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## Interpreting Election Results in Western Democracies

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## Interpreting Election Results in Western Democracies

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## Contents

Major Issues . . . . .	i
Introduction . . . . .	1
The Party Problem . . . . .	1
Recent Elections . . . . .	3
Results . . . . .	4
Changes in Governments . . . . .	11
The Swing to the Centre-Right . . . . .	12
From Decline to Rise in Just Three Years: The Context of Centre-Right Success . . . . .	12
Explaining the Success of the Centre-Right . . . . .	13
Beyond the Mainstream? Other Trends in the Election Results . . . . .	19
The Rise of the Far-Right? . . . . .	19
Voter Dealignment and the Fragmentation of the Left? . . . . .	21
Identity and the Growth in Regional Politics . . . . .	22
Conclusion . . . . .	22
Appendix 1. The Classification of Political Parties . . . . .	24
Appendix 2. Election Results and Sources . . . . .	27
Endnotes . . . . .	39

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Major Parties of the Centre-Right, Countries A–K . . . . .	5
Figure 2. Major Parties of the Centre-Right, Countries L–Z . . . . .	5
Figure 3. Major Parties of the Centre-Left, Countries A–K . . . . .	6
Figure 4. Major Parties of the Centre-Left, Countries L–Z . . . . .	6
Figure 5. Parties of the Far Right . . . . .	7
Figure 6. Green Parties . . . . .	7
Figure 7. Parties of the Far Left, Countries A–K . . . . .	8
Figure 8. Parties of the Far Left, Countries L–Z . . . . .	8
Figure 9. Minor Regionalist Parties . . . . .	9
Figure 10. Member Parties of the Liberal International, Countries A–K . . . . .	10
Figure 11. Member Parties of the Liberal International, Countries L–Z . . . . .	10



## Major Issues

French voters prompted a flood of media comment and analysis in April when, in the first round of the presidential election, they scorned socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and turned the second round into a contest between far-rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen and centre-right incumbent President Jacques Chirac. Le Pen's success aroused considerable speculation about the future of a Western Europe allegedly caught in the grip of a xenophobic, anti-immigrant and anti-Europe far-right, with commentators discussing the 'wind of change' that had 'dramatically redrawn' the continent's political landscape.

While French voters pulled back from the far-right in the second round of the presidential election to vote in overwhelming numbers for the centre-right, they did not swing far enough back to rescue the left. Instead, they handed two-thirds of the seats in the French parliament to Chirac's supporters, bringing an end to the 'cohabiting' of a right-wing president with a left-wing parliament.

The French election results are consistent with the pattern emerging in Western liberal democracies, in which centre-left and social democratic governments are losing power to centre-right governments (see map). Since early 2001, the left has lost power in Denmark, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. In 1999, it lost power in Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg. A centre-right government holds power in Australia and a centre-right president resides in the White House. Commentators speculate that Germany will swing to the right at elections in September, and Greece is said to be leaning that way too. The electoral success is not confined to the centre-right—the far-right has also gained ground in some countries. Far-right parties have joined government coalitions in Austria, Denmark, Norway, and Portugal, and in some other countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, support for far-right parties has increased.

This is not to say that the swing to the centre-right is universal. The British Labour Party continues to govern in the United Kingdom and the New Zealand Labour Party won 41 per cent of the vote, more than twice the share of any other party, in New Zealand's election in July 2002. Central Europe, too, is bucking the trend, with left-wing victories in the Czech republic in June 2002, Hungary earlier that year and Poland in 2001.

However, the centre-left's general fall from the voters' grace cannot be disputed. Only three years ago, centre-left parties were the ones being described as in the ascendant. In January 1999, centre-left parties were in power in 11 of the 15 European Union countries and in the United States, and the centre-right was described as 'tired, arrogant and in need of refreshing'. Today, the situation—and the comments—are reversed and it is centre-left parties which are accused of being 'exhausted, complacent and clubby in office'. Even in New Zealand, Labour was less successful than many expected, losing votes to smaller centre-right parties.

In this paper, we outline the election results for parties in our selected countries in a series of graphs, which reveal a number of patterns, including a swing to the centre-right, a decline in support for the centre-left and increased support for minor regionalist parties. Before examining the results in detail, we note that each country has a distinctive electoral system, which affects the election results, particularly how percentages of votes translate into numbers of seats in the parliamentary chambers. For this reason, our paper is based on the percentage of votes won by parties, rather than on the number of seats.

How can the swing to the right be explained and/or understood? It is not possible to pinpoint one single factor that explains the outcome for all countries. Rather, a range of substantially different factors appear to be involved. These include:

- the 'it's time' factor, according to which a 'pendulum swing' occurs between the major parties such that one side, then the other, holds office for a time. Recently, in most countries, this has meant a swing to the right
- the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, in which centre-right parties have benefited from an upswing in concern about national security. Most voters in most countries still seem to think security issues are better handled by the right rather than the left, with conservative parties traditionally seen as taking a tougher stance on these issues
- the centre-right's new focus on 'compassionate conservatism', which blends small government with compassionate government and emphasises 'a hand-up, not a handout'
- the centre-right's capitalisation on value politics, which recognises the consensus that has developed among mainstream parties about economic policy and shifts the focus to non-economic, 'quality-of-life', *value* issues, such as environmental concerns, national identity, family values and so on.

None of these factors serves as a sufficient explanation for the results in all countries. For example, there are limits to the link between the centre-right and security issues. In the United Kingdom, the Conservative Party failed to benefit from the fallout from the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, despite poll respondents preferring by a large margin the Tories' defence policies. In fact, support for the Tories slipped from 26 per cent before September 11 to 25 per cent after September 11, with support for Labour rising from 54 per cent to 56 per cent in the same period.

Nor does the centre-right's focus on 'compassionate conservatism' provide a sufficient explanation in and of itself. On the surface, there appears little to differentiate this fuzzy slogan from those offered by the left under the guise of the 'third way'. For example, Bush claims that welfare should be 'a hand-up, not a handout', while proponents of the 'third way' reiterate that welfare is a matter of 'mutual obligation' and there should be 'no rights without responsibilities'. It is hard to see the difference between the expressions used by these political rivals.

Some have used the apparent lack of differentiation between the 'third way' and the centre-right's broad policy agenda of the 1980s to argue that this consensus between the major parties reflects 'the end of ideology'. An argument in support of the alleged decline in left-right politics is that modern politics can no longer be divided so neatly into two opposing groups. Today's political debates are not simply a matter of left-right 'old' politics associated with the traditional economic and distributional 'standard-of-living' issues of welfare, employment, housing, and the role of the state in managing these. Rather, post-materialist, 'quality-of-life', non-economic, value issues, such as environmental concerns, national identity, family values and so on, influence today's 'new' politics debates.

This is said to create a problem for parties on the left, which retain their focus on economics (and income redistribution in particular), and are thus left talking about economics at a time that the right is focusing on values. That is, some claim that the left is being left behind in a world in which national economies have yielded their sovereignty to globalism and international bankers are the key players in the market. Rightist parties, which have focused on social issues such as crime, immigration, morals and societal standards, have gained because these issues 'remain potent even in a global economy'.

In Western Europe, there are a number of other factors that may explain the swing to the centre-right, including growing political distrust and Euroscepticism, and increased concerns about the links between immigration and unemployment. Immigration is a particular difficult area for many European countries in that they need immigrants to renew their economies, yet they fear the political impact.

Although the swing to the right is the most obvious pattern to be seen in recent election results, it is not the only one. Others include steady gains by some small regionalist parties, some parties of the far-right (though not others), parties of the far-left (particularly the non-communist far-left), and green parties. This outcome reflects that minor parties are taking advantage of niches left vacant by the major parties as they move to the centre in a bid to catch the growing number of 'swinging' voters; that is, those voters who no longer strongly identify with a particular party.

In these circumstances, minor parties are proliferating in many countries, and in all countries the major parties are tending to lose votes. What the niche parties have in common is profiles of demographic support that are very distinctive. Thus, Democrats and Greens are far more likely to receive the votes of the young than either major party in Australia, a phenomenon repeated for green parties elsewhere. It is unlikely that this trend will be reversed because social group identities, which previously gave voters social cues about voting, are becoming more diverse and less stable. The result is a volatile electorate, increasingly fragmented along issue lines.

The focus on values and identity appears to be striking a chord with many voters, but neither of these issues is inherently right-wing terrain. Rather, the right has capitalised on these issues more effectively than the left in recent years.

Finally, the rise of the far-right should not be over-played. Figures show that it is possible to argue that support for the far-right is not rising, despite media hype to the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

In this paper, we examine recent elections in a number of Western democracies, exploring claims that there has been a swing to the centre-right.

Before looking at the election results in detail, we outline some of the difficulties of cross-country comparisons, including the problems of comparing different electoral systems and defining parties along a one-dimensional, left–right political spectrum. We then portray the election results for parties in our selected countries in a series of graphs, which reveal a number of patterns, including a swing to the centre-right, a decline in support for the centre-left, and increased support for minor regionalist parties.

We begin our analysis of the selected election results by examining some of the factors that may explain the rise of the centre-right, first placing them in the context of the explanations of the earlier success of the centre-left. We then outline four major factors that have been cited as underlying the swing in voter support to the centre-right. These are:

- the 'it's time' factor
- the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks
- the centre-right's new focus on 'compassionate conservatism'
- the centre-right's capitalisation on value politics.

We conclude this section with a discussion of issues that may be specific to Western Europe: political distrust and Euroscepticism, and immigration and unemployment.

In the final sections of the paper, we examine other patterns in the election results, including the rise of the far-right, voter dealignment and the fragmentation of the left, and the increasing importance of regional politics.

## **The Party Problem**

Politics is not the same the whole world over. One of the main difficulties lies in understanding the ideological stances of parties and therefore interpreting their electoral fate. It is difficult enough to interpret British or New Zealand politics through Australian eyes. Things quickly become more complex when we go further afield. Should one draw an analogy between the Canadian Liberal Party and the Australian Labor Party, since both face major conservative opponents? Or should we treat the Liberals there as centrist on the grounds that they are members of the Liberal International,<sup>2</sup> and also face social-democratic opponents? Is the Bloc Québécois solely a regional party or should it also be analysed as a left-wing movement? Are libertarian parties far-right (because they favour

small government and very low taxes) or centrist (because, while anti-socialist, they are also anti-nationalist, free-traders, pro-immigration and strong supporters of individual rights)?

To deal with these issues, we need to impose some order on the diversity of political parties. This process must deal with several problems. One problem with classifying parties is that labels, such as 'centre-left' and 'centre-right', are 'umbrella' terms that do not take into account that centre-left and centre-right parties in one nation may differ considerably from centre-left and centre-right parties elsewhere. For example, the Labour Party in Britain can today be seen as considerably more to the right on many policies than its counterparts in other countries.<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, French President Jacques Chirac, though a conservative, favours a stronger role for the state than would his centre-right counterparts in the United States and Britain.<sup>4</sup>

Another problem with party classification relates to the changes that parties have made to their underlying philosophies and policy stances in order to respond to the weakening of party affiliation and identification over the past 30 years.<sup>5</sup> The decline of identification with a particular party has dramatically increased the proportion of 'swinging' voters available to the main parties. To 'catch' these voters, and thus increase their chances of winning an election, parties move to the centre, adjusting their policies to avoid alienating the mass of voters in the middle. Hence the term, 'catch-all' parties, which is often applied to parties of the centre-left and centre-right.<sup>6</sup> The result is sometimes claimed to be a 'pragmatic consensus' based on an absence of ideology and dogma with a view to appealing more strongly to the middle ground.<sup>7</sup> Such a result can make it more difficult to place a party on the political spectrum.

A third problem is that ideological variations cannot in any case be captured solely on a left–right spectrum. There are socialist and anti-socialist party platforms that are amenable to a left–right analysis. Other distinguishing features of parties are harder to address. Is opposition to immigration a feature of the far-right? If so, why are some anti-immigration parties in favour of state intervention in the economy (e.g. the Flemish Block in Belgium; One Nation in Australia), while others take libertarian social policy positions (e.g. Pim Fortuyn's List in the Netherlands)? Some green parties have allied themselves with left-wing movements (e.g. the Red Greens in Denmark), while others have not (e.g. Ecological Party in Finland) and seem centrist in their views on collectivism. Thus, not all political diversity can be captured using a simple left–right spectrum. Indeed, in the case of Ireland, we have not been able to classify either of the major parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael—at all for this paper.

Given all these limitations, the classification of parties in this study should be treated with caution. The classification of parties is shown in Appendix 1, as are some notes on sources and methods. This paper, however, is focused on overall trends, so the results are not too sensitive to how any individual party has been classified.

## Recent Elections

Elections are held in different years and at different intervals in different countries. This paper looks at parliamentary rather than presidential elections (though there is some discussion of some recent presidential elections, particularly in France). The countries and their elections that are used in this paper are set out in the table below.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Country</b>	<b>Election year</b>	<b>Election year</b>	<b>Election year</b>
Austria		1995	1999
Belgium		1995	1999
Canada	1993	1997	2000
Denmark	1994	1998	2001
Finland		1995	1999
France	1993	1997	2002
Germany		1994	1998
Greece		1996	2000
Iceland		1995	1999
Ireland		1997	2002
Italy	1994	1996	2001
Luxembourg		1994	1999
Netherlands	1994	1998	2002
New Zealand	1996	1999	2002
Norway	1993	1997	2001
Portugal	1995	1998	2002
Spain		1996	2000
Sweden		1994	1998
Switzerland		1995	1999
UK		1997	2001

Each country has a distinctive electoral system. These electoral systems affect the election results, particularly how percentages of votes translate into numbers of seats in the parliamentary chambers. For this reason, this paper is based on the percentage of votes won by parties, rather than the number of seats. The distinction can be important, and this is nowhere more evident than in the recent elections for the French parliament. The French use a two-stage, first-past-the-post ballot system for their lower house, the *Assemblée Nationale*.<sup>9</sup> The effect in the recent elections is interesting. News coverage of the election concentrated on a shift to the right, with the French voting to ensure that the majority of the parliament was of the same party as the recently-elected conservative President.<sup>10</sup> However, what is less well known is that the vote for the major party of the left, the Socialist Party, actually rose slightly, yet it lost both government and nearly half its seats. Why? The table below shows a collapse of support for the far-right and the centrist parties in favour of the centre-right Rally for the Republic. The French result does not show a significant decline in support for the left, but rather a unifying of the vote on the right,

including a move away from the extremist National Front. Under first-past-the-post systems, unifying voters who supported different parties has a big pay-off in terms of seats won, and this was what Rally for the Republic achieved in 2002.

