

Party identification and party choice in Ireland

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INTRODUCTION

In all western democracies election outcomes tend to follow fairly stable patterns. Each is usually similar to the one before, and the one after, and while relatively insignificant changes in vote and seat shares may have very significant consequences for who governs next, the most obvious feature of such changes are that they are generally quite small. Political commentators are always pressed to explain these small differences. This is certainly an important task, but here we will examine the reasons why there is so much stability. What provides the baseline for voting behaviour? Only when this is established can we really appreciate the short of change that the 2002 election represents. There are three sets of factors typically seen as underpinning stable party systems: linkages between social structural groups, such as classes or religious groups, and parties, linkages between ideological groups, such as the left or the right, and parties, and a more generalised attachment to parties usually termed party identification or partisanship which in a well-established party system will have roots in parental voting patterns and loyalties. This chapter deals primarily with the last of these, party identification or attachment. It explores the extent of attachment, and the simple links between attachment and voting behaviour. It concludes with a multivariate analysis comparing the impact of these attachments on various dimensions of party preference with the impact of social cleavages and political values. However, to begin with we will review the stability of the Irish party system and then deal briefly with the impact of social structure and ideology and party choice

STABILITY IN IRISH VOTING BEHAVIOUR

The Irish party system has seen considerable stability since the 1930s when FF first entered government and FG was reformed largely on the basis of the old Cumann na nGael party which dominated government after the civil war. Since 1932 FF has always been the largest party with typically between 40 and 50 per cent of the vote, Fine Gael the second largest (between 20 and 40) and Labour – usually – the third party winning normally a little more than 10 per cent. Labour has given way on occasion, such as to the short-lived Clann na Poblachta party in 1948 and to the Progressive Democrats in 1987 but has maintained its position overall. ‘Others have varied in composition and size. The broad picture is shown in Figure 1. Some see the 2002 election as marking a decisive shift away from this pattern, as Fine Gael slip further away from FF, and Labour sees many rivals for its position as the largest of the smaller parties. Independents too swelled the ranks of ‘other’ deputies to an almost unprecedented level. Even so, the pattern remains one of broad stability and in this paper we will concentrate on that aspect of the 2002 result rather than on the change that it might presage.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

We will discuss three explanations of voting stability here: social cleavages, political values and party identification, but our treatment of the first two will be brief given our main concern is with the last explanation.

Social cleavages

The social cleavages model has its origins in the early studies of voting (Lazarsfeld et al 1948; Berelson et al 1954) and was given renewed emphasis in the work of Stein

Rokkan on the bases of European party systems (Lipset and Rokkan 1965). As explained best in the work of Bartolini and Mair (1990), social cleavages provide a stable basis for party systems combining issues, loyalties and the organisations that sustain them. Class and religious cleavages provide obvious examples. Class cleavages provide interests, and class organisations, such as trade unions, promote solidarity and class consciousness, and mobilise members of behalf of a party. Religious organisations have fulfilled a similar role. In Europe generally much of electoral behaviour has been understood in these terms, at least in the past. Yet Ireland has never been seen to fit in this sort of framework very easily. The party system did not have its roots in class or religious cleavages but in a dispute over the resolution of the national question in 1922. There are no parallels to the organisational density of networks underlying many European parties based on class or religion, and while there are trade unions, these have never been very successful in mobilising their members in support of the Labour Party. As Whyte famously pointed out in his contribution to the first systematic review of the power of cleavages to explain the vote in various European countries, Irish party choice was politics without social bases (Whyte 1974). Whyte's analysis was directed largely to the difference between FF and other parties and, since Whyte, many people have indicated that there are social differences between Irish parties. Mair highlighted the class differences within the non-Fianna Fail vote (Mair 1979; see also Laver 1986a, 1986b, Laver, Marsh and Sinnott 1988, Marsh 1991, Marsh and Sinnott 1990, 1999), and it is generally accepted now that the newer small parties – the Greens, PDs and SF, are really quite distinctive in their social bases (Garry et al. 2003).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

In Table 1 we show the distribution of party choice by a number of cleavage related variables: class, urban-rural, church attendance, membership of a trade union and membership of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). The first four of these are traditional measures capturing elements of the Lipset-Rokkan European cleavage structure; GAA membership is included in an attempt to capture what might be an organisational basis to the nationalist cleavage. The figures here underline the point made in the above paragraph. The most important feature is the FF, by far the largest party, is not very distinctive in terms of any of the cleavage variables. There are some sharp contrasts within the non-FF vote, but even those are typically most clear in the case of the small parties. Class differences are remarkably slight here for FG and Labour, for a long time seen as the non-FF middle class and working class parties respectively. In contrast the Greens and PDs are overwhelmingly middle class and SF equally working class. There are clearer contrasts between FG and Labour in patterns of church practice and, even more, in urban-rural living – the two undoubtedly related.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

None of these differences have a very large impact on the distribution of the vote. This is clarified in Figure 2, in which we show the impact of each factor. This is done by contrasting the distribution of a sub-group with that of the sample as a whole. To estimate the impact of class we should contrast the distribution of working class voters with that of the whole sample. If we subtract the sample % voting from the working class % voting FF the number shows the impact of class and the sign

indicates whether FF benefits or loses from working class voters. This can be easily repeated for all parties. For most cleavages the effects on individual parties lie in the band +/- 4 per cent with only urban-rural (for FF and FG) and church attendance (FG) clearly outside that band. Across the party system as a whole total effects of each (the summed impacts divided by 2) is only 11 per cent in the case of church practice and urban-rural, 4-5 per cent in the case of class and union membership and 2 per cent for GAA membership – all relatively small. Moreover, in terms of the most stable elements of the system – the votes for FF, FG and Labour – these are even smaller. Social cleavage then hardly provides a plausible explanation for the stability of the party system.

Political values.

A second explanation for stable patterns stresses political values. The argument is that people have particular value sets which link them to parties. In the US value sets are best summarised by a liberal-conservative dimension (Knight 1999), in most of Europe by a left-right dimension. These may simplify vote choices by providing benchmarks against which to evaluate parties, leaders and policy options. In Ireland three dimensions have been highlighted as having potential importance on the vote in an enduring fashion (see Sinnott 1995 66-82 for a review). The first is nationalism. The differences over treaty which initially underlay the party system were differences about how to pursue a united Ireland and these were reinforced by differences between the parties over the nature of an independent Ireland, with FF, particularly under deValera, placing more emphasis on a separate Gaelic culture than FG. FF – which subtitled itself ‘The Republic Party’ – was more strident and more uncompromising in its vision of national identity. The revival of nationalist violence in NI gave a new reality to the issue and for much of the period since the late 1960s there have been differences between FF and FG (and Labour) on the appropriate response to ‘the troubles’. A second dimension is the economic left-right issue that needs little explanation here. A third may be thought of as confessionalism, or what in recent years has become known as the moral agenda: contraception, divorce, abortion and laws about homosexuality. More generally, this dimension taps the importance of the dictates of the Catholic Church on social issues. For the most part there may have been little difference between the parties on this dimension until the last couple of decades of the twentieth century. All appeared to see the church as the source of moral principles but over the last 30 years or so, as issues like divorce demanded attention, Labour, and to a lesser extent FG, adopted more ‘liberal’ positions, campaigning for divorce and adopted less absolutist stances on abortion than FF. There has been relatively little hard data on the relationship between these dimensions and the vote. However, it is apparent none of these is likely to have huge explanatory power. The concepts of left and right cannot be used to place parties to the extent they are in many other countries as people – experts and ordinary voters – see little difference between the major parties in these terms (see Chubb 1983, Gallagher 1987). Experts have certainly seen the moral dimension as differentiating parties in recent years (Laver, 1994) but there are still sharper differences within the major parties than between them. The nationalist issue too has probably been obscured by events in the North and arguably differences have been more about means than ends.

We measured each dimension by a question that presents polar opposites and asks respondents to place themselves (and each party) on an 11-point scale (with an explicit don't know option). The questions are:

With regard to the Northern Ireland problem some people think that we should insist on a United Ireland now while other people think we should abandon the aim of a United Ireland altogether. Of course other people have opinions somewhere between these two extremes. Suppose the people who believe that we should insist on a United Ireland now are at one end of the scale, at '0', and the people who think that we should abandon the aim of a United Ireland altogether are at 10'. Where would you place yourself on this scale? Where would you place the parties on the card in terms of their views on Northern Ireland?

And now I would like to ask you a question about abortion. People who fully agree there would be a total ban on abortion would give a score of '0'. People who fully agree that abortion should be freely available in Ireland to any woman who wants one would give a score of 10'. Where would you place yourself on this scale? And what about the political parties? Where would you place the parties on the card in terms of their views on abortion?

I would like you to look at the scale from 0 to 10 on this card. A '0' means government should cut taxes a lot and spend much less on health and social services, and 10' means government should increase taxes a lot and spend much more on health and social services. Where would you place yourself on this scale? Where would you place the political parties on this scale?

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Figure 3 shows the average placement of each party on each of these scales. With the exception of the placement of SF at the extreme end of the NI dimension there is very little evidence that the electorate discriminates much between any of the parties on any of these scales. There are differences but they are small. And there are small when it comes to differences between FF and FG with the almost 1 point difference on NI easily the largest of them. It might be argued that it is because these differences are now so small that the party system now seems to be undergoing change but even the small parties appear remarkably similar in the eye of the voters. Certainly figure 3 does not offer much of a basis for thinking that voting behaviour is strongly influenced by basic values. Hence we turn to examine the evidence on party identification.

Party identification

The most widespread explanation of stability involves the concept of party identification, or partisanship. This has its academic origins in the electoral research carried out by a team from the University of Michigan into US voting behaviour in the 1950s (Campbell et al 1960, and Miller and Shanks 1997 for a recent restatement.). Earlier studies had assumed (naively) that voters made up their mind afresh at each election on the basis of the campaign itself, but discovered that most people seemed to make up their mind much earlier, and indeed reported voting

histories that were remarkably stable. If voters did decide afresh each time, they were clearly disposed in most cases to do what they did last time, and the time before. This 'predisposition' was described as party identification, a psychological attachment to a party which serves not only to define an individual's relationship to political society, but also provides an informational filter which helps the individual to deal with the constant stream of information about politics. Like other identities, party identification is something acquired quite early in life and while it may not be set in stone, it would normally be expected to become more stable as the voter gets older. The roots of identity lie in the family, and the network of social relations which define the young adult experience, so we would expect to see identification being passed on from one generation to another, providing a stable basis to electoral behaviour over a long period of time.

Exported to Europe, this explanation underwent some adaptation with more emphasis being placed on the way in which political divisions were underpinned by clear social structures, most often those of religion and class. In many cases political identities were inculcated and reinforced by a dense network of social relationships. We will explore the extent of this in Ireland in a later chapter. Yet in many essentials, the explanation remained unchanged. Voters had a stable predisposition to vote in a particular way. This predisposition was learned and, once acquired, served to reinforce itself by screening out information that might weaken it.

