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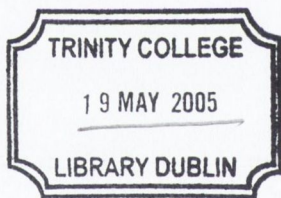
Stability and Change in the Choice Available to Voters:
The Set of Potential Leaders of Government.
An Aggregate Level Study of Eleven European Countries, 1950-1999

by

Fiachra Kennedy

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Dublin, Trinity College.

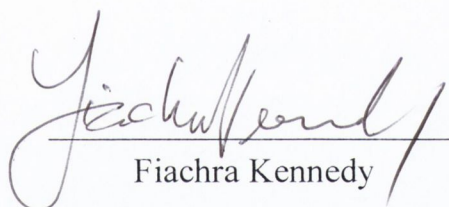
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Summary

Choice is an integral aspect of the democratic system. This thesis is about stability and change in choices available to voters. In particular, it is about the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. Many regard the office of prime minister as the most important political office in parliamentary democracies. In parliamentary democracies, the parties most likely to fulfil their ambitions of leading government are those that control the largest shares of seats in the legislature. By focusing on seat share, I am suggesting an alternative way of looking at the choices available to voters. On the one hand, there are the largest parliamentary parties, the potential leaders of government. On the other hand, there are the parties that can at best expect to play a supporting role in government.

In this thesis, my dependent variable is stability and change in the set of potential leaders of government parties. Stability in the set of potential leaders of government implies that the parties controlling the largest shares of seats in the most recently elected legislature are also the parties that controlled the largest shares of seats in the outgoing legislature. Change in the set of leading parties implies that one, or both, of the parties that controlled one of the largest shares of seats in the outgoing legislature no longer does so. I examine four explanations of stability and change in the party system: electoral instability, changes in the distribution of voters' preferences, the systemic and institutional context of the electoral decision and the actions of political parties.

In order to examine stability and change in the set of potential leaders of government, I consider the party systems of eleven European parliamentary democracies (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK). To give each party system time to settle down after the upheavals of the Second World War I do not consider the results of the first two post-war elections. I use a variety of different sources of data: published electoral data, *Eurobarometer* data, expert-rankings of the proportionality of electoral rules and data from the *Manifesto Research Group*.

The set of potential leaders of government is constituted by the two largest parties in the legislature (between them these parties have led over 90 percent of

governments formed after an election (1950-1999)). In some countries the choice available to voters is more stable (i.e., Austria, Germany, Ireland and the UK) than it is in other countries (in particular, Denmark, Finland and Sweden). The evidence suggests that, on average, support for the set of leading parties is declining in most countries.

In analysing the data, I use a variety of different methods. I begin my analysis by examining the effect of each explanation on the dependent variable. Then I consider all of these explanations together in a multivariate analysis. Given that my data is cross-sectional time-series I calculate panel-corrected standard errors.

Shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties has a direct effect on the composition of the set of leading parties. Change in the set of potential leaders of government is most likely to occur when support for this set of parties declines. Stability in this set is associated with an increase in support for these parties. I also wish to note that the closeness of the second and third largest parties in terms of seat share influences the effect of electoral instability on the composition of the set of leading parties. Change in the composition of the set of leading parties is more likely to occur the closer these two parties are to each other. The evidence suggests that the factors related to the electoral, the context of the electoral decision and the actions of the parties do not have significant direct effects on the composition of the set of leading parties. Instead, the effects of these factors are mediated through electoral instability. The evidence that I present suggests that change in electoral participation, changes to the electoral formula and policy changes relative to the long-term policy positions of the leading parties influence shifts in support for the leading parties. I also wish to note that the evidence suggests that once change occurs in the composition of the set of leading parties, further changes are very likely to follow.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is about stability and change in the choices available to voters. Schumpeter (1943, p.269) defines democracy as an ‘institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote’. However, democracy is more than a set of rules and institutions that decide who gets to hold political power. Democracy is also about choice and it is important that the choices available to voters are responsive to the democratic process. Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.3) argue that the ‘legitimacy of democracy can be seen to derive from the process of electoral competition and competitiveness, that is, from the opportunities afforded to the different political actors or coalitions to increase their power and influence through the electoral process’.

At elections, the options available to voters vary in terms of the number of political parties and their relative sizes (Duverger, 1964; Blondel, 1978), the variety of parties representing differing sides of social and political conflicts (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Inglehart, 1970 and 1990; Bartolini and Mair, 1990) and the intensity of the ideological differences between the parties (Sartori, 1966). In this thesis, I focus on the choice of potential leaders available to voters.

In order to examine stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters I consider the party systems of eleven European countries. The countries that I consider are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. The reason I select these countries is that they are all parliamentary democracies. In each country, the prime minister is the leader of government (in France the relationship between the president and the prime minister is not quite as clear-cut). I also select these countries because they have had free and open elections since the end of the Second World War

(unlike other European countries such as Greece, Spain, Portugal and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe). I list the elections considered by country in the Appendix (See Table A1.1). I do not consider the first two post-war elections in each country. This gives politics in each country time to settle down after the anti-democratic upheavals that many experienced in the 1920s and 1930s and the effects of the Second World War. Finally, I select these eleven party systems because, as will become evident in this chapter, they differ in terms of the stability and change in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government.

In examining stability and change in the choice available to voters, I use a variety of different types of data. I use electoral data to measure the share of the seats and votes won by each party as well as levels of electoral participation.¹ I use data from *Eurobarometer* to measure how close people feel to political parties.² Data from the Manifesto Research Group allows me to estimate policy positions.³ I rely on both expert rankings of the proportionality of electoral rules as well as Gallagher's Least-Squares Index of the proportionality of electoral outcomes.⁴ Finally, I use Laakso and Taagepera's measure of the 'effective number of parties'.

1.1.1 Choice of Potential Leaders of Government

Schumpeter's reference to acquiring 'power to decide' is somewhat vague. Often, the goals of political parties are seen as winning government office, and where possible, leading government (Epstein, 1980). Strøm (1990) outlines three goals of political parties. The first goal is based on Downs' (1957) approach to political competition.

¹ In the Appendix, I provide a complete list of parties in Table A1.2, vote share won by each party in Table A1.3 and seat share by party in Table A1.4. I use Mackie and Rose's *The International Almanac of Electoral History* (1991) and *A Decade of Election Results: Updating the International Almanac* (1997) as my source of electoral data (i.e., seat and vote shares and turnout). I rely on Woldendorp et al (1998) when it comes to identifying which parties were in government and the party of the prime minister. For the few elections that these did not cover, I consulted a number of government websites, <http://www.electionworld.org> and <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith>.

² For measures of strength of partisanship I rely on *Eurobarometer* data as published by Schmitt and Holmberg (1995). I use published data to measure partisanship in Europe because there are a number of controversies about using such data (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of this).

³ For data on the policy positions of the various political parties I consult the data set provided by Budge et al (2001) *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors and Governments 1945-1998*.

⁴ Lijphart in *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of 27 Democracies, 1945-1990* (1994) reports the decisive electoral formula and the average district magnitudes overtime in each of the eleven countries that I consider. Since Lijphart's data set ends in 1990, I also consult Mackie and Rose (1991 and 1997), Caramini (2000) and Farrell (2001).

Political parties are seen as seeking to maximise their share of the vote in order to win elections. The second goal focuses on access to government office and is based on Riker's (1962) view of government office as a fixed prize to be divided up amongst the members of the winning coalition. For parties that are only interested in access to government office 'perhaps all that really counts is parking the party leader's rear end on a seat at the cabinet table' (Laver and Schofield, 1990, p.39). A third goal of political parties is to implement their policies. De Swaan (1973) notes that for some parties the prize of being involved in government is the opportunity to effect government policy.

In parliamentary democracies, the most obvious form of political power is government office. I see the goal of political parties as leading government. Many regard the office of prime minister as the most powerful political office in a country. Prime ministers speak on behalf of the government as a whole and, on the international stage, on behalf of the state. In part, elections are about who will become prime minister. As Rose (1991, p.9) notes 'a prime minister does not stand alone; he or she depends upon the confidence of a popularly elected assembly'. While prime ministers are the most prominent of politicians, their powers vary from country to country. The opportunities and limitations of the office are influenced by a country's constitution and legislation, by formal rules and constraints, whether the government is a single-party government or a coalition, by politics within the prime ministers own party as well as political culture and expectations about what the prime minister is expected to do (Jones, 1991a, p.1 and 1991b, pp165-166). In a special volume of *West European Politics* that focused on prime ministers, Jones (1991b, p.164) concludes that in terms of the prime minister's power 'the most important political resource of all is party'.

I am interested in stability and change in the composition of the set of parties that form the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. In parliamentary democracies, parties may have ambitions to lead government (many produce election manifestos outlining what they would do when in government). However, few of these have any real expectations of leading government (in the near future). Amongst voters, and the media, when people discuss who will lead the next government, attention generally focuses on the leader of the outgoing government and the leaders of the main opposition parties. As such then, there is a subset of parties with the parliamentary resources (the numbers of representatives in the legislature) to

be potential leaders of government. I describe the party system in terms of a choice between those parties that are potential leaders of government and those that are not.

1.1.2 Political Resources

Both Sartori (1976) and Mair (2002) use access to government office to differentiate between party systems. In identifying parties that he considers 'governmentally relevant', Sartori outlines a set of criteria that require a party to have played some role in supporting a government. For Sartori (1976, p.301; Sartori's emphasis) a party is '*governmentally relevant* only when it actually governs, enters a government, or supports it at the vote of confidence by giving it that majority that the government demands for taking office'. Mair (2002, p.97) distinguishes between party systems by considering three factors: the identities of the parties that govern; the patterns of alternation; and whether or not a particular combination of parties has previously formed a coalition together.

A difficulty with both of these approaches is that they require a party to play some part in government, either through membership of the government, or by supporting a government in the legislature. Focusing on past experience in government may mean ignoring a party that is not considered 'governmentally relevant' but may be large enough to be considered an alternative leader of government. In particular I am thinking of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI). Despite controlling the second largest share of seats in the *Camera dei Deputati*, the Italian parliament, they have not led an Italian government.⁵ Yet, given the share of seats that they controlled in the Italian parliament, the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) can be seen as offering an alternative to the government leadership of the Christian Democrats (DC). This is an alternative that did not succeed because on each occasion, when it came to seeking support from the other smaller parties in order to form a coalition government, the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) lost out to the Christian Democrats (DC). This example highlights the importance of identifying potential leaders of government in terms of the political resources they control in parliament (i.e., seat share).

⁵ A strategy adopted by the Christian Democrats (DC) locked the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) out of power. In forming coalition governments, the Christian Democrats (DC) initially turned to the smaller centre and centre-right parties (Liberal Party (PLI), Republican Party (PRI) and Social Democrats (PSDI)) for support, and later to the Socialist Party (PSI) (Daniels, 1999, p.76).

The resources a candidate or party controls can play an important role in whether or not they achieve their political goal. It is sometimes said, that anyone born in the United States of America can grow up to become president. Similarly, anyone born in a parliamentary democracy can grow up to become prime minister. The sentiment being expressed is that the highest political office in the land is open to anyone who can win the support of a sufficiently large number of his or her fellow citizens. However, this sentiment is not wholly reflective of the reality of contemporary democratic competition. In the USA, an aspirant for the presidency needs to be able to raise millions of dollars to finance his or her election campaign. In 2004, between them both presidential candidates will have raised over \$400 million. In parliamentary democracies, while access to campaign funds plays an important role, in order to become prime minister a different sort of political capital is required: seats in the national legislature. Without adequate support in the legislature, a politician with ambitions of leading government is lost.

Focusing on the resources in parliament that a party requires to lead government suggests an alternative way of looking at the choices available to voters. The choice available to voters can be seen in terms of a decision between those parties that are likely to have the resources to be in a position to lead government and those that will at best play a supporting role. What is important about the strongest parties in the party system is that these parties generally get to lead government. For instance, when a party wins a majority of seats in the legislature, the process of identifying which party gets to lead government is straightforward. The party with the largest share of the seats is able to form a single-party government and install its party leader as prime minister. However, when no one party controls a majority of the seats in the legislature, the process of identifying which party leads government is more complicated. Under these conditions, the largest party in the legislature is not guaranteed to lead government. In the post-election period, a number of large parties may attempt to form majority coalition governments (it has also happened that minority single-party and coalition governments have taken office). While it may take time after an election to decide which party gets to lead government, generally, prime ministers are members of those parties that control the largest shares of seats in parliament. Parties that do not first control one of the largest shares of seats in the legislature rarely get to install their leaders as prime minister.

Political competition refers to attempts by the strongest parties to stay at the top of the party system. At each election the largest parties face the challenge of smaller parties who also have ambitions of leading government. The electoral process provides the leading parties with the opportunity to maintain their positions of power and influence. The smaller challenging parties have the opportunity to increase their power and influence.

The aim of remaining a potential leader of government means that the goals of the leading parties are not simply vote maximisation or gaining access to government office or implementing policy. A party with ambitions of leading government needs to do more than simply win representation in the legislature. A party wishing to achieve that ambition needs to win one of the largest shares of seats in the legislature. A party that fails to do so will find itself outside the set of potential government leaders and the job of leading government will fall to another party. A party with ambitions of leading government is not simply interested in getting a seat at the cabinet table. Political competition for these parties is about more than achieving access to government office. Instead, it is about achieving a particular government office. What matters is seeing the party leader at the head of the cabinet table: in the prime minister's seat. Of course, parties that want to lead government may be interested in more than just the trappings of office; they also may wish to do something with their political power. These parties do not simply want to influence policy either from inside cabinet, or from a position of influence outside cabinet⁶, these parties want to do so from the most powerful political office in the cabinet.

⁶ As Laver and Schofield (1990, p.38) note, a party that is solely interested in policy does not have to have a cabinet seat 'if major government policy can be influenced by playing the parliamentary game from a position outside the government coalition'. Laver and Hunt (1992) examined whether the leaders of political parties were 'office seekers' or more concerned with policy and found that most countries have both office- and policy-seeking parties (though New Zealand and the USA were judged to have politicians interested above all else in office). Social Democratic parties were found to balance office- and policy-seeking motivations, while all Christian Democratic and secular conservative parties were classified as being driven by office-seeking motivations. Those parties that were driven by policy-seeking motivations were communist parties, left-socialist parties, green parties and nationalist parties.

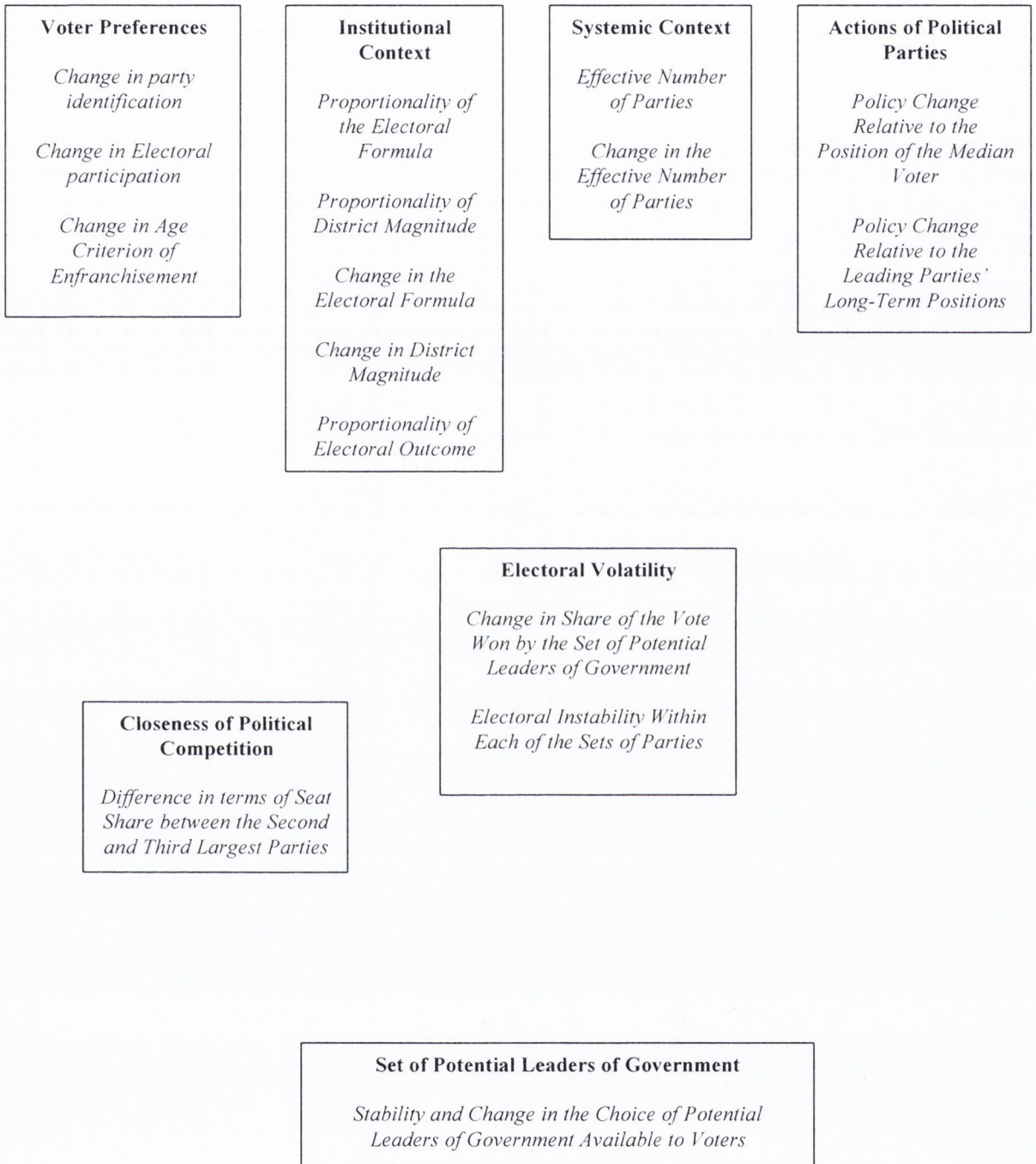
1.2 Understanding Stability and Change in the Choice Available to Voters

In Figure 1, I present an illustration of the various factors that influence stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. In Figure 1, I do not illustrate the relationships between these variables. To illustrate all of the relationships would result in an overly complex illustration. The purpose of Figure 1 is to highlight the factors that I consider and the measures of these factors that I use (in Chapter 4 I outline how these measures are operationalised). The purpose of this section is to provide a brief outline of the relationships between these factors. In Chapter 3, I present the hypotheses that I test in this thesis.

1.2.1 Party System Stability and Change: The Composition of the Set of Leading Parties and Electoral Instability

I observe stability and change in the choice available to voters in two ways. The first focuses on the choice of parties available to voters. When Sartori (1976) and Mair (2002) consider party system change, they examine whether or not the number of ‘governmentally relevant’ parties has expanded. For them, party system change occurs when a party, for the first time, either takes government office or supports a government in a vote of confidence in parliament. Party system change also occurs when a new government includes a party that was a member of the erstwhile government or when a new combination of parties comes together to form a coalition government. While all parties cannot be expected to win a place around the cabinet table, Mair (2002, p.98) argues that it is possible to distinguish between party systems. On the one hand are those party systems where political competition for government is ‘closed’ – ‘highly predictable, with little or no change over time’. On the other hand are those party systems where political competition is ‘open’ – ‘quite unpredictable, with differing patterns of alternation, with frequent shifts in the make-up of the governing alternatives, and with new parties gaining relatively easy access to office’.

Figure 1: Factors that Influence Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government



From this perspective, I focus on movement into, and out of, the set of potential government leaders. If there is no change in the composition of this set of parties, I think of the party system as essentially stable. However, the more movement in and out of this set of parties, the more unstable the party system.

The second way I observe party system stability and change is by means of electoral instability. In particular I measure shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties (i.e., the set of potential leaders of government). Party system stability and change can also be described in terms of shifts in electoral support for the various competing parties. Party system change is often associated with 'high' levels of electoral volatility while stability is associated with 'low' levels of electoral volatility. Rose and Unwin (1970) and Maguire (1983) consider trends in support for individual political parties while Pedersen (1979 and 1983), Shamir (1984), Bartolini and Mair (1990) and Mair (1993) consider measures of overall levels of electoral instability.

From this second perspective I focus on shifts in electoral support for the strongest parties. In order to maintain their positions at the head of the party system, the leading parties need to maintain, if not increase, their vote shares. By doing so they are likely to strengthen their positions within the party system and protect their places in the set of potential leaders of government. When there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties, I think of the choice available to voters as becoming more stable. However, loss of vote share is likely to result in loss of seat share. While this need not result in one of the strongest parties losing its place at the top of the party system, it does serve to weaken their position within the party system. If support for one of the leading parties were to continue to decline, then the spectre of losing their place in the set of potential government leaders would loom ever larger. When the set of large parties loses vote share, I think of the stability of the choice available to voters becoming less stable.

1.2.2 Explanations of Party System Change and Stability

1.2.2.1 The Impact of Electoral Instability on the Choice Available to Voters

Shifts in support for the set of leading parties indicate increases and decreases in the popularity of this choice. It is reasonable to expect that changes in a party's electoral fortunes will have an effect on the share of the seats it controls in the legislature. After

all, in order to win seats in the legislature a party must first win votes. I examine if an increase in support for this set is associated with stability in the choice available to voters. I also examine if a decrease in support for the set of leading parties is associated with the emergence of a new choice of potential leaders of government available to voters.

Shifts in support for the set of potential leaders of government may not capture all of the electoral instability in the party system. The remaining part of electoral instability occurs within each of the sets of parties: between the leading parties and between the other parties. Electoral instability between the parties that constitute each of the sets may reflect competition along other dimensions of political competition (See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion). This electoral instability may also contribute to change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. For instance, within the set of leading parties, the parties compete with one another to be the largest party (as will be outlined below, the largest party is the party most likely to lead government). One consequence of this competition is that one of the leading parties may lose its place in the set of leading parties because it lost to another leading party a large enough proportion of its vote share. Party system change may also be a consequence of electoral instability between the other smaller parties. Within this set of parties, a party may win a large enough share of the vote from the other smaller parties to control one of the largest shares of seats in the legislature. In other words, it becomes large enough to be one of the potential leaders of government.

Another factor that needs to keep in mind is the closeness of political competition. Closeness of political competition refers to the gap in terms of seat share between the leading party with the smallest seat share and the challenging party with the largest seat share. This latter party is best placed to challenge for a position in the set of leading parties. The closer this party is to the smallest leading party in terms of seat share, the closer is political competition in the party system. This factor plays an important role in whether or not electoral instability results in change or stability in the composition of the set of leading parties. For change to occur, electoral instability has to be sufficient to bridge the gap in terms of seat share between the two sets of parties. When competition is close, a low level of electoral instability may result in change. However, the less close political competition, the greater the level of electoral instability required to bring about change. So, as well as having a direct impact on

stability and change in the choice available to voters, electoral instability also has an indirect effect mediated through the closeness of political competition.

Electoral instability, or shifts in support for the set of leading parties, does not just happen. I consider three explanations of electoral instability. These explanations focus on the voters (those who do the choosing), the systemic and institutional contexts in which the choice is made and the actions of the leading political parties.

1.2.2.2 The Distribution of Voters' Preferences

My first explanation of stability and change focuses on the distribution of voters' partisan preferences. According to this explanation party system stability is a consequence of 'voter traditions' that pass from one generation of voters to another (Smith, 1989, p.48; Beck, 1979, p.130). However, when these 'voter traditions' become less salient and when voters are less willing to rely on long-term cues, they may be more willing to alter their vote from one election to the next (Beck, 1979; Franklin et al., 1992). Furthermore, shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences may mediate the effect of electoral instability on the choice available to voters. For instance, if voting patterns become particularly unstable, electoral instability may contribute to a decline in people's willingness to identify with a particular party. Since voting for the preferred party reinforces party identification that people opt for different parties over a number of elections may contribute to a weakening of partisanship.

1.2.2.3 The Institutional and Systemic Contexts of the Electoral Decision

When examining party system stability and change it is also important to take into account the institutional and systemic contexts of elections. As Bartolini and Mair (1990) argue the vote choice may not simply be a function of voters' preferences. Voters' ability to vote in line with their preferences can be constrained by the proportionality of the electoral system in which they vote and the number of parties from which they make their choice. Both of these contextual factors help to frame voters' choices. Moreover, electoral volatility may have an indirect effect on the stability and change of the set of leading parties through the institutional and systemic contexts of the election. One example of this indirect relationship may be through the

institutional context of the electoral decision. The electoral rules allocate seats in parliament based on vote share. A change in a party's share of the vote is likely to alter their share of the seats. This change may have a knock-on effect in terms of which parties control the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. Change in the systemic context of the electoral decision may also effect the distribution of voters' preferences. For instance if there is a decline in the number of parties, those who identified with a party that no longer exists may be unwilling to transfer their loyalty to another party. As such, the proportion of people who feel close to a political party will decline.

1.2.2.4 The Actions of the Political Parties

My final explanation of party system stability and change focuses on the actions of the political parties themselves. Political parties are often portrayed as actors to which things happen, but as Wolinetz (1988, p.5) points out 'parties are far more than passive recipients of electoral preferences'. Instead, political parties react to changes in their environment and attempt to influence change in their environment. As Mair (1993) notes parties have survived at the top because they adapt and change as the political environment changes. Party system stability is associated with successful changes by parties. However, changes that are misguided, or an inability to adapt to changing circumstances, may result in a decline in their electoral support. From this point of view, a political party may be responsible for its own demise. The actions that I focus on are changes made by the leading parties to their policy positions. The actions of the political parties may also mediate the effects of electoral volatility on the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. In particular, poor election results are likely to motivate parties to alter their policy positions in order to win back support. However, this may also affect the willingness of people to identify with the party. If the policy change moves the party away from a policy identity that is favoured by its long-term supporters this may contribute to a weakening of partisanship. In reaction to this, or simply to tackle a drop in those who identify with the party, a party may alter its policy identity in order to satisfy the policy concerns of its erstwhile supporters. A change in the systemic context of the electoral decision may also motivate parties to act. Parties may decide to alter their policy positions in response to a change electoral environment. The emergence of new parties that

challenge their own position may encourage existing parties to make some changes to their policy identities.

1.2.3 A Plan for Understanding Stability and Change in the Choice Available to Voters

From this discussion, it is evident that stability and change in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government is a consequence of a complex interaction between a variety of different factors. My first task is to identify the size of the set of leading parties (i.e., how many parties are potential leaders of government). I will then examine, in each of the eleven party systems, whether or not the composition of these sets of parties has remained stable or undergone change. I deal with this first task in Sections 1.3 of this chapter.

My second task is to establish how electoral support for the set of leading parties has oscillated. When support for the set of leading parties increases, how large are their average gains? When support falls, how large are their average losses? Is the experience of the set of leading parties the same in all eleven countries or does it vary from country to country? How often does support for both leading parties increase (or decrease) and how often does one party gain vote share while the other loses?

My third task is to examine the relationship between shifts in support for the set of leading parties and party system stability and change. In other words, is the choice of potential leaders of government responsive to changes in support for these parties.

My fourth task is to examine the three explanations of shifts in support for the set of leading parties. When I analyse these relationships, I initially focus on the association between pairs of variables (i.e., one measure of party system stability and change and one measure of a particular explanation).

My final task is to take all of these explanations together and examine their importance in explaining party system stability and change. These analyses will tell me whether a variable that the bi-variate analysis shows to be associated with party system stability and change continues to have an effect on the party system when other explanations are taken into consideration. I test two models. The first focuses on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The second focuses on change in the

choice available to voters. Ideally, I would like to test a single model that combines both of these variables. The analysis would measure the direct effects of factors related to voters, the context and the actions of the parties on both the choice available to voters and shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The analysis would also measure the indirect effects of these factors on the choice available to voters. However, the differing natures of the two variables measuring party system stability and change mean that this is not available to me. Shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties is an interval level variable while stability and change in the choice available to voters is a binary variable. In Chapter 9, I also examine how well my model predicts stability and change in the choice available to voters.

1.3 The Set of Potential Leaders of Government

So far, I have argued that those parties that control the largest shares of seats in the legislature are potential leaders of government. The criterion for inclusion in the set of potential government leaders is seat share. The question is, how many parties are in the set of potential leaders of government?

1.3.1 Expected Size of the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

One approach to answering this question is to focus on the binary-structure of electoral competition. That is, one purpose of elections in parliamentary democracies is to elect a government with the other parties forming the opposition. There is a leading party of government (either a single party in government or the largest of the coalition partners) and there is a leading party of the opposition (the largest of the opposition parties). This simple approach to electoral politics suggests that election contests are in part a choice between two alternative governments. These alternative governments may be either single party governments or coalition governments led by one of the two largest parties. As such then, the binary nature of electoral competition suggests that in each party system there are two potential leaders of government, the parties with the two largest shares of the seats in parliament. However, the outcome of

elections does not always result in one of the largest parties leading government while the other forms the opposition. As will be outlined below, on occasions the two largest parties have come together to form a coalition government.

The binary structure of political competition is also emphasised by the ideological divisions, or social and political cleavages, within western liberal democracies. Often, people portray political debate as being between two opposing viewpoints (political scientists engaged in electoral research often ask respondents to position themselves on bipolar scales e.g., left-right; liberal-conservative).

Lipset and Rokkan (1967, p.50) suggest there has been a ‘freezing of the major party alternatives’ around political conflicts or cleavages.⁷ This sociological approach to voting behaviour regards certain social groups as attached to particular political parties. Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.5) note that:

‘once cleavages become established and institutionalised in relevant social and political organisations, they become secure over and beyond the individual and social group, constituting the structure and the universe of alternatives in which individual political preferences develop. The stabilised cleavage system therefore presents individuals with an already existing constellation of alternatives contributing to the structuring of their votes and to their political integration into society’.

In some countries, such as the UK and in Scandinavia the class cleavage was salient. The class cleavage ‘represents the economic and material problems of industrial societies: providing for the economic security of all citizens and ensuring a just distribution of economic rewards’ (Dalton, 2002, p.191). Class voting involves the

⁷ Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) essay ‘*Cleavage structures, party systems and voter alignments: an introduction*’ sets out the historical linkages between social cleavages and party systems. Lipset and Rokkan (1967, p.14) distinguish between four cleavages within a country’s community. The first two are associated with the National Revolution. The first cleavage is what they refer to as the ‘centre-periphery’ cleavage. They describe this conflict as one between the ‘central nation-building cultural’, and the resistant periphery of ‘ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject populations’. The second cleavage is what they refer to as the ‘confessional-secular’ cleavage. Here, the conflict is between the nation-state (that is seeking to centralise, standardise and mobilise) and the Church (that is seeking to protect its position of influence over what the emerging state considered its citizens). The second two cleavages are associated with industrialisation. The third cleavage is what Lipset and Rokkan refer to as an ‘urban-rural’ cleavage. This cleavage addresses the conflict between the interests of the emerging industrial economy and society, in particular the ‘rising class of industrial entrepreneurs’, and those of the agrarian economy and society, ‘the landed interests’. The fourth cleavage refers to conflict over the ‘ownership of capital’. Here the division was between, on the one hand, the ‘owners and employers’ and on the other hand, the ‘tenants, laborers, and workers’ (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 14).

working class supporting socialist parties while the middle class support liberal and conservative parties. For instance, Arter (1999, p.148) notes that in Sweden, the party-building process was bound up with, and sustained by, class-based voting. Farmers voted in force for the Agrarian-Centre Party while workers voted for one of the parties of the left and the middle classes opted for either the liberals or the conservatives.

In other countries, such as Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands religion was also salient. The religious cleavage saw political parties arrange 'themselves with specific religious interests: Catholic or Protestant, religious or secular' (Dalton, 2002, p.195).⁸ Religious voting involves people voting on the grounds of their attitudes towards religion or membership of particular churches (Pennings, 2002, pp100-101). For example, Daniels (1999, p.80) notes that the development of the two largest Italian parties, and subsequent electoral choice, was rooted in a clerical-secular cleavage. The Catholic subculture in the north-east of Italy sustained the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI), while the Communist Party's (PCI/PDS) strength lay in the anti-clerical and socialist traditions of central Italy. In the Netherlands, Napel (1999, p.172) notes that religious voting involved parties representing particular churches (Roman Catholics opted for the Catholic People's Party while Protestants voted for either the Anti-Revolutionary Party or the Christian-Historical Union). As will be outlined below, the sets of potential government leaders are generally some combination of Socialist/Social Democrat and either Christian Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, or Centre Party/Agrarian.

Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.289) and Mair (1990, p.176) note that electoral instability is 'regularly contained within broader and more stable political alignments'. That is, when voters change the party they vote for:

'they switch between friends rather than between enemies... Thus when parties of the right lose votes, they tend to do so to the benefit of other parties of the right; and when parties of the left lose votes they tend to do so to the benefit of other parties of the left – there is little shifting across cleavage boundaries' (Mair, 1993, p.124).

⁸ The argument is that during the first three decades of the twentieth century, the extension of the franchise and the mobilisation of major sections of society acted as the catalyst for the freezing of the cleavage structures. As Pennings (2002, p.101) puts it, 'democratization went hand in hand with the rise of closed ideological shops'.

The stability of these political alignments suggests that it is reasonable to expect that the set of potential leaders of government will include a party from both sides of the salient cleavage in each party system. As such then it is reasonable to expect that the number of potential leaders of government in each party system at any one election is two.

1.3.2 Relative Sizes of Parties that Lead Government

It is clear from Table 1.1 that the two largest parties have been almost ever present in governments formed in the immediate aftermath of an election.⁹ Of the 160 governments that I analyse (See Table A1.5 in the Appendix) 59 are single party governments while 48 are two-party coalition governments and 53 are multi-party governments. One or both of the parties that control the two largest shares of seats in the legislature have been present in 158 of these governments. While holding one of the two largest shares of seats is important in terms of gaining access to government office, my main concern is with whether or not these parties lead government.

It is also evident from Table 1.1, that the party controlling the largest share of seats in the legislature is the party most likely to see its leader installed as prime minister. Of the 160 governments formed in the aftermath of an election, the parties controlling the largest shares of seats in the legislature led 119 of these (or 74 percent). The parties controlling the second largest share of seats in the legislature have led slightly more than a sixth of these governments (or 18 percent). Finally, only one in twelve prime ministers are members of a party that does not control one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature (or eight percent). As such then, the vast majority of prime ministers (over 90 percent) are members of one of the two largest parties in the legislature, and most of these are members of the party controlling the largest share of the seats.

⁹ I focus on the first government formed after an election because this follows the expression of the voters' preferences. Subsequent changes in the composition of the government may be a consequence of changes in the parliamentary arithmetic or changes in the relations between coalition partners.

Table 1.1: Format of Government, Presence of the Two Largest Parties in Government and Party of the Prime Minister (N = 160)

	Party of Prime Minister			Total
	Largest Party	Second Largest Party	Neither	
Single Party Government				59
Largest Party	57			57
Second Largest Party		1		1
Neither			1	1
Two-Party Coalition				48
Largest Party	22			22
Second Largest Party		12		12
Both Largest Parties	13	1		14
Neither			0	0
Multi-Party Coalition				53
Largest Party	21		4	25
Second Largest Party		9	5	14
Both Largest Parties	6	5	2	13
Neither			1	1
Total	119	28	13	160

Note: Mutli-party coalitions are coalition governments between three or more parties.

Sources: Woldendorp et al (1998); Mackie and Rose (1991 and 1997) and <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith>

When the largest party is the only one of the two largest parties in government, it generally gets to lead the government, whether it is a single party government or a coalition government. The largest parties have formed and led 57 single party governments. Moreover, the largest parties have led all 22 of the two-party coalition governments in which they are the only one of the two largest parties. However, when it comes to multi-party coalition governments, the largest parties do not always have it their own way. The four exceptions involve Italian governments. In 1983 and 1992, the largest party in the *Camera dei Deputati*, the Christian Democrats

(DC/PPI) was a member of a multi-party coalition government. The prime minister was a member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI): a party that in 1983 controlled 12 percent of the seats (the third largest seat share); and in 1992 controlled 15 percent of the seats (the third largest seat share). After the 1994 election, the leader of Forza Italia, Mr. Berlusconi, became prime minister, even though his party controlled only the fourth largest share of the seats. However, unlike the two earlier governments, the gap in terms of seat share between the fourth largest party and the largest party was much closer; just three percentage points as opposed to 24 percentage points in 1983. Finally, after the 1996 election, Mr. Prodi, who was designated 'non-party', became prime minister.

As with the parties controlling the largest share of seats in the legislature, a party controlling the second largest share generally gets to lead government when it is the only one of the two largest parties in government. Only once in the aftermath of an election has a party controlling the second largest share of the seats managed to form a single party government: the Conservatives (H) after the 1981 election in Norway. The second largest parties have led all of two-party coalition governments in which they are the largest party. However, when it comes to multi-party coalitions, the second largest parties, like the largest parties, do not always provide the first prime minister to each of these governments. The five exceptions include the Norwegian governments formed after the 1965 and 1969 elections. These were led by the Centre Party (S), a party that controlled a share of the seats that was about seven percentage points less than the Conservatives' (H) share of the seats (the second largest party). After the Danish election of 1968, the Radical Party (RV), the smallest party in the coalition, provided the prime minister. Despite their small size, the Radical Party (RV) had been a member of three of the four previous governments. Their larger coalition partners, the Conservative People's Party (KF) and the Liberals (V), had not been in government since 1953. After the 1971 election in the Netherlands, the leader of the five-party coalition government that took office was a member of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) rather than the larger Catholic People's Party (KVP) (these parties would later merge to form the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)). The final exception occurred after the Swedish election of 1979, when the Centre Party (C) despite failing to hold onto the second largest share of seats in the legislature, managed to retain their position as leader of

government (the second largest share of seats was controlled by the Moderate Unity Party (MS)).

Of the 160 governments that I consider, 27 include both leading parties. In 19 of these governments, the prime minister is a member of the largest party. However, there is a notable difference between whether both parties are members of a two-party coalition or a multi-party coalition. When the two largest parties are both members of a two-party coalition (14 governments), the prime minister taking office after the election is, in all but one case, a member of the largest party. The one exception is the Belgian government formed after the 1991 election. The prime minister in this case was a member of the Christian People's Party (CVP) and not the larger socialist party.

Both of the largest parties are members of 13 multi-party coalition governments. On six occasions, the prime minister is a member of the largest party¹⁰ and on five occasions the prime minister is a member of the second largest party¹¹. There are two exceptions and both of these occurred in Finland. After the 1954 Finnish election, the prime minister was a member of a party that controlled only six percent of the seats, the Swedish People's Party (SF). This party trailed the second largest party, Agrarian Union (SK), by a full 20 percentage points. The prime minister who took office after the 1975 Finnish election was a member of Centre Party (SK). This party controlled 19 percent of the seats and was only half a percentage point behind the second largest party, Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL). Finally, in only one case neither of the two largest parties were members of a multi-party coalition government. After the 1997 election in Norway a three party coalition government took office and had as its prime minister a member of the Christian People's Party (KF).

Despite these exceptions, it is clear from the evidence that I present that the parties controlling the two largest shares of seats in the legislature are the parties most likely to lead government. The two largest parties in the legislature have led just over 90 percent of governments formed after an election. These two parties constitute the choice available to voters in terms of potential leaders of government.

¹⁰ The governments formed after the 1978 and 1999 elections in Belgium, after the 1966 election in Finland and after the 1956, 1972 and 1981 elections in the Netherlands.

¹¹ The governments formed after the 1987 election in Belgium, after the 1951, 1970 and 1987 elections in Finland and after the 1952 election in the Netherlands.

1.3.3 Evidence of Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The question that I address in this section is whether or not the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters has remained stable in European parliamentary democracies. In other words, have the same two parties controlled one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature for five decades? If the composition of the set of potential leaders of government remained unchanged in all eleven countries, then only 22 parties would control the two largest shares of seats in the national legislatures (i.e., two parties in each country). If this were the case, I would regard all eleven party systems as stable. The evidence that I present in Table 1.2a and Table 1.2b implies that not all of the party systems are stable. The set of potential government leaders is more open in some countries than it is in others.

Table 1.2a: Where the Choice Available to Voters is Stable: Identities of Political Parties Controlling the Two Largest Shares of Seats in National Parliaments (1950-1999)

COUNTRY	PARTY	PERIODS
AUSTRIA	<i>OVP</i>	1953-1999
	<i>SPO</i>	1953-1999
GERMANY	<i>SPD</i>	1953-1998
	<i>CDU/CSU</i>	1953-1998
IRELAND	<i>FF</i>	1951-1997
	<i>FG</i>	1951-1997
UK	<i>CONS</i>	1951-1997
	<i>LAB</i>	1951-1997

The evidence in Table 1.2a implies that the party systems in four countries are stable. In Austria, Germany¹², Ireland and the UK, two parties control the two largest shares of seats in their national parliaments. Since the war, no new party has managed to break through the threshold of controlling the second largest share of seats in these legislatures. In Austria, the closed nature of the party system has been accentuated by a series of grand coalitions involving the two largest parties. Luther (1999, p.136) concludes that in Austria there is ‘a relatively closed structure of competition for office’ and that this ‘has been and remains a ‘core element’ of the post-war party system’.

¹² The Christian Social Union (CSU) is treated as one with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

In the other three countries, the larger parties are less willing to work with each other in government. In Germany, after the first few post-war elections, party competition gradually concentrated around the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). However, despite the Social Democratic Party's (SPD) size, it was not until 1969 that they first led a government in the aftermath of an election¹³ (Jeffery, 1999). In Ireland, for many decades, government alternatives involved either a single party government formed by Fianna Fail (FF) or a coalition led by Fine Gael (FG) and supported by the Labour Party (LP). In 1989, Fianna Fail (FF) altered its worldview and led a coalition government formed with the Progressive Democrats (PD). This change of approach has proven to be very fruitful for Fianna Fail (FF). In the aftermath of every election since 1989, Fianna Fail (FF) has been able to lead a coalition government in partnership with either the Progressive Democrats (PD) or the Labour Party (LP)¹⁴. In the UK, since the Second World War, one of the two largest parties has led a single party government. The positions of both the Conservatives (Cons) and Labour (Lab), at the head of the party system, have remained undisturbed by the periodic challenges posed by the Liberals/Liberal Democrats (LD).

¹³ This was not the Social Democrats' (SDP) first experience of government. In 1966, the Free Democrats (FDP) withdrew from its coalition arrangement with Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU), which allowed for the formation of a coalition government between the two leading parties. Jeffery (1999) suggests that this experience of government allowed the Social Democrats (SPD) to establish its credibility as a governing party.

¹⁴ The Fianna Fail (FF) – Labour (LP) coalition collapsed in mid-term and was replaced by a Fine Gael (FG) – Labour (LP) – Democratic Left (DL) government.

Table 1.2b: Where the Choice Available to Voters has Changed: Identities of Political Parties Controlling the Two Largest Shares of Seats in National Parliaments (1950-1999)

COUNTRY	PARTY	PERIODS
BELGIUM	<i>BSP/PSB</i>	1950-1999
	CVP/PSC	1950-1999*
DENMARK	<i>SD</i>	1950-1998
	V	1950-1968; 1977; 1981; 1998
	KF	1971-1973; 1984-1994
	F	1975; 1979
FINLAND	SK	1951-1958; 1966-1970; 1995-1999
	SSP	1951-1962; 1970-1999
	SKDL	1962-1966; 1975-1979
	KK	1972; 1983-1991
ITALY	<i>PCI/PDS</i>	1953-1996
	DC/PPI	1953-1994
	LL/LN	1996*
NETHERLANDS ¹⁵	<i>PvdA</i>	1952-1998
	KVP	1952-1972
	CDA	1981-1998*
NORWAY	<i>DNA</i>	1953-1997
	H	1953-1993
	S	1997*
SWEDEN	<i>SSA</i>	1952-1998
	F	1952-1958; 1964-1968
	MS	1960; 1982-1998
	C	1970-1979

Italics indicate coded as one of two largest parties for all elections considered

* At the last election in the series the party failed to win one of the two largest shares of seats in the national legislature. The parties that will replace these parties in the set of leading parties are the Liberals (PVV/PLP) in Belgium, Forza Italia (FI) in Italy, the Liberals (VVD) in the Netherlands, and Progress Party (F) in Norway.

¹⁵ It should be noted that in the Netherlands, the set of potential government leaders changed in the 1970s. This change was not a consequence of one of the largest parties failing to retain at least the second largest share of the seats. Instead it was a consequence of the merger of the Catholic People's Party (KVP), with a number of smaller confessional parties to form the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA). In my analysis I do not include those changes to the set of potential government leaders in the Netherlands that resulted from the merger of these parties. That is, I do not include the change that resulted in only one potential leader of government being identified for the 1977 election (the Catholic People's Party ceased to exist and cannot then be regarded as a potential leader of the next government while the resultant Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) is coded as a new party and consequently not a member of the set of potential leaders), nor do I include the subsequent change where the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) are included in the set of potential leaders for the first time.

The evidence in Table 1.2b implies that in other countries the choice available to voters is less stable. That said, until quite recently, the choices available to voters were stable in Belgium¹⁶, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. In these countries, up until the late 1980s, the set of potential government leaders had remained unchanged since the early 1950s and the two largest parties were secure in their positions at the head of the party system. However, the outcome of elections in the 1990s saw one of the two largest parties fall victim to the challenge of other parties. Political parties that had never before controlled one of the two largest shares of seats in their legislatures, were now in the set of potential leaders of government.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, the first change in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government occurred as a result of the last election of the five-decade period that I consider. The 1999 Belgian election result means that the Liberals (PVV/PLP) replace the Christian Democrats (CVP/PSC) in the set of parties that compete to lead government. Similarly, in the Netherlands, the result of the 1998 election means that the Liberals (VVD) replace the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) as one of the two largest parties.

In both Italy and Norway, the choice available to voters remained stable until the final two elections of the period that I consider. As I note above, the party system in Italy has been described as a ‘blocked system’ with the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) dominating government without interruption from the early post-war years until 1992 (Daniels, 1999, p.76). Since then, the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) have been replaced in the set of potential government leaders by Lega Nord (LN/LL), who in turn have been replaced by Forza Italia (FI). In Norway, both the Labour Party (DNA) and the Conservatives (H) continued to enjoy periods of government leadership up until the early 1990s. As a result of the Norwegian election of 1993 the Conservatives (H) lost their place as the second largest party to the Centre Party (S). However, rather than achieving a new stability, or even returning to the *status quo*

¹⁶ In this project the Christian Democrats (CVP/PSC), Socialists (BSP/PSB) and Liberals (PVV/PLP) are treated as single parties rather than as separate parties representing one of the two linguistic traditions in Belgium. As such then the electoral performances of each, both in terms of share of the vote and share of seats won, are aggregated and treated as one. There is some question as to whether or not the party system in Belgium should be treated as a single party system or two separate party systems (Winter and Dumont, 1999, p.184). Given that the focus is on the Belgian government, I identify a single Belgian party system and treat the main parties accordingly. The linguistic laws of 1963 defined the linguistic boundaries between Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. While Brussels became bilingual, in Flanders Dutch was established as the official language, while in Wallonia French became the official language. The electoral successes of regionalist parties in the 1960s provoked the division of the three traditional parties, the Christian Democrats in 1968, the Liberals in 1971 and the Socialists in 1978 (Winter and Dumont, 1999, p.198).

ante, the choice continued to change as Centre Party (S) were replaced in the set of potential government leaders by the Progress Party (F).

Finally, Table 1.2b shows that the choices of potential leaders of government available to voters in Denmark, Finland and Sweden are much less stable than they are in other countries. Since the end of the war, in each country, four parties control one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. That said, although party system change has occurred, one of the two largest parties has been relatively secure in its position. In Denmark and Sweden the largest socialist parties (in Denmark the Social Democrats (SD) and in Sweden the Social Democrats (SSA)) have managed to maintain a continued presence in the set of potential government leaders over the five decades. In other countries, where the choice available to voters has changed, the largest socialist party has remained at the top of the party system: in Belgium (BSP/PSB), in the Netherlands (PvdA), in Norway (DNA) as well as the communist party in Italy (PCI/PDS). In Finland, the Social Democrats (SSP) have been almost ever present in the set of potential leaders of Finnish governments. The one occasion when they failed to do so was after the 1962 election when they controlled the third largest share of the seats in the *Eduskunta*, the Finnish Parliament. As well as being almost ever present in the set of potential leaders of government, the Social Democrats (SSP) have been almost ever present in Finnish governments that take office after each election. They have been absent from two of the 14 Finnish governments formed after an election (1962 and 1991).¹⁷

Up until the late 1970s, the socialist parties in Denmark and Sweden had been successful at winning access to the office of prime minister. In Sweden, the Social Democrats (SSA) more or less governed alone for the first three post-war decades. However, in 1976, the three parties that had at one time or another controlled the second largest share of seats in parliament came together to form a coalition. Since then, the Social Democrats (SSA) have managed to lead five of eight post-election governments. Their counterparts in Denmark have not been quite so successful. Up until 1982, the Social Democrats (SD) were only out of office for short periods. However, from 1982 until 1994 not only did they fail to lead government, they also found themselves locked out of government office by a coalition of conservative, confessional, liberal and centre parties.

¹⁷ I exclude the four-month non-party government formed in April 1958 and the two-month government of experts formed in May 1970. A government containing the Social Democrats (SSP) replaced each of these governments.

1.3.4 Chapter Outline

So far two points are clear. First, the vast majority of prime ministers that take office after an election are members of parties controlling at least the second largest share of seats in the legislature. The choice of alternative leaders of government available to voters is between the two largest parties in the national legislature. Second, despite all of the competition in multi-party elections, only a few changes have occurred in the set of potential leaders of government. From one election to the next, the choice available to voters has remained more or less the same. Yet, the evidence also suggests that while party systems are stable, this stability has not become so institutionalised as to rule out change. Change has occurred, suggesting that party systems are responsive to democratic competition. In some countries, the choice available to voters has changed on more than one occasion. The purpose of this thesis is to examine stability and change in the choice of potential government leaders available to voters.

In the next chapter, I examine in more detail explanations of party system stability and change. In developing my understanding of party system stability and change I build on the work of other scholars. For the most part these scholars have focused on electoral instability and this is reflected in Chapter 2. However, my interest is in shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties and in the composition of the set of leading parties. While earlier work guides the development of my explanation, a new set of hypotheses that I test need to be outlined and explained. The purpose of Chapter 3 is to outline and explain the hypotheses that I test in later chapters. Before I test each of the explanations empirically, in Chapter 4 I outline how I operationalise each of the variables identified in the hypotheses. I test each of the explanations in the remaining chapters. In Chapter 5, I begin by examining the electoral evidence of whether or not the strong parties have protected their vote. Then I examine the impact of this form of party system stability and change on the choice of potential leaders of government that are available to voters. In Chapter 6, I focus on the relationship between party system change and stability and change in the distribution of voters' preferences. More specifically, I examine the impact on the party system of changes in the proportion of people who feel close to a political party and the changes in the willingness of voters to participate in elections. In Chapter 7, I examine the relationship between the party system and the institutional and systemic

contexts that frame voter choice. In particular, I focus on the proportionality of the electoral rules, changes in the electoral rules, the fragmentation of the party system and changes in the number of parties. In Chapter 8, I examine the relationship between the party system and the actions of the leading parties. In particular, I focus on the changes these parties have made to their policy positions. In examining this relationship I consider two competing approaches to policy change: policy changes relative to the positions of the median voter and policy changes relative to the long-term policy positions of each leading party. Finally, in Chapter 9, I examine the impact of each of these explanations on party system stability and change when they are included in the same model. The final chapter, Chapter 10, outlines my conclusions and future approaches for examining why the set of potential government leaders is so stable.

Chapter 2

Explanations of Party System Stability and Change

2.1 Introduction

Electoral instability in the 1970s prompted a debate about whether or not democratic politics was witnessing a period of fundamental transformation and an exploration of the causes of electoral instability. Increased numbers of parties contesting elections and instability in voting patterns led some such as Dalton et al (1984, p.451) to conclude that 'virtually everywhere among the industrialised democracies, the old order is changing'. In order to examine these changes a variety of explanations were considered. As Wolinetz (1988, p.300) notes the 'durability of party systems depends on multiple sources of stability: voter loyalties, the ability of parties to adapt, organisational resources, and institutional constraints such as electoral laws'. The purpose of this chapter is to outline these explanations and how they contribute to understanding party system stability and change. In a sense, these three explanations form the three pillars of the electoral decision: the voters, the context of the electoral decision and the political parties.

I begin in Section 2.2 by considering Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) argument that party systems are frozen around social and political cleavages. Bartolini and Mair (1990) provide electoral evidence to support the contention that party systems are frozen around a class-cleavage. This explanation goes some way towards explaining stability in terms of the set of leading parties: the set of potential leaders of government contains a party from each side of the salient cleavage in the party system. However, it does not explain why the same party on each side of this divide should continue to be the strongest party.

The first explanation that I consider, in Section 2.3, focuses on the distribution of the electorate's partisan preferences. Party systems will be stable as long as the distribution of these predispositions remains more or less constant. However, once this distribution begins to change, so too will the electoral support for the various

competing parties (Beck, 1979; Smith, 1989; Inglehart, 1977 and 1990; Franklin et al, 1992; Dalton, 1996; Crewe and Thomson, 1999). The impact of these changes on party systems has been noted in terms of the emergence of new parties (Knutsen, 1990; Kitschelt and Hellemans, 1990) as well as evidence of electoral instability (Rose and Unwin, 1970; Maguire, 1983; Pedersen, 1979 and 1983). However, there is some debate about the significance of the impact of these changes on party systems (Shamir, 1984; Mair, 1993). In terms of estimating changes in the distribution of voters' preferences I consider two measures, party identification and electoral participation. Changes in both of these measures are associated with electoral instability.

In Section 2.4, I turn my attention to the relationship between the party system and the institutional and systemic context of elections. The electoral rules and the number of parties help to frame voter choice and the willingness of voters to alter their votes (Bartolini and Mair, 1990). When considering the relationship between the context of an election and the party system, it is also important to keep in mind that the number of parties, as well as change in the number of parties, is influenced by the proportionality of the electoral rules (Duverger, 1964; Sartori, 1986; Riker, 1986; Katz, 1980; Cox, 1997).

In Section 2.5, I consider my final explanation. Political parties are not passive actors, that is, they are not just affected by their environment but can act to enhance their own positions in the party system (Schlesinger, 1984; Panebianco, 1988; Mair, 1993). Over time, the roles and organisational structures of political parties have changed (Duverger, 1964; Kirchheimer, 1966; Katz and Mair, 1995), and these changes have contributed to, and later undermined, electoral stability (Mair, 1990). Changing roles and organisational structures are long-term factors, but in the short-term, from election to election, political parties can alter their policy positions. In examining the question of policy change two alternative approaches can be taken. The first is based on Downs' model and considers the electoral consequences of parties' converging on, and diverging from, the positions of the median voters. The second is based on salience theory and argues that parties will benefit if they emphasise particular issues but will suffer if they emphasis other issues (Robertson, 1976; Budge and Farlie, 1977; Budge, 1987; Budge and Bara, 2001). In order to improve their electoral positions, parties focus not only on their own policy positions (Budge, 1994; Janda et al., 1995; Finegold and Swift, 2001) but some may also consider what can be

learnt about the policy preferences of voters by considering the policy images of smaller parties (Fisher, 1980; Herzog, 1987; Rosenstone et al., 1996).

2.2 Social and Political Cleavages

One approach to understanding party system stability and change is to consider the social and political cleavages that structure political competition. Lipset and Rokkan (1967, p.50) observe that not only are the major party alternatives available to voters ‘frozen’, many of the political parties that voters choose between ‘are older than the majorities of the national electorates’.

In order to test the ‘freezing hypothesis’ Bartolini and Mair (1990) focus on the class-cleavage. In testing the ‘freezing hypothesis’, Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.63) question the appropriateness of methodologies that measure aggregate electoral trends or focus on the electoral experiences of individual parties. As Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.63) point-out: ‘there is little to suggest that the Lipset-Rokkan theory can be tied so explicitly to the fortunes of individual parties’. Instead, attention should focus on a dimension of competition that highlights an important distinction between ‘the individual party organisations, on the one hand, and the organised expression of cleavage, on the other, with the latter capable of incorporating more than one party’ (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.64). The method they use involves dividing the competing political parties into two sets, or blocks, of parties: ‘left-wing’ parties and ‘right-wing’ parties. They then measure electoral interchange between these two sets of parties, that is, class-cleavage volatility. This is to establish whether ‘left-wing’ parties lose vote share to ‘right wing’ parties, and vice versa.

What Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.289) find is a decline in the mean levels of class-cleavage volatility, that is, electoral interchange between the two sets of parties. They note that this decline in class-cleavage volatility began in the 1920s, ‘the period from which Rokkan dated the onset of the freezing process’ (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.289). Moreover, Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.289; their emphasis) also find ‘a distinct tendency for cross-class cleavage mobility to decline *as a component of total volatility*’. In other words, electoral interchange between the sets of parties accounts for a smaller proportion of overall electoral instability in the party system. This

suggests that electoral instability is a consequence of political competition along dimensions other than the class-cleavage.

As I note in Chapter 1, the ‘freezing hypothesis’ goes some way towards explaining the stability of the set of potential leaders of government. The evidence that there is little electoral interchange between ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ blocks of parties suggests that political competition is frozen along the class-cleavage. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that the set of potential leaders of government will include a large ‘left-wing’ party and a large ‘right-wing’ party. Indeed, the sets of potential government leaders are generally some combination of Socialist/Social Democrat and either Conservative, Liberal, Christian Democrat, or Centre Party/Agrarian (as outlined in Tables 1.2a and 1.2b in Chapter 1).¹

Furthermore, the change that occurs in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government supports the view that the set contains parties from both sides of the salient cleavage in the party system. The socialist parties that are part of the set of leading parties have retained their place at the top of the party system in all but one case. When the choice of potential leaders of government does change, it generally occurs on one side of Bartolini and Mair’s (1990) class-cleavage, amongst the non-socialist parties. In all but one case, a conservative/centrist party loses its place in the set of leading parties to another conservative/centrist party. As I note in Chapter 1, the one exception is the 1966 Finnish election when the Centre Party (SK) replaced the leading socialist party, Social Democrats (SSP), in the set of leading parties.

The ‘freezing hypothesis’ provides support for the idea that there are two leading parties (i.e., reflecting the binary nature of the divide along the salient cleavage). However, while the ‘freezing hypothesis’ may indicate that the choice of alternative leaders of government will include one from each side of the salient cleavage, it does not explain electoral interchange between the parties that constitute each set of parties.

What I suggest is that there is competition within each of the sets of parties that represent the cleavage divide to be the largest party. From the ‘left-right’ perspective, there is competition to be the largest party within each of set of parties. The largest ‘left-wing’ party competes with the other parties in the ‘left-wing’ block to remain the largest party of the ‘left’ and to retain its position at the head of the

¹ In Ireland, a Christian Democrat party and a Conservative party have controlled the two largest shares of seats in the Dáil. In Finland and Italy, Communist parties have controlled one of the two largest shares of seats.

party system. The largest 'right-wing' party does likewise with the parties of the 'right'. The purpose of the rest of this chapter is to outline three explanations of electoral instability. In the next chapter I apply these explanations to shifts in support for the set of potential leaders of government.

2.3 The Distribution of Voters' Preferences

I begin by focusing on those who do the choosing, the voters. When the distribution of voters' preferences change it is reasonable to expect that this will result in electoral instability and even change in the set of leading parties. In this section, I begin by making some general observations about the relationship between voters' preferences and party system stability and change. Then I turn my attention to evidence of electoral instability and two measures of change in the distribution of voters' preferences (i.e., change in party identification and change in electoral participation).

2.3.1 Dealignment and Realignment

Smith (1989, p.48) argues that party systems and political parties exhibit continuity and resilience to change. He suggests that this 'inertia' is the result of party and voter traditions and that political parties foster 'voter tradition'. Over time these traditions became established in certain sections of the electorate, and were passed on from one generation to the next. Beck (1979, p.130) argues that when the prevailing cleavages are dominant there is a period of stability and 'little variability in the partisan division of the electorate and little alteration in the basis of enduring support for either party'.

While 'inertia' is difficult to break, a period of stability may come to an end when 'voter traditions' become less salient, when the prevailing cleavages are no longer relevant to a large number of voters, when new cleavages emerge or when existing cleavages become more salient. In more recent decades, the salience of class- and religious-voting has declined. Franklin et al. (1992, p.385) observe that there has been a decline 'in the ability of social cleavages to structure individual choice'. Instead, there has been a shift towards short-term factors (Dalton, 2002, p.202)

including voters' assessments of past performance-future expectations of a party in government (Fiorina, 1981), party leaders (Bean and Mughan, 1989), candidates (Page and Jones, 1979; MacKuen et al., 1989; Weisberg and Smith., 1991) and issues (the salience of which is often temporary) (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989). Furthermore, Inglehart (1977 and 1990) identifies a new conflict: between people who hold materialist and post-materialist values.² For Inglehart (1984, p.26), Lipset and Rokkan's political alignments 'no longer reflect the forces most likely to mobilize people to become political active'. This new cleavage is associated with issues the traditional cleavages fail to account for: quality of the environment, alternative lifestyles and minority rights (Inglehart, 1977, 1990; Poguntke, 1987, p.77; Muller-Rommel, 1989, pp115-116; Dalton, 1996, p.153).

According to Beck (1979, p.130) these changes can bring about a period of dealignment (an opening up of the 'electoral market') and a greater willingness of voters to shift their allegiances from one party to another: 'party loyalties decline and independence becomes more common'. This period of dealignment continues until either a new 'cleavage line' becomes salient or the old one is reinforced (Beck, 1979, p.130). Knutsen (1990, p.259) argues that the emergence of a materialist – post-materialist dimension will result, firstly, in party system dealignment, and then, in a realignment of the party system by contributing to: 'ideological reorientations of party profiles, the creation of new parties, and a new political space that is oriented towards placement of voters, social groups and parties along the MPM-dimension'.