<b>Party</b>	<b>1997</b> <b>%</b>	<b>1997</b> <b>seats</b>	<b>2002</b> <b>%</b>	<b>2002</b> <b>seats</b>
Socialist Party	23.5	241	24.1	140
Rally for the Republic (centre-right) <sup>11</sup>	15.7	134	33.7	357
National Front (far-right)	14.9	1	11.3	0
Union for French Democracy (centre)	14.2	108	4.8	29

## Results

The following graphs show the vote in the elections since 1993 for various groups of parties.<sup>12</sup> Not every party is shown in the graphs: full results, showing the percentages of votes and numbers of seats won, for every party securing parliamentary representation, are shown in Appendix 2. The party classifications used here are explained and set out in Appendix 1.

For some countries, we have aggregated the votes of individual parties that occupy similar places on the ideological spectrum. Thus, in Figure 5, 'Parties of the Far Right', we plot the votes of 'Far Right Parties of Belgium', 'Far Right Parties of Denmark', and so on. Such aggregation was necessary, especially to describe voting for the far right, in order to offer a clear picture of the level of support for these parties in general, given volatility in individual party support, and to allow for changing names and numbers of parties from one election to the next. The Belgian data had to be aggregated because there are two parties in Belgium for every ideological position on the spectrum: one French-speaking, one Flemish-speaking. In all cases, the disaggregated data is available in Appendix 2.