The predisposition of an identifier to vote for a particular party, if it is to make sense, should be a tendency, not a certainty. Under the circumstances of a particular election voters may vote for another party's candidate but the expectation would be that this is a temporary deviation and that at subsequent elections the voter's behaviour will, more often than not, be consistent with his or her identification. This separation of vote and identity allows for the short-term change and long-term stability typically seen in aggregate election results to have its roots at the level of the individual voter.

This distinction between long and short-term forces gives rise to a typology of elections according to the nature of the electoral change observed. A simple distinction is between 'maintaining', 'de-aligning' and 're-aligning'. In the first, the changes observed are solely the result of short-term factors. There is no sign that anything dramatic has happened in terms of the long-term influences on the vote, notably some change in the distribution of partisanship. De-aligning and realigning elections, in contrast, see a more fundamental change. De-aligning elections see a decline in attachments to parties; shifts in voting preference away from the traditional ones cannot be expected to correct themselves. Realigning elections see and even more fundamental change, as the alignments themselves alter, as votes attach themselves to parties in different ways. This may provoke no long-term change in party strength, if the realignments cancel out one another. This would be the case if, for instance, one group moved from FF to FG, but an equally large group moved in the other direction. There is some evidence that this sort of realignment has taken place in the US, and it has certainly been argued that it was taking place in European party systems as left and right became based on different foundations (Inglehart, 1979). While the evidence from a single election study is an inadequate basis on which to decide into which of these three categories 2002 falls, we will make use of other survey evidence – from the Eurobarometer, and from commercial opinion polls – to provide some indications of change. In particular, we want to consider the long-

term significance of the falling FG vote, and the rising vote for the smaller parties. Is that temporary, or does it presage a new pattern in Irish politics. According to the theory of party identification, the answer to this question depends on what is happening at a deeper level than the vote: whether or not there are changes in partisanship.

A central question in this paper is the value of the party identification theory for understanding voting behaviour in Ireland. In the US social structural foundations were generally seen to be weak, and the multilevel character of the electoral decision, as well as the existence of primaries, perhaps give party identification a special value. The absence of obviously strong ideological or social structural underpinnings of Irish parties, certainly by contrast to much of the rest of Western Europe, and the use of an electoral system which separates candidate and at least for the larger parties, offers some resemblances to the situation in the US. If party identification proved to be a useful concept anywhere in Europe, Ireland would seem to be a prime candidate. Carty (1983) has argued that party identification is very strong and, in the absence of social structural underpinning and ideological differences, provides the only account of the stability of Irish party support. Carty was using data from the 1960s, but the argument still holds true in principle today, but it remains to be seen how strong the evidence is to support it now. Marsh, writing in the 1980s suggested there were strong grounds for thinking the electorate was becoming de-aligned (1985: esp 193-97), and there is further evidence of such de-alignment as we will see below (Mair 1987; Schmitt and Holmberg 1995; Sinnott, 1999; Marsh, 1999).

The idea itself should not sound unfamiliar to most observers of Irish elections, whatever their interest. The view that the civil war provided as its legacy a set of strong partisan attachments on behalf of a large section of the population, attachments that were passed down through the generations, is commonplace. The question of whether someone is FF or FG, or whether their family was FF or FG, are easily understood, although placing one's family might be easier than placing oneself nowadays as there is a perception that the clear attachments are less widespread today than they once were. In order to explore party attachment we need a way to measure it. Once this is achieved we will go on to see how strong and widespread it is, how it relates an individual's voting behaviour, how well the roots of such partisanship do appear to lie in the past and the allegiances of each voter's parents and how partisans see their own party relative to other parties.

MEASURING PARTY IDENTIFICATION

A measure of party identification is needed that will do several things. First, it should tap attachment rather than behaviour. Second, it should not be phrased in such a way as to force, or allow either almost all voters, or almost no voters to claim an identity. Thirdly, it should provide some indication of how strong is that identification. And finally, the instrument should permit some comparison with the situation in other countries and at other times in Ireland if that is possible. The classic measure of party identification was a set of questions: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as PARTY A, PARTY B or what? [If so] Would you call yourself a strong [supporter of PARTY], or not so strong?" [If not] Do you think of yourself as closer to the PARTY A or PARTY B?" This wording is not easily adapted to a multiparty system. Moreover, this wording has been criticised for leading respondents to provide

an identity, and to provide only one identity. In theory at least, voters could have multiple identities (van der Eijk and Niemoller 1983). It has been asked in Ireland but on only a few occasions between 1976 and 1982 (Marsh 1985: p. 194). The measure used here is more appropriate to Ireland and is also employed by a cross national study now in progress, and is also comparable in many respects to the question asked by the Eurobarometer between 1978 and 1994.

Like the traditional question it has several parts:

- Do you think of yourself as close to any political party?
- [If so] Which one (s)¹?
- [If so] How close?: Very close, somewhat close, not very close
- [If not] Do you think of yourself as closer to one party than the others?
- Which one?

This overcomes some of the criticisms of the classic wording and its variants although the removal of the ‘generally speaking’ preamble might be expected to lead to responses more closely link to current vote. The responses can be seen in Table 2, which also shows comparable responses from some other countries. Compared to these other countries attachment in Ireland is less widespread but over 50 per cent of the electorate have some degree of party attachment as measured in this way.² When we look at the measure of the strength of this attachment it is evident that more than half of these are very weak, feeling no more than closer to their party than any other. Most of those who feel ‘close’ describe themselves as ‘somewhat close’. Almost nobody who claims to be ‘close’ indicates that they are ‘not very close’, perhaps unsurprisingly, as it might be considered something of a contradiction. In view of the small numbers reporting that they are ‘not very close’ we will in the analysis that follows combine these with the ‘leaners’, who incline to one party, identified in the follow-up question.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

A more extensive comparison can be made with other countries using the data gathered by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems project (CSES). This is displayed in Figure 4. For all countries we have combined those who say they are ‘close’ to a party with those who are ‘closer’ to one party than another. The range is considerable, and while attachment is perhaps surprisingly high in some countries such as Russia considering how new and unstable are their party systems, the extreme position of Ireland – at the bottom of the party attachment league – is striking.

INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Clearly party identification in Ireland can make a much weaker contribution to political stability than it can elsewhere. Even if everyone with some degree of attachment voted in accordance with it, the other half of the electorate could still be responsible for huge changes was it so minded. These unattached votes may be, and

¹ We will explore the degree of multiple attachment below

² The traditional question appears to tap even softer forms of identification, with some 15per cent fewer reporting no identification at all in the three countries in Table ID.1

probably often are, very stable in their behaviour but we cannot ascribe that stability to anything like party identification.

The relative weakness of attachment in Ireland is almost certainly not of long standing. Table 3 shows the distribution of responses since 1978 to a Eurobarometer question that is essentially the first part of the question displayed in Table 2. As has been pointed out before (Sinnott 1995; Mair and Marsh 1999) attachment declined in the 1980s, particularly between 1981 and 1984, a period that saw three elections, and between 1990 and 1991. This decline is most marked in the categories reflecting weaker attachment.³ The sample on which the figure for 1999 is based was both much smaller and collected in a different way, but the data from 2002 suggests that the further decline indicated by that figure has continued as almost three quarters of respondents now do not feel close to a party. The use of the follow up ‘closer’ question provides us with a much greater number of those who at least lean towards a particular party.

PARTY ID AND THE VOTE

For those with some identification with a party, how does this differ from vote intention? One of the criticisms of the concept as applied in Europe has been that it differs insufficiently from the vote, and is little more than another measure of the same thing. This is part of a much more general criticism which sees identification as measured as much less stable than its theoretical counterpart (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Thomassen 1976). We will return to this later but initially we will examine the relationship between identity and the vote. For a start, how consistently do respondents give a first preference vote to ‘their’ party? The answer is that most partisans do vote for their party but that there is a distinction between vote and partisanship. In fact only 66 per cent of those who declare a partisan attachment vote in accord with it; 80 per cent of those ‘very close’ 73 per cent of those ‘somewhat close’ and 57 per cent of the weak partisans do so (figure 5). Those who do not follow their partisanship are divided between those who don’t vote and those who vote for someone else, with the former rising and the latter falling as the strength of attachment drops. This link between partisanship and the vote is comparable with that elsewhere, although in the US in particular the strong partisans, those ‘very close’, are more likely to vote consistently (see Blais et al 2001).

INSERT FIGURES 5 ABOUT HERE

In Ireland voters have the chance to indicate a preference for all of the candidates standing in a constituency, and parties with several candidates standing will encourage supporters to give a high preference to all of them. When this is done it increases a party’s chance of using all its support to wins seats; here it is not, support may be wasted, because a very popular candidate has too many votes when a less popular one has too few. Are partisans more likely to vote a ‘straight ticket’? This is a measure of voting consistency not generally available as few countries give

³ The use of ‘not very close’ as a response category rather than ‘merely a sympathiser’ may have pushed a few more into the ‘somewhat close’ category, since the decline is most marked there, but we cannot be sure.

comparable power to their voters. However, in the US where voters chose several levels of government simultaneously, and in mixed member electoral systems, like the German, there is the parallel of split and straight-ticket voting. Figure 6 shows Irish voters are more likely to do this when their attachment is stronger, and least likely when they voice no attachment at all. We have separated the data by party and by the number of candidates each party fielded in a respondent's constituency. The incidence of straight-ticket voting or 'solidarity' declines with the strength of party attachment, for the most part quite regularly. This ties in with the evidence of aggregate election results and voting transfers. As party attachment has declined since at least the late 1970s, so has the tendency of voters to follow party lines (Gallagher 1978, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1999, 2003).

INSERT FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

A final vote-attachment link can be derived from the reported vote shifts between 1997 and 2002. Does consistent voting across these two elections increase with the strength of partisanship? Figure 7 provides the answer: it does. The big change here is between the somewhat attached and the weakly attached partisans, with the latter actually more likely to have switched parties or abstained than not. There is a slight tendency here for weaker partisans to have move away from their party in 2002 rather than towards it.

INSERT FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE

The key point that these several analyses reinforce is that the measure of partisanship behaves as it should. It is close to the vote, but not identical, and has a weaker link with the vote, whether measured by first preferences, lower preferences or voting history ,as the strength of partisanship wanes.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

We now turn from examining the consistency of the link between attachment and vote to exploring the extent of attachment to different parties. Which parties are best served by partisans? There are two points here: what is the party preference of partisans, and how strong is this partisanship. Table 4 shows the distribution across the parties and the strength of attachment to each party. A majority are FF, with FG also having a reasonable share. This might be expected to provide the major party with a head start in any election, once it can mobilise that core support. Table 4 shows the strength of partisanship across each party. The larger parties also have an advantage in having a higher proportion of partisans who are stronger in their attachment than most other parties, although SF outdoes both of them in this respect. The Greens and the PDs are well behind. The strength of SF attachment is remarkable in that it is a new party in some senses, but its profile in NI and historical roots in the Republic give it a status that is certainly not that of most new parties.