Dealignment is generally seen as part of a process of party system realignment.³ Realignment occurs as voters' policy preferences shift. It is accompanied by a shift in the social and ideological basis of party support that may alter the balance of support between the parties: 'the sources of party support in the electorate undergo substantial change, and, usually, but not necessarily, the party balance of power is altered as well' (Beck, 1979, p.130). For Crewe and Thomson

² Inglehart (1977, p.182) argues that post-war affluence in much of the developed world, combined with a relative absence of war, has had a profound effect on a wide range of public attitudes. The ambitions and priorities of younger generations, for themselves and their societies, are expected to be different because unlike earlier generations they could take relative economic well-being and physical security for granted. The post-materialism thesis proposes that a consequence of this is a shift away from the materialist concerns of pre-industrial and industrial societies (that is, support for the established order through the maintenance of law and order and the preservation of economic gains) towards post-materialist values (that is, greater emphasis on individual self-expression, greater participation in decision-making, freedom and quality of life).

³ Beck (1979, pp129-156) argues that dealignment is one aspect of a cyclical recurrence of 'three electoral periods': stability, dealignment and realignment.

(1999, p.65) their idea of a 'critical realigning election' (or series of elections) is one that results in a lasting change in the levels of support for the main parties.

For instance, in Sweden, class voting is now held to have a weaker influence on electoral behaviour than it once had. By the early 1990s, farmers accounted for only 16 percent of Centre Party's (C) support and the working class for 52 percent of the Social Democrats' (SSA) support (as compared with 74 percent in 1956) (Arter, 1999, p.144). Increased secularisation also contributes to increased electoral instability. While the dramatic dealignment of the party system in Italy in the 1990s is associated with events at that time (i.e., judicial inquiries into corruption and a new electoral system), pressures had built-up in earlier decades. In particular, increased secularisation, the weakening of the church organisation and the decline in the salience of anti-communism, weakened support for the Christian Democrats' (DC/PPI) (Bartolini and D'Alimento, 1996, pp108-109; Daniels, 1999, p.76). Class-based parties also face a more general problem. According to Napel (1999, p.179), the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) has 'been so successful in achieving their original political goals that they have, in a sense, become a party without a 'heartland'. The old working class has virtually disappeared'⁴.

2.3.2 The Emergence of New Political Parties

The development of new parties in Europe is in part associated with the emergence of new issues onto the political agenda. Kitschelt and Hellemans (1990, pp210-211) note that a new cohort of political parties emerged initially under a 'left socialist' label in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, and later under 'ecologists' and 'greens' labels in Austria, Belgium and West Germany. According to Muller-Rommel (1989, p.121) the emergence of the Green Party in Germany served as a 'political vehicle for those voters who are discontented and whose grievances have been ignored by the established parties'. The emergence of these 'New Left' parties and post-materialist libertarianism produced a reaction that resulted in the establishment of 'New Right' parties and a call for rigid moral standards (Clarke and Kronberg, 1996; Ignazi, 1996; Minkenberg, 1992). For instance, in Italy, the successful emergence of the regional leagues is associated with the increased salience of an older conflict between north

⁴ That said, Napel (1999, p.179) goes on to note that 'because of technological developments (with the advent of 'the information age'), new forms of inequality are already emerging'.

and south (Bartolini and D'Alimonte, 1996, pp108-109; Daniels, 1999, p.76). In Austria, Luther (1999, pp130-132) notes that a 'process of depillarisation' eventually contributed to both the entry of the Green Alternative (DGA) into the *Nationalrat*, and the revitalisation of the Freedom Party (FPÖ) under the leadership of Mr. Haider.

However, the effect of these changes, and in particular the emergence of new parties, on the largest parties is limited. Mair (1993) remains unconvinced about the impact new parties have had on support for the older parties. Despite these challenges, the older parties have proven themselves resilient. Mair (1993, p.126) notes that the average vote share of those parties that contested elections in the 1960s and in the 1980s/early 1990s, fell from 95 percent to 84 percent. For Mair (1993, p.126) an average net loss of eleven per cent 'can hardly be considered earth-shattering'. Moreover, these parties are not only holding their own in terms of the percentage of the vote they win but are also doing so in terms of the absolute number of votes in expanded electorates (Mair, 1993, pp126-127). Minkenberg (1992) and Poguntke (1987) are not convinced about the degree to which the emergence of a materialist – post-materialist cleavage has had on the party system. Minkenberg, (1992, p.61) notes that the challenge by New Politics does not in any sense imply that the Old Politics dimensions have disappeared. Instead, as Poguntke (1987, p.79) notes, their challenge suggests that there exists 'a considerable and resourceful minority [that] can not be adequately represented by the established political forces'.

2.3.3 Evidence of Electoral Instability

Rose and Urwin (1970, p.295) conclude that 'the electoral strength of most parties in Western nations since the war had changed very little from election to election, from decade to decade, or within the lifespan of a generation'⁵. However, Maguire (1983) and Pedersen (1979 and 1983) argue that there is some evidence of electoral instability. Replicating the Rose and Urwin study, Maguire (1983, p.92) concludes 'the electoral stability that characterized the European party systems for much of the post-war period has recently [1960-1979] given way to a situation of greater change and instability'. Pedersen (1979 and 1983) also concludes that 'the distribution of

⁵ For the period 1945-1969, Rose and Urwin (1970, p.289) examined aggregate vote for each party at general elections in 19 countries using a number of indices of change (measures of trends and of fluctuation).

electoral strength in several countries has changed in unpredictable ways⁶ (Pedersen, 1983, p.35). However, not everyone agrees that European electorates in the 1970s and 1980s had become more volatile than they once were.

Mair (1993, p.123) argues that the ‘image of electoral change is largely mythical... lacking in foundation, bearing little or no relation to the actual patterns of electoral alignments in contemporary Europe’. For Mair (1993, p.124), there is no evidence of a European-wide trend towards electoral instability: ‘the average level of aggregate volatility in the period from 1945 to 1989 is just 8.7...And this, in turn, means that there has been a net aggregate stability of 91 percent⁷. Mair (1993, p.124; his emphasis) goes on to note that ‘this average level of volatility is actually *lower* than that reached in the inter-war period, when everybody agrees that the party systems became frozen, and when average volatility was 9.9’. Similarly, Shamir (1984, p.36), using data from elections before World War II, argues ‘that most party systems have never been frozen’. Shamir (1984, p.69) concludes that: ‘instability levels in terms of the political party units and their strength are substantial in all systems, at least in some elections’.

2.3.4 Change in Party Identification

Party identification is one type of ‘voter tradition’ held to pass from one generation to the next. In *The American Voter*, Campbell et al. (1960) intend ‘party identification’ as a measure of people’s predisposition toward political parties independent of their current vote.⁸ Campbell et al (1993 [1960], p.231 and p.232) and Miller (1976, p.22) argue that people acquire party identification from their parents, as part of a process of political socialisation. That said, people can identify with a particular party yet be ‘without a consistent record of party support’ (Campbell, 1993 [1960], p.224). In

⁶ Pedersen examined elections in 13 European nations for the period 1945-1977. He identifies two sub-groups of countries in which the party system has experienced a lot of change. The first sub-group contains the German and French party systems in which volatility has decreased considerably. The second contains the Danish and Norwegian party systems in which volatility has increased. The rest of the party systems that he analysed are divided into a group where volatility has decreased slightly (Austria, Belgium, Ireland and Italy) and another group in which volatility has increased slightly (Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands) (Pedersen, 1983, pp34-41).

⁷ Mair (1993, p.124) accepts that there is evidence of increased volatility in countries such as Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands and Norway, but this does not make a European trend towards more volatile electorates as other countries, France, Germany, Ireland and Italy, have become less volatile over time.

⁸ The political party serves ‘as a group toward which the individual may develop an identification, positive or negative, of some degree of intensity’ (Campbell et al, 1993 [1960], p.224).

order to account for this Converse (1966, p.14) proposes the concept of the 'normal vote'. The vote cast is split into two component parts. The first is a long-term component that is stable over substantial periods of time and reflects the distribution of underlying party loyalties. The second is a short-term component that includes 'forces associated with peculiarities' of the particular election.

However, others question the stability of the long-term component of the 'normal vote'. Nie et al (1979 [1976]) observe in *The Changing American Voter* that partisanship was declining among voters. Fiorina (1981, p.102; Fiorina's emphasis) concludes that while 'there is an inertial element in voting behavior that cannot be ignored, but that inertial element has an experiential basis; it is *not* something learned at mommy's knee and never questioned thereafter'. Fiorina's approach, while noting that there is a large degree of continuity in party evaluations, alters the static view of party identification. It is instead a 'running tally' that responds to new information about political and economic events.⁹ Flanagan and Dalton (1984, pp16-17) challenge the continuing relevance of party identification. They argue that trends associated with post-industrialism¹⁰ 'have made long-standing party attachments less reliable guides' (Flanagan and Dalton, 1984, p.16). However, Reiter (1993, p.100) finds that those classified as 'post-materialists', or who support 'New Politics' parties, identify with political parties. Not only do they identify with political parties but 'those more closely attuned to the new agenda were stronger, not weaker, partisans than those less attracted to the new agenda' (Reiter, 1993, p.100). The reason Reiter (1993, p.100 and p.102; Reiter's emphasis) offers for this is 'the activist will more often than not seek *both* a social movement to advocate particular issues or ideologies *as well as* a party to carry those goals on a 'march through the institutions' ... presumably post-materialists were especially strong partisans when they could find a party that reflected their orientations'.

A decline in the proportion of people who identify with political parties is seen as evidence of dealignment in the party system. Poguntke (1996, p.326) argues 'declining party identification...is a likely result of an increasing distance between

⁹ Markus and Converse (1979) suggest that partisanship is, to some degree, influenced by past voting behaviour. Others such as Allsop and Weisberg (1988) argue that partisanship is subject to short-term events while Page and Jones (1979) note that voter choice is influenced by evaluation of presidential candidates. MacKuen et al (1989) and Weisberg et al (1991) argue that there is a macro-level relationship between party identification and short-term factors such as presidential approval (but their data is criticised by Abramson and Ostrom (1991)). Norpoth and Rusk (1982) argue that decline in partisanship is a consequence of period effects and in particular the impact of events on 'new voters'.

¹⁰ Rising levels of education and the consequent increased voter sophistication, greater focus on narrow issues rather than broad cleavage based issues.

parties and their electorates'. Mair (1984, p.176) suggests that 'a declining role for party will be directly visible in declining rates of Party Identification or, at least, in a declining intensity in the degree to which partisan loyalists continue to identify. Parties cannot all lose votes at the same time, but they can all lose identifiers'.

Schmett and Holmberg (1995, p.100) argue that declining partisanship 'is equivalent to the dwindling of the stabilizing elements in electoral behaviour. When partisanship is declining, electoral volatility is likely to increase'. Ignazi (1996, p.550) argues that declining levels of party identification are likely to result in increased levels of volatility because:

'people are less attached to a specific party and more independent of emotional or affective bonds in their evaluations of past party performance and in their confidence about future performance. Voters no longer sign a blank cheque...citizens are now freer to move from one party to another; switching party allegiances is less and less a traumatic experience. One can go back and forth without the sense of treason and guilt once associated with abandoning previous political allegiances'.

The experience of the Progressive Conservatives in Canada offers a salutary lesson for parties that are experiencing a decline in partisan identifiers. As Clarke and Kornberg (1996, pp470-471) conclude: 'the 1993 Canadian national election demonstrates that long-lived governing and opposition parties in a contemporary western democracy characterized by substantial partisan dealignment can experience rapid, extremely traumatic reversals of fortune'. However, as Poguntke (1996, p.326) reminds us, declining partisanship does not mean that voters are in all cases motivated by 'conscious disaffection with, or even rejection of, parties', they may simply not feel very close to a party. The impact on voting behaviour of voters not feeling very close to a party is that 'such individuals may consider several parties in a given party system as potential electoral choices' (Poguntke, 1996, p.326). If voters are willing to consider several parties, then over a number of elections they are likely to switch their vote from one party to another.

2.3.5 Change in Electoral Participation

As Topf (1995, p.27) states national elections 'are powerful symbols of the democratic legitimacy of a nation-state'. However, not all citizens who are registered to vote in an election actually do so, even in those systems where voting is compulsory. From one election to the next, the number of people who are willing to cast their ballot papers changes. Dittrich and Johansen (1983, pp97-99) find that there is no single pattern across Europe. For the period 1945 – 1978, they note that there has been an increase in electoral participation in Sweden, Germany, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Italy and Ireland, but a decrease in turnout in electoral participation in Belgium, Austria, the UK and the Netherlands.

When it comes to interpreting what changes in turnout mean there are two conflicting views about non-participation. The first argues that low turnout implies that the members of the electorate are satisfied with the way things are going while high levels of turnout suggest that there are high levels of political conflict within the society. This view is based on Lipset's (1960, p.185) argument that 'non-voting is now, at least in Western democracies, a reflection of the stability of the system'. However, the Lipset argument is not universally accepted. As Dittrich and Johansen (1983, p.95) note, Key has argued that significant levels of non-voting implies that certain groups are under-represented in government, particularly those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. From this point of view declining levels of electoral participation are associated with increasing levels of dissatisfaction with, and alienation from, the political system, while increasing levels suggest growing satisfaction with politics in a particular society. Moreover, Poguntke's (1996, p.328) states that: 'declining turnout figures in countries with a tradition of high levels of electoral participation may legitimately be interpreted as signalling a declining approval of political parties, or even of the political system at large'.

Bartolini and Mair (1990) examine the impact of change in electoral participation on electoral stability. They concluded that there is a non-linear relationship between changes in electoral participation and electoral volatility. That is, large changes in electoral participation, whether increases or decreases, contribute to electoral volatility by altering the distribution of voters' preferences. Such changes in turnout are unlikely to have a proportional effect on support for all parties. Some parties will benefit more than other parties when electoral participation changes.

Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.176) argue that an increase in turnout 'will have a discernible impact on volatility levels only in the relatively extreme cases, that is only in cases where former non-voters add substantially to the pre-existing active electorate'. On the other hand, a decline in turnout is 'likely to reflect the sort of shock to the party system that might also be reflected in a high level of volatility' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.177).

There is evidence that differential turnout impacts on support for particular parties. Yet, it is unclear as to which types of party gain, or lose, from the electoral instability that results from changes in electoral participation. Some argue that, because individuals who have 'left-wing' preferences tend to be less likely to vote than those who prefer parties to the right, the vote share of socialist and left wing parties might increase if more people voted (Lijphart, 1997). While increased turnout does not always result in increased support for 'left wing' parties, Pacek and Radcliff (1995) find that in advanced industrial countries the share of the vote won by 'left wing' parties is increasing with voter turnout. However, Bernhagen and Marsh (2004, p.25), who impute the vote choices of non-voters, find 'no evidence for either left, right, or centre parties gaining from full turnout scenarios'. Instead they find that non-governing parties and smaller parties gain from full turnout. Their finding challenges Leithner's (1990, p.10) conclusion that there is a negative relationship between voter turnout and voting for one of the smaller parties. When fewer voters turn out to vote, the smaller parties win a larger percentage of the vote than is the case when more voters cast ballots.

2.4 The Institutional and Systemic Contexts of Elections

As well as considering changes in the distribution of voters' preferences, I also consider the context in which they make their choices. I expect that the willingness of voters to switch support between parties that are potential leaders of government and other parties will in part be influenced by the institutional and systemic context of the electoral choice. That is, I posit that the electoral rules and the number of parties will have an influence on electoral instability and change in the composition of the set of leading parties.

In examining the impact of differences between electoral systems on electoral instability, Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.151) assume that ‘the different formulae constrain voting behaviour in different ways’. As such then, these constraints help to frame voter choice. Moreover, by framing voters’ choices, Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.151) argue that electoral rules are ‘likely to impact on the voters’ propensity to change their partisan preferences’. When it comes to deciding how to vote, the decision is ‘not merely a function of partisan dispositions, but also includes a strategic or tactical element, the relative strength of which will vary according to the different electoral formulae’ (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.151). Voters do not simply base their choice on their preferences, but also have to take into account the potential of their vote being wasted.

The number of parties, and change in the number of parties, is also likely to affect electoral stability. The number of parties in the party system determines the range of choice voters have available to them. Changes in the number of parties means that voters will have a wider choice available to them, when the number of parties increases, or that their choice will become more restricted, when the number of parties decreases.

2.4.1 Electoral Instability and the Institutional Context of the Electoral Decision

Electoral rules differ in terms of the proportionality of the outcomes they produce. The single-member plurality system pays no heed to the proportional allocation of seats to votes. Under these rules, the candidate with the most votes wins the one available seat in the constituency. These rules bias the allocation of seats such that the ‘strong’ are over-represented and the ‘weak’ are under-represented (Sartori, 1994, p.54; Lijphart, 1984, p.150; Cox, 1997, p.56).¹¹

The purpose of the introduction of proportional-representation (PR) electoral formulae with multi-member districts was ‘to achieve greater proportionality and better minority representation than the earlier majoritarian electoral methods had produced’ (Lijphart, 1994, p.10). However, PR formulae are not free from bias. As Rae (1971, p.88) notes:

¹¹ Schattschneider (1942, p.75 quoted in Riker, 1986, p.26) states that single-member plurality systems: ‘discriminate moderately against the second party; but against the third, fourth, and fifth parties the force of this tendency is multiplied to the point of extinguishing their chances of winning seats altogether.’

‘virtually all electoral systems work to the disadvantage of weak parties. The stronger parties usually receive more than proportional shares of seats while weaker parties obtain less than proportionate shares. The extent of this bias varies with electoral formulae’.¹²

However, in considering the proportionality of electoral rules I do not simply focus on the electoral formula. I also take into account district magnitude (i.e., the number of representatives elected from each constituency). Katz (1980, p.21) argues that the relationship between the proportionality of election results and electoral formulae ‘is spurious, resulting rather from the fact that plurality election generally takes place in single-member districts while PR requires multimember districts’.¹³

With regard to the relationship between electoral instability and the institutional context, Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.152) posit that ‘when the constraints imposed on voting choice are stronger and more perceptible, the level of electoral volatility will be higher’. When Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.156) compare mean levels of overall electoral instability under majoritarian and PR rules they find that the data confirms the hypothesis ‘but not wholly convincingly’. When they utilise a continuous measure of the proportionality of the electoral outcome, they find that generally ‘as elections become more disproportional mean volatility tends to increase’ (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.164).

The explanation that Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.151) offer for this is that electoral systems that produce proportional outcomes ‘may allow for the almost exclusive dominance of partisan predispositions’. As long as voters’ preferences remain more or less constant there is little reason to expect electoral instability. From one election to the next, voters will continue to vote for their most preferred party. However, under electoral rules that produce disproportional outcomes, voters ‘may accord much greater weight to tactical decisions, with voters rejecting a potentially

¹² The variation in the proportionality of PR formulae is a consequence of how proportionality is defined: ‘what each PR formula does is to define proportionality in a particular way, and it then allocates seats to parties so as to maximize proportionality on the basis of its particular definition’ (Lijphart, 1994, p.62).

¹³ Similarly, Lijphart (1994, p.11) outlines that ‘in PR systems, proportionality- and chances for small parties to gain representation- are necessarily very limited when there are only two or three representatives per district, but increase dramatically when magnitude increases’. The proportionality of the electoral system is influenced by district magnitudes: the more seats there are available to be won in a district the greater the degree of proportionality (Rae, 1971, pp19-22; Lijphart, 1984, p.154 and 1994, pp10-11; Cox, 1997, p.56).

losing but preferred party in favour of a potentially winning but still acceptable alternative' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, pp151-152). In many constituencies, where a third party has little chance of winning, voters vote strategically by opting for a less preferred party that has a better chance of winning than their preferred party (Cain, 1978, p.640).¹⁴ That said, from election to election, 'the viability or plausibility of a third party may also change dramatically from one election to the next, and so induce a further element in the promotion of electoral instability' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.155). In plurality systems, another source of electoral instability is the strength of the two largest parties. The strength of these two parties means that there is a strong sense of retrospective voting. The two parties are 'judged on their record in government and in the light of the evident alternative available in the form of an identifiable opposition' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.155).

A second aspect of the relationship between electoral instability and institutions is change in the electoral rules. The hypothesis that Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.152) test is that 'higher levels of volatility will also be associated with sudden changes in the prevailing electoral formula'.¹⁵ Their analysis indicates that the mean volatility in the elections where major changes to the electoral rules were introduced 'is some 66 per cent higher than in the remaining cases [no change to electoral system]' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.153).

Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.152) argue that 'major changes in the electoral system will clearly affect the structure of opportunity available to electors'. The

¹⁴ That said, in the UK, Labour and the Conservatives do not dominate all constituencies. The Liberal Democrats, as well as smaller nationalist parties, do win seats. Rae (1971), Katz (1980) and Riker (1986) attribute their success to the concentration of support for the third party in particular constituencies. Rae (1971, p.95) reformulated Duverger's law to take into account parties that had strong support in particular regions: 'plurality formulae are always associated with two-party competition except where strong local minority parties exist'. Similarly, Katz (1980, p.115) notes that the simple-majority single ballot system favours a two party system not at the national level but rather at district level. Riker (1986, p.33) reformulates Rae's version further:

'plurality election rules bring about and maintain two-party competition, except in countries where third parties nationally are continually one of two parties locally and except for countries where one party among several is almost always the Condorcet winner in elections'.

Riker (1986, p.34) notes that third parties survive in plurality systems because of constituency conditions. A party may be small in national terms but one of two large parties locally.

¹⁵ In order to test this hypothesis, Bartolini and Mair (1990, pp152-153) compare elections that involve a major change to the electoral rules (i.e., changes that are likely to have been perceived by voters) with those where the rules remain the same. The changes that Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.153) consider include the introduction of proportional representation, attempts to reduce the proportionality of the proportional formulae, the re-introduction of a majoritarian system following a period of proportional representation, the abolition of compulsory voting, changes to the electoral threshold and the replacement of indirect voting by direct voting in Norway in 1906.

reason for electoral instability may be that change in the electoral rules reduces the constraints on voter choice (e.g., a switch to a more proportional electoral formulae or an increase in district magnitudes) or increases them (e.g., the introduction of legal electoral thresholds). In particular cases, the abolition of compulsory voting or a change in the age of enfranchisement may result in increased levels of electoral instability. The removal of the legal compulsion to vote may result in increased instability because voters who previously had voted abstain and this is likely to alter the distribution of voters' preferences. Increased electoral volatility may also result from a reduction in the age at which voters can first vote because the introduction of a new age cohort into the electorate may also alter the distribution of preferences.

2.4.2 Electoral Instability and the Systemic Context of the Electoral Decision

There is also evidence that electoral instability is also a consequence of the number of parties in the party system. The argument that Pedersen (1983, pp45-47) presents is that the more parties there are in a party system the closer they are in terms of policy. This implies that, from one election to the next, voters will be willing to transfer their support from one party to another. In other words, the more parties there are the more difficult it will be for voters to differentiate between them.

Pedersen (1983, pp50-51) finds that 'the higher the number of parties contesting the election, the higher the electoral volatility...[and] Increases as well as decreases in the number of parties lead to high volatility'. Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.138) also conclude that in general the number of parties 'contributes significantly to explaining differences in the levels of electoral instability. The more fragmented the system, the more likely it is to experience a high level of volatility'. They also note that the association between party system fragmentation and high levels of electoral instability is particularly marked in the post-war period. Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.137) propose two reasons as to why this might be so. The 'more substantive' of these relates to 'party-system structuration'.¹⁶ Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.137) suggest that, over time, there will be a weakening in the impact of those factors

¹⁶ The first reason that Bartolini and Mair (1990, pp136-137) offer relates to the increase in the number of competing parties and change in these numbers. They argue that if early elections were characterised by competition between two dominant parties then the number of parties is unlikely to be related to electoral volatility. However, as the number of competing parties began to change then the potential for an association between numbers and volatility may have increased.

associated with the formation of the party system (e.g. enfranchisement, electoral growth of new parties, institutional changes). As the influences of these factors declines, the impact of systemic factors (e.g. the number of parties) will become more apparent.¹⁷

2.4.3 *Electoral Instability and the Relationship Between the Institutional and Systemic Contexts of the Electoral Decision*

As has been outlined there is evidence that differences in both the proportionality of the electoral rules and the number of competing parties contribute to our understanding of different levels of electoral instability. However, the proportionality of the electoral rules and the number of competing parties are not independent of each other.¹⁸ In particular, Duverger (1964, p.249) sees proportional representation formulae as having a 'multiplicative effect' on the number of contesting parties in a political system. Sartori (1986, p.62) criticises these conclusions arguing that the

¹⁷ The argument that Bartolini and Mair (1990, pp137-138; their emphasis) present is that: 'the volatility in the early phases [1885-1917 and 1918-1944] may largely result from a process of party-system formation which almost wholly smothers the impact exerted by specific systemic factors. Thus, it is likely that when such systemic factors prove relatively strong in the final phase [1966-85] it is not because they become more important in absolute terms, but rather because their relative impact is enhanced by the waning of other, more formative factors'.

¹⁸ For Duverger, the relationship between the electoral system and the party system was so strong that it prompted him to suggest that it approached 'a true sociological law'. Duverger (1964, p.217; Duverger's emphasis) concludes that '*the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system*'. In what he refers to as a 'hypothesis', Duverger (1964, p.239; Duverger's emphasis) states that, '*the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favour multi-partism*'. Many have criticised this aspect of his work. Sartori (1986, p.44; 1994, p.29) states that a law or a causal generalisation is verifiable if, and only if, the cause and the effect are clearly specified something, Sartori argues Duverger fails to achieve. Sartori also notes that Duverger assumes that a causal relation can be warranted by a correlation and as such does not seem to differentiate between 'associated with' and 'cause of'. Riker (1986, p.20) is similarly critical stating that 'it is not at all easy to straighten out the ambiguity in his statement of the relationship between electoral systems and the number of parties. Is plurality voting a necessary condition or both or neither?' Sartori is also critical of how Duverger counted political parties arguing that he does not use a consistent counting rule even though his laws posit an effect on the number of parties in a party system. Duverger is somewhat inconsistent in separating out two-party systems from multi-party systems. His inconsistency is a consequence of the difficulties involved in distinguishing 'between two-party and multi-party systems because there exist alongside the major parties a number of small groups'. (Duverger, 1964, p.207) While one is not surprised that he considers the British system a two-party system, he classifies the German and Italian party systems as two-party systems because they 'display a fairly marked tendency towards it...Under the outward appearance of a multi-party system the political struggle is restricted to two major formations that are quite disproportionate compared to the others'. (Duverger, 1964, p.211) However Duverger (1964, pp245-246) later claims that never has a PR system given rise to or sustained a two-party system. While in Italy and Germany it may be possible to 'discern' polarisation around two parties, 'nevertheless there are six parties in Germany and eight in Italy, and their number tends to increase rather than decrease'.

observed effect is ‘an optical illusion prompted by the historical sequencing of electoral systems’. On the one hand, plurality’s effect on the party system is a consequence of its facilitating a two-party format and obstructing multipartyism. On the other hand, proportional representation formulae facilitate multipartyism and are, as such, not conducive to two-partyism. Riker (1986, pp29-30) notes that plurality rules act as a disincentive because ‘it is rare for the prospective builders of a new party to predict that they may come in first past the post’. However, PR rules act as an incentive to create a new party as these systems sometimes give them a chance ‘to get a bit of political influence with relatively few votes’ (Riker, 1986, p.29).

It has also been argued that district magnitude is important with regard to a party’s decision to enter political competition.¹⁹ Cox (1997, p.157) suggests that ‘if it is clear at the time of entry who is viable and who is not, then entry by nonviable candidates should be deterred’.²⁰ That said, the prospect of losing might not deter a party or candidate if they believe that they will benefit in the future. If a party or politician adopts a longer-term perspective then their focus is on a series of elections rather than their initial election.²¹

Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.157) note that the association of PR rules with larger numbers of parties and easier access of new parties to political competition presents a counter-argument to their hypothesis that those systems that impose greater constraints on electoral choice will be associated with higher levels of electoral volatility. While PR rules ‘may not require tactical voting, they may nevertheless afford more choice, and they may also encourage the mobilisation of new alternatives’ (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.157).

When Bartolini and Mair (1990, pp157) compare systems that use proportional rules with those that use plurality rules they find that ‘the contrasting levels of volatility vary considerably according to the different numbers of parties’. Moreover, they find that ‘proportional systems which are characterised by a large

¹⁹ Palfrey (1989), Cox (1994, 1997), Feddersen et al (1990, 1992) and Fey (1997) arrive at the general conclusion that in M-seat districts the equilibrium number of candidates, or party lists, is M+1 (Cox, 1997, pp31-32; see his Chapter 5 for a full consideration). According to Cox (1997, p.31; his emphasis), the ‘M+1 rule’ implies that ‘any electoral system can be characterized by an equilibrium upper bound on the number of candidates (or party lists), such that if the actual number exceeds this upper bound there is a tendency for instrumentally rational voters to concentrate on a smaller number’.

²⁰ This ‘argument presupposes that it will be clear *at the time at which entry decisions must be made* which candidate(s) or list(s) are doomed to be perceived as non-viable on the day of the election, hence shunned by instrumentally rational voters’. (Cox, 1997, p.151; Cox’s emphasis)

²¹ According to Cox (1997, p.151) ‘the prudent withdrawals argument also presupposes that elites are motivated primarily by the prospect of victory in the current election’.

number of competing parties offer a potential for vote-switching which appears to outweigh that induced by the constraining effects of majority systems' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, pp158). Later they compare the proportionality of the various PR systems taking into account the number of parties. They find that 'higher values of each of these two crucial institutional variables, format and proportionality, are quite independently associated with higher mean levels of volatility' (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.166). In the evidence Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.166) present: 'the more fragmented systems within each level of proportionality are characterised by higher mean levels of volatility'; and 'the more disproportional systems within each format category are also associated with higher mean levels of volatility'.

2.5 The Actions of Political Parties

The final aspect of the electoral decision that I consider is the behaviour of the leading parties. As well as voters and the context of the electoral decision influencing party system stability and change, it is likely that the action of the leading parties will contribute to stability and change. After all, political parties survive at the top of the party system for long periods because they react to changes in their environment. In order to survive, Mair (1993, p.131) notes that over long periods of time it is important that parties 'adapt their policies, strategies, and styles of competition to a different set of circumstances'. Political parties are unlikely to introduce any sudden and dramatic changes in organisation or policy. The main motivator for change is electoral defeat (or poor electoral performance). Mair (1983, p.408) notes that 'there are many cases in the literature of parties seeking to renew their organisational effectiveness in the wake of electoral defeat'. Panebianco (1988, p.243) argues that a 'strong environmental pressure' in the form of an electoral defeat can lead to 'an organisation crisis' and party change. On the other hand, Schlesinger (1984, p.390) notes that if a political party performs to expectation in an election the tendency is to adopt an 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' outlook. Political parties 'proven capacity to survive' is evidence enough for Mair (1993, pp130-131) of their ability to adapt successfully to their changing environment. Mair (1993, pp130-131) argues:

‘the insistence that electoral change is an inevitable consequence of social change, neglects the capacity of parties to adapt to their changed circumstances, and hence neglects their own capacity to maintain the support of their electorates... Parties adapt and modify their appeals and their methods of mobilising support. That they do so successfully is more than clear from their proven capacity to survive’.

For instance, in Germany, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) initially derived their core support from organised manual workers while the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) did so amongst regular, church-going Catholics. However, during the post-war economic boom, ‘new middle class’ (white-collar workers and public servants) and secular voters accounted for increasing proportions of the electorate. The two largest parties responded to these changes by becoming *Volkspartei* (‘party of the whole people’) and making broad electoral appeals (Jeffery, 1999, p.107). This strategy proved successful and both parties continue to control the largest shares of seats in the *Bundestag*, the German Parliament.

2.5.1 Changing Roles and Organisational Structure of Political Parties

Party change can take the form of changes in the party’s organisational structures and how it interacts with citizens and the institutions of state. Duverger (1964) links the development of ‘mass parties’ to the extension of democratic rights in the first decades of the twentieth century. He argues that the origin of mass parties was a consequence of the development of socialist parties: ‘if the party is the political expression of a class it must naturally seek to rally the whole of the class, to form it politically, to pick out the elites capable of leadership and administration’²² (Duverger, 1964, p.66). The mass parties relied on large numbers of members. In particular, members’ subscriptions were its source of income (unlike cadre-type parties that could rely on their wealthy supporters).

Kirchheimer (1966) identifies the emergence of the ‘catch-all party’, a party that is less interested in ‘the party’s ideological baggage’ and more focused on

²² Duverger (1964, p.63) identifies one of the aims of the French Socialist party as the ‘political education of the working class, at picking out from it an elite capable of taking over government and the administration of the country’.

winning elections. In order to do so, these parties sought to appeal to a wider audience and to recruit members from amongst the wider population. Furthermore, the role of party members was reduced in favour of strengthening the role of party leaders. Kirchheimer (1966, p.184) also notes that these parties were not interested in 'attempts at the intellectual and moral *encadrement* of the masses'. Mair (1990, p.182) argues that the change from 'mass party' to 'catch-all party' signals a severing of its:

'specific organisational links with the society of which it is part and begins to operate at one remove from its constituency. It shifts from being a 'bottom-up' party to being a 'top-down' party... It builds on conditional support rather than on a sense of identification. It seeks the endorsement of voters rather than their encapsulation'.

More recently, Katz and Mair (1995, p.16) have identified a new type of party, the 'cartel party'. While 'mass' and 'catch-all' parties are associated with government leadership and are regarded as either being 'in' or 'out' of government, in the cartel party model 'none of the major parties is ever definitely 'out''. Political competition between parties is based on 'managerial skills' and 'efficiency'. Voters are regarded as being concerned 'with results rather than policy which is the domain of the professional' (Mair and Katz, 1995, p.22). The increasing similarity of party programmes and the pursuit of agreed goals means 'the distinction between parties in office and those out of office becomes more blurred, the degree to which voters can punish parties even on the basis of generalized disaffection is reduced' (Katz and Mair, 1995, p.22). For Katz and Mair (1995, p.22) political parties have become 'partnerships of professionals, not associations of, or for, the citizens'.

Changes in the organisational structures and roles of political parties have had an effect on the stability of electorates. Mair (1990) argues that the development of mass parties had a stabilising effect on the electorate. This stability was a consequence of 'the encapsulation of sections of the mass electorate, and through the inculcation of political identities which proved both solid and enduring, the mass party became the agency by which political behaviour was structured, and by which partisan stability was ensured' (Mair, 1990, p.180). However, as the twentieth century progressed, the changes in the structure and role of political parties, the loosening of

the links between parties and citizens, contributed to the erosion of electoral stability (Mair, 1990, p.181).

2.5.2 Shifts in Policy Positions: Proximity Theory versus Salience Theory

Party change may also take the form of altering the party's policy positions. The motivation for doing so is to win extra votes. There are two competing models of policy change. Downs' (1957, p.115) model assumes that political preferences can be ordered from left to right, that voters' preferences are normally distributed and that voters vote rationally. The normal distribution of voters' preferences implies that the position of the median voter is a vote maximising position. In voting rationally, Downs argues that voters firstly assess the various parties based on each party's position on the policy issue. Then the members of the electorate cast their ballots for the party closest to their own preferred position. Since, the position of the median voter is a vote maximising position, and voters' vote rationally, parties want to be as close as possible to this position in order to maximise their share of the vote. As parties converge on, or diverge from, the position of the median voter their share of the vote is expected to change.

The second model, salience theory, posits that political parties are tied to particular issues. The political party is seen as being 'under considerable constraints...[and] where it has a clear record it has by and large to stick with it' (Budge, 1987, p.27). In a sense, parties are confined to a segment of an underlying policy dimension, and unlike in Downs' model, certain policy areas may be off limits no matter how many voters support it.²³ This implies that areas or segments 'are open only to one party - certain policy areas 'belong' to it, as do the votes of the electors found there' (Budge, 1987, p.27). Robertson (1976, pp66-68) refers to 'a party's ideological preference'. This position is not a vote maximising position in terms of the party system, but is in keeping with the tradition and general principles or ideology of the party. Furthermore, the party's past record encourages voters to have confidence in the party in this area. While all of this has the effect of restricting a party's ability to make substantial alterations to their policy positions there remains some room for change. Robertson (1976) and Budge and Farlie (1977) argue that parties, when they

²³ Budge (1987, p.26) notes that in Downs' model 'party leaders have no fixed commitments but simply adjust their policy position so as to attract the largest number of votes and so gain office'.

believe an election is not competitive (i.e., the party expects to win or lose and has no need for extra votes), will seek to reassure their own supporters by reaffirming traditional priorities and adopt more partisan positions. When they believe an election is competitive, parties will try to pick up crucial votes by appealing to a wider electorate. In order to appeal to a wider audience they will emphasise ‘across the board’ issues rather than purely partisan ones in order to make their own positions less partisan. Budge and Farlie (1977, p.428) predict that when leaders of political parties:

‘expect an election result to be close and capable of being affected by their actions, they will adopt less partisan positions, and hence move relatively closer in party-defined space. Where they expect to win or lose regardless, they will become more partisan’.

In their review of research on party competition and policy equilibria, Budge and Bara (2001, p.65) note that ‘all of the analyses of competition applied to the MRG²⁴ produce expectations and outcomes of non-convergent policy equilibria’. This contrasts with a whole tradition of theory and modelling which expects parties to converge on the median voter. Budge and Bara (2001, p.65) argue ‘the weight of evidence from the Manifesto data among others, is that non-convergent policy equilibria are the norm in party competition’.

2.5.3 Deciding How To Change Policy

Budge (1994) considers how parties can make decisions about policy change when they have no reliable information available. Of the five different rules that he considers, Budge finds that the Policy Alteration rule (between elections parties alter priorities in different directions resulting in a zig-zag pattern on a Left-Right policy dimension) and the Past Election rule (parties evaluate policies in terms of whether a previous left/right move was associated with gain/loss of vote share) do most of the work. Janda et al (1995) focus on party perception of electoral performance to explain change in the profile of manifesto topics over adjacent elections. They conclude that

²⁴ The Manifesto Research Group (MRG) is a research group constituted within the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) in 1979. Their coding scheme is a development on earlier work by Robertson (1976). As a result of their work the classification scheme was extended, revised and additional countries were added.

previous election results are the best indicators politicians have of how their moves were being received by the public. Using data provided by the Manifesto Research Group to study party change between adjacent elections²⁵ for eight parties²⁶, Janda et al (1995, p.189) conclude that, 'while substantial change in issue emphases may occur in the absence of poor electoral performance, poor performance may be needed to produce extreme attempts to change party identity through election manifestos'. Finegold and Swift (2001) consider the options that a party out of power has available to it in terms of altering its policy position: accommodation, persistence and innovation.²⁷ After examining data for American elections 1864-1996, Finegold and Swift (2001, p.114) conclude that in the short-run 'no one out-party strategy is clearly superior to any one of its alternatives'.²⁸

Of course rather than actually going to the trouble of developing a policy area a large party may 'innovate' by considering the salient issues of smaller parties that have increased their vote share. John Hicks (1933, pp26-27) wrote in the *Mississippi*

²⁵ They compared, using correlation and regression analysis, topics discussed in the party manifesto for one election with the profile of topics discussed in the same party's manifesto for the subsequent election. (Janda et al, 1995, p.179) When the correlation between profiles of manifesto topics is high, Janda et al conclude that parties do not change much in the issues they emphasise from one election to the next. If, on the other hand, the correlation is low they conclude that change has occurred in issues they emphasise from one election to the next. (Janda et al, 1995, p.170)

²⁶ UK: Conservatives, Labour and Liberals; Germany: CDU, FPD and SDP; USA: Democrats and Republicans

²⁷ The first, accommodation, is associated with Downs (1957), and Finegold and Swift (2001, p.101) define a party that accommodates as one that is attempting 'to compete by adopting positions closer to those of the other major party'. The basic idea is that in a two-party, first-past-the-post system the 'out-party' repositions itself so that 'its policy preferences are closer to those of the in-party...in order to advance its goal of winning office'. (Finegold and Swift, 2001, p.97) The party out of power will 'accommodate to the positions of the party in power, which Downs assumes holds that status because it is closer to the preferences of the median voter, and thus better positioned to win votes'. (Finegold and Swift, 2001, p.97) The second strategy, persistence, is associated with those who proposed the salience theory of party competition. When a party adopts this second strategy it seeks 'to compete on the basis of the party's previous issue positions'. (Finegold and Swift, 2001, p.100) By utilising this strategy a political party hopes that they will find favour with the electorate by emphasising those issues on which they believe they have an advantage and by ignoring, or at least giving little attention to, those that favour other parties. The third strategy that a party can follow is to attempt to innovate. For Finegold and Swift (2001, p.100) this means a party will 'compete by raising new and distinctly different issues'. By doing so a party is attempting to win the support of those who are concerned about a particular issue that was previously not addressed by either of the major parties in the system. A party that adopts this strategy believes that they can 'differentiate themselves by stressing issues to which neither party had previously given much attention'. It should be noted that in their taxonomy they also consider a fourth strategy, to cease, that is, to decide not to compete as a party any longer. (Finegold and Swift, 2001, p.100)

²⁸ While these models use past election results, another model, proposed by Robertson (1976), is based on a party's assessment of whether or not the election is competitive. This approach gives his model its 'unreal' nature: the model assumes perfect information about the result of the upcoming election, as well as certainty on the part of party strategists that they can fine-tune the manifesto to take account of this (Budge, 1994). Robertson (1976) uses the actual result of the upcoming election to measure party expectations about the outcome (of the upcoming election).

Valley Historical Review: 'let a third party once demonstrate that votes are to be made by adopting a certain demand, then one or other of the older parties can be trusted to absorb the new doctrine'. Fisher (1980, p.611) suggests that minor parties are sometimes seen as a testing ground for vote-getting issues. Rosenstone et al (1996, p.8) note that 'minor parties, historically, have been a source of important policy innovations'. Herzog (1987, p.318) argues that considering the policy images of minor parties 'enlarges our knowledge about potential change, about challenging groups and ideas, and about rejected alternatives'.

2.6 Conclusion

Lipset and Rokkan's approach to the study of party systems serves as an important starting point for many studies that have considered how political parties interact with each other, with citizens and with the institutions of state. This book is no different in that respect. More importantly, their 'freezing hypothesis' provides some insight as to why the choice of potential leaders of government facing voters is so stable. As outlined above, the set of potential leaders of government is composed of parties from either side of the more salient cleavages in European party systems. However, what the freezing hypothesis does not address is electoral interchange within the sets of parties associated with each side of the cleavage dimension. The suggestion here is that electoral instability within each of the blocks of parties is a consequence of competition to be the leading party on a particular side of the cleavage dimension.

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline three explanations of electoral instability. In a sense, these three explanations form the three pillars of the electoral decision. The first focuses on the role of voters, the second focuses on the context in which they make their choices and the third focuses on the actions of those who seek their support. For all explanations, there are clear theoretical expectations and empirical evidence of the effects each has on the party system. The purpose of the next chapter is to outline how each of these three explanations, as well as electoral instability, contribute to stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters.

Chapter 3

A Model of Party System Stability and Change: The Set of Potential Leaders of Government

3.1 Introduction

It is clear from the evidence presented in Chapter 1 that the choices available to voters in terms of potential leaders of government are very stable. This is not to say that these choices have remained the same everywhere. In some countries, the choice available to voters has changed. The purpose of this chapter is to outline how the explanations of electoral system stability and change contribute to an understanding of change in the choice available to voters.

In Chapter 1, I observe party system stability and change in terms of the composition of the set of leading parties and in terms of electoral instability. The first part of the model that I consider is the impact of electoral instability on the composition of the set of leading parties. The question I ask is, is the set of potential leaders of government responsive to changes in support for the various parties? In Section 3.2 of this chapter, I consider the effect of change in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties on the choice available to voters. That said, change in support for this set of parties is only part of overall electoral instability. The other part occurs within each of the sets of parties. I also consider the effect of electoral instability within each set of parties on the choice available to voters. My model includes all of the electoral instability that occurs at a particular election (overall electoral instability, or total volatility, is equal to the sum of electoral instability *between* the two sets of parties and electoral instability *within* each of the two sets). One factor that may dampen the effect of electoral instability on the choice available to voters is the gap (in terms of seat share) between the second and third largest parties in the legislature (i.e., the closeness of political competition). The impact of this factor on change in the choice available to voters is also considered in Section 3.2.

The second part of my model focuses on the explanations of shifts in support for the set of leading parties. While it is yet to be confirmed empirically, it is reasonable to expect that factors that explain a drop in support for the set of leading parties will also contribute to an understanding of change in the composition of this set of parties. Moreover, I focus on shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties because it exhibits greater variability than change in the composition of the set of leading parties.

In Section 3.3 I turn my attention to the second explanation, shifts in the distribution of the electorate's preferences. Party system stability is in part explained by 'voter traditions' that pass from one generation to the next. However, when the influence of these traditions weakens the electoral market opens up. What is at issue here is whether or not these changes result in instability in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties and the emergence of a new choice available to voters. The two measures of change that I consider are change in the proportion of people who feel close to a political party and change in the proportion of the electorate who turn out to vote. When both of these factors decline they are regarded as indicators of party system dealignment.

The next explanation of party system stability and change that I consider is the institutional and systemic context of the election (Section 3.4). Voters' electoral choices are framed by the proportionality of the electoral rules, the number of parties and changes to both of these factors. The willingness of voters to switch support from one party to another depends not only on changes in their preferences but also on the likelihood that their vote might be wasted and the availability of an alternative party. As with Bartolini and Mair (1990) I also take into account the relationship between the proportionality of the electoral rules and the number of competing parties.

Finally, in Section 3.5, I consider the impact of the leading parties' actions on their own positions at the top of the party system. The ability of parties to act is an important factor to keep in mind when examining party system stability and change. In the last chapter, I note Mair's (1990b) conclusion that the ability of parties to change has contributed to both the development, and later to the undermining of, electoral stability. When it comes to examining empirically the impact of parties' own actions on their places at the head of the party system I focus on policy changes. I consider two competing models. The first model outlines the relationship between change in support for the set of leading parties and whether these parties converge on,

or diverge from, the positions of the median voter. The second examines the impact on support for the set of leading parties of these parties converging on, or diverging from, their own long-term policy positions.

3.2 Shifts in Electoral Support and Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

To win seats in the legislature a political party must first win votes. It is reasonable to expect that change in support for a party will result in shifts in the proportion of the seats it controls in the legislature. Such changes in seat share may lead to change in the choice available to voters. As such then I expect electoral instability to contribute to an explanation of party system stability and change. That said, Mair (2002, p.101) notes that while:

‘party system stability and change, on the one hand, and electoral stability and change, on the other, may certainly be related, they are far from being synonymous. Electoral alignments might shift, for example, even in quite a dramatic way, without necessarily impinging significantly on the structure of competition, and hence without necessarily altering the character of the party system itself. Conversely, the structure of party competition and hence the nature of the party system itself might suddenly be transformed, even without any significant prior electoral flux’.

In order to examine the impact of electoral volatility on the choice available to voters I measure change in support for the set of leading parties. This change in support for the set of leading parties is just one aspect of overall electoral instability, or total volatility. The second aspect is electoral instability within each of the blocks of parties (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.124; also see Chapter 4).

3.2.1 Shifts in Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The first relationship that I consider is the effect of shifts in electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government on the choice available to voters. Change in support for the set of leading parties may be due to support for both leading parties increasing (or decreasing). Change in support for this set of parties may also be due to an increase in support for one party and a fall in support for the other. Whether support for the set of leading parties increases depends on whether the increase in support for one party is greater than or less than the decrease in support for the other.

How does change in support for the set of leading parties affect the choice available to voters? On the one hand, when both large parties increase their share of the vote, it is reasonable to expect that the share of the seats controlled by these two parties will also increase. In a sense, the positions of the two largest parties at the head of the party system are strengthened. On the other hand, when both large parties lose vote share, it is reasonable to expect that they will also lose seat share. As such their positions at the head of the party system are weakened. As the positions of the leading parties are weakened by their loss of seat shares, the possibility of change in the choice available to voters opens-up.

Change in support for the set of leading parties need not always be due to an increase (or decrease) in support for both leading parties. Instead, the overall share of the vote won by these two parties may increase, even though one of them lost vote share, and *vice versa*. I expect choice available to voters to change when there is a decrease in support for the set of leading parties and to remain stable when there is an increase in support for this set of parties. The hypothesis that I posit is:

HYPOTHESIS 1: The choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change when electoral support for the set of leading parties decreases, and is less likely to change when support for this set of parties increases.

In reality, the relationship between change in the choice available to voters and shifts in support for the set of leading parties is more nuanced than this. In the next two sections, I consider the impact on the choice available to voters of electoral instability within each of the sets of parties and closeness of political competition. These factors contribute to an understanding as to why a change in the choice available to voters can

occur even though support for this set of parties increases and why change does not always result from a decrease in support for this set of parties.

3.2.2 Electoral Shifts Within Sets of Parties

The second aspect of overall electoral instability is that which occurs within each of the two sets of parties. As noted in the last chapter, Bartolini and Mair (1993, p.124) conclude that when voters switch parties they are more likely to opt for a party on the same side of the class-cleavage. They are unlikely to cross the class-cleavage and vote for a party from the opposite side of the ideological divide. As such then, within a particular set of parties, not all parties gain (or lose) vote share. Some parties will win an increase in their share of the vote while others will see their share of the vote fall.

Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.44) note that electoral interchange within the sets of parties is difficult to interpret because 'its rather residual nature gives it a quite ambiguous meaning'. Here, electoral interchange within the set of potential leaders of government may reflect competition within the set of leading parties to be the largest party in the party system. The party that controls the largest share of seats in the legislature is much more likely than the second largest party to lead government. Electoral instability within the set of leading parties reflects changes in preferences for the two largest parties. In particular, it may reflect changes in preferences as to which of these should lead government. How does electoral instability within the sets of political parties contribute to change in the choice available to voters?

To examine this question, I consider two situations: when there is a decrease in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties and when there is an increase in support for this set of parties. When there is a decrease in support for the set of leading parties, but only one of the leading parties loses vote share, the losses suffered by this set of parties are due to one party. However, the smaller challenging parties may not be the only parties to benefit from this party's losses. These losses may also benefit the other leading party (i.e., the share of the vote won by this other leading party increases). The set of smaller challenging parties may only benefit from part of the losses suffered by the leading party.¹ The choice available to voters may change if

¹ When one of the leading parties loses vote share and the other leading party's share of the vote remains the same (i.e., they win the same share of the vote over the two elections), then the set of challenging parties benefit from all of the leading party's losses.

the party that lost vote share is unable to control one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. However, it could also happen that the party that increased its share of the vote loses its place at the head of the party system. If the party losing vote share is the largest party in the legislature, its losses may benefit one of the challenging parties to such a degree that after the election it controls one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature.

An increase in support for the set of leading parties implies a decline in support for the set of smaller challenging parties. Yet, it may happen that within the set of leading parties only one party increases its share of the vote (the other leading party loses vote share). The gains made by the leading party are a combination of the losses suffered by the other leading party and the losses suffered by the set of challenging parties. This situation highlights the possibility of change in the choice available to voters even when there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties. In this case, the losses suffered by the leading party may prevent it from controlling one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature.

It is also important to take account of electoral interchange within the set of challenging parties. Within this set of parties, one of the challenging parties may be able to sweep up enough support from the other smaller parties to be able to control one of the two largest shares of seats. As such then, party system change can occur without the successful challenging party winning vote share from the set of leading parties. The hypothesis that I test is that the larger the shift in vote share within each set, the more likely these changes are to result in party system change.

HYPOTHESIS 2: The choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change the higher the levels of electoral instability within each of the two sets of parties.

3.2.3 Closeness of Political Competition

The closeness of political competition refers to the distance in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the legislature. The party that is best placed to challenge for a place in the set of leading parties is the party controlling the third largest share of seats in the legislature.

The closeness of political competition plays an important role in whether or not electoral instability will result in change to the choice available to voters. The distance between these two parties is the minimum distance in terms of seat share that needs to be bridged if change in the choice available to voters is to happen. When the gap between the second and third largest parties is narrow, only a small shift in support for these parties is required for change in choice available to voters to occur. Even when support for the set of leading parties remains constant, if one of the challenging parties can win enough support from the other smaller parties it may be able to bridge the gap and control at least the second largest share of seats in the legislature. Alternatively, support for the third largest party may remain constant but a small drop in support for one of the leading parties may be sufficient for it to be unable to control at least the second largest share of seats in the legislature. However, as this gap grows wider, more and more electoral instability, either between the two sets of parties and/or within the two sets of parties is required if the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is to change.

HYPOTHESIS 3: The choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change the more narrow the gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the national legislature.

3.3 Change in the Distribution of Voters' Preferences

The second explanation of party system stability and change that I consider focuses on the distribution of voters' preferences. In order to examine the effects of shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences on the choice available to voters I consider two measures: change in party identification and change in electoral participation.

3.3.1 Party Identification

Party identification or partisanship is one type of voter tradition. Partisanship refers to people's predisposition towards a particular party and is seen as part of a process of

political socialisation (Campbell et al, 1960; Miller, 1976). While such predispositions do not go unquestioned there is 'an inertial element' in people's voting behaviour (Fiorina, 1981). However, people's attachments to political parties have not remained constant and there is evidence of declining levels of party identification (Nie et al, 1976; Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995; Dalton, 2001).

Weakening partisanship suggests that a gap between voters and political parties is opening up (Poguntke, 1996). In deciding how to vote, voters are no longer willing to rely on long-term guides (Flanagan and Dalton, 1984). One consequence of a 'dwindling of the stabilizing elements in electoral behaviour' is increased levels of electoral instability (Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995, p.100). A decline in the strength of partisanship does not necessarily mean that people are disaffected with or reject a particular party. Instead, it may simply mean that they do not feel very close to a party (Poguntke, 1996). As the proportion of the electorate feeling close to political parties declines, there is an increase in the number of people willing to consider a number of parties in deciding how to vote.

I expect a decrease in the proportion of the electorate who feel close to a political party to result in a decrease in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties. Schmitt and Holmberg (1995, p.100) note that 'a downturn in partisanship improves the electoral prospects for new parties'. Leithner (1990, p.17) notes that a decrease in partisan loyalty for the major political parties may 'facilitate the appearance and electoral support of the candidates of non-major parties'.

HYPOTHESIS 4: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the proportion of people who feel close to a political party decreases, and is more likely to remain constant when the proportion of people who feel close to a political party increases.

Following on from this, change in the choice available to voters is more likely to be associated with a weakening of partisanship while stability in this choice is more likely to be associated with a strengthening of partisanship.

3.3.2 Electoral Participation

Changes in electoral participation are also expected to contribute to electoral instability. Changes in the proportion of the electorate who cast ballots may alter the distribution of preferences for the various parties from one election to the next. It is unlikely that an increase or decrease in turnout will have a proportionate effect on support for all parties. That said small changes in turnout are likely to have a negligible impact on electoral stability. Bartolini and Mair (1990, pp176-177) conclude that changes in electoral participation will have a discernible impact on electoral volatility 'only in the relatively extreme cases'.

When it comes to which set of parties is likely to benefit from a change in electoral participation the existing evidence is not clear. On the one hand, Bernhagen and Marsh (2004, pp22-23) examine the relationship between party size and the impact of complete turnout on parties' vote share and find that 'the smallest parties tend to gain; the largest ones tend to lose'. This implies that, as turnout increases, the set of potential leaders of government, the largest parties, ought to lose vote share to the other parties. On the other hand, Leithner (1990, p.10) concludes that there is a negative relationship between voter turnout and voting for one of the smaller parties. In other words, the smaller parties win a larger percentage of the vote when fewer voters turnout to vote than is the case when more voters cast ballots. Applying this conclusion to changing electoral participation, I expect that declining turnout will result in a loss of support for the larger political parties.

Based on this evidence I propose to test two alternative hypotheses. The first is based on Bernhagen and Marsh's (2004) finding and posits that:

HYPOTHESIS 5a: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when electoral participation increases, and is more likely to increase when electoral participation decreases.

The second is based on Leithner's (1990) conclusion and posits that:

HYPOTHESIS 5b: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when electoral participation decreases, and is more likely to increase when electoral participation increases.

Since there is no one expectation about the relationship between change in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties and change in electoral participation, there is no one expectation about whether the choice available to voters is more or less likely to change when electoral participation increases.

3.3.3 Extension of the Franchise

A final aspect of electoral participation that I consider is change to the rules governing the minimum age at which citizens can vote. When the decision is made to lower the age criterion of the electoral franchise it introduces into the electorate an age cohort that has not voted before. If the preference distribution of this new set of voters is different from that of existing voters, it will affect the partisan distribution of voters' preferences.

If the introduction of younger voters into the electorate is to favour any one set of parties, it is likely to favour the smaller parties. Younger voters tend to be less interested in traditional politics in that their concerns often lie outside the boundaries of conventional politics (e.g., environmentalism). Large mainstream political parties often ignore or lack credibility in addressing such issues. As such then, I would expect younger voters to turn to those smaller parties that focus on such concerns (e.g., the Green Party). However, one difficulty with this expectation is that young people are less likely to vote than their counterparts. This implies that while I may expect a lowering of the age of enfranchisement to benefit the smaller set of parties, this may not occur because these new members of the electorate decide not to vote (Henn et al., 2002; Denver and Hands, 1990; Heath and Park, 1997; Kimberlee, 2002; Bennie and Rudig, 1993).

3.4 Systemic and Institutional Contexts of Elections

My third explanation of party system stability and change takes account of the systemic and institutional context of elections. I begin by focusing on how the systemic context of electoral competition affects support for the set of leading parties. Then I turn my attention to the influence of the proportionality of the electoral rules, and change in these rules, on support for this set of parties.

3.4.1 Systemic Context of Electoral Competition

3.4.1.1 Number of Parties

The first systemic factor that I consider is the number of parties in the party system. Pedersen (1979 and 1983) and Bartolini and Mair (1990) both conclude that higher levels of electoral instability are associated with more fragmented party systems, that is, larger numbers of parties. The question remains as to whether support for the set of leading parties increases or decreases when the party system is more, or less, fragmented. It is not clear whether the number of parties will affect support for the set of potential leaders of government in a systematic manner. It is likely that at some elections support for the set of leading parties will increase while at others it will decrease.

As long as there are more than two parties contesting each election, those who supported one of the large parties but who are now dissatisfied with it may express their dissatisfaction by voting for one of the smaller challenging parties. If this happens, there will be a drop in support for the set of leading parties. At the next election, if the leading parties react to the concerns of their erstwhile supporters, these voters may abandon their protest vote and once again opt for their preferred leading party. As such, there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties. Whatever the reason for voters switching between a leading party and a smaller challenging party, a change in support for the set of leading parties is unlikely to be related to the number of parties in the legislature.

3.4.1.2 Change in the Number of Parties

The second systemic variable that I consider is change in the number of parties. Pedersen (1983) found that changes in the number of competing parties are associated with higher levels of electoral volatility.² Here the question is whether change in support for the set of leading parties is associated with the party system becoming more fragmented and less fragmented.

When a new party wins vote share, the share of the vote available to the other parties falls. For instance, in an election that is contested by five parties, the expected share of the vote won by each party is 20 percent. At the next election, a new party enters the electoral competition. The entry of the new party implies that the expected share of the vote won by each party is about 17 percent. For each of the five original parties, there is a drop in their expected share of the vote. Whatever the share of the vote won by the new party, the total vote share available to the original five parties is less than it was prior to the entry of the new party. When the number of parties decreases, say one of the six parties decides not to contest the next election the five remaining parties compete for its vote share. Their expected share of the vote increases from 17 percent to 20 percent.

This is obviously a simplification of a more complex relationship. Yet, this presentation allows me to outline a testable hypothesis about the relationship between shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties and whether parties enter or exit electoral competition.

HYPOTHESIS 6: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the party system becomes more fragmented, and is more likely to increase when the party system becomes less fragmented.

² Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.131) are critical of this conclusion arguing that 'there is a problem of circularity, in that the disappearance or appearance of a party inevitably implies some degree of electoral interchange'. I am interested in whether or not the set of leading parties benefit from entry and exit.

3.4.2 Institutional Context of Electoral Competition

3.4.2.1 Proportionality of Electoral Rules

Parties contest elections according to a given set of rules. These rules provide the institutional context of elections and influence the proportionality of the electoral system. To varying degrees, the proportionality of the electoral system biases the allocation of seat share to vote share in favour of the largest parties. This is particularly true of systems using a first-past-the-post electoral system. Under this set of rules overall electoral instability is greater than it is under more proportional rules (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.164). However, what is at issue here is whether electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to increase or to decrease under a given set of rules.

What Bartolini and Mair's (1990) conclusion implies is that the variation in changes in support for the set of leading parties is likely to be greater under a first-past-the-post system than it is under more proportional rules. Under the latter set of rules, people are less constrained in voting in line with their preferences, and as such are less likely to shift between parties from one election to the next. Under the former set of rules, people are more constrained in casting their votes and need to take into account whether or not their vote is going to be wasted. As such, voters may opt not for their preferred party but the most preferred of the two strongest parties in their constituency. Electoral instability may result as, from time to time, the third party may be able to present a more credible challenge. When the challenge of the third party is more credible, those who prefer this party, but who vote for a party in a stronger position in their constituency, may vote in line with their preferences. As such, there is a decline in support for the set of leading parties. However, if this third party fails to win a seat or to improve its position nationally, its supporters may return to choosing between the two largest parties. Consequently, there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties.

The proportionality of the electoral system may be associated with overall levels of electoral instability and variability in shifts between the two sets of parties. However, I do not expect to observe a systematic relationship between the proportionality of the electoral system and changes in support for the set of leading parties. In a particular country, no matter how proportional the given electoral system,

at some elections the set of leading parties win extra support; at other elections they lose support.

3.4.2.2 Change to the Electoral Rules

Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.152) argue changes to the electoral rules alter 'the structure of opportunity available to electors'. They find that higher levels of volatility are associated with changes to the electoral rules. The issue here is whether the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government will increase or decrease because of a change in the rules.

