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COPING WITH POLICY-MAKING COMPLEXITY: ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS, DIVERSITY, AND POLICY PROBLEM-SOLVING

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ABSTRACT

COPING WITH POLICY-MAKING COMPLEXITY: ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS, DIVERSITY, AND POLICY PROBLEM-SOLVING

By

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Political thinkers have long sought to identify institutions that help produce good governance and this concern extends to recent research showing that electoral institutions influence governmental performance on a wide range of policy outcomes. In particular, countries with institutions such as proportional representation have been found to outperform countries with majoritarian institutions on a wide range of environmental, social health, and governmental performance indicators. This dissertation contributes to that line of thought by elaborating a framework that explains these results. I apply to the political arena insights from an interdisciplinary body of literature that identifies diverse perspectives as a factor enhancing the problem-solving capacity of small groups. I argue that electoral institutions influence the degree to which diverse perspectives are included in the policy-making process of a country and that this influence produces consequences important to a country's ability to deal with a wide range of policy problems.

This dissertation is dedicated to *mi familia*.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Political thinkers have long sought to identify institutions that help produce good governance. Famously, Plato promoted a government run by ascetic philosophers; Aristotle favored a hybrid of oligarchy and democracy; Hobbes recommended that power should be centralized (particularly in the hands of a benevolent monarch); and Montesquieu supported the decentralization of power with checks and balances that would stifle ambition. Many more examples exist. This dissertation project is influenced by this framework, by this search for political institutions that contribute to good governance.

A useful first step is to identify the problem that institutions are meant to address and here I define the problem in terms of its process. I ask in this project what a society can do to improve its decision-making capacity, and so I seek to identify the institutions that enhance a state's ability to deal with the related problems of human cognitive limitation, complexity, uncertainty, and the difficulty of prediction. To a great extent, this project is influenced by Karl Popper's effort to identify political institutions that promote good governance. In particular, Popper focused on the performance of democracy relative to authoritarianism. Popper described the cognitive problem faced by humans, especially as decision-makers, and how democracy improves the acquisition of knowledge:

> The position here adopted is very different from the popular . . . view of reason as a kind of 'faculty', which may be possessed and developed by different men in vastly different degrees. . . . According to our view, however, we not only owe our reason to others, but we can never excel others in our reasonableness in a way that would establish a claim to authority; authoritarianism and rationalism in our sense cannot be reconciled, since argument, which includes criticism, and the art of listening to criticism, is the basis of reasonableness. . . . Reason, like science, grows by way of mutual criticism; the only possible way of 'planning' its growth is to develop those institutions that safeguard the freedom of criticism, that is to say, the freedom of thought. (Popper 1971, 226-227)

Thus, Popper was advocating for institutions that help society deal with the complexity and uncertainty associated with the world and the limitations associated with the human mind. Institutions should enhance openness and the tolerance of criticism because these mechanisms permit humans to reach higher levels of objectivity and provide the best opportunity for approximating truth (1971, 225). Openness ensures that others can examine an individual's claims about the way the world works and this mechanism creates incentives for individuals to pursue objectivity. Popper also believed the openness is a part of a piecemeal learning process; individual claims make piecemeal contributions to the community's understanding of the world, because the community can reject a claim, accept it, or develop it. Popper is well known for applying this logic to the philosophy of science, but he also extended this idea to the political realm, claiming that democracies have an advantage over authoritarian regimes, with respect to the

development of knowledge, because they institutionalize openness and the tolerance of criticism.

In recent political science work, we can see a related preoccupation with governance. Like Popper, some of this work focuses on the relationship between democracy and governance. For example, Przeworski et al (2000) showed that electoral democracies achieve higher levels of well-being for their citizens than do authoritarian regimes. Moreover, various branches of institutional research have focused on particular institutions and particular mechanisms by which these institutions affect governmental performance. An important example of this approach focuses on the effects of presidentialism on the democratic performance. Much of this research is concerned with how presidentialism and parliamentarism affect democratic stability, but this research also touches on how these regimes affect democratic quality (e.g., Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Stepan and Skach 1993; Shugart and Carey 1992). Stepan and Skach, for example, used Vanhanen's Index of Democratization (ID) and his Index of Power Resources (IPR) to categorize countries as democratic overachievers or as democratic underachievers, and they found that presidential systems had a democratic underachiever rate 3.4 times greater than parliamentary systems, while parliamentary systems were 1.8 times more likely than presidential systems to be democratic overachievers.[1]