As we have already seen, partisans tend to vote with their parties. Table 5 shows the detailed voting preferences of partisans of each party. There is not much to choose between the partisans of FF, FG, Labour and PD partisans in their tendency to vote for their parties, but Greens and PDs are much more likely to defect. Of course these parties ran candidates in many fewer constituencies than the other parties. If we

confine the analysis of the smaller parties to those constituencies where each ran at least one candidate, then the tendency of partisans of Greens and PDs to vote for their party rises, to 55 per cent in the case of the Greens, to 52 per cent in the case of the PDs and to 70 per cent in the case of SF. The weaker consistency of the PDs and Greens is largely due to the weaker partisanship in those parties.

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Given FF's lead in numbers of partisans, the relatively even rate of conversion of partisans to voters would be expected to mean that the overall impact of partisanship on voting would favour FF most of all. As we did earlier when exploring the impact of cleavages, we can calculate the impact of partisanship on each party's vote by contrasting the vote share amongst non-partisans with that amongst all voters. The difference reflects the marginal impact of partisan voting. It must be emphasised that this difference is relative: it tells us how much better a party does out of long-term, partisanship, forces relative to the short-term (non-partisanship) influences. This is displayed, for each party, in Figure 8, using the same technique used in Figure 2. For only two parties does it make much difference: FF and independents. FF gained almost 6 per cent from having a much higher share of partisans than any other party, while independent candidates, almost by definition, lost out by a fairly similar margin. This underlines how difficult it would be for independent candidates in an electorate that largely identified with parties. The de-alignment we have described in Table 3 helps independents, but the residual partisanship still makes their lives more difficult.

INSERT FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE

One surprising feature of figure 8 is the minuscule impact partisanship on the FG vote. As an old, well-established party FG might have been expected to do a little better. Since its conversion rate was not far behind FF's it is clear that it failed to gain from partisanship because its share of them is no more than proportional to its size. This raises a small question mark against the validity of party identification theory in this instance. FG did badly in 2002, its vote share dropping below any recent performance, and well below that of 1997, yet it did well enough amongst its partisan voters: 67% voted with their party as against 71 of FF partisans. The suspicion must be that at least some of those who might have identified themselves as FG partisans in 1997 no longer did so in 2002. This is a problem since at least in the short term we would have expected a party such as FG in bad times to have lost votes not only by failing to win support from neutrals but also by failing to mobilise its own partisans. There is no evidence of the latter playing a significant part in its 2002 failure in this data. Had FG partisans voted at the same rate for their party as FF partisans did for theirs, the FG vote would have been only 0.05 per cent per cent higher.

What appears to have happened is that FG no longer has (if it ever did) an overabundance of partisans relative to the smaller parties. Does this mean that the significant de-alignment that still seems to be taking place within the Irish electorate is working very much to the disadvantage of FG? This is not an easy question to answer. The only available series on partisanship, that contained in the Eurobarometer as displayed earlier, rarely complemented the question on strength with one on direction and when that was done, as in 1989, results are unsatisfactory. In 1989, the data show 58 per cent of FF's voters were FF partisans compared with 50 per cent of

FG's voters, but for both parties there is insufficient difference between vote and partisanship, with more than 90 per cent of partisans voting for their party.⁴

WHAT DOES PARTY IDENTIFICATION MEAN?

In a critique that questioned the capacity of party identification to offer us much of a guide to the future, Crewe pointed out that the concept might conflate some very different types of partisans (Crewe, 1976). The classic partisan would have a very black and white view of the political world, in which their own party was good and the others was bad. Weaker partisans would like their own party a little less, and the other party a little more. This pattern would be mirrored in the views of partisans of the other party. Crewe suggested some might be partisan because they felt strongly about the alternative and not because they liked their own party. He suggested the term 'negative partisans' for those who followed this pattern, and advanced several variations on the same theme. The significance of this is that, particularly in a multiparty system, changes in partisanship could easily come about because a third party also offered a home for those people. The key point is whether partisanship indicates loyalty or convenience. If the former, it should be more durable. Of course in a multiparty system, the black and white model also seems more problematic. Are all other parties viewed in equally unfavourable terms? Van der Eijk and Niemoller (1983), writing about the Netherlands, suggested the answer to this was no. Moreover, the degree of warmth between some parties undermined the notion of identification because many voters seemed to see themselves as close to more than one. We found very few Irish voters feel close to more than one party. While almost 27 per cent of respondents provided the name of a party to which they felt close, only 2 per cent felt close to more than one, and only 0.2 per cent close to more than two. This is not to say that partisanship is black and white in all cases. It is still worth examining the views of partisans about the other parties. Do they have black and white views? Are there significant numbers who are against one party rather than for another? The argument has certainly been made that FG has gathered significant support, particularly in times past, because it is not FF. Members of the FG party themselves have reported joining the party to fight FF, and it that is true of members so also it may be true of mere partisans. If such partisanship is widespread it implies the

⁴ If we examine changing ratios of FF and FG voters to (unidentified) partisans over the period 1979-94 it appears that the decline in partisans appears to be taking place at much the same rate for both FF and FG. Yet FF has been able to overcome this, keeping its vote reasonable stable, while FG's has declined much more markedly. As with many polls, there is apparent overestimate of the FF vote and an underestimate of the FG vote here, but the trends reflect actual changes in election results. This is open to a number of interpretations. On the one hand we may simply see the decline in partisanship as a sign of an ongoing dealignment that affects both civil war parties equally. The electorate is now potentially much more volatile. For FG this is might be bad news, in that it indicates the reservoir of support for the party is getting very shallow, but it also suggests there is potential for all parties to attract voters at any election. A second interpretation would see the similarity in the rate of dealignment as a puzzle that could not easily be resolved within party identification theory. Because FG's decline in votes has been greater, it should have lost more partisans. The fact that its ratio of partisans to voters has remained so similar to that of FF raises suspicions that 'partisanship' follows, rather than precedes vote.

potential exists for even greater instability in future as change can come about from a much wider variety of sources, not simply because of what one party does by because of what any of the parties might do.

It is also important to know how close partisans (and voters) of each party are to one another. Even if they have a black and white view, the shades of blackness may vary, and this may make people more or less likely to change parties in response to short-term influences.

INSERT FIGURE 9 [marked as ID 5] ABOUT HERE

We will start by examining the party system as if it comprised just FF and FG. (Indeed, in partisan terms these two parties still attract the support of three out of every four partisans. Figure 9 [ID.5] shows the views of FF and FG partisans of themselves of each other. These views are measured by feeling thermometers, which ask people to rate an object on a scale of 1-100 where more than 50 represents warmth and less than 50 represents coolness. We have dived into scale into three: cold, neutral and hot at the 33rd and 66th percentile, giving us nine groups, although we have collapsed into one group those for whom the parties are, at least in the three point scale, equal. Each of these groups is then graphed on a 7-point scale that runs from strong FG to strong FF via those who do not feel close (or closer) to either party. The results indicate that most are classic partisans. Their own party is scored hot; the other party is scored cold. The next most numerous group scores its own party as hot and the opposition as neutral. Then there are those who score both parties equally – and only a tiny fraction of these score both as cold. This leaves the real negative partisans, who score their own party as only neutral and the other as cold. As can be seen, there are a negligible number. Classic partisans are most common amongst those whose partisanship is strong; those for who it is weaker are more likely to feel less negative towards the opposition. In general, the gap between the two parties seems to decline with the strength of partisanship. The other feature of the graph is that FF partisans tend to see a greater distance between the parties. There are very few FF partisans who place both FG and FF in the middle, neutral category. This may reflect no more than the current weakness of FG. Without data from the past we cannot know. However, it does suggest that FG partisans are less black and white than those of FF, but they are certainly not negative partisans as Crewe defined the term.

It would be possible to reproduce this sort of analysis for all pairs of parties but there is no reason to expect anything very different, and in most cases anyway, the pairs would have very few cases. We will look simply at how the gap between a partisan's own party and the average rating of the opposition parties closes as partisanship declines. When this is done in almost all cases there is a steady decline as partisanship grows weaker. The average gap is also quite a large one, close to 50 amongst most strong partisans declining to 30-40 points depending on party. In general this appears to confirm partisanship as something positive rather than negative. It is apparent here that FF partisans seem to place most distance between their party and all others. FG is seen as a little closer, and PD partisans see least distance between them and all others – which is a little surprising in view of the common media perception of the party as the most 'right-wing' of Irish parties.

Of course, one pair of parties may be closer to one another than another pair. A simple examination of the different way partisans view other parties suggests that this is the case, and the evidence of transfer votes underlines this. Voters have tended to transfer in somewhat predictable patterns, and this can be taken as a sign that at least some voters have preferences across a number of parties. The simplest way to show this is by the use of multidimensional scaling analysis, a technique that makes use of the pattern of individual likes and dislikes to show the relative proximity of parties to one another. It could be that this proximity can be shown in one dimension, but it may require more than one to account for the patterns of likes and dislikes. For instance, it might be that we would see a pattern with the PDs on the right, SF on the left and FF, FG, Labour and Greens (in that order) in the middle. In that case, partisans of the PDs would rarely like the Greens or SF; Green partisans would like Labour and SF, but not the PDs and FF, and FF and FG partisans would like one another's party. If this is not so – perhaps FF and FG partisans do not like one another – then perhaps we may need to extend the space into another dimension to allow for the distance between those two parties.

INSERT FIGURE 10 ABOUT HERE

Figure 10 shows the pattern derived from the likes/dislikes thermometer questions asked of six parties, using data on partisans. It is most easily thought of as a triangle, with FG, FF and SF at the three points of the triangle and Greens, PDs and Labour inside the triangle, all of them closer to one another than the parties at the extreme points, although all of them are closer to FG than to SF and to FF. This picture makes a lot of sense in terms of partisanship. It is in essence a 'party defined' space (Budge 1976). It is difficult to see in this any sign of an ideological basis for party differences. We might see the FG/SF axis as one of nationalism and attitudes to NI, but if so we might have expected a little more distance between the small parties and FF; the SF/FF axis, might be thought of in left-right terms but in that case the PDs, Labour and Greens might be expected to be more distinct from one another. We will return to this question when dealing with ideology and political issues in later chapters. The key point here, however, is that while partisans almost invariably much prefer their own party and indeed think of their own party in positive terms, they nonetheless discriminate between the other parties in a patterned manner.