When it comes to changing electoral rules, not only is it not easily done, the largest parties, those who have benefited most from the institutional *status quo* may be reluctant to do so³. Sartori (1994, p.28) notes that while electoral systems have changed, and continue to change⁴, 'change by reform is always difficult. Once an electoral arrangement is in place, its beneficiaries protect their vested interests and try hard to go on playing the game by the rules that they know'. The largest parties in the legislature are the parties that 'do best' out of the current electoral rules. Since electoral systems are somewhat biased in favour of the largest parties, there is little incentive for them to introduce changes that reduce this bias. After all, such changes might undermine their positions at the top of the party system. Moreover, as has already been discussed, the electoral rules influence the ability of new parties to win seats in the legislature. The number of parties in the legislature may increase as a result of a change in the electoral rules. An increase in the number of parties in the legislature will fragment the seat shares held by the various parties, something that may weaken the positions of the largest parties. Nevertheless, electoral rules have

³ Lijphart (1994, p.7) refers to this long-term stability when he defines electoral systems as 'sets of essentially unchanged election rules under which one or more successive elections are conducted'. As Lijphart (1994, p.52) notes electoral systems 'tend to be very stable and to resist change. In particular, as Dieter Nohlen has emphasized, "fundamental changes are rare and arise only in extraordinary historical circumstances". The most fundamental change that Nohlen has in mind is the shift from plurality to PR or vice versa'.

⁴ Similarly, Bawn (1993, p.987) notes that 'an important aspect of the stability of institutions is that the individuals who have the power to change them generally receive that power because of success in the existing institutional framework. In particular, the people who have power to change electoral institutions are those who benefit enough from the existing electoral system to hold seats in the legislature. The common interest of elites in preserving the institutions that make them elites may create sufficient agreement to allow equilibrium in institutions even when there is no institution-free equilibrium in the policy choices'. Noonan (1954, p.32) notes that in systems with single-member districts it is not in the interests of the major parties to make the system more proportional: 'Defense of the system by the major parties illustrates the fact that the parties will not wage war on themselves by revising the institution favourable to their domination of the parliamentary apparatus'.

changed. Cox (1997, p.18) identifies three sets of motivations a party may have for altering the electoral system: (1) wish to insure themselves against substantial uncertainty; (2) electoral situation has changed so much so that the old rules will not serve them well; (3) the electoral system symbolises an unpopular regime. If political parties believe that electoral laws do confer some partisan advantage then some parties will be motivated to alter the electoral system (Cox, 1997, pp17-19).

Since it is the largest parties in parliament who benefit most from the existing electoral rules they may be reluctant to introduce changes, preferring to continue with the rules they know. When the rules are changed, it is reasonable to expect that these parties are unlikely to act against their own interests. As such then, I expect a change in the electoral rules to benefit the set of potential leaders of government.

3.5 Actions of the Political Parties

The final explanation of party system change and stability lies with the actions of the political parties themselves. In Chapter 2, I note that those political parties that have survived for decades have shown themselves able to adapt to their changing environment. One form of party change is shifts in policy position. The hypotheses that I test posit that party system stability and change is likely to be a consequence of shifts in the policy positions of the parties that constitute the set of potential leaders of government. In other words, the stability or otherwise of the party system may be due to the actions of the largest parties with regard to their own policy positions. Two theoretical frameworks are considered. The first hypothesis that I test is most commonly associated with Downs' (1957) conclusion that competing parties converge on the position of the median voter, a vote maximising position. The second hypothesis is based on Budge and Bara's (2001) observation that each party's policy position oscillates around a long-term policy position (that non-convergent policy equilibria are the norm).

3.5.1 *Position of the Median Voter*

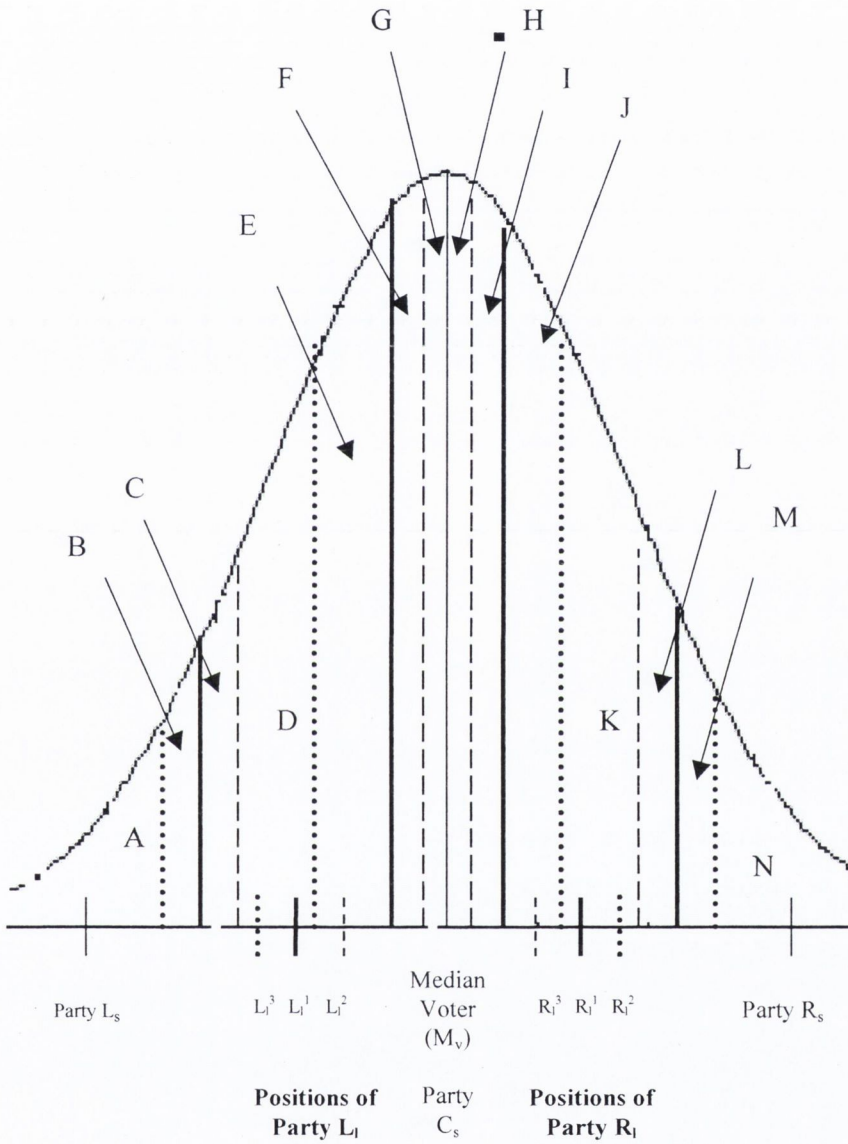
As with Downs, I assume that voters' preferences are distributed normally from left to right, there is agreement on the ordering of the parties, and voters vote rationally. My approach differs from Downs' model in that rather than competing on the basis of one issue, I estimate the relative emphasis given to a variety of issue areas on particular policy dimensions using the Manifesto Research Group's dataset. In this model, when it comes to voting rationally, voters firstly assess the relative policy emphasis of each party on the policy dimension. Then voters opt for that party which 'best' represents their preferred policy-mix. Moreover, Downs focused on individual parties while I am interested in the shift in the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government.

3.5.1.1 Presence of an Intervening Party between the Potential Leaders of Government

Imagine for a moment that there are five competing parties. Two parties, Party L_1 and Party R_1 , are in the set of potential leaders of government, while the other three parties, Party C_s , Party L_s and Party R_s , are outside this set. I begin by assuming that the parties are arranged on the policy dimension such that two leading parties (Party L_1 and Party R_1) are separated by one of the smaller parties (Party C_s), with the other smaller parties located such that, one is to the 'left' (Party L_s) and the other is to the 'right' (Party R_s). Initially, the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government is the aggregate of that won by Party L_1 at position L_1^1 , equal to $C+D+E$, and that won by Party R_1 at position R_1^1 , equal to $J+K+L$. The shares of the vote won by the smaller parties are, in the case of Party L_s equal to $A+B$, in the case of Party R_s equal to $M+N$ and in the case of Party C_s equal to $F+G+H+I$.

Assuming the all three smaller parties hold their positions, the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government increases when both parties converge on the position of the median voter. When Party L_1 converges on the median voter to position L_1^2 it will win vote share from Party C_s , F , but lose vote share to party Party L_s , C .

Figure 3.1: Policy Change and Shift in Vote Share with the Positions of the Two Leading Parties (Party L_1 and Party R_1) Separated by a Small Party (Party C_s)



Similarly, when Party R_1 converges on the median voter to position R_1^2 , it will win vote share from Party C_s , I, but lose vote share to party Party R_s , L. The net effect is an increase in the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government, since $(F+I) > (C+L)$. When the two leading parties are separated by a smaller party the share of the vote won by the set of potential government leaders increases when both converge on the position of the median voter.⁵

However, the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government decreases when both parties diverge from the position of the median voter. When Party L_1 diverges from the median voter to position L_1^3 it will win vote share from Party L_s , B, but lose vote share to Party C_s , E. Similarly, when Party R_1 diverges from the median voter to position R_1^3 , it will win vote share from Party R_s , M, but lose vote share to party Party C_s , J. The net effect is a decrease in the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government, since $(B+M) < (E+J)$. When a smaller party separates the two leading parties, the share of the vote won by the set of potential government leaders decreases when both diverge from the position of the median voter.⁶

Furthermore, these conclusions hold as long as there is a party located between the two leading parties whether there are smaller parties located in only one periphery or neither.

HYPOTHESIS 7: When a smaller party is positioned between the two potential leaders of government, electoral support for this set of parties is more likely to decrease when both parties diverge from the position of the median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged) and is more likely to increase when both parties converge on the position of the median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged).

⁵ The share of the vote won by the set of potential government leaders will also increase when one leading party converges on the position of the median voter and the position of the other leading party remains unchanged.

⁶ The share of the vote won by the set of potential government leaders will also decrease when one leading party diverges from the position of the median voter and the position of the other leading party remains unchanged.

3.5.1.2 Absence of an Intervening Party between the Potential Leaders of Government

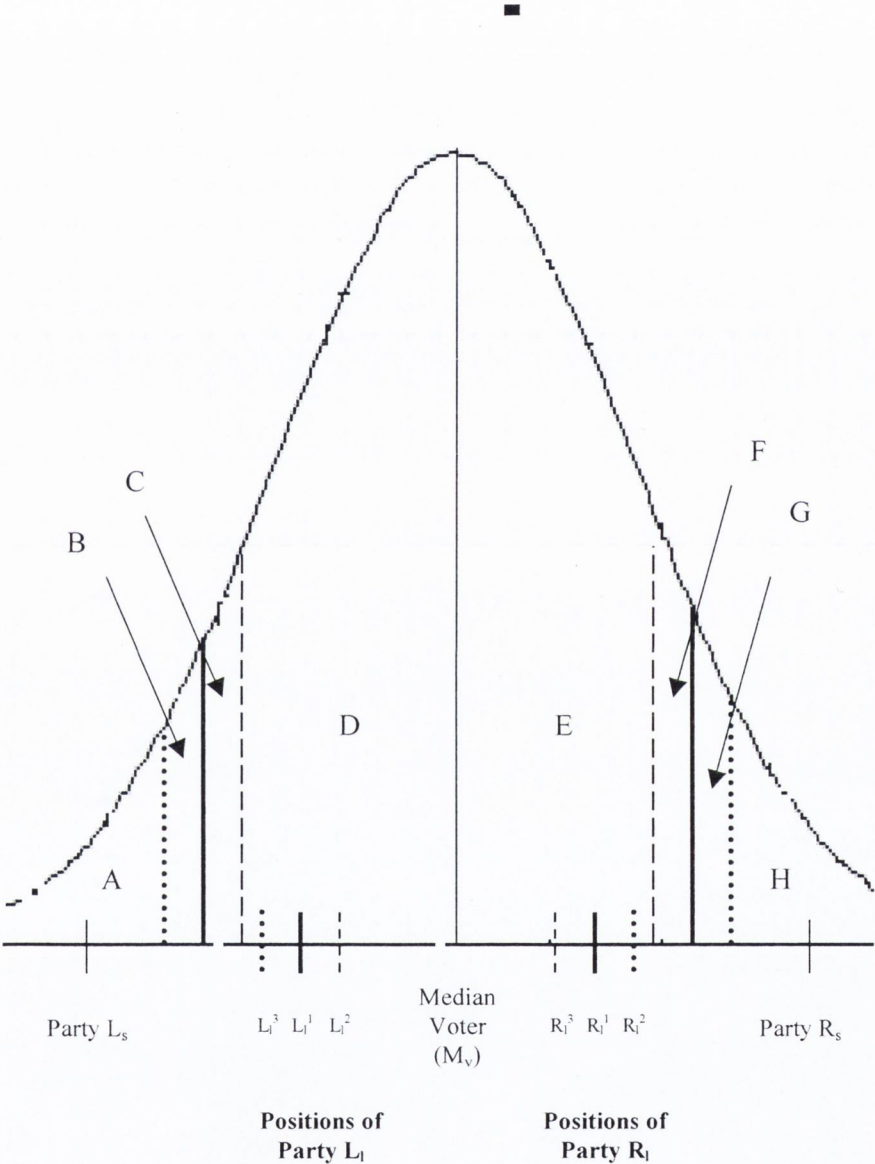
What happens when there is no intervening party (Party C_s) between the two leading parties (Party L_l and Party R_l)? To examine this question I assume that the four remaining parties are arranged so that one of the smaller parties is located to the 'left' of the two leading parties (Party L_s) and the other is located to the 'right' of the two leading parties (Party R_s). Initially, the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government is equal to the aggregate of that won by Party L_l at position L_l^1 , equal to $C+D$, and that won by Party R_l at position R_l^1 , equal to $E+F$. The shares of the vote won by the smaller parties are, in the case of Party L_s equal to $A+B$, and in the case of Party R_s equal to $G+H$.

I assume the two smaller parties hold their positions. In the absence of an intervening party between the two leading parties, the set of potential leaders of government loses vote share when the parties converge on the position of the median voter (M_v). When Party L_l converges on the median voter to position L_l^2 it will lose vote share to Party L_s , C . Similarly, when Party R_l converges on the median voter to position R_l^2 it will lose vote share to Party R_s , F . Any gains made by either of the leading parties when they converge on the position of the median voter are at the expense of the other leading party (that is, electoral instability within the set of leading parties). When there is no intervening party between the two leading parties, the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government will decrease when both converge on the position of the median voter.⁷

However, under these circumstances, the vote share won by the set of potential leaders of government will increase when both parties diverge from the position of the median voter (M_v). When Party L_l diverges from the median voter to position L_l^3 it will win vote share from Party L_s , B . Similarly, when Party R_l diverges from the median voter to position R_l^3 it will win vote share from Party R_s , G . Again, these shifts in policy position may contribute to electoral instability within the set of leading parties but this does not reduce the aggregate share of the vote won by this set.

⁷ The share of the vote won by the set of potential government leaders will also decrease when one leading party converges on the position of the median voter and the position of the other leading party remains unchanged.

Figure 3.2 Policy Change and Shift in Vote Share with the Positions of the Two Leading Parties (Party L_1 and Party R_1) Not Separated by a Small Party (Party C_S)



When there is no intervening party between the two leading parties, the share of the vote won by the set of potential leaders of government will increase when both diverge from the position of the median voter.⁸

HYPOTHESIS 8: When the two potential leaders of government are not separated by a smaller party, electoral support for this set of parties is more likely to decrease when both parties converge on the position of the median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged) and is more likely to increase when both parties diverge from the position of the median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged).

It is evident from this that when testing the relationship between change in support of the set of leading parties and whether they converge on, or diverge from, the position of the median voter, it is necessary to identify whether or not there is an intervening party (Party C_s) between the two leading parties (Party L_1 and Party R_1).

3.5.1.3 One of the Two Leading Parties Converges on the Position of the Median Voter while the Other Diverges

In the above discussion, I only consider what I expect to happen when both leading parties either converge on, or diverge from, the position of the median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged). Here I turn my attention to the expected outcome when one of the leading parties converges on the position of the median voter while the other diverges from it. Only in one case is it possible to set out *a priori* whether the vote share of the set of potential leaders of government will increase or decrease. In all other cases, what matters are the precise policy configurations of the parties; these determine whether the gains made by one of the leading parties will be greater than the losses suffered by the other.

The only relationship that is clear occurs when there is a smaller party and this is located in the periphery of the preference distribution (either Party L_s or Party R_s). Whether the set of potential government leaders gain or lose electoral support depends on whether the adjacent leading party converges on, or diverges from, the position of

⁸ It should also be noted that the share of the vote won by the set of potential government leaders will also increase when one leading party diverges from the position of the median voter and the position of the other leading party remains unchanged.

the median voter. The shift in policy of the other leading party will only influence electoral interchange between the two leading parties (that is, electoral instability within this set of parties).

3.5.2 Long-Term Policy Position of Each Leading Party

As I note in Chapter 2, Budge and Bara (2001, p.65) argue ‘the weight of evidence from the Manifesto data among others, is that non-convergent policy equilibria are the norm in party competition’. The hypothesis that I outline in this section is based on the idea that each party has a long-term policy position. The hypothesis that I test measures policy change relative to the long-term policy positions of each of the two parties.

Saliency theory posits that political parties are tied to particular issues. In a sense parties are confined to a segment of an underlying policy dimension. This has the effect of restricting a party’s ability to make substantial alterations to their policy positions. The long-term policy position of a party is what Robertson (1976, pp66-68) termed ‘a party’s ideological preference’. This position is not a vote maximising position in terms of the party system. Instead, it is in keeping with the tradition and general principles or ideology of the party. The party’s past record encourages voters to have confidence in the party in this area. Essentially, it is the best position for a particular party because voters see it as a credible position for the party (Robertson, 1976, pp66-68).

From this point of view, the party’s long-term policy position is the best policy position for the party to adopt. The closer they are to this policy position, the greater their appeal to voters. The hypothesis that I test is based on the expectation that any deviation from such a position is likely to result in a loss of support for the party. On the one hand, I expect electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government to decrease when both parties diverge from their *own* long-term equilibrium positions. On the other hand, I expect support for this set of parties to increase when both parties converge on their *own* long-term policy positions. When one of the leading parties diverges, while the other converges, whether the set of potential government leaders gains or loses electoral support, depends on whether the gains of one are cancelled out by the losses of the other.

HYPOTHESIS 9: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the net change in their policy positions indicates that they diverge from their long-term policy positions, and is more likely to increase when the net change in their policy positions indicates that they converge on their long-term policy positions.

3.6 Conclusion

I describe the party system in terms of the choice of potential leaders of government that voters face. When this choice remains the same from one election to the next then the party system is seen as stable. However, when this choice changes, that is when voters have a different set of potential leaders of government to choose from, the party system is seen as having undergone a change. The purpose of this chapter has been to outline a model of party system stability and change.

Electoral instability is a form of party system stability and change. Where other scholars simply focus on the levels of electoral instability in the party system, I focus on electoral instability having a particular effect. Rather than electoral instability being regarded as an end in itself, it is seen as a mechanism for change in the choice available to voters. I am not simply interested in whether the vote share of the set of leading parties increases or decreases. Instead, I am concerned with the effect of these changes on the choices that voters have in terms of the parties that are strong enough to be considered potential leaders of government. After all, if the party system is responsive to voters' preferences, then the choice available to voters ought to reflect changes in support for the parties. In other words, electoral instability is seen as either contributing to the stabilisation of the party system or to undermining party system stability.

As well as outlining the impact that electoral instability is expected to have on the choice of leaders of government available to voters I also examine the causes of shifts in support for the set of leading parties. In order to do so I consider three explanations of party system stability and change. Previously, these explanations have been applied to explaining overall levels of electoral instability in the party system as

a whole. Here, I take theoretical and empirical conclusions of these explanations and apply them to the change in vote share of the set of leading parties. In a sense, I present these explanations with new challenges.

Over the next few chapters, I test each of the hypotheses outlined above. In a final empirical chapter, I examine the importance of each when all are included in the same model. Before doing so though I need to outline the data that I use as well as the methods that I apply.

Chapter 4

Methodology: Operationalisation of Measures and Empirical Methods

4.1 Introduction

In the last two chapters I outline a number of explanations of stability and change in the party system and how they contribute to an understanding of stability and change in the choice available to voters. The purpose of this chapter is to outline how I test these explanations.

I begin in Section 4.2 by outlining how I operationalise the variables identified in the last chapter. In Section 4.3, I outline the various methods used to analyse my data. Finally, I need to take account of the fact that my data is pooled cross-sectional time-series (Section 4.4).

4.2 Data: Operationalisation of Measures

4.2.1 Measures of Stability and Change in the Party System

4.2.1.1 Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

In Chapter 1, I identify those parties that I consider potential leaders of government. The rule I employ is that parties controlling the two largest shares of seats in the legislature constitute the set of potential leaders of government going into the next election. If the second and third largest parties control the same share of the seats, I separate them by considering the share of the vote that each won. For the most part, I refer to the 'set of potential leaders of government' as the 'set of leading parties'.

The set of leading parties is stable when the parties controlling the two largest shares of seats in the legislature are the same parties that controlled the two largest

shares of seats in the legislature after the previous election. Change in the composition of the set of leading parties takes place when one of the potential leaders of government going into the election fails to control one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. The stability of the choice available to voters depends on the degree of movement in and out of this set of parties. The more changes in the composition of the choice available to voters, the more unstable the party system.

4.2.1.2 Measures of Electoral Instability

There are a number of ways to measure electoral instability. Rose and Urwin (1970, pp289-290), for whom the unit of analysis is the party, focus on both the trend and fluctuation of 'the aggregate vote for each party in each election for the major national legislative assembly'. Asher and Tarrow (1975, pp480-481) developed a measure of net change, which they called 'volatility', and applied it to aggregate election results of individual political parties. Volatility of an individual party's support measures the average change in support for this party from one election to the next. Pedersen's (1979 and 1983) measure of 'aggregate volatility' or 'total volatility' focuses on electoral instability in the party system as a whole.

Pedersen (1983, p.32) states that aggregate volatility:

'is simply the cumulative gains for all winning parties in the party system or... the numerical value of the cumulative losses for all losing parties'.

The model that I test takes account of all of the shifts in electoral support for the various competing parties. As such then, individual-party level measures of shifts in electoral support are not appropriate. However, the problem with total volatility is that it does not measure changes in support for a particular set of parties. In particular, total volatility does not provide me with a measure of shifts in electoral support that reflect political competition to be in the set of potential leaders of government. What I require is a measure that organises the political parties into two groups and that captures shifts in electoral support between groups. In particular, the measure needs to record whether support for the set of leading parties is increasing or decreasing.

The measure that I use is 'block volatility'. Bartolini and Mair (1990) use block volatility when they tested Lipset and Rokkan's 'freezing hypothesis'. This

method allowed them to divided the party system into an ‘organised expression’ of the cleavage that is the focus of their study, and to measure shifts in vote share along that dimension. I adopt this measure of electoral instability for two reasons. Firstly, it allows me to arrange the competing political parties into two groups of parties. Secondly, I am able to record the electoral interchange between the two groups of parties. However, there is a difference between how Bartolini and Mair (1990) use this measure, and I how I use it. While they focus on the absolute value of the electoral interchange that occurred between the two sets of parties, I note whether the share of the vote won by the two largest parties increases or decreases.

Block volatility aggregates together the electoral results of two or more parties that share a common property (i.e., the parties that control the two largest shares of seats in the legislature). Let L be the set of leading parties. The two parties that constitute the set of leading parties, party a (p_a) and party b (p_b), control the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. The share of the vote won by this set of parties is:

$$V_L = \sum V_l$$

where, l is a party that controls one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature;

$$= (v_a + v_b)$$

where, v_a is the share of the vote won by party a (p_a) and v_b is the share of the vote won by party b (p_b).

As a measure of electoral instability, block volatility (ΔV_L) captures shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties:

$$\Delta V_L = V_{L,t} - V_{L,t-1}$$

where, $V_{L,t}$ is the share of the vote won by the two leading parties at the most recent election, election $_t$, and $V_{L,t-1}$ is the share of the vote won by the two leading parties at the previous election, election $_{t-1}$;

$$= (v_{a,t} + v_{b,t}) - (v_{a,t-1} + v_{b,t-1})$$

$$= (v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1}) + (v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1})$$

where, $v_{a,t}$ is the share of the vote won by party a (p_a) and $v_{b,t}$ is the share of the vote won by party b (p_b) at the most recent election, election $_t$, while $v_{a,t-1}$ is the share of the vote won by party a (p_a) and $v_{b,t-1}$ is the share of the vote won by party b (p_b) at the previous election, election $_{t-1}$.

When there is an increase in electoral support for both parties in the set of potential leaders of government, that is:

$$(v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1}) > 0$$

$$(v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1}) > 0$$

then block volatility is positive ($\Delta V_L > 0$). The share of the vote won by the set of leading parties has increased.

However, when the share of the vote won by both parties decreases, that is:

$$(v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1}) < 0$$

$$(v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1}) < 0$$

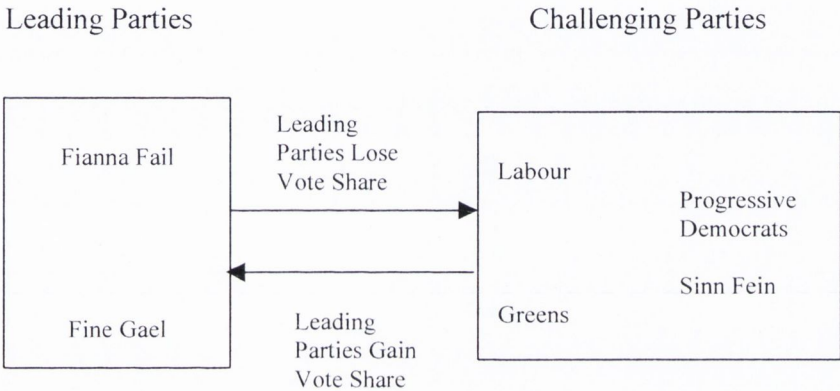
then block volatility is negative ($\Delta V_L < 0$). The share of the vote won by the set of leading parties has decreased.¹ When it is negative, electoral support for the set of smaller challenging parties has increased.

In Figure 4.1, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael form the set of potential leaders of government in Ireland. When the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties increases, the share of the vote won by the other set of parties decreases, and *vice versa*. Going into an election, voters in Ireland can expect that either Fianna Fail or

¹ It should also be noted that an increase or decrease in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties will also occur when the share of the vote won by one of the two leading parties remains constant.

Fine Gael will lead the next government and that their party leader will be the next Taoiseach. The other set of parties is composed of the four remaining political parties, Labour, the Progressive Democrats, Sinn Fein and the Greens. In terms of a role in government, members of the electorate who opt for these parties can expect that their party will, at best, form a coalition government under the leadership of either Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

Figure 4.1: Electoral Interchange Between Sets of Parties (Block Volatility)



Of course, within the set of leading parties, the share of the vote won by party a (p_a) may increase while that won by party b (p_b) may decrease, that is:

$$(v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1}) > 0$$

$$(v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1}) < 0.$$

Whether the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties increases or decreases depends on whether the gain made by party a (p_a) is greater than the loss suffered by party b (p_b).

When the absolute value of change in support for party a (p_a) is greater than the absolute value of change in support for party b (p_b), the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties (ΔV_L) will increase²:

² When the absolute values are equal to each other, then the gain made by party a (p_a) is solely due to the losses suffered by party b (p_b). As such there is no electoral interchange between the two sets of parties: $\Delta V_L = 0$.

$$|(v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1})| > |(v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1})|$$

$$\Rightarrow (v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1}) + (v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1}) = \Delta V_L > 0$$

The increase in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties (ΔV_L) is due to the increase in support for party a (p_a). Part of this increase in electoral support for party a (p_a) is due to a loss of support by the set of challenging parties. The remaining part of the increase in electoral support for party a (p_a) is due to the loss of electoral support by party b (p_b). This is what Bartolini and Mair (1990) refer to as *within block volatility*.³ Volatility within each block is equal to the sum of the shifts in support for parties that is of a different sign to the change in support for the set of parties as a whole. For example, in this case the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties increases. Volatility within the set of leading parties is equal to the share of the vote lost by party b (p_b). The set of smaller challenging parties does not benefit from the losses suffered by party b (p_b).⁴ In this case, party a (p_a), the leading party that increases its share of the vote is the only party to benefit from party b 's (p_b) losses.

The set of challenging parties benefit from losses suffered by party b (p_b) when the absolute value of change in support for party a (p_a) is less than the absolute value of change in support for party b (p_b).⁵ Under these conditions the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties (ΔV_L) will decrease:

$$|(v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1})| < |(v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1})|$$

$$\Rightarrow (v_{a,t} - v_{a,t-1}) + (v_{b,t} - v_{b,t-1}) = \Delta V_L < 0$$

While the share of the vote won by party a (p_a) increases, the greater losses suffered by party b (p_b) mean that there is a decrease in the overall share of the vote won by the set of leading. The set of challenging parties may benefit from party b 's (p_b) losses but they are not the sole beneficiaries of these losses. Since the share of the vote won by

³ According to Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.44) volatility within the sets of parties has a rather residual nature.

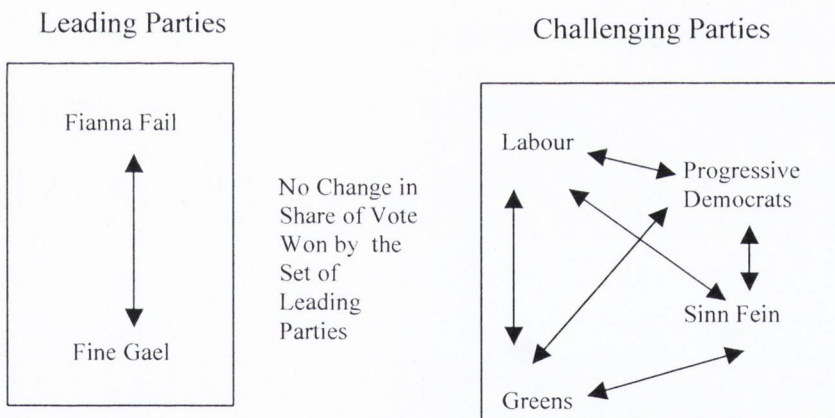
⁴ Within this framework, any challenging party that increased its share of the vote while the set of challenging parties loses vote share is seen as having benefited from electoral instability within its own set of parties (i.e., the set of challenging parties).

⁵ Again, when the absolute values are equal to each other, then the gain made by party a (p_a) is solely to the losses suffered by party b (p_b). As such there is no electoral interchange between the two sets of parties: $\Delta V_L = 0$.

the set of leading parties decreased, the increase in support for party a (p_a) is not seen as coming from the set of challenging parties. Instead, party a (p_a) benefits from part of the loss of support suffered by party b (p_b). The rest of the decrease in support for party b (p_b) benefits the set of smaller challenging parties. For this set of parties to benefit from all of party b 's (p_b) losses, the share of the vote won by party a (p_a) would have to remain constant.

As is illustrated in Figure 4.2, support for the set of leading parties may remain the same even though Fianna Fail may cede vote share to Fine Gael, or *vice versa*. The share of the vote won by the set of smaller challenging parties does not change as a consequence of losses suffered by one of the leading parties (ΔV_{Lwb} refers to electoral interchange within the set of leading parties). A similar, if somewhat more complex, exchange of vote share may occur within the block formed by the smaller political parties (ΔV_{Cwb} refers to electoral interchange within the set of challenging).

Figure 4.2: Electoral Interchange Within Sets of Parties (Within Block Volatility)



Closeness of political competition (Λ_t) refers to the distance in terms of seat share between the second and third largest party. I use a lagged version of this variable because going into an election closeness of competition refers to the distance that needs to be bridged if the composition of the set of leading parties is to change. I calculate it by subtracting the share of the seats controlled by the third largest party from the share controlled by the second largest party:

$$\Lambda_t = S_{i, t-1} - S_{j, t-1}$$

where Λ_t is the closeness of political competition going into the current election, $s_{i,t-1}$ is the share of the seats won by the second largest party, party i , at the previous election, election $t-1$, and $s_{j,t-1}$ is the share of the seats won by the third largest party, party j at the previous election, election $t-1$.

When the result of the previous election is such that the second and third largest parties control the same share of seats in the legislature then the closeness of political competition going into the current election, election t , is $\Lambda_t = 0$. The less close political competition between the second and third largest parties, the greater will be the value of Λ_t .

4.2.2 Measures of Changes in Voters' Preference Distribution

In measuring change in the distribution of voters' preferences, I consider two indicators. The first focuses on change in the distribution of the proportion of people who feel close or very close to a political party (ΔID). The second measures change in the percentage of the electorate that participate in the electoral decision (ΔTO).

This latter measure is simply the difference between the percentage of people who cast a ballot over adjacent elections:

$$\Delta TO = TO_t - TO_{t-1}$$

where, TO_t is the proportion of people who voted in the most recent election, election t , and TO_{t-1} is the proportion who voted in the previous election, election $t-1$.

A second measure of change in the distribution of voters' preferences is change in the age at which citizens are first entitled to vote (Δ_{age}). I use a dummy variable to identify those elections for which the age of enfranchisement was changed ($\Delta_{age} = 1$) and those where it remained the same ($\Delta_{age} = 0$).

When it comes to measuring change in the strength of partisanship (ΔID) I rely on *Eurobarometer* data published by Schmitt and Holmberg (1995). Schmitt and

Holmberg (1995, p.126) publish the yearly averages of the proportion of Eurobarometer respondents who feel very and fairly close to a political party for the period 1975-1992. The English language version of the question reads: 'do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party?' If so, 'do you feel yourself to be very close to this party, fairly close, or merely a sympathizer?' On a less regular basis, respondents were asked to identify the party they felt close to. They report percentages for all respondents aged 18 and older, use national representative weighting where available and classify 'don't knows' and 'no replies' as 'not close'. In those years where there are two Eurobarometer surveys they report an average percentage for the particular year.

The measure I use is the difference in the proportion of people who identify closely with a political party over adjacent elections:

$$\Delta ID = ID_t - ID_{t-1}$$

where, ID_t is the proportion of people who feel close to a political party in the year of the most recent election, election_t, and ID_{t-1} is the proportion of people who feel close to a political party in the year of the previous election, election_{t-1}.

I use published data because there are a number of issues with using this data to measure partisanship in Europe. Katz (1985, p.105) notes that 'the question wording in some languages has been changed at one time, or another, possibly within having been documented in the standard codebooks. Moreover, these changes may not have been made in all languages'. Sinnott (1998, p.630) argues that 'the real problem' is differences in the structure of questions. In some countries an 'absolute' version ('close to a party?') of the item is asked, in other countries a 'relative' version ('are closer to one party than to the others?') is asked and in others an 'ordinal' version ('feel strongly attached to a party, quite strongly attached or a sympathizer?') is asked. Sinnott (1998, p.635) finds that 'surveys in which the absolute question is used show a higher level of non-attachment than is found in the surveys using the relative question'. When comparing party attachment across countries it is important to be aware that 'these can only be approximate' (Sinnott, 1998, p.635).

4.2.3 Measures of Systemic and Institutional Contexts of the Electoral Decision

4.2.3.1 The Number of Political Parties

Lijphart (1994, p.67) observes ‘the practical problem in measuring the number of parties is how to count parties of unequal size and, in particular, how to count very small parties’. A simple method of counting political parties is to take account of all those that contest a particular election. Pedersen (1983, p.46) argues that all parties competing should be counted because ‘each party competing in the electoral campaign constitutes an option for the voter and should be counted as such’. However, this method is vulnerable to the criticism of giving equal weighting to very small and very large parties. Sartori (1976) argues that researchers should consider only relevant parties (i.e, those with ‘coalition’ potential or ‘blackmail’ potential). A problem with this method, as Mair (1991, p.42) highlights, is that the focus is on relevant-irrelevant parties. Mair (1991) himself opts for an approach that utilises a cut-off point (parties that do not normally poll more than one percent of the national poll are ignored). Yet, this is an arbitrary method of deciding between those parties to include and those to ignore.

Other methods of counting parties take account of their relative sizes. Such measures include Rae’s (1971) ‘index of party system fractionalisation’ and, the method that I opt for, Laakso and Taagepera’s (1979) ‘effective number of parties’.⁶ I calculate the effective number of parties (N_{eff}) according to the following:

$$N_{eff} = 1/(\sum s_i^2)$$

where s_i is the share of the seats in the legislature won by each party.

As well as being interested in the effective number of parties (N_{eff}), I also take into account change in the effective number of parties (ΔN_{eff}):

$$\Delta N_{eff} = N_{eff, t} - N_{eff, t-1}$$

⁶ While the measure is somewhat abstract, there is an intuitive difference between those systems where the effective number of parties is, say, 2.6, and those where it is, say, 6.2.

where, $N_{eff, t}$ is the effective number of parties in parliament as a result of the most recent election, election t , and $N_{eff, t-1}$ was the effective number of parties in parliament as a result of the previous election, election $t-1$.

In calculating the effective number of parties (N_{eff}) I use seat share rather than vote share. The problem with using vote share arises when I calculate change in the effective number of parties. If I used vote share, then for any one election the effective number of parties would be based on the distribution of vote share between the various parties. However, any change in the effective number of parties would be a consequence of change in the distribution of vote share amongst the parties. In other words, the change in the effective number of parties would be a consequence of electoral instability. Change in the effective number of parties would use the same data as the dependent variable, electoral instability. In other words, I would be using electoral instability to calculate both an independent and a dependent variable. The only difference would be in how electoral instability was treated (i.e. the formula applied). For this reason, I use seat share to calculate the effective number of parties though some might argue that this is also dependent on electoral instability. After all, shifts in the distribution of seat shares will result from electoral instability. However, these measures are somewhat removed from each other because electoral systems do not produce perfectly proportional outcomes (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, p.132). Changes in the distribution of seat share are not the same as changes in the distribution of vote share.

4.2.3.2 Proportionality of the Electoral Rules

I focus on the proportionality of the electoral rules when I describe the institutional context of the electoral decision. My main data source is Lijphart's (1994) *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A study of 27 democracies, 1945-1990*. Lijphart notes the decisive electoral formulae and the average district magnitudes in each of the eleven countries that I consider. Changes in these measures are also noted. Since his data set ends in 1990, I also consult Mackie and Rose (1991 and 1997), Caramani (2000) and Farrell (2001).

I consider two rankings of the proportionality of electoral formulae. The first ranking (${}^P P_{ef3}$) simply identifies those systems that use a proportional representation

formula, a mixed formula and a plurality formula. However, within the set of Proportional Representation (PR) formulae, some produce a more proportional allocation than others do. Consequently, I consider a second ranking of electoral formulae (P_{ef4}) that ranks the various PR formulae in terms of the expected proportionality of their outcomes.

In all three rankings of electoral systems that I consider, the least proportional of the electoral rules is the first-past-the-post system used in the UK. In each constituency, the candidate with the most votes wins the one available seat. The rules pay no heed to the proportionality of the allocation of seats to vote share⁷ (Sartori, 1994, p.54; Lijphart, 1984, p.150; Cox, 1997, p.56).

In order to differentiate between the proportionality of the various PR formulae I use Lijphart's (1994) expert ranking in order to differentiate between the proportionality of these formulae.⁸ According to Lijphart's (1994) ranking LR-Hare produces the most proportional outcome. Under a Largest Remainder (LR) (or Quota method) formula, political parties are given as many seats as they have quotas. The most proportional method of calculating a quota is the Hare method. This formula divides the number of valid votes cast by the number of seats available in the district. As such it is indifferent between large and small parties and produces closely proportional results (Lijphart, 1994, p.24).

⁷ Consequently, the 'strong' are over-represented while the 'weak' are under-represented. Noonan (1954, p.32; also see Bawn (1993, p.967)) notes that when single-member districts are used small parties are disadvantaged: 'minorities usually come away short-changed and significant sections of public opinion are thus prevented from securing parliamentary representation in proportion to their existence in the country'. That majoritarian rules work against small parties has led many to consider a vote for such a party a wasted vote. There is a long association between the concept of the wasted vote and plurality systems. In 1869, Henry Droop recognised the logic of the strategic vote under conditions of single-vote plurality-rule elections held in single-member districts: 'As success depends upon obtaining a majority of the aggregate votes of all electors, and election is usually reduced to a contest between the two most popular candidates...Even if other candidates go to the poll, the electors usually find out that their votes will be thrown away, unless given in favour of one or the other parties between whom the election really lies' (quoted in Riker, 1982, p.756). Duverger (1964, p.226; also see Black (1978, pp612-613)) offers two theoretical reasons for this. The first is a 'psychological factor' that occurs when voters realise that their votes are 'wasted' on a third party. The second is a 'mechanical effect' where all but the two strongest parties are underrepresented. Also see Schattschneider (1942, p.75; quoted in Riker, 1986, p.26) who outlined the affect plurality has on parties other than the leading party.

⁸ Blondel also produced a ranking of electoral formulae in terms of their proportionality. In his ranking the most proportional is S.T.V., then Sainte-Lague, D'Hondt and finally the Largest Remainder formulae (reproduced in Lijphart, 1986, p.171). I use Lijphart's ranking of electoral because unlike Blondel he separates out the largest remainder formulae. In Blondel's ranking the LR formulae are classified as the least proportional. For Lijphart one of the Largest Remainder formulae, LR-Imperiali, produces less proportional results than the others. Of the other two, LR-Droop forms a middle category while LR-Hare is regarded as the formula that produces the most proportional election results.

Of the PR formulae, d'Hondt (a highest average method) and Imperiali (a largest remainders method) produce the least proportional allocations of seats to votes. Duverger (1964, p.253) regards the d'Hondt system as the least proportional of the PR formulae as it systematically favours the larger parties. The d'Hondt method uses a series of divisors (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on) to calculate the number of votes required to win a seat. The party with the most votes wins the first seat as it has the highest ratio of those divided by 1. The 'ratio' for the party winning the first seat now has a divisor 2 while all others retain the divisor 1; and so on until all of the seats have been allocated. Under the Imperiali system, the quota is calculated by dividing the number of valid votes by the number of seats (district magnitude)-plus-two (Lijphart, 1994, p.23; Cox, 1997, pp56-57).⁹ According to Lijphart (1994, p.23) 'the use of these lower quotas means that there will be fewer remaining seats to be allocated- and hence also more wastage of remaining votes, which is especially harmful to the smaller parties and results in a decrease in proportionality'.

Lijphart (1994, p.23) also identifies an intermediate category of PR formulae. This category includes modified Sainte-Lague (divisor method), LR-Droop (quota method) and STV (in Ireland a Droop quota is calculated). Sainte-Lague in its 'pure' form uses the odd-integer divisor series (1, 3, 5, etc) and is held to approximate proportionality quite closely; treating large and small parties even-handedly. The Droop quota is calculated by dividing the valid vote by $M+1$. All of the above electoral formulae are used in at least one of the eleven countries that I consider.

As well as ranking electoral systems in terms of the proportionality of the electoral formulae, I also rank the various party systems in terms of the proportionality of district magnitudes (0P_M). District magnitude refers to the number of representatives elected from a particular district (Rae, 1971, pp19-22). Katz (1980, p.21) argues that the relationship between the proportionality of the electoral outcome and electoral formulae is 'spurious'. Those systems that return only one representative per district produce the least proportional outcomes. The proportionality of the electoral system increases as district magnitude increases¹⁰ (Lijphart, 1994, p.11).

⁹ Under the reinforced Imperiali system, the quota is calculated by dividing the number of valid votes by district magnitude-plus-three.

¹⁰ According to Rae (1971, p.21) the proportionality of electoral systems are influenced by district magnitudes: the more seats there are available to be won in a district the greater the degree of proportionality. Cox (1997, p.56) states that 'larger district magnitudes typically make the system more proportional'.

As well as describing the institutional context in terms of the proportionality of the electoral formulae and district magnitude, I also measure the proportionality of the electoral outcome. There are a number of measures of proportionality, all of which begin by noting the differences between the percentage of the votes received by the different parties and the percentage of the seats allocated to each of the parties. The various measures diverge on the issue of how to aggregate these differences (Lijphart, 1994, pp57-58). The index that I use is that proposed by Gallagher (Γ):

$$\Gamma = [\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i - s_i)^2]^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

where, v_i is the percentage of the vote won by party i and s_i is the percentage of the seats in the national legislature that party i won.

Lijphart (1994, p.62) favours this index because it ‘registers a few large deviations much more strongly than a lot of small ones’¹¹ (Lijphart, 1994, p.60-61).

In Chapter 7, I calculate an average of the Gallagher Index (Γ^m) for each set of rules. When the electoral rules change, I calculate a new average for this set of rules. This allows me to compare the proportionality of electoral outcomes across countries and within countries.

4.2.4 Measures of Policy Change

In order to measure change in policy positions I use data published in conjunction with Budge et al.’s (2001) *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945-1998*. The data describes the contents of parties’

¹¹ Other measures of proportionality include those suggest by Rae (1971) and Loosemore and Hanby (1971). The measure proposed by Rae uses the average of the deviations between vote and seat share. The problem with Rae’s measure is that it is overly sensitive to the presence of small parties. Lijphart (1994, p.58) states that Rae’s index tends to ‘understate the disproportionality of systems with many small parties, and, as a result, tends to understate the disproportionality of PR systems which generally have more small parties than non-PR systems’. In an attempt to avoid this problem Rae introduces an arbitrary cut-off point and disregards parties that win less than 0.5 percent of the vote. (Lijphart, 1994, p.58) The index developed by Loosemore and Hanby calculates the total percentage by which the over-represented parties are over-represented. The index is calculated by again summing the absolute values of all vote-share differences and dividing by two (rather than the number of parties as Rae does). (Lijphart, 1994, p.60) According to Lijphart (1994, p.60) this index ‘tends to err in the opposite direction of exaggerating disproportionality of systems with many parties- and hence overstating the disproportionality of PR systems’.

election programmes according to a classification scheme devised by the MRG. The coding scheme contains seven basic domains that are common sets of categories covering broad areas of political debate (i.e., external relations, freedom and democracy, government, economy, welfare and quality of life, fabric of society and social groups) (Budge et al, 1987, pp456-458). Each domain contains a number of issue categories; there are 56 different issue categories in the scheme used here.¹²

A number of policy dimensions using MRG data have been developed. Laver and Budge (1992) identify 26 coding categories that go into their Left-Right scale. Their scale groups together a number of 'Left' policy categories and a number of 'Right' categories. They estimate party positions on this scale by summing the percentage of the manifesto given to the 13 'Left' items and subtracting from this the sum of 13 'Right' items. The difference indicates whether a party lies to the 'Left' or to the 'Right' (Laver and Budge, 1992, pp25-30; Budge and Klingemann, 2001, p.21).

Laver and Garry (1998) proposed two further dimensions. The first is a dimension that contrasts concerns for state intervention with capitalist economics and negative mentions of welfare. The second dimension treats social and cultural values as a separate liberal versus conservative aspect of Left-Right politics (McDonald and Mendes, 2001, p.130). In Table 4.1, I present the items used to construct the three dimensions that I use in Chapter 8.¹³

¹² See Budge et al (1987 and 2001) and Janda et al (1995) for a more detailed elaboration on the work of the Manifesto Research Group.

¹³ Other scales include Budge and Robertson's (1987, p.404) scale that identifies a 'left-wing isolationism' position and a 'capitalist traditionalist' position, as well as Bartolini and Mair's (1990) measure which focuses on economic matters.

Table 4.1: MRG Items used in the Construction of Three Policy Scales [Source: McDonald and Mendes (2001, pp132-134)]

MRG Scale	Left		MRG Scale	Right	
	Laver and Garry Economic Scale	Laver and Garry Social Scale ¹		Laver and Garry Economic Scale	Laver and Garry Social Scale
Decolonization	Regulation of Capitalism	Constitutionalism (Con)	Military (Pro)	Free Enterprise	Constitutionalism (Pro)
Military (Con)	Economic Planning	Government Corruption	Constitutionalism (Pro)	Incentives	Government Authority
Peace	Protectionism (Pro)	National Way of Life (Con)	Freedom and Human Rights	Protectionism (Con)	National Way of Life (Pro)
Internationalism (Pro)	Controlled Economy	Traditional Morality (Con)	Government Authority	Economic Orthodoxy	Traditional Morality (Pro)
Democracy	Nationalisation		Free Enterprise	Welfare (Con)	Law and Order
Regulation of Capitalism			Incentives		Social Harmony
Economic Planning			Protectionism (Con)		
Protectionism (Pro)			Economic Orthodoxy		
Controlled Economy			Welfare (Con)		
Nationalisation			National Way of Life (Pro)		
Welfare (Pro)			Traditional Morality (Pro)		
Education (Pro)			Law and Order		
Labour Groups (Pro)			Social Harmony		

¹ Given that there is an unequal number of 'Left' and 'Right' items the scores for the latter set of items was calculated by summing the percentages for the six items and then weighted by multiplying by 4/6.

To estimate party positions on each dimension, I adopt three methods of doing so. The first method uses the raw positions estimated on each dimension (Pp_i), while the other two methods use smoothing techniques. I use these smoothing techniques for a number of reasons. First, one individual codes each manifesto. While coder reliability tests are used, there is an unknown error around the percentages of the manifesto devoted to a particular category. Second, there is an element of a time-series in the policy positions adopted by the various parties. In order to appear (somewhat) consistent over time, the positions adopted by a party at the previous election are likely to influence the positions taken at the next election. The smoothing techniques that I use are n -period moving averages. I use a three-point moving average because the greater n is the more cases I lose at either end of each country's time period. The method I use to calculate the moving average influences whether I lose two cases at the beginning of the period in each country, or at either end of the period. The two methods that I use are a three point moving average:

$$\xi Pp_{i,t} = (Pp_{i,t-2} + Pp_{i,t-1} + Pp_{i,t})/3$$

and a centred three point moving average:

$$\psi Pp_{i,t} = (Pp_{i,t-1} + Pp_{i,t} + Pp_{i,t+1})/3$$

where, $Pp_{i,t}$ is the policy position of party i at a particular election, election $_t$, $Pp_{i,t-1}$ is the policy position of party i at the previous election, election $_{t-1}$, and $Pp_{i,t+1}$ is the policy position of party i at the subsequent election, election $_{t+1}$, and so on.

In the first case, the three point moving average (ξPp_i), the average position is dependent on the party's position at the two previous elections as well as its position at election $_t$. In the case of the centred three point moving average (ψPp_i), the mean position at election $_t$ depends on the position of the party at that election as well as the party's position at the previous election (election $_{t-1}$) and its position at the subsequent election (election $_{t+1}$). This second method of calculating a moving average does not suggest that at the time of election $_t$ voters weigh the position of the party according to a position it had yet to adopt. Rather, the technique I employ removes some of the

error, or short-term volatility, that is present in the time-series when all positions are known. In examining the relationship between stability and change in the party system and the actions of the leading political parties, I consider change in policy positions estimated using these smoothing methods and using raw scores on each dimension.

In Chapter 3 I note that policy change is measured relative to two different points: the positions of the median voters (V^{med}) and the long-term positions of the large parties (P^l). The long-term position of each party is simply the median position of the party for the period in question.

I calculate the position of the median voter for each election using the available information about the position of each of the parties on the particular policy dimension and the share of the vote that it won at that election. The method that I use is similar to that used for calculating the median within a class interval (Barrow, 1988, p.20). I begin by ordering the parties in terms of their policy positions from left to right. Then I calculate the cumulative vote share won by the parties from the left-most positioned party to the right-most positioned party. I then identify the party for which the inclusion of their vote share results in the cumulative vote share passing/or equal to 50 percent. The median voter lies within the policy space occupied by this party.

For instance, assume that Party M is located at m on the policy dimension. The share of the vote won by Party M is equal to v_m . There are other parties to the left of party, and the cumulative share of the vote won by this parties is $\Sigma v_{a>l}$ (i.e., the sum of vote shares won by all parties from the left-most party, Party A, to the party that is positioned to the left and adjacent to Party M, Party L). The cumulative share of the vote won by these parties is less than 50 percent, that is:

$$\Sigma v_{a>l} < 50\%$$

When I include Party M in the cumulative vote share, the share of the vote won by these parties is greater than/or equal to 50 percent, that is:

$$\Sigma v_{a>m} = \Sigma v_{a>l} + v_m \geq 50\%$$

The proximity model assumes that voters opt for the party closest to their own preferred position. This assumption implies that voters' positioned on both the left and the right of a party's policy position may opt for the same party. The policy space

occupied by Party M extends to the halfway positions between the estimated position of Party M (m) and the estimated positions of the adjacent parties to its left (λ) and to its right (ρ).

The formula that I use to calculate the position of the median voter is:

$$V^{med} = \lambda + [\rho - \lambda] * [(50 - \sum v_{a < m}) / v_m]$$

where, λ is the halfway point between the estimated policy positions of Party M and Party L, ρ is the half-way point between the estimated positions of Party M and Party R, $\sum v_{a < m}$ is the cumulative share of the vote won by all of the parties to the left of Party M and v_m is the share of the vote won by Party M.

To calculate change in policy position of the set of leading parties I aggregate each individual leading party's policy change. I begin, by measuring the distance between each party's policy position on the given dimension and the particular reference point (i.e., the point from which distance is measured). Then I measure the change in those distances for adjacent elections. Finally, for the parties that constitute the set of leading parties, I aggregate the changes in policy distance.

When the reference point is the position of the median voter in each election, change in a party's policy position relative to the position of the median voter (ΔPp^{med}) is:

$$\Delta Pp_a^{med} = (Pp_{a,t+1} - V_{t+1}^{med}) - (Pp_{a,t} - V_t^{med})$$

where, $Pp_{a,t}$ is the position of party a (p_a) at election $_t$, $Pp_{a,t+1}$ is the position of party a (p_a) at election $_{t+1}$ while V_{t+1}^{med} and V_t^{med} are the positions of the median voters at these elections.

Change in the policy positions of the set of leading parties relative to the voters' median positions is:

$$\Sigma \Delta Pp^{med} = \Delta Pp_a^{med} + \Delta Pp_b^{med}$$

where, ΔPp_a^{med} is change in party a 's (p_a) policy position relative to the positions of the median voters over two adjacent elections while ΔPp_b^{med} is change in party b 's (p_b) policy position over the same two adjacent elections relative to the positions of the median voters.

When the reference point is the long-term policy position of a leading party, change in a party's policy position relative to the long-term position of the leading party (ΔPp^{lt}) is:

$$= (Pp_{a,t+1} - P_a^{lt}) - (Pp_{a,t} - P_a^{lt})$$

where, $Pp_{a,t}$ is the position of party a (p_a) at election $_t$, $Pp_{a,t+1}$ is the position of party a (p_a) at election $_{t+1}$ and P_a^{lt} is the long-term policy position of party a (p_a).

Change in the policy positions of the set of leading parties relative to their own long-term policy positions is:

$$\Sigma \Delta Pp^{lt} = \Delta Pp_a^{lt} + \Delta Pp_b^{lt}$$

where, ΔPp_a^{lt} is change in party a 's (p_a) policy position over two adjacent elections relative to its own long-term position while ΔPp_b^{lt} is change in party b 's (p_b) policy position over the same two adjacent elections relative to their own long-term policy positions.

For instance, suppose the position of the median voter is at the centre of the policy dimension, that is, zero. At election $_t$, on a policy dimension, Party A has a position of to the left, say -8 , while Party B has a position to the right, say $+4$. This means that the distance from Party A to the position of the median voter is 8 and the distance from the position of the median voter to Party B is 4. At the next election, election $_{t+1}$, Party A adopts a position closer to that of the median voter (again positioned at the centre of the policy dimension), say -6 , while Party B also adopts a position closer to that of the median voter, say $+2$. At election $_{t+1}$, both Party A and Party B are closer to the position of the median voter than they were at election $_t$. In

other words, both Party A and Party B have converged on the position of the median voter. The net shift in policy position is negative, in this case -4 . If however, the distance between the parties and the position of the median voter was greater at election_{t+1} than it was at election_t, both parties will have diverged from the position of the median voter (the net policy shift in this case will be positive). However, it may happen that one party converges on the positions of the median voter while the other diverges from these positions. In these cases, the aggregate shift indicates whether the net change in policy of the two leading parties converges on, or diverges from, the position of the median voter.

4.3 Basic Methods of Data Analysis

In addressing the relationships between the stability and change in the party system and the explanations I outline in the previous chapter, I begin by using bi-variate methods of analysis. Doing so allows me to explore in depth the association between each of the explanations that I consider and the party system. In each chapter, I first examine the various explanations of shifts in support for the set of leading parties. Then I discuss the contribution of a particular explanation to my understanding of stability and change in the choice available to voters.

I use One-Way ANOVA when testing the relationship between shifts in support for the set of leading parties and a variable that contains three or more categories. I use this method when I compare average shifts in support of the set of leading parties across the rank orderings of the electoral formulae, district magnitudes, the proportionality of electoral outcomes under given sets of rules and the effective number of parties. One-Way ANOVA allows me to test whether three or more means are significantly different from each other. The null hypothesis is that all of the mean shifts in support for the set of leading parties are the same while the alternative hypothesis is that at least one mean is different from the others. On the one hand, if these means are significantly different from each other, then variation in the explanatory variable has a systematic effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. On the other hand, if they are not significantly different, the effect of one state of the explanatory variable on shifts in support for the set of leading parties is not

different from the effect of another state. In other words, variation in the explanatory variable does not have a systematic effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties.

When I have only two categories, I examine whether the mean shifts in support are significantly different from each other. I generally compare two means when dealing with continuous variables such as change in turnout or change in the proportion of people who feel close to a political party. Doing so allows me to compare the average shifts in support for the set of leading parties when a variable increases and when it decreases. It allows for a substantive discussion of the relationship between these variables. That said, when I examine the association between shifts in support for the set of leading parties and changes in policy position I rely on estimating correlation coefficients. As is evident from the above discussion, I consider three policy dimensions, three ways of estimating policy positions on each dimension and two points from which to measure change. Presenting correlation coefficients is a more efficient way of examining the relationship between these two variables.

In Chapter 9, I present two multi-variate models of stability and change in the party system. I present two models because I consider two measures of stability and change in the party system. The first, shifts in support for the set of leading parties, is a continuous variable. I use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Analysis to analyse this model (Brown, 1991). My model is a linear additive causal relationship between shifts in support for the set of leading parties and change in the distribution of voters' preferences, the context of the electoral decision and the actions of the leading political parties.

The second is a binary measure of stability and change in the composition of the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. Stability in the choice available to voters is coded 0 while change in the choice is coded 1. In order to test a model with a binary dependent variable I analyse the data using Binary Logistic Regression Analysis. The most serious problem with using OLS with a binary dependent variable is that the predicted value of the dependent variable will fall outside the required range (0, 1). When the predicted value for an election is greater than 0.50, I interpret this as the model predicting change while predicted values that are less than 0.50 are interpreted as predicting stability (Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1998).

Ideally, I would test the relationship between these two variables and the three explanations of party system stability and change using path analysis (Schumacker and Lomax, 1996). The first multivariate model that I test examines the effect of variation in the three explanations on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The second model examines the effects of variation in the aspects of the electoral decision, and shifts in support for the set of leading parties, on stability and change in the choice available to voters. I expect these three explanations to have both direct effects on the choice available to voters, and indirect effects that are mediated through shifts in support for the set of leading parties. If the choice available to voters was measured using a continuous variable, I would be able to use OLS Regression Analysis. This would allow me to use Path Analysis and calculate the direct and indirect effects of these variables on the choice available to voters.

4.4 Pooled Cross-Sectional Time-Series Data

A cross-sectional research design is one that compares across 'space' (i.e. the eleven countries). One example of such a research design would be to compare the roles of prime ministers in a number of countries. A time-series involves measuring change over time within a single country. An example of this would be support for the various political parties. I compare across both time and space. The data I use are cross-sections of time-series because 'the data are characterized by having repeated observations on fixed units' (Beck and Katz, 1995, p.634; also see Stimson, 1985, p.918). The structure of my data is a pooled cross-section because I group together into a single analysis data from eleven countries. It is a time-series because I consider successive elections within each country for the period 1950-1999. The first case in each country is the first election to take place in the 1950s, while the last case considered for each country is the last election of the 1990s.

A research design that considers both space and time presents a number of opportunities, but also requires caution in the methods employed:

'Pooling data gathered across both units and time points can be an extraordinarily robust research design, allowing the study of causal

dynamics across multiple cases, where the potential cause may even appear at different times in different cases. Many of the possible threats to valid inference are specific to either cross-sectional or time-series design, and many of them can be jointly controlled by incorporating both space and time into the analysis' (Stimson, 1985, p.916).

Stimson (1985, p.945) concludes that despite the complications of dealing with space and time together, doing so 'carries with it the possibility of insights into the political world... that make it sometimes worth its price'.

4.4.1 Space: Panel-Corrected Standard Errors

In Chapter 9, the first multi-variate model that I test has shifts in support for the set of leading parties as its dependent variable. Beck and Katz (1995) advise that in using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Analysis to estimate the parameter estimates the OLS standard-errors should be replaced by panel-corrected standard-errors. When using time-series cross-sectional data, Beck and Katz (1995, p.636) note that 'there is no guarantee that the OLS standard errors will be correct'. As Stimson (1985, p.921) notes the problem with using OLS is that it 'does not recognize a structure of N units at T times as anything more than NT independent cases'. Moreover, OLS does not produce a 'unit-specific measure of heteroscedasticity, and its standard indicators of autocorrelation (e.g., Durbin-Watson) are inappropriate (and biased against significance)' (Stimson, 1985, p.921). If the standard errors are incorrect the results will lead political scientists 'to be either too confident or insufficiently confident about whether our findings might merely be statistical artifacts' (Beck and Katz, 1995, p.636).

The method that Beck and Katz (1995) propose provides panel-corrected standard errors. The correction that Beck and Katz (1995, p.638) implement corrects that standard errors by taking into account:

'the contemporaneous correlation of the errors (and perforce heteroscedasticity). Any serial correlation of the errors must be eliminated before the panel-corrected standard errors are calculated. The

correction for contemporaneous correlation of the errors is only possible because we have repeated information on the contemporaneous correlation of the errors’.

Beck and Katz (1995, p.645) conclude that ‘the combination of OLS with PCSEs [Panel Corrected Standard-Errors] allows for accurate estimation of variability in the presence of panel error structures’.