A more direct connection between institutions and the performance of governments comes from research on electoral systems. Decades of research shows that

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[1] The ID is based on total percentage of vote received by all parties except largest, and the percentage of population that votes. The IPR is based on degree of decentralization of nonagricultural resources, percentages of total agricultural land owned as family farms, and the percentages of the population in universities, in cities, that is literate, and that is not employed in agriculture.

electoral systems influence many areas of politics. The nucleus of this research has established that electoral institutions influence the character and nature of party systems. They influence the number and type of parties that compete and succeed in a democracy (Cox 1997; Duverger 1954; Lijphart 1994; Rae 1971; Taagepera and Shugart 1989); and they are argued to have indirect effects on virtually every other important characteristic of a democracy, including: minority representation (Bowler et al. 2003), the success of interest groups and social movements (Heidenheimer 1973; Kitschelt 1986), responsiveness to public opinion (Powell 2000), legitimacy (Banducci et al. 1999; Banducci and Karp 1999), conflict mitigation (Lijphart 1969), and governability (Pereira and Orellana 2008).

We are also learning that electoral institutions influence a broad array of policy outcomes. Electoral institutions, for example, have been credited with influencing wealth redistribution (Huber and Stephens 2001; Alesina and Glaeser 2004), environmental performance (Fredriksson and Millimet 2004), economic policy (Persson and Tabellini 2003) and corruption (Chang and Golden 2006). Indeed, based on the kinds of findings produced by this research it has been suggested that countries with institutions such as proportional representation tend to outperform countries with majoritarian institutions on a wide range of indicators of performance. Lijphart (1999), for example, suggested that little separates consensual and majoritarian systems in terms of economic performance, but consensual systems significantly outperform majoritarian systems in terms of "kinder-gentler" political outcomes. These outcomes include democratic quality (measured in several ways), social welfare, protection of the environment, criminal justice, and foreign aid. Gerring et al. (2005) argued, further, that "centripetal"

institutions (which include parliamentarism and proportional representation) are associated with higher achievement in several areas of governance, including political, economic, and human development.

A key mechanism identified by these studies is the degree of "collegiality" found in a legislature—consensual consensual systems, in general, are assumed to increase collegiality. Little has actually been said, however, about what this collegiality is and how it is linked to the quality of policies produced by governments. The goals of this dissertation are to identify concrete mechanisms by which electoral institutions affect government performance, and in doing so, to provide an overarching framework that explains a broad range of the many relationships that have already been identified between electoral institutions and policy outcomes.

This endeavor requires a move away from (or the re-definition of) the concept of collegiality, toward a focus on the concept of *diversity*. This is a concept consonant with Karl Popper's defense of democracy and openness. That is, we can view *diversity* as a form of *openness*, and as such, it should lead to a greater flow of information. A crude but useful way to think about the independent effects of diversity is to imagine that a country may employ democratic electoral processes in its decision-making, but if it is perfectly lacking in diverse agents (e.g., if everyone in this society thinks the same way), then the level of criticism and information it generates may be as limited as what is found under more authoritarian regimes. On the other hand, a democracy with a high degree of agent and discourse diversity can be seen, in this instance, as approximating a maximization of openness.

Indeed, Przeworski and his colleagues were aware of the interplay between institutions and information. They speculated on the possibility that democracies enhance the free-flow of information and hence can improve the quality of economic decisions (Przeworski 2000, 144), but they did not explore the specific mechanisms that might be involved in this process. Such information mechanisms remain largely unexplored, perhaps because of the unruly nature of the data required. Nevertheless, exploring the impact of information on the quality of policy-making may be facilitated by shifting the focus from the differences in information flows between democracies and non-democracies to the differences in information flows that exist between democracies, and more specifically, with the differences in "openness" (i.e., diversity) effectuated by electoral institutions.

The idea that diversity can affect problem solving endeavors has received ample attention from several fields (including economics, psychology, organization theory, and computer science). Varied perspectives, knowledge, skills, and approaches have been found to enhance a group's capacity for problem solving, by several mechanisms. Most of this research is focused on small groups, and accordingly, this project is in large part an attempt to extend the insights provided by this small-group literature to the larger areas of politics.