PARTISANSHIP AND THE FAMILY

Party identification theory identifies the intergenerational transmission of partisanship as key to the stability of party systems. This may be supplemented, or even replaced, by strong social networks. The absence of strong links between social institutions and political parties in Ireland, in contrast to much of Europe, suggests that the family has a significant role in socialisation and anecdotal evidence, as well as scattered survey evidence, would certainly support an argument that the family has been a strong influence (Carty; 1983 Chapter 4; Sinnott 1995: 148-9; Gallagher and Marsh 2002: Chapter 4) We asked respondents to tell us about the voting behaviour of their parents when the respondent was growing up. While about a third did not know,⁵ or reported

⁵ We made this the first option on the showcard to reduce the chance that respondents would invent a memory. This number seems broadly the same as that found by Larsen in 1969: see Carty 1983: p. 82.

that their parents did not vote, a majority indicated their parents usually voted for FF or FG with small numbers mentioning other parties, some of them long extinct. Remarkably few opted for the 'different parties' option (see Table 6). We also asked whether their parents were strong supporters of their parties and it was reported that 38 per cent of fathers and 33 per cent of mothers were strong supporters, and 65 per cent and 57 per cent respectively of those parents identified with a party. This is hardly an indication of strong intergenerational attachments. While 24 per cent of those born after 1973 report strong parental attachment, 46 per cent of those born before 1955 do so, giving support to the argument that intergenerational transmission of a party loyalty is becoming weaker. The absence of transmission is not due to a lack of knowledge about parental politics. Even amongst our youngest respondents, those born after 1981, 64% can report parental habits of voting. This is comparable to the 76% of secondary school students who knew parental habits in the early 1970s: see Carty 1983: 81, n47. Parents reported as being strong supporters were more likely to be FF, and less likely to favour the smaller parties, a result which is consistent with the greater stability of FF support.

When we compare parental support to each respondent's partisanship we see clear evidence of transmission. There are a large number of respondents with no partisanship but where there is an attachment it tends to follow parental voting. There are few partisans whose favoured party is different than that of their father: 14 per cent in the case of FF, 23 per cent in the case of FG. This is not true of Labour partisans as significant numbers of Labour partisans have FF fathers. There are of course differences within the family. Fathers and mothers tend to be recalled as having the same voting patterns in only 67 per cent of those cases where a preference for a respondent's father was recalled and transmission from a father is weaker where the mother's support is different. Figure 11 shows the respondent's partisanship by the mother and father's typical vote. 53 per cent of those with a FF mother and father have a FF partisanship, a figure that falls to 37 per cent if mother is not FF and 30 per cent if the father is not FF and 20 per cent if neither parent was FF. Overall, 71 per cent of FF partisans report at least one parent with a FF voting habit. The pattern is broadly similar for FG but for Labour the important fact is whether either parent typically voted Labour.

INSERT FIGURES 11 AND 12 ABOUT HERE

Not surprisingly, family loyalties are also evident in the respondent's voting behaviour (see Figure 12). The figures here are similar to those for partisanship, although typically some 10 per cent higher. The argument that parental loyalties influence partisanship and hence vote get a lot of support from this, at least to the extent that there are parental loyalties of which respondent's are aware. However, these figures can be contrasted with the results of a 1969 study reported by Carty (1983) which found 78 per cent of those whose father (the only parent for which data was available) was FF voting for FF, and correspondingly 65 per cent voting FG and 53 per cent Labour.⁶ These are about 15 per cent higher than the 2002 figures that are 61 per cent, 48 per cent and 36 per cent. Sinnott, using a 1990 study, reported figures of 68 per cent, 53 per cent and 30 per cent respectively for FF, FG and Labour

⁶ It is not clear whether the question asked was about father's typical vote or something stronger although the Ns suggest the former.

transmission, somewhat closer to 2002 rates (1995: 149). Just as identification has declined, so has intergenerational transmission of the vote although there has been little decline over the past decade.

Following the same strategy used to look at the marginal effect of partisanship on the vote – by comparing the vote of partisans with voters and calculating the difference – we can look at the impact of mother's and father's loyalties on vote. This is done in Figure 13 which also shows again the impact of party identification. It indicates that party loyalty of each parent contributes positively to the vote for the established parties, particularly FF, but that there is no difference between the impact of father's and mother's vote. Current partisanship appears to compensate for the lack of family loyalties in the smaller parties but obviously not for independents.⁷

INSERT FIGURE 13 ABOUT HERE

This evidence on the political affiliations of the family suggest that it is perfectly valid to suggest that partisanship can generally be seen as both rooted in childhood socialisation and, therefore, separate from and antecedent to current vote. The argument that parents inculcate in their children a predisposition to vote for a particular party is certainly consistent with this evidence, even if it is clear that this does not seem to be the case for a significant number of voters. It makes sense to see this effect as one that engenders partisanship in the child, but also may create a predisposition that does not show up in our partisanship questions. It is the case, for instance, that children of a FF father tend to vote FF even where they are not partisans, and the same is true of children of FG parents. It could be that this is simply due to a shared outlook and set of interests by parents and children.

SOURCES OF PARTY PREFERENCE: MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

This section deals with the extent to which the three models of the vote – social cleavages, values and partisanship, explain patterns of party preference. Apart from the earlier analysis of split ticket voting, the analysis above has concentrated on first preference votes. There are several reasons why we should look beyond this. First of all, even if we are only interested in first preferences it is arguable that we should look at the wider set of party preferences if we are to understand this choice. This point has been made most strongly by van der Eijk in a number of publications (van der Eijk 2002, van der Eijk, Franklin 1996 and Oppenhuis; see also Tillie 199?) and also by Rivers 1988, Burden 1997 and Schmitt 2002). This involves considering the full range of choices available to the voter and establishing relative preferences across all of them. This can be done by using scales measuring respondent's support for each of the parties, for instance using feeling thermometers, asking about alternative votes here we use the 'probability to vote question', used originally in the Netherlands and now widely copied elsewhere which taps respondents utilities for each of the parties (Tillie 1995) and corresponds to vote for as much as over 90 per cent of respondents (Oppenhuis, 1995). A second reason is that in Ireland voters ranking of the parties at any point in time is of much more than academic interest. Parties both need and seek out second and third preference votes to maximise the seat share under Ireland Single

⁷ In using family loyalties we included as loyalists all who indicated a regular voting pattern for whichever party.

Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system. The electorate's preferences across the set of parties are thus vital to the result of the election. While few voters go to the trouble of expressing a full set of preference, the majority vote for at least two parties and many indicate a preference for three or even more. To date there has been relatively little attempt to examine these preferences through survey data (Bowler and Farrell 1991a, 1991b; van der Brug et al 2000) and no attempt has been made to explain individual choice patterns. In what follows we will examine the ability of cleavages, values and party attachments to explain not simply the vote but also the structure of preferences as manifested in expressed utilities and in ordered choices manifested through completion of simulated ballot which all respondents were asked to fill in as they did on election day.

This sort of analysis requires a rather different data structure to that used in the conventional analysis of electoral choice, where we are interested only the which single choice from a given set is made by each voter. To do so we need to stack the data, using a format typical of cross-national analyses with multiple observations for each country – the classic data structure for cross-section time-series analysis. In this case we have, in effect, multiple observations for each individual, each observation indicating their choice of, or rating of, or ranking of each party.

Using this approach we explored how far each of the three explanation discussed above – the first two briefly, the third in more detail – explain the patterns of party choice in 2002. Table 7 displays the summary results of each of these – social cleavages, values and party attachment as well as a null model and a general model containing all three sets of variables. The first section of the table takes first preference vote as the dependent variable, using mixed-model conditional logit to estimate the models. The second section takes expressed utilities as the dependent variable and uses OLS and the last section takes the ordering expressed in the simulated ballots, again using OLS.

INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

We will start by looking at the regression of the several models on the vote. The null model here (dummies for each party – analogous to the constant terms in a typical regression using logit or multinomial logit) gives an R^2 of .19 and a log likelihood of -334. We should this the former rise, and the latter fall if each of the various models improves on the null model. The social cleavages model, which contains class, urban-rural dwelling, church attendance, membership of the GAA and membership of a trade union, all expressed as dichotomies – adds .04 to the R^2 and reduces the log likelihood by only 14. This is hardly impressive but not surprising. As we saw earlier, while some of the smaller parties have distinctive social profiles, the larger ones do not and so cleavages can contribute little to an understanding of overall vote choice. Values are a little more effective, pushing the R^2 term up by .06, and the log likelihood down by 21, using only three variables. These are the proximity of the respondent to each party on the NI, morality and economic left-right scales displayed earlier. It might be argued that using proximity here is overly favourable to the values argument. A tough test would be whether self-placement predicted vote although in fact there is little difference in the outcomes if that alternative is chosen. In any case, because our main concern is with the superiority of the party identification model we wanted to be as favourable as possible to alternatives. We have included fathers and

mothers voting habits as well as party attachment in this model, since whether or not a respondent is measured as having a partisan it seems reasonable to suggest that in some cases there is an inclination inherited from parents. This model performs much better than the other two, doubling the R^2 and dropping the log likelihood to -255 . Clearly party identification provides a much better explanation of vote than either of the other two. Moreover, the other two models add little to what is achieved simply by the identification model. The full model, combining all three, gives an R^2 of $.41$, only $.03$ above what is achieved by party identification alone, and a log likelihood of -243 , only 12 below that for the identification model alone. Once current attachment and inherited leanings are taken into account, cleavages and values add relatively little.

The story is similar when party preference and ballot ranking are used as the dependent variables. We might have expected values to perform better here since in principle values could explain rankings more effectively than attachment as the measures are more nuanced but that is not the case. Only the identification model improves strongly on the null model, and the full model performs only marginally better once the number of added variables is taken into account. Adjusted R^2 is only $.02$ higher in the party preference regression and actually much *smaller* in the ballot position regression, indicating that values and social cleavages offer no significant improvement in explanation at all.

There is not space here to examine the details of the models but it is important to identify the different contributions of parental habit and current attachment to voting choices. Judging by the regression analysis current attachment looks more important, but of course this ignores the fact that the most obvious interpretation of the relationships between attachment, parental choice and the vote is that parental voting influences vote both directly and via current partisan attachment, and that the combination of these direct and indirect influences may be more substantial than what is suggested by the single stage regression model.

INSERT FIGURE 14 ABOUT HERE

Figure 14 shows such a simple causal model for each of the dependent variables. We have used partial correlations to estimate the path coefficients. Each tells a similar story: that parental habit has both a direct and an indirect influence on the vote and when these are combined the importance of parental choice is roughly equal to that of current attachment. This holds for first preference vote as well as for more general measures of party preference.

CONCLUSION

This paper had several objectives. First, to review several explanations for the long-term stability of Irish voting patterns: cleavages, values and party identification. Second to explore the most promising of these—party identification—in more detail. We have done this in several ways: by describing the distribution of partisan identity in the population, considering the ways in which identification is linked to vote, by exploring the ways in which partisans view other parties, and by detailing the possibility of intergenerational transmission of partisanhip. Finally we used multivariate analysis to confirm the argument that party identification does a much better job in explaining party preferences than do cleavages or values, and then to

tease out the respective contribution of family and current partisanship to current support patterns.