4.4.2 Time: Duration Since Last Occurrence

In Chapter 9, stability and change in the choice available to voters is the dependent variable in the second multivariate model that I test. Stability and change in the choice available to voters is a binary variable. That is, a particular election either resulted in change in the choice available to voters or it did not. The binary nature of the dependent variable requires that I test this model using Binary Logistic Regression Analysis.

Beck et al. (1998, p.1261) note that it is unlikely that time-series – cross-sectional data with a binary dependent variable (BTSCS) will meet the assumption of temporal independence that binary logistic regression analysis requires. In order to deal with this issue, Beck et al. (1998, p.1261) propose adding a series of dummy variables that ‘mark the number of periods (usually years) since either the start of the sample period or the previous occurrence of an “event” such as war’. The inclusion of these dummy variables in the model ‘corrects for temporally dependent observations’ (Beck et al., 1998, p.1261). In the model that I test, each dummy variable represents the number of elections since the beginning of the period (i.e., 1950) or since the last change in the choice available to voters. That said, before including the dummy variables it is important to establish whether the observations are temporally independent or dependent. If they are temporally independent then including the dummy variables may introduce unnecessary multicollinearity (Beck et al, 1998, p.1269).

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the type of data I consider, the sources of this data and the empirical methods I employ to analyse this data. I begin my analysis in the next chapter by examining the relationship between stability and change in the choice available to voters and electoral instability. Then I turn my attention to the relationship between shifts in support for the set of leading parties and variables describing changes in the distribution of voters' preferences, the systemic and institutional contexts of elections and the actions of the leading parties. In my penultimate chapter, I bring all of these variables together into a single model of stability and change in the choice available to voters.

Chapter 5

Stability and Change in the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to European Voters

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine my first explanation of stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government (ΔL). This explanation focuses on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. Electoral instability has been the focus of numerous studies and has been approached from a variety of different angles (Rose and Urwin, 1970; Pedersen, 1979 and 1983; Maguire, 1983; Wolinetz, 1988; and Bartolini and Mair, 1990). Rather than electoral instability being an end in itself, I expect it to have an effect on the choice of potential government leaders available to voters.

In order to win seats in parliament a party needs to first win votes. It is reasonable to expect that shifts in vote share will alter the partisan distribution of seat share in the legislature. When the leading parties protect their vote shares this is likely to result in party system stability. However, when the leading parties fail to protect their vote share these losses may result in a change to the choice of potential leaders of government.

As Mair (2002, p.101) notes, while both of these forms of party system stability and change may be related, the choice available to voters need not always be transformed by electoral instability. In a way I am examining whether one form of party system stability and change, electoral instability, explains another form of party system stability and change, change in the composition of the set of leading parties. As I outlined in Chapter 1, shifts in electoral support and change in the composition of this set of parties are types of party system change.

I begin in Section 5.2 by examining changes in electoral support for parties in eleven European countries. As I outline in Chapter 1, my first task is to establish if shifts occur in support for the set of potential leaders of government (ΔV_L). The

model that I test takes account of all of the electoral instability within the party system at a particular election. Rather than using a single measure of electoral instability (i.e., total volatility), I break it up into its constituent parts. The first part measures shifts in support for the set of leading parties. This measure captures change in the popularity of the parties that constitute the choice available to voters. When support for the set of leading parties changes it can be due to an increase (or decrease) in support for both leading parties or it can be due to support for one leading party increasing while that for the other decreases. This latter point highlights the role of the second part of total volatility, electoral instability within each of the sets of parties (ΔV_{Lwb} and ΔV_{Cwb}).

My second task is to examine if the party system is responsive to political competition. In the final part of this section I examine whether or not there is an association between change in the choice available to voters and electoral instability.

While my main focus is on the relationship between the choice available to voters and electoral instability, the effects of electoral instability on the choice available to voters may be dampened by the closeness of political competition (Λ_i). Closeness of political competition refers to the gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the legislature. This is the minimum distance that needs to be bridged if change in the choice available to voters is to occur. In the final part of this section, I examine whether or not there is a systematic relationship between stability and change in the choice available to voters and the closeness of political competition.

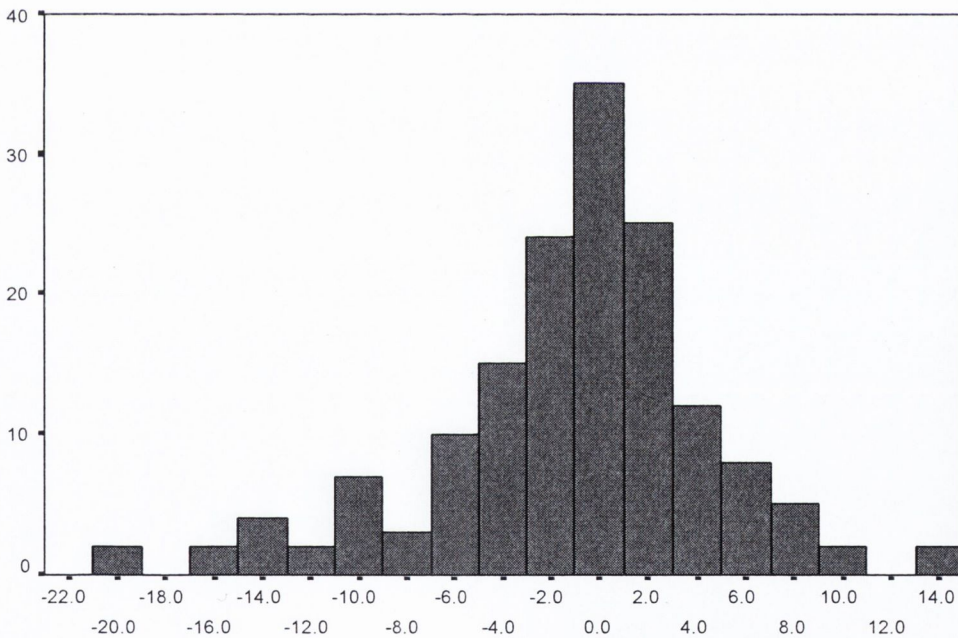
In Section 5.4 I outline a number of cases of change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. I do not do so in Section 5.2 or Section 5.3 because of the complex inter-relationship between shifts in support for the set of leading parties, electoral instability in each of the sets of parties and the closeness of political competition. Finally, I also consider examples of how these factors contribute to an understanding of stability in the choice available to voters.

5.2 Electoral Instability in European Party Systems

5.2.1 Shifts in Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The first question I address is whether support for the set of potential leaders of government generally increases or decreases (ΔV_L). Figure 5.1 is a histogram of the shifts in electoral support for the sets of leading parties. While the histogram is not perfectly symmetrical, the distribution suggests that, in general, gains made by the sets of leading parties are cancelled out by losses. A closer look at Figure 5.1 suggests that the distribution is skewed to the right. On average the sets of leading parties lose vote share (a mean of -1.24 and a median of -0.50).

Figure 5.1: Histogram of Shifts in Support for Sets of Potential Leaders of Government (ΔV_L , 1950-1999 ($N = 158$))



In Table 5.1 I present the average shifts in support for the sets of leading parties in each country when support for these parties increases and when it decreases. When support for the set of potential leaders of government increases, on average it increases by about three percentage points (a mean of 3.5 and a median of 2.3).

However, when support for this set of parties decreases, on average it falls by four percentage points (a mean of 4.9 and a median of 3.2).

Across the eleven countries, average losses by the set of leading parties are generally greater than average gains. In only two countries is the opposite the case, that is, the average gains are greater than the average losses. In one of these countries, Germany, the set of leading parties has remained stable. Moreover, the average gains made by the set of leading parties in Germany is greater than the average gains made by sets of leading parties in any of the other ten countries. In the UK, another country in which the choice available to voters is stable, while on average the gains made by the set of parties is less than the average losses, the average gains made by the set of leading parties are the second highest of the eleven countries. In Ireland and Austria, the other two countries in which the choice available to voters has remained the same, the average gains made by the sets of leading parties are less than average gains for all cases (that is 3.5).

Table 5.1: Mean Shifts in Support for the Sets of Potential Leaders of Government (ΔV_L) in Each Country, 1950-1999, (standard errors) (N = 158)

Country	Gains	Losses
Germany	4.68 (1.60)	2.84 (1.07)
<i>Number of elections</i>	8	5
UK	4.34 (0.95)	5.33 (2.04)
<i>Number of elections</i>	5	7
Norway	4.18 (2.05)	8.70 (2.60)
<i>Number of elections</i>	6	5
Belgium	4.18 (1.25)	5.86 (1.51)
<i>Number of elections</i>	6	10
Sweden	3.80 (1.43)	3.13 (0.70)
<i>Number of elections</i>	5	11
Netherlands	3.56 (1.59)	5.87 (2.77)
<i>Number of elections</i>	5	7
Ireland	3.48 (1.02)	4.30 (2.32)
<i>Number of elections</i>	9	6
Denmark	2.79 (0.93)	4.69 (1.35)
<i>Number of elections</i>	7	13
Italy	2.73 (0.33)	5.31 (2.16)
<i>Number of elections</i>	3	8
Austria	2.11 (0.78)	6.25 (1.86)
<i>Number of elections</i>	7	6
Finland	1.70 (0.47)	3.64 (0.78)
<i>Number of elections</i>	5	9

Sweden is the only other country in which average gains are greater than average losses. In Sweden, the choice available to voters has changed on a number of occasions. In Denmark and Finland, the other two countries where the choice available to voters has changed after a number of elections, the average gains by the sets of leading parties less than the average losses. Moreover, these average gains are less than three percentage points.

In Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, change in the choice available to voters occurs for the first time in the 1990s. In all four countries the average gains by the sets of leading parties are less than the average losses. That said, in Norway and Belgium when there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties, on average the increase is by more than four percentage points. It should be noted though that when there is a drop in support for the set of leading parties in Norway it falls on average by more than eight percentage points. In Italy and the Netherlands, average gains for the sets of leading parties are less than four percentage points while average losses are by more than five percentage points.

In just under half of the elections that I consider, support for both leading parties either increased or decreased. In Table 5.2, I present the average shifts in support for this set of parties when support for both parties either increases or decreases. In the next section, I focus on electoral instability within the set of leading parties (as well as within the set of smaller challenging parties).

Table 5.2: Mean Shift in Vote Share of Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_L) when both Gain/Lose Vote Share, 1950-1999 (standard errors)

	Mean Shift in Vote Share	N
Both Large Parties Lose Vote Share	-7.38*** (0.75)	45
Both Large Parties Gain Vote Share	5.20*** (0.62)	26

*** The mean values are different from each other at $p < 0.01$

In over a quarter of elections there is a decrease in support for the both leading parties. There is an increase in support for both parties in a sixth of cases. In the remaining 87 cases, support for one of the leading parties increases while that for the other party decreases.

When both leading parties lose vote share, on average, support for this set of parties drops by about seven percentage points. When both leading parties increase

their share of the vote, on average, there is about a five-percentage point increase in support for the set of leading parties. Again it is clear that while the set of leading parties do make electoral gains, on average these gains are less than the average losses.

It is clear that support for the set of leading parties both increases and decreases. From one election to the next, the popularity of the parties that form the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters both increases and decreases. However, the general pattern is one of a loss of support by the set of potential leaders of government. At the European level, it is evident that when there is a change in support for the set of leading parties, these parties, on average, lose vote share. From the point of view of individual countries, generally, average losses by the set of leading parties are greater than average gains.

5.2.2 Electoral Instability Within Sets of Parties in Europe

In just over half of the elections (87 elections) support for one of the potential leaders of government increases while support for the other decreases. On average, when support for one of the leading parties' increases and support for the other decreases, support for the set of potential leaders of government decreases by less than half-a-percentage point. In 42 of these elections, there is a decrease in support for the set of leading parties, and the average loss of vote share is about 2.3 percentage points. In 40 of the 87 elections, there is an increase in support for this set of parties, and the average gain is about 2.3 percentage points. In the other five cases, the shift in support for the set of leading parties was negligible.

In Table 5.3, I present the average levels of electoral instability within each set of leading parties (ΔV_{Lwb}) by country as well as instability within each set of smaller challenging parties (ΔV_{Cwb}). If electoral instability within the set of leading parties reflects competition between the set of potential leaders of government to be the strongest party, then this competition is most open in Ireland. This suggests that when support for one of the Irish leading parties increases (while that for the other party decreases), on average, over three percentage points of that increase is won from the other leading party. In Ireland the two leading parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, have not formed a coalition government together and each presents itself as a potential

leader of government. However, in other countries both leading parties have been members of the same government: Austria (7 governments), Belgium (9 governments), Finland (6 governments) and the Netherlands (5 governments). These countries account for the four lowest average levels of electoral instability within the set of potential leaders of government. As such then it might be argued that competition in these countries to be the leading party is less intense.

Table 5.3: Mean Shift in Vote Share Within the Sets of Parties by Country, 1950-1999 (standard errors)

Country	Within the Set of Two Largest Parties (ΔV_{Lwb})	Within the Set of Smaller Parties (ΔV_{Cwb})	Min N
Ireland	3.43 (0.71)	3.34 (0.46)	7
Denmark	2.62 (0.64)	5.74 (0.69)	9
Italy	2.44 (0.60)	11.54 (2.27)	8
UK	2.41 (0.92)	1.81 (1.11)	9
Germany	2.18 (0.52)	3.28 (0.78)	9
Norway	2.11 (0.54)	4.93 (0.87)	7
Sweden	2.05 (0.48)	3.13 (0.59)	8
Finland	1.84 (0.84)	5.26 (1.07)	7
Netherlands	1.74 (0.47)	5.02 (1.27)	7
Austria	1.56 (0.35)	1.19 (0.33)	9
Belgium	1.16 (0.35)	2.94 (0.56)	7

NOTE: With the set of leading parties, I exclude cases where support for both leading parties' either increases or decreases. When this happens, volatility within the set of leading parties (ΔV_{Lwb}) is equal to zero.

In Table 5.3, I also present the average levels of electoral instability within the other set of parties. Of the eleven countries that I consider, the set of smaller challenging parties in Italy stands out as being the least stable. I am less willing to speculate as to the causes of this instability. It may be that this instability reflects competition between the smaller parties to be the largest challenger to the set of leading parties. Given the large number of parties in this set it is quite probable that a substantial part of this volatility is a consequence of parties of a similar ideological orientation competing with one another (Bartolini and Mair, 1990).

5.2.3 Hypotheses: Relationship between Choice Available to Voters and Electoral Instability

The first explanation that I consider focuses on the effect of electoral instability on the choice available to voters (L). In order to examine the relationship I divide electoral instability into two parts: shifts in support for the set of leading parties (ΔV_L) and electoral instability within each of the sets of parties (ΔV_{Lwb} and ΔV_{Cwb}). Change in the choice available to voters (ΔL) is often a consequence of both of these aspects of overall electoral instability (or total volatility) working together (See Chapter 3).

The first measure focuses on changes in the proportion of the electorate willing to vote for one of the potential leaders of government (ΔV_L). The first aim of the two leading parties is to maintain, if not strengthen, their electoral support so that they can retain their position at the head of the party system. The smaller challenging parties compete to win vote share from the set of leading parties, and as a consequence a large enough share of the seats in the legislature to enter the set of potential leaders of government. The second aim of the leading parties is to be the largest party in the legislature (the largest party is more likely to lead government than the second largest party). This introduces the second measure of electoral instability: electoral interchange within the set of leading parties. While it is difficult to interpret instability within the set of leading parties, it is possible that it reflects competition between the two leading parties to be the largest party in the legislature.

The first hypothesis that I test examines the relationship between change in the choice available to voters (ΔL) and shifts in support for the set of leading parties (ΔV_L). When there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties, it is reasonable to expect that they will win more seats in the legislature and this will strengthen their position at the head of the party system. However, when there is a drop in support for the set of leading parties, it is reasonable to expect that they will return to the legislature with fewer seats. Losing seats weakens the positions of the parties in the set of leading parties.

HYPOTHESIS 1: The choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change when electoral support for the set of leading parties decreases, and is less likely to change when support for this set of parties increases.

The second hypothesis that I test examines the relationship between change in the choice available to voters (ΔL) and electoral instability within each of the sets of parties (ΔV_{Lwb} and ΔV_{Cwb}). It is important to consider electoral instability within each of the sets of parties. Firstly, doing so means that I take account of all of the electoral instability at a particular election. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it contributes to a more complete understanding of the relationship between electoral instability and change in the choice available to voters. It is possible that change will occur despite an increase in support for the set of leading parties. As I outline in Chapter 3, support for the set of leading parties may increase even when one of the leading parties loses vote share. These losses may result in this party failing to win one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. Similarly, within the set of smaller challenging parties, some parties increase their share of the vote while others lose vote share. Electoral instability within this set of parties may result in one of these parties winning a large enough share of the vote to control one of the two largest shares of seats.

HYPOTHESIS 2: The choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change the higher the levels of electoral instability within each of the two sets of parties.

5.2.4 Results: The Choice Available to Voters and Electoral Instability

In this section I confine myself to discussing the evidence in each table. In Section 5.4, I illustrate with examples the relationship between the choice available to voters and the factors considered in this chapter. It is worth remembering that of the 160 elections that I consider, just 24 elections result in change in the choice available to voters. From this point of view, European party systems are quite stable. Consequently, in this chapter, and in later chapters, the most probable pattern is that change is more likely to be associated with one set of circumstances than with another. I do not expect to observe associations between variables where change in the choice available to voters is more likely to be associated with a particular state than stability.

5.2.4.1 Change in Support for the Set of Leading Parties

I begin by considering those cases where support for both leading parties increases or decreases. It is evident from Table 5.4, that in those elections where there is a drop in support for both leading parties, over a quarter of these are associated with change in the choice available to voters. In all cases, where support for both parties increases, the choice available to voters remains unchanged.

Table 5.4: Impact on the Choice Available to Voters (ΔL) of Shifts in Electoral Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government (ΔV_L) (N = 158)

	Choice Available to Voters		
	Stable	Change	Total
<i>Support for Both Leading Parties Increases/Decreases</i>			
Both Large Parties Lose Vote Share (%)	33 (73)	12 (27)	45 (100)
Both Large Parties Gain Vote Share (%)	26 (100)	0 (0)	26 (100)
<i>Support for One Leading Party Increases While Support for the Other Decreases</i>			
Decrease in share of vote won by the two leading parties (%)	34 (81)	8 (19)	42 (100)
Negligible change (equal to zero to two decimal places) (%)	5 (100)	0 (0)	5 (100)
Increase in share of vote won by the two leading parties (%)	36 (90)	4 (10)	40 (100)

As I already note, change in support for the set of leading parties need not involve support for both parties increasing or decreasing. Instead, support for one party can increase while that for another can decrease.¹ When the net effect of such changes in support is that the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties decreases, a fifth of these cases result in party system change. If I take both types of decreases in support for the set of leading parties together, it is evident that out of 87 elections, 20 of these result in change in the choice available to voters (or 23 percent).

It is also evident from Table 5.4 that change in the choice available to voters is not confined to those cases where support for the set of leading parties decreases. In

¹ It can also happen that support for one leading party increases or decreases, while that for the other leading party remains constant.

those elections when there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties, a tenth of these are associated with change in the choice available to voters (I give greater attention to these in next Section 5.4).

The evidence I present shows that the choice available to voters is more likely to change when electoral support for the set of leading parties decreases than when there is an increase in support for this set of parties. As such then, stability in the choice available to voters is associated with a strengthening of the electoral positions of the leading parties while change in the choice available to voters is associated with a weakening of their positions.

5.2.4.2 Electoral Instability Within the Sets of Parties

The evidence I present in Table 5.5 suggests that shifts in support within the set of leading parties is not important to an understanding of change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. While there is a slight difference, the choice available to voters is more or less as likely to change when there is electoral instability within the set of leading parties as it is to occur when it is relatively stable.

The evidence I present in Table 5.5 suggests that there is an association between electoral instability within the set of smaller challenging parties and change in the choice available to voters. A quarter of those elections where instability within the set of leading parties is greater than average result in a change in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government. At elections where this set of parties is relatively stable, only one in ten result in party system change.

The evidence I present provides some support for the hypothesis that I outlined. It is evident that change in the choice available to voters is more likely to occur when the voting patterns among the smaller challenging parties become less stable. However, change is no more likely to occur when this happens within the set of leading parties.

Table 5.5: Impact on the Choice Available to Voters (ΔL) of Electoral Instability Within the Sets of Parties (ΔV_{Lwb} and ΔV_{Cwb})

	Choice Available to Voters		
	Stable	Change	Total
<i>Within Set of Largest Parties (ΔV_{Lwb})</i>			
Electoral Stability (%)	48 (89)	6 (11)	54 (100)
Electoral Instability (%)	27 (82)	6 (18)	33 (100)
<i>Within Set of Smaller Parties (ΔV_{Cwb})</i>			
Electoral Stability (%)	86 (90)	9 (10)	95 (100)
Electoral Instability (%)	42 (76)	15 (24)	57 (100)

Note: Here 'stability' refers to shifts in vote share within a set of parties that is less than the mean shift in vote share. 'Instability' refers to shifts in vote share within a set of parties that is greater than the mean shift in vote share.

5.3 Closeness of Political Competition

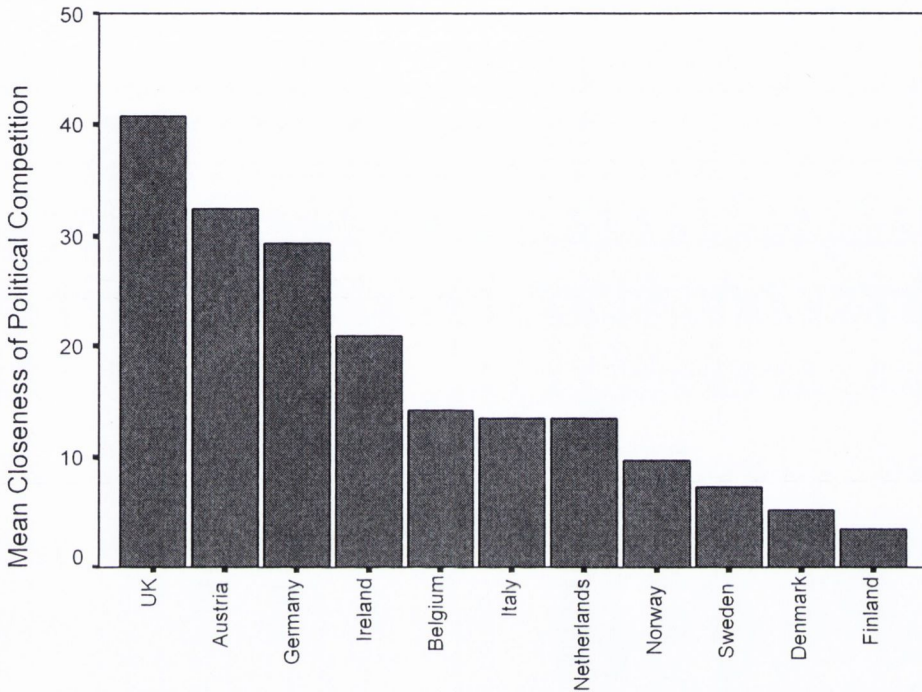
Closeness of competition is the minimum distance in terms of seat share that needs to be bridged if change is to occur in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters (Δ_t). In order to measure closeness I calculate the gap between the share of the seats won by the second and third largest parties.

5.3.1 Closeness of Political Competition in Europe

In Figure 5.2, I present the average gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the legislatures for each of the eleven countries. From this figure, it is evident that closeness of political competition plays an important role in the stability of the choice available to voters. Political competition is, on average, closest in Finland, Denmark and Sweden. In these countries, the choice of potential leaders of government has changed on a number of occasions. On the other hand, in the UK, Austria, Germany and Ireland, the share of the seats won by the third largest

parties are, on average, at least twenty percentage points less than the share of the seats won by the second largest parties. In these countries the choice of potential leaders of government has remained stable over five decades.

Figure 5.2: Mean Closeness of Competition in Each Country (Λ_i) (Seat Share)



It is also worth looking at trends in closeness of competition² (See Table 5.6). In Belgium and the Netherlands there are statistically significant negative trends in the closeness of political competition. In both countries, change in the choice available to voters is a relatively new phenomenon. In Belgium, the distance in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties narrowed from about 30 percentage points in the 1960s to just over a percentage point going into the 1999 election when the Liberals (PVV/PLP) replaced the Christian People's/Christian Social Party (CVP/PSC) in the set of potential leaders of government. Similarly, in the Netherlands, closeness of political competition narrowed from 23 percentage points in 1959 to just less than three percentage points in 1994. In the subsequent election of 1998, Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) lost their place in the set of leading parties to the Liberal Party (VVD).

² Here trend refers to the closeness of competition over time. When the trend is negative, then the gap between the second and third largest party in terms of seat share is becoming narrower. When the trend is positive, the gap in terms of seat share between the two parties is becoming wider.

There are also some interesting trends in those countries where this choice has remained stable. In Germany, a country in which the choice available to voters has remained unchanged, the closeness of competition has widened. The positive trend in Germany has seen the gap between the second and third largest parties increase from 20 percentage points in 1953 to 29 percentage points in 1994.

Table 5.6 Trends in Closeness of Political Competition in Each Country (1950-1999)

Country	Trend (β)	Standard Errors	R ²	F-Ratio	N
Austria	-0.59***	0.17	0.47	11.73	14
Belgium	-0.51***	0.11	0.60	21.23	15
UK	-0.27***	0.09	0.49	10.41	12
Netherlands	-0.22**	0.10	0.33	4.84	11
Italy	-0.10	0.16	0.03	0.36	11
Denmark	-0.07	0.08	0.04	0.77	19
Finland	-0.02	0.05	0.02	0.24	13
Sweden	0.09	0.08	0.09	1.38	15
Ireland	0.13	0.12	0.08	1.10	14
Germany	0.17*	0.12	0.17	2.21	12
Norway	0.18	0.11	0.13	1.47	11

One-Tailed Tests: *** Trend significant at $p < 0.01$; ** Trend significant at $p < 0.05$; * significant at $p < 0.10$

In both Austria and the UK the distance between the second and third largest parties has become narrower. Yet, while there is a significant negative trend in the UK, the second largest party continues to enjoy a substantial lead over the main challenging party. In the early 1950s, the gap was 46 percentage points. In 1997 the Conservatives (Cons) finished 18 percentage points ahead of the Liberal Democrats (LD). In Austria the significant negative trend has had a much more substantial effect on the closeness of competition between the second and third largest parties. Up until the late 1980s the second largest party had a lead of at least 30 percentage points over the third largest party. However, since then, the Freedom Party (FPO), under the leadership of Mr. Haider, closed the gap on the second largest party. The Austrian election of 1999 saw the Freedom Party (FPO) win the same share of seats in the *Nationalrat*, the Austrian Parliament, as one of the set of potential leaders of

government, the Christian Social Party (OVP). However, the threat posed to their position by the Freedom Party (FPO) receded in 2003.

5.3.2 Hypothesis: The Choice Available to Voters and Closeness of Political Competition

The third hypothesis that I test focuses on the closeness of political competition. When the second and third largest parties control more or less the same share of seats in the legislature, only a small shift in support for these parties is required for the choice available to voters to change. However, a lot more electoral instability is required if the choice available to voters is to change when there is a large gap between these two parties.

HYPOTHESIS 3: The choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change the more narrow the gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the national legislature.

5.3.3 Results: The Choice Available to Voters and Closeness of Political Competition

The evidence I present in Table 5.7 examines the relationship between party system stability and change (ΔL) and the closeness of political competition (Λ_t). The evidence confirms my expectation that the choice available to voters is more likely to be stable the greater the lead that the second largest party has over the third largest party.

In the few elections where a percentage point or less separates the second and third largest parties, the majority of these result in party system change. A sizeable proportion of those elections where the gap between the second and third largest parties is between one and five percentage points result in change in the choice available to voters. Taken together, it is evident that more than half of those elections where the gap between these two parties is five percentage points or less result in change to the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters.

Table 5.7: *Impact on the Choice Available to Voters (ΔL) of Closeness of Competition (Λ_i) (N = 158)*

Closeness of Competition (Λ_i):	Choice Available to Voters		
	Stable	Change	Total
Difference 0 to 1 Percentage Points (%)	2 (20)	8 (80)	10 (100)
Difference 1 to 5 Percentage Points (%)	15 (58)	11 (42)	26 (100)
Difference 5 to 10 Percentage Points (%)	26 (87)	4 (13)	10 (100)
Difference 10 or More Percentage Points (%)	91 (99)	1 (1)	92 (100)

When the gap between the second and third largest parties is wider than five percentage points, party system change is very unlikely to occur. That said, it is evident from Table 5.7, change in the choice available to voters occurs even when there is a large gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the legislature. In Section 5.4, I highlight these instances of party system change.

In terms of the hypothesis that I test, the evidence suggests that change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is more likely to change the closer political competition between the second and third largest parties.

5.4 Discussion: Electoral Instability, the Closeness of Political Competition and the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters

From the above discussion, it is evident that I need to take account of more than just shifts in support for the set of leading parties when considering stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. Instead, there is a more complex inter-relationship between this factor and electoral instability within each set of parties and the closeness of political competition. The purpose of this section is to provide some examples of the interaction of these factors. I begin by considering elections where there is a decline in support for both leading parties.

The Danish election of 1973 and the Norwegian election of 1997 highlight the role played by both leading parties losing vote share. In both examples, the party that entered the set of potential leaders of government was not the third largest party, the

party best placed to do so³. In Denmark, the result of the 1973 election meant that Progress Party (F), a party contesting its first election, entered the set of leading parties. Progress Party won 16 percent of both votes and seats, and became the second largest party in the *Folketing*, the Danish legislature. At this election, both leading parties, Conservative People's Party (KF) and Social Democrats (SD), lost vote share (between them they lost 19 percentage points).

The result of the 1997 election in Norway saw a dramatic increase in support for one of the smaller parties. At the previous election in 1993, Progress Party (F) won six percent of the vote. However, in 1997 its share of the vote increased by nine percentage points. This increase in support for Progress Party (F) is in part due to a fall in support for both of the leading parties. Between them support for the Labour Party (DNA) and Centre Party (S) fell by eleven percentage points. As in Denmark, the third largest Norwegian party, the Conservatives (H), not only failed to benefit from the support lost by the leading parties, they lost vote share. The outcome of the 1997 election in Norway meant that the Conservatives (H), who had lost their place in the set of leading parties in 1993, continued to decline. In these two examples, both of the leading parties lost vote share and it is evident that these falls in support contributed to the rise of one of the smaller parties. What is particularly interesting about these examples is that the parties entering the sets of potential leaders of government were not the parties best placed to do so.

The majority of cases of change in the choice available to voters are associated with a decline in support for the set of leading parties. However, there are a number of cases where change is associated with an increase in support for this set. These cases of change in the choice available to voters occurred in Denmark (1975), Finland (1972), the Netherlands (1998) and Sweden (1968). For example, at the Danish election of 1975, support for the set of leading parties increased by two percentage points. This example highlights the importance of shifts in support within the set of challenging parties. In 1975, Progress Party (F) lost their place in the set of leading parties to the Liberals (V). While support for the set of leading parties may have increased, support for both large parties did not increase. Instead, only the Social Democrats (SD) increased their share of the vote by 4.3 percentage points. Support

³ Going into this election, the Liberals' (V) share of the seats was about one percentage point less than the share of the seats controlled by the second largest party, the Conservative People's Party (KF). However, rather than benefiting from the decline in support for both leading parties, the Liberals (V) also lost vote and seat share.

for the Progress Party (F) fell by just over two percentage points. Given that support for the set of leading parties increased, this implies that the losses suffered by the Progress Party (F) favoured the Social Democrats (SD) (the other two percentage points of the increase in support won by the Social Democrats (SD) is due to a decline in support for the set of smaller challenging parties). The set of smaller parties, and in particular the Liberals (V), would not appear to have benefited from Progress Party's (F) decline. Instead, the Liberals' (V) eleven-percentage point increase in support would appear to be due to losses suffered by the other smaller parties. Support for three of the parties in this fell by at least three percentage points. This example highlights the importance of taking shifts in support within the set of small parties into account.

In the above examples, I refer to the closeness of political competition. As the example of change in the choices available to Danish voters in 1973 illustrates, change occurred despite Progress Party (F) never previously having won seats in the Danish legislature. Along similar lines, change in Norway took place despite Progress Party (F) trailing the Centre Party (S) by 13 percentage points going into the election. In both cases, there were dramatic falls in support for the set of leading parties. However, change in the choice available may also occur because of a drop in support by just one of the set of leading parties.

The subsequent Danish election of 1977 highlights the importance of electoral instability within the set of leading parties. The result of the 1975 election in Denmark meant that Progress (F), trailed the second largest party, Liberals (V), by ten percentage points. However, in 1977, the Liberals (V) lost all of the eleven-percentage point increase in vote share that they won in 1975. While a change took place in the choice of potential leaders of government available to Danish voters, the party that entered the set of leading parties was not the main beneficiary of the Liberals' (V) losses. Instead, the other leading party, the Social Democrats (SD) appear to have benefited most from the decline in support by the Liberals (V). In 1977, support for the Social Democrats (SD) increased by over seven percentage points. What was left of the losses suffered by the Liberals (V), accounts for the four-percentage point increase in support for the set of smaller parties (i.e., support for the set of leading parties fell by over four percentage points). Support for the Progress Party (F), the party that replaced the Liberals (V) in the set of leading parties, increased by a percentage point. Despite a gap of ten percentage points and support

for the third largest party increasing by a percentage point, change in the choice available to voters occurred because the drop in support for the Liberals (V) was enough to ensure that they were unable to control the second largest share of seats in the legislature.

The Swedish election of 1979 is another useful example of change resulting from one of the leading parties losing vote share. While support for the set of leading parties at this election fell by five percentage points, within the set of leading parties the Social Democrats (SD) made a small gain. The drop in support for the set of leading parties was solely due to the loss of six percentage points suffered by Centre Party (C). Of this six-percentage point drop in support, about half-a-percentage point of it favoured the Social Democrats (SD). The rest of the Centre Party's (C) loss favoured the other set of parties. Within the set of smaller parties, one party in particular, the Moderate Unity Party (MS), appears to have benefited from the decline in support for Centre Party (C) as its share of the vote increased by five percentage points. The six percentage point fall in support by Centre Party (C), and the five percentage point gain by Moderate Unity Party (MS), were enough to bridge the nine percentage point gap between the parties going into this election. In this example, the losses suffered by one of the leading parties accounts for the decline in support for the set of leading parties. These losses, and the fact that one of the smaller parties was able to benefit from them, contribute to change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to Swedish voters.

Change in the choice available to voters is not always associated with large shifts in support for the set of leading parties. In some cases, competition between the second and third largest parties is so close small shifts in support may be associated with change. For instance, in Finland, the second and third largest parties in the legislature are, on average, closer, in terms of seat share, than second and third largest parties in other parliaments. Agrarian Union (SK), the party that entered the set of potential leaders of government as a result of the 1962 election, was so close to the second largest that it entered this set despite losing a small amount of support. Going into the 1962 election only 0.1 percentage points separated the three largest parties from each other. As long as the third largest party, Agrarian Union (SK), more or less retained its share of the vote it was perfectly placed to take advantage of any slips in support by the leading parties. At this election, both of the leading parties lost vote share. Between them support for the Social Democrats (SSP) and Finnish People's

Democratic Union (SKDL) fell by five percentage points. However, since support for Agrarian Union (SK) also fell, albeit by a tenth of a percentage point, it did not benefit from the support lost by the two leading parties. The outcome of the 1962 election in Finland meant that Agrarian Union (SK) found itself controlling the largest share of seats in the Finnish parliament. It is worth noting that this change in the choice available to voters is the only election where the largest socialist party failed to be returned with one of the two largest shares of seats (though the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL), as a communist party, is a large party of the 'left').

A small shift in support for the set of leading parties can result in a change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters when political competition is close. However, when competition is not close, change in the choice available to voters may be unlikely even when there is a large drop in support for the leading parties (i.e., the third largest party does not benefit sufficiently from the fall in support for the leading parties). In the Dutch election of 1994, both leading parties, Labour (PvdA) and the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), lost support. Between them support for the set of leading parties fell by 21 percentage points. Going into the 1994 election, the third largest party, the Liberal Party (VVD) trailed the second largest party by 17 percentage points. Despite this large drop in support for the set of leading parties, change did not occur because support for the Liberal Party (VVD) increased by only five percentage points. The outcome of the 1994 election left the Liberal Party (VVD) trailing Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) by two percentage points. While the choice available to voters did not change at this election, the Liberal Party (VVD) was well placed to take advantage of a further slip in support for Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) in 1998.

As I note above, the countries with the largest average distances in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties are those countries in which the choice of potential leaders of government is stable. In Ireland and Germany, while some of the smaller parties have had some notable successes, they continue to trail the set of large parties by quite some distances. For instance, in the Irish election of 1992, support for the set of leading parties fell by ten percentage points. The party that benefited most from this drop in support was the third largest party, Labour (LP). The result of the 1992 election meant that Labour (LP) closed the gap on Fine Gael (FG) to just five percentage points. However, at the following election in 1997, Labour was unable to retain, let alone build on their gains, and the gap widened to over 17

percentage points. In Germany, the gap between the two sets of parties has never been this close and the set of smaller parties trail the larger parties by over twenty percentage points. The smaller parties' greatest success was at the 1987 election when the share of the vote won by both large parties fell by five percentage points. This shift in support was nowhere near that required to bring about change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to Germany voters.

In the UK, the electoral system helps to maintain the large gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties. Support for the set of leading parties, the Conservatives (Cons) and Labour (Lab) declined dramatically at two elections. Yet on both occasions the third largest party continued to trail the second largest party by about 30 percentage points. The first major decline in their support occurred in February 1974. At this election, both Conservatives (Cons) and Labour (Lab) lost vote share. The party that benefited most from this loss was the Liberals (Lib). However, while their share of the vote increased by twelve percentage points, their share of seats in the House of Commons increased by about a percentage point. In the election of 1983, support for the set of leading parties fell by ten percentage points with the drop in support for Labour (Lab) accounting for most of this. The Social Democratic Party/Liberal Alliance⁴ won a quarter of the votes, yet in parliament they held about three percent of the seats.

Finally, in Austria, in the 1990s political competition became closer (i.e., the gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties became narrower). From the early 1950s until the late 1970s, the second largest party had a substantial lead over the third largest party in parliament. Going into the election of 1986, the third largest party, the Freedom Party (FPO) trailed the second largest party, Christian Social Party (OVP), by over thirty percentage points. Over two elections (1990 and 1994), support for the set of leading parties, the Christian Social Party (OVP) and the Socialists (SPO), fell by 22 percentage points. One party in particular, the Freedom Party (FPO), posed the main challenge. Support for the Freedom Party (FPO) increased from ten percent in 1986 to 22 percent in 1994. As noted earlier, in 1999, the Freedom Party (FPO) made further inroads winning the same share of the seats as the Christian Social Party (OVP). While the growth in support for the Freedom Party (FPO) came very close to changing the choice of potential leaders of government available to Austrian voters, this threat receded in 2003.

⁴ In 1981, thirteen Labour Party MPs broke with the party and in 1983 and 1987 contested the elections in alliance with the Liberal Party as the Social Democratic Party.

5.5 Conclusion

Earlier I noted Mair's (2002, p.101) conclusion that partisan support for political parties may shift without affecting the 'structure of competition'. The purpose of this chapter was to examine whether or not the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters was responsive to shifts in electoral support for the various leading parties. The analysis presented in this chapter highlights the need to take account of a variety of factors.

My focus is on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. I focus on this factor because it captures changes in the popularity of the parties that constitute the choice of potential leaders of government facing voters. If parliamentary democracies are responsive to shifts in voters' preferences then the choice available to voters should reflect this. On the one hand, when support for the set of leading parties falls then the choice available to voters ought to change. The evidence suggests that, while loss of support by the set of leading parties does not always result in change in the choice available to voters it is responsive to a weakening of support for the set of leading parties. On the other hand, the choice available to voters ought to remain stable when support for the set of leading parties remains constant or increases. The evidence that I present suggests that while this is generally the case, it is not always so. In a small number of cases, change occurs despite an increase in support for the set of leading parties. This highlights the need to take account of electoral instability within each of the sets of parties as well as the closeness of political competition.

From the analysis I present in this chapter it is reasonable to conclude that the choice of potential leaders of government is responsive to shifts in electoral support. The purpose of the next three chapters is to examine explanations of change in support for the set of leading parties. I approach this by considering three aspects of the electoral choice: those who do the choosing, the context in which they make their choice and the set from which they have to choose. In the next few chapters I will also examine whether those factors that contribute to shifts in support for this set of leading parties have an effect on change in the choice of potential leaders of government.

Chapter 6

Changes in the Distribution of Voters' Preferences and the Choice Available to Voters

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine my second explanation of stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government. This second explanation focuses on change in the distribution of voters' preferences. From the point of view of this explanation, party system stability is a consequence of stability amongst the electorate. Voters rely on 'voter traditions' or long-term cues that pass from one generation to the next (Smith, 1989, p.48; Beck, 1979, p.130). However, a period of stability can end when the influence of these traditions weakens (Beck, 1979; Franklin et al., 1992). According to Schmett and Holmberg (1995, p.100) electoral instability may result from a 'dwindling of the stabilizing elements in electoral behaviour'. The party system may initially experience electoral instability as voters shift their support from one party to another. Over time, a new set of potential leaders of government may emerge.

Since there is no single measure of the electorate's preferences, I use two measures: change in party identification (ΔID) and change in electoral participation (ΔTO). Party identification is one type of voter tradition and refers to people's predisposition towards a particular party (Campbell et al, 1960; Miller, 1976). Generally, such predispositions are relatively stable but they do not go unquestioned (Fiorina, 1981) and there is evidence of declining levels of party identification (Nie et al, 1976; Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995; Dalton, 2001). Weakening partisanship suggests that those elements that contributed to the stability of party systems and political parties are weakening (Poguntke, 1996; Flanagan and Dalton, 1984).

Obviously, change in the levels of electoral participation is not a measure of change in voters' preferences. Instead, it is a general measure of change in the distribution of voters' preferences. When there is an increase or decrease in the level of electoral participation, it is unlikely to affect every party in a proportionate manner.

Instead, the effects of changes in the levels of electoral participation will be to the benefit of some parties and the detriment of others.

In Section 6.2, I outline changes in the proportion of the people who feel either very close or close to a political party. Then in Section 6.3, I outline changes in the levels of electoral participation. I provide a brief outline of the hypotheses that I test in both of these sections (See Chapter 3). I then examine the effect on support for the set of leading parties of change in the proportion of people who feel close to a party (Section 6.2.3) and change in the levels of electoral participation (Section 6.3.3). Finally, in Section 6.4 I discuss the effect that these changes have on the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters.

6.2 Change in Party Attachment

In this section, I focus on the proportions of people who feel either very close or close to a political party. I use Schmitt and Holmberg's (1995, p.126) measures of the proportion of people who feel close to a party (they use Eurobarometer data for the period 1975-1992).¹

6.2.1 Party Attachment in Europe

In Tables 6.1a and 6.1b, I compare the percentages of people who feel close to a party in each of the eleven countries for the period 1975-1992. The first table focuses on those countries in which the choice available to voters has remained stable while the second table focuses on those countries where the choice available to voters has changed. The evidence of these tables suggests there is no difference in the proportion of people who feel close to a party between those party systems where the choice available to voters is 'closed' and those where it is more 'open'. The average percentage of people who feel close to a political party is about 32 percent in both

¹ Some such as Kasse (1976, p.88) question that appropriateness of using party identification in a European context and argue that it is something different from that in the USA. LeDuc (1981) compares four countries and finds changes in party identification that are two or three times greater in European countries than in the USA and that a quarter or more respondents alter their partisanship within a five to six year period.

groups of countries. As such then, it is unlikely that party system stability is associated with the proportion of people who feel close to a political party. The hypothesis that I test is instead concerned with change in the proportion of people who feel close to a party.

Table 6.1a: Countries Where the Choice Available to Voters has Remained Stable: Percentage Respondents Who Feel Very Close or Close to a Party

	Election Year	% Feel Very Close or Close to A Party	Change Between Elections
Germany	1976	35	
	1980	32	-3
	1983	36	4
	1987	32	-4
	1990	28	-4
Ireland	1981	29	
	1982 Feb	29	0
	1982 Nov	29	0
	1987	26	-3
	1989	23	-3
	1992	24	1
UK	1979	34	
	1983	34	0
	1987	36	2
	1992	41	5

Source: Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995, Table4.A1, p.126.

It is evident from Table 6.1a that there has been a decline in partisanship in two of the three countries in which the choice available to voters has remained stable. In both Ireland and Germany, this long-term element that contributes to the stability of the party system is weakening. In Ireland, Schmitt and Holmberg (1995) find a statistically significant negative trend. By 1992, the proportion of Irish people who feel close to a political party has fallen by five percentage points. In Germany, they find a decline in the number of strong identifiers but a slight increase in the number of weak identifiers (Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995, pp108-109). By 1990, the proportion of Germans who feel close to a political party has fallen by seven percentage points. In the other country where the choice available to voters has remained stable, the UK, the proportion of people who feel close to a political party has increased over the same period. By 1992, the proportion of people in the UK who feel close to a political party has increased by seven-percentage points. This suggests that in the UK this long-term stabilising factor is strengthening.

Table 6.1b: Countries Where the Choice Available to Voters has Changed:

Percentage Who Feel Very Close or Close to a Party

	Election Year	% Feel Very Close or Close to A Party	Change Between Elections
Belgium	1977	33	
	1978	27	-6
	1981	17	-10
	1985	22	5
	1987	20	-2
	1991	21	1
Denmark	1977	37	
	1979	36	-1
	1981	33	-3
	1984	30	-3
	1987	31	1
	1988	36	5
Italy	1979	45	
	1983	41	-4
	1987	36	-5
	1992	31	-5
Netherlands	1977	39	
	1981	25	-14
	1982	35	10
	1986	35	0
	1989	33	-2

Source: Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995, Table4.A1, p.126.

In those countries where the choice available to voters is more 'open', the influence of this long-term stabilising factor in the 1990s is weaker than it was in the 1970s. Schmitt and Holmberg (1995) find a statistically significant negative trend in party attachment in Italy. In the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium they find statistically negative trends in the number of strong identifiers but slight increases in the number of weak identifiers (Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995, pp108-109). However, it is evident from Table 6.1b that partisanship is notably weaker in Italy and Belgium in the 1990s than it was in the 1970s. The proportion of people who feel close to an Italian party has fallen by 14 percentage points between 1979 and 1992 while in Belgium it has fallen by twelve percentage points. In the other two countries, over this period, the proportion of Danes feeling close to a political party has fallen by eight percentage points while in the Netherlands it has fallen by six percentage points.

6.2.2 Hypothesis: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Changing Party Attachment

Weakening partisanship suggests that members of the electorate are feeling distant from the parties (Poguntke, 1996) and are no longer willing to rely on long-term cues in deciding how to vote (Flanagan and Dalton, 1984). When the proportion of people who feel close or very close to a political party decreases it does not always mean that voters are becoming disaffected with politics or political parties. Instead, it may simply indicate that they are more willing to consider a variety of parties before deciding how to vote (Poguntke, 1996). According to Schmett and Holmberg (1995), electoral instability is one consequence of a weakening of these long-term socialised cues. The hypothesis that I test is based on empirical findings by both Schmett and Holmberg (1995, p.100) and Leithner (1990, p.17). They conclude that the leading parties suffer most from the electoral instability that results from a weakening of partisanship because it facilitates electoral support for new and small parties.

HYPOTHESIS 4: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the proportion of people who feel close to a political party decreases, and is more likely to remain constant when the proportion of people who feel close to a political party increases.

6.2.3 Results: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Changing Party Attachment

The evidence I present in Table 6.2 suggests that change in the strength of partisanship (ΔID) does not have a statistically significant effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties (ΔV_L). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that when partisanship weakens, support for the set of large parties, on average, falls by about three-and-a-half percentage points. However, when the proportion of people who feel close to a political party increases, support for the set of leading parties also falls but this time by an average of just over a percentage point.

Table 6.2: Mean Shifts in Support for the Sets of Leading Parties (ΔV_L) by Change in Percentage Feeling Close to a Party (ΔTO) ($N = 29$)

	Mean Shift in Support for Set of Leading Parties		
	Mean	Standard Errors	Total
<i>Change in Percentage Feel Very Close or Close to a Party</i>			
Decrease	-3.51	1.50	16
Increase	-1.24	1.80	9
Negligible Change in Partisanship	-0.02	3.98	4

In 13 of the 16 elections associated with a weakening of partisanship there is a drop in support for the set of leading parties. For instance, going into the 1981 Belgian election the proportion of people feeling close to a party was ten percentage points less than it was in 1978. At the 1981 election, support for the set of leading parties fell by ten percentage points. However, of the two parties in the set of leading parties, the Christian Peoples Party/Christian Social Party (CVP/PSC) suffered most as their support fell by just under ten percentage points. In the Italian election of 1992, the weakening of partisanship was not quite as dramatic as the Belgian case, but it is associated with an even greater fall in support for the set of leading parties. Going into the 1992 Italian election, the percentage of people who felt close to a political party was five-percentage points less than it was in 1987. At the 1992 election, support for both leading Italian parties fell by just over 15 percentage points. Losses suffered by the Communist Party of Italy (PCI/PDS) account for most of this as their support fell by ten percentage points. It is also worth noting that in both of these countries, previous elections had also been associated with declines in the proportion of people who feel close to a party. In a sense then, these large declines in electoral support may be part of a multi-election period in which this stabilising factor is weakening.

Furthermore, there are four cases where an increase in the proportion of people who feel close to a party is associated with an increase in support for the set of leading parties. One such case is the subsequent Belgian election to the 1981 election. Between 1981 and 1985 the proportion of people feeling close to a party increased by five percentage points. At this election, both leading parties increased their share of the vote. However, the Christian Peoples Party/Christian Social Party (CVP/PSC) were only able to recover about three percentage points of the nine that they lost in 1981. In the British election of 1992, a three-percentage point increase in support for the set of large parties is associated with a five-percentage point increase

in the proportion of people who feel close to a party. Of the two largest parties, only Labour (Lab) managed to increase its share of the vote.

However, despite these 17 cases, the fact remains that when partisanship strengthens and when it weakens the average changes in support for the set of leading parties are not significantly different from each other. Based on the data I have available to me, there is no systematic relationship between changes in partisanship and support for the set of leading parties. It is also evident from the above examples that changes in partisanship do not always affect both leading parties to the same degree. As the Italian example illustrates the losses suffered by the Communist Party of Italy (PCI/PDS) were twice those suffered by the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI).

6.3 Change in Electoral Participation

For the most part, Europeans are willing to participate in the operation of democratic politics by turning out at elections to cast their ballots (see Table 6.3). In the countries that I consider an average of 84 percent of the electorate vote. However, this figure hides large differences in levels of participation between countries. Not surprisingly, the highest levels of participation are evident in those countries where voting is compulsory. For the 46 elections where electoral participation is compulsory, average turnout is 92.1 percent. On a number of occasions, more than 95 percent of the electorates of Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands have voted.² In the remaining 114 cases where voting is not compulsory the average level of electoral participation is 81 percent.³ Within this latter set of cases there are large differences in electoral participation.

In those countries where the legal compulsion on citizens to vote has been removed electoral participation has fallen. In the Netherlands, average turnout fell from 95 percent when voting was compulsory to 82 percent after the abolition of compulsory voting in 1970. Similarly, in Italy the removal of compulsory voting resulted in decline in electoral participation. The levels of electoral participation in the

² In Austria electoral participation has been greater than 95 percent in 1949 (96.8 percent), 1953 (95.8 percent) and in 1956 (96 percent); in Belgium in 1977 (95.1 percent) and in 1991 (95.7 percent); and in the Netherlands in 1952 (95 percent), in 1956 (95.5 percent), 1959 (95.6 percent) and in 1963 (95.1 percent).

³ Difference between the means is statistically significant.

Netherlands and Italy after the removal of compulsory voting are similar to the levels of participation in countries such as Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden, where voting has not been compulsory. However, electoral participation is a lot lower in Finland, Ireland and the UK. In both Finland and Ireland, electoral participation has fallen below 70 percent.⁴ Ireland stands out as having the lowest level of participation. Just 66 percent of the electorate cast a ballot in the 1997 election (and an even lower percentage voted in 2002).

Table 6.3: Mean Turnout by Country, 1950-1999 (%)

	Non-Compulsory		Compulsory Voting	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
Italy	84.5 ^a	2	91.6 ^a	10
Netherlands	81.9 ^b	9	95.2 ^b	5
Belgium			92.7	16
Austria			90.7	15
Sweden	86.1	16		
Germany	85.7	13		
Denmark	85.5	20		
Norway	81.0	12		
Finland	76.1	14		
UK	76.0	13		
Ireland	73.1	15		

^{a, b} Means are significantly different from each other at $p < 0.01$.

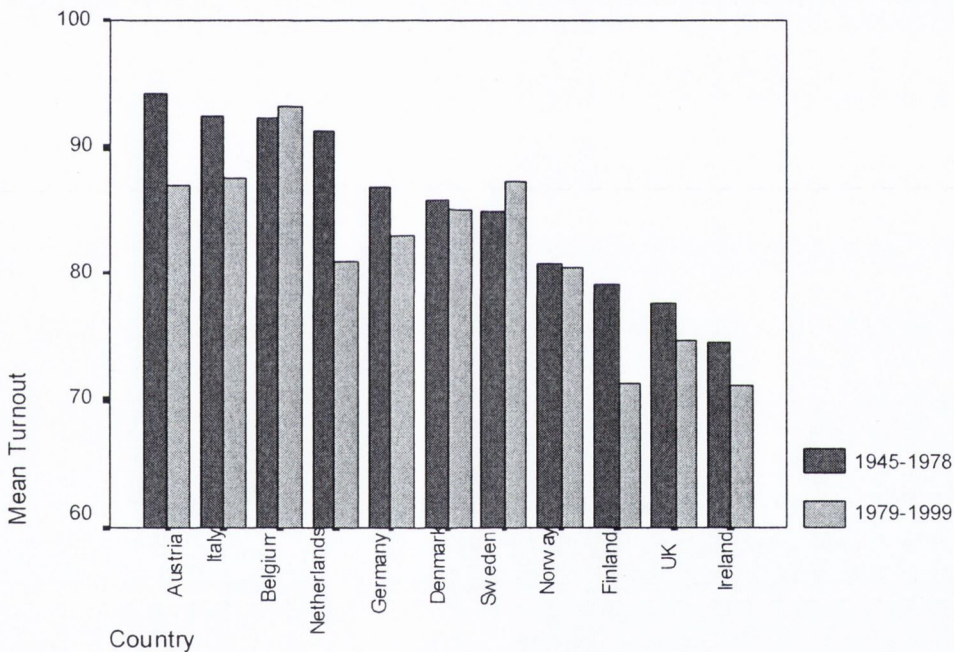
6.3.1 Changes in Electoral Participation in Europe

While most Europeans are willing to participate in the democratic choice by voting, the evidence I present in Figure 6.1 suggests that in a number of countries levels of participation are falling. The bar chart in Figure 6.1 compares average levels of turnout in each country for the periods 1945-1978 and 1979-1999. The first period is the same as that considered by Dittrich and Jonansen (1983). Of the four countries in which Dittrich and Johansen (1983, pp97-99) note a major increase in turnout, only in Sweden is the average level of participation greater in the second period than it is in the first period. In Norway, average levels of turnout have remained more or less the same while in Germany and Finland average electoral participation is less in 1979-1999 than it is in 1945-1978. Dittrich and Johansen (1983, pp97-99) note modest

⁴ In Finland about 68 percent of voters cast ballots in the elections of 1991, 1995 and 1999. In Ireland, the percentage of the electorate voting has fallen from 68.5 percent in 1989, to 67.5 percent in 1992 and to 65.9 percent in 1997.

increases in electoral participation in Denmark, Italy and Ireland. In Denmark, average levels of participation are more or less the same in both periods. However, in Italy and Ireland average levels of participation are less in the period 1979-1999 than they were in 1945-1978. Dittrich and Johansen (1983, pp97-99) note major decreases in turnout in the UK and the Netherlands, and modest decreases in Belgium and Austria. In the UK, the Netherlands and Austria the downward trend in electoral participation continued. In Belgium, where voting is compulsory, the average level of electoral participation in 1979-1999 is more or less the same as electoral participation in 1945-1978.

Figure 6.1: Bar Chart of Mean Turnout by Period: (1) 1945-1978 and (2) 1979-1999



Note: Mean Turnout for the period 1945-1978 taken from Dittrich and Johansen (1983)

6.3.1.1 Extension of the Franchise

I also take into account reform of the age criterion of the franchise (Δ_{age}). Reform of the age criterion has occurred at least once in each of the eleven countries. Three sets of reforms took place in Denmark and Sweden, while Austria, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway have changed the age criterion twice. Moreover, in all 19 cases the reforms reduced the minimum age at which citizens are entitled to vote. The introduction of these changes generally occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

6.3.2 Hypotheses: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Changing Electoral Participation

Bartolini and Mair (1990) find that changes in electoral participation (ΔTO) contribute to their understanding of electoral instability. They suggest that electoral instability is the result of the effect that changes in turnout have on the distribution of voters' preferences. It is unlikely that an increase (or decrease) in electoral participation will have a proportionate effect on support for each party. However, while changes in electoral participation are likely to contribute to electoral instability, it is not clear whether an increase in turnout will result in an increase or decrease in support for the set of leading parties. Lijphart (1997) and Pacek and Radcliff (1995) have focused on the effects of differential turnout on support for 'left-wing' parties. In terms of the focus of this book, Bernhagen and Marsh (2004, pp22-23) find that if there was complete turnout it is the smallest parties that tend to gain while the largest ones tend to lose. However this contrasts with Leithner's (1990, p.10) finding that there is a negative relationship between voter turnout and voting for one of the smaller parties. The share of the vote won by the smaller parties is greater when electoral participation is lower. This suggests that their share of the vote increases as turnout declines.

These contradictory empirical results mean that I examine two competing hypotheses. The first hypothesis posits that the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties is expected to decrease when turnout increases.

HYPOTHESIS 5a: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when electoral participation increases, and is more likely to increase when electoral participation decreases.

The second hypothesis posits that support for the set of leading parties will increase when electoral participation increases.

HYPOTHESIS 5b: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when electoral participation decreases, and is more likely to increase when electoral participation increases.

A lowering of the age criterion of the electoral franchise (Δ_{age}) introduces into the electorate an age cohort that has not voted before. Such a change will not affect the distribution of partisan support if the preference distribution of this new cohort is the same as existing voters. However, if the preference distribution of this new set of voters differs from existing voters then some parties are likely to see their share of the vote increase while others will lose out. It is not obvious whether shifts in support that result from the addition of a new age cohort to the electorate will favour or work against the set of leading parties.

6.3.3 Results: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Changing Electoral Participation

The evidence I present in Table 6.4 implies that changes in electoral participation (ΔT) have a significant effect on support for the set of leading parties (ΔV_L). On average, support for the set of leading parties falls by almost three percentage points when turnout decreases. When the proportion of the electorate who vote increases, on average support for the set of leading parties increases by almost a percentage point. These average shifts in support for the leading parties are significantly different from each other.

What these results suggest is that changes in the levels of electoral participation affect support for the set of leading parties. At the aggregate level, at least, those who voted in the previous election, but who decide to stay at home, are more likely to be supporters of one of the large parties, than one of the smaller parties. On the one hand, these voters may have decided to stay at home because they were dissatisfied with the performance of the strong parties and were unwilling to vote for one of the smaller parties. On the other hand, they may have felt that their party was sufficiently popular that their support was not required. Either way, their absence on polling-day cost the set of leading parties vote share. For instance, in the Swedish election of 1998 and the Austrian election of 1999 turnout fell by over five percentage

points. In the latter case support for the set of leading parties fell by just over six percentage points while in Sweden it fell by just over eight percentage points. In the Austrian case, both of the leading parties lost vote share with the Socialists (SPO) losing five percentage points and the Christian Social Party (OVP) about one-and-a-half percentage points. However, in Sweden, change in turnout had a negative impact on electoral support of the Social Democrats (SSA). At this election support for the Social Democrats (SSA) fell by just under nine percentage points while support for Moderate Unity Party (MS) increased by a modest half percentage point.

Table 6.4: Mean Shifts in Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government (ΔV_L) by (1) Change in Electoral Participation (ΔTO) and (2) Change in the Age Criterion of the Franchise (Δ_{age}) ($N = 158$)

	Shift in Vote Share for Set of Parties that Compete to Lead Government		
	Mean	Standard Errors	Total
<i>Electoral Participation</i>			
Decrease (> 1 percentage point)	-2.86 ^a	0.66	69
Increase (> 1 percentage point)	0.89 ^a	1.13	38
Negligible Change (between -1 and +1 percentage point)	-0.72	0.62	51
<i>Age Criterion</i>			
Change	-1.62	1.11	19
No Change	-1.22	0.50	139
Change in the Age Criterion and an Increase in Electoral Participation (> 1 percentage point)	0.20	0.95	3
Change in the Age Criterion and an Decrease in Electoral Participation (> 1 percentage point)	-2.26	1.89	8

^a One-Way ANOVA: Means are significantly different from each other at $p < 0.01$.

Of course, the evidence also suggests that on average support for the set of leading parties increases when turnout increases. That said, this increase in support is a lot less than the average losses suffered when electoral participation decreases. Moreover, as is evident from Table 6.4, electoral participation decreases in almost twice as many cases as it increases. Nevertheless, the leading parties do derive some support from an increase in turnout.⁵ For instance, in the Dutch election of 1984, a

⁵ That said, it is worth noting that when turnout increases, support for both leading parties increases in 14 cases but decreases in 15 cases. Furthermore, when turnout increases, in 29 cases support for one of the large parties also increases while support for the other large party falls. There is a clearer relationship between a decrease in turnout and drop in support for the two largest parties. When turnout decreases, support for both large parties falls in 29 cases and increases in 12 cases. Also, when turnout decreased, in 58 cases the vote share of one party increased while that of the other decreased.

five-percentage point increase in electoral participation is associated with an increase in support for the set of leading parties of eight percentage points. Both of the largest parties benefited from the increase in electoral participation with Labour's (PvdA) support increasing by three percentage points and the Christian Democratic Appeal's (CDA) support increasing by five percentage points. In the German election of 1953, the seven-percentage point increase in turnout favoured the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) over the Social Democrats (SPD). Support for the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) increased by 14 percentage points while support for the Social Democrats (SPD) fell by just less than a half percentage point. While an increase in electoral participation provides some limited support for the leading parties, the next question is whether or not these parties benefit from the introduction of a new cohort to the electorate.