Figure 1. Major Parties of the Centre-Right, Countries A-K

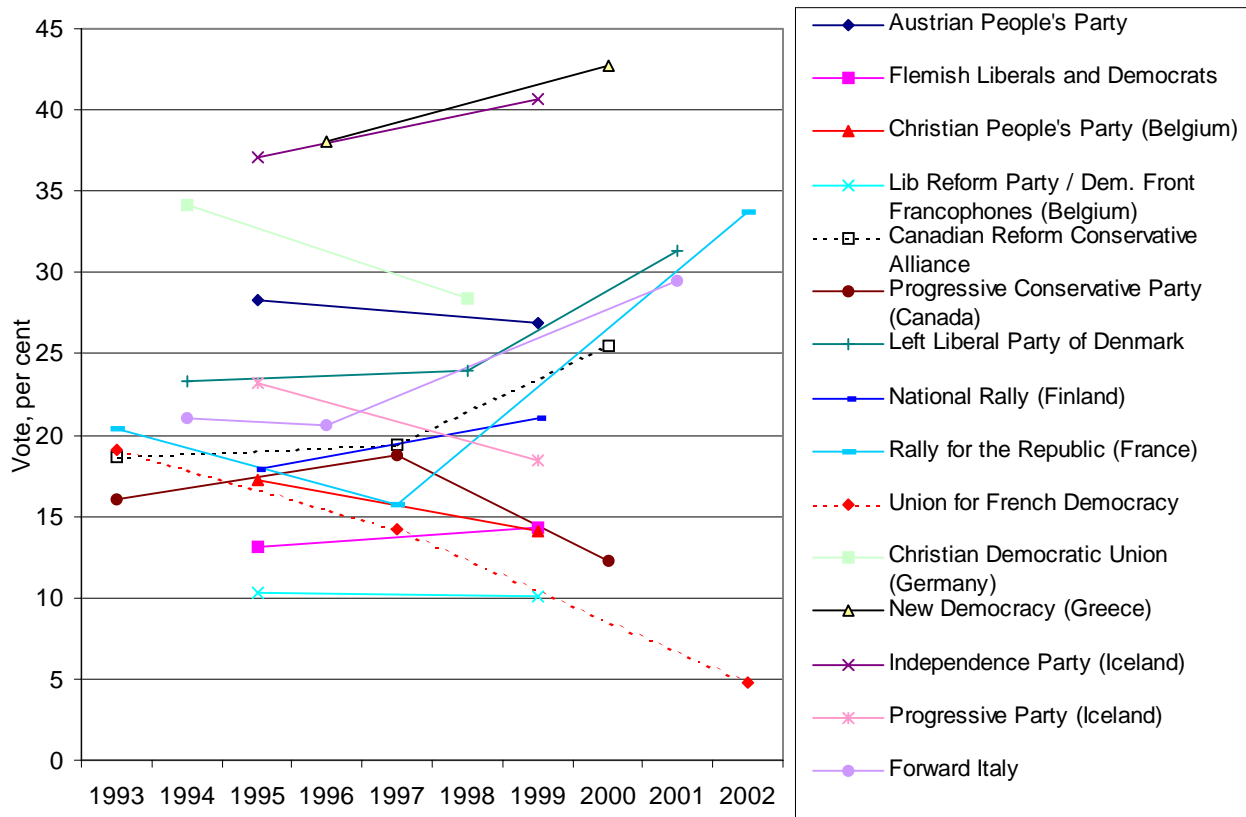


Figure 2. Major Parties of the Centre-Right, Countries L-Z

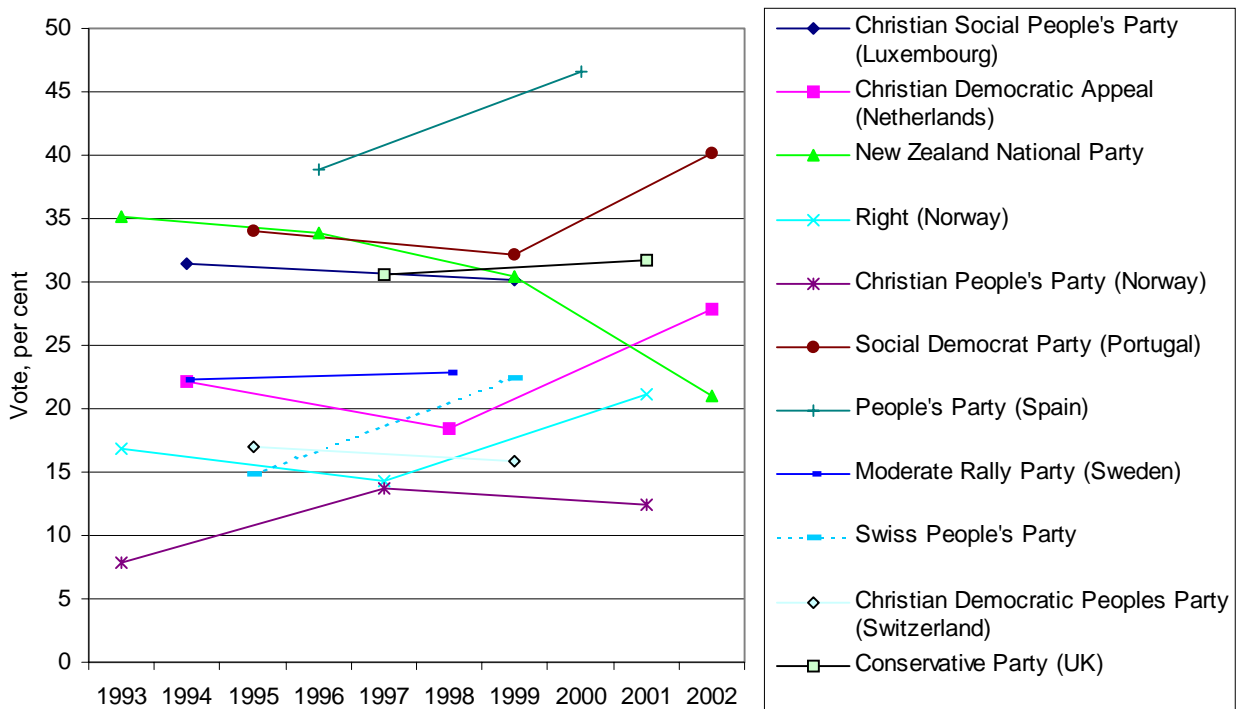


Figure 3. Major Parties of the Centre-Left, Countries A-K

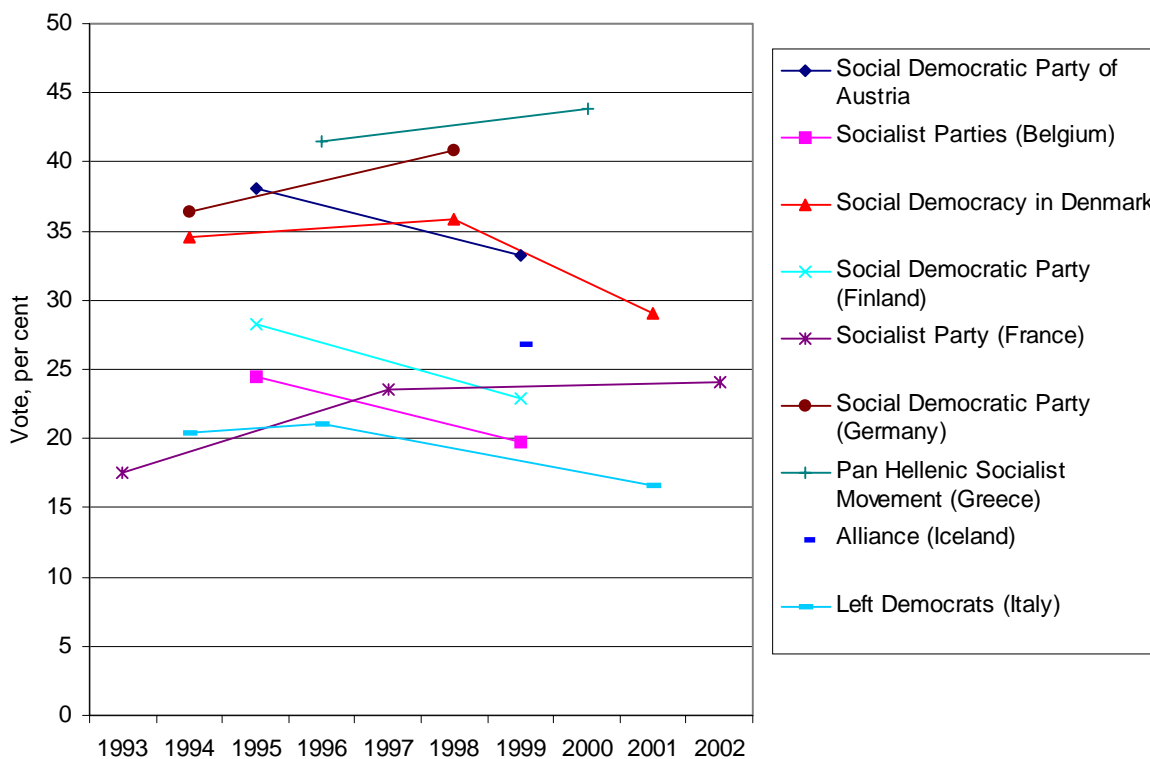


Figure 4. Major Parties of the Centre-Left, Countries L-Z

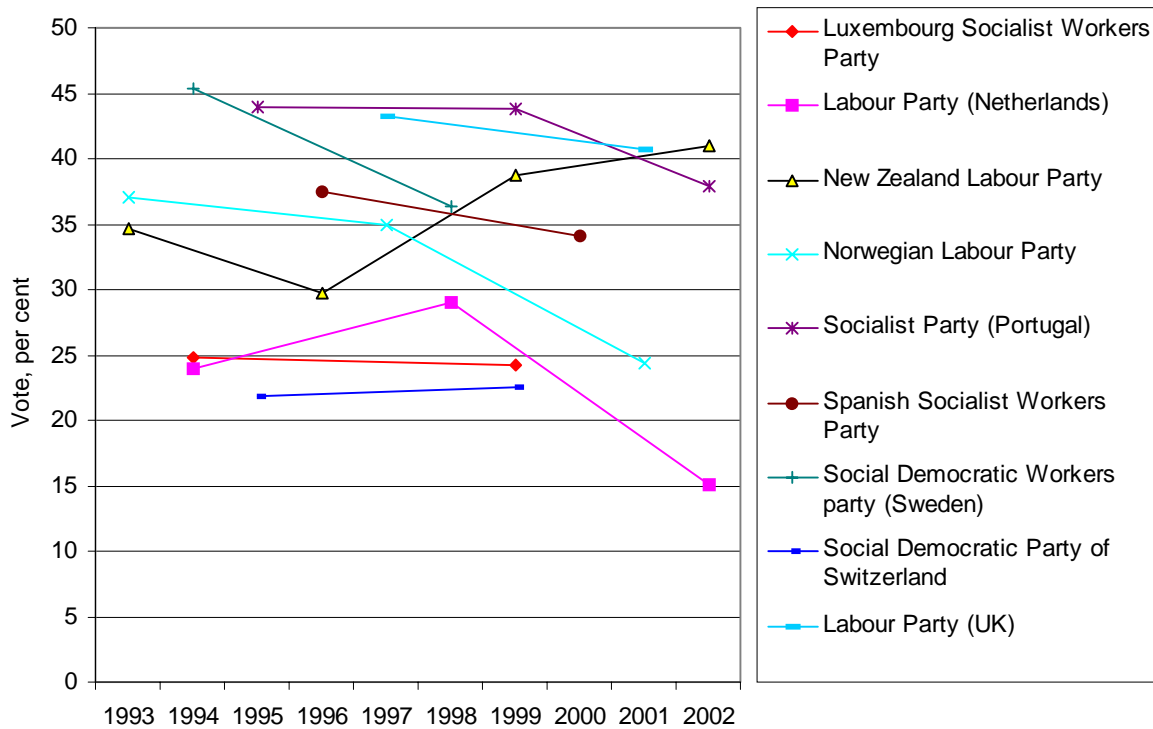


Figure 5. Parties of the Far Right

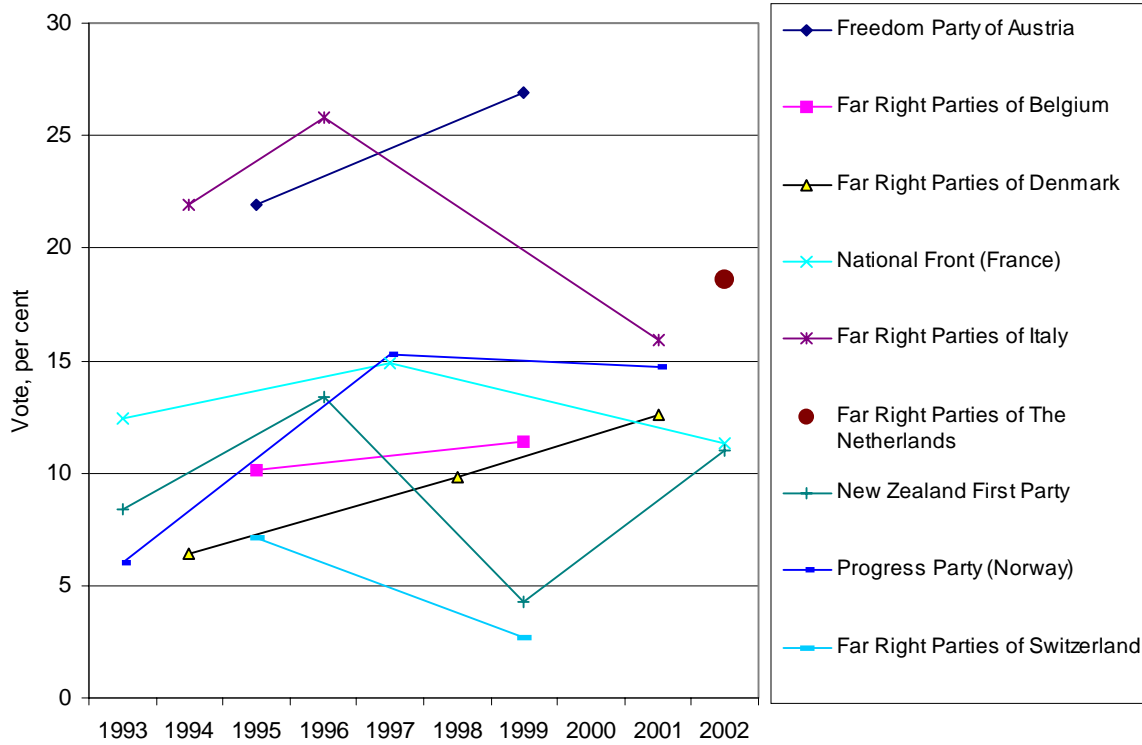


Figure 6. Green Parties

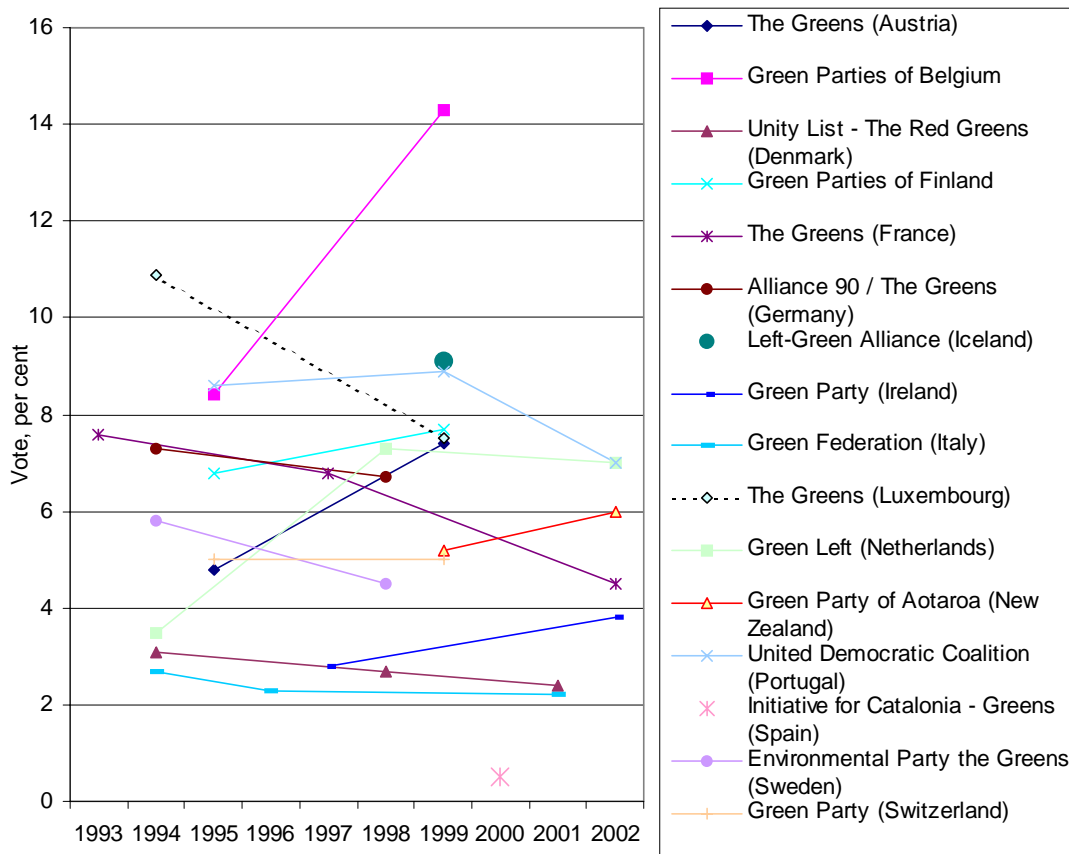


Figure 7. Parties of the Far Left, Countries A-K

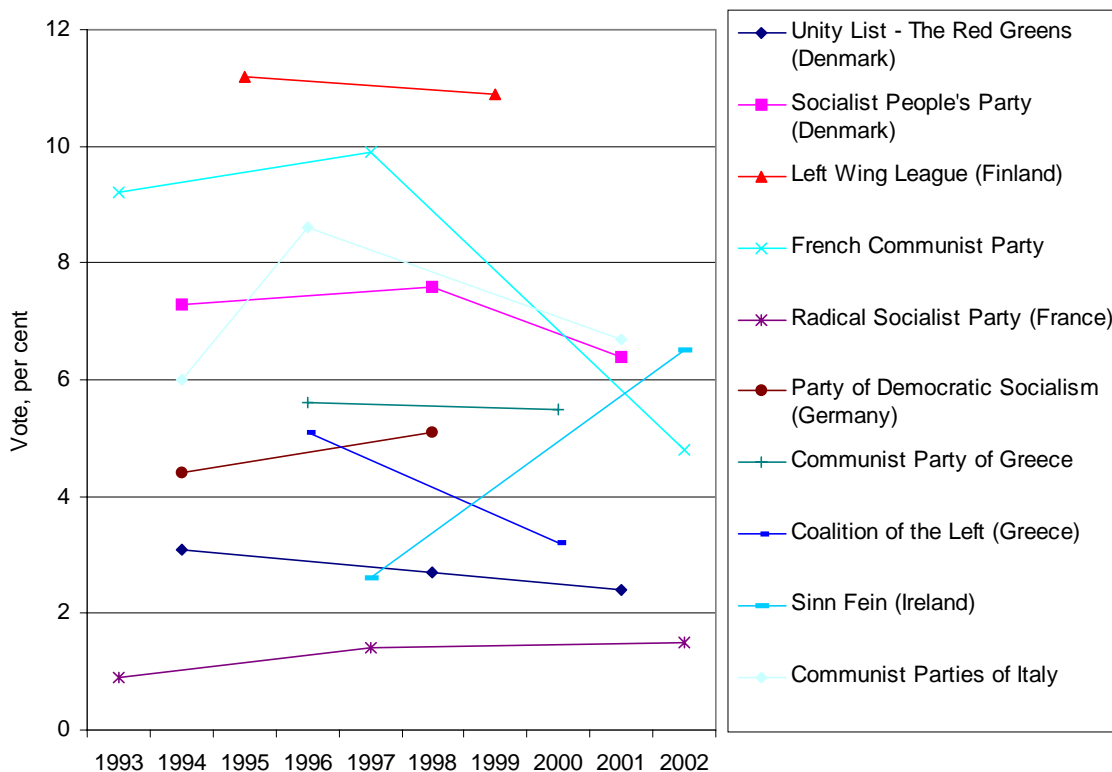


Figure 8. Parties of the Far Left, Countries L-Z

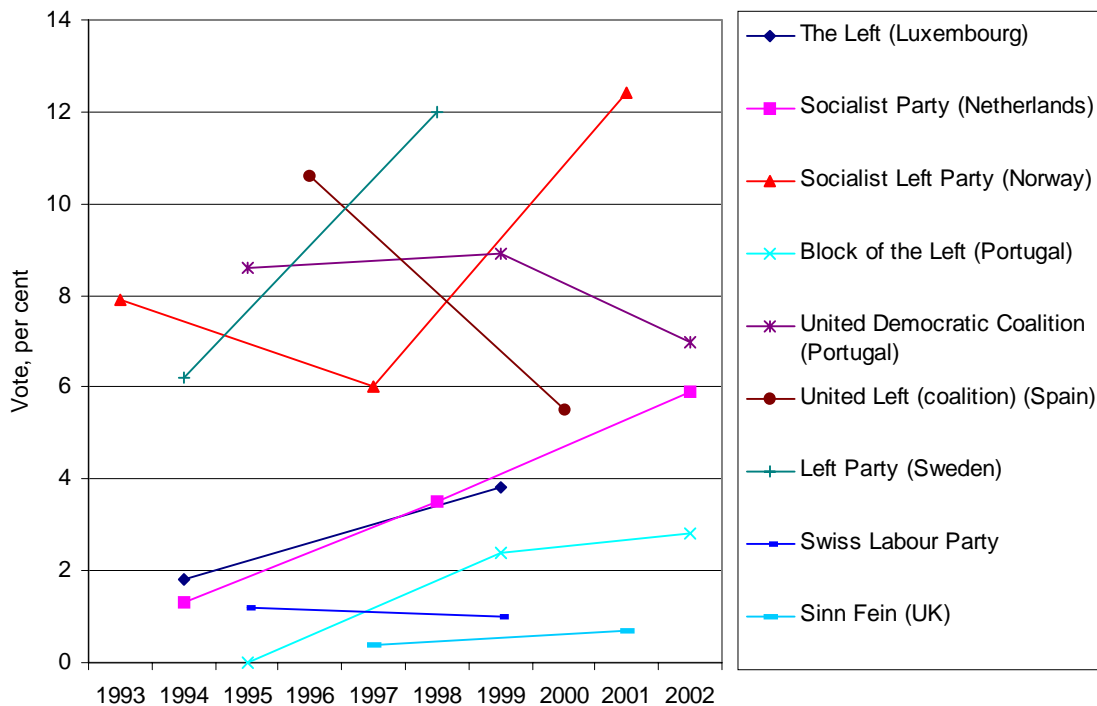


Figure 9. Minor Regionalist Parties

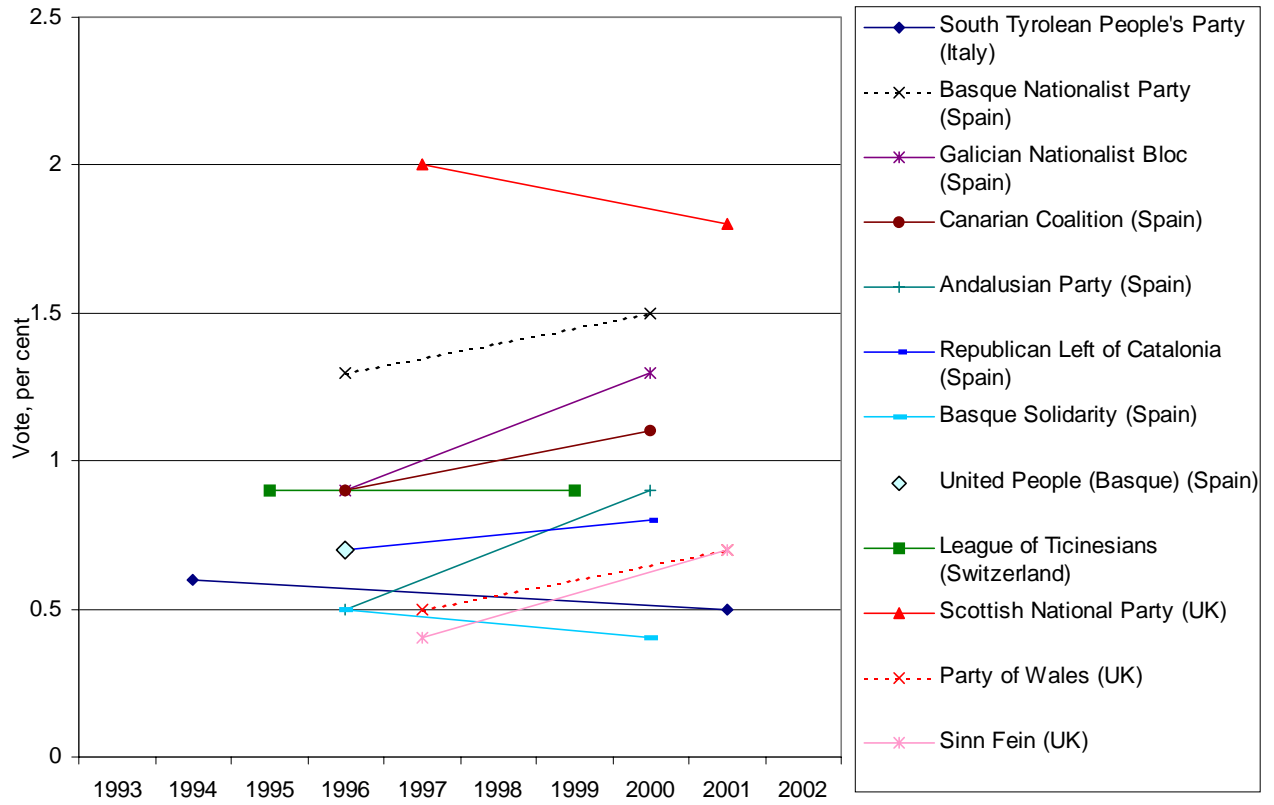


Figure 10. Member Parties of the Liberal International, Countries A-K

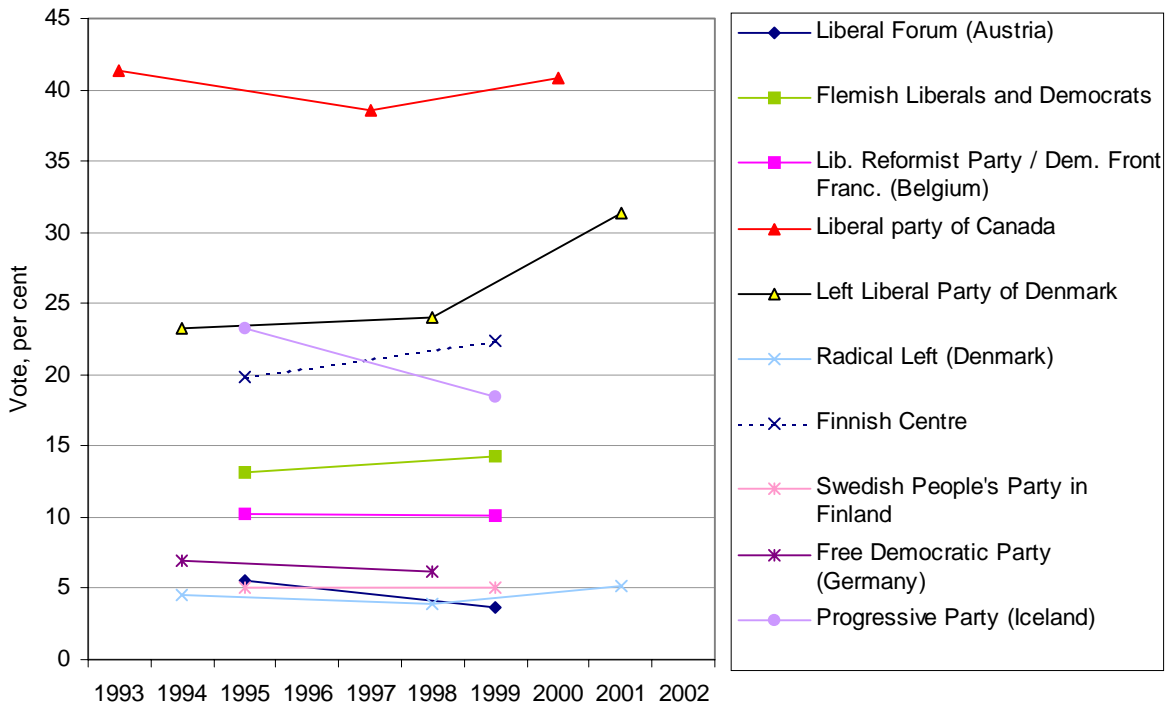
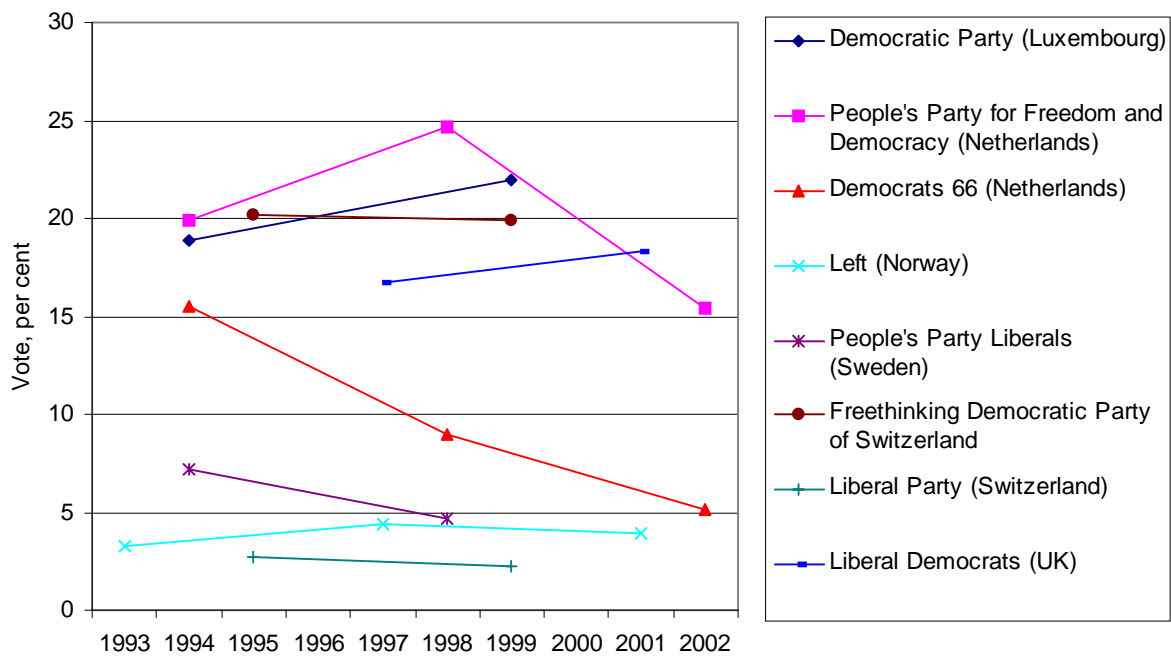


Figure 11. Member Parties of the Liberal International, Countries L-Z



## Changes in Governments

The effects of the elections on governments in the various countries are summarised in the table below.<sup>13</sup>

<b>Country</b>	<b>election year</b>	<b>Resulting government</b>	<b>election year</b>	<b>Resulting government</b>	<b>Change</b>
Australia	1998	conservative coalition	2001	conservative coalition	unchanged
Austria	1995	social democratic – conservative coalition	1999	conservative – nationalist coalition	to right
Belgium	1995	centre-left coalition	1999	conservative liberal – social democratic-green coalition	to right
Canada	1997	liberal	2000	liberal	unchanged
Denmark	1998	social democratic – liberal coalition	2001	conservative – nationalist coalition	to right
Finland	1995	rainbow coalition	1999	rainbow coalition	unchanged
France	1997	social democratic	2002	conservative	to right
Germany	1994	conservative – christian democratic coalition	1998	social democratic coalition	to left
Greece	1996	socialist	2000	socialist	unchanged
Iceland	1995	centre-right coalition	1999	centre-right coalition	unchanged
Ireland		not classifiable			not applicable
Italy	1996	centre-left coalition	2001	conservative – christian democratic coalition	to right
Luxembourg	1994	christian democratic – social democratic coalition	1999	liberal – christian democratic coalition	to right
Netherlands	1998	social democratic – conservative liberal coalition	2002	right-wing coalition	to right
New Zealand	1999	social democratic coalition	2002	social democratic coalition minority	unchanged
Norway	1997	centrist coalition minority	2001	conservative – christian democratic – liberal coalition	to right
Portugal	1998	social democratic	2002	moderate conservative coalition	to right
Spain	1996	regionalist supported conservative coalition	2000	conservative	unchanged
Sweden	1994	social democratic minority	1998	social democratic minority	unchanged
Switzerland		not classifiable			not applicable
UK	1997	social democratic	2001	social democratic	unchanged

The net effect of these changes can be summarised thus:

<b>Changes in government</b>	
Shift to right	9
Unchanged	9
Shift to left	1
Not classifiable	2
Total	21

The table shows that many governments have swung to the right since the mid-1990s.

## **The Swing to the Centre-Right**

The day after the June 2002 elections in The Netherlands, *The Australian* pointed out:

Yesterday's election ended a decade of Centre-Left dominance on the Council of Ministers, which represents the EU's 15 member states—socialist and social democrat governments are now in a minority of seven to eight, and the survivors, such as Britain's Tony Blair and Germany's Gerhard Schröder, are becoming increasingly conservative.<sup>14</sup>

There have been suggestions that parties of the left have suffered broad decline in recent elections around the world.<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly, as Figures 1 to 4 in the previous section reveal, the centre-left's dominance has come an end. A significant number of centre-left governments have lost office in the last three years, including those in Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. Among the western democracies, New Zealand stands alone in having swung in the opposite direction over the same period, although other centre-left governments have been re-elected in the United Kingdom and Greece. As *The Guardian* observed in a June 2002 editorial discussing a meeting of centre-left leaders at a retreat in the UK: 'The glad confident morning of the transatlantic centre-left in the late 1990s is a distant memory now ... these are not good times for reformist politics'.<sup>16</sup>

In the following sections, we outline some of the possible reasons for the success of the centre-right and the defeat of the centre-left.

## **From Decline to Rise in Just Three Years: The Context of Centre-Right Success**

The improved fortune of the centre-right is a recent phenomenon, and may be part of regular swings that take place in both directions (see the 'it's time' discussion below). Only three years ago, the current question—why is the centre-left doing badly?—was being asked in reverse. In January 1999, centre-left parties were in power in 11 of the 15 European Union countries, and in the United States. The arguments made at the time to explain the centre-left's success are worth reviewing.

One explanation for the centre-left's ascendancy was the 'it's time' factor. It was argued that centre-right parties had been in power too long, and looked tired, arrogant and in need of refreshing. *The Economist* wrote of Europe's centre-right parties that they were 'demoralised and divided, groping for ideas [they] might use to organise a return to power'.<sup>17</sup>