The key questions this study seeks to address, then, are the following. First, do electoral institutions significantly affect the diversity of perspectives included in the policy-making process? And, second, does this diversity affect a country's "problem-solving" capacity in noticeable ways? In this dissertation it is argued that the answer to these questions is yes. Electoral institutions do significantly shape the diversity of

perspectives included in the policy-making process and this diversity produces two concrete mechanisms that affect a society's capacity for policy-related problem-solving.

In short, through their influence on the diversity of the legislature and the executive, electoral institutions first influence the diversity of the political discourse produced by elites and that captured by the media. This mechanism influences how quickly political issues are debated and addressed. Via a second mechanism, majoritarian systems tend to produce a style of political competition that privileges short-term solutions to problems. This mechanism produces more aggressive, short-term policy responses to problems. Both of these mechanisms produce important consequences for public opinion and policy outcomes.

Plan of Book

In Chapter 2, I elaborate a theory explaining how electoral institutions affect the diversity of the political information environment and consequently influence public learning and policymaking. I use small-group and public opinion literature to derive three mechanisms by which ideological diversity can influence policy innovation and long-term planning.

In Chapter 3, I provide empirical evidence showing how electoral institutions influence political information and media coverage. I use data from legislative speeches, the Comparative Manifestos Project (Klingemann et al. 2006), and perform a content analysis of New Zealand's largest newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*, to provide empirical evidence showing that electoral institutions do influence political debate and the information environment. New Zealand's experience with major electoral reform (a move from a majoritarian to a proportional representation system) increased the diversity

of perspectives expressed in the political system and that covered by the media. Significantly more coverage was given to minor parties and many of the "marginalized" issues they promoted. The diversity of solutions offered for several policy problems also increased. I also show that that on issues related to personal security (such as law and order) New Zealand's political discourse under the Westminster electoral system suffers from groupthink and can be described as more aggressive than the political discourse emerging after New Zealand's adoption of a more proportional electoral system.

In Chapter 4, I investigate how the information effects produced by electoral institutions influence public learning. If electoral institutions affect the kind of information that citizens can access, then we should expect them to influence citizen preferences on various issues. I found this is the case especially for what I call "sensitive" issues. In particular, minor parties in more permissive electoral institutions (e.g., proportional representation) have more space to introduce controversial or sensitive issues into the political discourse. This means that issues such as same-sex rights and environmental protection will be debated earlier in countries with electoral institutions that permit a more diverse political discourse. Consequently, citizens in countries with parliamentary, proportional electoral systems tend to show more tolerance toward sensitive issues such as homosexuality, abortion, and euthanasia, and they tend to be more supportive of protecting the environment. Furthermore, because majoritarian systems limit dissent, relative to more permissive systems, the public is more likely to favor aggressive, short-term responses to policy problems related to personal security (such as crime).

In Chapter 5, I investigate how the information mechanisms influence policy problem-solving. First I consider how electoral institutions can influence policy innovation, generally through their influence on how early certain issues can be debated. If electoral institutions affect a society's flow of information, and thereby the kind of information that elites have access to, and if they affect the preferences of citizens, then we should expect them to influence how quickly governments take action on certain issues. I show that countries with electoral institutions that permit the earlier discussion of sensitive issues take earlier action on those issues. For example, countries with proportional representation systems tend to act earlier on issues such as environmental protection and the adoption of civil union legislation.

A second policy effect I consider in this chapter is how limitations on dissent encourage the advancement of short-term solutions, especially on issues related to personal security. I show that the mechanism of groupthink helps explain why countries with majoritarian institutions are more likely to use more aggressive policies to deal with problems in the areas of law and order and foreign affairs.

In Chapter 6, I conclude by arguing that my findings help explain the relationships uncovered by past research and they generate important implications. For example, I ask if the evidence presented here suggests that some countries have competitive advantages over others as a result of the mechanisms described in this study. I also discuss a variety of points that should be addressed by future work, including how diversity may not always be a positive influence and how different kinds of diversity can produce differing results.