A reduction in the age criterion at which citizens can vote for the first time adds a new age cohort of voters to the electorate. The evidence I present in Table 6.4 suggests that the introduction of such a cohort of voters does not have a significant effect on support for the set of leading parties. The average changes in support for the set of leading parties are not significantly different from one another. Part of the problem with this factor is that change in the age criterion is associated with an increase in turnout for eight elections but a decrease in turnout for three elections. Given the relationship between change in turnout and change in support for the set of leading parties, it is necessary to separate out change in the age criterion and the associated change in turnout. When I do this, it is evident that the average shifts in support for the set of leading parties are not significantly different from each other. Despite the absence of a systematic relationship, it is worth noting that, on average, there is a decline in support for the set of leading parties when change in the age criterion is associated with an increase in electoral participation.

It is also worth noting that in eleven cases where the age criterion was changed, one of leading parties is favoured over the other.⁶ For instance, in Italy in 1976, change in the age criterion is associated with an increase in support for the set of leading parties. At this election, support for the Communist Party of Italy (PCI/PDS) increased by five percentage points while support for the Christian

⁶ When change was introduced to the age criterion of the franchise, support for one of the leading parties increased while the other leading party lost vote share: in Austria (1970), Denmark (1979), Finland (1972), Germany (1972), Italy (1976), the Netherlands (1972), Norway (1969 and 1981), Sweden (1968 and 1970) and the UK (1970).

Democrats (DC/PPI) fell by two percentage points. On the other hand, in the Netherlands in 1972, support for the set of leading parties fell. This loss is due to a drop in support for the Catholic Peoples Party (KVP), which fell by four percentage points, while support for Labour's (PvdA) increased, by almost three-percentage points.⁷

6.4 Discussion: Change in the Distribution of Voters' Preferences and the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters

In this section, I examine the impact of changes in the distribution of voters' partisan preferences on the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. The expectation is that changes in voters' preferences associated with a drop in support for the set of leading parties will also be associated with change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. Of the 24 elections that result in change to the set of leading parties just over half are associated with a shift in the distribution of voters' partisan preferences. Of these 13 elections, two involve a drop in support for the set of leading parties associated with a decline in partisanship and electoral participation. A further eleven cases of change in the choice available to voters involve a decline in support for the set of leading parties associated with a decline in turnout. Given the missing data on changes in the proportion of people feeling close to a political party, it is possible that more than just two changes in this choice are associated with weakening partisanship.

The Danish elections of 1979 and 1981 resulted in changes to the choice of leading parties available to Danish voters. At both of these elections not only was there a decline in support for the set of leading parties, there was also a fall in the levels of electoral participation and a weakening of partisanship. At the 1979 election, support for the set of leading parties fell by just over two percentage points, while in 1981, it fell by more than six percentage points. At the 1979 election, electoral participation fell by two-and-a-half percentage points and by a similar amount in 1981. Between 1977 and 1981, the percentage of people feeling very close or close to

⁷ Both leading parties lost vote share in Austria (1994), Belgium (1981), Denmark (1964), Finland (1970), the Netherlands (1967) and Sweden (1976). Both leading parties' shares of the vote increased in Ireland (1973) and in Denmark (first election in 1953).

political party in Denmark fell from 37 percent to 33 percent. While both elections resulted in a change in the composition of the set of leading parties, the effect of these changes on support for the leading parties differed. In 1979, the decline in support for the set of leading parties was due wholly to the three percentage points lost by Progress Party (F). This loss of support cost them their place in the set of leading parties and they were replaced by the Liberals (V). However, the Liberals (V) success was short lived as they also lost their place at the head of the party system. Although their support fell by just over a percentage point, it was enough for them to be unable to control even the second largest share of seats in the legislature (support for the larger Social Democrats (SD) fell by more than five percentage points).

At eleven elections when change occurs in the choice available to voters, the fall in support for the set of leading parties is associated with a decline in electoral participation (of these elections, three are associated with a minimal decline in electoral participation of less than a percentage point⁸). While a weakening of partisanship may also have had a role to play, these cases illustrate the association between a fall in support and a decline in electoral participation when the choice available to voters changes. For instance, in Finland in 1991, electoral participation declined by almost four percentage points and support for the set of leading parties fell by just over six percentage points. Both leading parties lost vote share and National Coalition (KK), whose support fell by four percentage points, lost its place in the set of leading parties to Finnish Centre (SK). Similarly, in 1958 in Finland, electoral participation fell by five percentage points and support for the set of leading parties fell by four percentage points. Again, both leading parties lost vote share. However, on this occasion, the party that lost its place in the set of leading parties was not the party that lost the largest share of the vote. Support for the Social Democrats' (SSP) fell by three percentage points but they managed to hold onto their place in the set of potential leaders of government (at least for another election). Instead, it was Agrarian Union (SK) that was replaced by the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL).

As noted in the last section, declines in electoral participation may not cost both leading parties vote share. One example of this is the Norwegian election of 1993 when electoral participation fell by over seven percentage points. While support for the set of leading parties fell by just over two percentage points, this loss was due

⁸ Belgium (1999), Denmark (1977) and Finland (1966).

to losses suffered by the Conservatives (H). The Conservatives (H) not only lost over five percentage points, they also lost their place at the head of the party system. Similarly, in Sweden in 1958, the decline in turnout had a negative effect on support for just one of the leading parties. Support for People's Party (F) fell by almost six percentage points and they lost their place in the set of leading parties to the Conservatives (MS).⁹

As weakening partisanship may not be immediately associated with party system change, it is worth examining the period leading up to a change in the choice available to voters. An example of the long-term effect of weakening partisanship is change in the choice available to Italian voters. As I have already noted the 1980s and early 1990s was a period of profound change in the Italian party system (Bartolini and D'Alimonte, 1996; Daniels, 1999). The period since the late 1970s is also associated with a prolonged decline in the proportion of people who felt close to a political party. By 1992, the proportion of people feeling close to a party had fallen by 14 percentage points. Moreover, electoral participation in Italy was also declining during this period. Electoral participation began to fall in 1979 and declined at every subsequent election. By 1996, electoral participation had fallen by over ten percentage points since the late 1970s. At the three elections in the 1990s, it fell by more than five percentage points. These changes in the distribution of voters' partisan preferences are associated with dramatic declines in support for the set of leading parties. Over this same period, support for the set of leading parties fell from 69 percent in 1979 to 46 percent in 1992 and 32 percent in 1994. Up until 1992, it was the Communist Party of Italy (PCI/PDS) that appeared in danger of losing their place at the top of the party system. Their share of the vote in 1992, 16 percent, was just more than half what it was in 1979. However, in 1994 support for the Communist Party of Italy (PCI/PDS) increased by four percentage points while support for the scandal-embroiled Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) fell from 30 percent to eleven percent. It was at this election that the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) lost their place in the set of potential leaders of government. What the Italian case highlights is that changes in the distribution of voters preference may take some time to alter the electoral support of the leading parties to result in a change in the choice available to voters. It took almost 15 years for these continuous declines in partisanship and electoral participation as well as

⁹ The other cases of party system change that are associated with declines in both support for the set of leading parties and electoral participation (by more than one percentage point) are Finland (1970) and Sweden (1979).

events peculiar to the Italian political system to bring about change. However, despite this example, the evidence is very limited and requires further analysis of a larger comparative data set.

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the effect of shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences on the party system. The stability of this distribution is seen as a source of party system stability. As long as voters are willing to rely on long-term cues such as party identification, social class and religion, the party system is expected to remain more or less stable. However, when voters are less willing to rely on long-term cues the electoral market will begin to open up. Increased levels of electoral instability are associated with shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences (whether measured by party identification (Schmett and Holmberg, 1995; Leithner, 1990) or electoral participation (Bartolini and Mair, 1990)). What this chapter examined is whether the electoral volatility resulting from shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences favour the set of leading parties in a systematic manner.

The evidence that I present provides some support for the idea that increases and decreases in support for the set of leading parties are influenced by the changes that occur in the distribution of voters' preferences. As there is no single measure of the electorate's preferences, I use change in party identification and change in electoral participation. Party identification refers to people's predisposition towards a particular party and declining partisanship suggests that those elements that contributed to the stability of party systems and political parties are weakening. The appropriate comparative data that I use is limited to a number of countries over a short period of time. Within these limits, the results are not wholly convincing. There is no evidence of a systematic relationship between shifts in partisanship and change in support for the set of leading parties.

While change in the level of electoral participation is not a measure of change in voters' preferences, it is a general measure of change in the distribution of voters' preferences. An increase or decrease in turnout is unlikely to affect every party's electoral support in a proportionate manner. The evidence I present supports the

expectation that change in turnout will be to the benefit of some parties and the detriment of others. Increases in electoral participation enhance the stability of the party system. However, a decline in the proportion of the electorate turning out to vote undermines this stability. It is also clear that more than half of the changes in the choice available to voters occur when there is a fall in support for the set of leading parties associated with a decline in electoral participation.

While there is some support for the explanation that the stability or otherwise of the choice available to voters is associated with that of the distribution of voters' preferences, I also need to take account of other factors. Voters may not simply follow their preferences. Instead, they may also take account of the context in which they are voting. The number of parties and the proportionality of the electoral rules help to frame the electoral choice. Both of these factors differ not only between countries but also within countries from one election to the next.

Chapter 7

The Systemic and Institutional Contexts of Electoral Competition and the Choice Available to Voters

7.1 Introduction

In parliamentary democracies, parties compete with one another according to set rules of engagement. However, the number of parties and the rules of political competition differ not only between countries but also, over time, within countries. In the last chapter, I focused on those who do the choosing. In this chapter I focus on the context in which that choice is made.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine my third explanation of stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government (ΔL). This explanation focuses on the systemic and institutional contexts in which the political parties compete with one another for votes. In the previous chapter I focused on voters' preferences. However, as Bartolini and Mair (1990) argue, how voters cast their ballots may not simply be a function of their preferences. Instead, when it comes to deciding how to vote, voters' choices are framed by aspects of the electoral context such as the number of parties and the proportionality of the electoral rules. With regard to the number of parties, Pedersen (1979 and 1983) and Bartolini and Mair (1990) conclude that higher levels of electoral instability are associated with more fragmented party systems. Moreover, Pedersen (1983) found that changes in the number of competing parties are associated with higher levels of electoral volatility. With regard to the proportionality of the electoral rules, Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.164) conclude that electoral volatility tends to be higher under less proportional rules than it is under more proportional rules. It is also important to control for the systemic factors when considering the relationship between the institutional factors and electoral instability. The systemic and institutional contexts of elections are not independent of each other (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Duverger, 1964; Sartori, 1986; Riker, 1986; Katz, 1980; Lijphart, 1994, Rae, 1971; Cox, 1997). When Bartolini and

Mair (1990) control for the number of parties, they found that volatility varied not only in terms of proportionality but also according to differing numbers of parties. Finally, I examine the relationship between the party system and change in the context of the electoral decision. As Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.152) argue, changes to the electoral rules alter 'the structure of opportunity available to electors'. They find that higher levels of volatility are associated with changes to the electoral rules.

The evidence suggests that the systemic and institutional contexts of the electoral decisions affect overall levels of electoral instability. However, the focus of this book is not on overall levels of electoral instability but on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The purpose of this chapter is to examine empirically whether or not context has a systematic influence on support for this set of parties. Moreover, I examine if the choice available to voters is more likely to change in one context than it is in another.

In Section 7.2, I focus on how the systemic contexts of elections differ between countries as well as within countries. Then in Section 7.3 I turn my attention to differences between, as well as within, the various countries in terms of the proportionality of the electoral rules that they employ. In each of these sections I provide a brief outline of the hypotheses that I test, before examining the effect of the various systemic and institutional factors on support for the set of potential leaders of government. In the penultimate section of this chapter, Section 7.4, I discuss the effect that these factors have on the choice of alternative leaders of government available to voters.

7.2 Systemic Context of Elections

In order to describe the systemic context of an election I focus on the number of parties. Rather than simply counting the number of parties that contest each election (giving equal weight to all parties), I use Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) measure of 'the effective number of parties'. Counting parties in this way removes the need for arbitrary cut-off points, including tiny parties, or rules about relevance.¹ I use seat share rather than vote share to calculate the effective number of parties. If I was to use

¹ See Chapter 4 for the formula used to arrive at the effective number of parties.

vote share all I would be doing is looking at the same data treated in two different ways: shifts in vote share would be reflected in changes in the effective number of parties. I also lag the data so that the effective number of parties for a particular election is equal to the effective number of parties in the previous parliament. I do so because the lagged version of the variable captures the number of parties that were available for voters to choose between at the current election from the outgoing parliament. If I did not lag this variable, the number of parties would refer to the effective number of parties calculated from the result of the current election. In looking at the various alternatives available to them at the current election, voters did not know the result of the election. As such then, the lagged effective number of parties in the legislature provides a useful measure of the number of parties that voters have to choose from that are likely to win representation.

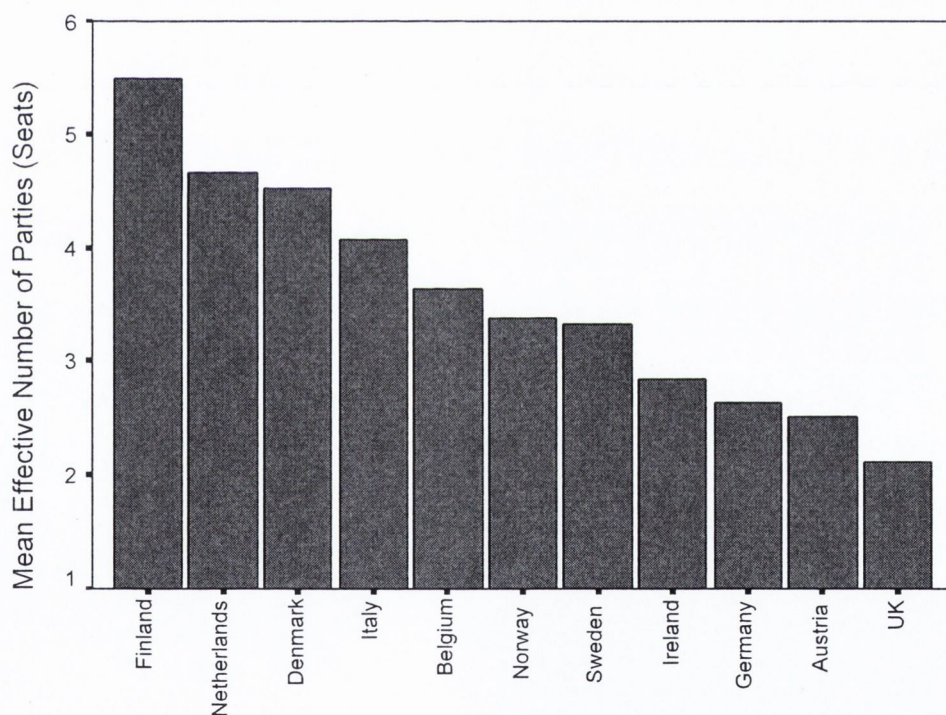
7.2.1 Number of Parties in the Party System

The eleven countries differ in terms of the effective number of parties in their national parliaments (N_{eff}). In Figure 7.1, I present the average effective number of parties in each country. The party systems that are least fragmented are those where the choice available to voters has remained stable. In all four countries the average effective number of parties is less than three and is lowest in the UK. In each of Austria, Germany and Ireland, going into one election the effective number of parties was equal to four. The result of the Austrian election in 1994 meant that the share of the seats held by the set of leading parties was 64 percent. The remaining seats were shared out between the Freedom Party (FPO) and Green Alternative (DGA) and a new party Liberal Forum (LF) who won seats in the Austrian Parliament for the first time. In Germany and Ireland, the effective number of parties was equal to four for elections in the 1950s. Going into the German election of 1953, the set of leading parties controlled two-thirds of the seats in the legislature with the remaining share of seats divided between eight other parties. Similarly, in Ireland, going into the 1951 election, the set of leading parties controlled two-thirds of the seats, with the remaining share of the seats divided between four other parties.²

² The effective number of parties in the Austrian legislature is less than 2.5 for ten of 14 elections. In Germany, the effective number of parties is less than 2.5 for six elections and between 2.5 and 3.5 for

The most fragmented party system is the Finnish where the average effective number of parties is greater than five. In fact, for the 14 Finnish elections that I consider, the effective number of parties is equal to five or more parties. The Netherlands and Denmark are the next most fragmented party systems. In Denmark, the number of parties has not been less than four. Generally, in the Netherlands, the number of parties is equal to four or more. However, going into the 1989 election the effective number of parties was equal to three. This is because in the election of 1986 the set of leading parties controlled 71 percent of the seats in the legislature and the remaining share was divided between seven other parties. This compares with the set of leading parties controlling 61 percent of the seats after the 1982 election with the remaining seats controlled by ten other parties.

Figure 7.1: Mean Effective Number of Parties in Each Country (N_{eff}) (Seat Share)



I consider sixteen Belgian elections and the range of effective number of parties is from two to five. On the one hand, the Belgian party system is at its least fragmented going into the 1954 and 1961 elections. Going into both of these elections

six elections. In Ireland, the effective number of parties is between 2.5 and 3.5 for twelve of 15 elections.

the set of leading parties controlled about 88 percent of the seats. The remaining share of the seats were divided between two other parties going into the 1954 election and three other parties going into the 1961 election. On the other hand, the party system is at its most fragmented going into the elections of 1974 and 1995. Going into these elections that set of leading parties controlled 60 percent and 57 percent respectively. In the other countries, Italy, Norway and Sweden, the effective number of parties is either three or four. That said, Italy differs from the two Scandinavian countries in that twice the effective number of parties is equal to six. These two exceptions are the Italian elections of 1994 and 1996. Going into the 1994 election the set of leading parties controlled 50 percent of the seats and going into the 1996 election the set of leading parties controlled just 36 percent of the seats.

7.2.2 Change in the Number of Parties in the Party System

It is evident from the above discussion that the effective numbers of parties not only differ between countries but also differ within countries (ΔN_{eff}). Yet, in the vast majority of cases the effective number of parties has remained fairly stable³ (see Table 7.1). When it does change, the effective number of parties generally increases or decreases by one. For instance, the effective number of parties in Austria is generally about two or three. However, in the second half of the 1990s, the improved electoral performance of the Freedom Party (FPO) saw the effective number of parties in Austria increase to four. Compared to 1990, the share of the seats controlled by the set of leading parties fell from 77 percent in 1990 to 64 percent in 1994.

There are only five cases where the effective number of parties changed by two or more parties (four of these measure increases in the effective number of parties). The 1977 election in the Netherlands is the only instance of a large decline in the effective number of parties. In 1977, the effective number of parties fell from six to four parties. The difference between this election and the previous one in 1972 is the merger of three parties to form the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA).

³ In the empirical analysis, I use the effective number of parties as calculated. Here I round up when the first decimal is five or more. In this case stability in the effective number of parties refers to a change that is greater than -0.5 and less than 0.5 .

Table 7.1: Changes in the Effective Number of Parties in the Legislature (ΔN_{eff}) by Country ($N = 149$)

Country	Change in the Effective Number of Parties (Seats)				
	Decrease by 2 or more	Decrease by 1	No Change	Increase by 1	Increase by 2 or more
Austria			13	1	
Belgium		1	11	3	
Denmark		2	15	1	1
Finland			12	1	
Germany		1	11		
Ireland			13	1	
Italy			7	2	2
Netherlands	1	2	6	3	1
Norway		1	8	2	
Sweden		1	13	1	
UK			12		
Total	1	8	121	15	4

There are notable increases in the effective number of parties in Denmark, the Netherlands and Italy. In Denmark, at the 1973 election two new parties, Progress Party (F) and Centre Democrats (CD) burst onto the electoral scene. Between them, these parties won almost a quarter of the votes. In the Netherlands, the set of leading parties controlled 47 percent of the seats in the legislature after the 1994 election as compared with 69 percent after the 1989 election. Moreover, the number of parties winning representation in the *Tweede Kamer*, the Dutch parliament, increased from six to nine. Finally, at the Italian elections of 1992 and 1994 the effective number of parties in the *Camera dei Deputati*, the Italian parliament, increased by two at each election. The share of the seats held by the set of leading parties fell from 65 percent in 1989 to 50 percent in 1992 to 36 percent in 1994. The number of parties winning seats in the *Camera dei Deputati* increased from 14 to 16 to 20 over the same elections.

7.2.3 Hypotheses: Shifts in Support for Set of Leading Parties and Party System Fragmentation

Pedersen (1979 and 1983), and later Bartolini and Mair (1990), find that electorates are more unstable the more fragmented the party system. While overall electoral instability may be greater the larger the number of parties, this does not mean that there is a systematic relationship between support for the set of leading parties and the

fragmentation of the party system. Instead, support for the set of leading parties is likely to increase and decrease irrespective of the number of parties. As long as there is an alternative to the two leading parties, those who voted for one of these at the last election can express their dissatisfaction with them by opting for one of the smaller challenging parties. However, when the leading parties address the cause of this dissatisfaction, or the issue is no longer as salient as it once was, these voters may again vote for one of the leading parties. It is unlikely that a decrease (or increase) in support for the set of leading parties will be greater when there are many parties rather than when there are few parties. I do not expect to observe a relationship between change in electoral support for the set of leading parties and the number of parties.

However, I do expect change in the number of parties to affect support for the set of leading parties. Pedersen (1983) found that changes in the number of parties are associated with higher levels of electoral instability. While the hypothesis that I test is a simplification of a more complex relationship between electoral instability and the entry and exit of political parties, it does allow me to outline a testable hypothesis (See Chapter 3). When a new party wins vote share there is less vote share available for the existing parties to compete over. It is likely that there will be a decrease in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties. When a party exits competition, the vote share available to be won by the remaining parties increases. Under these circumstances it is likely that there will be an increase in the share of the vote won by the set of leading parties. The reality of electoral competition may be different in that the leading parties may not lose vote share to a new party, or they may not win a proportion of the vote share left by an exiting party. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that I test is:

HYPOTHESIS 6: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the party system becomes more fragmented, and is more likely to increase when the party system becomes less fragmented.

7.2.4 Results: Shifts in Support for set of Leading Parties and Party System Fragmentation

The effective number of parties going into elections varies between countries as well as within countries. In Table 7.2, I compare average shifts in support for the sets of leading parties (ΔV_L) for differing levels of party system fragmentation (N_{eff}). The evidence I present implies that fragmentation of the party system does not influence shifts in support for the set of leading parties.

Table 7.2: Mean Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_L) by Effective Number of Parties in the Legislature (N_{eff}) and by Change in the Effective Number of Parties in the Legislature (ΔN_{eff}) (One-Way ANOVA)

	Mean Change in Electoral Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government (Standard Errors)	Total
<i>Lagged Effective Number of Parties (Seats)</i>		
Two	-0.62 (0.76)	33
Three	-1.47 (0.80)	51
Four	-1.63 (1.17)	42
Five	-0.88 (0.80)	25
Six or More	-2.07 (2.16)	7
<i>Change in the Effective Number of Parties⁴</i>		
Increase	0.90 ^a (1.32)	19
Decrease	-1.36 (1.71)	8
Stable	-2.03 ^a (0.51)	120

Note: ^a Means significantly different at $p < 0.10$.

The average shifts in support are not statistically significant from each other. The average change in support for the set of leading parties when the party system is most fragmented is not statistically different from the average shift in support when it is least fragmented. Moreover, there is no obvious pattern in the average shifts of support for the set of leading parties. That is, when I compare the average shifts in support (ΔV_L) across the different levels of party system fragmentation (N_{eff}), the average changes are not greater under the more fragmented systems and less under the least fragmented systems, or *vice versa*. For instance, the average losses suffered by the set of leading parties when the effective number of parties is five is about a

⁴ When estimating average shifts in support for the set of leading parties I exclude those Dutch cases where change in the choice available to voters is associated with the merger of a number of parties to form Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) in the late 1970s.

percentage point. However, this is less than the average losses suffered by this set when the effective number of parties is four (about two percentage points), and when the effective number of parties is six or more (about two percentage points).

It is also evident from Table 7.2 that change in the effective number of parties (ΔN_{eff}) contributes little to understanding shifts in support for the leading parties (ΔV_L). The average values presented in Table 7.2 suggest that support for the set of leading parties increases when the system becomes more fragmented and decreases when the system becomes less fragmented. However, these averages are not statistically different from each other. That said, the average shift in support for the set of leading parties when the party systems becomes more fragmented is statistically different from the average shift in support when the effective number of parties remains stable. However, this is not sufficient to conclude that change in the degree of party system fragmentation has an effect on support for the set of leading parties. To arrive at such a conclusion, I would need to observe significantly different averages for all three contexts. Significantly different mean shifts in support for the set of leading parties when party system fragmentation increased and decreased would also have been of some interest. However, neither of these is the case.

7.3 Institutional Context of Elections

The rules under which political parties compete with one another influence the proportionality of the electoral outcome. Here I focus on two of those rules. The first, the electoral formulae, are the rules by which votes are translated into seats in the national legislature. The various electoral formulae that are used in Europe differ from each other in terms of the proportionality with which they translate votes into seats. The second, district magnitude refers to the number of seats available to be won in an electoral district or constituency. As noted earlier, the greater the district magnitude the more proportional the electoral outcome.

7.3.1 Proportionality of Electoral Formulae

In Table 7.3, I rank each of the eleven countries by the proportionality of the decisive electoral formulae (${}^pP_{ef}$).⁵ Lijphart (1994) identifies LR-Hare method as the most proportional electoral formula.⁶ This formula allocates to parties as many seats as they have quotas. Of the countries that I consider, LR-Hare formula has been used for elections in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Italy. The formula that produces the least proportional allocation of seats to votes is plurality. Under this rule, the allocation of seats is biased in favour of the strong parties. These parties are over-represented while the 'weak' are under-represented (Sartori, 1994, p.54; Lijphart, 1984, p.150; Cox, 1997, p.56). Of the countries I consider, only the UK uses a plurality formula. The 1983 election is a striking example of how disproportional election results in the UK can be. The share of the vote won by the SDP/Liberal Alliance was just two percentage-points less than that won by Labour. However SDP/Liberal Alliance was unable to convert this vote share into seat share in the House of Commons and they trailed Labour's seat share by almost 30 percentage-points. As Webb and Fisher (1999, pp13-14) note the single-member plurality system works to exclude third parties from power enabling the two largest parties to operate an 'informal cartel' and maintain their advantage over other challengers. As such then, single-member plurality rules undermine the ability of a third party to present a credible challenge.

Within the family of PR formulae Lijphart identifies an intermediate category that includes modified Sainte-Lague (divisor method), LR-Droop (quota method) and STV (in Ireland, a Droop quota is calculated). Two Scandinavian countries, Norway and Sweden, use Modified Sainte-Lague, while Ireland is the only country to use the Single Transferable Vote, with Austria the only country to have used Droop. The PR formulae that produce the least proportional allocation of seats to votes are, d'Hondt (a highest average method) and Imperiali (a largest remainders method) (Lijphart, 1994, pp22-24). Of the countries I consider, d'Hondt has been used in Belgium, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. Moreover, in the eleven countries, d'Hondt

⁵ In order to identify the decisive electoral formula in each country it is important to note that some countries have more than one tier. According to Lijphart (1994, p.36) 'the upper-level is the *decisive level*' in terms of achieving proportionality *except* when remainder-transfer systems are used at the lower level. When remainder-transfer (LR) formulae are used 'no higher-tier formula is able to favour systematically the larger over the smaller parties, since the parties with the highest totals of remaining votes are not necessarily the largest parties' (Lijphart, 1994, p.36).

⁶ See Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion on the proportionality of electoral formulae.

has been the decisive electoral formula for more elections than any other formula. Finally, before switching to LR-Hare in the 1990s, Italy used two versions of Imperiali.

Table 7.3: Electoral Systems Ranked by Proportionality of Electoral Formula (P_{ef4}), 1950-1999 (N = 160)

Rank	Electoral Formula	N	Countries (Number of Elections)
Most (3)	Hare	35	Austria (9) [Lower Tier] Denmark (20) Germany (4) Italy (2)
(2)	Modified Sainte-Lague	28	Norway (12) Sweden (16)
	LR-Droop	6	Austria [Lower Tier]
	Single Transferable Vote	15	Ireland (15)
(1)	d'Hondt	53	Belgium (16) Finland (14) Germany (9) Netherlands (14)
	Imperiali	9	Italy (9) [Lower Tier]
	Reinforced Imperiali	1	Italy (1) [Lower Tier]
Least (0)	Plurality	13	UK (13)

Sources: Lijphart (1994) Tables 2.1 - 2.5, pp10-39; Caramani (2000), Relevant sections on each country; Farrell (2001), p.113.

7.3.1.1 Change in Electoral Formula

While changing the electoral formula (Δ_{ef}) is not easily done, changes have been introduced. In 1994, the Italians introduced a mixed system: 75 percent of the seats are decided by a plurality rule while the rest are allocated by a PR-rule. These changes followed the introduction in 1992 of limitations on preference voting. In Italy, reform of the electoral system had been on the political agenda as some regarded the Imperiali formula as a source of the fragmented and unstable nature of their multi-party governments. However, electoral reform proved elusive until the result of a referendum on a quasi-majoritarian electoral system for the Senate helped to break the deadlock. While this referendum referred to the Senate, the popular endorsement of

electoral reform compelled parliament to redraft the entire parliamentary electoral system (Daniels, 1999, p.81).

The electoral systems in some of the other countries have also undergone change. Of the four countries in which the least proportional electoral formula is used, Germany is the only country to switch to a more proportional system. For the 1987 election in Germany LR-Hare replaced d'Hondt as the decisive electoral formula. Electoral reform in Austria saw the more proportional LR-Hare replace LR-Droop for the 1971 election. While this increased the proportionality of the Austrian electoral system, the introduction of a third tier in 1992 reduced it again somewhat (this is coded as a change to the electoral formula)⁷ (Lijphart, 1994, pp25-29 and p.39; Luther, 1999, p.122). Finally, in the early 1950s, Norway and Sweden switched from d'Hondt to Modified Sainte-Lague. Furthermore, the Swedes introduced a second tier for the 1970 election, with the Norwegians doing the same for the 1989 election. In both countries the Modified Sainte-Lague formula is used on each tier.

7.3.2 District Magnitudes

In Table 7.4, I present the average district magnitudes in each of the eleven countries ranked by proportionality (pP_M). The most proportional systems are those where average district magnitude is greater than ten and the least proportional system is the UK where district magnitude is one.⁸ Since I rely on Lijphart (1994) for a measure of district magnitude, I only consider those years for which he reports a measure. As such only 131 cases are considered.

⁷ Another institutional variable that affects party competition in Austria, but which I do not consider, is the financing of political parties. Luther (1999, p.123) notes that Austrian parties are probably the most generously financed in Europe but new parties, until they win parliamentary representation, lack the financial muscle of established, state-subsidised parties.

⁸ It needs to be kept in mind that seats in the legislature are not always allocated to one level of electoral district. In some countries two, and even three, tiers of electoral districts are used. According to Lijphart (1994, p.32) the 'basic rationale for two-tier districting is to combine the advantage of reasonably close voter-representative contact offered by smaller districts with the advantage of greater proportionality and minority representation offered by larger districts'. An upper tier is used to allocate supplementary seats in order to correct deviations from proportionality that are caused by small district magnitudes (Lijphart, 1984, p.155). The district magnitudes at the lower level are fairly small, 'usually less than 10 seats' (Lijphart, 1994, p.36). Lijphart (1994, p.36) notes that in two-tier systems 'the effects of small magnitude at the lower level are overridden at the higher level. At the upper level, the district magnitudes are all sizeable, ranging from a minimum of well over 20 seats to the huge national district of more than 600 seats in recent Italian elections'. In cases with a two-tier system, I consider the second tier's district magnitude. Lijphart also notes that legal thresholds have been used to temper the near-perfect proportionality of such large upper-tier districts.

Table 7.4: District Magnitudes Ranked by Proportionality (P_M), 1950-1999 (N=131)

Rank	District Magnitude	N	Country (number of elections)
Most Proportional (2)	More than 10	92	Austria (12)
			Belgium (13)
			Denmark (17)
			Finland (11)
			Germany (10)
			Italy (9)
			Netherlands (12)
			Norway (1)
			Sweden (7)
			(1)
			Norway (9)
			Sweden (6)
Least Proportional (0)	One	11	UK (11)

Sources: Lijphart (1994) Tables 2.1 - 2.5, pp10-39.

In the majority of elections that I consider the average number of representatives returned *per* district is greater than ten. It should be noted that within this group there is a wide range of district magnitudes. For example, in the Netherlands district magnitude is equal to 150, while in Finland it is equal to 13. Both countries are within the ‘most proportional’ group of countries. The UK is ranked as the ‘least proportional’ as each constituency returns a single member of parliament.

7.3.2.1 Change in District Magnitude

Since the beginning of the 1950s, seven countries have changed the average number of representatives elected *per* constituency (Δ_M). For the most part these changes involved increases in average district magnitude where it was already greater than ten. In Germany, average district magnitude has changed on three occasions. The first change was introduced for the 1953 election and was again changed for the subsequent election of 1957. A third, and very marginal, change was introduced for the 1987 election (average district magnitude increased from 496.88 to 497).⁹ Changes were made to average district magnitude in Austria for the 1971 election, for the second Danish election in 1953, for the Italian election of 1958 and the Dutch election of 1956. The exceptions to this are the changes introduced in Sweden and Norway. In both countries, the changes mean that I reclassify these countries from the intermediate category (between one and ten) to the most proportional category

⁹ The average district magnitude of 496.88 is a consequence of changes in the number of seats in the German parliament over the period 1957-1983 (see Lijphart, 1994, p.16 and p.34).

(greater than ten). The change introduced in Sweden for the 1970 election increased average district magnitude from eight to 349. Similarly, the change introduced in Norway for the 1989 election increased average district magnitude from just less than eight to 165. In both countries, the large increase in district magnitude was the result of a switch from a single-tier system to a two-tier system (Lijphart, 1994, p. 31 and p.35).¹⁰

7.3.3 Proportionality of Electoral Outcomes

Ranking proportionality by electoral formulae and district magnitudes means relying on expectations about the independent effects of these rules on the proportionality of the electoral outcome. In reality, electoral competition occurs under both types of rules, as well as other rules, such as legal thresholds. When it comes to allocating seats in parliament on the basis of vote share, these rules act in concert. Consequently, I also consider a measure of proportionality of electoral outcomes. I use the measure proposed by Gallagher and recommended by Lijphart (1994, p.62).¹¹

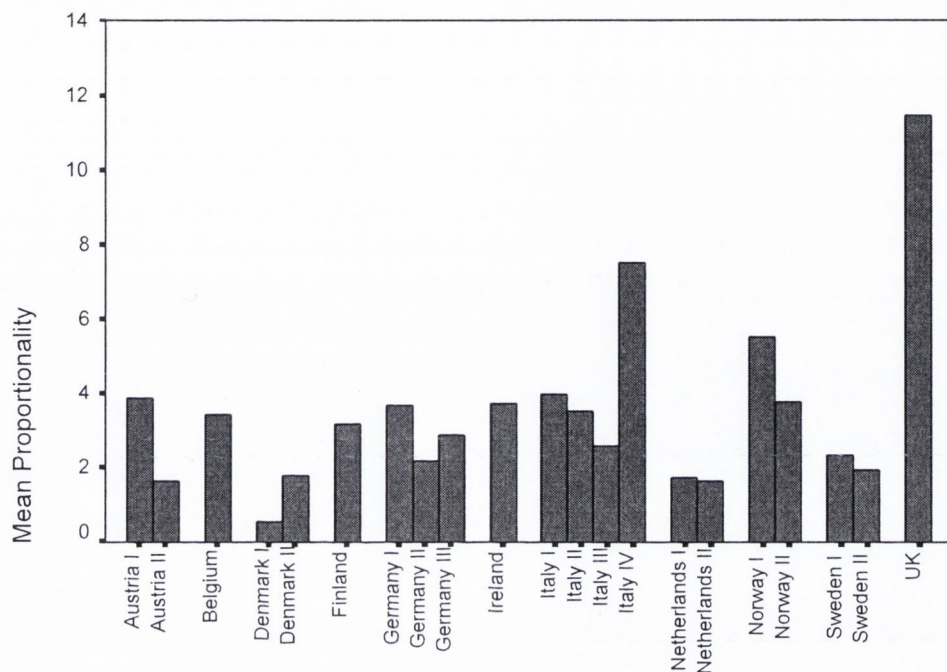
In Figure 7.2, I present the mean score for each electoral system regime on the Gallagher Least-Squares Index (I^m). That is to say, I focus on the proportionality of electoral outcomes under a given set of rules. In any country where the rules are changed, I measure the proportionality of electoral outcomes under the new set of rules. For example, the electoral rules in Germany have changed twice. This means that for Germany I measure the proportionality of three sets of rules.

The UK, with its first-past-the-post electoral system, stands out as by far the least proportional of the systems. Of the various PR-multi-member electoral systems, the least proportional of these is the mixed Italian electoral system. In Italy, the introduction of the mixed system for the 1994 election reduced the proportionality of the electoral outcomes. While this average is based on only two elections, it is markedly different from the average value under Italy II.

¹⁰ This was the second time average district magnitude changed. Changes to district magnitude were also introduced for the first elections of the 1950s.

¹¹ See Chapter 4.

Figure 7.2: *Disproportionality of Electoral Outcomes: Mean Scores on Gallagher's Least Squares Index for Each Electoral Regime by Country (T^m), 1950-1999*



The countries with the most proportional electoral outcomes are Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria II. In Denmark, while it would appear that changes to the electoral rules reduced the proportionality of the electoral outcomes, the average score for Denmark I is based on two elections. In Austria as well as Norway and Sweden, it would appear that the changes to the electoral system improved the proportionality of the electoral outcomes.

7.3.4 Hypothesis: Shifts in Support for Set of Leading Parties and Proportionality of Electoral System

The electoral rules provide the institutional context of elections. To varying degrees, the proportionality of the electoral system biases the allocation of seat share to vote share in favour of the largest parties. This is particularly true of systems using a first-past-the-post electoral system. Bartolini and Mair (1990) find that overall levels of electoral instability are greater under less proportional rules than under more proportional rules. Bartolini and Mair's (1990) conclusion implies that the variation in

changes in support for the set of leading parties is likely to be greater under a first-past-the-post system than it is under more proportional rules. Under the latter set of rules people are less constrained in voting in line with their preferences, and as such are less likely to shift between parties from one election to the next. Under the former set of rules, people are more constrained in casting their votes and need to take into account whether or not their vote is going to be wasted. Electoral instability may result as, from time to time, the third party in a constituency may be able to present a more credible challenge.

The question here is, is electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government more likely to increase or decrease under a given set of rules? If there is a relationship between the proportionality of the electoral rules and shifts in support for the leading parties, then not only does the proportionality of the electoral rules bias the allocation of seats to votes in their favour, it also contributes to them maintaining their positions at the top of the party system.

I do not expect to observe a systematic relationship between the proportionality of the electoral system and changes in support for the set of leading parties. No matter how proportional a given electoral system, at some elections the set of leading parties win extra support; at other elections they lose support.

When it comes to changing the electoral rules, it is reasonable to expect that the leading parties may be reluctant to do so. After all, they are the parties who benefit most from the existing electoral rules. Instead, they may wish to continue with the rules they know. When these rules do change, since the leading parties are unlikely to act against their own interests, I expect a change in the electoral rules to benefit the set of potential leaders of government.

7.3.5 Results: Shifts in Support for Set of Leading Parties and Proportionality of Electoral System

In Table 7.5, I present average shifts in support for the set of potential leaders of government associated with different measures of proportionality. The evidence I present suggests that differences in the proportionality of electoral formulae and district magnitude as well as the proportionality of electoral outcomes do not contribute to an understanding of shifts in support for the set of leading parties.

Table 7.5: Mean Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_L) by Proportionality of the Electoral System (One-way ANOVA and Differences of Two Means)

		Average Change in Electoral Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government	Total
<i>Type of Electoral Formulae</i> (P_{ef3})			
Proportional Representation		-1.49 (0.50)	130
Mixed		0.59 (1.66)	15
Plurality		-1.20 (1.73)	13
<i>Proportionality of Electoral Formulae</i> (P_{ef4}) ^a			
Most Proportional	(3)	-2.65 (0.94)	35
	(2)	-0.37 (0.80)	49
	(1)	-1.22 (0.75)	61
Least Proportional	(0)	-1.20 (1.73)	13
<i>District Magnitudes</i> (P_M)			
More than TEN	(2)	-1.02 (0.54)	90
Between ONE and TEN	(1)	0.52 (1.01)	28
ONE	(0)	-1.49 (2.01)	11
<i>Proportionality by Electoral System Period</i> (Gallagher's Index) (Γ^m) ^b			
Most Proportional	(3)	-2.55 (4.15)	2
	(2)	-1.68 (0.69)	68
	(1)	0.95 (0.69)	64
Least Proportional	(0)	-0.85 (1.39)	24
<i>Change in the Electoral Rules</i>			
Change Electoral Formula (Δ_{ef})		-6.43* (2.59)	9
No Change		-0.96* (0.45)	149
Change in District Magnitude (Δ_M)		1.53 (0.47)	11
No Change		-0.94 (2.23)	118
Change in Electoral Formula but District Magnitude Remains Constant		-14.00*** (0.70)	3
No Change		-0.94*** (0.48)	118
Change in District Magnitude but Electoral Formula Remains Constant		6.54** (2.15)	5
No Change		-0.94** (0.48)	118

Notes: ^a (3) Hare (2) Modified Sainte-Lague; LR Droop; Single Transferable Vote (1) d'Hondt; Imperiali; Reinforced Imperiali (0) Plurality;

^b (4) Between 0 and 1.5; (3) Between 1.5 and 3; (2) Between 3 and 4.5; (1) Greater than 4

Means significantly different at *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$ (equal variances not assumed).

When I compare across these various measures of proportionality of the electoral system, the average shifts in support for the set of leading parties are not significantly different from each other. Moreover, there is no evident pattern in the average shifts in support. That is, the losses suffered by the set of leading parties are not greater under the most proportional rules and less under the least proportional rules, or *vice versa*.

The one aspect of the context of the electoral decision that does have a significant impact on support for the set of leading parties is change in the electoral system. I expect the set of leading parties to benefit from these rule changes. However, the evidence I present in Table 7.5 suggests that the effect of rule changes on support for the set of leading parties depends on what rules are changed.

On the one hand, when changes are made to the electoral formula, on average, the set of leading parties loses vote share.¹² On the other hand, when changes are made to district magnitude the set of leading parties, on average, increase their share of the vote.¹³ This association between change in the electoral rules and support for the set of leading parties is clear when I focus on those cases when *only* the electoral formula was changed and those cases where *only* district magnitude was changed. That said, given that the number of cases of change is very low, it would be unwise to draw any hard conclusions from these average shifts in support.

7.3.5.1 Results: Shifts in Support for Set of Leading Parties and Proportionality of Electoral System Controlling for Party System Fragmentation

The proportionality of the electoral rules and the number of competing parties are not independent of each other. As Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.157) note there is an association between PR rules and larger numbers of parties as well as easier access of new parties to political competition. Bartolini and Mair (1990) compare those systems that use proportional rules with those that use majority rules and control for the

¹² This high average loss is due to large losses suffered by the leading parties in Austria (1994) when their share of the vote fell by 13 percentage points and in Italy (1992 and 1994) when their share of the vote fell by more than 14 percentage points at both elections.

¹³ This high average gain is mainly due to the gains made by the set of leading parties in Germany. In Germany, a change in district magnitude that is not accompanied by a change in the electoral formula is associated with a 14 point increase in their share of the vote in 1953 and an eight percentage point increase in their support in 1957. In the Netherlands, a similar type of change is associated with an increase in support for the leading parties by seven percentage points in 1956. The set of leading parties also increased their shares of the vote in Denmark (1953) by two percentage points and in Italy (1958) by two percentage points.

number of parties. They find that ‘the contrasting levels of volatility vary considerably according to the different numbers of parties’ (Bartolini and Mair, 1990, pp157). When I examine these relationships, the evidence suggests that, when controlling for systemic factors, the proportionality of the electoral rules, or changes in these rules, do not have a systematic affect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties (See Table A7.1 in the Appendix).

While Bartolini and Mair (1990) and Pedersen (1979 and 1983) found that the contexts of the electoral decision influence the levels of overall electoral instability, the evidence I present suggests that they do not have systematic impacts on shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties. I conclude that the overall levels of electoral volatility associated with systemic and institutional contexts neither enhance nor undermine support for the set of leading parties. This is an interesting conclusion given that the various electoral systems are, to a greater or lesser degree, biased in favour of the larger parties. What this conclusion suggests is that the rules may allocate seats to votes in a somewhat disproportionate manner, but, over time, these rules do not encourage a shift in vote share towards the leading parties.

7.4 Discussion: Systemic and Institutional Contexts of Elections and the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters

The question that this section addresses is whether or not there is an association between the systemic and institutional factors and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. It is evident from the above discussion that the systemic and institutional contexts of elections are not systematically associated with changes in support for the set of potential leaders of government. The question I examine here is, is change in the choice available to voters more likely to occur under a particular context than it is to occur under another context?

There is a difference between those countries that apply PR-multi-member rules and those that use a plurality-single member rule. In the latter case, the set of leading parties remains unchanged while under the former set of rules change in the choice available to voters occurs. Since only the UK employs a plurality-single

member rule it is not possible to conclude whether this difference is due to differing electoral systems or factors that are unique to elections in the UK.

Within the family of PR-multi-member electoral systems, change in the choice available to voters is no more likely to be associated with the most proportional PR formula than it is with the least proportional PR formula. In four countries, the most proportional of the PR rules, LR-Hare, is the decisive electoral formula. This electoral formula is associated with change in the choice available to voters in both Denmark and Italy. In the other two countries, Germany and Austria, the choice available to voters has remained unchanged. A similar pattern is evident when I consider the least proportion of the PR rules, d'Hondt. Under this electoral formula the choice available to voters has changed in Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands. Yet, not only did party system change not occur in Germany when d'Hondt was the decisive electoral formula, it did not occur under this rule in Belgium and the Netherlands until relatively recently.

As well as considering the proportionality of electoral formulae I also take into account average district magnitude. While Denmark and Finland may differ in terms of the proportionality of the electoral formula employed in each country, average district magnitudes in both countries are high. Both of these countries have experienced several changes in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. However, as with electoral formulae, average district magnitudes are also high in the party systems of Germany and Austria where the choice available to voters is stable. Moreover, in Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, despite numerous elections with high average district magnitudes, change in these party systems is a recent phenomenon. It is evident from this discussion that change and stability in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters is not associated with the proportionality of the institutional context of the electoral decision.¹⁴

One case of party system change is associated with change in the institutional context. The Italian election of 1994 was the first election to occur under a new set of electoral rules. At this election the Lega Nord (LN) replaced the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) as one of the leading parties. In considering this case it is important to remember that during this period the Italian political system was in crisis. This period

¹⁴ In the above discussion I also considered the proportionality of electoral outcomes by a given set of rules in each country. Of those elections held under the two most proportional set of rules 17 percent of these are associated with change in the choice available to voters. Under the two least proportional set of rules 13 percent of these are associated with party system change.

not only saw the introduction of new electoral rules it also witnessed the exposure of corruption, which hit the once dominant Christian Democrats (DC) particularly hard, the emergence of new parties and in the decade leading up to this election there had been notable shifts in the distribution of voters preferences (i.e., a weakening of partisanship and a decline in electoral participation; see Chapter 6). What is particularly notable about the impact of the new rules on the choice available to Italian voters is the manner of the change in the choice. The new mixed electoral system had the effect of reducing the proportionality of the allocation of votes to seats in the Italian parliament. In 1994, Lega Nord (LN) won eight percent of the vote in the PR-leg of the election, a share that entitled them to ten seats. In the single member districts they won 107 seats. This brought them a grand total to 117 seats (or 18.6 per cent of the seats) and as a result they became the largest party in the *Camera dei Deputati*.

Changes in the electoral rules may have a delayed effect on the choice available to voters. This delay may be a consequence of voters needing to adjust how they cast their ballots in the light of the new rules. Moreover, it may take more than one election for the effect of the new rules on the party system to undermine the stability of the party system. For instance, in Norway, the introduction of a second tier and the increase in district magnitude for the 1989 election is not associated with an immediate change in the choice available to voters. It might be argued that the introduction of these more proportional rules had a delayed effect on the set of leading parties. The composition of this set of parties changed at the two subsequent elections (1993 and 1997) to the change in the electoral rules. In Sweden, the lapse in time, between the introduction of new electoral rules and party system change, is wider. In 1952 the decisive electoral formula was changed from d'Hondt to Modified Sainte-Lague and district magnitude was increased. Two elections later, in 1958, the composition of the set of leading parties changed. Furthermore, in 1979, the choice available to Swedish voters changed three elections after the 1970 introduction of a second tier and increase in district magnitude. However, the failure of institutional changes to result in changes (even delayed change) in choices available to voters highlights the tenuous nature of this association: Austria (1971), Denmark (second election of 1953), Germany (1953, 1957 and 1987), Italy (1958), the Netherlands (1956) and Norway (1953).

In terms of the systemic context, change in the choice available to voters is associated with fragmentation of seat share in the legislature. More than a quarter of those elections where the effective number of parties is four or more result in change in the choice available to voters. This accounts for all but four elections that result in change in the choice available to voters. The four exceptions all occurred in Sweden where the effective number of parties was equal to three. It is worth noting that in two of these cases, the third largest party in the Swedish legislature was within four percentage points of the second largest party (1960 and 1968). However, rather than drawing any particular conclusions about the relationship between change in the choice available to voters and the fragmentation of the party system, I wish to note that there is a strong correlation between party system fragmentation and the closeness of political competition. I give greater consideration to this point in Chapter 9.

Change in the systemic context of electoral competition is also associated with a number of changes in the choice available to voters. In particular, change in the choice available to voters in Denmark (1975), Italy (1994 and 1996) and the Netherlands (1998) are associated with increases in the fragmentation of their national legislatures. Increases in fragmentation widen the choice of incumbent parties available to voters. More parties have proven their abilities to win seats in parliament. Moreover, an increase in the effective number of parties may mean that smaller and new parties win seat share off the more established parties. The changes in Denmark and Italy are associated with notable shake-ups in their party systems. In Denmark, Progress Party (F) and Centre Democrats (CD), who split from the Social Democrats (SD), contested their first election in 1973 and between them won almost a quarter of the seats. Furthermore, four other parties between them managed to win about eleven percent of the seats in the Danish parliament. The share of the seats in the parliament won by the erstwhile set of leading parties fell from 58 percent to 35 percent, with the Conservative People's Party (KF) losing their place in the set of potential leaders of government (their share of the seats fell from 18 percent to nine percent). Earlier, when I considered the changes to the choice available to Italian voters I made reference to the emergence of new parties. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a variety of parties emerged from splits in the two leading parties. In the early 1980s, the two leading parties, Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) and the Communist Party of Italy (PCI/PDS) controlled about two-thirds of the seats in the *Camera dei Deputati*. By

1996, what was left of these parties, the Italian Popular Party (DC/PPI) and the Democratic Party of the Left (PCI/PDS) controlled a third of the seats in the *Camera dei Deputati* (of this the former communists controlled 23 percent). While this period witnessed the emergence of a variety of parties, the most notable of these is Forza Italia (FI). In 1994, they won 16 percent of the seats and in 1996 they won 19 percent of the seats. Since then they have gone on to lead the Italian government. The 1990s also saw the rise in popularity of the Northern League (LL/LN). In 1987 the Northern League controlled less than one percent of the seats in the national legislature, but by 1994 they were the largest party with 19 percent of the seats in the Italian Parliament (in 1996, their share of the seats fell to nine percent). In the Netherlands, the election of 1994 resulted in established parties such as Democrats '66 (D'66) and the Liberal Party (VVD) increasing their share of the seats in the *Tweede Kamer* by about 14 percentage points. The two largest parties, Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and Labour (PvdA) both lost seat share (the share of the seats controlled by the set of leading parties fell by 21 percentage points).

7.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the relationship between the systemic and institutional contexts in which elections take place and the party system. The contexts in which voters decide how to cast their votes differ not only between countries but also within countries. There is substantial evidence that the number of parties and the proportionality of electoral rules, as well as changes in these, contribute to an understanding of differences in levels of overall electoral instability (Bartolini and Mair (1990); Pedersen (1979 and 1983)). The purpose of this chapter was to examine whether these factors contribute to an understanding of changes in support for the set of leading parties.

From the analysis that I present in this chapter it is evident that there is no systematic relationship between change in support of the set of leading parties and either the system or institutional contexts. No matter what the context of the election at some elections support for the set of leading parties increases while at others it decreases. While electoral formulae bias the allocation of seats to votes, differences in proportionality do not encourage voters to drift towards the largest parties. Moreover,

while I expected the leading parties to benefit from change in the electoral rules, the evidence suggests that they lose support when they alter the electoral formula.

There is no systematic relationship between change in support for the set of leading parties and the electoral context. Despite this, there is some evidence that the choice of potential leaders of government is more likely to change in some contexts than it is in others. In a sense, the particular context of an election makes change more or less likely to occur without having a direct effect on support for the set of leading parties. In particular, when voters have a wide group of parties to choose between, and when that group is expanding, the choice available to voters is more likely to change.

This leads me to the final set of factors that I need to take into account: the object of voters' choices, the political parties. Political parties are not simply a set of labels from which voters choose. While voters may opt for a political party for a variety of reasons, one important framework for viewing the vote decision is party policy. In the next chapter, I explore how shifts in party policy contribute to changes in support for the set of leading parties.

Chapter 8

Shifts in Party Policy and the Choice Available to Voters

8.1 Introduction

The final aspect of the electoral choice that I examine is the set of objects that voters choose between, the political parties. The purpose of this chapter is to examine my fourth explanation of stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters (ΔL). This explanation focuses on the actions of political parties. Political parties are more than a collection of passive objects from which voters choose. Parties not only react to changes in their environments, they also act to influence their environment (Wolinetz, 1988; Mair, 1993). To examine the effect of the parties' own actions on the choice available to voters, I focus on changes to the policy positions that they have adopted over a series of elections.

In examining change in policy positions there are two theoretical frameworks that need to be considered. The first is associated with Downs' (1957) conclusion that competing parties converge on the position of the median voter, a vote maximising position (V_t^{med}). The second is based on Budge and Bara's (2001) observation that each party oscillates around a long-term policy position (P_a^{ll}). The expectation of both models is that the direction in which parties alter their policy positions will influence whether their support increases or decreases. Furthermore, I expect that the effect of policy changes on party support will also influence whether the choice available to voters remains stable or changes. In examining these hypotheses, I consider policy change on three different policy dimensions: the Manifesto Research Groups Left-Right dimension, Laver and Garry's Economic Left-Right dimension and their Social Left-Right dimension. I construct these dimensions using the MRG comparative dataset (See Chapter 4).

In Section 8.2, I focus on the two positions from which I measure policy change. I begin by estimating the typical position of the median voters in each of the countries. While I report the typical position, I note that when I calculate change in

policy relative to the position of the median voter, I do so relative to the estimated position of the median voter in each election. I then estimate the long-term policy positions of each party that has been in the set of potential leaders of government. Finally, I provide two illustrations of changes made by parties to their policy positions on the Laver and Garry Economic dimension. The purpose of these illustrations is to show how parties' positions on this dimension shift from one election to the next. In particular I note how they change relative to the typical position of the median voters and the long-term policy positions of each of the leading parties. In Section 8.3, I begin by providing a brief outline of the hypotheses that I test. The question I address is whether or not the change in support for the set of leading parties is due to actions of the largest parties with regard to their own policy positions. In reporting my results, I first focus on the European level, that is, taking all eleven countries together. Then I consider the relationship between policy and support for the leading parties within each of the eleven countries. In Section 8.4, I examine whether or not change in the choice available to voters is associated with policy change.

8.2 Changing Policy Positions in Europe

The three policy dimensions that I consider are the MRG Left-Right dimension, Laver and Garry's Economic Left-Right dimension (Economic) and their Social Left-Right dimension (Social).¹ Each policy dimension has a range from -100 to +100. Parties that have policy positions that are greater than zero are parties that have a 'right' policy mix, while parties with policy positions that are negative have a 'left' policy mix. In Chapter 4, I provide a more detailed description of how these dimensions are constructed. Basically, parties that are to the 'right' give greater emphasis to issues such as 'free enterprise', 'law and order', 'economic orthodoxy', 'incentives to encourage enterprise' and to 'government authority'. Parties to the 'left' give greater emphasis to issues such as 'nationalisation of industry', 'controlled economy', 'regulation of capitalism', 'economic planning' and express opposition to ideas of 'traditional morality' and the 'national way of life'.

¹ As I note in Chapter 4, I use three methods for estimating policy positions on each dimension.

8.2.1 Measuring Change on Policy Dimensions Relative to the Position of the Median Voter

The first point from which I measure change in policy is the position of the median voter at each election (V_t^{med}). In Table 8.1, I present the typical estimated position of the median voters in each country. On the one hand, in Finland, Norway and the UK, the typical positions of the median voters on the MRG and economic dimensions are to the 'left'. On the other hand, in Austria, Germany and Ireland, the typical positions of the median voters on both dimensions are to the 'right'. In the five remaining countries, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden, a more mixed pattern is evident. The typical positions of the median voters in these countries on the MRG dimension are to the 'left' while the typical positions on the Economic dimension are to the 'right'. On the Social dimension, the typical positions of the median voters are to the 'right' in all eleven countries.

When I consider policy change relative to the positions of the median voters, I need to take into account whether or not a party is located between the two leading parties on a particular policy dimension (see Table A8.1 in the Appendix). The presence, or absence, of an intervening smaller party influences the direction of the relationship between policy change and shifts in support for the set of leading parties. When there is an intervening party, I expect support for the set of leading parties to increase when they converge on the position of the median voter. However, when there is no intervening party, I expect support for the set of leading parties to increase when they diverge from the position of the median voter.

Table 8.1: Median Voter by Country (V_t^{med}): Mean Positions (Standard Deviations), 1950-1999

	MRG Left-Right	Laver and Garry Economic Left-Right	Laver and Garry Social Left-Right
Austria	0.51 (17.52)	7.42 (5.88)	5.81 (3.40)
Belgium	-3.52 (8.09)	2.71 (4.14)	3.36 (2.40)
Denmark	-2.33 (8.32)	2.99 (3.63)	3.21 (3.79)
Finland	-12.56 (12.59)	-5.10 (5.32)	6.75 (4.37)
Germany	1.43 (10.68)	5.63 (5.78)	8.98 (3.88)
Ireland	5.45 (15.23)	2.70 (4.88)	10.26 (7.25)
Italy	-1.61 (9.34)	2.79 (2.90)	3.84 (4.04)
Netherlands	-5.58 (10.99)	6.26 (5.07)	5.00 (2.60)
Norway	-21.23 (7.16)	-2.41 (2.95)	2.53 (1.42)
Sweden	-15.18 (15.86)	7.50 (7.41)	2.75 (2.69)
UK	-6.81 (13.21)	-0.79 (6.35)	5.46 (3.74)

8.2.2 Measuring Change on Policy Dimensions Relative to Long-Term Policy Positions

The second point of reference is the long-term policy positions of each of the potential leaders of government (P_a^H). A party's long-term position is its median position on each of the three policy dimensions. In Table 8.2, I present the long-term positions for the leading parties on each of the dimensions. Earlier, in Chapter 1, I noted that generally the set of potential leaders of government included one party of the 'left' and one party of the 'right'. I made this observation on the basis of the family types of the various leading parties. Do I arrive at a similar conclusion when I examine the long-term policy positions of each of those parties that have been potential leaders of government?

I begin by considering those countries where the choice of potential leaders of government has remained unchanged. On the MRG dimension, the long-term positions for the leading parties of Austria, Germany, Ireland and the UK, indicate that one party is to the 'left' (negative score) and one party is to the 'right' (positive score). On the Economic dimension, the UK is the only one of these four countries where a leading party has a positive score and a negative score. That said, in the other three countries, the leading party *on the left* on the MRG dimension is *to the left* of the other leading party on the Economic dimension. However, the same left-right ordering of these parties is not evident on the Social dimension in these four countries. Only in Germany and the UK are the leading parties to the 'left' on the MRG and Economic dimensions to the 'left' on the Social dimension. In Austria and Ireland, the leading party that is to the 'left' on the MRG and Economic dimensions is to the 'right' on the Social dimension.

In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the choice available to voters has changed on a number of occasions. In these countries, four parties have been in the set of potential leaders of government. In Denmark, one of the four parties, the Social Democrats (SD), is to the 'left' on both the MRG and Economic dimensions. On the Social dimension, this Danish party does not have a negative score, but is *to the left* of the other three parties.