A second explanation was that the centre-left's 'third way' appeared to offer a pragmatic mix of markets and state intervention that, in the words of *The Economist*, managed to 'capture the popular mood' and 'look fashionably modern'.<sup>18</sup> That is, the centre-left embraced market economics *and* social justice, combining a commitment to sound or responsible economic management with a flexible social conscience and a belief that the role of government went beyond fiscal respectability.

A third explanation for the ascendancy of the centre-left was that it attracted new votes of working-class and lower-middle-class voters who were uncomfortable with the marketisation of all areas of public life and who wanted to rein in Reaganism and Thatcherism.<sup>19</sup> That is, these voters were voting *against* the right rather than *for* the 'third way'. According to this view, Tony Blair's 'New Labour' landslide in 1997 reflected both the party's reassurance to voters that it could manage public finances and the unions and its promise of more public investment, less privatisation, renewed public services and reduced economic inequality.<sup>20</sup>

## **Explaining the Success of the Centre-Right**

Many of these explanations are now being repeated to account for the rise of the centre-right. Several factors are thought to have played a role:

- the 'it's time' factor
- the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks
- the centre-right's new focus on 'compassionate conservatism'
- the centre-right's capitalisation on value politics, and
- issues specific to Western Europe: political distrust and Euroscepticism; and immigration and unemployment.

### **The 'It's Time' Factor**

Some of the swing away from the centre-left may be a result of these governments having lived out their 'natural life': that is, 'it's time' for the other side to have a turn. The premise here is that a 'pendulum swing' occurs between the major parties such that one side, then the other, holds office for a time, and currently, in most countries, this has meant a swing to the right. This theory suggests that a government holding office for some time can

become jaded, lax and inefficient, while the opposition party uses its time out of office to reconsider party principles and formulate fresh policies (perhaps in a bid to catch more of the 'swinging' voters in the middle). A 'pendulum swing' between the major parties thus allows both a reinvigoration of government and the satisfying of the concerns of all groups in society, some of whom are in favour of policies not pursued by the current government.<sup>21</sup>

This is not to suggest that a pendulum swing *must* occur, but that such alternation may be a naturally occurring result of systems of government in which parties are organised into government and opposition.<sup>22</sup>

Hugo Young uses this explanation when he argues in *The Guardian* that, in today's world, incumbency is more important than ideology (or the choice between left-wing and right-wing policies).<sup>23</sup> He alleges that the main reason for the centre-left's decline in Europe is that 'the social democrats happened to be in charge when disillusionment with all politicians reached new depths, and the patience of electorates was overtaken by rage or apathy or both'. Young's claim links the 'it's time' explanation to another of the earlier justifications of the centre-left's rise in the 1990s—that voters are not voting *for* the opposition, but *against* the party in power, which, in many recent elections, has meant voting for the centre-right and against the centre-left.

### **The Aftermath of the September 11 Attacks**

A commonly cited reason for the success of the centre-right is voter insecurity in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. Of course, many of the elections covered in this paper occurred before September last year. That said, conservative parties traditionally are seen as taking a tough stance on security issues, which are a concern in Western liberal democracies at the present time. The resurgence of the centre-right in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks may reflect an upswing in concern about national security, which most voters in most countries still seem to think is better handled by the right rather than the left. As *The Australian* claimed in a recent editorial: 'In a world where people are feeling insecure, and anti-immigrant sentiment is rising, centre-right political parties are playing to their natural strengths and beating the national security drum to approving constituents'.<sup>24</sup>

However, there are limits to the link between the centre-right and security issues. Polling in the UK in the lead-up to the last election, and before the September 11 terrorist attacks, showed that respondents preferred by a large margin the Tories' policies on defence, although only a small percentage of respondents thought defence should be an election issue.<sup>25</sup> In a poll in November, two months after September 11, concerns about security topped the list of the most important issues facing Britain, but this was not reflected in an increase in support for the Tories.<sup>26</sup> In fact, support for the Tories slipped from 26 per cent before September 11 to 25 per cent after September 11, with support for Labour rising from 54 per cent to 56 per cent in the same period. Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair's handling of the British response to the terrorist attacks attracted a 71 per cent approval

rating in the November poll. The implication of the UK case is that these issues do not necessarily work only to the advantage of centre-right parties, but can work to the advantage of the incumbent.