From both the bi-variate and multivariate analysis it is evident that only party identification has much of a link with vote. While some parties may have distinctive value or social identities this is not the case with the larger parties, the ones that receive most of the votes. Party identification does 'explain' the vote in statistical terms but does it provide a plausible explanation? In many respects the concept of party identification makes sense in the Irish context. We see more identifiers belonging to the long established parties, and particularly FF, as the most stable of them, and identification appears to be separate from the vote. Partisans are more likely to vote in a particular way, but not certain to do so; and voting with the identified party declines with the strength of partisanship so there is no question of an explanation based on party identification amounting to no more than a tautology. Straight ticket voting and consistent voting 1997-2002 also declines with the strength of partisanship. We also see the roots of partisanship in the family, as we would expect. Most partisans have at least one parent who usually supported their party. Our attempt to disentangle the separate impact of familial support and current partisanship on the vote suggests that each has much the same effect taken alone but if anything, fathers voting habits having the edge. Yet, just as a large proportion of voters report that they have no partisanship, so also does a sizeable proportion report that they don't know whether or not their parents usually supported a particular party. This is particularly the case with younger voters. While family socialisation obviously plays a significant part in current partisanship and voting habits, there are many voters whose political preferences cannot be accounted for in this way.

Moving beyond partisanship as party attachment to look at how voters view the different parties indicates that partisans in general have a positive basis for their attachment. They like their own party a lot and do not like other parties, or certainly like them a lot less than they do their own. There is little evidence of attachment being negative, stemming from a dislike of alternatives rather than the attraction of a particular party and this suggests partisanship is more likely to provide a stable support base for those parties who have many partisans. However, we also see from the pattern of likes and dislikes that some parties are less unattractive than others. For partisans (and for all voters) FF and SF seem apart both from one another and from the other parties. For FG, PDs, Greens and Labour this means the competition is greater and that the success of any of them will be at the expense of others rather than of FF (or SF). This of course has been the pattern of Irish politics: FF faced with a more or less fragmented opposition whose elements tend either to consume, or be consumed by, one another rather than FF.

On the evidence of our party attachment question the Irish electorate is significantly de-aligned. A majority of voters appear to be open to persuasion according to the balance of short-term forces. If these were to be neutral, FF would win most elections since that party has a disproportionately large share of partisans, and we would see few independents elected to the Dail. Beyond that, nothing much would change. In fact, FF did very well amongst partisans and non-partisans. Although in relative terms short-term influences seem to favour Independents and work against FF, in absolute terms FF won a large plurality of the vote amongst both groups but since we have no point of comparison it is not possible to say that FF, or any other party, did 'well' or

'poorly' this time amongst the non partisans. What we would have expected is that FF, as the party winning the election, and growing its vote over 1997 and 1992, did better amongst its own partisans than did FG, but as we have seen the differences here are relatively small.

While the concept of attachment is therefore helpful in examining voting patterns, this exploration of party identification in Ireland was intended to give us a view of the baseline of Irish party politics. By examining partisanship we hope to provide an indication of what an election would look like if all the short-term factors were to be neutral in their effects – providing what Stokes called a 'normal' election (Stokes, 1966). This is not really possible. This is firstly because it appears that about half of the electorate do not have a standing decision to vote for any particular party, and secondly, because we have insufficient information about what 'normally' happens in Irish elections. Many see themselves as floating voters, not necessarily available to any party but certainly available to more than one. Half of the electorate does have a bias towards one party but only one out of every two of them have anything more than a slight inclination towards a party. If we are looking for stronger predispositions we are talking about less than a quarter of electors. It is apparent that this situation was different in the past. Even 25 years ago we might have seen the great majority of voters with a bias, and half with a strong bias but no longer. Short-term factors, including assessments of government performance, the attractiveness of different leaders and the wealth of factors that are essentially candidate centred thus have the opportunity to have a big impact on the election. Our next task is to explore those.

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Table 1 Social cleavage and the vote

	Manual	Non manual	Regular Attender	Not regular attender	GAA	Not GAA	Union member	Not union member	Rural	Urban	Total %
FF	50.6	41.4	50.8	40.3	53.0	44.4	44.4	46.1	43.7	46.9	45.8
FG	18.3	21.0	25.2	14.8	23.0	19.6	20.0	18.7	12.9	26.4	20.1
Green	1.9	6.0	1.8	6.6	1.9	4.5	3.1	4.6	6.0	2.5	4.1
Lab	9.7	11.9	7.3	13.7	3.6	11.7	11.9	10.1	14.3	7.1	10.5
PD	0.9	4.9	2.7	3.8	1.8	3.3	1.9	4.3	4.8	1.6	3.1
SF	6.9	4.9	3.7	8.2	6.2	5.9	7.3	5.6	7.3	5.0	5.9
Ind	11.6	9.9	8.5	12.7	10.6	10.5	11.5	10.7	11.1	10.5	10.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	841	1071	1086	850	325	1684	607	1125	849	1118	

Source: Irish election study 2002

Table 2 Party identification in Ireland and elsewhere

	Ireland %	Canada %	USA %	GB %
Very close	8.6	9.4	15.5	13.5
Somewhat close	14.2	24.7	37.2	31.9
Not very close	2.0	3.6	5.9	3.7
Closer to one party than the others	26.0	25.7	20.1	30.4
Not close at all	49.3	36.6	21.3	20.5

Source: Ireland from Irish Election Study 2002: Questions e28, e30, e31, e33; other countries from Blais et al, 2001

Table 3 The decline of party attachment in Ireland since 1978

Year	Degree of party attachment				Total %	N
	Very close %	Fairly close %	Merely a sympathiser %	Not close at all %		
1978	13.7	28.7	22.1	35.5	100	876
1979	9.6	26.3	26.6	37.5	100	1761
1980	9.0	26.4	25.9	38.6	100	885
1981	8.7	23.4	28.3	39.7	100	1640
1982	8.0	21.4	24.2	46.4	100	1886
1983	7.5	22.3	23.8	46.4	100	1818
1984	5.7	19.5	22.3	52.6	100	1832
1985	7.8	18.9	21.0	52.3	100	1795
1986	4.8	17.6	20.4	57.2	100	1791
1987	7.7	19.1	17.9	55.3	100	1757
1988	6.1	19.0	20.1	54.7	100	1792
1989	6.0	16.4	18.8	58.8	100	3480
1990	8.0	19.3	13.1	59.6	100	1815
1991	8.0	15.3	11.9	64.8	100	1800
1992	7.2	17.1	12.0	63.7	100	1814
1993	6.3	14.6	15.5	63.6	100	1803
1994	5.7	18.2	15.5	60.7	100	2774
1999	10.7	13.2	5.2	70.8	100	503
	Very close	Somewhat close	Not very close/ Closer	Not close at all		
2002 (a)	8.6	14.2	2.2	73.9	100	2612
2002 (b)	8.6	14.2	28.0	49.3	100	2612

Source: Eurobarometers 1978-94; European Election Study 1999; and Irish Election Study 2002: qe28 and qe33. One 1978 and one 1981 Eurobarometer excluded due to different question wording.

Note: (a) Do you think of yourself as close to any political party?

(b) includes (a) plus Do you think of yourself as closer to one party than the others?

Table 4 Party of voters with a party identification, and strength of identification

	Close	Somewhat close	Not very Close/ Weak	Total
FF	55.7%	55.3%	57.4%	56.5%
FG	21.0%	21.5%	16.9%	18.9%
Green	4.0%	3.6%	6.9%	5.5%
Labour	6.9%	7.5%	9.5%	8.5%
PDs	0.7%	3.0%	3.9%	3.1%
SF	11.8%	8.1%	3.5%	6.2%
Independent	0%	1.1%	0.5%	0.6%
Others	0%	0.1%	1.5%	0.9%
Total	100	100	100	100
N	217	368	725	1358

Source: Irish Election Study 2002

Table 5 Vote choice by party identification

Vote	Party identification						
	FF	FG	Green	Lab	PD	SF	Ind/othr
FF	72.5	2.6	2.7	3.9	14.3	4.2	11.8
FG	4.5	69.3	7.3	4.8	13.0	3.3	5.9
Green	1.0	0.8	52.1	0	4.7	0	0
Lab	1.4	5.6	4.3	70.1	4.4	1.4	0
PD	1.5	2.5	0	0	32.5	0	0
SF	1.5	0.3	5.3	0.7	4.1	68.3	0
Ind/other	4.4	5.2	11.3	8.2	8.9	5.1	75.0
Did not vote	13.1	13.4	17.7	11.7	18.3	17.8	11.0
N (1318)	748	251	71	110	40	79	19

Source: Irish Election Study 2002: Questions b1, ballotq, e28,e29_1, e30,e31

Note: 43 cases where no vote was recorded are excluded.

Table 6 Father's and mother's vote when respondent was growing up

	Father	Mother
Dont know/no answer	30.0	32.7
Fianna Fail	39.5	37.9
Fine Gael	17.8	18.2
Labour	5.5	4.1
Progressive Democrats	0.2	0.1
Sinn Fein	1.2	0.7
Worker's Party/ Democratic Left	0.1	0.1
Clann na Poblachta	0.2	0.1
Clann na Talmhan	0.2	0.2
For different parties	2.3	2.7
Other	1.1	1.1
Did not vote	1.9	2.1
N	2707	2707

Source: Irish election study 2002 Questions e34, e36

Table 7 A comparison of cleavage, values and party identification models

	Null model 6 variables	Social cleavages 36 variables	Values 9 variables	Party identification 9 variables	Full model 42 variables
Vote (clogit)					
R ²	0.19	0.23	0.25	0.38	0.41
Log likelihood	-334	-320	-313	-255	-243
LR chi2	160	189	203	318	344
N	11182	11182	11823	11182	11182
Party preferences (OLS)					
R ² (adjusted)	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.20	0.22
F	29.7	6.34	25.7	44.7	11.5
N	1571	1571	1571	1571	1571
Ballot position (OLS)					
R ² (adjusted)	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.16	0.10
F	12.5	2.94	8.9	3.0	2.83
N (notional)	579	579	579	579	579

Notes: Social cleavages includes class (manual-non-manual), urban-rural, church attendance, GAA membership and union membership; values include proximity to each party on scales measuring economic left-right, social morality (abortion) and nationalism (NI); party identification includes party attachments and parental voting patterns. The dependent variables are the six parties (FF, FG, Labour, Green, PDs and SF) plus Independents/others. Vote is first preference vote, party preference is measured by each respondent's self-ascribed probability of voting for each party and ballot position is the highest preference given by each voter to each party.

All analysis uses a stacked data set with party dummies, and dummies for each social cleavage-party relation. The N for party preference is simply the stacked N divided by 7; for ballot position the smaller N reflects incomplete ballots and therefore missing data for some parties.