Table 8.2: Median Position for Leading Parties (P_a^{It}) on Three Policy Dimensions, 1950-1999

Country	Party	MRG	Laver and Garry Economic	Laver and Garry Social
Austria	OVP	24.00	15.50	5.13
	SPO	-13.80	0.00	6.00
Belgium	CVP/PSC	-3.81	3.85	4.50
	BSP/PSB	-19.53	-4.79	1.03
Denmark	SD	-11.40	-1.84	1.47
	V	20.25	17.30	2.17
	KF	28.40	16.25	4.87
	F	36.60	31.70	4.27
Finland	SK	-3.30	-11.50	9.02
	SSP	-19.96	-12.82	1.85
	SKDL	-42.55	-12.77	4.55
	KK	2.48	2.99	0.00
Germany	SPD	-14.16	2.31	2.57
	CDU	12.21	6.84	7.99
Ireland	FF	-0.95	2.74	7.61
	FG	8.17	6.45	5.57
Italy	DC/PPI	-2.62	2.63	4.50
	PCI/PDS	-12.11	0.52	1.04
	LL/LN	13.05	6.63	5.68
Netherlands	KVP	-9.10	12.60	5.20
	PvdA	-23.60	-3.85	1.25
	CDA	-4.00	2.00	5.27
Norway	DNA	-31.40	-6.10	1.67
	H	2.10	14.35	2.34
	S	-14.95	0.00	3.02
Sweden	SSA	-21.10	5.10	1.93
	F	-2.10	12.20	1.39
	MS	36.70	32.29	3.39
	C	-5.30	11.40	3.53
UK	CONS	9.30	5.50	6.33
	LAB	-26.60	-4.80	2.20

The opposite situation occurs in Finland, where three of the four parties are *to the left* on both the MRG and Economic dimensions. Given this it is perhaps not surprising the Social Democrats (SSP) are the only one of the leading social democratic parties to lose their place at the head of the party system. It would appear that in Finland there is a lot of competition between these three parties. What this also implies is that on a number of occasions the choice of potential leaders of government available to Finnish voters included two parties of the 'left'. However, on the Social dimension these three 'left' parties have higher scores than the party that is to the 'right' on the MRG and Economic dimensions. In Sweden, on the MRG dimension three parties are also on the 'left'. On the Economic dimension this pattern is replicated to the extent that the parties most to the 'left' and to the 'right' on this dimension are also the parties most to the 'left' and to the 'right' on the MRG dimension. In the other countries, on the MRG dimension the leading conservative parties in Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy also have negative scores. However, despite this, in all three countries and in Norway, the leading socialist party *lies to the left* of the leading conservative party on the MRG dimension as well as on the Economic and Social dimensions.

It is evident from my brief description that, for the most part, the set of potential leaders of government contains a party of the 'left' and a party of the 'right'. While the pattern is not quite as exact as might be expected, the general pattern is nonetheless evident.

8.2.3 An Illustration of Policy Change: Norway and Ireland

To illustrate how the policy positions of political parties vary over time, I consider diagrammatic representations of the policy positions adopted by parties on the Laver and Garry Economic left-right dimension in Ireland and Norway.² In both figures, the leading parties are in bold. It is evident from Figure 8.1, that in Norway, Labour (DNA) and Conservatives (H), the two potential leaders of government up until 1993, keep to their own sides of the policy dimension. In particular, both parties have quite different long-term positions on this dimension. The long-term policy position of Labour (DNA) on this dimension is -6.10 while that of Conservatives (H) is 14.35

² Budge and Bara (2001) in *Mapping Policy Preferences* present an extensive consideration of party positions on the MRG's left-right dimension.

(See Table 8.2). From Figure 8.1 it is evident that the policy positions of both parties vary around these points. However, their policy positions also converge on and diverge from the average position of the median voters (in Norway this is -2.41 on this dimension; see Table 8.1). On a few occasions, one or other of these two parties adopts a position at or near the centre of the dimension. However, the two parties never cross over each other. That is to say, the Conservatives (H), the party with the 'positive' scores on the policy dimension, never have a policy score that is less than that of Labour's (DNA), the party with the 'negative' scores on the policy dimension. Moreover, there is always at least one small party between the two largest parties (See Table A8.1).

In Ireland a somewhat different story emerges (see Figure 8.2). The two parties that compete to lead government, Fianna Fáil (FF) and Fine Gael (FG), are not quite as disciplined as their counterparts in Norway. On the Economic dimension, Fine Gael's (FG) long-term policy position of 8.17 suggests that they are to the 'right', while Fianna Fáil's (FF) position of -0.95 is just to the 'left'. The general picture presented in Figure 8.2 is one where Fine Gael (FG) started out to the 'right' of Fianna Fáil (FF). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Fine Gael (FG) moved to the 'left' of Fianna Fáil (FF). By the early 1980s, the left-right ordering reverted to its earlier state, though for the last two elections of the 1980s Fine Gael (FG) were again slightly to the 'left' of Fianna Fáil (FF). In Ireland, the typical position of the median voter on the Economic dimension is 2.70. Relative to this point, Fianna Fáil's (FF) policy positions are, for the most part, quite close to the average position of the median voter. Initially, Fine Gael (FG) converged on the typical position of the median voter and has attempted to remain close to it, but on occasions they have diverged from it. It is also evident that on a number of occasions both parties were adjacent to each other, that is, there was no smaller party positioned between them (Table A8.1 in the Appendix).

Figure 8.1: Estimated Positions of Political Parties in Norway on the Laver and Garry Economic Left-Right scale

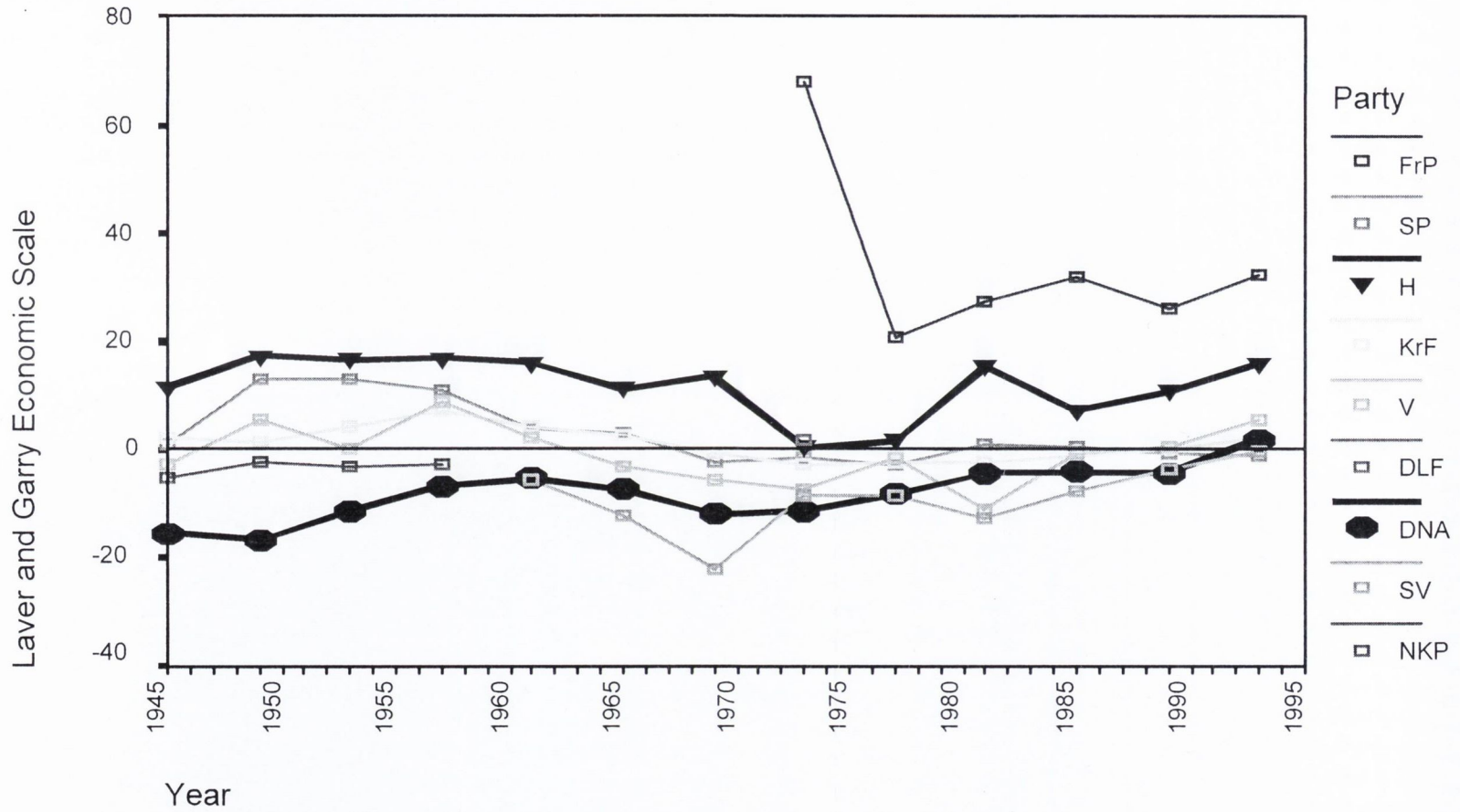
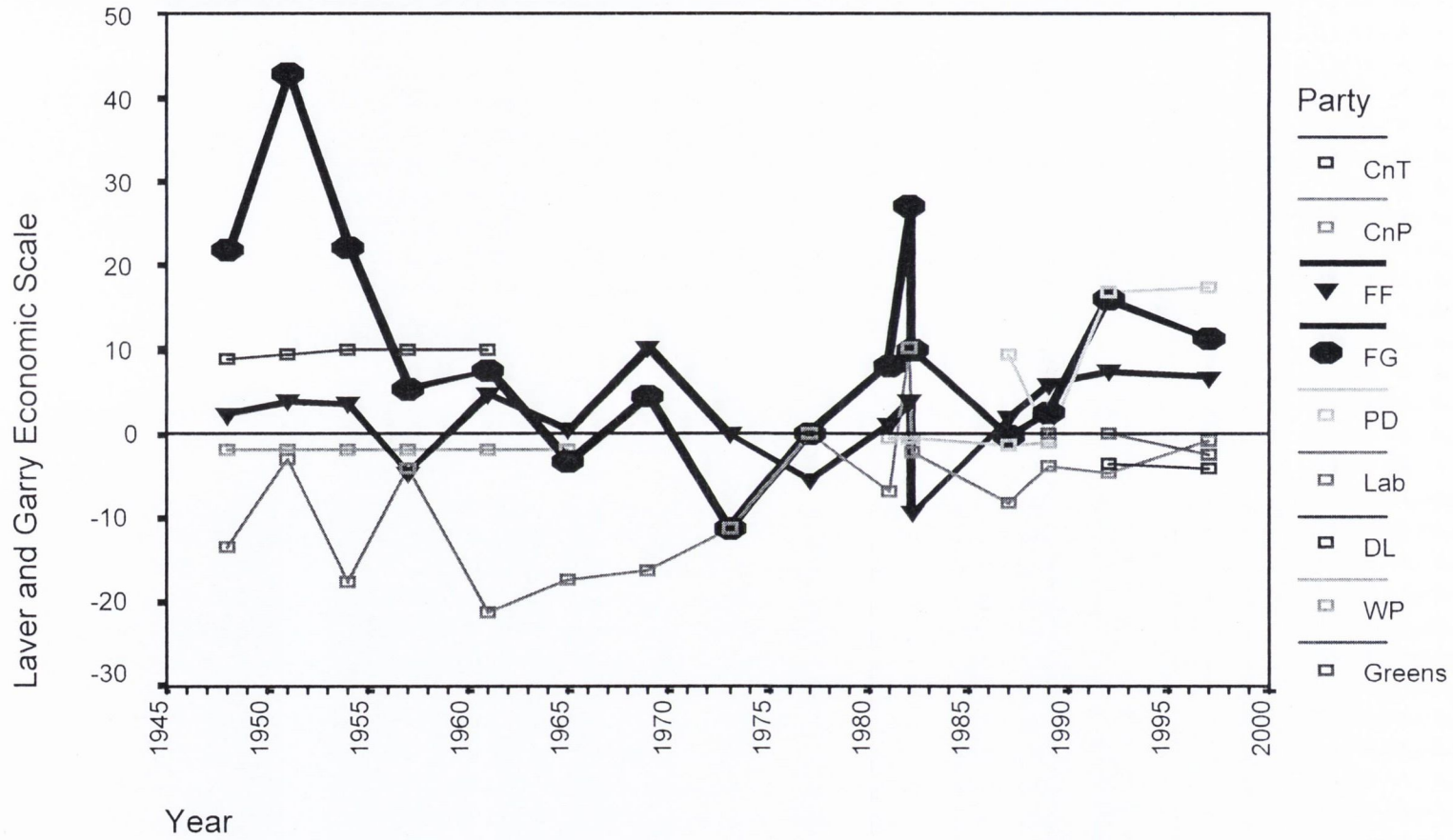


Figure 8.2: Estimated Positions of Political Parties in Ireland on the Laver and Garry Economic Left-Right scale



8.3 Policy Change and Shifts in Vote Share

In Chapter 3 I provide a detailed exposition of the hypotheses I test, so in this section I will provide a brief outline of the most salient points. The first hypothesis that I test is based on Downs' (1957) conclusion that parties in order to increase their share of the vote will converge on the position of the median voter. The second hypothesis is based on salience theory and in particular Budge and Bara's (2001) observation that parties appear to oscillate around long-term policy positions.

8.3.1 Hypothesis: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Policy Change Relative to the Position of the Median Voter

Along the same lines as the Downsian model, I assume that voters' preferences are distributed normally from left to right, that there is agreement on the ordering of the parties and that voters vote rationally. My model differs from the Downsian model in two ways. The first is Downs' policy dimension refers to particular points on a bipolar issue dimension. The policy dimensions that I consider describe a more general policy mix with parties either giving greater emphasis to 'left' issues or to 'right' issues on the MRG dimension and the Laver and Garry Economic and Social dimensions. When voters vote they assess the relative policy emphasis of each party and opt for that party which 'best' represents their preferred policy-mix.

The second important difference is that Downs focuses on the effect of a shift in policy on support for an individual party. I am concerned with the effect of policy shifts by two parties on support for both parties taken together. These effects are aggregated because of my measure of change in support for the set of potential leaders of government. This aggregation of the effects means that I need to take into account whether or not there is an intervening party between the two leading parties. As noted above, the presence or absence of an intervening party influences whether I expect support for the set of leading parties to increase when they converge on the position of the median voter or when they diverge from this position. On the one hand, when a smaller party is located between the two largest parties I expect support for this set of parties to increase when both of the leading parties converge on the position of the

median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged). On the other hand, when a smaller party does not separate the two largest parties I expect support for this set of parties to increase when both of the leading parties diverge from the position of the median voter (or when the policy position of one of this set remains unchanged).

In my analysis, rather than testing both hypotheses, I adjust my data so I test just one hypothesis. I adjust my data such that in those cases where there is no intervening party, those parties that converge on the position of the median voter appear to diverge from it, and *vice versa*.

Finally, both leading parties may not converge or diverge on the position of the median voter. It is not possible to state *a priori* whether this net shift in policy position will result in increased support for the set of leading parties. This depends on whether or not the gains made by one party from converging on (or diverging from) the position of the median voter are greater than the losses suffered by the other leading party diverging from (converging on) the position of the median voter.

Keeping these points in mind, the basic hypothesis that I test in this section is¹:

HYPOTHESIS: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the net shift in policy indicates that this set of parties diverges from the position of the median voter, and is more likely to increase when the net shift in policy indicates that this set of parties converges on the position of the median voter.

8.3.2 Hypothesis: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Policy Change Relative to the Long-Term Policy Positions of the Leading Parties

The second hypothesis focuses on the long-term policy position of each of the leading parties. Saliency theory posits that political parties are tied to particular issues. This has the effect of restricting a party's ability to make substantial alterations to their policy positions. The long-term policy position is in keeping with the tradition and general principles or ideology of a party. The party's past record encourages voters to have confidence in the party in this area.

¹ This is a combination of Hypotheses 7 and 8 in Chapter 3.

The hypothesis that I posit is based on the expectation that any deviation from such a position is expected to result in a loss of support for the party. Aggregating this expectation, I expect support for the set of leading parties to decrease when both parties diverge from their *own* long-term equilibrium positions. On the other hand, I expect this set's support to increase when both parties converge on their *own* long-term policy positions. Again, in those cases where one of the leading parties diverges from its long-term policy position while the other converges on its long-term policy position, whether the set of potential government leaders gains or loses vote share will depend on whether the gains made by one leading party are cancelled out by the losses of the other. Again, keeping these difficulties in mind, the hypothesis that I test is:

HYPOTHESIS 9: Electoral support for the set of potential leaders of government is more likely to decrease when the net change in their policy positions indicates that they diverge from their long-term policy positions, and is more likely to increase when the net change in their policy positions indicates that they converge on their long-term policy positions.

8.3.3 Results: Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Policy Change

In this section I examine the relationship between shift in policy and change in support for the set of leading parties (ΔV_L). In order to do so I consider policy change relative to the position of the median voter in each election ($\Sigma \Delta Pp^{med}$) and relative to the leading parties' long-term policy positions ($\Sigma \Delta Pp^l$). If change in policy influences support for the set of leading parties, I expect to observe a negative correlation. The expectation is that when the distance between the policy positions of the set of leading parties and the reference point narrows (indicated by a negative score), support of the set of parties should increase (a positive score). However, when the distance between their policy positions and the reference point widens (indicated by a positive score), I expect support for the set of leading parties to decline (a negative score). In Tables 8.3 and 8.4, I present correlations at both the European level, that is all eleven countries taken together, and at the level of the individual countries.

In Table 8.3, I present two versions of the correlations between shift in policy and change in support for the set of leading parties taking all eleven countries together. As I have already outlined, I only have clear expectations about the relationship between change in support for the set of leading parties and shift in policy position when both leading parties either converge on, or both diverge from, a particular reference point (i.e., the position of the median voter or the leading parties' long-term policy positions). It is not clear whether support for the set of leading parties will increase or decrease when one party converges on this reference point while the other diverges from it. It is possible that this ambiguity may contribute to the low correlations between change in support and shift in policy positions.

I compare those correlations that only include cases where the leading parties either both converge on, or diverge from, a reference point with those correlations that include all cases of policy change. It is evident the ambiguous cases do not undermine the association between change in electoral support and policy change. In Table 8.3, when all cases of policy change are included there are five statistically significant negative correlations. However, when the ambiguous cases are removed only two of these remain statistically significant. In both of these cases, while the correlation coefficient increases, the overall level of association between change in support and shift in policy remains relatively weak. In the other three cases, excluding the ambiguous cases means that there is no longer a statistically significant association between change in electoral support and shift in policy positions. The exclusion of the ambiguous shifts in policy results in weaker associations between both of these factors. That those correlations based on all cases of policy change (i.e., they include the ambiguous cases) are significant suggests that the *net shift* in policy is associated with a change in support for the set of leading parties. I conclude that there is a linear association between the *net shift* in policy and support for the set of leading parties.

8.3.3.1 Results at European Level

The evidence that I present in Table 8.3 does not provide overwhelming support for either of the two hypotheses that I test. When policy change is measured relative to the position of the median voter at each election there are two statistically significant negative correlations. These significant correlations occur when I measure policy change on the Economic and Social dimensions (estimated using a three point moving

average). This suggests that there is likely to be an increase in support for the set of leading parties when they converge on the positions of the median voters, and there is likely to be a decrease in their support when they diverge from the positions of the median voters on both dimensions.

When I measure policy change relative to the long-term positions of the leading parties, there are three statistically significant negative correlations. Moreover, there is a significant negative correlation on each of the three policy dimensions. This suggests that support for the set of leading parties is likely to increase when they converge on their own long-term policy positions and is likely to decrease when they diverge from these policy positions.

8.3.3.2 Results at Country Level

I now turn my attention to the relationship between shifts in policy and change in support for the set of leading parties within each of the countries. In Table 8.4, I focus on policy change relative to the long-term policy positions of the leading parties. I do so for two reasons. Firstly, as outlined above, change relative to these points are associated with changes in support for the set of leading parties on all three dimensions. Secondly, when I measure policy change relative to the long-term positions of the leading parties there are statistically significant negative correlations in nine of the eleven countries. When I measure policy change relative to the positions of the median voters there are significant negative correlations in only four countries (See Table A8.2 in the Appendix). The only countries where significant correlations were not observed when policy change was measured relative to the long-term positions were Ireland and the UK. In the UK, on the Economic and Social dimensions, there are significant negative correlations between shifts in policy relative to the positions of the median voters and change in support for the set of leading parties (See Table A8.2 in the Appendix). This leaves Ireland as the only country in which there is no evidence of policy change impacting in a systematic way on support for the two leading parties.

Table 8.3: European Level Correlations between Shifts in Vote Support for the Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_i) and Policy Changes Relative to (a) median voter ($\Sigma \Delta P p^{med}$); and (b) long-term policy positions of the leading parties ($\Sigma \Delta P p^l$). (Correlations when both leading parties converge or diverge)

	MRG			Economic			Social			Min N
	Raw	3pma	Cent.	Raw	3pma	Cent.	Raw	3pma	Cent.	
Position of Median Voter	0.07	0.03	0.05	-0.12*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.05	-0.12*	0.10	137
	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(-0.18**)	(-0.01)	(0.01)	(-0.12)	(-0.07)	(0.08)	(79)
Long-Term Policy Positions	-0.01	-0.10	-0.12*	-0.04	0.04	-0.15**	-0.06	-0.23***	-0.09	137
	(0.03)	(-0.16)	(-0.12)	(-0.05)	(0.03)	(-0.14)	(-0.01)	(-0.31***)	(-0.12)	(67)

* significant at $p < 0.10$; ** significant at $p < 0.05$; *** significant at $p < 0.01$;

Notes: Raw: Unsmoothed Data; 3pma: Smoothed by three-point moving average; Cent: Smoothed by centred three-point moving average.

Table 8.4: Country Level Correlations between Shifts in Vote Support for the Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_i) and Policy Changes Relative to the long-term policy positions of leading parties ($\Sigma \Delta P_i^l$).

	Raw	MRG 3pma	Cent.	Raw	Economic 3pma	Cent.	Raw	Social 3pma	Cent.	Min N
Austria	0.37	0.06	-0.37	0.39	0.19	-0.24	-0.10	-0.29	-0.77***	12
Belgium	-0.52**	-0.01	-0.34	-0.06	0.02	-0.43*	0.10	-0.18	-0.07	14
Denmark	0.24	0.15	-0.28	-0.40**	-0.06	0.10	-0.08	0.05	0.14	18
Finland	0.32	-0.26	0.25	0.37	-0.11	0.14	0.06	-0.48*	0.23	12
Germany	0.13	0.21	-0.05	-0.15	-0.20	-0.42	0.09	-0.64**	-0.03	11
Ireland	0.01	0.03	-0.10	0.32	0.06	-0.01	-0.12	-0.11	-0.09	13
Italy	-0.67**	-0.75***	-0.55**	-0.33	-0.55**	-0.30	-0.67**	-0.72***	-0.87***	10
Netherlands	-0.64**	-0.53*	-0.31	-0.43*	0.22	-0.30	-0.66***	-0.48*	-0.63**	10
Norway	-0.66**	-0.41	-0.19	-0.39	-0.15	-0.54**	-0.09	-0.42*	-0.36	11
Sweden	0.54	0.08	-0.23	0.29	0.34	-0.38*	0.14	0.11	0.23	14
UK	-0.16	0.27	0.43	-0.15	0.56	0.07	0.32	-0.23	0.28	12

One-Tailed Test: * significant at $p < 0.10$; ** significant at $p < 0.05$; *** significant at $p < 0.01$;

Notes: Raw: Unsmoothed Data; 3pma: Smoothed by three-point moving average; Cent: Smoothed by centred three-point moving average.

From Table 8.4, it is evident that in Italy and the Netherlands there are strong correlations between change in support for the set of leading parties and shifts in policy on all three dimensions. Furthermore, on the MRG dimension in Italy, and on the Social dimension in Italy and the Netherlands, these strong significant negative correlations occur no matter which of the three methods of estimating positions on these dimensions is used.

To illustrate the relationship between these two factors I outline a number of examples in Italy and the Netherlands. On the one hand, an increase in support is associated with the set of leading parties converging on their long-term policy positions on one or more of the policy dimensions. For example, in Italy in 1976 increased support for the set of leading parties is associated with the parties in this set converging on their long-term policy positions on the MRG dimension and on the Economic dimension. In the Netherlands in 1956 support for the set of leading parties increased and this is associated with both parties converging on their long-term positions on the Economic dimension. On the other hand, declines in support for the set of leading parties are associated with these parties diverging from their long-term policy positions. For example, in Italy in 1992 support for the set of leading parties fell by over 15 percentage points. On the three policy dimensions both of the leading parties diverged from their long-term positions. At the Dutch election of 1994, support for the set of leading parties fell by 21 percentage points. In this case the fall in their support is associated with both parties diverging from their long-term positions on MRG dimensions and on the Social dimension.

From this analysis there is some evidence of a systematic relationship between shifts in policy position and change in support for the set of leading parties. In Chapter 3, I outline two competing hypotheses. The evidence does not provide overwhelming support for either of these hypotheses. That said, the balance of evidence supports the association between change in support for the set of leading parties and policy change measured relative to the long-term policy positions of the leading parties.

At the European level, there is a significant negative correlation between change in support for the set of leading parties and shifts in policy relative to the long-term positions on the three dimensions (the same cannot be said of policy change measured relative to the positions of the median voters). Moreover, at the level of individual countries, there are a greater number of significant negative correlations

when shifts in policy is measured relative to the long-term positions than when it is measured relative to the positions of the median voters.

8.4 Discussion: Shifts in Policy Positions and the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters

The purpose of this final section is to examine the relationship between the choice available to voters and the actions of the parties in relation to their own policy positions. The theoretical framework focuses on the relationship between shifts in a party's policy and changes in its electoral support. In examining change and stability in the choice available to voters I focus on those occasions when a decrease (increase) in support is associated with the set of leading parties diverging from (converging on) their long-term policy positions. I do so because it is reasonable to expect that changes in policy that are expected to result in a weakening of support for the set of leading parties, are also expected to contribute to instability in the choice available to voters. On the other hand, it is reasonable to expect that policy changes that strengthen the electoral position of the set of leading parties will contribute to the stability of the choice available to voters. The examples that I consider here measure policy change relative to the long-term positions of the leading parties given that the weight of evidence supports the association between change in electoral support for the set of leading parties and policy change relative to this reference point.¹

For the purposes of discussing the relationship between shifts in policy and change in the choice available to voters, I focus on policy positions estimated using a three-point moving average. I do so because on each of the three policy dimensions, change in the choice available to voters is more likely to be associated with the set of leading parties diverging from their long-term policy positions than with this set of parties converging on their long-term positions (See Table A8.3 in the Appendix)². When policy positions are estimated using either raw data or centred-three point moving averages, change in the choice available to voters is not always more likely to

¹ Of the 24 elections that resulted in change in the choice available to voters, I do not have data to measure shifts in policy by the set of leading parties in Belgium in 1999, Denmark in 1975 and Italy in 1996. For all of the other elections, appropriate data is available.

² See Table A8.4 for association between change in choice available to voters and policy change relative to the positions of the median voters.

occur when the set of leading parties diverge from their long-term positions on the three dimensions. Instead, when policy positions are estimated using these two methods, party system change is more likely to occur when they converge on their long-term positions on the MRG dimension. Moreover, when the centred-moving average is used, the choice available to voters is as likely to change when the set of leading parties converges on their long-term positions, as it is to occur when they diverge. As such then, estimating policy positions using a three-point moving average provides a more consistent pattern of shifts in policy and the choice available to voters.

In the last section, I illustrated the relationship between change in electoral support for the leading parties and shifts in policy position by focusing on Italy and the Netherlands (see page 174). While neither the Italian election of 1992 nor the Dutch election of 1994 resulted in a change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters, they did contribute to the change that took place at the subsequent election. In the Italian election of 1992 and the Dutch election of 1994, the loss of vote share by the leading parties is associated with both parties diverging from their long-term policy positions. In the Netherlands, the losses suffered by Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) reduced the gap in terms of seat share between them and the third largest party in the legislature to less than three percentage points. At the subsequent election in 1998, Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) continued to lose vote share, and ultimately their place in the set of potential leaders of government. This loss of support in 1998 is associated with Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) diverging from its long-term positions on the three policy dimensions. In 1998, Labour (PvdA), the other leading Dutch party, converged on their long-term positions on the three dimensions and this is associated with an increase in their electoral support. In the case of the change in the choice available to Italian voters in 1994, the relationship between these variables is somewhat more ambiguous (see below).

There are other elections that suggest a systematic relationship between change in the choice available to voters and loss of electoral support for the set of leading parties associated with them diverging from their long-term policy positions. In fact there are nine other cases of change in the choice available to voters where a decrease in support for the set of leading parties is associated with both leading parties diverging from their long-term positions on at least one dimension. The Norwegian election of 1997 resulted in a change in the choice available to voters. This is the only

one of these elections at which electoral support for both leading parties fell, and the drop in support is associated with both parties diverging from their long-term positions on the three policy dimensions.

At four elections that resulted in a change in the choice available to voters, the drop in support for both leading parties is associated with both leading parties diverging from their long-term positions on two dimensions. The losses of electoral support by the set of leading parties in Denmark (in 1973 and 1994) and in Finland (1991) are associated with both leading parties diverging from their long-term positions on the Economic and Social dimensions. At the Finnish election of 1979, the loss of support by both leading parties is associated with them diverging from their long-term positions on the MRG and Economic dimensions.

At four further elections that resulted in a change in the choice available to voters, the loss of electoral support by the set of leading parties is associated with both leading parties diverging from their long-term positions on one dimension. In Denmark (1981) and Finland (1962) they diverged from their long-term positions on the MRG dimension, in Denmark (1968) they did so on the Economic dimension and in Finland (1970) on the Social dimension.

These examples provide some evidence of a systematic relationship between change in the choice available to voters and loss of vote share associated with both leading parties diverging from their long-term policy positions. However, the reality is somewhat less clear.

The first ambiguity has to do with the identification of the policy dimension associated with change in the choice available to voters. I estimate positions for the leading parties on the three dimensions. Yet, only in one case, the 1997 Norwegian election, both leading parties diverge from their long-term positions on the three dimensions. In the remaining examples, support for both leading parties decreased and both leading parties diverged from their long-term positions on at least one dimension. This implies that on at least one other dimension a leading party converged on its long-term policy position while the other diverged from its long-term position.

A second ambiguity resides with the degree to which shifts in policy influence change in support for a particular party. In the theoretical framework from which I derive my hypotheses, there is an inherent assumption that large shifts in policy will be associated with large changes in support for a party, while smaller shifts will be associated with smaller changes. However, this is not always the case. For instance, at

the Finnish election of 1962, both leading parties lost vote share. In terms of policy change, both parties diverged from their long-term positions on the MRG dimension. Of the two leading parties, the drop in support for the Social Democrats (SSP) was greater than the drop in support for Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL). However, it was the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL) and not the Social Democrats (SSP) that moved furthest away from its long-term position. As such then, the fall in support for the individual parties does not always reflect the degree to which the parties diverged from their long-term policy positions.

A further problem has to do with those elections at which the set of leading parties loses vote share, but the loss is due to a drop in support for just one of the leading parties. For instance, at the Italian election of 1994 both leading parties diverged from their long-term positions on both the MRG dimension and the Social dimension. While support for the set of leading parties declined, this loss of vote share was due to the decline in support for the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI). Moreover, in Sweden, in 1979, both leading parties diverged from their long-term positions on both the Economic and Social dimensions. Again, the decline in support for the set of leading parties was due to the Centre Party (C) losing vote share. Both of these cases are examples of the relationship between change in the choice available to voters and loss of support for the set of leading parties associated with both parties diverging from their long-term positions. However, what both examples also make clear is that at the level of the individual parties, when both parties diverge from their long-term positions the two parties do not always lose vote share.³

8.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the effect of parties' own actions on their positions at the head of the party system. In order to do so I focused on shifts in their policy positions over a series of elections and the effect these have had on their electoral support. Moreover, I examined whether or not this contributed to change in

³ As outlined in Chapter 1, stability and change in the party system is a consequence of complex relationships between the factors examined in this thesis. It is likely that these results also indicate that parties are chasing voters. That is, political parties are altering their policy positions in order to deal with shifting policy preferences amongst voters. While it is important to note this possibility, it is not within the scope of this thesis to examine such relationships.

the composition of the set of leading parties. In examining the relationship between shifts in policy and change in electoral support I considered two theoretical frameworks: change relative to the positions of the median voter and change relative to the long-term positions of the leading parties.

The evidence that I present does not conclusively support one hypothesis over the other. While there is some support for each hypothesis, the weight of evidence favours the relationship between shift in policy relative to the long-term positions of the leading parties and change in their electoral support. There is also some support for the relationship between stability and change in the choice available to voters and change in electoral support for the set of leading parties associated with shifts in policy.

Yet, this evidence is tenuous and the reason would appear to lie in the nature of the task. The theoretical frameworks from which I derive my hypotheses focus on the relationship between policy positions on either a particular issue (Downs) or a particular policy dimension (Budge and Bara). The expectation of both theoretical frameworks is that changes a party makes to its own policy position will affect support for the party. What I examine here is more than just the relationship between an individual party's shift in policy and change in its electoral support. I aggregate the expected effects for two parties of shifts in policy on their electoral support. As such, in this chapter I set a difficult empirical task for both frameworks. The evidence that I present here suggests that the actions of leading political parties do affect their own positions in the party system. In the next chapter, I take account of other factors and examine the importance of these shifts in policy on both electoral instability and the composition of the set of leading parties.

Chapter 9

Understanding Party System Change and Stability

9.1 Introduction

My focus until now has been on the relationship between the party system and an individual explanation of stability and change in the party system. The purpose of this chapter is to take all of these explanations together and examine their importance in understanding stability and change in the party system. In carrying out this task I consider two models because of the two ways in which I measure stability and change in the party system. The first is a model of change in support for the set of leading parties. In this model, I include the three explanations of electoral instability that I have considered: shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences (Chapter 6); the system and institutional context of the election (Chapter 7); and the actions of the leading political parties (Chapter 8). The second is a model of stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. In Chapter 5, I only consider the separate relationships between the choice available to voters and, first, electoral instability and, second, the closeness of political competition. In this chapter, I consider the effect of these variables on the choice available to voters when they are included in the same model. Moreover, I also include measures of shifts in the distribution of voters' preferences, systemic and institutional contexts of elections and the actions of the parties. I am interested in whether the factors that contribute to an understanding of change in support for the set of leading parties, also contribute to an understanding of stability and change in the choice available to voters independently of electoral volatility. If not, then their effect on the choice available to voters is mediated through change in support for the set of leading parties.

In Section 9.2 I examine whether or not the explanatory variables that I consider are independent of each other. An assumption of the methods of regression analysis that I employ in this chapter is that there is no exact (or strong) linear relationship between any two or more explanatory variables. If these variables are not independent of each other then problems associated with 'multicollinearity' arise.

Given that my data is a pooled cross-sectional time-series, I need to take time and country into account. In Section 9.3, I examine the relationship between time and, first, change in support for the set of leading parties, and, second, change in the choice available to voters. When I run my multi-variate model in Sections 9.4, I take account of 'country' by including dummy-variables representing each country and calculating panel-corrected standard-errors (Beck and Katz, 1995; Beck et al, 1998). In Section 9.5, I run a multi-variate model of stability and change in the choice available to voters. In Section 9.6, I examine my model and its ability to predict correctly stability and change in the choice available to voters.

9.2 Independence of the Explanatory Variables

The problem of 'multicollinearity' arises when explanatory variables are related to each other. It is unlikely that two explanatory variables will be perfectly collinear. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that if this were the case it would be impossible to generate any parameter estimates. The much more likely scenario is that two explanatory variables will be strongly correlated. When two explanatory variables are strongly correlated it is difficult to determine which of the independent variables is responsible for the change in the dependent variable. In other words, the interpretation of the parameter estimates may be unclear because it may be hard to hold one constant while varying the other. As such then it is important that I examine the correlations between the various explanatory variables.

9.2.1 Systemic and Institutional Contexts

The first group of variables that I examine are those that describe the systemic and institutional context of the electoral choice. In Chapter 2, I outlined the relationship between the proportionality of the electoral system and the number of parties (Duverger, 1964; Rae, 1971; Katz, 1980; Lijphart, 1984; Riker, 1986; Sartori, 1986; Palfrey, 1989; Feddersen et al., 1990 and 1992; Barolini and Mair, 1990; Cox, 1994 and 1997; Fey, 1997). Later in Chapter 7, when I examined the relationship between

shifts in support for the set of leading parties and the proportionality of the electoral system, I also controlled for party system fragmentation. The question I address in this section is whether or not there are strong correlations between those variables describing the systemic context and those describing the institutional context.

In Table 9.1, I present the correlation coefficients between the four measures that I use to describe the institutional context of the electoral choice and party system fragmentation. The first of these institutional factors distinguishes between those electoral systems that apply a Proportional Representation electoral formula, a Plurality formula and a mix of the two (${}^pP_{ef3}$). There is a strong correlation between this measure and the effective number of parties (N_{eff}). There is also a strong correlation between the effective number of parties (N_{eff}) and the measure that ranks district magnitude in terms of proportionality (pP_M). These results suggest that both of these measures that describe the institutional context of the electoral choice should not be included with a measure of party system fragmentation.¹

This leaves me with two measures of the institutional context of the electoral choice. There is a weak correlation between the proportionality of the electoral outcome for a given set of rules (Γ^m) and the effective number of parties (N_{eff}). The correlation between the effective number of parties (N_{eff}) and the measure that rank orders electoral formulae in terms of proportionality (${}^pP_{ef3}$) is not statistically significant. Moreover, there is a strong association between both measures that describe the institutional context (Γ^m and ${}^pP_{ef3}$). In my multivariate analysis I use the measure of the proportionality of the electoral outcome (Γ^m). I do so because this measure captures the effect of all of the various electoral rules on the proportionality of the electoral outcome. The other measure simply focuses on the rank ordering of expected proportionality of a particular electoral formula. While it is reasonable to order electoral formulae in terms of the proportionality of their allocation of seats to votes, it has been shown that district magnitude is the most important factor in determining the proportionality of the election result. Other rules such as legal thresholds may limit the effect of district magnitude. As such then I only include the

¹ In the multi-variate model that I test I do not include a measure of party system fragmentation. This is because there is a very strong correlation between the effective number of parties and the closeness of political competition (see below). Consequently, there is a strong correlation between the measure differentiating between PR-Mixed-Plurality electoral formulae and the closeness of political competition (Spearman's rho of -0.49). While the correlation between the rank ordering of district magnitude by proportionality and the closeness of competition is weaker (Spearman's rho of -0.26), I exclude this variable because of the smaller number of cases.

measure that ranks the various sets of electoral rules by the proportionality of their outcome.²

Table 9.1: Correlations of Institutional and Systemic Measures (N. of Cases)
[Spearman's rho]

	Ranked Proportionality of Electoral Formulae (${}^pP_{ef\beta}$)	Ranked Proportionality of District Magnitudes (pP_M)	Proportionality of Electoral Outcome for Given Set of Rules (Γ^m)	Effective Number of Parties in Parliament (N_{eff})
PR, Mixed and Plurality Electoral Formulae (${}^pP_{ef\beta}$)	0.37*** (160)	0.36*** (131)	-0.25*** (160)	0.48*** (160)
Ranked Proportionality of Electoral Formulae (${}^pP_{ef\beta}$)		0.13* (131)	-0.46*** (160)	0.10 (160)
Ranked Proportionality of District Magnitudes (pP_M)			-0.58*** (131)	0.47*** (131)
Proportionality of Electoral Outcome for Given Set of Rules (Γ^m)				0.23*** (160)

*** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$; ** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$; and * Correlation is significant at $p < 0.10$.

In Table 9.2, I present correlation coefficients between the three measures that I use to describe change in the electoral rules and change in the effective number of parties. I also present the correlation coefficient between change in the effective number of parties and the measure of proportionality of electoral outcomes under a given set of rules (Gallagher's Least Squares Index). It is evident from Table 9.2 that there is a very strong association between change in the electoral formula (Δ_{ef}) and change to district magnitude (Δ_M). This suggests that changes to the electoral system include both changes to the electoral formula and to the district magnitude. On nine occasions, the decisive electoral formula changed and in six of these cases changes were also made to the average district magnitudes. Given the strong association between these variables, and the missing data for change to district magnitude, I only include change in the electoral formula (Δ_{ef}) in my multivariate analysis. It is also evident from Table 9.2 that there are no other statistically significant associations between the remaining variables. In my multivariate analysis I can include these

² Furthermore, the association between the proportionality of the electoral outcome and the closeness of political competition (Spearman's rho of -0.20) is weaker than the association between the rank ordering of the electoral formulae and closeness of competition (Spearman's rho of -0.27).

measures of change: change in the age criterion (Δ_{age}), change in the effective number of parties (ΔN_{eff}) and my measure of the proportionality of the electoral outcome³ under a given set of rules (Γ^m).

Table 9.2: Correlations of Change to Institutional and Systemic Measures (N. of Cases) [Spearman's rho]

	Change to District Magnitude (Δ_M)	Change to Age Criterion (Δ_{age})	Change in the Effective Number of Parties (ΔN_{eff})
Change to Electoral Formula (Δ_{ef})	0.72*** (131)	0.08 (160)	0.03 (149)
Change to District Magnitude (Δ_M)		-0.04 (131)	-0.09 (120)
Change to Age Criterion (Δ_{age})			-0.01 (149)
Proportionality of Electoral Outcome for Given Set of Rules (Gallagher's Least Squares Index)			-0.02 (149)

*** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$.

Given that my measures of the effective number of parties and the closeness of political competition are based on seat share, there is a danger that a strong association exists between both measures. The countries with the least fragmented party systems are Austria, Germany, Ireland and the UK (See Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7). These four countries are also the countries in which there is the widest average gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties (See Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5). In Denmark and Finland, the average gap between the second and third largest parties is at its narrowest. On average, the Finnish legislature is the most fragmented of the eleven that I consider while the Danish system has the third largest average effective number of parties. This comparison of the average closeness of political competition and the average effective number of parties in each country suggests that there is an association between both of these factors. I find significant correlations when I examine the association between both variables.

In my multivariate model, I only include my measure of closeness of political competition. It is evident from the analysis I present in Chapter 5 that closeness of political competition has a strong and significant effect on the choice available to

³ There are no significant associations between my measure of the proportionality of electoral outcomes and changes in the electoral rules.

voters. More than half of those elections where the second and third largest parties are within five percentage points of each other result in change in the choice available to voters. The analysis I present in Chapter 7 implies that the effective number of parties has a weak effect on the choice available to voters. Just over a quarter of elections where the effective number of parties is four or more result in change to the choice available to voters.⁴

9.2.2 Changes in Party Policy Positions

In Chapter 8, I examined the impact of policy change on support for the set of leading parties. While the evidence did simply support one hypothesis and not the other, the weight of evidence favours measuring policy change relative to the long-term policy positions of the leading parties. I consider changes in the leading parties' positions on three policy dimensions relative to their long-term policy positions: MRG Left-Right dimension and the Laver and Garry Economic and Social dimensions.

To a certain degree, the Laver and Garry Economic and Social dimensions are a two-dimensional representation of the MRG Left-Right dimension. Both of the Laver and Garry dimensions include items also included in the MRG dimension. In Table 9.3, I present the correlation coefficients between each of the three scales for shifts in policy relative to the long-term policy positions of the leading parties. No matter which of the three methods I employ to estimate positions on the three dimensions⁵, the Laver and Garry dimensions are significantly correlated with the MRG dimension. Moreover, the Laver and Garry dimensions are not significantly correlated with each other. While the correlations are not very strong, when I carry out my multivariate analysis, in order to avoid the problems associated with collinearity, I run two versions of the model. The first includes both Laver and Garry dimensions while the second only includes the MRG Left-Right dimension.

⁴ When I ran regression analyses including each of these variables, the explanatory power of the model was greater when I used closeness of political competition than it was when I included the effective number of parties.

⁵ In estimating policy positions I use raw data as well as two methods for smoothing the data.

Table 9.3: Correlations of Change in Policy Positions Relative to Parties Long-Term Policy Positions ($\Sigma\Delta Pp^t$) on Three Dimensions (Three Methods of Estimating Positions) (N. of Cases) [Pearson Correlation]

	Laver and Garry Economic	Laver and Garry Social
<i>Raw Data</i>		
MRG	0.30*** (153)	0.52*** (153)
Laver and Garry Economic		-0.06 (153)
<i>Three Point Moving Average</i>		
MRG	0.33*** (137)	0.31*** (137)
Laver and Garry Economic		0.09 (137)
<i>Centred Three Point Moving Average</i>		
MRG	0.30*** (137)	0.36*** (137)
Laver and Garry Economic		0.01 (137)

*** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$.

9.3 The Role of Time

9.3.1 Shift in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Time

When analysing time-series data, a lagged version of the dependent variable is often included in the model as an independent variable. However, in this case there is no theoretical reason why an increase in support for the set of leading parties at election_t will influence whether their share of the vote increases or decreases at election_{t+1}. When I calculate a correlation coefficient for change in support for the set of leading parties and a lagged version of this variable, the resulting correlation coefficient was very low and not statistically different from zero. However, given the time-series nature of the data, I include a measure of time.

Table 9.4: Mean Change in Support for the Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_L) by Decade (Number of Cases)

Change in Support for Set of Leading Parties:	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Decrease	-2.81 (11)	-3.80 (18)	-4.31 (19)	-5.13 (19)	-7.51 (20)
Increase	4.52 (18)	2.15 (11)	3.14 (14)	3.46 (13)	3.43 (10)

It is evident from Table 9.4 that it is important to take account of the passage of time. From one decade to the next, the losses suffered by the set of leading parties are increasing. In Chapter 5, I noted that when support for the set of leading parties decreases it does so by an average of four percentage points. In the 1950s and 1960s, the average losses of electoral support by the set of leading parties are not as great as four percentage points. However, since the 1970s, when the set of leading parties lose vote share, on average they lose more than four percentage points. Moreover, the sizes of these average losses are increasing. In the 1990s, when the set of leading parties lost vote share, on average, they lost more than seven percentage points. On the other hand, in Chapter 5 I noted that when there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties, on average, support for this set of parties increases by about three percentage points. From the results I present in Table 9.4 it is evident that in the 1950s, the average increase in support was greater than this and in the 1960s the average increase was less than this. Since then, the average gain made by the set of leading parties has remained more or less the same. Over time, it is evident that when the set of leading parties lose vote share the average size of these losses are increasing, but when support for them increases, the average size of these gains remains stable.⁶

⁶ That the size of the average losses are increasing over time, while the average gains have remained more or less the same raises an interesting question as to why this is so. In order to examine this question more fully it would be necessary to examine both trends using time-series analysis.

9.3.2 *The Choice Available to Voters and Time*

Beck et al. (1998) advise taking the passage of time into account when dealing with pooled cross-sectional time-series data with a binary dependent variable. In order to do so, I examine how much time passes between each observation of change in the composition of the set of leading parties. The evidence that I present in Table 9.5 suggests that the 'passage of time' may also have a role to play in understanding stability and change in the choice available to voters.⁷ More specifically, once the first change in choice available to voters occurs, subsequent changes are more likely to follow within a short few years.

When it comes to the first change in the choice available to voters, the passage of time is not a useful guide. In those countries where the choice available to voters has changed, the first change has occurred, on average, after 27 years. However, within this group of countries there are large differences in terms of the passage of time before the first change in the choice available to voters. The choices available to voters in Finland and Sweden occurred eight years into the time series. The 1958 elections in both countries resulted in a change in the composition of the set of potential leading parties. In Finland, Agrarian Union (SK) lost their place to the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL), while, in Sweden, the People's Party (F) lost their place to the Conservatives (MS). In Denmark, the choice available to Danish voters did not change for the first time until the 1968 election. At this election Conservative People's Party (KF) were replaced in the set of leading parties by the Liberals (V). In Belgium, Italy and Norway the set of potential leaders of government remained stable for over forty years. In Belgium, the last election considered in the time-series resulted in the first change in the choice available to the voters: the Liberals (PVV/PLP) replacing the Christian Democrats (CVP/PSC). In Italy and Norway the first changes to the set of potential leaders occurred in the first half of the 1990s. In Norway, the 1993 election resulted in the Conservatives (H) losing their place in the set of leading parties to the Centre Party (S). The Italian election of 1994 resulted in Lega Nord (LL/LN) replacing the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) in the set of leading parties.

⁷ I measure the passage of time to the first election to result in change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters relative to the first year of my data set, 1950. The time to subsequent changes to the choice available to voters are measured relative to the previous election to result in change in choice available to voters.

While it may, on average, take a long time for the first change in the set of leading parties to occur, it is evident from Table 9.5 that once change in the choice available to voters occurs, it is likely to occur again within a few years. Taking the average figures that I present in Table 9.5 as a guide, once party system change occurs, it is likely to occur on five more occasions within the next 16 years. After the first change in the choice available to voters, the next five changes occur within about three years of each other. It is almost as if the first change begins a period of instability in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government.

Table 9.5: Mean Number of Years Between Changes to the Choice of Leading Parties Available to Voters (ΔL)

Change to the Party System:	Years To Change in Choice Available to Voters (Mean)	N.
First	27.0	6
Second	3.4	5
Third	4.7	3
Fourth	2.0	3
Fifth	2.0	2
Sixth	4.5	2
Seventh	12.5	2

Note: I exclude the change that occurs in the Netherlands in 1998. The choice available to voters changed in the 1970s due to a merger between one of the leading parties and a number of smaller parties. These cases of party system change are not included in the analysis. It is not clear whether I should measure the passage of time from 1950 or from the emergence of Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) as a leading party. As such, I exclude the most recent change in the choice available to Dutch voters from data presented in this table.

The evidence suggests that once the change in the set of leading parties occurs for the first time, a second change is likely to occur as a result of the next election.⁸ Almost half of the elections resulting in change to the choice available to voters followed an election that resulted in change to this choice. For instance, the election that resulted in the first change in the choice available to voters in Finland, Italy,

⁸ This is not to suggest that change in the choice available to voters occurs after the first election. The earliest changes in the choice of potential leaders of government occurred in Finland and Sweden. These changes occurred as a result of the third election that I consider in both countries. In Denmark the first change in the choice available to voters took place at the eighth election. Change did not occur for the first time in Italy and Norway until the eleventh election and in Belgium until the sixteenth. Yet, there is evidence that the election following an election that resulted in change in the choice available to voters is likely to be associated with another change in the choice available to voters.

Norway and Sweden was followed by an election that resulted in the second change in the choice available to voters in these countries. Moreover, in Finland the first change in the choice available to voters was the first election in a series of five elections that resulted in change in this choice. In other words, in Finland, the composition of the set of leading parties changed as a result of five consecutive elections. In Denmark two elections separate the second change in the choice available to voters from the first change in this choice. Subsequent changes in this choice occurred at each of the next four elections. As such then, it would appear that the election following an election that results in change in the choice available to voters is also likely to result in change in the choice available to voters. In order to take account of this, I include in my analysis a dummy variable that identifies the first election following a change in the composition of the set of leading parties. The first election after a change in this set of parties is coded '1' while all other elections are coded '0'.

One possible reason for the immediacy of subsequent changes is that the party that loses its place in the set of potential leaders of government manages to regain it at the next election. However, there is little evidence to support this view. In Sweden, the People's Party (F) is the only party to win back its place in the set of leading parties from the party it lost it to, the Conservatives (MS). However, the People's Party (F) success was short lived. The election of 1968 resulted in them losing their place in the set of leading parties to Centre Party (C) who subsequently, as a result of the 1979, election lost their place to the Moderate Unity Party (MS). The People's Party (F) have since then failed to regain their position in the set of leading parties and 1998 won five percent of the seats in the *Riksdag*, the Swedish Parliament.

In Finland, Agrarian Union (SK) did manage to regain their place in the set of leading parties. However, they did not displace the party that took their place, the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL). Instead, the Finnish election of 1962 saw Agrarian Union (SK) replace the Social Democrats (SSP). Since then a variety of changes in the choice available to Finnish voters have taken place. The election of 1970 saw the Centre Party (SK) lose their place in the set of leading parties to the National Coalition (KK), who in turn, lost their place to Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL) as a result of the 1972 election. This series of changes was then reversed as a result of the 1979 election as the National Coalition (KK) replaced Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL) in the set of leading parties, and this party as a result of 1991 election lost their place to Finnish Centre (SK). So despite all

of the changes in Finland, the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters at the end of the five decades is the same as it was at the beginning of the 1950s.

A similar pattern is evident in Denmark. After the Liberals (V) lost their place in the set of leading parties as a result of the 1968 election, two parties, the Conservative People's Party (KF) and the Progress Party (F), took turns at controlling the second largest share of seats in the *Folketing*, the Danish parliament. The Liberals regained their place in the set of leading parties for short periods as a result of the 1975 election and the 1979 election. The Progress Party (F) replaced the Liberals (V) in the set of leading parties after the 1977 election. The election of 1981 saw the Liberals (V) lose their place at the head of the party system to the Conservative People's Party (KF). It was not until the 1994 election that the Liberals (V) managed to regain their position at the head of the party system from the Conservative People's Party (KF).

In those countries where change in the choice available to voters is more recent, the party that lost its place in the set of leading parties has not fared as well as those in Finland and Denmark. In Italy, the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) only managed to win five percent of the seats in 1994, as compared with 33 percent in the election before the election that cost them their place in the set of leading parties. At the subsequent Italian election in 1996, the party that replaced the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI), the Northern League (LL/LN) lost their place in the set of leading parties to Forza Italia (FI). In Norway, the Conservatives (H) held onto their place in the set of leading parties for 43 years. As a result of the 1993 election they lost their place to Centre Party (S). When the choice available to voters changed as a result of the 1997 election, the Conservatives (H) did not regain their position. Instead, Progress Party (F) replaced the Centre Party (S) in the set of leading parties. In 1997, the Conservatives controlled 14 percent of the seats in the *Stortinget*, the Norwegian parliament, as opposed to 22 percent in the election prior to that which cost them their place in the set of potential leaders of government.

For the most part, the party losing its place in the set of leading parties has been unable to recover its position. This is particularly so of the People's Party (F) in Sweden and is likely to be true of the Christian Democrats (DC/PPI) in Italy. The experience of the Liberals (V) in Denmark and Finnish Centre (SK) in Finland suggests that while a party can recover its position, it is less than secure.

9.4 Understanding Shifts in Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

In this section, I focus on shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties. In Table 9.6, I present the results of two models. The two models differ in terms of the dimensions on which I measure policy change. In *Model 1*, I use both Laver and Garry dimensions, while in *Model 2* I only use the MRG dimension (see above). Both models include the same measures of change in the distribution of voters' preference and of the systemic and institutional context. I also take into account the passage of time and control for each of the eleven countries.

In controlling for each of the countries, dummy variables that identify those cases associated with a particular country are included in the model (I report the estimated coefficients for the country dummy variables in Table A9.2 in the Appendix). I use the UK as the reference country as the average shift in support for the set of leading parties in the UK is closest to the overall average shift in support for this set of parties. The results in Table A9.2 suggest that there is no country effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. Only in Finland is the estimated coefficient for the country dummy variable statistically significant, and only at the ten-percent level of significance.

In Section 9.3, I note that over time when the set of leading parties lose vote share the average size of these losses are increasing, but when support for them increases, the average size of these gains have remained stable. From the evidence that I present in Table 9.6 it is clear that the passage of time has a significant effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The negative trends in both versions of the model imply that, with the passage of time, the shifts in support for this set of parties are becoming more negative. The estimated coefficients imply that over time support for the set of leading parties is falling. The mere passage of time implies that by 1999 support for the set of leading parties will be between three-and-a-half and four percentage points less than it was in 1950. However, time has a weak effect and there are more interesting explanations of shift in support for the set of leading parties than the passage of time.

9.4.1 Change in the Distribution of Voters' Preferences

One explanation of stability and change in support for the set of leading parties' focuses on change in the distribution of voters' preferences. The basic argument is that if the distribution remains more or less constant from one election to the next, voting patterns should remain stable. However, I expect shifts in this distribution contribute to electoral instability. In Chapter 6, I considered two measures of change in the distribution of voters' preferences. The first of these was party identification. While the data was limited to a number of countries over a short period, the results were not convincing that a weakening of partisanship is associated with a decline in vote share for the set of potential leaders of government.

The second measure was change in electoral participation. The results in Table 9.6 imply that even when I take other factors into account, changes in the level of electoral participation have a significant positive effect on support for the set of leading parties. This confirms my earlier finding in Chapter 6 that a decrease in turnout is associated with a decline in support for the set of leading parties (of about three percentage points). An increase in electoral participation is associated with a much smaller shift in support for the set of leading parties (an increase of about one-percentage point).

As well as changes in electoral participation, I also take into account the introduction of a new age cohort into the electorate as a result of a change in the age criterion of the franchise. The results that I present in Table 9.6 confirm my earlier conclusion that changes in the age criterion do not have a significant effect on support for the set of leading parties.

9.4.2 Systemic and Institutional Context of Electoral Decision

The next explanation of stability and change in support for the set of leading parties focuses on the systemic and institutional contexts of the electoral decision. Both the number of parties and the proportionality of the electoral system, as well as changes in these, help to frame the choice available to voters.

The results that I present in Table 9.6 confirm my conclusion that the systemic and institutional contexts of the electoral decision do not have a systematic effect on support for the set of leading parties. With regard to the systemic context of the electoral decision, the estimated coefficients for my measures of the number of parties and change in this number are not statistically significant. In Chapter 7, the average shifts in support for the set of leading parties were not significantly different from each other when I compared across different systemic contexts of the electoral decision (and across changes in the systemic context). With regard to the institutional context of the electoral decision, the estimated coefficient of my measure of the proportionality of election outcomes under given rules is not statistically significant. Again, this confirms my earlier finding that the average shifts in support for the set of leading parties are not different from each other when I compare across different institutional contexts.

The one aspect of the context of the electoral decision that does have a significant impact on support for the set of leading parties is change in the electoral system. In Chapter 7, I consider change to the decisive electoral formula and change to district magnitudes. The evidence in that chapter suggests that the set of leading parties benefit from changes in district magnitude but lose vote share when the decisive electoral formula is changed. Of the nine occasions when the electoral formula was changed, six also involved changes to district magnitude⁹. When both types of change were introduced for the same election, support for the set of leading parties on average fell by six percentage points. The results in Table 9.6 are similar in that a change in the electoral formula is associated with a drop in support for the set of leading parties of seven percentage points. It is evident from this that, on the few occasions when the electoral rules change voters adjust their support for the set of leading parties.¹⁰

⁹ I do not include change in district magnitude because of missing data.

¹⁰ These results focus attention on the political context in which the electoral system was changed. Such an examination lies outside the scope of this project.

Table 9.6: Multi-Variate Models of Shifts in Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government (ΔV_L) (standard errors) [Linear Regression, panel corrected standard errors]

	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Change in Distribution of Voters' Preferences</i>		
Change in Electoral Participation (ΔTO)	0.26** (0.13)	0.28** (0.14)
Change in Age Criterion (Δ_{age})	0.25 (0.90)	0.48 (0.93)
<i>Institutional Context</i>		
Proportionality of Electoral Outcome for Given Set of Rules (Γ^m)	-1.85 (1.92)	-1.62 (1.89)
Change of Electoral Formula (Δ_{ef})	-7.07*** (1.91)	-7.30*** (1.86)
<i>Systemic Context</i>		
Effective Number of Parties in Parliament (N_{eff})	2.42 (0.98)	2.48 (0.99)
Change in the Effective Number of Parties in Parliament (ΔN_{eff})	1.17 (1.02)	1.31 (1.04)
<i>Change in Set of Large Parties' Policy Positions</i>		
Laver and Garry Economic Scale ($\Sigma \Delta P_{econ}^H$)	-0.01 (0.09)	
Laver and Garry Social Scale ($\Sigma \Delta P_{soc}^H$)	-0.26*** (0.08)	
MRG Left-Right Scale ($\Sigma \Delta P_{mrg}^H$)		-0.06 (0.05)
Time (t)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.08*** (0.03)
Constant	-2.90 (3.21)	-2.95 (3.35)
	R ² 0.24	0.23
	Wald χ^2 93.39	92.30
	N. of Cases 137	137

One-tailed tests: *** Estimated coefficient is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$;

* $p < 0.10$. NOTE: Control for eleven countries (see Table A10.X in the Appendix)

9.4.3 *Actions of the Leading Parties*

The final explanation of stability and change in support for the set of leading parties focuses on the actions of these parties themselves. This explanation focuses on the effects of policy changes by the leading parties. In the last chapter, Chapter 8, I examine two competing hypotheses that measure change in policy relative to two different points: the position of the median voter and the long-term policy positions of the leading parties. While the evidence does not conclusively support either hypothesis, the weight of evidence supports policy change relative to the long-term policy positions.

In Table 9.6, I report estimated coefficients of policy change based on policy positions calculated using a three-point-moving-average (see Table A9.3 for estimated coefficients of policy change based on the other two methods of estimating policy positions). The evidence that I present in Table 9.6 (and Table A9.3) implies that change in policy relative to the long-term policy positions of the leading parties has a significant impact on support for the set of leading parties. Depending on the method used to estimate the policy positions, the estimated coefficients of policy change on both Laver and Garry dimensions have a significant effect.

From Table 9.6, it is evident that support for the set of leading parties will increase when the net effect of shifts in policy on the Social dimension indicates that they converge on their long-term policy positions. On the other hand, if the net effect of their shifts in policy indicates that they diverge from their long-term positions, support for this set of parties will fall. The evidence that I present in Table A9.3 implies that a similar relationship exists between shifts in policy on the Economic dimension and change in support for the set of leading parties. While the overall effect is weak, what is important here is that, even when I take other factors into account, there is evidence to support the hypothesis that electoral support for the set of leading parties is affected by changes they make to their policy positions.

9.5 Understanding Stability and Change in the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters

The second aspect of my model is stability and change in the choice available to voters. I consider the three aspects of the electoral decision and electoral volatility. As in the last section, two versions of the model are considered.

9.5.1 Electoral Instability

Electoral instability has been the focus of numerous studies of party system stability and change. In this book I examine whether or not it has an impact on the choice available to voters. What is at issue is the responsiveness of the set of potential leaders of government to shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties (overall levels of electoral instability in the party system (as measured by total volatility) do affect the choice available to voters¹¹). My approach focuses on political competition by the leading parties to remain potential leaders of government and by the challenging parties to control one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature.