In Australia, Liberal Party pollster Mark Textor has acknowledged the effect on voters of September 11, but has said that voters were unnerved even before then by events such as the Asian economic crisis, the uncertainty over East Timor, and the arrival of the Tampa.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Focus on 'Compassionate Conservatism'**

'Compassionate conservatism', which blends small government with compassionate government and emphasises 'a hand-up, not a handout', is believed to have been important in the centre-right's success in the presidential elections in the United States. Like the 'third way' of the centre-left, 'compassionate conservatism' involves judicious reliance on market mechanisms and local civic renewal, and is based on the idea that the federal government should be the ultimate guarantor of health and financial security.<sup>28</sup> However, while it favours market incentives, decentralisation and private charity, it envisions the federal government overarching it all, supporting and nurturing.<sup>29</sup>

Republican George W. Bush campaigned on a platform of 'compassionate conservatism', which matched Democrat Al Gore's 'third way'-based 'pragmatic idealism'. Both were, to an extent, fuzzy slogans that voters could interpret to suit their own ideals, especially since some of the other slogans used by both sides in the US (and elsewhere) had considerable overlap in meaning.<sup>30</sup> For example, Bush claims that welfare should be a 'hand-up, not a handout', while proponents of the 'third way' reiterate that welfare is a matter of 'mutual obligation' and there should be 'no rights without responsibilities'. It is hard to see the difference between the expressions used by these political rivals.

One argument for the success of the focus on 'compassionate conservatism' in the US is the acceptance by the centre-right of the 'more liberal social values' of today's affluent Americans, who are in favour of the market, but who have become more accustomed to, and more accepting of, a government role in welfare provision.<sup>31</sup> The Republicans are said to have used their 'compassionate conservatism' to return moderate affluent voters to the fold, recapturing the votes lost to Clinton's 'third way' policies.<sup>32</sup>

Centre for the New Europe think-tank director Tim Evans notes a similar softening in the stance of the centre-right in Europe, and likens it to 'elements of the liberal Left of the 1960s'.<sup>33</sup> That is, he says, 'The economics might be more free market than ever but the authoritarianism of traditional conservatism just is not there.'

### **The Capitalisation on Value Politics**

Both the security issue and the centrist tendencies of Bush are closely intertwined with the success of the centre-right in capitalising on issues of values and identity. This is related to what has been referred to as Howard's 'conviction politics'.<sup>34</sup> The key to understanding this

shift is to recognise the consensus that has developed among mainstream parties about economic policy and globalisation.

Some argue that the consensus between the major parties, the reasons for which are touched on in the 'party problem' section above, reflects 'the end of ideology'. Proponents of this theory claim that the centre-left's acceptance in the 1990s of the centre-right's broad policy agenda, under the rubric of the 'third way', has resulted in policy convergence such that there is no longer any 'left' or 'right' in politics. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, for example, writes:

Not long ago I caused indignation by maintaining that there was no longer a left-wing economic policy and a right-wing economic policy, but only a right policy or a wrong policy. This book [in which he was writing] proceeds from the premise that there is consensus on this today in Europe and beyond ...<sup>35</sup>

In a similar vein, Australia Institute executive director Clive Hamilton argues that an ideological convergence of the main parties has marked the last 25 years of politics in the West, with social democratic parties now sharing neo-liberalism's 'obsession with growth' and abandoning their traditional commitments in order to converge on the free-market policies of the conservatives.<sup>36</sup> As a result, he says, people no longer know what distinguishes parties of the left from those of the right.

An argument in support of the alleged decline in left-right politics is that modern politics can no longer be divided so neatly into two opposing groups. Today's political debates are not simply a matter of left-right 'old' politics associated with the traditional economic and distributional 'standard-of-living' issues of welfare, employment, housing, and the role of the state in managing these. Rather, post-materialist, 'quality-of-life', non-economic, *value* issues, such as environmental concerns, national identity, family values and so on, influence today's 'new' politics debates.

Thus, in an environment in which economic policy is ceasing to distinguish the parties, non-economic policy issues are becoming the keys to voter differentiation of parties. Social issues are becoming the terrain on which political battles are fought.<sup>37</sup> The centre-right has capitalised on this way of thinking better than the centre-left. To an extent, parties of the left are still pressing their economic policy credentials. They are still asserting that they can be competent economic managers. But no-one is arguing with them, and no-one, therefore, is interested in these claims. Thus, polling in the UK before the election did not have economic policy issues as ranking in the top five issues in the campaign.

Former Clinton adviser Dick Morris argues that leftist parties, with their focus on economics (and income redistribution in particular), have been left behind in a world in which national economies have yielded their sovereignty to globalism and international bankers are the key players in the market.<sup>38</sup> Rightist parties, which have focused on social

issues such as crime, immigration, morals and societal standards, have gained because these issues 'remain potent even in a global economy'. Thus, he says:

The Left is talking economics and the Right is talking values. That's why the Right is winning. But the Left can come back. Just look at Clinton in the US and Tony Blair in Britain.

The success of centre-right parties in the New Zealand election in July 2002 illustrates this point. The economy featured so little in the campaign and the minds of voters that *The Press* in Christchurch observed in an editorial:

So cut off are the general election festivities from the main issues [world commodity prices, the kiwi dollar and overseas share markets], it is almost like sitting through Nero's recital on the night Rome burned.<sup>39</sup>

New Zealand First, which campaigned on a three-point platform of crime, immigration and Treaty of Waitangi issues, increased its percentage of the vote from 4.3 per cent in the 1999 election to 10.4 per cent, and doubled its seats from six to 13 in the 120-seat Parliament. United Future, a Christian-focused centre-right party which campaigned on increased support for families, increased its share of the vote from 0.5 per cent in 1999 to 6.7 per cent in 2002. The number of seats to which it was entitled jumped from one to eight, which gave it considerable power when discussing with Labour leader Helen Clark how much support it would give her minority government. In the final negotiations, United Future was promised a Commission for the Family and a stay on the legalisation of cannabis in return for its support on confidence and supply.

To the extent that the focus on values has been important, the key question for the centre-left is not 'how do we imitate the right's position on these issues', but 'what is our position on these issues and how will we get that across?'

### **Issues Specific to Western Europe**

Some of the arguments put forward for the success of the centre-right in Western Europe are based on issues specific to the region, including economic insecurity, the impact of an expanding European Union, and fears about a 'wave of chaotic immigration' into EU countries. These issues have also been cited as reasons for the rise of the far-right in Western Europe. Thus, an economic slowdown and the post-September 11 fear of terrorism have 'coincided with a popular backlash against a Europe of open borders, good for criminals as well as tourists, and against generous immigration policies'<sup>40</sup> to turn voters away from social democratic policies towards those of the centre- and far-right.

A distinctive feature of the swing to the right in Western Europe is that it runs counter to much of the region's traditional political culture in which the state has played a large role in the economy, especially through corporatist arrangements with labour and business.

## Political Distrust and Euroscepticism

Adding to voters' economic and national security fears is a growing distrust of political leaders, both at home and in the distant EU bureaucracy in Brussels. Politicians, especially those of the incumbent centre-left parties, are condemned as being arrogant and out of touch with voters and their concerns.<sup>41</sup>

Alan Cowell, writing in the *New York Times*, argues that it is this voter disillusionment and distrust of political leaders, who are seen to 'speak too much on behalf of the people and not too much with the people', that makes the current shift in Western Europe 'more acute than the routine pendulum swing from left to right'.<sup>42</sup> That is, Cowell says:

[There is] a sense among voters that the left-wing parties who promised tolerance and social justice have become exhausted, complacent and clubby in office, out of touch with their constituents' worries at a time when Europeans' sense of national identity is slipping in a new era of continental integration.

Parties of the right are seen to be 'feeding off antipathy' towards the European Union,<sup>43</sup> which is on the brink of a dramatic increase in size, with plans to admit 13 new member countries (and more than 170 million new citizens) in the next few years.<sup>44</sup> Voters in the existing EU countries are anxious about the repercussions of expansion, including the financial implications of enlargement in terms of agricultural subsidies and aid to poorer regions and the possibility of an influx of immigrants across the EU's open borders. They are also worried about the EU itself, which 'seems to many Europeans to have swallowed their national identity in a meddling, continent-wide bureaucracy that no-one elected'.<sup>45</sup> This 'Euroscepticism' is feeding the success of both conservative and far-right parties in Western Europe.<sup>46</sup>

## Immigration and Unemployment

A commonly cited reason for the rise of the centre-right in the region is its capitalisation on voters' fears that a 'cozy and prosperous' Western Europe is under threat from a 'wave of chaotic immigration'.<sup>47</sup> Already, more than 700 000 legal and an estimated 500 000 illegal migrants a year enter the continent (compare this with around 95 000 legal and just 2000 unauthorised arrivals in Australia).<sup>48</sup> Cowell notes that immigration poses a 'fundamental paradox' for many European countries in that they need immigrants to renew their economies, yet they fear the political impact.<sup>49</sup>

A Eurobarometer opinion poll of EU countries taken after September 11 recorded a large jump in concern about the economy, with 42 per cent saying they feared that employment prospects would deteriorate, up 19 percentage points from a year before.<sup>50</sup> Unemployment in the European Union now stands at 7.7 per cent, and for France and Germany, at 9 per cent and 8.1 per cent, respectively.<sup>51</sup> This contrasts with a rate of around 6.5 per cent in Australia.

However, there is not necessarily a link between popular views and electoral preferences on this issue. Writing about the lack of success of the far-right in Sweden, Rydgren,<sup>52</sup> of Stockholm University's Department of Sociology, points out that although Swedes were just as xenophobic as other Europeans, they were less concerned about immigration and race as an election issue. This suggests that political parties do not need to move to become anti-immigration because citizens hold certain views on the issue. Rather, some parties may choose to turn immigration into an election issue because they think it may gain them some political advantage.<sup>53</sup>

## **Beyond the Mainstream? Other Trends in the Election Results**

The major theme of Figures 1 to 4 shown earlier is the rise of the centre-right and the decline of the centre-left. However, Figures 5 to 11 show other patterns, including steady gains by some small regionalist parties, some parties of the far-right (though not others), parties of the far-left (particularly the non-communist far-left), and green parties. When major parties converge and focus on catch-all strategies, they may open up 'specific niches in the party system' that can be occupied by new, smaller parties.<sup>54</sup> In some cases, these niches are very small: parties winning individual districts (like the Independent Kidderminster Hospital and Health Concern party, which won a House of Commons seat in the last UK election) or small numbers of seats in upper houses (like the Greens in Australia). What these niche parties have in common is profiles of demographic support that are very distinctive. Thus, Democrats and Greens are far more likely to receive the votes of the young than either major party in Australia, a phenomenon repeated for green parties elsewhere.

Much of the research in this area suggests this is not something that can be reversed, though new allegiances between social groups and particular parties may form.<sup>55</sup> Voters are receiving fewer social cues about voting, and this is because voters' social settings are becoming more diverse and less stable: social group identities are not as fixed as they used to be. Unless this long-term pattern is reversed (and there is no obvious reason that it will be), the electorate will remain increasingly volatile, and increasingly fragmented on issue lines. This may mean that issues will be increasingly important to the votes of all parties, and demographics less so, though this will show most clearly in voting for minor parties.

## **The Rise of the Far-Right?**

As a preliminary comment, we note that the far-right is not a single entity: it includes pro- and anti-democratic parties; and it includes radical-liberal and anti-liberal parties. In the current climate, it may make more sense to talk of the xenophobic right, or even simply of xenophobic parties. The parties considered here are generally nationalist, with anti-immigration views. A few, such as Norway's Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party), are also liberal or libertarian in some respects, while both the Progress Party and the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List have argued for more spending on public services.

The *Australian's* Europe correspondent, Peter Wilson, argues that almost all of the European far-right parties 'rely on supporters who tend be poorer, older and less educated than average, and who feel besieged by economic change and isolated from what they see as cosy and corrupt mainstream leaders'.<sup>56</sup> These voters, who also feel left behind by globalisation and European political integration, have reacted by saying 'no' to the political centre. This reaction has allowed the far-right to take advantage of the gaps left by the mainstream parties, whose messages have become increasingly blurred as they move to the centre in a bid to attract more of the disaffiliated 'swinging' voters. As Wilson observes of The Netherlands and France:

Both nations have enjoyed long periods of economic growth and relatively low unemployment, but the populists' message still resonated because of the perception that in the centrist, technocratic world of post-Cold War politics, the major parties are a cosy, self-perpetuating elite who don't speak the public's language.<sup>57</sup>

*The Economist* makes a similar point, noting that populists are tilting against political elites whose 'cosy consensus' and convergence in the middle ground is thought to have muffled the voices of ordinary people and limited their sense of choice.<sup>58</sup> However, in this same editorial, 'How sick is Europe?', *The Economist* cautions against overplaying the success of the far-right, saying that recent events in Europe had been shocking, but the consequences should not be exaggerated.

In fact, we would argue that support for the far-right is not rising, despite the media hype to the contrary. Figure 5 certainly shows some mixed results. The National Front actually lost ground in the French parliamentary elections and had its presidential candidate emphatically rejected, disappointing even Le Pen's supporters.<sup>59</sup>

In Switzerland, the elections of 1999 were marked by the rise of the mainstream right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP). However, the party's rise was largely at the expense of more extreme parties, the xenophobic Swiss Democrats and the far-right Freedom Party of Switzerland.<sup>60</sup> In fact, Church argues that 'the left did not do badly' in Switzerland.<sup>61</sup> While the SVP's share of parliamentary seats rose from 29 to 44 seats, the centre-left Social Democratic Party lost only three of the 54 seats it had secured in 1995.

In Austria, one of the far-right's 'success stories', the Freedom Party of Austria became a coalition partner after the elections of 1999. As the graph earlier showed, it was the standout performer among far-right parties. However, after the election it became mired in controversy, its leader was under investigation for bribing police, it lost several ministers, and its popularity in opinion polls and regional elections has suffered.<sup>62</sup>

One of the other leading far-right parties, Norway's Progress Party, made no gains in the 2001 election, and was in any case busy trying to outflank the Labour Party on the left, advocating a more progressive approach to health and aged pensions, and gaining from criticisms of the Labour Party's privatisation plans.