Source: Irish Election Study 2002

Figure 1 Elections 1932-2002

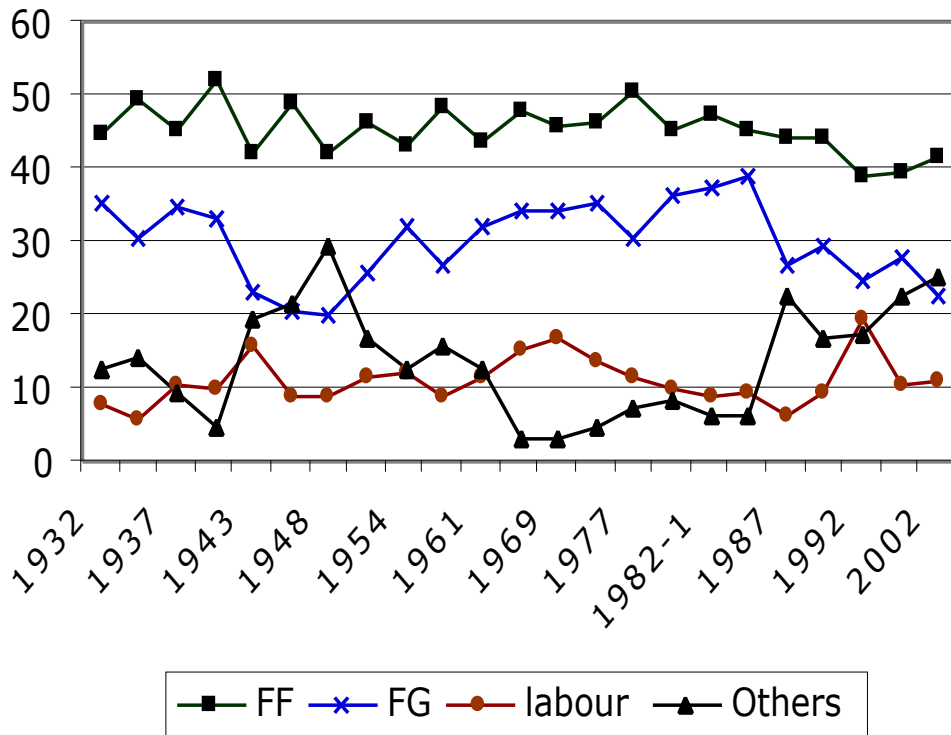
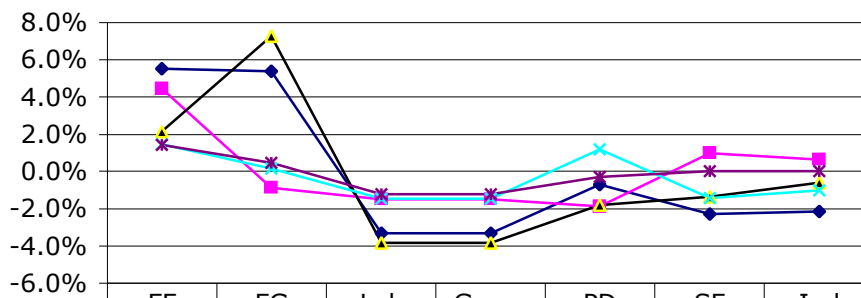


Figure 2 Impact of social cleavages on the vote



	FF	FG	Lab	Green	PD	SF	Ind
◆ Church	5.5%	5.4%	-3.3%	-3.3%	-0.7%	-2.3%	-2.1%
■ Manual	4.4%	-0.8%	-1.5%	-1.5%	-1.9%	1.0%	0.6%
▲ Rural	2.1%	7.3%	-3.8%	-3.8%	-1.8%	-1.4%	-0.6%
✕ Not union	1.5%	0.2%	-1.5%	-1.5%	1.2%	-1.4%	-1.0%
* GAA	1.4%	0.5%	-1.2%	-1.2%	-0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

◆ Church ■ Manual ▲ Rural ✕ Not union * GAA

Figure 3 Electorate's placement of parties on three ideological dimensions: 11 point scales

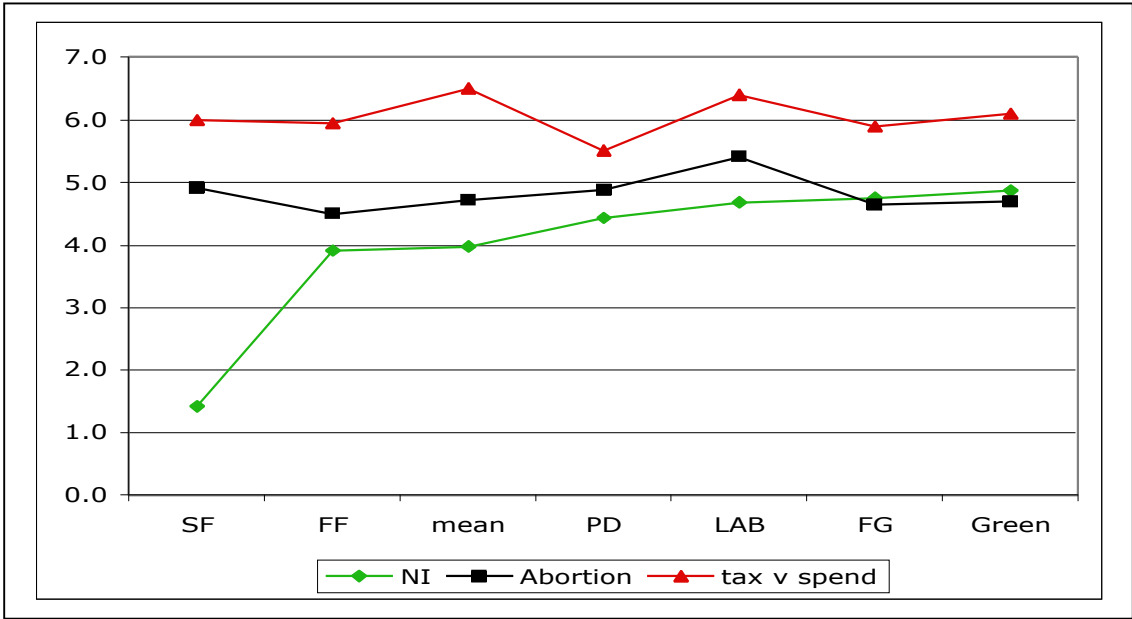


Figure 4 Levels of party attachment: Ireland in comparative perspective (CSES data)

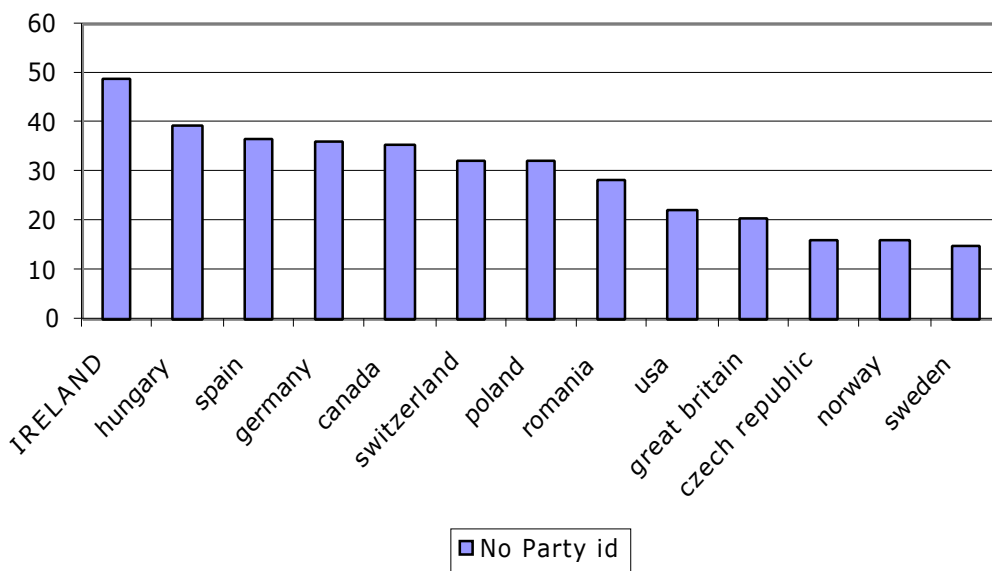


Figure 5 Proportion voting in line with party identification, by strength

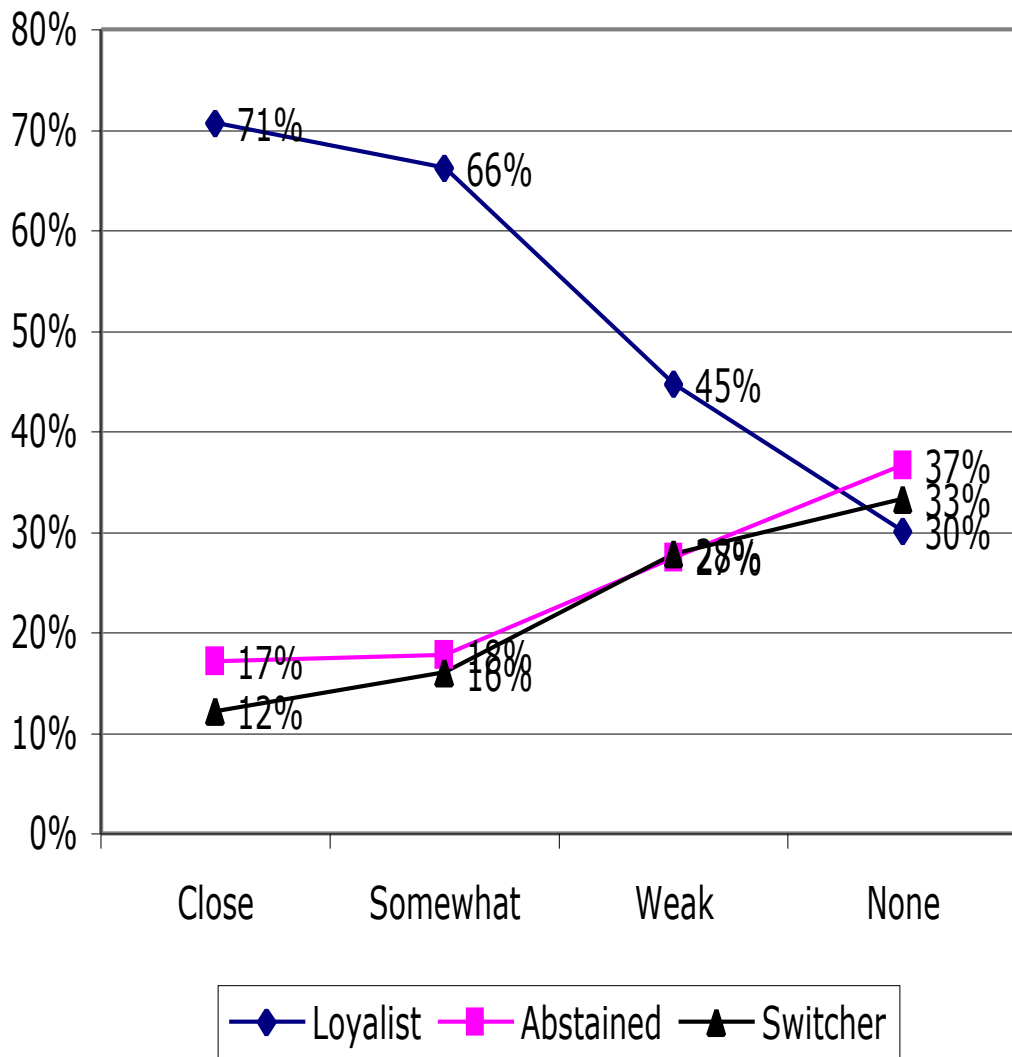
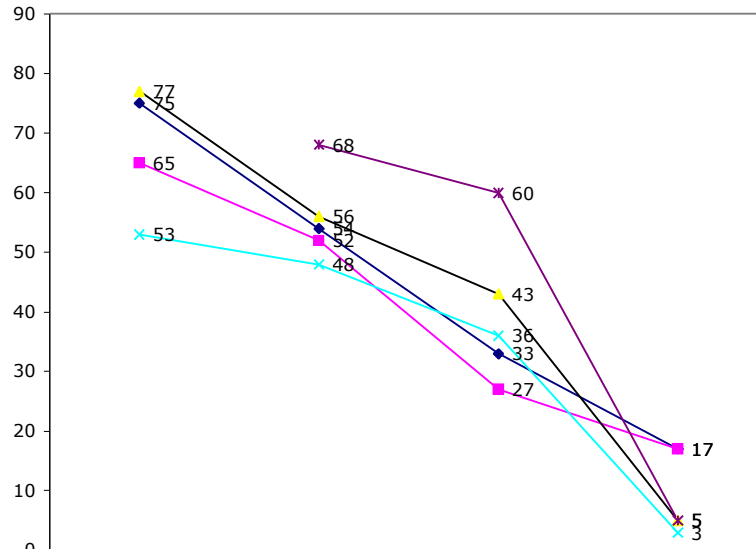