It is evident from Table 9.7 that when I take a variety of other factors into account there is a significant negative relationship between shifts in support for the set of leading parties and the choice available to voters. This implies that the choice available to voters is more likely to change when there is a decrease in support for the set of leading parties than when there is an increase in support for this set of parties. While shifts in support for the set of leading parties has a significant effect on the choice available to voters, it is worth remembering that a loss of support by the set of leading parties does not always result in change in this choice. At those elections where there is a decline in support for the set of leading parties, about a quarter of these result in change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters.

¹¹ When I run Model 3 and Model 4 only using total volatility as my measure of electoral instability, the estimated coefficient is significantly positive in both cases. Closeness of political competition also remains statistically significant but the variable measuring change in the choice available to voters at the previous election is no longer significant. None of the other variables in these models are statistically significant. Moreover, the explanatory power of the models including total volatility are less than those presented in Table 9.7: Pseudo R^2 of about 0.41.

Table 9.8: Multivariate Models of Stability and Change in the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters (ΔL) (Standard Errors)[Binary Logistic Regression Analysis; panel corrected standard errors]

	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Electoral Volatility</i>		
Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties (ΔV_L)	-0.29*** (0.10)	-0.28*** (0.09)
Electoral Instability Within the Set of Smaller Challenging Parties (ΔV_{Cwb})	0.12 (0.11)	0.14* (0.10)
Closeness of Political Competition (Λ_I)	-0.33*** (0.10)	-0.32*** (0.10)
<i>Change in Distribution of Voters' Preferences</i>		
Change in Electoral Participation (ΔTO)	-0.01 (0.11)	0.01 (0.11)
Change in Age Criterion (Δ_{age})	0.77 (1.00)	0.37 (0.99)
<i>Institutional Context</i>		
Proportionality of Electoral Outcome for Given Set of Rules (Γ^m)	0.45 (0.68)	0.56 (0.64)
Change of Electoral Formula (Δ_{ef})	-3.86 (2.54)	-3.56 (2.51)
<i>Systemic Context</i>		
Change in the Effective Number of Parties in Parliament (ΔN_{eff})	0.49 (0.74)	0.37 (0.71)
<i>Change in Set of Large Parties' Policy Positions</i>		
Laver and Garry Economic Scale ($\Sigma \Delta P P^i_{econ}$)	0.06 (0.08)	
Laver and Garry Social Scale ($\Sigma \Delta P P^i_{soc}$)	0.05 (0.09)	
MRG Left-Right Scale ($\Sigma \Delta P P^i_{mrG}$)		0.03 (0.04)
Time (t)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Election Following Change in Choice Available to Voters (e_I)	1.90** (1.00)	1.57** (0.87)
Constant	-1.72 (2.21)	-2.22 (2.06)
	Log likelihood	-26.16
	LR χ^2	65.05
	Pseudo R ²	0.55
	N. of Cases	137

One-tailed tests: *** Estimated coefficient is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$;

* $p < 0.10$.

One reason for this may be the gap in terms of seat share between the second largest party and third largest party. The evidence in Table 9.7 suggests that the closer political competition between these two parties, the more likely change in the choice available to voters is to occur. In Chapter 5, I note when these parties are within five percentage points going into an election, more than half of these elections result in change in the choice available to voters.

The other aspect of electoral instability is that which takes place within each of the sets of parties. The results are not wholly convincing about the effect of electoral instability within the set of smaller challenging parties on the choice available to voters. In Model 4 the estimated coefficient implies that change in the choice available to voters is more likely to occur the greater the instability in voting patterns within the set of smaller challenging parties. However, the tentative nature of this conclusion is a consequence of the level of significance and the fact that in Model 3 the coefficient of this measure is not statistically significant.

I do not include my measure of electoral stability within the set of leading parties. I exclude this measure because in 71 cases support for both leading parties either increased or decreased. As such, in these elections there was no electoral interchange between the leading parties. If I were to treat these cases as missing data then the number of cases in my analysis would be a lot less than the 137 that I have. Moreover, in Chapter 5 I note that change in the choice available to voters is no more likely to occur when electoral instability within this block is high than when it is low.

9.5.2 Other Aspects of the Electoral Decision: Voters, Context and Parties

In Table 9.7, it is evident that the variables measuring change in the distribution of voters' preferences, the contexts of the electoral decision and the actions of the parties do not have significant effects on the choice available to voters. None of these variables have significant effects on change even when electoral instability is not included in the model. This means that the absence of significant coefficients is not due to these factors being correlated with shifts in support for the set of leading parties. I conclude from this that the effects these factors have on the choice available to voters are mediated through shifts in support for the set of leading parties.

9.5.3 *The Passage of Time*

Beck et al (1998) advise controlling for the passage of time when dealing with pooled cross-section time series with a binary dependent variable. The evidence suggests that there is a significant association between the passage of one election and further change in the choice available to voters. In my model of stability and change in the choice available to voters I include a dummy variable that captures the passage of one election since the last change in the choice available to voters. The estimated coefficient of this variable is positive and statistically significant. As such then there is an important temporal element to stability and change in the choice available to voters. The election following an election that resulted in change in the choice available to voters is more likely to result in change in the choice available to voters than an election that does not. The new party in the set of potential leaders of government is at its most vulnerable at this election.

9.6 Discussion: Model of Stability and Change in the Choice of Potential Leaders of Government Available to Voters

For the most part my model of stability and change in the choice available to voters is relatively good. Of the 116 elections where this choice remained stable, both models predict 112 of these correctly (97 percent).¹² The models are less successful at predicting change in the choice available to voters, yet of the 21 elections that result in change both models predict 13 of these correctly (62 percent). Before examining those cases of incorrect predictions, I make a few general comments. In Chapter 1, I note that stability and change is a consequence of complex relationships between a variety of factors. In particular, electoral instability does not simply have a direct effect on the composition of the set of leading parties. It also has indirect effects acting through factors related to voters, the institutional and systemic context and the actions of the leading political parties. However, electoral instability is an interval

¹² I calculate predicted values for both models. The predicted values are between 0 and 1. The models predict change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters when the predicted value is greater than or equal to 0.50. The models predict stability in the set of leading parties when the predicted values are less than 0.50.

level variable while stability while change in the composition of the set of leading parties is a binary variable. Given these differences it is not possible to combine the two models. That is, it is not possible to measure the indirect effects of electoral instability and of the other three factors on stability and change in the set of leading parties. The model is also limited in that it deals with the two leading parties as a set of parties (i.e., I aggregate together into a set of leading parties). A consequence of this is that I do not consider factors that influence support for an individual leading party. Further development of the dependent variable may focus on the leading parties as individual parties.

Of the 13 correct predictions of change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters, eleven are associated with a decrease in support for the set of leading parties. In ten of these cases, the gap in terms of seat share between the second and third largest parties in the legislature is within five percentage points. The one exception to this is the change in the choice available to Finnish voters that occurred as a result of the 1991 election. At this election, the Finnish Centre (SK), the third largest party, trailed National Coalition (KK), the second largest party, by over six percentage points. In 1991, support for the set of leading parties fell by six percentage points. Moreover, voting patterns within the set of smaller challenging parties were very unstable (i.e., three times the average rate of electoral instability within the set of challenging parties). Nine of these 13 cases are associated with higher than average levels of electoral instability within the set of challenging parties (i.e., average levels for the particular country). Here, change is not simply a consequence of the leading parties losing vote share to the set of smaller parties. Instead, change is also a consequence of higher than normal levels of instability in the voting patterns for the smaller parties. Moreover, in six cases, an election that results in change in the choice available to voters follows an election that resulted in change in this choice.

In two cases, my model correctly predicts change in the choice available to voters, although support for the set of leading parties increased. At the 1972 Finnish election support for the set of leading parties increased by two percentage points while at the Dutch election of 1998 support for this set of parties increased by just over a percentage point. In the latter case, the Liberals (VVD), the third largest party, trailed Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the second largest party, by two-percentage points. Moreover, voting patterns within the set of smaller challenging

parties were very unstable (i.e. about three times the Dutch average). In the former case, voting patterns within the set of smaller parties was very stable (i.e., about a fifth of the Finnish average). However, the previous Finnish election of 1970 resulted in change to the choice available to voters. Perhaps more importantly, both the second and third largest parties, National Coalition (KK) and the Centre Party (SK), respectively, controlled the same proportion of seats in the Finnish legislature (i.e., 18.5 percent).

From the above discussion it is evident that loss of vote share by the set of leading parties and close political competition is associated with nearly all of the correct predictions of change in the choice available to parties. In a large number of cases, higher than average levels of electoral instability (for a particular country) are also associated with change in the choice available to voters. Finally, while a preceding election resulting in change is also a relevant predictor of change at the next election, it is only present for seven of 13 cases where my model correctly predicts change.

Three elections that resulted in change in the choice available to voters are not included in my multivariate analysis because of missing data. The missing data refers to policy positions: for Denmark (1975) and Italy (1996) I do not have enough cases to estimate a three point moving average and there was no data provided for Belgium (1999). In all three cases, political competition was close as the largest gap between the second and third largest parties was about three percentage points (i.e., Denmark in 1975). The set of leading parties lost vote share in two of the three elections. In Belgium, support for this set of parties fell by almost ten percentage points. In Italy, support for the set of leading parties fell very slightly, by less than a percentage point. That said, electoral instability within the set challenging parties was almost twice its normal (high) level and the previous election in 1994 resulted in change in the choice available to voters. Finally, in Denmark, support for the set of leading parties increased by two percentage points, but instability within the set of challenging parties was almost twice its average level and the previous election also resulted in change. While these three cases are not included in my model, there is evidence to suggest that my model would have predicted that all three would have resulted in change in the choice available to voters.

For eight elections, the model incorrectly predicts stability in the choice available to voters. In only one of these cases is there an increase in support for the set

of leading parties. When the choice available to voters in Sweden changed as a result of the 1968 election there was a slight increase in support for the set of leading parties. The increase in support for the set of Swedish leading parties is not as great as the increases in the two elections that the model correctly predicts change (Finland in 1972 and the Netherlands in 1998). However, competition in Sweden in 1968 is not as close as it was in both of these cases. Moreover, while electoral instability in the set of leading parties is not as low as it is in the Finnish case (1972), this election is not preceded by an election that results in change to the choice available to voters.

In the other seven elections, there is a decrease in support for the set of leading parties. However, in five of these cases the decline in support is less than the average losses by the set of large parties in the particular country. The 1993 change in the choice available to Norwegian voters is associated with a decline in support for the set of leading parties of just over two percentage points (as compared with an average drop in support of over eight percentage points). The changes in the choices available to voters in Denmark (1977) and in Finland (1966 and 1979) are also associated with lower than average levels of losses by the set of leading parties.

The closeness of political competition, or rather that more than five percentage points separated the second and third largest parties in the legislature, contributes to a number of incorrect predictions. Going into the Danish election of 1977, Progress Party (F), the third largest party, trailed the Liberals (V), the second largest party, by over ten-percentage points in terms of seat share in the legislature. Moreover, going into the Norwegian election of 1993 the gap in terms of seat share between the Progress Party (F), third largest party, and the Conservatives (H), second largest party, was over nine percentage points. However, the Conservatives (H) did not lose their place in the set of potential leaders of government to the Progress Party (F). Instead, they lost their place to the Centre Party (S); a party that trailed them by 15 percentage points in the legislature going into the 1993 election. Finally, the changes in the choices available to Swedish voters in 1958 and 1979 also took place despite the fact that political competition was not very close. Going into the 1958 election in Sweden the gap between the second and third largest parties, the People's Party (F) and Conservatives (MS), respectively, was seven percentage points; in 1979 nine percentage points separated the Centre Party (C) and Moderate Unity Party (MS), the second and third largest parties respectively.

Finally, for six elections, incorrect predictions of stability are associated with the absence of a preceding election that resulted in change in the choice available to voters. In other words, because the preceding election did not result in change the model incorrectly predicts stability. That said in all but one case a second factor contributes to the incorrect prediction of stability. The incorrect prediction of stability in Finland (1979) is also associated with lower than average losses in support, in Sweden (1958 and 1979) with political competition not being close and in Norway (1993) with both lower than average losses and political competition not being close. The only exception is the change in the choice available to Finnish voters in 1958. At this election support for the set of leading parties fell by four percentage points, while greater than the average losses suffered by Finnish parties, is less than the average losses suffered by all sets of leading parties. Moreover, the third largest party trailed the second largest party by five percentage points. These factors and that the preceding election did not result in change contributed to an incorrect prediction of stability.

Both models also incorrectly predict change in the choice available to voters. At the Norwegian election of 1973 support for the set of leading parties fell by 13 percentage points (both parties lost vote share). Given such a large fall in support it is not surprising that the model predicted change in the choice available to voters even though in the legislature the third largest party trailed the second largest by six percentage points. As well as losing vote share, the share of the seats held by the leading parties fell, with the Labour Party (DNA) losing nine percentage points and the Conservatives (H) one percentage point. However, these losses did not favour the Centre Party (S), the party in third place going into the election. The election result meant that they continued to trail the Conservatives by about six percentage points. Instead, three new parties won seats in the Norwegian legislature. Between them these parties won over 13 percent of the seats. Of these three, the Socialist People's Party won ten percent of the seats. The fragmentation of party representation in the legislature helped to protect the position of the two leading parties. At the Danish election of 1966, support for the set of leading parties fell by five-percentage points. Going into the election, the Liberals (V), the second largest party, led the Conservative People's Party (KF), third largest party, by just over a percentage point. Again, it is not that surprising that the model predicts change. Change did not occur because of a fall in both the Conservative People's Party's (KF) share of the votes and

seats. In Denmark in 1971, about a percentage point separated the second and third largest parties. Moreover, an election that resulted in change preceded this election. As with the Danish election of 1966, the party in third place going into the election, in this case the Liberals (V), failed to benefit from the losses suffered by the set of leading parties. Finally, my model incorrectly predicts change in Finland for the 1975 election. Going into this election only a percentage point separated the second and third largest parties and an election resulting in change preceded this election. However, the support for the set of leading parties increased. The Centre Party (SK), the party in third place only managed to narrow the gap on Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL), the second largest party.

9.7 Conclusion

Up until this chapter, my focus was on the relationship between the party system and one of a variety of factors related to explanations of stability and change in the choice available to voters. In this chapter I examined whether or not those factors that by themselves contributed to an understanding of stability and change in this choice, did so when other factors were taken into account. It is evident from the above analysis, the change in the distribution of voters preferences, changes in the institutional context and the actions of political parties continue to have a significant effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. However, neither these factors nor those related to the systemic context of the electoral decision have significant effects on the composition of the choice of potential leaders of government. Instead, their effect on this choice is mediated through shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The evidence that I present in this chapter also shows that other factors affect the composition of the choice available to voters. In particular, closeness of political competition and change whether or not change occurs at the previous election are important elements in my model. Overall, my model highlights the aggregate level factors that need to be taken into account when considering stability and change in the choice available to voters. In my final chapter, I outline a number of individual level factors that may usefully be considered in the further examination of this issue.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I examine stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. Choice is an integral aspect of the democratic system. If there are no alternatives to choose between, there is no 'competitive struggle for the people's vote' (Schumpeter, 1943, p.269). It is the competitive struggle for electoral support, and the opportunity that those contesting elections have to try to convince people that they have the best ideas and approaches, that contributes to the legitimacy of the election outcomes. At each election, voters face a variety of choices. Parties and candidates differ in terms of their experience, their records as political actors, their ideological outlooks, their views on particular issues and so on.

One question elections seek to resolve is, which party will lead the next government? In other words, which party will get to install their leader as prime minister? The office of prime minister is seen by many as the most important political office in parliamentary democracies. In some cases, when one party wins an overall majority of seats in the legislature the election result resolves this question. In other cases, when no one party wins an overall majority, the resolution of this question is more complex. A number of parties need to reach agreement in order for a government to achieve the confidence of the legislature.

As a goal, leading government is more specific than 'the power to decide' or 'winning government office' (Schumpeter, 1943; Epstein, 1980) or the three goals outlined by Strøm (1990). Those parties that wish to lead government need to not only maximise their vote share; they need to win one of the two largest shares of seats in the legislature. Parties with ambitions of leading government are not simply interested in gaining access to government office; they want a particular position at the cabinet table, that of the prime minister. Finally, if these parties want to implement policy, they want to do so from the most powerful position in the cabinet.

While many parties may have ambitions of leading government, ambition is not enough. In order to be in a position to fulfil their ambitions, parties need to control the parliamentary resources to do so. In most walks-of-life, controlling resources is an important aspect to achieving goals. Politics is no different. Often attention focuses on the financial resources of political parties. Here, I focus on their parliamentary resources: the share of the seats they control in the legislature. Generally, in parliamentary democracies parties controlling the largest shares of seats in the legislature are best placed to fulfil their ambitions of leading government.

By focusing on the resources a party requires to be a potential leader of government, I am suggesting an alternative way for looking at the choices available to voters. The political resources of a candidate or party are important in whether or not they achieve their political goal of leading government. A politician with ambitions of leading government has little chance of doing so if their party does not control an adequate share of the seats in the legislature. Others, such as Sartori (1976) and Mair (2002) consider access to government in terms of those parties that have either been in government or supported a government in the legislature. A problem with this approach, as highlighted by the experience of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI), is that a party may control one of the largest shares of seats in the legislature but never lead government. The fact that it controls a large share of the seats suggests that, if it could find support from the other smaller parties, it would not only be in government but would be likely to lead that government. As such then, it can be seen as an alternative leader of government; an alternative that has failed to fulfil its potential.

From this perspective, political competition is about competition between parties to control enough seats in government to be in a position of a potential leader of government. Political parties that are in the set of potential leaders of government know that if they can win an overall majority, or do a deal with a number of smaller parties, that they will lead government. Parties outside of this set know that, for the most part, the best they can expect is to play a supporting role in government. Those who control sufficient parliamentary resources to be in the set of leading parties seek to maintain, and strengthen, their position in the party system. They know that failure to do so will result in them losing their position as a potential leader of government to another party. They will find their role shifting from one of potential leadership of government to one of the supporting cast. The parties outside of the set of leading

parties compete to win enough seats to be in this set of parties. Elections provide them with the opportunity to an increase their power and influence.

For the most part, they have to choose between the same two alternatives from election to election. That said, there is some evidence of change in the choice available to voters. The task I set myself is to explain, using aggregate level data, the stability and change of the set of potential leaders of government.

10.2 Principal Findings

10.2.1 There are Two Parties in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The criterion for inclusion in the set of potential leaders of government is parliamentary resources, or seat share. The first question that I addressed is how many parties constitute this set of parties. Of the 160 governments formed after an election that I analyse, one or both of the two largest parties in the legislature were present in 158 of these. The party controlling the largest share of seats in the legislature led 119 governments while the second largest party in the legislature led 28 governments. As such, the two largest parties led over 90 percent of governments formed after an election. While there are a number of exceptions, it is reasonable to conclude that the two largest parties in the legislature constitute the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters.

10.2.2 The set of Potential Leaders of Government is More Stable in Some Countries than in Other Countries

I observe stability and change in the choice available to voters in two ways. The first focuses on the composition of the set of leading parties. From this perspective, I focus on movement in to, and out of, the set of potential leaders of government. If the composition of the set of leading parties remains unchanged, I regard the choice available to voters as stable. However, the more change in the composition of this set of parties the more unstable the party system.

The evidence that I present suggests that in some countries the choice available to voters is more stable than it is in other countries. For instance, for the last five decades, voters in Austria, Germany, Ireland and the UK, have been faced with the same choice of potential leaders of government. In these four countries, the same two parties have controlled the largest shares of seats in the legislature. A similar situation was evident in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, up until the 1990s. For four decades, the choice of potential leaders of government remained stable in these countries. Then in the 1990s, voters were presented with a new choice. While change in the choice available to voters is a new phenomenon in these countries, the choice available to voters in Denmark, Finland and Sweden have changed on a number of occasions over the second half of the twentieth century.

My second approach of stability and change in the choice available to voters focuses on shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties. To win seats in the legislature a party first needs to win votes. In order to preserve its place at the head of the party system, a leading party needs to maintain its share of the vote. When there is an increase in support for the set of leading parties, I think of the choice available to voters as becoming more stable. This serves to strengthen their position at the head of the party system. However, loss of vote share is likely to result in loss of seat share. While this need not result in change in the composition of the seat of leading parties, it does serve to weaken their position within the party system.

From the evidence that I present it is clear that electoral support for the set of leading parties both increases and decreases. However, there is some evidence to suggest that, on average, support for the set of leading parties is declining in most countries. Support for the sets of leading parties increased at 66 elections (support for both parties increased in 26 of these elections) but decreased in 87 elections (support for both parties decreased in 45 elections). At the European level as well as in all countries except Germany and Sweden, when there is a change in support for this set of parties, on average their losses are greater than their gains. There is evidence of a trend over time. On the one hand, the average losses suffered by this set of parties in the 1990s are greater than the average losses suffered by this set of parties in the 1950s. Moreover, the sizes of these average losses have increased from one decade to the next. On the other hand, from one decade to the next, the average gains made by this set of parties have remained more or less the same. The next question that I

addressed is what impact these shifts in support for the set of leading parties had on the choice available to voters.

10.2.3 Relationship between Electoral Instability and Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The first explanation that I considered is that the party system is responsive to shifts in electoral support for the various parties. Other scholars have used electoral instability as a measure of party system stability and change (Rose and Urwin, 1970; Pedersen, 1979 and 1983; Maguire, 1983). In this thesis, I use it to measure not only stability and change in electoral support, but also as an explanation of stability and change in the choice of leading parties available to voters.

When I measure electoral instability, I break it up into two parts. The first part measures shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties. The second part is electoral instability between the parties that constitute each set of parties. While Bartolini and Mair (1990, p.44) regard this as being 'residual' in nature, it is possible that within the set of leading parties that this electoral instability is due to competition along a cleavage line (e.g., a class-cleavage). After all, the set of leading parties is general constituted by the largest socialist party and the largest conservative or liberal party. The low levels of electoral instability within this set of parties are in line with Bartolini and Mair's (1990) finding that there is little evidence of electoral interchange along the class-cleavage. That said, electoral interchange within the set of leading parties might reflect competition to be the largest party. When I compare across countries, the level of instability within the set of leading parties is lower in those countries where the leading parties formed a government together than in those countries where they have not done so. It is almost as if in the latter group competition to be the largest party is more intense than it is in the former set of countries.

I expect both aspects of electoral instability to contribute to my understanding of change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. First, the choice available to voters is more likely to change when the electoral position of the set of leading parties weakens than when their position strengthens. Of those elections at which the electoral position of the set of leading parties weakens, almost a

quarter of these resulted in change in the composition of the set of potential leaders of government. As such then, the evidence suggests that party systems are relatively responsive to shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties.

Second, I expect change in the choice available to voters to be more likely the greater the levels of instability in voting patterns within each of the sets of parties. There is some support for this expectation. The choice available to voters is more likely to change when partisan support for the smaller challenging parties becomes less stable. However, elections in which there is electoral instability within the set of leading parties are no more likely to result in party system change than elections where there is little or no electoral interchange between the set of leading parties.

The evidence suggests that while electoral instability does not always result in a change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters, it does have an important impact. One factor that softens the impact of electoral instability on the choice available to voters is the closeness of the second and third largest parties in terms of seat share. When only a few percentage points separates both parties, a relatively small shift in support for the various parties is likely to result in change. However, the greater the lead that the second largest party has over the third, the more electoral instability is required to bring about change in the composition of the set of leading parties. The evidence suggests that when less than five percentage points separate these two parties, change in the composition of the set of leading parties is likely to occur. Of the 36 elections where the third largest party trailed the second largest party by less than five percentage points, 19 of these elections resulted in party system change. On the other hand, the composition of the set of leading parties is very unlikely to change when the gap between these two parties is greater than five percentage points.

10.2.4 Relationship between Change in the Distribution of Voters' Preferences and Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The second explanation that I considered focused on those who do the choosing, the electorate, and in particular on changes in the distribution of their preferences. This explanation sees stability in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters as a consequence of stability in the distribution of voters preferences. Stability

in the distribution of voters' preferences may be due to salience of socialised long-term cues and associations. However, once these begin to weaken an opening-up of the electoral market may occur. The instability in people's voting patterns may ultimately result in a change in the choice available to voters. Given that there is no single measure of the distribution of the electorate's preferences, I use change in party identification and change in electoral participation. Declines in the strength of partisanship and in electoral participation are indicators of dealignment in the party system. The evidence that I present provide some support for the view that change in the choice available to voters is associated with dealignment.

Party identification refers to people's predisposition towards a particular party. When these predispositions weaken, electoral instability increases (Schmett and Holmberg, 1995). This is not to suggest that people are rejecting a party or feeling dejected with politics. They may simply feel less inclined towards a particular party and as such may be more willing to consider a number of parties before deciding how to vote (Poguntke, 1996). The question I examined is, is support for the set of leading parties influenced by changes in the proportion of people who feel close to a political party? The data I have available to me is limited (in terms of time and number of countries). For those elections for which I have appropriate comparative data, there is little support for the expectation that the set of leading parties are more likely to lose vote share when partisanship weakens than they are when partisanship strengthens. While the losses are greater when partisanship weakens, the two averages are not significantly different from each other.

With regard to the composition of the set of leading parties, only two of these changes occur during the period for which I have data measuring change in partisanship. On both occasions (the Danish elections of 1979 and 1981) the set of leading parties lost vote share and this is associated with a weakening of partisanship. Moreover, a number of cases of change to the choice available to voters are associated with a weakening of partisanship in the preceding years. However, the experience in a number of countries undermines any conclusions about the relationship between the choice available to voters and partisanship. In Germany and Ireland, the proportion of people feeling close to a political party fell below thirty percent but the set of potential leaders of government remained unchanged. While people may be more willing to consider more than just one party in deciding how to vote, there is little

evidence that this undermines electoral support for the set of leading parties or contributes to change in the choice available to voters.

The second measure that I consider is change in the levels of electoral participation. Obviously, this is not a measure of voters' preferences. Instead, it is a more general measure of change in the distribution of voters' preferences. An increase or decrease in electoral participation is unlikely to affect every party in a proportionate manner. Instead, the effects of changes in turnout will be to the benefit of some parties and the detriment of others. Bartolini and Mair (1990, pp176-77) found that changes in electoral participation did have an effect on the levels of electoral volatility though 'only in relatively extreme cases'. Others have considered the effects of differential turnout on support for political parties. While Bernhagen and Marsh (2004) note that the smaller parties would gain from a complete turnout, Leithner (1990) concludes that smaller parties' shares of the vote are greater the lower electoral participation. My analysis shows that when electoral participation changes there is a systematic relationship between that change and shifts in electoral support for the set of leading parties. When the proportion of the electorate turning out to vote falls, there is a decline in support for the set of leading parties. There is a slight increase in support for this set of parties when turnout increases. Moreover, both average shifts in support for the set of leading parties are significantly different. The results of my multivariate analysis suggest that the impact of change in electoral participation on the choice available to voters is mediated through shifts in support for the set of leading parties. Of the 24 elections that result in change in the choice available to voters, in thirteen cases the decline in support for the set of leading parties is associated with a drop in electoral participation.

10.2.5 Relationship between Systemic and Institutional Context of the Electoral Decision and Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The third explanation that I considered is the context in which the electoral choice takes place. In parliamentary democracies, varying numbers of political parties compete with one another according to set rules of engagement that not only differ from one country to another but also, over time, differ within countries. The systemic and institutional contexts of the election help to frame the choice that voters make.

There is evidence that differences in both of these contexts contribute to variation in the levels of overall electoral instability (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Pedersen, 1979 and 1983). However, the evidence that I present suggests that these differences do not systematically favour either the set of leading parties or the set of smaller challenging parties.

The average shifts in support for set of leading parties are not significantly different when I consider the proportionality of the electoral system in a variety of different ways. This is quite an important conclusion in terms of the effects of institutional contexts on shifts in electoral support. As I have outlined earlier, the various electoral rules influence the proportionality of the electoral outcomes. To a greater or lesser these rules are biased in favour of the largest parties. The evidence implies that these rules do not accentuate this problem over time by encouraging voters to shift their support to the leading parties. That is there is no systematic relationship between changes in support for the set of leading parties and the proportionality of the individual electoral rules or the electoral system.

While the number of cases is very small, it is interesting to note that there appears to be a systematic relationship between change in the electoral rules and shifts in support for the set of leading parties. I expected that such changes would favour the set of leading parties because they are unlikely to alter the rules in such a way that harms their own position. The evidence that I present suggest that changes to district magnitude, on average, favour this set of parties. However, support for the set of leading parties, on average, falls when the electoral formula is changed. The small number of cases suggests that such conclusions are tentative, but the message appears to be that if the electoral rules are to be changed, the leading parties need to be careful about what rules are changed.

When it comes to the choice available to voters, change is no more likely to occur under the most proportional set of PR rules than it is under the least proportional set of PR rules. That said, when I compare PR rules with first-past-the-post, change occurred under the former set of rules but not under the latter. However, I would be incorrect to conclude that change is more likely to occur under PR rules than under a first-past-the-post rule. Only one of the eleven countries that I consider, the UK, uses single-member plurality. To arrive at such a conclusion I would need to include other countries that apply such rules (e.g., the United States of America and

Canada). Moreover, a second problem with comparing PR rules with first-past-the-post is that it groups together a diverse set of electoral formulae.

There is some evidence that change in the choice available to voters is associated with the level of fragmentation in the legislature. It is worth noting that party system fragmentation is not systematically associated with shifts in support for the set of leading parties. The effect that fragmentation has on the choice available to voters is not mediated through changes in support for the set of potential leaders of government. The choice available to voters is more likely to change when four or more parties have shown themselves able to win representation. However, there is a strong correlation between party system fragmentation and the closeness of political competition. The more fragmented the party system, the smaller the expected share of the seats held by each party, the closer the gap between the second and third largest parties is to be close. Given the strong correlation between these variables, in my multivariate analysis do not include my measure of party system fragmentation.

10.2.6 Relationship between Shifts in Policy Positions of Leading Parties and Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

The final explanation of party system stability and change that I considered focused on the objects of the election choice, the political parties. Political parties are not merely passive objects from which voters choose. Instead, they react to changes in the political environment and act to influence the environment in which they compete (Wolinetz, 1988; Mair, 1993). One form of action available to political parties is to alter their policy emphasis. By altering policy positions, parties hope to increase their support amongst the electorate. The problem for parties is how should they alter their policy positions? I consider two theoretical frameworks, each of which proposes a different point of reference on which parties should converge in order to increase their support. The weight of evidence suggests that the set of leading parties are better off converging on their own long-term policy positions, rather than the positions of the median voter. When the set of leading parties diverges from their long-term policy positions it is more likely to cost them electoral support than when they converge on these positions. By losing electoral support, the actions of the leading policy parties may contribute to change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to

voters. When I examined these measures in my multivariate model the results suggest that the impact of policy change on the choice available to voters is mediated through shifts in support for the set of leading parties.

These findings support the view that a political party may not be as free to move in policy space as the Downsian model implies. Instead, parties appear to be restricted in the degree to which they can alter their policy positions. Leading parties need to be careful when they go in search of extra votes. A shift in policy that involves a party moving from its policy roots may prove costly in terms of electoral support and ultimately in terms of their position in the party system. Voters have expectations about party policy, that is, policy will be in keeping with the traditional orientation of the party. The long-term policy position, while it may not be a vote maximising position, is more in keeping with what a party's tradition and general principles or ideology. This position is one that may encourage supporters and voters to have confidence in the party because voters regard the party as credible at this position. The analysis I present lends some support to the expectation that leading parties deviating from their long-term policy positions undermines their electoral positions. As such then, the leading parties can contribute to their own downfall.

10.2.7 Direct and Indirect Effects on Stability and Change in the Set of Potential Leaders of Government

Ideally, I would like to have included all of the above explanations in a path analysis model. This would have allowed me to estimate the direct effects of each variable on the stability and change in the choice available to voters. This approach would also have allowed me to estimate the indirect effects on the choice available to voters of those variables that have a direct effect on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. These indirect effects are the effects of these variables on the choice available to voters as mediated through shifts in support for the set of leading parties. However, path analysis is not available to me as stability and change in the choice available to voters is a binary variable and shifts in support is a continuous variable. The differences in these variables require different types of regression analysis.

Nevertheless, it is evident that the effects on the choice available to voters of factors related to the three aspects of the electoral decisions are mediated through

shifts in support for the set of leading parties. In my multi-variate model, the only one of these variables that has a direct effect on stability and change in the choice available to voters are shifts in support for the set of leading parties. Variables related to voters, the context of the electoral decision and actions of the parties do not have significant effects on stability and change in the choice available to voters. This is so even when shifts in support for the set of leading parties is not included in the model. These variables only have significant effects on shifts in support for the set of leading parties. This model highlights the role played by aggregate level factors in stability and change in the choice of potential leaders of government available to voters. Future research would focus on individual level factors and adopt a more sophisticated approach to the relationship between policy and electoral support..

10.3 Future Research

The first suggestion about future research is that more countries should be included. I have focused on eleven European parliamentary democracies. Future research in this could expand the number of countries to include the newer democracies of Spain, Portugal and Greece as well as those countries that were formally part of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It would also be useful to include other parliamentary democracies from around the world such as New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Canada and so on.

10.3.1 Electoral Support and Policy Positions

In this thesis, I have focused on the composition of the set of parties that are potential leaders of government and change in support for this set of parties. In seeking to explain change in support for a set of two (or more) parties it is necessary to consider how each explanation affects support for the set of parties rather than the individual parties themselves. Doing so is useful in that it tests hypotheses about the relationship between a given factor and electoral support in a new way highlighting points that have received little attention. For instance, in outlining my hypothesis about policy change relative to the position of the median voter, the role played by an intervening

party between the set of leading parties became clear. When an intervening party is present, then the set of leading parties are expected to increase their share of the vote when they converge on the position of the median voter. However, if there is no intervening party, converging on the position of the median voter will result in one leading party winning vote share of the other, while the set as a whole may lose vote share to the smaller parties.

The testing of new hypotheses based on the theoretical expectations of other hypotheses sets quite a tough empirical test. This is particularly true of the hypotheses testing the relationship between policy change and electoral instability. The original theories focus on policy change by individual parties and how this is expected to affect electoral support for these parties. The hypotheses that I test take these expectations and argue that if I expect to observe a particular relationship for one party then combining the effects for two parties should result in a particular outcome when both parties either converge on or diverge from a particular point of reference. While there is some empirical support for the hypotheses that I test, it is not all that strong. It is possible that the low correlations are due to the ambiguous effects on electoral support for the set of leading parties when one leading party converges on its long-term policy position while the other diverges. However, this is somewhat unlikely because when I exclude these ambiguous cases, fewer significant correlations are observed.

Instead the real weakness appears to lie in the associations between the magnitudes of shifts in support and shifts in policy. In other words, large shifts in policy are not necessarily associated with large changes in vote share, nor are small shifts in policy associated with small changes in electoral support. Along similar lines, of the two parties altering their policy positions, the party undertaking the largest shift is not necessarily the party that benefits/losses from the largest change in electoral support. It may be that these empirical mismatches are in part a consequence of an assumption I make in the hypotheses that I test. When outlining my hypotheses I assume that the position of the other parties, the parties that are not leading parties, remain unchanged. I do so for two reasons. The first is that my focus is on the impact of policy changes by the set of leading parties on their own electoral support. However, these changes should not really be considered separate from changes made by other smaller parties. The second reason for assuming this is that to not do so opens up a whole other level of complexity in analysing the relationship between

policy change and electoral instability. Such a task would be a thesis in itself, let alone a chapter in a thesis of this nature. What this analysis highlights is the need for a more narrow focus on the relationship between shifts in policy and change in electoral support.

The area of policy change also presents a second potential research project. The question in this case would examine the impact of the smaller parties on the policy positions of the larger parties. As I outlined in Chapter 3, some regard small or minor parties as testing grounds for policy issues. There is an impression that if one of these parties does well in an election, that one of the larger parties will be 'inspired' by the smaller party's success and include a similar policy proposal in its next manifesto. Adopting a proven policy issue with certain sections of the electorate may allow a leading party to increase its share of the seats by attracting supporters from the smaller party.

10.3.2 Individual Political Party Level Study

In this thesis, I have taken a particular definition of my dependent variable. The focus on the set of leading parties and changes in their electoral support means that I have only been able to focus on those explanations that are capable of being translated into the effect on a set of parties. I have not considered explanations that are specific to individual parties, nor have I examined the nuances of political events in each of the countries and various parties. When support for the set of leading parties changes, I am measuring the net effect of changes in support for both leading parties.

What my model does not take into account are explanations of shifts in support for the individual parties. In other words, future research could identify the two largest parties as the leading parties but focus on them as individual parties. One such explanation is people's retrospective assessments of an incumbent's time in government as well as their prospective expectations about both leading parties if they formed the next government. Such assessments and expectations contribute to an explanation of shifts in support for individual leading parties. In those cases where both leading parties were members of the same government, combining such assessments and expectations might provide some leverage. However, in the vast majority of governments that I consider both leading parties have not been members

of the same government, so such an explanation is only of a very limited use. Another set of factors that are not included is events specific to particular parties. In particular, I am thinking of such events such as changing the party leader, revelations in the media of corruption or scandal, splits within the party or mergers with other parties, whether or not a party was a member of the outgoing government and so on.

10.3.3 Case Studies of Countries

An alternative research design could focus on an individual country, or a small number of countries. The advantage of doing so would be that attention would focus on particular elections. For instance, it would be interesting to compare cases studies of countries where the choice available to voters has remained unchanged (e.g., Germany and the UK) with countries where the choice available has changed a number of times (e.g., Denmark and Finland) and those where change is a relatively new experience (e.g., Italy and the Netherlands). Each case study could take into consideration the factors explored in this thesis as well as those mention in the previous section.

10.3.4 Individual Voter Level Study

This thesis also highlights the need for individual level research on this question. In Ireland, there is evidence that voters switch between large and smaller parties, from one election to the next. Garry et al (2002, p.124) found that of those who voted for one or other of the leading parties, Fianna Fail or Fine Gael, at the 1997 election, almost 20 percent of these switched to a smaller party in 2002. Of course it is not all one-way traffic: 18 percent of those who voted for Labour in 1997, 27 percent of Progressive Democrat voters, nine percent of Sinn Fein voters and two percent of Green Party voters, switched to either Fianna Fail or Fine Gael in 2002. The question is why do they switch?

An individual level study could examine why individual voters switch from a large party to a smaller party and vice versa. Is it because they are disaffected or disillusioned with politics, and with the large parties in particular? Have they moved

because a smaller party highlighted an issue they were concerned or because a larger party has taken on such an issue?

Above, when I considered party identification the dearth of appropriate comparative data limited my analysis. This relationship could be re-examined using individual level data. Also, the analysis that I present suggests that the set of leading parties lose vote share when turnout decreases. However, it is not clear why: did supporters for the set of leading parties stay at home because they were confident their party would win or because they were unhappy with their party but could not bring themselves to vote for another party?

When the number of parties changes, and on those few occasions when changes are introduced to the electoral rules, it would be interesting to explore at an individual level how these changes in context influence how voters cast their ballots.

Finally, an individual level study would examine whether or not respondents perceive a difference between the role of parties. In particular do they distinguish between parties that are potential leaders of government and those that are not. And if so, how important is this difference to them in deciding how to cast their votes?





Appendix

Table A1.1: Date of Elections by Country

	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Norway	Sweden	UK
1950s	22/02/53	04/06/50	05/09/50	03/07/51	06/09/53	30/05/51	07/06/53	25/06/52	12/10/53	21/09/52	25/10/51
	13/05/56	11/04/54	21/04/53	08/03/54	15/09/57	18/04/54	25/05/58	13/06/56	07/10/57	26/09/56	26/05/55
	10/05/59	01/06/58	22/09/53	07/07/58		05/03/57		12/03/59		01/06/58	08/10/59
1960s	18/11/62	26/03/61	15/11/60	05/02/62	17/09/61	04/10/61	28/04/63	15/05/63	11/09/61	18/09/60	15/10/64
	06/03/66	23/05/65	22/09/64	21/03/66	19/09/65	07/04/65	19/05/68	15/02/67	12/09/65	20/09/64	31/03/66
		31/03/68	22/11/66		28/09/69	16/06/69			07/09/69	15/09/68	
1970s	01/03/70	07/11/71	21/09/71	16/03/70	19/11/72	28/02/73	07/05/72	28/03/71	09/09/73	20/09/70	18/06/70
	10/10/71	10/03/74	04/12/73	03/01/72	30/10/76	16/06/77	20/06/76	29/11/72	11/09/77	16/09/73	28/02/74
	05/10/75	17/04/77	09/01/75	22/09/75			03/06/79	25/05/77		19/09/76	10/10/74
1980s	06/05/79	17/12/78	15/02/77	13/03/79						16/09/79	03/05/79
			23/10/79								
	24/04/83	08/11/81	08/12/81	21/03/83	09/10/80	11/06/81	26/06/83	26/05/81	14/09/81	19/09/82	09/06/83
1990s	23/11/86	13/10/85	10/01/84	16/03/87	06/03/83	18/02/82	14/06/87	08/09/82	08/09/85	15/09/85	11/06/87
		13/12/87	08/09/87		25/01/87	24/11/82		21/05/86	10/09/89	18/09/88	
			10/05/88			17/02/87		06/09/89			
1990s						15/06/89					
	07/10/90	24/11/91	12/12/90	17/03/91	12/12/90	25/11/92	05/04/92	03/05/94	12/09/93	15/09/91	09/04/92
	09/10/94	21/05/95	21/09/94	19/03/95	16/10/94	06/06/97	27/03/94	06/05/98	15/09/97	18/09/94	01/05/97
	17/12/95	13/06/99	11/03/98	17/03/99	27/09/98		21/04/96			20/09/98	
	03/10/99										

Table A1.2a: List of Parties by Country

Austria			
1_1	Socialists	SPO	
1_2	Christain Social Party	OVP	
1_5	Communists	KPO	
1_11	Freedom Party	FPO	
1_12	Democratic Progressive Party	DFP	Split from SPO
1_13	United Greens of Austria	VGO	
1_15	Green Alternative	DGA	
1_14	Alternative List	ALO	
1_16	Assoc Members Soc Sec Sys	VS	
1_17	Liberal Forum	LF	split from FPO in Feb 1993
1_18	No- Cits Against Sale Austria	NBVO	
Belgium			
2_1	Catholic Party	CVP/PSC	split to CVP and PSC 1968
2_2	Party of Liberty and Progress	PVV/PLP	split to VVP and PLP 1972
2_3	Belgian Socialist Party	BSP/PSB	split to BSP/PSB 1978
2_5	Liberal/Socialist Cartel	LSC	
2_6	Dissident Catholic Lists	DCL	various lists
2_8	Volksunie	VU	VU since 1954
2_10	Communists	KPB/PCB	
2_11	German Minority	PDB	was HF and CUW
2_14	Francophone Democratic Front	FDF	
2_15	Walloon Democratic Front	FDW	To RW
2_16	Walloon Front	FW	To RW
2_17	Walloon Workers Party	PWT	
2_18	Walloon Rally	RW	from FDW and WF 1965-68
2_19	Chr Peoples Party	CVP	
2_20	Chr Social Party	PSC	
2_21	Party of Liberty and Progress	PVV	
2_22	Francophone Liberals	PRL	was PLP and PRLW
2_23	Brussels Liberal Party	PLDP	was PL, 1974 in electoral alliance with FDF; merged with PRLW to form PRL
2_24	All Power to the Workers	PVDA/PTB	was AMADA
2_25	Revolutionary Workers Party	POS/SAP	was LRT/RAL
2_26	Ecolo	Ecolo	Francophone Greens
2_27	Agalev	Agalev	Flemish Greens
2_28	Democratic Union for respect of Labour	UDRT/RAD	
2_29	Flemish Bloc	VB	
2_30	Flemish Socialist Party	SP	was BSP
2_31	Francophone Socialist Party	PS	was PSC
2_32	Radical Reformers	ROSSE(U)M	

Table A1.2b: List of Parties by Country

Belgium (cont.)

2_33	National Front	FN/NF
2_34	Belgium-Europe	BEB
2_35	Rainbow	REGEBO
2_36	Agir	Agir

Denmark

3_1	Conservative Peoples Party	KF	
3_4	Social Democrats	SD	
3_5	Radical Party	RV	
3_6	Liberals	V	
3_8	Schleswig Party	SP	German speaking minority
3_9	Communist Party	DKP	
3_10	Justice Party	R	
3_13	Danish Union	DS	
3_15	Independents Party	DU	
3_16	Socialist Peoples Party	SF	
3_17	Liberal Centre	LC	
3_18	Left Socialist Party	VS	Split from SF
3_19	Christian Peoples Party	KFP	
3_20	Centre Democrats	CD	Split from SD
3_21	Progress Party	F	
3_22	Common Course	FK	
3_23	Greens	DG	
3_24	Unity List- Red Greens	EDRG	

Table A1.2c: List of Parties by Country

Finland

4_1	Social Democrats	SSP	
4_2	Swedish Peoples Party	SF	
4_4	Finnish Centre	SK	since 1988, was Agrarian Union until 1965 when changed to Centre Party
4_8	National Coalition	KK	
4_9	Liberal Peoples Party	LK	since 1966, was National Progressive Party until 1951 when renamed Finnish Peoples Party
4_11	Small Farmers Party	SPP	
4_13	Finnish Peoples Democratic Union	SKDL	
4_14	Liberal League	VL	
4_15	Social Democratic League Workers Smallholders	TPSL	
4_16	Christian League	SKL	
4_17	Finnish Rural Party	SMP	since 1966, was Finnish Smallholders Party
4_18	Constitutional Party of Finland	PO	since 1980, was Constitutional Peoples Party
4_19	Union for Democracy	KL	since 1983, was Finnish Peoples Unity Party
4_20	Green Union	VL	since 1987, was Greens
4_21	Pensioners Party	SEP	
4_22	Democratic Alternative	DV	
4_23	Left Wing Alliance	VAS	
4_24	Alliance for Free Finland	VSL	
4_25	Progressive Finnish Party	NP	
4_26	True Finns Party	PS	in other
4_27	Reform Grp	REM	in other

Germany

5_1	Centre Party	DZ	
5_2	Social Democrats	SPD	
5_28	German Communist Party	DKP	since 1968, was KPD, banned by constitutional court in 1956 but reconstituted in 1968, to ADF
5_36	Christian Democratic Union	CDU	
5_37	Christian Social Union	CSU	
5_38	Free Democrats	FDP	
5_39	Barvarian Party	BP	
5_40	Economic Reconstruction League	WAV	
5_41	German Party	DP	to GP
5_42	German Reich Party	DR	
5_43	South Schleswig Voters League	SSW	
5_44	All German Peoples Party	GVP	
5_45	Refugee Party	GB	to GP
5_46	Federal Union	FU	
5_47	All German Party	GP	formed from DP and GB
5_48	German Peace Union	DFU	to ADF
5_49	National Democratic Party	NPD	

Table A1.2d: List of Parties by Country

Germany (cont.)

5_50	Action for Democratic Progress	ADF	from DKP and DFU
5_51	Greens	DG	
5_56	Party of Democratic Socialism	PDS	
5_55	Greys	G	
5_52	Ecological Democratic Party	EDP	
5_54	German Social Union	DSU	
5_57	Republicans	R	
5_53	Alliance90/Greens	A90G	

Ireland

6_2	Sinn Fein 2	SF2	rump left after DeValera formed FF
6_8	Labour	LAB	
6_9	Communists	C	
6_10	Fianna Fail	FF	split from anti-treaty SF
6_14	Fine Gael	FG	merge of CnaG, National Centre, National Guard (Blueshirts)
6_15	Clann na Talmhan	CnaT	
6_16	National Labour	NL	split from L
6_17	Clann na Poblachta	CnaP	
6_18	National Progressive Democrats	NPD	rump CP (Noel Browne)
6_19	Workers Party	WP	split from SF2 in 1970 (Officials: SF-WP)
6_20	National H-Block Committee	NHBC	
6_21	Socialist Labour Party	SLP	former Lab members (Noel Browne)
6_22	Sinn Fein 3	SF3	provisional wing of SF2
6_23	Democratic Socialist Party	DSP	
6_24	Greens	G	AKA Ecology Party and Comhaontas Glas
6_25	Progressive Democrats	PD	
6_26	Democratic Left	DL	split from WP, merges with L

Table A1.2e: List of Parties by Country

Italy

7_3	Socialist Party	PSI	
7_4	Republican Party	PRI	
7_11	Democratic Party of the Left	PDS	since 1991, was PCI; 1994: Progressive Alliance; 1996 Olive Tree Alliance
7_13	Slovene minority	SM	
7_14	Sardinian Action Party	PSdA	Olive Tree Alliance
7_17	Italian Popular Party	PPI	since 1994, was Christian Democrats (DC); link to Prodi list 1996; Progressive Alliance (Pact for Italy); Olive Tree Alliance
7_19	Liberal Party	PLI	
7_20	Monarchist Party	PDUIUM	since 1963, was BNdL until 1948, then PNM until 1958
7_21	Peasants party	PCdI	
7_22	Sicilian Independence Movements	UMF	since 1948, was MidS
7_23	Social Democrats	PSDI	from 1953, was PSLI
7_24	Italian Social Movement	MSIDN	since 1972, was MSI; Freedom Alliance; Pole for Liberties
7_25	South Tyrol Peoples Party	SVP	
7_26	Community	C	
7_27	Popular Monarchist Party	PMP	
7_28	Val dAosta Union	UV	
7_29	Piedmontese Regional Autonomist Movement	MARP	
7_30	Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity	PSIUP	
7_31	United Socialist Party	PSU	
7_32	Manifesto	PdUP	
7_33	Workers Political Movement	MPL	
7_34	Radical party	PR	
7_35	Continuous Struggle	LC	campaigns with PdUP 1976
7_36	Workers Vanguard	AO	campaigns with PdUP 1976
7_37	Proletarian Democracy	DP	
7_38	Friuli Movement	FM	
7_39	Trieste List	LT	
7_40	National Pensioners Party	PNP	
7_41	Venetian League	LV	
7_42	Lega Nord	LN	since 1992, was LL
7_43	Piedmont-Regional Autonomy	PAR	
7_44	Piedmont	P	
7_45	Greens	FLV	Progressive Alliance; Olive Tree Alliance
7_46	Hunting Fishing Environment	CPA	
7_47	Venetian Regional Autonomy	MVRA	
7_48	Reformers	LP	since 1994, was Pannella Liste ally of FI
7_49	La Rete	LRMD	the network, ally of PDS 1996; Progressive Alliance; Olive Tree Alliance
7_50	Communist Refoundation	RC	
7_51	Venetian Autonomy League	LAV	
7_52	Referendum List	LR	
7_53	Piedmont Alpine League	LAP	

Table A1.2f: List of Parties by Country

Italy (cont.)

7_54	Lombard Alpine League	LAL	
7_55	League of Southern Action	LAM	
7_56	Union of Venetian People	UPV	
7_57	Democratic Alliance	AD	
7_58	Social Christians	CS	ally of PDS 1996, Progressive Alliance, Olive Tree Alliance
7_59	Socialist Renewal	RS	
7_60	Segnie Pact	PS	link to Italian Renewal 1996; Progressive Alliance (Pact for Italy), Olive Tree Alliance
7_61	Forza Italia	FI	Freedom Alliance, Pole for Liberties
7_62	Christian Democratic Centre	CCD	ally of FI 1994; 1996 campaigned with CDU; Freedom Alliance, Pole for Liberties
7_63	Union of the Centre	UCD	ally of FI
7_64	Liberal Democratic Pole	PLD	ally of FI
7_65	United Christian Democrats	CDU	1996 campaigned with CCD; Freedom Alliance; Pole for Liberties
7_66	Unitary Communists	CU	ally of PDS 1996, Olive Tree Alliance
7_67	Labour	L	ally of PDS 1996, Olive Tree Alliance
7_68	Dini List	LDRI	link to Italian Renewal 1996
7_69	Pannella Sgarbi List	LPS	Pole for Liberties
7_70	The Flame	FMST	

Netherlands

8_1	Anti-Revolutionary Party	ARP	merged to form CDA in 1977 with KVP and CHU
8_2	Catholic Peoples Party	KVP	merged to form CDA in 1977 with ARP and CHU
8_6	Christian Historical Union	CHU	merged to form CDA in 1977 with ARP and KVP
8_10	Communist Party	CPN	
8_14	Political Reformed Party	SGP	
8_23	Labour Party	PvdA	
8_24	Liberal Party	VVD	
8_25	Catholic National Party	KNP	
8_26	Reformed Political Union	GPV	
8_27	Pacifist Socialist Party	PSP	
8_28	Peoples Party of the Right	RV	was until 1977 Farmers Party (B)
8_29	Democrats 66	D66	
8_30	Democratic Socialists 70	DS70	
8_31	Middle Class Party	MCP	
8_32	Radical Political Party	RPP	
8_33	Roman Catholic Party	NRP	
8_34	Christian Democratic Appeal	CDA	
8_35	Reformed Political Federation	RPF	
8_36	Centre Party	C	
8_37	Evangelical Peoples Party	EVP	
8_39	Centre Democrats	CD	

Table A1.2g: List of Parties by Country

Netherlands (cont.)