In Denmark, the Danish People's Party gained in popularity, but did so partly at the expense of another far-right party, the Progress Party. Most other right-wing parties have been steadily losing ground: the National Alliance and the Northern League in Italy; the National Front in Belgium; and, of course, One Nation in Australia. Despite much publicised race-related rioting and anti-immigration sentiment in the UK, the British National Party continues to register as barely a blip on the British national electoral landscape.<sup>63</sup> It won just 0.2 per cent of the national vote in 2001 (a slight increase on 1997, partly caused by declining voter turnout) and stood fewer candidates than in 1997.<sup>64</sup>

### **Voter Dealignment and the Fragmentation of the Left?**

Most commentators agree that minor parties are taking advantage of niches left vacant by the major parties as they move to the centre. In these circumstances, minor parties are proliferating in many countries, and in all countries the major parties are tending to lose votes. In recent years, this has been particularly evident on the left of politics. In countries where elections are based on proportional representation, this has not in itself had a massive impact on the ideological balance of political power. In other countries with single-member electorates and/or first-past-the-post voting (such as France), however, it can have a significant impact. It has been said that, all problems with voting machines aside, the reason Democrat Al Gore lost the 2000 US presidential race was the three per cent of the vote secured by left-wing green candidate Ralph Nader, which might otherwise have flowed to the Democrat contender.<sup>65</sup> The main reason that the French presidential race became a contest between the centre-right and the extremist Jean-Marie Le Pen was the fragmentation of the left-wing vote, which was responsible for the failure of Jospin to make it to the final round of the French presidential elections.

Figures 6 to 8 show that many green parties and parties of the far left are gaining ground. This is particularly true if one excludes the communist parties, many of which have continued to decline (including the French Communist Party, the Party of Italian Communists, the United Democratic Coalition in Portugal, and the United Left in Spain, a coalition of socialists and communists). Other far-left parties have had considerable success, including socialist parties in Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Norway.

Figures 10 and 11 shows that not all parties have been the beneficiaries of voter dealignment. In particular, the traditional parties of the centre—liberal parties—have failed to make much of an impression. Of the members of the Liberal International, only the Left Liberal Party of Denmark and the Liberal Party in Canada have improved their position in recent years, and the former has benefited from being the principle anti-left-wing party in that country.

The question is whether anything can or should be done by major parties to try and win these voters back. As we have argued above, the dealignment of voters from major parties is a long-term trend that seems unlikely to be reversed. It seems likely, therefore, that inter-party coalition building and preference deals will be of increasing significance. Three countries that are likely to be dealing with these trends in the next five years are Canada,

Germany and the UK. Despite the current dominance of centre or centre-left major parties in government, all may be headed towards balance-of-power scenarios in their lower Houses, the likes of which have not been seen for a long time.<sup>66</sup> The fragmentation of the electorate is also increasing the importance of the need of parties to 'earn' the votes of each supporting group, a phenomenon well understood in Australian politics at least since the late 1980s.<sup>67</sup> It appears that this contest split the vote more on the left than the right in some recent elections (such as the French and US presidential races, and the Australian Senate contest in 2001), but it is not going to be any less of a strategic issue for the right.

## **Identity and the Growth in Regional Politics**

Another pattern in recent election results has been the growth—and success—of regional parties (Figure 9). Australia differs from many of the countries considered in this paper, in that regional political divisions are relatively unimportant. Although the National Party has some regional strongholds, regional differences do not find strong expression in party representation in the Australian parliament.

In other countries, regionalism finds expression both in parties having regional bases (as with essentially all parties in Canada) and in the existence of regional parties (most marked in Spain). The regional basis for parties has its ultimate expression in Belgium, where the established political ideologies are represented by two parties one Flemish, one Walloon (French-speaking). Not all regional parties are separatist: the Northern Irish unionist parties in the UK being perhaps the best examples of regional centrist parties.

On the issue of identity, nationalism and anti-immigration movements have led the popular press to associate these sorts of issues with the rise of both the right and the far-right. But this association is mistaken. Political expression of regional identity appears to be of growing importance. But this is not at all confined to right-wing nationalists and xenophobes like the National Front in France and the Flemish Block in Belgium. The Scottish National Party has become the opposition in its regional parliament and holds more seats than the Conservatives in Scotland. It is, like Bloc Québécois in Canada, a centre-left party with a clear social democratic agenda. Left-wing and centrist regionally-based parties have stable, and slowly growing, representation in some other parliaments, particularly in Spain. Sinn Fein has experienced increased electoral success both in the UK Parliament and in recent Irish elections, and is generally understood to be an extreme left-wing party. Regional political movements have gained in momentum, but only the right-wing ones have gained the publicity.

## **Conclusion**

There is no single convincing explanation of the rise of the centre-right. One need only see Blair's ongoing domination of the Tories, while across the Channel social democratic governments are falling, to realise that there is no single trend at work.

The pendulum argument has some merit. Many of the outgoing leftist governments had been in office for some time. On the other hand, the pendulum argument is based on the idea that the opposition is invigorated and clean, while the government is tired and possibly tainted by scandals. How then to explain the endorsement of the centre-right in France, given the scandals with which the new President has previously been associated?

There is reason to believe that a focus on values and identity is striking a chord with many voters. Despite the right's capitalisation on security and ethnicity issues, however, values and identity are not inherently right-wing terrain. Some claim the centre-left can only reclaim this sort of ground by shifting to the right: they cite Blair being tough on terrorism and on immigration as examples. But that is not true. First, immigration and race have been marginalised as election issues in the UK, to some extent because the government and voters appear to have stayed focused on other 'values' issues pursued by the centre-left. Second, it is possible for centre-left agendas to be constructed on these issues: as Blair said on law and order, it is a matter of being 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime', an approach later paraphrased to 'tough on terrorism, tough on the causes of terrorism'.<sup>68</sup> The mistake some are making is to think that a focus on 'values' necessarily benefits the right. Rather, the right has picked up on social policy issues more effectively in recent years and capitalised on them.

## Appendix 1. The Classification of Political Parties

For the purposes of this paper, parties needed to be located on an ideological spectrum. For this purpose we relied upon classifications made by existing publications and sources. The starting point for the classification was the [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org) web site. The site is maintained by the international secretary of a Dutch centrist political party (Democrats 66) and contributed to by a range of international experts, including election results publishers Klipsan Press. Initial classifications for those parties which are not classified by [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org) are drawn from *Political Parties of the World* (4th edition), the [www.parties-and-elections.de](http://www.parties-and-elections.de) web site and the *Europa World Yearbook* (2000). Most party classifications were crosschecked against either *Political Parties of the World* or the *World Encyclopedia of Political Systems and Parties* (3rd edition). In a small number of cases, where the classification by electionworld.org was not the same as the latter two books, the classification in the books prevails. European liberal parties, which some treat as centre-left and others as centre-right, were placed in the category 'Liberal parties and centrist parties', unless there were clear indications from the major studies in this field to suggest they should be classified as either centre-left or centre-right.

Country	Far left	Centre-left	Green
Australia	none	Australian Labor Party	The Greens
Austria	none	Social Democratic Party	The Greens
Belgium	none	Socialist parties (2)	Ecologist Party Live Differently
Canada	none	New Democratic Party	none
Denmark	Unity List – The Red Greens Socialist People's Party	Social Democracy in Denmark Radical Left	Unity List – The Red Greens
Finland	Left Wing League	Social Democratic Party	Green League Ecological Party
France	French Communist Party Radical Socialist Party	Socialist Party	The Greens
Germany	Party of Democratic Socialism	Social Democratic Party	Alliance 90 / The Greens
Greece	Communist Party Coalition of the Left	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement Democratic Social Movement	none
Iceland	People's Alliance (until 1999)	Alliance Social Democratic Party People's Movement	Left-Green Alliance
Ireland	Sinn Fein Socialist Party	Labour Party Democratic Left (until 2002)	Green Party
Italy	Party of Italian Communists Communist Refoundation	Left Democrats Democratic Socialists Democratic Alliance	Green Federation

<b>Country</b>	<b>Far left</b>	<b>Centre-left</b>	<b>Green</b>
Luxembourg	The Left	Socialist Workers Party	The Greens
Netherlands	Socialist Party	Labour Party Democrats 66	Green Left
New Zealand	none	New Zealand Labour Party Alliance	Green Party of Aotearoa
Norway	Socialist Left Party	Labour Party	none
Portugal	Block of the Left United Democratic Coalition	Socialist Party	United Democratic Coalition
Spain	United Left	Socialist Workers Party several small regional parties	Initiative for Catalonia – Greens (regional)
Sweden	Left Party	Social Democratic Workers' Party	Environmental Party the Greens
Switzerland	Swiss Labour Party	Social Democratic Party List of Independents	Green Party
United Kingdom	Sinn Fein	Labour Party Scottish National Party Social Democratic and Labour Party	none

<b>Country</b>	<b>Liberal and centrist</b>	<b>Centre-right</b>	<b>Far right / nationalist</b>
Australia	Australian Democrats	Liberal Party National Party	Pauline Hanson's One Nation
Austria	Liberal Forum	People's Party	Freedom Party of Austria
Belgium	Liberal Reformist Party / Democratic Front of Francophones Flemish Liberals and Democrats	Christian People's Party Christian Social Party	Flemish Block National Front
Canada	Liberal Party	Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance Progressive Conservative Party	none (arguably Reform Party of Canada, prior to becoming Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance)
Denmark	Centre Democrats	Left, Liberal Party Conservative People's Party Christian People's Party	Danish People's Party Progress Party
Finland	Finnish Centre Swedish People's Party in Finland Progressive Finnish Party	National Rally Christian League	none
France	none	Rally for the Republic Union for French Democracy	National Front

<b>Country</b>	<b>Liberal and centrist</b>	<b>Centre-right</b>	<b>Far right / nationalist</b>
Germany	Free Democratic Party	Christian Democratic Union Christian Social Union	none
Greece	none	New Democracy	none
Iceland	Liberal Party	Independence Party Progressive Party	none
Ireland	Progressive Democrats	none	none
Italy	Radical Party	Democracy and Freedom / La Margherita Forward Italy Christian Democratic Centre	Northern League National Alliance
Luxembourg	Democratic Party	Christian People's Party	none
Netherlands	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	Christian Democratic Appeal Reformational Political Federation / Reformed Political League	Pim Fortuyn's List Livable Netherlands
New Zealand	United New Zealand ACT New Zealand	National Party	arguably New Zealand First Party
Norway	Left Centre Party	Right Christian People's Party	Progress Party
Portugal	none	Social Democrats People's Party	none
Spain	none	People's Party	none
Sweden	Liberal People's Party Centre Party	Moderate Rally Party Christian Democrats	none
Switzerland	Freethinking Democratic Party Liberal Party	Swiss People's Party Christian Democratic People's Party Federal Democratic Union Protestant People's Party	Swiss Democrats Freedom Party
United Kingdom	Liberal Democrats	Conservative Party Ulster Unionist Party	none

## Appendix 2. Election Results and Sources

The tables of results were drawn from the following sources:

- Electionworld.org web site: <http://www.electionworld.org/index.html>
- Parties and Elections in Europe web site: <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/europe.html>
- Elections New Zealand web site: <http://www.elections.org.nz>
- Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer (eds), *Double Decision: The 1993 Election and Referendum in New Zealand*, Department of Politics, Victoria University of Wellington, 1994.
- Teaching and Learning About Canada, *Distribution of House of Commons Seats*, web site: <http://www.canadainfolink.ca/charteight.htm>
- Folketinget (Denmark), *The Parliamentary Electoral System in Denmark*, web site: <http://www.folketinget.dk/BAGGRUND/00000048/00232623.htm>
- The European Journal of Political Research, *Political Data Yearbooks* (vols. 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, nos. 3–4)

Notes to the tables are found at the end of the Appendix.

Vote percentages generally do not add to 100 per cent as figures for parties that did not achieve elected representation were not available. To the best of the authors' knowledge, changes in total numbers of seats represent actual changes in the size of the parliament (not missing data).

Where 'na' appears in *both* the percentage vote and the seats columns, this means the party did not contest that election, either because it did not exist, or it had amalgamated with another party. Where 'na' appears in the percentage vote column and a zero in the seats column, either the party contested the election but won no seats, or the authors' were unable to confirm that the party did not contest the election. In all other cases where 'na' appears, it means data not available.

## Austria

Party name	Party type	1995		1999	
		%	seats	%	seats
Social Democratic Party of Austria	social democratic	38.1	71	33.2	65
Freedom Party of Austria	nationalist	21.9	40	26.9	52
Austrian People's Party	conservative	28.3	53	26.9	52
The Greens	ecologist	4.8	9	7.4	14
Liberal Forum	liberal	5.5	10	3.7	0
	TOTAL	98.6	183	98.1	183

## Belgium

Party name	Party type	1995		1999	
		%	seats	%	seats
Flemish Liberals and Democrats	conservative liberal	13.1	21	14.3	23
Christian People's Party	christian democratic	17.2	29	14.1	22
Socialist Party	social democratic	11.9	21	10.1	19
Liberal Reformist Party / Democratic Front of Francophones	conservative liberal	10.3	18	10.1	18
Flemish Block	xenophobic, separatist	7.8	11	9.9	15
Socialist Party	social democratic	12.6	20	9.6	14
Ecologist Party	ecologist	4.0	6	7.3	11
Live Differently	ecologist	4.4	5	7.0	9
Christian Social Party	christian democratic	7.7	12	5.9	10
People's Union – Flemish Free Democrats	liberal	4.7	5	5.6	8
National Front	xenophobic	2.3	2	1.5	1
	TOTAL	96.0	150	95.4	150

## Canada

Party name	Party type	1993		1997		2000	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Liberal party of Canada	liberal	41.3	177	38.5	155	40.8	172
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	conservative	18.7	52	19.4	60	25.5	66
Progressive Conservative Party	conservative	16.0	2	18.8	20	12.2	12
New Democratic Party	social democratic	6.9	9	11.0	21	8.5	13
Bloc Quebecois	separatist, social democratic	13.5	54	10.7	44	10.7	38
Others			1		1		0
TOTAL		96.4	295	98.4	301	97.7	301

## Denmark

Party name	Party type	1994		1998		2001	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Left Liberal Party of Denmark	conservative	23.3	42	24.0	42	31.3	56
Social Democracy in Denmark	social democratic	34.6	62	35.9	63	29.1	52
Danish People's Party	nationalist	na	0	7.4	13	12.0	22
Conservative People's Party	conservative	15.0	27	8.9	16	9.1	16
Socialist People's Party	socialist	7.3	13	7.6	13	6.4	12
Radical Left	social liberal	4.6	8	3.9	7	5.2	9
Unity List – The Red Greens	extreme left	3.1	6	2.7	5	2.4	4
Christian People's Party	christian democratic	1.8	0	2.5	4	2.3	4
Centre Democrats	conservative centrist	2.8	5	4.3	8	1.8	0
Progress Party	populist	6.4	11	2.4	4	0.6	0
Others			1		4		4
TOTAL		98.9	175	99.6	179	100.2	179