Figure 6 Solidarity by party and strength of identification



	Close	Somewhat	Weak	None
FF 2 cands	75	54	33	17
FF 3 cands	65	52	27	17
FG 2 cands	77	56	43	5
FG 3 cands	53	48	36	3
Lab 2/3 cands		68	60	5

◆ FF 2 cands
 ■ FF 3 cands
 ▲ FG 2 cands
 × FG 3 cands
 ✱ Lab 2/3 cands

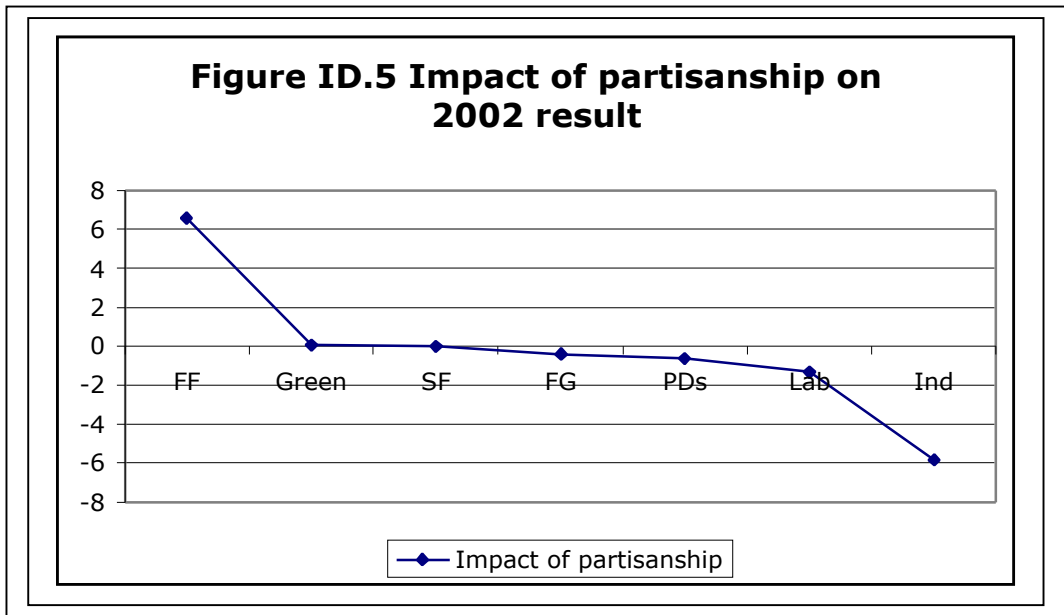
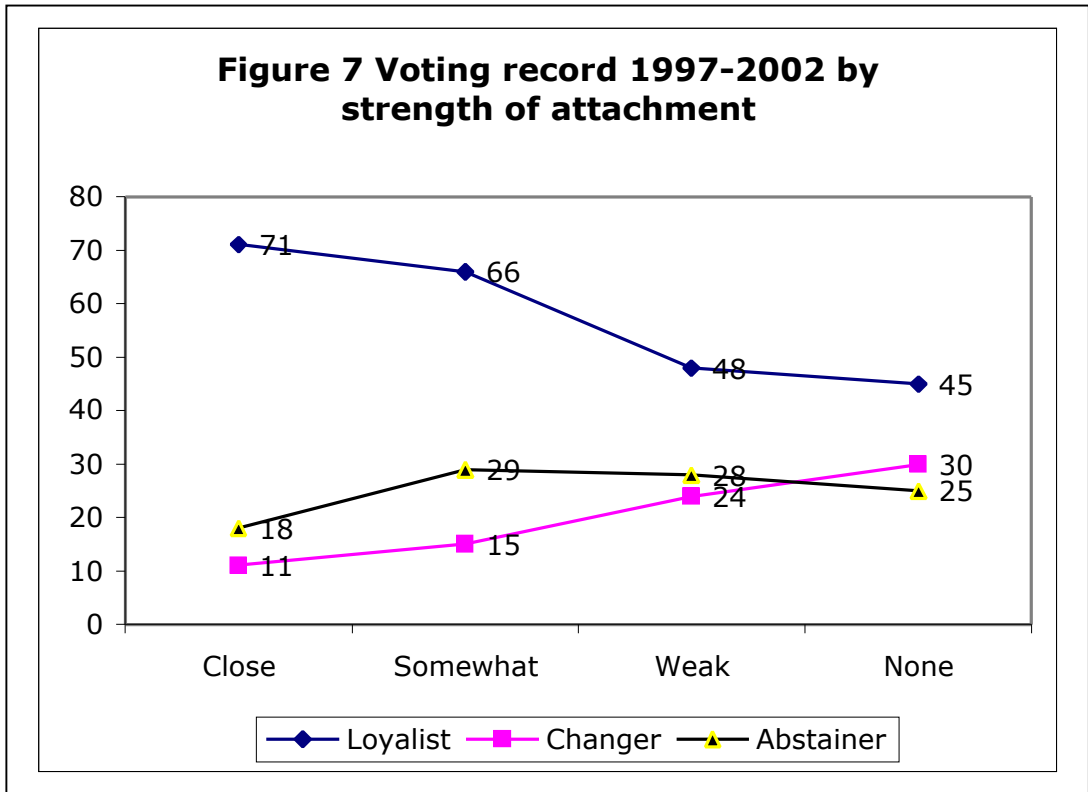
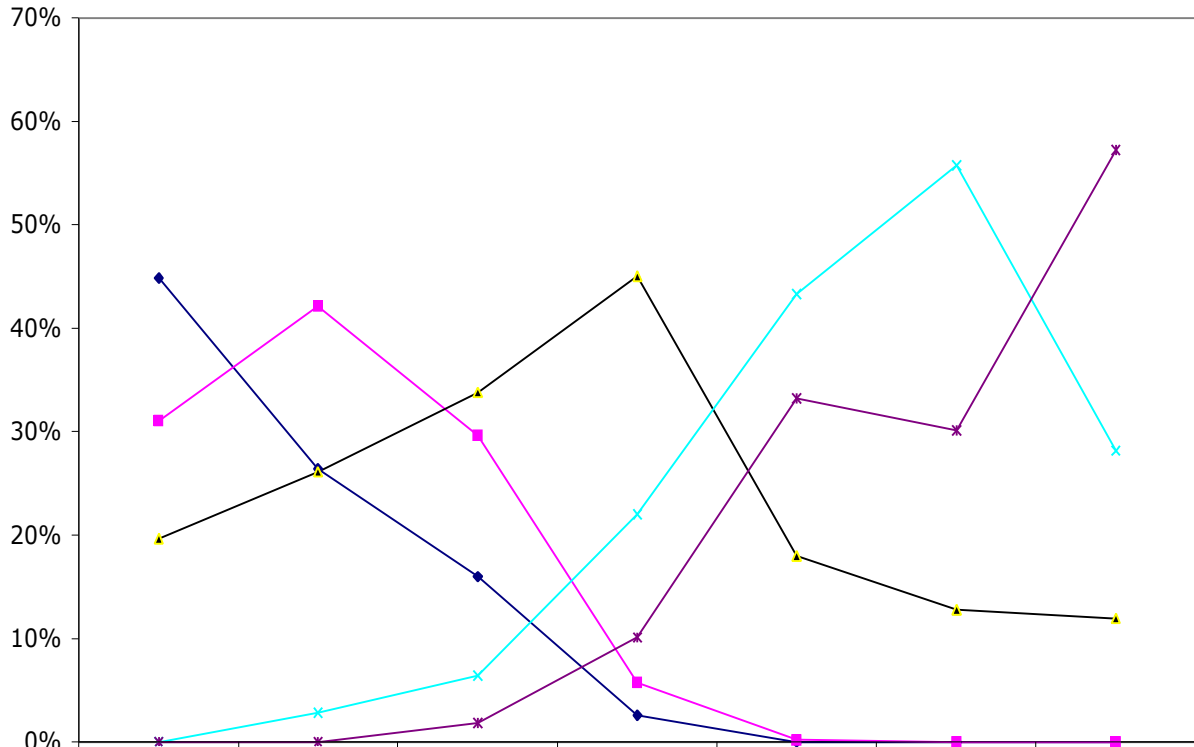


Figure 9 Strength of party attachment by Views on FF and FG



	FG	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	FF
◆ FGh FFc	45%	26%	16%	3%	0%	0%	0%
■ FGn FFc	31%	42%	30%	6%	0%	0%	0%
▲ FF=FG	20%	26%	34%	45%	18%	13%	12%
× FGn FFh	0%	3%	6%	22%	43%	56%	28%
* FGc FFh	0%	0%	2%	10%	33%	30%	57%

◆ FGh FFc ■ FGn FFc ▲ FF=FG × FGn FFh * FGc FFh

Figure 10 Multidimensional scaling representation of affective attachment to Irish parties