8_40	Green Left	GL
8_41	Greens	G
8_42	United Old Persons League	UOPL
8_43	55+Union	55U
8_38	Socialist party	SP

Norway

9_1	Liberals	V	
9_2	Conservatives	H	
9_4	Labour Party	DNA	
9_7	Centre Party	S	was Agrian League until 1921 and Farmers Party until 1959
9_9	Communist	NKP	
9_10	Christian Peoples Party	KF	
9_11	Commonwealth	SFP	
9_13	Joint Non-Socialists Lists	JNSL	local alliances Cons Lib Agr Chr
9_14	Socialist Left Party	SV	since 1975, was Socialist Peoples party (SF)
9_15	Progress Party	F	since 1977, was Anders Lange Party (ALP)
9_16	Liberal Peoples Party	DLF	since 1980, was New Peoples Party
9_17	Pensioners Party	PP	
9_18	Red Electoral Alliance	REA	
9_19	Greens	G	
9_20	Future for Finnmark	F4F	

Sweden

10_5	Social Democrats	SSA	
10_6	Moderate Unity Party	MS	since 1969, was Conservatives (H)
10_7	Centre Party	C	since 1957, was Agrarian Party (B)
10_10	Left Party Communists	VK	since 1967, was Communist Party (SKP)
10_18	Peoples Party	F	
10_20	Christian Democratic Union	KDS	
10_21	Citizens Coalition	MBS	
10_22	Middle Parties	M	
10_23	Ecology Party	MG	
10_24	New Democrats	ND	

Table A1.2h: List of Parties by Country

UK

11_1	Conservative Party	Cons	
11_2	Liberals	Lib	merged with SDP in 1988 to form Alliance later the LibDems
11_6	Labour Party	Lab	
11_7	Sinn Fein	SF	
11_11	Scottish Nationalist	SNP	
11_12	Plaid Cymru	PC	
11_15	National Front	NF	
11_16	Ulster Unionists	UU	
11_17	Alliance NI	ANI	
11_18	SDLP	SDLP	
11_19	Greens	G	
11_20	Social Democrats	SDP	
11_21	Liberal Democrats	LD	since 1992, formerly the Alliance
11_10	Communist	Comm	
11_22	Democratic Unionist Party	DUP	
11_23	United Kingdom Unionist Party	UKU	

Table A1.3a: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Austria													
Year	Turnout	SPO	OVP	KPO	FPO	DFP	VGO	ALO	DGA	VS	LF	N-BVO	Others
1949	96.8	38.7	44	5.1	11.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
1953	95.8	42.1	41.3	5.3	10.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4
1956	96	43	46	4.4	6.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1959	94.2	44.8	44.2	3.3	7.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1962	93.8	44	45.4	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6
1966	93.8	42.6	48.3	0.4	5.4	3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1970	91.8	48.4	44.7	1	5.5	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1971	92.4	50	43.1	1.4	5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1975	92.9	50.4	42.9	1.2	5.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1979	92.2	51	41.9	1	6.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	92.6	47.6	43.2	0.6	5	0	1.9	1.4	0	0	0	0	0.3
1986	90.5	43.1	41.3	0.7	9.7	0	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0.4
1990	86.1	42.8	32.1	0.5	16.6	0	2	0	4.8	0.8	0	0	0.4
1994	81.9	34.7	27.5	0.3	22.4	0	0.2	0	7.3	0	6	0.9	0.7
1995	86	38.1	28.3	0.3	21.9	0	0	0	4.8	0	5.5	1	0.1
1999	80.42	33.1	26.9	0	26.9	0	0	0	7.4	0	3.6	0	2.1

Table A1.3b: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Belgium

Year	Turnout	CVP/PSC	PVV/PLP	BSP/PSBSoc	LSC	DCL	VU	KPB/PCB	PDB	FDG	FDW	FW	PWT	RW
1949	94.4	43.5	15.3	29.7	0	0.1	2.1	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
1950	92.6	47.7	11.3	34.5	1.8	0		4.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
1954	93.2	41.1	12.1	37.3	2.1	0.9	2.2	3.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
1958	93.6	46.5	11	35.8	2.1	0	2	1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
1961	92.3	41.5	12.3	36.7	0	0.8	3.5	3.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1965	91.6	34.5	21.6	28.3	0	0.3	6.4	4.6	0	1.3	0.1	0.5	0.5	0
1968	90	31.7	20.9	28	0	0	9.8	3.3	0	2.5	0	0	0.1	3.4
1971	91.5	30.1	15.2	27.2	0	0	11.1	3.1	0.1	4.5	0	0	0	6.7
1974	90.3	32.4	15.2	26.7	0	0	10.2	3.2	0.2	5.1	0	0	0	5.8
1977	95.1	36	14.4	27	0	0	10	2.7	0.1	4.3	0	0	0	3
1978	94.8	36.2	15.5	25.4	0	0	7	3.3	0.2	4.2	0	0	0	2.9
1981	94.6	26.5	21.5	25.1	0	0	9.8	2.3	0.1	2.5	0	0	0	1.7
1985	93.6	29.3	20.9	28.4	0	0	7.9	1.2	0.1	1.2	0	0	0	0.2
1987	93.4	27.5	20.9	30.6	0	0	8	0.8	0.1	1.2	0	0	0	0.2
1991	95.7	24.5	20	25.4	0	0	5.9	0.1	0	1.5	0	0	0	0.1
1995	91.1	24.9	23.4	24.5	0	0	4.7	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
1999	90.6	20	24.4	19.7	0	0	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table A1.3c: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Belgium														
Year	CVP	PSC	PVV	PRL	PLDP	PVDA/PTB	POS/SAP	Ecolo	Agalev	UDRT/RAD	VB	SP	PS	ROSSE(U)M
1949	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1950	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1954	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1961	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1965	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1968	20	11.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1971	19.7	10.4	9.5	5.7	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1974	23.3	9.1	9.6	5.6	0	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1977	26.2	9.8	8.5	5.9	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
1978	26.1	10.1	10.3	5.2	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.9	1.4	12.4	13	0
1981	19.3	7.2	12.9	8.6	0	0.8	0.2	2.5	2.3	2.7	1.1	12.4	12.7	0
1985	21.3	8	10.7	10.2	0	0.8	0.2	2.5	3.7	1.1	1.4	14.5	13.9	0
1987	19.5	8	11.5	9.4	0	0.7	0.5	2.6	4.5	0.1	1.9	14.9	15.7	0
1991	16.8	7.7	11.9	8.1	0	0.5	0.1	5.1	4.9	0	6.6	11.9	13.5	3.2
1995	17.2	7.7	13.1	10.3	0	0.6	0	4	4.4	0	7.8	12.6	11.9	0
1999	14.1	5.9	14.3	10.1	0	0	0	7.3	7	0	9.9	9.6	10.1	0

Table A1.3d: *Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)*

Belgium	NF	BE	Rainbow	Agir
Year				
1949	0	0	0	0
1950	0	0	0	0
1954	0	0	0	0
1958	0	0	0	0
1961	0	0	0	0
1965	0	0	0	0
1968	0	0	0	0
1971	0	0	0	0
1974	0	0	0	0
1977	0	0	0	0
1978	0	0	0	0
1981	0	0	0	0
1985	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0
1991	1.1	0.3	0.2	0.2
1995	2.3	0	0	0.3
1999	1.5	0	0	0

Table A1.3e: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Denmark

Year	Turnout	KF	SD	RV	V	SP	DKP	R	DS	DU	SF	LC	VS	KFP
1947	85.8	12.4	40	6.9	27.6	0.4	6.8	4.5	1.2	0	0	0	0	0
1950	81.9	17.8	39.6	8.2	21.3	0.3	4.6	8.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1953.1	80.8	17.3	40.4	8.6	22.1	0.4	4.8	5.6	0.8	0	0	0	0	0
1953.2	80.6	16.9	41.3	7.8	23.1	0.4	4.3	3.5	0	2.7	0	0	0	0
1957	83.7	16.6	39.4	7.8	25.1	0.4	3.1	5.3	0	2.3	0	0	0	0
1960	85.8	17.9	42.1	5.8	21.1	0.4	1.1	2.2	0	3.3	6.1	0	0	0
1964	85.5	20.1	41.9	5.3	20.8	0.4	1.2	1.3	0.4	2.5	5.8	0	0	0
1966	88.6	18.7	38.2	7.3	19.3	0	0.8	0.7	0	1.6	10.9	2.5	0	0
1968	89.3	20.4	34.1	15	18.6	0.2	1	0.7	0	0.5	6.1	1.3	2	0
1971	87.2	16.7	37.3	14.3	15.6	0.2	1.4	1.7	0	0	9.1	0	1.6	2
1973	88.7	9.2	25.6	11.2	12.3	0	3.6	2.9	0	0	6	0	1.5	4
1975	88.2	5.5	29.9	7.1	23.3	0	4.2	1.8	0	0	5	0	2.1	5.3
1977	88	8.5	37	3.6	12	0	3.7	3.3	0	0	3.9	0	2.7	3.4
1979	85.6	12.5	38.3	5.4	12.5	0	1.9	2.6	0	0	5.9	0	3.7	2.6
1981	83.2	14.5	32.9	5.1	11.3	0	1.1	1.4	0	0	11.3	0	2.6	2.3
1984	88.4	23.4	31.6	5.5	12.1	0	0.7	1.5	0	0	11.5	0	2.7	2.7
1987	86.7	20.8	29.3	6.2	10.5	0	0.9	0.5	0	0	14.6	0	1.4	2.4
1988	84	19.3	29.8	5.6	11.8	0	0.8	0	0	0	13	0	0.6	2
1990	82.8	16	37.4	3.5	15.8	0	0	0.5	0	0	8.3	0	0	2.3
1994	84.3	15	34.6	4.6	23.3	0	0	0	0	0	7.3	0	0	1.8
1998	85.95	8.9	35.9	3.9	24	0	0	0	0	0	7.6	0	0	2.5

Table A1.3f: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Denmark							
year	CD	F	FK	DG	EDRG	DF	others
1947	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
1950	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1953 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1953 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1957	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1960	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1964	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3
1966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1968	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1971	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1973	7.8	15.9	0	0	0	0	0
1975	2.2	13.6	0	0	0	0	0
1977	6.4	14.6	0	0	0	0	0.9
1979	3.2	11	0	0	0	0	0.4
1981	8.3	8.9	0	0	0	0	0.3
1984	4.6	3.6	0	0	0	0	0.1
1987	4.8	4.8	2.2	1.3	0	0	0.3
1988	4.7	9	1.9	1.4	0	0	0.1
1990	5.1	6.4	1.8	0.9	1.7	0	0.3
1994	2.8	6.4	0	0	3.1	0	1.1
1998	4.3	2.4	0	0	2.7	7.4	0.4

Table A1.3g: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Finland															
Year	Turnout	SSP	SF	SK	KK	LK	SFP	SKDL	LibLeague	TPSL	SKL	SMP	PO	KL	
1948	78.2	26.3	7.7	24.2	17	3.9	0.3	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1951	74.6	26.5	7.6	23.2	14.6	5.7	0.3	21.6	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	
1954	79.9	26.2	7	24.1	12.8	7.9	0	21.6	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	
1958	75	23.2	6.7	23.1	15.3	5.9	0	23.2	0.3	1.7	0.2	0	0	0	
1962	85.1	19.5	6.4	23	14.6	5.9	0	22	0.5	4.4	0.8	2.2	0	0	
1966	84.9	27.2	6	21.2	13.8	6.5	0	21.2	0	2.6	0.4	1	0	0	
1970	82.2	23.4	5.7	17.1	18	5.9	0	16.6	0	1.4	1.1	10.5	0	0	
1972	81.4	25.8	5.3	16.4	17.6	5.2	0	17	0	1	2.5	9.2	0	0	
1975	73.8	24.9	5	17.6	18.4	4.3	0	18.9	0	0	3.3	3.6	1.6	1.7	
1979	75.3	23.9	4.5	17.3	21.6	3.7	0	17.9	0	0	4.8	4.6	1.2	0.3	
1983	75.7	26.7	4.9	15.5	22.1	2.1	0	14	0	0	3	9.7	0.4	0.1	
1987	72.1	24.1	5.6	17.6	23.1	1	0	9.4	0	0	2.6	6.3	0.1	0	
1991	68.4	21.8	5.8	24.6	19.1	0.8	0	0	0	0	3	4.8	0.3	0	
1995	68.6	28.2	5.4	19.8	17.8	0.6	0	0	0	0	3	1.3	0	0	
1999	68.3	22.9	5.1	22.4	21	0	0	0	0	0	4.2	0	0	0	

Table A1.3h: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Finland							
Year	VL	PP	DV	VAS	AFF	NP	others
1948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6
1951	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
1954	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4
1962	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7
1966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1970	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3
1972	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1975	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
1983	1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1987	4	1.2	4.2	0	0	0	0.8
1991	6.7	0.4	0	10	0	0	2.7
1995	6.5	0.2	0	11.1	1	2.8	2.3
1999	7.5	0	0	10.9	0	1	5

Table A1.3i: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Germany															
year	Turnout	CP	SDP	DKP	CDU-CSU	FDP	BavP	ERL	GP	GRP	SSVL	AGPP	RefP	FedUn	
1949	78.5	3	29.2	5.8	31	11.9	4.2	2.9	4	1.8	0.3	0	0	0	
1953	85.8	0.8	28.8	2.2	45.2	9.5	1.7	0	3.2	1.1	0.2	1.1	5.9	0	
1957	87.8	0	31.7	0	50.2	7.7	0	0	3.4	1	0.1	0	4.6	0.9	
1961	87.7	0	36.2	0	45.4	12.8	0	0	0	0.8	0.1	0	0	0	
1965	86.8	0	39.3	0	47.6	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1969	86.7	0	42.7	0	46.1	5.8	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1972	91.1	0	45.8	0.3	44.9	8.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1976	90.7	0	42.6	0.3	48.6	7.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1980	88.6	0	42.9	0.2	44.5	10.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1983	88.4	0	38.2	0.2	48.8	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1987	83.5	0	37	0	44.3	9.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1990	76.9	0	33.5	0	43.8	11	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1994	77.9	0	36.4	0	41.5	6.9	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1998	82.2	0	43.8	0	39.6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Germany															
year	AGP	GPU	NDP	ADP	Grns	PDS	Greys	EDP	GSU	Rep	Alli90/Grn	others			
1949	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.9			
1953	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3			
1957	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4			
1961	2.7	1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1			
1965	0	1.3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3			
1969	0	0	4.3	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4			
1972	0	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1976	0	0	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3			
1980	0	0	0.2	0	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1			
1983	0	0	0.2	0	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1987	0	0	0.6	0	8.2	0	0	0.3	0	0	0	0.4			
1990	0	0	0.3	0	3.9	2.4	0.8	0.4	0.2	2.1	1.2	0.3			
1994	0	0	0	0	7.3	4.4	0.5	0.4	0	1.8	0	0.7			
1998	0	0	0	0	4.97	4.9	0	0	0	2.3	0	1.43			

Table A1.3j: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Ireland year	Turnout	FF	FG	Lab	WP	CnaT	NatLab	CnaP	Comm	SF2	NPD	Hblock	SocLabP	SF3
1948	74.2	41.9	19.8	8.7	0	5.6	2.6	13.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1951	75.3	46.3	25.8	11.4	0	2.9	0	4.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1954	76.4	43.4	32	12.1	0	3.8	0	3.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1957	71.3	48.3	26.6	9.1	0	2.4	0	1.7	0.2	5.3	0	0	0	0
1961	70.6	43.8	32	11.6	0	1.5	0	1.1	0	3.1	1	0	0	0
1965	75.1	47.7	34.1	15.4	0	0	0	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
1969	76.9	45.7	34.1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1973	76.6	46.2	35.1	13.7	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1977	76.3	50.6	30.5	11.6	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1981	76.2	45.3	36.5	9.9	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	0.4	0
1982.1	73.8	47.3	37.3	9.1	2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1982.2	72.8	45.2	39.2	9.4	3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	73.3	44.2	27.1	6.4	3.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.9
1989	68.5	44.1	29.3	9.5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2
1992	67.5	39.1	24.5	19.3	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.6
1997	65.9	39.3	27.9	10.4	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.6

Table A1.3k: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Ireland					
year	DSP	Green	PD	DL	Others
1948	0	0	0	0	8.2
1951	0	0	0	0	9.5
1954	0	0	0	0	5.6
1957	0	0	0	0	6.4
1961	0	0	0	0	5.9
1965	0	0	0	0	2
1969	0	0	0	0	3.2
1973	0	0	0	0	3.9
1977	0	0	0	0	5.6
1981	0	0	0	0	3.7
1982.1	0	0	0	0	3.1
1982.2	0.4	0.2	0	0	2.3
1987	0.4	0.4	11.8	0	4
1989	0.6	1.5	5.5	0	3.3
1992	0	1.4	4.7	2.8	5.9
1997	0	2.6	4.7	2.3	9.8

Table A1.31: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Italy year	Turnout	PSI	PRI	PCI/PDS	SM	PSdA	DC/PPI	PLI	PDIUM	PCdI	UMF	PSDI	MSIDN	SVP
1948	92.2	13.8	2.5	17.2	0	0.2	48.5	3.8	2.8	0.4	0.2	7.1	2	0.5
1953	93.5	12.7	1.6	22.6	0	0.1	40.1	3	6.8	0	0	4.5	5.8	0.5
1958	93.7	14.2	1.4	22.7	0	0	42.4	3.5	2.2	0	0	4.6	4.8	0.5
1963	92.9	13.8	1.4	25.3	0	0	38.2	7	1.7	0	0	6.1	5.1	0.4
1968	92.8	0	2	26.9	0	0.1	39	5.8	1.3	0	0		4.4	0.5
1972	93.2	9.6	2.9	27.2	0	0	38.7	3.9	0	0	0	5.1	8.7	0.5
1976	93.4	9.1	2.9	32.6	0	0	36.7	11.6	0	0	0	3.2	0.6	0.5
1979	91.1	9.8	3	30.4	0	0	38.3	1.9	0	0	0	3.8	5.3	0.6
1983	89	11.5	5.1	29.2	0	0.2	32.9	2.9	0	0	0	4.1	6.8	0.5
1987	88.9	14.3	3.7	26.6	0	0.4	34.3	2.1	0	0	0	3	5.9	0.5
1992	87.4	13.6	4.4	16.1	0	0.4	29.7	2.9	0	0	0	2.7	5.4	0.5
1994	86.1	2.2	0	20.6	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	13.5	0.6
1996	82.9	0	0	18.7	0	2.6	6.8	0	0	0	0	0	15.7	0

Italy year	C	PMP	UV	MARP	PSIUP	PSU	PdUP	MPL	PR	DP	FM	LT	PNP	LV
1948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1953	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1958	0.6	2.6	0.1	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1963	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1968	0	0	0.1	0	4.4	14.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1972	0	0	0.1	0	1.9	0	0.7	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
1976	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	1.4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1979	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	1.4	0	3.5	0.8	0.1	0.2	0	0
1983	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0.7	0	2.2	1.5	0.1	0.2	1.4	0.3
1987	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	2.6	1.7	0	0	0	0.8
1992	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6	0
1994	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1996	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table A1.3m: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Italy year	LL/LN	PAR	P	FLV	CPA	MVRA	LP	LRMD	RC	LAV	LR	LAP	LAL	LAM
1948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1953	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1963	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1968	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1972	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1976	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0.5	0.2	0.2	2.5	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1992	8.7	0	0	2.8	0.5	0.1	1.2	1.9	5.6	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.1
1994	8.4	0	0	2.7	0	0	3.5	1.9	6	0	0	0	0.4	0.2
1996	10.1	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	8.6	0	0	0	0	0.2

Italy year	AD	CS	PS	FI	CCD	CDU	CU	LDRI	LPS	FMST	others
1948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1953	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3
1958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
1963	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9
1968	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1972	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3
1976	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8
1983	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3
1987	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
1992	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1
1994	1.2	0	4.7	16.4	4.6	0	0	0	0	0	2.1
1996	0	0.8	1.1	20.6	3.4	2.4	1.6	1.1	1.9	0.9	3.4

Table A1.3n: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Netherlands														
Year	Turnout	ARP	KVP	CHU	Comm	PRP	PvdA	VVD	CNP	RPU	CDA	PSP	FP	D66
1948	93.7	13.2	31	9.2	7.7	2.4	25.6	7.9	1.3	0	0	0	0	0
1952	95	11.3	28.7	8.9	6.2	2.4	29	8.8	2.7	0.7	0	0	0	0
1956	95.5	9.9	31.7	8.4	4.7	2.3	32.7	8.8	0	0.6	0	0	0	0
1959	95.6	9.4	31.6	8.1	2.4	2.2	30.4	12.2	0	0.7	0	1.8	0.7	0
1963	95.1	8.7	31.9	8.6	2.8	2.3	28	10.3	0	0.7	0	3	2.1	0
1967	94.9	9.9	26.5	8.1	3.6	2	23.6	10.7	0	0.9	0	2.9	4.8	4.5
1971	79.1	8.6	21.8	6.3	3.9	2.3	24.6	10.3	0	1.6	0	1.4	1.1	6.8
1972	83.5	8.8	17.7	4.8	4.5	2.2	27.3	14.4	0	1.8	0	1.5	1.9	4.2
1977	88	0	0	0	1.7	2.1	33.8	17.9	0	1	31.9	0.9	0.8	5.4
1981	87	0	0	0	2.1	2	28.3	17.3	0	0.8	30.8	2.1	0.2	11.1
1982	81	0	0	0	1.8	1.9	30.4	23.1	0	0.8	29.4	2.3	0.3	4.3
1986	85.8	0	0	0	0.6	1.7	33.3	17.4	0	1	34.6	1.2	0	6.1
1989	80.3	0	0	0	0	1.9	31.9	14.6	0	1.2	35.3	0	0	7.9
1994	78.7	0	0	0	0	1.7	24	20	0	1.3	22.2	0	0	15.5
1998	73.3	0	0	0	0	1.8	29	24.7	0	1.3	18.4	0	0	9
Netherlands														
Year	DS70	MCP	RPP	RCP	RPF	CP	EPP	SP	CD	GL	Gms	UOPL	55plus	others
1948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.7
1952	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.3
1956	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9
1959	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
1963	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.6
1967	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5
1971	5.3	1.5	1.8	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3
1972	4.1	0.4	4.8	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7
1977	0.7	0	1.7	0.4	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1
1981	0.6	0	2	0.2	1.2	0.1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7
1982	0	0	1.7	0	1.5	0.8	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1986	0	0	1.3	0	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0	0	0	0	0.8
1989	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.4	0.9	4.1	0.4	0	0	0.4
1994	0	0	0	0	1.8	0.4	0	1.3	2.5	3.5	0.2	3.6	0.9	1.1
1998	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3.5	0.6	0	7.3	0	0.5	1.9

Table A1.30: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Norway														
Year	Turnout	V	H	DNA	S	NKP	SV	KF	CwthP	JNSL	F	DLF	PP	REA
1949	82	12.4	15.9	45.7	4.9	5.8	0	8.4	0.8	6.1	0	0	0	0
1953	79.3	10	18.4	46.7	8.8	5.1	0	10.5	0	0.5	0	0	0	0
1957	78.3	9.6	16.8	48.3	8.6	3.4	0	10.2	0	2.9	0	0	0	0
1961	79.1	7.2	19.3	46.8	6.8	2.9	2.4	9.3	0	5.2	0	0	0	0
1965	85.4	10.2	20.3	43.1	9.4	1.4	6	7.8	0	1.8	0	0	0	0
1969	83.8	9.4	18.8	46.5	9	1	3.4	7.8	0	3.8	0	0	0	0
1973	80.2	2.3	17.2	35.3	6.8	0	11.2	11.9	0	6	5	3.4	0	0
1977	82.9	2.4	24.5	42.3	8	0.4	4.2	9.7	0	4.8	1.9	1	0	0
1981	82	3.2	31.7	37.2	4.2	0.3	4.9	8.9	0	3.6	4.5	0.5	0	0
1985	84	3.1	30.4	40.8	6.6	0.2	5.5	8.3	0	0	3.7	0.5	0.3	0.6
1989	83	3.2	22.2	34.3	6.5	0	10.1	8.5	0	0	13	0	0.3	0.8
1993	75.5	3.6	17.1	37.1	16.8	0	8	7.9	0	0	6.3	0	1.1	1.1
1997	78.3	4.5	14.3	35	7.9	0	6	13.7	0	0	15.3	0	0	1.7

Norway			
Year	Grns	F4F	others
1949	0	0	0
1953	0	0	0
1957	0	0	0.2
1961	0	0	0.1
1965	0	0	0
1969	0	0	0.3
1973	0	0	0.9
1977	0	0	0.8
1981	0	0	1
1985	0	0	0
1989	0.4	0.3	0.4
1993	0.1	0	0.9
1997	0	0	1.6

Table A1.3p: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

Year	Turnout	SSA	MS	C	VK	F	KDS	CitCoal	MP	MG	ND	others
1948	82.7	46.1	12.3	12.4	6.3	22.8	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1952	79.1	46.1	14.4	10.7	4.3	24.4	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
1956	79.6	44.6	17.1	9.5	5	23.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
1958	77.4	46.2	19.5	12.7	3.4	18.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1960	85.9	47.8	16.6	13.6	4.5	17.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
1964	83.9	47.3	13.7	13.2	5.2	17	1.8	1.5	0.3	0	0	0
1968	89.3	50.1	12.9	15.7	3	14.3	1.5	1.7	0.8	0	0	0
1970	88.3	45.3	11.5	19.9	4.8	16.2	1.8	0	0	0	0	0.5
1973	90.8	43.6	14.3	25.1	5.3	9.4	1.8	0	0	0	0	0.5
1976	91.8	42.7	15.6	24.1	4.7	11.1	1.4	0	0	0	0	0.4
1979	90.7	43.2	20.3	18.1	5.6	10.6	1.4	0	0	0	0	0.8
1982	91.4	45.6	23.6	15.5	5.6	5.9	1.9	0	0	1.7	0	0.2
1985	89.9	44.7	21.3	10.5	5.4	14.2	1.9	0	0	1.5	0	0.5
1988	86	43.2	18.3	11.3	5.8	12.2	2.9	0	0	5.5	0	0.8
1991	85.3	37.7	21.9	8.5	4.5	9.1	7.1	0	0	3.4	6.7	1.1
1994	86.8	45.3	22.4	7.7	6.2	7.2	4.1	0	0	5	1.2	0.9
1998	81.4	36.4	22.9	5.1	12	4.7	11.8	0	0	4.5	0	2.6

Table A1.3q: Vote Share by Party in Each Country (%)

UK												
Year	Turnout	CON	LIB	LD	LAB	SF	Comm	SNP	PC	NF	SDLP	UU
1950	83.6	43.4	9.1	0	46.1	0.5	0.3	0	0.1	0	0	0
1951	81.9	48	2.6	0	48.8	0.4	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
1955	76.8	49.7	2.7	0	46.4	0.6	0.1	0	0.2	0	0	0
1959		49.4	5.9	0	43.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0	0	0
1964	77.2	43.4	11.2	0	44.1	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0	0	0
1966	76	41.9	8.5	0	47.9	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.3	0	0	0
1970	72.2	46.4	7.5	0	43.1	0.6	0.1	1.1	0.6	0	0	0
1974.1	78.9	37.9	19.3	0	37.1	0.2	0.1	2	0.5	0.2	0.5	1.5
1974.2	72.9	35.8	18.3	0	39.2	0.2	0.1	2.9	0.6	0.4	0.5	1.5
1979	76.3	43.9	13.8	0	36.9	0.2	0.1	1.6	0.4	0.6	0.4	1.3
1983	72.8	42.4	0	25.4	27.6	0.4	0	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.4	1.4
1987	75.4	42.3	0	22.6	30.8	0.3	0	1.3	0.4	0	0.5	0.9
1992	77.7	41.9	0	17.8	34.4	0.2	0	1.9	0.5	0	0.5	0.9
1997	71.4	30.7	0	16.8	43.2	0.4	0	2	0.5	0	0.6	0.8

UK				
Year	ANI	G	DUP	Others
1950	0	0	0	0.5
1951	0	0	0	0.1
1955	0	0	0	0.3
1959	0	0	0	0.2
1964	0	0	0	0.2
1966	0	0	0	0.2
1970	0	0	0	0.6
1974.1	0.1	0	0	0.6
1974.2	0.2	0	0	0.3
1979	0.3	0.1	0	0.4
1983	0.2	0.2	0	0.4
1987	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1
1992	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.9
1997	0	0	0.3	4.7

Table A1.4a: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Austria									
Party	1949	Party	1953	Party	1956	Party	1959	Party	1962
OVP/CSP	46.7	OVP/CSP	44.8	OVP/CSP	49.7	OVP/CSP	47.9	OVP/CSP	49.1
SPO	40.6	SPO	44.2	SPO	44.8	SPO	47.3	SPO	46.1
FPO/LoI	9.7	FPO/LoI	8.5	FPO/LoI	3.6	FPO/LoI	4.8	FPO/LoI	4.8
KPO	3	KPO	2.4	KPO	1.8				
Party	1966	Party	1970	Party	1971	Party	1975	Party	1979
OVP/CSP	51.5	SPO	49.1	SPO	50.8	SPO	50.8	SPO	51.9
SPO	44.8	OVP/CSP	47.9	OVP/CSP	43.7	OVP/CSP	43.7	OVP/CSP	42.1
FPO/LoI	3.6	FPO/LoI	3	FPO/LoI	5.5	FPO/LoI	5.5	FPO/LoI	6
Party	1983	Party	1986	Party	1990	Party	1994	Party	1995
SPO	49.2	SPO	43.7	SPO	43.7	SPO	35.5	SPO	38.8
OVP/CSP	44.3	OVP/CSP	42.1	OVP/CSP	32.8	OVP/CSP	28.4	OVP/CSP	29
FPO/LoI	6.6	FPO/LoI	9.8	FPO/LoI	18	FPO/LoI	23	FPO/LoI	21.9
		DGA	4.4	DGA	5.5	DGA	7.1	LF	5.5
						LF	6	DGA	4.9
Party	1999								
SPO	36								
OVP	28								
FPO	28								
DGA	8								

Table A1.4b: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Belgium									
Party	1949	Party	1950	Party	1954	Party	1958	Party	1961
CVP/PSCseats	49.5	CVP/PSCseats	50.9	CVP/PSC	44.8	CVP/PSC	49.1	CVP/PSC	45.3
BSP/PSB	31.1	BSP/PSB	36.3	BSP/PSB	40.6	BSP/PSB	39.6	BSP/PSB	39.6
PVV/PLP	13.7	PVV/PLP	9.4	PVV/PLP	11.8	PVV/PLP	9.9	PVV/PLP	9.4
KPB/PCB	5.7	KPB/PCB	3.3	KPB/PCB	1.9	KPB/PCB	0.9	VU	2.4
				DCL	0.5	VU	0.5	KPB/PCB	2.4
				VU	0.5			DCL	0.5
Party	1965	Party	1968	Party	1971	Party	1974	Party	1977
CVP/PSC	36.3	CVP/PSC	32.6	CVP/PSC	31.6	CVP/PSC	34	CVP/PSC	37.7
BSP/PSB	30.2	BSP/PSB	27.8	BSP/PSB	28.8	BSP/PSB	27.8	BSP/PSB	29.2
PVV/PLP	22.6	PVV/PLP	22.2	PVV/PLP	14.6	PVV/PLP	13.4	PVV/PLP	14.6
VU	5.7	VU	9.4	VU	9.9	VU	10.4	VU	9.4
KPB/PCB	2.8	FDf	3.3	RW	6.6	RW	6.1	FDf	4.7
FDf	1.4	KPB/PCB	2.4	FDf	4.7	FDf	4.3	RW	2.4
FW	0.5	RW	2.4	KPB/PCB	2.4	KPB/PCB	1.9	KPB/PCB	0.9
PWT	0.5			PLDP	1.4	PLDP	1.4	PLDP	0.9

Table A1.4c: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Belgium

Party	1978	Party	1981	Party	1985	Party	1987	Party	1991
CVP/PSC	38.7	CVP/PSC	28.8	CVP/PSC	32.5	BSP/PSB	34	BSP/PSB	29.7
BSP/PSB	27.4	BSP/PSB	28.8	BSP/PSB	31.6	CVP/PSC	29.3	CVP/PSC	26.9
PVV/PLP	17	PVV/PLP	24.5	PVV/PLP	21.7	PVV/PLP	22.6	PVV/PLP	21.7
VU	6.6	VU	9.4	VU	7.5	VU	7.5	VB	5.7
FDf	5.2	FDf	2.8	Ecolo	2.4	Agalev	2.8	VU	4.7
KPB/PCB	1.9	UDRT/RAD	1.4	Agalev	1.9	FDf	1.4	Ecolo	4.7
RW	1.9	KPB/PCB	0.9	FDf	1.4	Ecolo	1.4	Agalev	3.3
PLDP	0.5	RW	0.9	UDRT/RAD	0.5	VB	0.9	ROSSEM	1.4
UDRT/RAD	0.5	Ecolo	0.9	VB	0.5			FDf	0.5
VB	0.5	Agalev	0.9					NF	0.5
		VB	0.5						
Party	1995	Party	1999						
CVP/PSC	27.3	PVV/PLP	27.3						
BSP/PSB	27.3	BSP/PSB	22						
PVV/PLP	26	CVP/PSC	21.4						
VB	7.3	VB	10						
Ecolo	4	Ecolo	7.3						
VU	3.3	Agalev	6						
Agalev	3.3	VU	5.3						
NF	1.3	NF	0.7						

Table A1.4d: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Denmark

Party	1947	Party	1950	Party	1953.1	Party	1953.2	Party	1957
SD	38.5	SD	39.6	SD	40.9	SD	42.3	SD	40
V	33.1	V	21.5	V	22.1	V	24	V	25.7
KF	11.5	KF	18.1	KF	17.4	KF	17.1	KF	17.1
RV	6.8	RV	8.1	RV	8.7	RV	8	RV	8
DKP	6.1	R	8.1	R	6	DKP	4.6	R	5.1
R	4.1	DKP	4.7	DKP	4.7	R	3.4	DKP	3.4
						SP	0.6	SP	0.6
Party	1960	Party	1964	Party	1966	Party	1968	Party	1971
SD	43.4	SD	43.4	SD	39.4	SD	35.4	SD	40
V	21.7	V	21.7	V	20	KF	21.1	KF	17.7
KF	18.3	KF	20.6	KF	19.4	V	19.4	V	17.1
RV	6.3	RV	5.7	SF	11.4	RV	15.4	RV	15.4
SF	6.3	SF	5.7	RV	7.4	SF	6.3	SF	9.7
DU	3.4	DU	2.5	LC	2.3	VS	2.3		
SP	0.6								
Party	1973	Party	1975	Party	1977	Party	1979	Party	1981
SD	26.3	SD	30.3	SD	37.1	SD	38.9	SD	33.7
F	16	V	24	F	14.9	V	12.6	KF	14.9
V	12.6	F	13.7	V	12	KF	12.6	V	12
RV	11.4	RV	7.4	KF	8.6	F	11.4	SF	11.4
KF	9.1	KF	5.7	CD	5.7	SF	6.3	F	9.1
CD	7.4	SF	5.1	DKP	4	RV	5.7	CD	8.6
SF	6.3	KFP	5.1	SF	4	VS	3.4	RV	5.1
KFP	4	DKP	4	RV	3.4	CD	3.4	VS	2.9
DKP	3.4	VS	2.3	R	3.4	R	2.9	KFP	2.3
R	2.9	CD	1.7	KFP	3.4	KFP	2.9		
SP	0.6	SP	0.6	VS	2.9				
				SP	0.6				

Table A1.4e: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Denmark

Party	1984	Party	1987	Party	1988	Party	1990	Party	1994
SD	32	SD	30.9	SD	31.4	SD	39.4	SD	35.4
KF	24	KF	21.7	KF	20	KF	17.1	V	24
V	12.6	SF	15.4	SF	13.7	V	16.6	KF	15.4
SF	12	V	10.9	V	12.6	SF	8.6	SF	7.4
RV	5.7	RV	6.3	F	9.1	F	6.9	F	6.3
CD	4.6	CD	5.1	RV	5.7	CD	5.1	RV	4.6
F	3.4	F	5.1	CD	5.1	RV	4	EDRG	3.4
VS	2.9	KFP	2.3	KFP	2.3	KFP	2.3	CD	2.9
KFP	2.9	FK	2.3						
Party	1998								
SD	36								
V	24								
KF	9.1								
SF	7.4								
DF	7.4								
CD	4.6								
RV	4								
EDRG	2.9								
KFP	2.3								
F	2.3								

Table A1.4f: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Finland

Party	1948	Party	1951	Party	1954	Party	1958	Party	1962
SK	28	SSP	26.5	SSP	27	SKDL	25	SK	26.5
SSP	27	SK	25.5	SK	26.5	SSP	24	SKDL	23.5
SKDL	19	SKDL	21.5	SKDL	21.5	SK	24	SSP	19
KK	16.5	KK	14	KK	12	KK	14.5	KK	16
SF	7	SF	7.5	SF	6.5	SF	7	SF	7
LK	2.5	LK	5	LK	6.5	LK	4	LK	6.5
						TPSL	1.5	TPSL	1
Party	1966	Party	1970	Party	1972	Party	1975	Party	1979
SSP	27.5	SSP	25.5	SSP	27.5	SSP	27	SSP	26
SK	24.5	KK	18.5	SKDL	18.5	SKDL	20	KK	23.5
SKDL	20.5	SK	18.5	SK	17.5	SK	19.5	SK	18
KK	13	SKDL	18	KK	17	KK	17.5	SKDL	17.5
SF	6	SMP	9	SMP	9	SF	5	SF	5
LK	4.5	SF	6	SF	5	LK	4.5	SKL	4.5
TPSL	3.5	LK	4	LK	3.5	SKL	4.5	SMP	3.5
SMP	0.5	SKL	0.5	SKL	2	SMP	1	LK	2
						PO	0.5		
						KL	0.5		
Party	1983	Party	1987	Party	1991	Party	1995	Party	1999
SSP	28.5	SSP	28	SK	27.5	SSP	31.5	SSP	25.5
KK	22	KK	26.5	SSP	24	SK	22	SK	23.5
SK	19	SK	20	KK	20	KK	19.5	KK	23
SKDL	13.5	SKDL	8	VAS	9.5	VAS	11	VAS	10
SMP	8.5	SF	6.5	SF	6	SF	6	SF	6
SF	5.5	SMP	4.5	VL	5	VL	4.5	VL	5.5
SKL	1.5	SKL	2.5	SKL	4	SKL	3.5	SKL	5
VL	1	VL	2	SMP	3.5	NP	1		
PO	0.5	DV	2	LK	0.5	SMP	0.5		

Table A1.4g: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Germany

Party	1949	Party	1953	Party	1957	Party	1961	Party	1965
CDU/CSU	34.6	CDU/CSU	49.9	CDU/CSU	54.4	CDU/CSU	48.5	CDU/CSU	49.4
SPD	32.6	SPD	31	SPD	34	SPD	38.1	SPD	40.7
FDP	12.9	FDP	9.9	FDP	8.2	FDP	13.4	FDP	9.9
BP	4.2	GB	5.5	DP	3.4				
DP	4.2	DP	3.1						
DKP	3.7	DKP	0.6						
ERL	3								
DZ	2.5								
DR	1.2								
SSW	0.2								
Party	1969	Party	1972	Party	1976	Party	1980	Party	1983
CDU/CSU	48.8	SPD	46.4	CDU/CSU	49	CDU/CSU	45.5	CDU/CSU	49
SPD	45.2	CDU/CSU	45.4	SPD	43.1	SPD	43.9	SPD	38.8
FDP	6	FDP	8.3	FDP	7.9	FDP	10.7	FDP	6.8
								DG	5.4
Party	1987	Party	1990	Party	1994	Party	1998		
CDU/CSU	44.9	CDU/CSU	48.2	CDU/CSU	43.7	SPD	44.5		
SPD	37.4	SPD	36.1	SPD	37.5	CDU/CSU	36.6		
FDP	9.3	FDP	11.9	FDP	7	DG	7		
DG	8.5	DG	7.3			FDP	6.4		
PDS	2.6	PDS	4.5			PDS	5.4		

Table A1.4h: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Ireland

Party	1948	Party	1951	Party	1954	Party	1957	Party	1961
FF	46.3	FF	46.9	FF	44.2	FF	53.1	FF	48.6
FG	21.1	FG	27.2	FG	34	FG	27.2	FG	32.6
LAB	9.5	LAB	10.9	LAB	12.9	LAB	8.2	LAB	11.1
CnaP	6.8	CnaT	4.1	CnaT	3.4	SF2	2.7	CnaT	1.4
CnaT	4.8	CnaP	1.4	CnaP	2	CnaT	2	NPD	1.4
NL	3.4			C	0.7	CnaP	0.7	CnaP	0.7
Party	1965	Party	1969	Party	1973	Party	1977	Party	1981
FF	50	FF	52.1	FF	47.9	FF	56.8	FF	47
FG	32.6	FG	34.7	FG	37.5	FG	29.1	FG	39.2
LAB	15.3	LAB	12.5	LAB	13.2	LAB	11.5	LAB	9
CnaP	0.7							NHBC	1.2
								WP	0.6
								SLP	0.6
Party	1982.1	Party	1982.2	Party	1987	Party	1989	Party	1992
FF	48.8	FF	45.2	FF	48.8	FF	46.4	FF	41
FG	38	FG	42.2	FG	30.7	FG	33.1	FG	27.1
LAB	9	LAB	9.6	PD	8.4	LAB	9	LAB	19.9
WP	1.8	WP	1.2	LAB	7.2	WP	4.2	PD	6
				WP	2.4	PD	3.6	DL	2.4
				DSP	0.6	DSP	0.6	Green	0.6
						Green	0.6		

Table A1.4i: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Ireland	
Party	1997
FF	46.4
FG	32.5
LAB	10.2
PD	2.4
DL	2.4
Green	1.2
SF3	0.6

Table A1.4j: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Italy									
Party	1948	Party	1953	Party	1958	Party	1963	Party	1968
DC/PPI	53.1	DC/PPI	44.6	DC/PPI	45.8	DC/PPI	41.3	DC/PPI	42.2
PCI/PDS	22.8	PCI/PDS	24.2	PCI/PDS	23.5	PCI/PDS	26.3	PCI/PDS	28.1
PSI	9.1	PSI	12.7	PSI	14.1	PSI	13.8	PSU	14.4
PSDI	5.7	PDIUM	6.8	MSIDN	4	PLI	6.3	PLI	4.9
PLI	3.3	MSIDN	4.9	PSDI	3.7	PSDI	5.1	MSIDN	3.8
PDIUM	2.4	PSDI	3.2	PLI	2.9	MSIDN	4.3	PSIUP	3.7
PRI	1.6	PLI	2.2	PDIUM	1.8	PDIUM	1.4	PRI	1.4
MSIDN	1	PRI	0.8	PRI	1	PRI	1	PDIUM	1
SVP	0.5	SVP	0.5	SVP	0.5	SVP	0.5	SVP	0.5
PsdA	0.2			C	0.2	UV	0.2		
				UV	0.2				
Italy									
Party	1972	Party	1976	Party	1979	Party	1983	Party	1987
DC/PPI	42.4	DC/PPI	41.7	DC/PPI	41.4	DC/PPI	35.7	DC/PPI	36.9
PCI/PDS	28.4	PCI/PDS	36	PCI/PDS	31.9	PCI/PDS	30.5	PCI/PDS	27.9
PSI	9.7	PSI	9	PSI	9.8	PSI	11.6	PSI	14.8
MSIDN	8.9	MSIDN	5.6	MSIDN	4.9	MSIDN	6.7	MSIDN	5.5
PSDI	4.6	PSDI	2.4	PSDI	3.3	PRI	4.6	PRI	3.3
PLI	3.3	PRI	2.2	PR	2.9	PSDI	3.7	PSDI	2.7
PRI	2.2	SVP	0.5	PRI	2.4	PLI	2.5	PR	2.1
SVP	0.5	PdUP	0.5	PLI	1.5	PR	1.7	FLV	2
		AO	0.3	PdUP	1	DP	1.1	PLI	1.7
		LC	0.2	SVP	0.6	PdUP	1	DP	1.3
				UV	0.2	SVP	0.5	SVP	0.5
				LT	0.2	PSdA	0.2	PSdA	0.3
						UV	0.2	UV	0.2
						LV	0.2	LL/LN	0.2

Table A1.4k: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Italy					
Party	1992	Party	1994	Party	1996
DC/PPI	32.7	LL/LN	18.6	PCI/PDS	23.3
PCI/PDS	17	PCI/PDS	17.3	FI	19.5
PSI	14.6	MSIDN	17.3	MSIDN	14.8
LL/LN	8.7	FI	15.7	DC/PPI	9.5
RC	5.6	RC	6.2	LL/LN	9.4
MSIDN	5.4	DC/PPI	5.2	RC	5.6
PRI	4.3	CCD	4.6	CCD	2.8
PLI	2.7	AD	2.9	FLV	2.5
PSDI	2.5	PSI	2.2	LDRI	1.6
FLV	2.5	PS	2.1	CDU	1.4
LRMD	1.9	FLV	1.7	PS	1.3
LP	1.1	LP	1	CU	1.3
SVP	0.5	LRMD	1	L	1
PsdA	0.2	CS	0.8	LRMD	0.8
UV	0.2	UCD	0.6	SVP	0.5
LAV	0.2	SVP	0.5	CS	0.5
		PLD	0.3	UV	0.1
		UV	0.2	LAM	0.1
		LAM	0.2		
		RS	0.2		

Table A1.41: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Netherlands

Party	1948	Party	1952	Party	1956	Party	1959	Party	1963
KVP	32	KVP	30	PvdA	33.3	KVP	32.7	KVP	33.3
PvdA	27	PvdA	30	KVP	32.7	PvdA	32	PvdA	28.7
ARP	13	ARP	12	ARP	10	VVD	12.7	VVD	10.7
CHU	9	CHU	9	CHU	8.7	ARP	9.3	ARP	8.7
CPN	8	VVD	9	VVD	8.7	CHU	8	CHU	8.7
VVD	8	CPN	6	CPN	4.7	CPN	2	CPN	2.7
SGP	2	SGP	2	SGP	2	SGP	2	PSP	2.7
KNP	1	KNP	2			PSP	1.3	SGP	2
								RV	2
								GPV	0.7
Party	1967	Party	1971	Party	1972	Party	1977	Party	1981
KVP	28	PvdA	26	PvdA	28.7	PvdA	35.3	CDA	32
PvdA	24.7	KVP	23.3	KVP	18	CDA	32.7	PvdA	29.3
VVD	11.3	VVD	10.7	VVD	14.7	VVD	18.7	VVD	17.3
ARP	10	ARP	8.7	ARP	9.3	D66	5.3	D66	11.3
CHU	8	D66	7.3	CHU	4.7	SGP	2	CPN	2
RV	4.7	CHU	6.7	CPN	4.7	RPP	2	SGP	2
D66	4.7	DS70	5.3	RPP	4.7	CPN	1.3	PSP	2
CPN	3.3	CPN	4	D66	4	GPV	0.7	RPP	2
PSP	2.7	SGP	2	DS70	4	PSP	0.7	RPF	1.3
SGP	2	GPV	1.3	SGP	2	RV	0.7	GPV	0.7
GPV	0.7	PSP	1.3	RV	2	DS70	0.7		
		MCP	1.3	GPV	1.3				
		RPP	1.3	PSP	1.3				
		RV	0.7	NRP	0.7				

Table A1.4m: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Netherlands									
Party	1982	Party	1986	Party	1989	Party	1994	Party	1998
PvdA	31.3	CDA	36	CDA	36	PvdA	24.7	PvdA	30
CDA	30	PvdA	34.7	PvdA	32.7	CDA	22.7	VVD	25.3
VVD	24	VVD	18	VVD	14.7	VVD	20.7	CDA	19.3
D66	4	D66	6	D66	8	D66	16	D66	9.3
CPN	2	SGP	2	GL	4	UOPL	4	G	7.3
SGP	2	RPP	1.3	SGP	2	GL	3.3	SP	3.3
PSP	2	GPV	0.7	RPF	0.7	RPF	2	RPF	2
RPP	1.3	PSP	0.7	CD	0.7	CD	2	SGP	2
RPF	1.3	RPF	0.7			SGP	1.3	GPV	1.3
GPV	0.7					SP	1.3		
C	0.7					55U	0.7		
EVP	0.7								

Table A1.4n: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Norway

Party	1949	Party	1953	Party	1957	Party	1961	Party	1965
DNA	56.7	DNA	51.3	DNA	52	DNA	49.3	DNA	45.3
H	15.3	H	18	H	19.3	H	19.3	H	20.7
V	14	V	10	V	10	S	10.7	V	12
S	8	S	9.3	S	10	KF	10	S	12
KF	6	KF	9.3	KF	8	V	9.3	KF	8.7
		NKP	2	NKP	0.7	SV	1.3	SV	1.3
Party	1969	Party	1973	Party	1977	Party	1981	Party	1985
DNA	49.3	DNA	40	DNA	49	DNA	41.9	DNA	45.2
H	19.3	H	18.7	H	26.5	H	34.8	H	31.8
S	13.3	S	13.5	KF	14.2	KF	9.7	KF	10.2
KF	9.3	KF	12.9	S	7.7	S	7.1	S	7.6
V	8.7	SV	10.3	V	1.3	SV	2.6	SV	3.8
		F	2.6	SV	1.3	F	2.6	F	1.3
		V	1.3			V	1.3		
		DLF	0.6						
Party	1989	Party	1993	Party	1997				
DNA	38.2	DNA	40.6	DNA	39.4				
H	22.4	S	19.4	F	15.2				
F	13.3	H	17	KF	15.2				
KF	8.5	KF	7.9	H	13.9				
S	6.7	SV	7.9	S	6.7				
F4F	0.6	F	6.1	SV	5.5				
		V	0.6	V	3.6				
		REA	0.6						

Table A1.40: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Sweden

Party	1948	Party	1952	Party	1956	Party	1958	Party	1960
SSA	48.7	SSA	47.8	SSA	45.9	SSA	48.1	SSA	49.1
F	24.8	F	25.2	F	25.1	MS	19.5	F	17.2
C	13	MS	13.5	MS	18.2	F	16.5	MS	16.8
MS	10	C	11.3	C	8.2	C	13.9	C	14.7
VK	3.5	VK	2.2	VK	2.6	VK	2.2	VK	2.2
Party	1964	Party	1968	Party	1970	Party	1973	Party	1976
SSA	48.5	SSA	53.6	SSA	46.6	SSA	44.6	SSA	43.6
F	18	C	15.9	C	20.3	C	25.7	C	24.6
C	14.2	F	13.7	F	16.6	MS	14.6	MS	15.8
MS	13.7	MS	12.4	MS	11.7	F	9.7	F	11.2
VK	3.4	VK	1.3	VK	4.9	VK	5.4	VK	4.9
Party	1979	Party	1982	Party	1985	Party	1988	Party	1991
SSA	44.1	SSA	47.6	SSA	45.6	SSA	44.7	SSA	39.5
MS	20.9	MS	24.6	MS	21.8	MS	18.9	MS	22.9
C	18.3	C	16	F	14.6	F	12.6	F	9.5
F	10.9	F	6	C	12.3	C	12	C	8.9
VK	5.7	VK	5.7	VK	5.4	VK	6	KDS	7.4
				KDS	0.3	MG	5.7	ND	7.2
								VK	4.6

Table A1.4p: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

Sweden			
Party	1994	Party	1998
SSA	46.1	SSA	37.5
MS	22.9	MS	23.5
C	7.7	VK	12.3
F	7.4	KDS	12
VK	6.3	C	5.2
MG	5.2	FP	4.9
KDS	4.3	MG	4.6

Table A1.4q: Seats in National Parliaments by Party (%)

UK									
Party	1950	Party	1951	Party	1955	Party	1959	Party	1964
LAB	50.4	CON	51.4	CON	54.8	CON	57.9	LAB	50.3
CON	47.7	LAB	47.2	LAB	44	LAB	41	CON	48.3
LIB	1.4	LIB	1	LIB	1	LIB	1	LIB	1.4
SF	0.3	SF	0.5	SF	0.3				
NLP	0.2								
Party	1966	Party	1970	Party	1974.1	Party	1974.2	Party	1979
LAB	57.8	CON	52.4	LAB	47.4	LAB	50.2	CON	53.4
CON	40.2	LAB	45.7	CON	46.8	CON	43.6	LAB	42.4
LIB	1.9	LIB	1	LIB	2.2	LIB	2	LIB	1.7
SF	0.2	SF	0.5	UU	1.7	SNP	1.7	UU	1.6
		SNP	0.2	SNP	1.1	UU	1.6	SNP	0.3
				PC	0.3	PC	0.5	PC	0.3
				SDLP	0.2	SF	0.2	SF	0.2
						SDLP	0.2	SDLP	0.2
Party	1983	Party	1987	Party	1992	Party	1997		
CON	61.1	CON	57.8	CON	51.6	LAB	63.6		
LAB	32.2	LAB	35.2	LAB	41.6	CON	25		
LibD	3.5	LibD	3.4	LibD	3.1	LibD	7		
UU	2.3	UU	2	UU	1.5	UUP	1.5		
SNP	0.3	SNP	0.5	PC	0.6	SNP	0.9		
PC	0.3	PC	0.5	SDLP	0.6	PC	0.6		
SF	0.2	SDLP	0.5	SNP	0.5	SDLP	0.5		
SDLP	0.2	DUP	0.5	DUP	0.5	DUP	0.3		
		SF	0.2			SF	0.3		
						UKU	0.2		

Table A1.5a: Government and Party of Prime Minister by Country

Year of Election	Party of PM	Government Partners	Subsequent Governments:			
Austria						
1953	OVP	OVP; SPO				
1956	OVP	OVP; SPO				
1959	OVP	OVP; SPO	OVP; SPO			
1962	OVP	OVP; SPO	OVP; SPO			
1966	OVP	OVP				
1970	SPO	SPO				
1971	SPO	SPO				
1975	SPO	SPO				
1979	SPO	SPO				
1983	SPO	SPO; FPO	SPO; FPO			
1986	SPO	SPO; FPO				
1990	SPO	SPO; OVP				
1994	SPO	SPO; OVP				
1995	SPO	SPO; OVP	SPO; OVP			
1999	OVP	OVP, FPO				
Belgium						
1950	CVP	CVP/PSC	CVP/PSC			
1954	BSP	PSB/BSP, PL/LP				
1958	CVP	CVP/PSC	CVP/PSC, PL/LP			
1961	CVP	CVP/PSC, PSB/BSP				
1965	CVP	CVP/PSC, PSB/BSP	CVP/PSC, PL/LP			
1968	CVP	CVP, PSC, PSB/BSP				
1971	CVP	CVP, PSC, PSB/BSP	CVP, PSC, PSB/BSP, PL, LP			
1974	CVP	CVP, PSC, PL, LP	CVP, PSC, PL, LP, RW			
1977	CVP	CVP, PSC, PL, LP	CVP, PSC, PSB/BSP, FDF, VU	CVP, PSC, PS, SP, FDF, VU		
1978	CVP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP, FDF	CVP, PSC, PS, SP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP, PL, LP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP
1981	CVP	CVP, PSC, PL, LP				
1985	CVP	CVP, PSC, PL, LP	CVP, PSC, PL, LP			
1987	CVP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP, VU				
1991	CVP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP			
1995	CVP	CVP, PSC, PS, SP				
1999	PVV	PVV, PRL, SP, PS, Agalev, Ecolo				

Table A1.5b: Government and Party of Prime Minister by Country

Year of Election	Party of PM	Government Partners	Subsequent Governments:			
Denmark						
1950	SD	SD	KF V			
1953.1	V	KF V				
1953.2	SD	SD	SD RV			
1957	SD	SD RV R	SD RV R			
1960	SD	SD RV	SD RV			
1964	SD	SD RV SF				
1966	SD	SD SF				
1968	RV	RV V KF				
1971	SD	SD	SD			
1973	V	V				
1975	SD	SD RV SF DKP				
1977	SD	SD	SD V			
1979	SD	SD				
1981	SD	SD	KF V CD KFP			
1984	KF	KF V CD KFP				
1987	KF	KF V CD KFP				
1988	KF	KF V RV				
1990	KF	KF V	SD RV CD KFP			
1994	SD	SD RV CD				
1998	SD	SD, RV				
Finland						
1951	SK	SK SSP SF LK	SK SF	KK SF LK		
1954	SF	SK SSP SF	SK SSP	SK SSP SF LK	SK SF LK	SK LK
			SK SKOG LK	Business Cabinet		
1958	SK	Non-party gvt	SK KK SSP SF LK	SK	SK	
1962	SK	SK KK SF LK	SK KK SF LK		SK KK SF LK	
1966	SSP	SK SSP SKDL TPSL	SK SSP SF SKDL TPSL			
1970	LK	Gvt Experts	SK SSP SF LK SKDL	SK SSP SF LK	SK KK SSP LK	
1972	SSP	SSP		SK KK SSP SF LK		
1975	SK	SK SSP SF LK SKDL	SK SF LK	SK SSP SF LK SKDL	SK SSP LK SKDL	
1979	SSP	SK SSP SF SKDL	SK SSP SF SKDL	SK SSP SF		
1983	SSP	SK SSP SF SMP				
1987	KK	SSP KK SF SMP	SSP KK SF			
1991	SK	SK KK SF SKL	SK KK SF			
1995	SSP	SSP KK VL VAS				
1999	SSP	SSP, KK, VAS, SF, VL				

Table A1.5c: Government and Party of Prime Minister by Country

Year of Election	Party of PM	Government Partners	Subsequent Governments:	
Germany				
1953	CDU	CDU/CSU, FDP, DP GB	CDU/CSU, FDP, DP	CDU/CSU, DP, FVP
1957	CDU	CDU/CSU	DP	
1961	CDU	CDU/CSU FDP		
1965	CDU	CDU/CSU, FDP		
1969	SPD	SPD, FDP		
1972	SPD	SPD FDP		
1976	SPD	SPD FDP		
1980	SPD	SPD, FDP	CDU/CSU, FDP	
1983	CDU	CDU/CSU, FDP		
1987	CDU	CDU/CSU, FDP		
1990	CDU	CDU/CSU, FDP		
1994	CDU	CDU/CSU, FDP		
1998	SPD	SPD, DG		
Ireland				
1951	FF	FF		
1954	FG	FG, L, CT		
1957	FF	FF		
1961	FF	FF		
1965	FF	FF		
1969	FF	FF		
1973	FG	FG, L		
1977	FF	FF		
1981	FG	FG, L		
1982.1	FF	FF		
1982.2	FG	FG, L		
1987	FF	FF		
1989	FF	FF, PD		
1992	FF	FF, L	FG, L, DL	
1997	FF	FF, PD		

Table A1.5d: Government and Party of Prime Minister by Country

Year of Election	Party of PM	Government Partners	Subsequent Governments:					
Italy								
1953	DC	DC	DC	DC	DC PSDI PLI	DC PSDI PLI	DC	
1958	DC	DC PSDI	DC	DC	DC	DC PSDI PRI		
1963	DC	DC	DC PSI PSDI PRI	DC PSI PSDI PRI	DC PSI PSDI PRI			
1968	DC	DC	DC PSI PRI	DC	DC PSI PSU PRI	DC PSI PSU PRI	DC PSI PSU	DC
1972	DC	DC PSDI PLI	DC PSI PSDI PRI	DC PSI PSDI	DC PRI	DC		
1976	DC	DC	DC	DC PSDI PRI				
1979	DC	DC PSDI PLI	DC PSI PRI	DC PSI PSDI PRI	DC PSI PSDI PRI PLI	DC PSI PSDI PRI PLI	DC PSI PSDI PLI	
1983	PSI	DC PSI PSDI PLI PRI	DC PSI PSDI PLI PRI	DC				
1987	DC	DC PSI PRI PSDI PLI	DC PSI PRI PSDI PLI	DC PSI PRI PSDI PLI	DC PSI PSDI PLI			
1992	PSI	DC PSI PSDI PLI	DC PSI PDS FLV	DC PSI PLI PRI				
1994	FI	FI MSIAN LN						
1996	NA	NON-ALIGN						
Netherlands								
1952	PVDA	PvdA, KVP, ARP, CHU						
1956	PVDA	PvdA, KVP, ARP, CHU	KVP, ARP, CHU					
1959	KVP	KVP, ARP, CHU, VVD						
1963	KVP	KVP, ARP, CHU, VVD	PvdA, KVP, ARP	KVP, ARP				
1967	KVP	KVP, ARP, CHU, VVD						
1971	ARP	KVP, ARP, CHU, VVD, DS70	KVP, ARP, CHU, VVD					
1972	PVDA	SGP, PvdA, D66, KVP, ARP						
1977	CDA	CDA, VVD						
1981	CDA	PvdA, D66, CDA	D66, CDA					
1982	CDA	CDA, VVD						
1986	CDA	CDA, VVD						
1989	CDA	PvdA, CDA						
1994	PVDA	PvdA, D66, VVD						
1998	PVDA	PvdA, VVD, D66						

Table A1.5e: Government and Party of Prime Minister by Country

Year of Election	Party of PM	Government Partners	Subsequent Governments:
Norway			
1953	DNA	DNA	DNA
1957	DNA	DNA	
1961	DNA	DNA	S, KF, H, V
1965	S	S, KF, H, V	
1969	S	S, KF, H, V	DNA
1973	DNA	DNA	S, KF, V
1977	DNA	DNA	
1981	H	H	S, KF, H
1985	H	S, KF, H	DNA
1989	H	S, KF, H	DNA
1993	DNA	DNA	
1997	KF	KF, S, V	
Sweden			
1952	SSA	SSA, C	
1956	SSA	SSA, C	SSA
1958	SSA	SSA	
1960	SSA	SSA	
1964	SSA	SSA	
1968	SSA	SSA	SSA
1970	SSA	SSA	
1973	SSA	SSA	
1976	C	C, F, MS	F
1979	C	C, F, MS	F, C
1982	SSA	SSA	
1985	SSA	SSA	SSA
1988	SSA	SSA	SSA
1991	MS	MS, F, KDS, C	
1994	SSA	SSA	
1998	SSA	SD	

Table A1.5f: Government and Party of Prime Minister by Country

Year of Election	Party of PM	Government Partners	Subsequent Governments:
UK			
1951	CONS	CONS	
1955	CONS	CONS	
1959	CONS	CONS	
1964	LAB	LAB	
1966	LAB	LAB	
1970	CONS	CONS	
1974.1	LAB	LAB	
1974.2	LAB	LAB	LAB
1979	CONS	CONS	
1983	CONS	CONS	
1987	CONS	CONS	
1992	CONS	CONS	
1997	LAB	LAB	

Table A7.1: Mean Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties by Proportionality of the Electoral System Controlling for Effective Number of Parties in the Legislature (One-way ANOVA and Differences of Two Means)

		Average Change in Electoral Support for the Set of Potential Leaders of Government					
		Effective Number of Parties					
		2	3	4	5	6+	Total
<i>Type of Electoral Formulae</i> (${}^pP_{ef\beta}$)							
Proportional Representation		-0.34	-1.88	-2.00	-0.88	-0.02	130
Mixed		-0.03	1.60	Φ	-	Φ	15
Plurality		-1.20	-	-	-	-	13
<i>Proportionality of Electoral Formulae</i> (${}^pP_{ef\alpha}$) ^a							
Most Proportional	(3)	-1.74	-4.60	-2.85	-0.64	-4.13	35
	(2)	1.70	-1.20	1.39	-	-	49
	(1)	-1.01	-0.18	-2.50	-1.00	-0.53	61
Least Proportional	(0)	-1.20	-	-	-	-	13
<i>District Magnitudes</i> (pP_M)							
More than TEN	(2)	-0.39	-1.79	-0.92	-1.21	-0.02	90
Between ONE and TEN	(1)	Φ	-0.62	8.87	-	-	28
ONE	(0)	-1.49	-	-	-	-	11
<i>Proportionality by Electoral System Period</i> (Gallagher's Index) (Γ^m) ^b							
Most Proportional	(3)	-	-	Φ	-	-	2
	(2)	-0.81	-1.43	-3.65	0.35	Φ	68
	(1)	0.44	-1.69	-0.36	-1.86	Φ	64
Least Proportional	(0)	-1.20	-0.94	Φ	-	Φ	24
<i>Change Electoral Formula</i> (Δ_{ef})							
Increase Proportionality		Φ	-0.30	-	-	Φ	6
No Change		-0.64	-1.03	-1.30	-0.88	-0.05	149
<i>Change District Magnitudes</i> (Δ_M)							
Increase Proportionality		Φ	-1.33	6.03	Φ	-	11
No Change		-0.71	-1.15	-0.62	-1.67	-0.02	118

Notes: Φ : Less the three cases; - Missing Data

^a (3) Hare (2) Modified Sainte-Lague; LR Droop; Single Transferable Vote (1) d'Hondt; Imperiali; Reinforced Imperiali (0) Plurality;

^b (4) Between 0 and 1.5; (3) Between 1.5 and 3; (2) Between 3 and 4.5; (1) Greater than 4

Table A8.1 Elections at which there is No Intervening Party between the Two Leading Parties.

Country	MRG	Laver and Garry Economic	Laver and Garry Social
Austria	1962, 1966, 1979, 1983, 1990, 1995	1983	1956, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1986, 1990
Belgium	1950, 1958, 1961, 1965	1950, 1961, 1991	1950, 1961, 1968, 1971, 1974
Denmark			1950, 1953.1, 1964, 1968, 1973, 1975, 1979, 1987, 1998
Finland	1951, 1966, 1970, 1991	1966, 1970, 1979	1958, 1966, 1987, 1995
Germany	1961, 1965, 1969, 1972, 1987	1953, 1961, 1972, 1976, 1987, 1990	1961, 1972, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1994, 1998
Ireland	1954, 1957, 1961, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1982.1, 1982.2, 1987, 1989, 1992, 1997	1961, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1987, 1989, 1992, 1997	1951, 1954, 1957, 1961, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1982.1, 1982.2, 1989, 1992
Italy	1983, 1996	1976, 1992	1987
Netherlands	1959, 1963, 1994	1971, 1982, 1989, 1998	1963, 1989, 1994
Norway			1957, 1961, 1969, 1985, 1989, 1997
Sweden	1956, 1964, 1976, 1994	1964, 1968, 1973, 1979	1979, 1982, 1994
UK	1955, 1959, 1964, 1997	1951, 1955, 1959, 1970	1951, 1955, 1970, 1987, 1992, 1997

Table A8.2 Correlations between Shifts in Support for the Set of Leading Parties and Policy Changes Relative to Position of the Median Voter by Country

	MRG			Economic			Social			Min N
	Raw	3pma	Cent.	Raw	3pma	Cent.	Raw	3pma	Cent.	
Austria	-0.25	-0.34	0.09	0.23	0.01	-0.25	0.10	-0.11	0.31	12
Belgium	0.52	0.41	0.10	-0.27	-0.35	-0.25	-0.20	-0.42*	0.38	14
Denmark	0.37	0.23	0.12	-0.23	0.08	0.29	-0.02	-0.10	-0.12	18
Finland	0.41	-0.09	-0.04	-0.06	0.30	0.10	-0.04	-0.36	0.61	12
Germany	0.06	0.06	0.04	-0.22	-0.42	-0.82***	0.19	0.09	-0.40	11
Ireland	-0.19	-0.10	0.14	0.03	-0.13	-0.22	0.05	0.04	0.48	13
Italy	-0.10	-0.28	-0.16	-0.62**	0.60	-0.44*	-0.57**	-0.44*	-0.45*	10
Netherlands	-0.14	-0.30	-0.28	-0.10	-0.21	0.23	-0.10	-0.05	0.26	10
Norway	-0.18	-0.34	0.01	0.09	-0.40	0.10	-0.37	-0.39	-0.07	11
Sweden	0.01	0.14	0.25	-0.09	-0.14	0.41	0.18	0.32	0.07	14
UK	-0.33	-0.25	-0.24	-0.58**	-0.03	-0.08	-0.19	-0.40*	-0.12	12

Notes: Raw: Unsmoothed Data; 3pma: Smoothed by three-point moving average; Cent: Smoothed by centred three-point moving average.

Table A8.3 Change in the Choice Available to Voters and Net Shift in Policy Position of Set of Leading Parties Relative to their Long-Term Policy Positions

	Party System Change			
	Raw	3pma	Cent.	Min. N
<i>MRG Left-Right</i>				
Converge	13	7	10	70
Diverge	8	14	8	63
<i>Laver and Garry Economic Left-Right</i>				
Converge	8	9	9	67
Diverge	13	12	9	68
<i>Laver and Garry Social Left-Right</i>				
Converge	6	8	8	60
Diverge	15	13	10	75

Notes: Raw: Unsmoothed Data; 3pma: Smoothed by three-point moving average; Cent: Smoothed by centred three-point moving average.

Table A8.4 Change in the Choice Available to Voters and Net Shift in Policy Position of Set of Leading Parties Relative to the Position of the Median Voter

	Party System Change			
	Raw	3pma	Cent.	Min. N
<i>MRG Left-Right</i>				
Converge	7	11	7	57
Diverge	16	10	12	74
<i>Laver and Garry Economic Left-Right</i>				
Converge	10	12	6	59
Diverge	13	9	13	71
<i>Laver and Garry Social Left-Right</i>				
Converge	5	8	10	59
Diverge	18	13	9	61

Notes: Raw: Unsmoothed Data; 3pma: Smoothed by three-point moving average; Cent: Smoothed by centred three-point moving average.

Table A9.2: Coefficients for Country Controls in Multivariate Models of Shifts in Vote Share of the Set of Parties That Compete to Lead Government (Linear Regression, panel corrected standard errors)

	Model 1	Model 2
Austria	3.35 (4.37)	2.97 (4.45)
Belgium	-3.00 (3.77)	-3.32 (3.84)
Denmark	-2.30 (5.24)	-3.06 (5.28)
Finland	-6.68* (4.23)	-6.17* (4.63)
Germany	5.34 (4.41)	5.00 (4.48)
Ireland	1.38 (3.30)	1.15 (3.32)
Italy	-2.19 (3.84)	-2.75 (4.05)
Netherlands	-3.18 (5.41)	-3.89 (5.50)
Norway	-2.65 (4.05)	-2.83 (4.16)
Sweden	1.62 (4.99)	1.21 (5.06)

One-tailed tests: * Estimated coefficient is statistically significant at $p < 0.10$.

Table A9.3 Multi-Variate Model of Stability and Change in the Choice Available to Voters: Alternative Measures of Policy Change

<i>Change in Set of Large Parties' Policy Positions</i>	Raw Data		Centred Three-Point Moving Average		
Laver and Garry Economic Scale	-0.05*		-0.14*		
	(0.04)		(0.09)		
Laver and Garry Social Scale	-0.01		0.02		
	(0.03)		(0.12)		
MRG Left-Right Scale		-0.02		-0.04	
		(0.02)		(0.04)	
Constant					
	R ²	25.74	25.32	27.97	27.22
	Wald χ^2	99.87	96.73	92.69	95.37
	N. of Cases	142	142	130	130

* Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$.

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