## Finland

Party name	Party type	1995		1999	
		%	seats	%	seats
Social Democratic Party	social democratic	28.3	63	22.9	51
Finnish Centre	agrarian liberal	19.9	44	22.4	48
National Rally	conservative	17.9	39	21.0	46
Left Wing League	extreme left	11.2	22	10.9	20
Green League	green	6.5	9	7.3	11
Swedish People's Party in Finland	liberal	5.1	11	5.1	11
Christian League	christian democratic	3.0	7	4.2	10
Reform Group	unknown	na	0	1.1	1
Progressive Finnish Party / Young Finns	radical free-market liberal	2.8	2	1.0	0
Finish Rural Party / True Finns	agrarian	1.3	1	1.0	1
Ecological Party	green	0.3	1	0.4	0
Others			1		1
TOTAL		96.0	198	96.9	200

## France

Party name	Party type	1993		1997		2002	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Socialist Party	social democratic	17.6	54	23.5	241	24.1	140
Rally for the Republic	conservative	20.4	247	15.7	134	33.7	357
National Front	nationalist	12.4	0	14.9	1	11.3	0
Union for French Democracy	conservative liberal, christian democratic	19.1	213	14.2	108	4.8	29
French Communist Party	communist	9.2	23	9.9	38	4.8	21
The Greens	ecologist	7.6	0	6.8	7	4.5	3
Radical Socialist Party	social liberal	0.9	6	1.4	12	1.5	7
Others			34		36		20
TOTAL		87.2	577	86.4	577	84.7	577

## Germany

Party name	Party type	1994		1998	
		%	seats	%	seats
Social Democratic Party	social democratic	36.4	252	40.9	298
Christian Democratic Union	conservative christian democratic	34.2	244	28.4	198
Christian Social Union in Bavaria	regional conservative	7.3	50	6.7	47
Alliance 90 / The Greens	ecologist	7.3	49	6.7	47
Free Democratic Party	liberal	6.9	47	6.2	43
Party of Democratic Socialism	extreme left	4.4	30	5.1	36
TOTAL		96.5	672	94	669

## Greece

Party name	Party type	1996		2000	
		%	seats	%	seats
Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement	socialist	41.5	162	43.8	158
New Democracy	conservative	38.1	108	42.7	125
Communist Party of Greece	communist	5.6	11	5.5	11
Coalition of the Left	socialist	5.1	10	3.2	6
Democratic Social Movement	socialist	4.4	9	2.6	0
TOTAL		94.7	300	97.8	300

## Iceland

Party name	Party type	1995		1999	
		%	seats	%	seats
Independence Party	conservative	37.1	25	40.7	26
Alliance	social democratic^	na	na	26.8	17
People's Alliance	socialist	14.3	9	na	na
Social Democratic Party	social democratic	11.4	7	na	na
Women's Alliance	feminist	4.9	3	na	na
Progressive Party	liberal	23.2	15	18.4	12
People's Movement	social democratic	7.1	4	na	0
Liberal Party	liberal	na	na	4.2	2
Left-Green Alliance	green	na	na	9.1	6
TOTAL		98.0	63	99.2	63

## Ireland

Party name	Party type	1997		2002	
		%	seats	%	seats
Fianna Fail		39.3	77	41.5	81
Fine Gael		28.0	54	22.5	31
Labour Party (and Democratic Left in 2002)	social democratic	10.4	17	10.8	21
Progressive Democrats	liberal	4.7	4	4.0	8
Green Party	ecologist	2.8	2	3.8	6
Democratic Left	socialist	2.5	4	na	na
Sinn Fein	irredentist extreme left	2.6	1	6.5	5
Socialist Party	extreme left, trotskyite	na	1	na	1
Independent Fianna Fail		na	1	na	0
Independent Health Alliance		na	0	na	1
Others			5		12
TOTAL		90.3	166	89.1	166

## Italy

Party name	Party type	1994		1996		2001	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Left Democrats	social democratic	20.4	115	21.1	171	16.6	138
Democracy and Freedom	liberal conservative	15.7	46	11.1	91	14.5	76
Green Federation	green	2.7	11	2.3	16	2.2	18
Italian Democratic Socialists	social democratic	2.2	15	0.4	0	na	0
Party of Italian Communists	communist	na	0	na	0	1.7	9
South Tyrolean People's Party	regionalist christian democratic	0.6	3	na	0	0.5	3
Forward Italy	conservative	21.0	107	20.6	123	29.5	189
National Alliance	nationalist	13.5	105	15.7	93	12.0	96
Christian Democratic Centre	christian democratic	na	30	5.8	30	3.2	40
Northern League	regionalist nationalist	8.4	118	10.1	59	3.9	30
New Italian Socialist Party	conservative	na	0	na	0	1.0	na
Communist Refoundation	communist	6.0	40	8.6	35	5.0	11
Radical Party	liberal	3.5	6	1.9	0	2.3	0
The Network	unknown	1.9	6	na	0	na	0
Democratic Alliance	centre-left, christian democratic	1.2	18	na	0	na	0
Aosta Valley List	regionalist	0.1	1	0.1	1	na	0
Southern League	regionalist	0.2	1	0.2	1	na	0
Others			8		10		20
		97.4	630	97.9	630	92.4	630

## Luxembourg

Party name	Party type	1994		1999	
		%	seats	%	seats
Christian Social People's Party	christian democratic	31.4	21	30.2	19
Luxembourg Socialist Workers Party	social democratic	24.8	17	24.2	13
Democratic Party	liberal	18.9	12	22.0	15
Action Committee for Democracy and Pensioners' Justice	pensioners' party	8.2	5	10.5	7
The Greens	ecologist	10.9	5	7.5	5
The Left	socialist	1.8	0	3.8	1
TOTAL		96	60	98.2	60

## Netherlands

Party name	Party type	1994		1998		2002	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Labour Party	social democratic	24.0	37	29.0	45	15.1	23
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	conservative liberal	19.9	31	24.7	38	15.4	24
Christian Democratic Appeal	christian democratic	22.2	34	18.4	29	27.9	43
Democrats 66	social liberal	15.5	24	9.0	14	5.1	7
Green Left	ecologist, socialist	3.5	5	7.3	11	7.0	10
Socialist Party	extreme left	1.3	2	3.5	5	5.9	9
Reformational Political Federation & Reformed Political League	christian social conservative	3.1	5	3.3	5	2.5	4
Political Reformed Party	christian	1.7	2	1.8	3	1.7	2
Pim Fortuyn's List	right-wing populist	na	na	na	na	17.0	26
Livable Netherlands	populist	na	na	na	na	1.6	2
Others		8.8	10				
TOTAL		100	150	97.0	150	99.2	150

## New Zealand\*

Party name	Party type	1996		1999		2002	
		% #	seats	%	seats	%	seats
New Zealand Labour Party	social democratic	28.2	37	38.7	49	41.3	52
New Zealand National Party	conservative	33.8	44	30.5	39	20.9	27
Alliance	progressive	10.1	13	7.7	10	1.3	0
Jim Anderton's Progressive Coalition	progressive	na	na	na	na	1.7	2
ACT New Zealand	libertarian	6.1	8	7.0	9	7.1	9
Green Party of Aotaroa	ecologist	na	na	5.2	7	7.0	9
New Zealand First Party	nationalist	13.4	17	4.3	5	10.4	13
United New Zealand**	liberal	0.9	1	0.5	1	6.7	8
TOTAL		92.5	120	93.9	120	96.4	120

## Norway

Party name	Party type	1993		1997		2001	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Norwegian Labour Party	social democratic	37.0	67	35.0	65	24.3	43
Right	conservative	16.9	28	14.3	23	21.2	38
Progress Party	populist	6.0	10	15.3	25	14.7	26
Christian People's Party	christian democratic	7.9	13	13.7	25	12.5	22
Socialist Left Party	extreme left	7.9	13	6.0	9	12.4	23
Centre Party	centrist (agrarian)	16.8	32	7.9	11	5.6	10
Left	liberal	3.3	1	4.4	6	3.9	2
Others			1	1.6	1	1.7	1
TOTAL		95.8	165	98.2	165	96.3	165

## Portugal

Party name	Party type	1995		1999		2002	
		%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
Social Democrat Party	moderate conservative	34.0	88	32.2	81	40.1	105
Socialist Party	social democratic	43.9	112	43.8	115	37.9	96
People's Party	conservative	9.1	15	8.3	15	8.8	14
United Democratic Coalition	communist, ecologist	8.6	15	8.9	17	7.0	12
Block of the Left	communist, extreme left	na	0	2.4	2	2.8	3
TOTAL		95.6	230	95.6	230	96.6	230

## Spain

Party name	Party type	1996		2000	
		%	seats	%	seats
People's Party	conservative	38.9	156	46.6	183
Spanish Socialist Workers Party	social democratic	37.5	141	34.1	125
United Left (coalition)	communist, socialist	10.6	21	5.5	8
Convergence and Union	Catalonian regionalist	4.6	16	4.2	15
Basque Nationalist Party	regionalist christian democratic	1.3	5	1.5	7
Galician Nationalist Bloc	regionalist social democratic	0.9	2	1.3	3
Canarian Coalition	regional centrist	0.9	4	1.1	4
Andalusian Party	regionalist	0.5	0	0.9	1
Republican Left of Catalonia	regionalist progressive centrist	0.7	1	0.8	1
Initiative for Catalonia – Greens	regionalist green	na	0	0.5	1
Basque Solidarity	regionalist progressive	0.5	1	0.4	1
Aragonese Junta	regionalist left-wing <sup>§</sup>	0.2	0	0.3	1
United People (Basque)	regionalist marxist	0.7	2	na	0
Valencian Union	regionalist centre-right	0.4	1	na	0
TOTAL		97.7	350	97.2	350

## Sweden

Party name	Party type	1994		1998	
		%	seats	%	seats
Social Democratic Workers Party	social democratic	45.4	162	36.4	131
Moderate Rally Party	conservative	22.3	80	22.9	82
Left Party	socialist	6.2	22	12.0	43
Christian Democrats	christian democratic	4.1	14	11.8	42
Centre Party	agrarian centrist	7.7	27	5.1	18
People's Party Liberals	liberal	7.2	26	4.7	17
Environmental Party The Greens	green	5.8	18	4.5	16
TOTAL		98.7	349	97.4	349

## Switzerland

Party name	Party type	1995		1999	
		%	seats	%	seats
Swiss People's Party	conservative	14.9	29	22.5	44
Social Democratic Party of Switzerland	social democratic	21.8	54	22.5	51
Freethinking Democratic Party of Switzerland	liberal	20.2	45	19.9	43
Christian Democratic Peoples Party	christian democratic	17.0	34	15.8	35
Green Party	ecologist	5.0	9	5.0	9
Liberal Party	liberal	2.7	7	2.2	6
Swiss Democrats	xenophobic	3.1	3	1.8	1
Protestant People's Party	conservative christian democratic	1.8	2	1.8	3
Federal Democratic Union	conservative	1.3	1	1.2	1
Swiss Labour Party	communist	1.2	3	1.0	3
League of Ticinesians	regionalist conservative	0.9	1	0.9	2
List of independents	social liberal	1.8	3	0.7	1
Christian Social Party	progressive christian democratic	0.3	1	0.4	1
Women Make Politics!	feminist	1.5	1	0.3	0
Freedom Party of Switzerland	conservative, car drivers' rights	4.0	7	0.9	0
TOTAL		97.5	200	96.6	200

## United Kingdom

Party name	Party type	1997		2001	
		%	seats	%	seats
Labour Party	social democratic	43.2	419	40.7	413
Conservative Party	conservative	30.6	165	31.7	166
Liberal Democrats	social liberal	16.7	46	18.3	52
Scottish National Party	separatist	2.0	6	1.8	5
Ulster Unionist Party	regional conservative unionist	0.8	10	0.8	6
Party of Wales	regionalist	0.5	4	0.7	4
Democratic Unionist Party	regional radical unionist	0.3	2	0.7	5
Sinn Fein	separatist, extreme left	0.4	2	0.7	4
Social Democratic and Labour Party	regional social democratic	0.6	3	0.6	3
Others			2		1
TOTAL		95.1	659	96	659

### Notes to Appendix 2

- ^ Classification by authors based on coalition membership profile.
- \* 1993 New Zealand result is excluded as the electoral system has since been changed. For results of that election, see Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer (eds), *Double Decision: The 1993 Election and Referendum in New Zealand*, Department of Politics, Victoria University of Wellington, 1994.
- \*\* Contested 2002 election as United Future.
- # Percentages for 1996 NZ election are the average of the party list and electorate votes.
- \$ Classification as left-wing from *Europa World Yearbook* (2000).