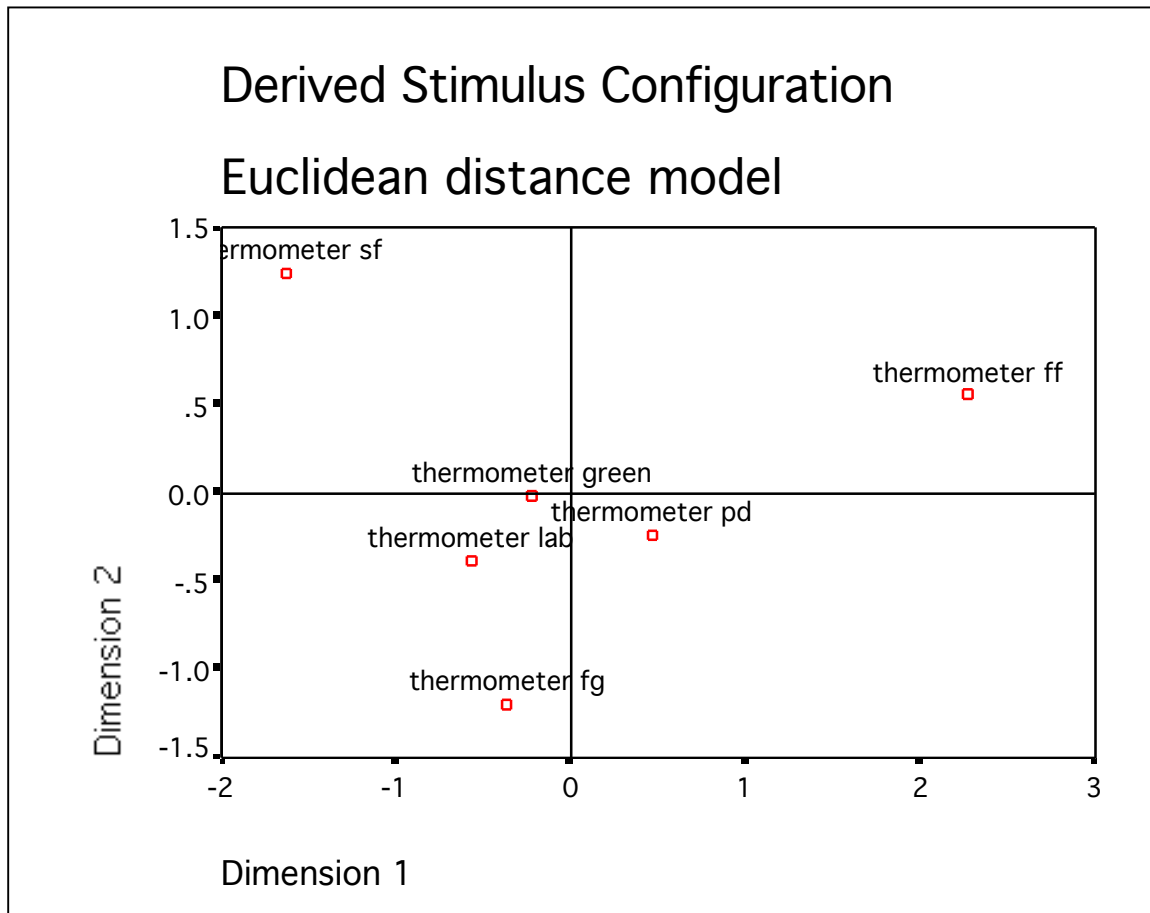


Figure 11 Family transmission of partisanship

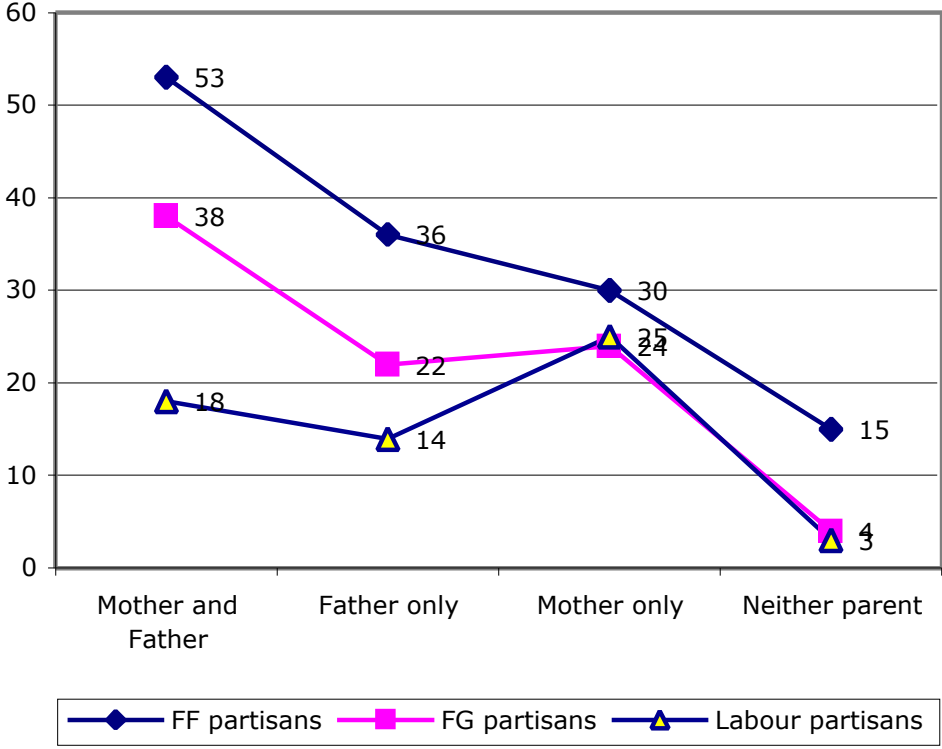


Figure 12 Family transmission of voting behaviour

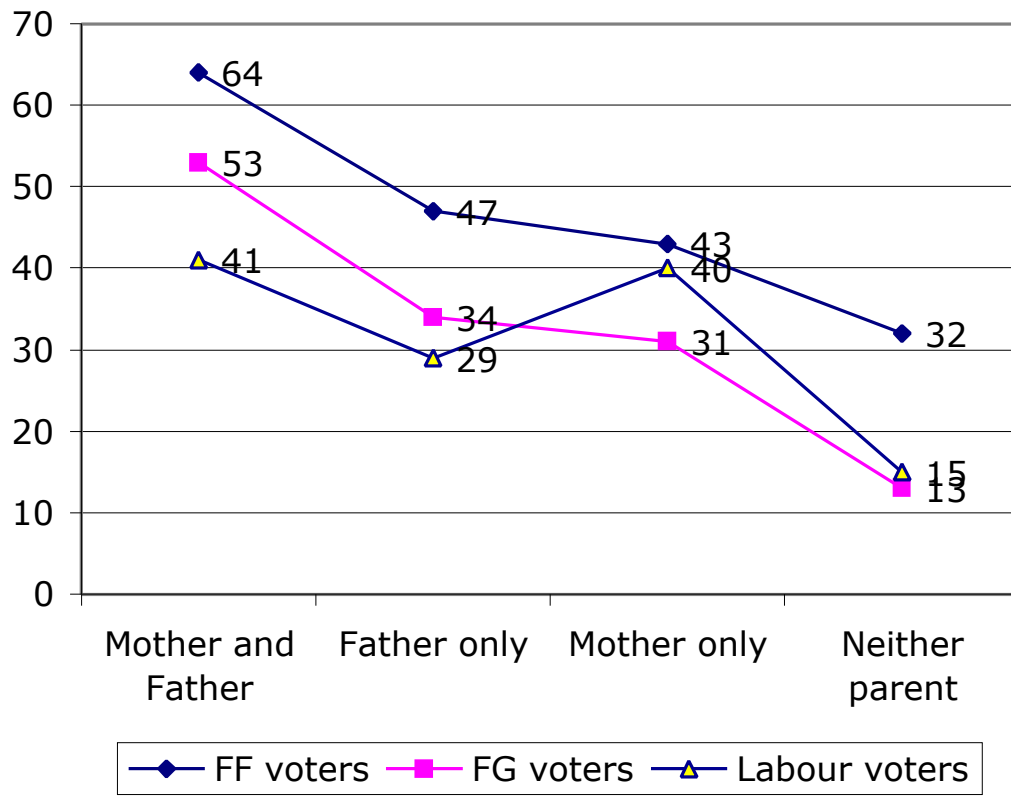
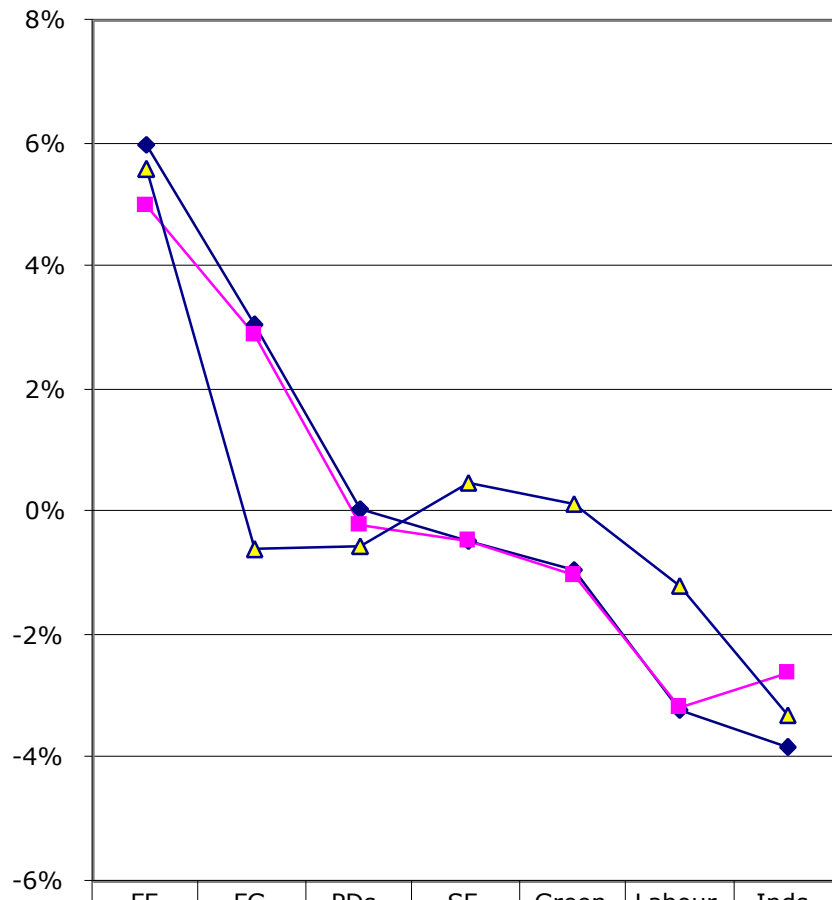


Figure 13 Impact of partisanship and family loyalties on each party's vote



	FF	FG	PDs	SF	Green	Labour	Inds
FV	6%	3%	0%	0%	-1%	-3%	-4%
MV	5%	3%	0%	0%	-1%	-3%	-3%
Partisanship	6%	-1%	-1%	1%	0%	-1%	-3%

FV MV Partisanship

Figure 14: Causal model of relationship between Fathers vote, party identification and, respectively, vote, party preference(PTV) and party placement on ballot. (Coefficients are partial correlations using a stacked data matrix)