## Endnotes

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1. Sources for this section include: 'Moi? A New Start (France and Europe)', *The Economist*, 22 June 2002; 'Immigration heat on Schroder', *The Australian*, 20 June 2002; 'Greece's prime minister: under attack', *The Economist*, 1 June 2002; 'Riding high the polls, Clark set to romp home in New Zealand election', *Canberra Times*, June 22, 2002; *The Economist*, 23 January 1999; Alan Cowell, 'Europe "is rubbing its eyes" at the ascent of the right', *New York Times*, 18 May 2002. In Germany, the Social Democrats have been trailing the conservative Christian Democrats in polls all year. In June, opinion polls gave the Christian Democrats a lead of about eight percentage points. In Greece, the ruling Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement is trailing behind the right-of-centre opposition by almost 10 percentage points.
2. The Liberal International is a worldwide federation of Liberal Parties, most of which are centrist parties, founded on what might be termed small-l liberal principles. However, most right-of-centre conservative parties, including the Liberal Party of Australia, are not members. The reasons that conservative parties have not joined are clear when one examines the Liberal International's 1997 Manifesto, which states, amongst other things:

There remain many challenges to Liberalism: from the violation of human rights, from excessive concentrations of power and wealth; from fundamentalist, totalitarian, xenophobic and racist ideologies, from discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability; from poverty and ignorance, from the widening gap between rich and poor; from the misuse of new technologies, from the weakening of social ties, from competition for scarce resources, from environmental degradation in an overcrowded world, from organised crime and from political corruption. Our task as Liberals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be to seek political responses to these new challenges which promote individual liberty and human rights, open societies and economies, and global cooperation. See <http://www.liberal-international.org/resolutions/97oxford.html>.
3. John Pilger is one left-wing critic who alleges that, in health and education, 'Blair and his new right movement' have promoted privatisation, 'the core of far-right ideology', more widely and rapidly than former Conservative leaders Margaret Thatcher or John Major dared (*New Statesman*, 28 May 2001). Michael Ledeen claims that, in the wake of the Socialists losing the French presidential elections, Europe is dominated by a centre-right bloc that runs from Blair's Britain to Spain and Italy (*The Australian*, 24 April 2002), with Blair's government also being characterised as 'New Right' ('Labor's warlords', *The Australian*, 21 June 2002). In a similar vein, Director of the Centre for the New Europe Tim Evans observes: 'Only in Tony Blair's Britain and in social democratic Sweden do politicians hold out under the guise of the centre-left and both of these offer a particularly decaffeinated variety of that once strident brand.' Tim Evans, 'Right man, right place', *The Australian*, 12 June 2002; the Centre for the New Europe is a market-oriented think tank in Brussels.
4. See Hugo Young, *The Guardian*, 11 June 2002.
5. Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Western Democracies*, 2nd ed., Chatham House Publishers, Chatham NJ, 1996; Clive Bean and Ian McAllister, 'From Impossibility to Certainty: Explaining the Coalition's Victory in 2001', in

- Marian Simms and John Warhurst (eds), forthcoming book on the 2001 Federal election [Title to be determined].
6. Ian Marsh says the following about catch-all parties: 'A catch-all disposition allows the parties to shape their presentation of policy according to perceptions of electoral requirements ... the party accepts what it takes to be the prevailing political consensus and shapes its policy appeals primarily to maximise electoral support' (Ian Marsh, 'Political integration and the outlook for the Australian party system: party adaptation or system mutation?' in Paul Boreham, Geoffrey Stokes and Richard Hall (eds), *The Politics of Australian Society: Political Issues for the New Century*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest NSW, 2000, p. 131).
  7. Raymond Miller, 'Review essay: The Third Way', *Political Science*, vol. 52, no. 2, December 2000, p. 177. Thus, *The Australian's* political editor, Dennis Shanahan, argues that 'the old concepts of dealing with Right or Left positions (or substituting equally simplistic progressive or conservative labels) need to be consigned to the dustbin' (14 June 2002). Giddens, the major proponent of the centre-left's 'third way', makes a similar claim, arguing that with the decline of class politics and the growth of a more affluent, consumption-oriented society, the politics of left and right have become less meaningful and important (Miller, p. 175). He proposes countering the growth of voter dissatisfaction and alienation with initiatives including the decentralisation and devolution of power, more open and accountable political processes, and voting mechanisms to encourage greater public participation, such as citizens' juries and electronic referenda.
  8. New Zealand had a general election in 1993 that is not shown in this table, or in the Appendix which lists data for the election results. It was excluded as it was held under a very different electoral system to that used since 1996.
  9. For details see *World Encyclopedia of Political Systems and Parties*, 3rd edition, 1999, vol. 1, p. 370.
  10. Peter Fray, 'Chirac tightens his grip on France', *The Age*, 11 June 2002; Peter Wilson, 'Chirac wins right to rule without Left', *The Australian*, 18 June 2002.
  11. In 2002 Rally for the Republic ran with some minor coalition partners under the banner 'Union for a Presidential Majority'.
  12. The data and sources on which the graphs are based are listed in Appendix 2.
  13. Ireland is excluded because the coalition government varied in composition after 1997, and the major parties cannot readily be classified on a left–right spectrum. Switzerland is excluded because its system of executive government cannot readily be analysed in this way. For details see *Encyclopedia of Political Systems and Parties*, 3rd edition, 1999, vol. 3.
  14. Peter Wilson, 'Fortuyn's List grabs influence', *The Australian*, 17 May 2002.
  15. Lenore Taylor, 'Blair: losing the third way', *Financial Review*, 2 March 2002; Peter Wilson, 'Left in the lurch as far Right grips EU', *Weekend Australian*, 27 April 2002.
  16. 'Do not duck the issues', *The Guardian*, 7 June 2002.

17. 'Europe's Right: Displaced, defeated and not sure what to do next', *The Economist*, 23 January 1999, pp. 17-19.
18. *ibid.*
19. Stanley Greenberg, 'The Mythology of Centrism', *The American Prospect*, September–October 1997, p. 42.
20. *ibid.*, p. 43. This argument, that the popularity of the centre-left reflected a response to the radical right, was advanced in *The Australian* as recently as November 2001, when Christopher Sheil argued that, at home and abroad, 'this is the era of the centre-left' in which the 'radical right has been dumped for the socially inclusive centre-left' (9 November 2001). According to Sheil, George Bush's victory did not signal a voting trend back to the right, in that, although he 'disguised himself as "compassionate conservative" during his campaign, ... Al Gore still won the popular vote'.
21. Graham Maddox, *Australian Democracy in Theory and Practice*, Pearson Education Australia, Sydney 2000, 4th edition, pp. 276–8, 300.
22. It is, perhaps, for this reason that John Howard, whose re-election last year made him the longest-serving contemporary national leader of Tory persuasion, recently urged centre-right parties to be cautious about celebrating their apparent dominance. He noted that although the tide around the world today was moving towards centre-right parties, the move was not uniform, not inevitable and could be reversed. John Howard, speech to the International Democratic Union, 10 June 2002, [www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/2002/speech1694.htm](http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/2002/speech1694.htm).
23. Hugo Young, 'The Tories think the tide is with them. They are wrong', *The Guardian*, 11 June 2002.
24. 'Howard leads Centre-Right ascendancy', *The Australian*, 12 June 2002.
25. Market & Opinion Research International (MORI), *Political Attitudes in Great Britain*, 17 May 2001. Cited: <http://www.mori.com/polls/2001/e010517.shtml>, accessed 20 June 2002. Asked which party had the best defence policy, 40 per cent said the Tories and 20 per cent said Labour. Only 7 per cent of respondents thought defence should be a major election issue.
26. [www.mori.com/polls/2001/t011127.shtml](http://www.mori.com/polls/2001/t011127.shtml), accessed 19 July 2002.
27. Glenn Milne, 'Eyes on the whys, guys', *The Australian*, 24 June 2002.
28. Elizabeth Arens, 'Republican Futures', *Policy Review*, April & May 2001, p. 17.
29. *ibid.*
30. Hugo Young recently observed that the British Conservative Party was drawing on Bush's 'compassionate conservatism' to match Blair's 'third way', but commented that the phrase was 'as vapidly reassuring, though decidedly more oxymoronic' (Hugo Young, 'The Tories think the tide is with them. They are wrong', *The Guardian*, 11 June 2002).
31. Arens, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
32. *ibid.*, p. 17. Arens observes that Bush's 'compassion' was instrumental in casting him as a more moderate kind of Republican, thus appealing to many of the swinging voters in the middle ground of politics.

33. Tim Evans, 'Right man, right place', *The Australian*, 6 June 2002.
34. Dennis Shanahan (quoting Barry Jones), "'Labor has lost its way'", *The Australian*, 20 June 2002. Glenn Milne reports that Liberal Party pollster Mark Textor told the party that it was Howard's commitment to particular ideas, despite their unpopularity, that helped to define Howard as a politician. For example, 'No one doubted Howard's conviction on refugees, even if they didn't like the values that conviction represented.' Glenn Milne, 'Eyes on the whys, guys', *The Australian*, 24 June 2002.
35. Gerhard Schröder, 'Postscript', in Bodo Hombach, *The Politics of the New Centre*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 156.
36. Clive Hamilton, 'Left cannot go forward looking back', *Australian Financial Review*, 23 May 2002.
37. This argument has been around for some time, with Ronald Inglehart and Jacques-Rene Rabier arguing in the academic journal *Government and Opposition* in 1986 that, in advanced industrial society, the relative importance of economic factors declined in comparison to quality-of-life factors such as self-expression, 'belonging' and the quality of the physical and social environment (Ronald Inglehart and Jacques-Rene Rabier, 'Political Realignment in Advanced Industrial Society: From Class-Based Politics to Quality-of-Life Politics', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 21, 1986, pp. 456–79). Inglehart and Rabier argue that, whereas 'a generation ago', the class conflict model of politics was accurate in that most of the working class voted for parties of the left while most of the middle class voted for the right, this traditional class-voting pattern had been eroded, with new support for the left increasingly coming from middle-class post-materialists and new support for the right coming from working class voters wanting to defend traditional values (pp. 463–4).
38. Dick Morris, 'Doing it the right way', *The Australian*, 20 June 2002.
39. 'Darkening horizons', *The Press*, 19 July 2002.
40. Steven Erlanger, 'A Jumpy, Anti-Immigrant Europe is Creeping Rightward', *New York Times*, 30 January 2002.
41. Erlanger, op. cit.; Cowell, op. cit.; Peter Fray, 'Might of the Right', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 2002.
42. Alan Cowell, 'Europe "is rubbing its eyes" at the ascent of the right', *New York Times*, 18 May 2002.
43. For example, the Freedom Party of Austria. See Franz Fallend, 'Austria', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 40, nos 3–4, 2001, p. 247.
44. The following table details the 13 candidate countries for European membership and their populations. List of candidate countries taken from European Union web site, <http://www.europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm>, accessed 19 August 2002; population statistics taken from news release of report published jointly by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities in Luxembourg, and the Council of Europe, 'EU population up by 0.4% in 2001 due mainly to net migration', on EU web site,

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=3-07082002-EN-AP-EN&mode=download>, accessed 19 August 2002.

Candidate Country	Population
Bulgaria	8 149 500
Cyprus	759 100
Czech Republic	10 295 000
Estonia	1 367 000
Hungary	10 200 000
Latvia	2 366 100
Lithuania	3 493 800
Malta	391 400
Poland	38 644 200
Romania	22 430 500
Slovenia	1 990 100
Slovakia	5 378 800
Turkey	68 036 000
Total	173 501 800

45. Erlanger, op. cit.; see also 'Moi? A New Start (France and Europe)', *The Economist*, 22 June 2002.
46. Roger Eatwell, 'The Rebirth of the 'Extreme Right' in Western Europe?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 53, 2000, pp. 407–25.
47. Cowell, op. cit.
48. Fray, op. cit.; Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMI), *Migration Program Planning Levels*, [Fact Sheet no. 20](#), 23 July 2002, DIMI Canberra; DIMI, *Unauthorised Arrivals by Air and Sea*, [Fact Sheet no. 74](#), 8 August 2002, DIMI, Canberra. The figure for legal migrants excludes around 12 000 who arrived under Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program.
49. Cowell, op. cit.
50. Steven Erlanger, 'A Jumpy, Anti-Immigrant Europe is Creeping Rightward', *New York Times*, 30 January 2002.
51. Harold Meyerson, 'The Democrats and the Euro-left', *The American Prospect*, 3 June 2002.
52. Jens Rydgren, 'Radical Right Populism in Sweden: Still a Failure, But for How Long?', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2002, p. 39.
53. This is also the general argument of Roger Karapin, 'Radical Right and Neo-Fascist Political Parties in Western Europe', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1998, p. 224.

54. Peter Mair, 'In the Aggregate: Mass Electoral Behaviour in Western Europe, 1950–2000', in Hans Keman (ed.), *Comparative Democratic Politics. A Guide to Contemporary Theory and Research*, Sage, London, 2000, p. 133.
55. Dalton, op. cit., pp. 165–7, 194, 216–7.
56. Peter Wilson, 'Left in the lurch as far Right grips EU', *The Weekend Australian*, 27 April 2002.
57. Peter Wilson, 'A wake-up call for EU's heavy-handed bureaucracy', *The Australian*, 17 May 2002.
58. 'How sick is Europe?', *The Economist*, 11 May 2002.
59. See, e.g. Peter Fray, 'Chirac launches his bid for majority', *The Age*, 7 May 2002; Lenore Taylor, 'Chirac's big test has just begun', *Australian Financial Review*, 7 May 2002.
60. Sibylle Hardmeier, 'Switzerland', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 38, nos 3–4, p. 534.
61. Clive Church, 'The Swiss Elections of October 1999: Learning to Live in More Interesting Times', *West European Politics*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2002, p. 223.
62. Franz Fallend, 'Austria', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 40, nos 3–4, 2001, p. 249.
63. The British National Party (BNP) has not been without any successes, having won a small number of local council seats in recent elections. Its vote in those seats in which it stood candidates in the national elections also reached significant levels in some cases: 11.3 per cent in the electorate of Burnley, for example, which is where the BNP holds three local council seats.
64. David Boothroyd, *United Kingdom Election Results*, [On-line]. <http://www.election.demon.co.uk/election.html>, accessed: 9 July 2002; Bryn Morgan, *General Election Results, 7 June 2001*, Research Paper 01/54, House of Commons Library, London.
65. 'I didn't sink Gore, says Nader', *The Australian*, 10 November 2000.
66. This issue is particularly clear in Germany, which faces the possibility that neither of the conventional coalitions (social democratic-green, and Christian democratic-liberal) will secure an absolute majority in the 2002 elections. 'Kaleidoscope. Polls suggest September's election may lead to a grand coalition of right and left', *The Economist*, 13 July 2002.
67. Paul Kelly, 'The New Ground Rules of Australian Politics', in *The Australian Political Almanac*, Hardie Grant Books, South Yarra, 2002, p. 6.
68. See, e.g. 'Tough on terrorism AND tough on the causes of terrorism: Our only hope', *Radical Middle Newsletter*, Nov/Dec 2001. Cited: [http://www.radicalmiddle.com/x\\_terrorism.htm](http://www.radicalmiddle.com/x_terrorism.htm), accessed 20 June 2002.