Chapter 2 Electoral Institutions, Diversity, and Policy Problem Solving

When attempting to solve problems, humans face a number of limitations. We suffer from numerous biases and cognitive constraints (Nisbett and Ross 1980; Holland et al. 1989); moreover, we often face difficult decision-making situations, i.e., multi-dimensional and highly nonlinear problems (Senge 2006). In this study, I claim that electoral institutions affect a society's capacity for problem-solving by affecting the diversity of perspectives that are included at various stages of the policy-making process. Many of the insights for this claim come from interdisciplinary research (from fields including economics, psychology, organization theory, and computer science) suggesting that diversity provides problem-solving benefits to small groups. In these fields, heterogeneity in perspectives, knowledge, skills, and approaches has been found to enhance a group's capacity for problem solving, through a variety of mechanisms.

This study represents an effort to extend the insight of such findings to the political arena, by exploring whether countries with electoral institutions that more readily permit the expression of diverse points of view (e.g., systems with proportional representation) possess a problem-solving advantage over countries with electoral systems that limit the expression of diversity (i.e., majoritarian systems). Because of time constraints I narrow my focus to only a few mechanisms by which diversity generates positive consequences for state policy-making.[2] I focus on two mechanisms

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[2] Indeed, there are other mechanisms of diversity (that produce both positive and negative consequences) which will have to be explored in future efforts. I discuss some of these in greater detail in the concluding chapter.

discussed extensively in the small-group literatures, and on a third mechanism that can be deduced from public opinion research. These mechanisms can be considered to overlap, but it should also become clear that each of them helps to directly explain particular features of political debate and policy making.

Mechanisms of Diversity

The first mechanism suggests that the inclusion of broader range of perspectives in the decision making process takes advantage of human variation in interpretation and heuristics. In this view, diversity increases the probability that a person with the right perspective to solve a particular problem will become available in a given decision-making situation (Page 2007). This mechanism implies that breakthroughs and innovations are the result of an individual in a group applying a novel perspective to a problem. The power of this mechanism is exemplified by studies such as Hong and Page (2004) and Page (2007), which used simulations to demonstrate various conditions under which a functionally diverse group with less ability will outperform a homogeneous group with higher ability.

A second mechanism relevant to problem-solving endeavors is derived from the expectation that diversity influences the nature of dissent in a group or society. It is assumed that compliance and conformity are more likely to occur in homogeneous rather than heterogeneous groups, or conversely, that heterogeneous groups should experience higher levels of dissent from minorities (De Dreu and West 2001; Hoffman and Maier 1961). Although cohesiveness and conformity in small groups can facilitate coordination and task performance, much research in psychology focuses on their several downsides. Janis (1972), for example, observed that conformity pressures and extreme concurrence

seeking may lead to defective decision making with sometimes disastrous consequences. Strains to uniformity, or "Groupthink", were found to cause the adoption of a preferred solution without adequate consideration of information or alternatives. Similarly, Hackman and Morris (1975) argued that one reason why groups sometimes fail to outperform individuals is their premature movement to consensus—with dissenting opinions being suppressed or dismissed.

Much research focuses on mechanisms that can mitigate groupthink, and here I focus on a mechanism that is particularly relevant to the political arena: the mechanism of dissent. Dissent can mitigate groupthink in several ways (Nemeth and Nemeth-Brown 2003). As famously documented by researchers such as Solomon Asch (1955, 1956) dissent can diminish the negative influences of social pressures. For example, large proportions of participants in Asch's studies chose incorrect answers to easy questions when the rest of the group unanimously chose the wrong answer. The presence of even one dissenter reduced conformity to less than 10%. Dissent also stimulates thinking about issues or problems from multiple perspectives (Nemeth 1986). Minority viewpoints, even when wrong, can stimulate a search for information by creating a tension that the majority frequently wants to resolve, generally by taking the minority members' perspectives into consideration. This act tends to stimulate reappraisal of the situation and consideration of more features of the situation.

Small-group studies tend to find that these first two mechanisms increase creative thought and solutions. Group homogeneity stimulates more conventional thought while group heterogeneity and exposure to dissent stimulates more novel thinking. In particular, people exposed to dissent develop ideas that are statistically infrequent. I

argue that these first two mechanisms are largely translatable to the broader political arena. They should operate in the decision-making processes undertaken by government elites.

Information and the Public

I also identify a third, citizen-level mechanism linked to diversity. We should expect that the information produced by political systems influences the political sophistication of the public. In general, political systems with diverse sources of information should increase the amount of information available to citizens and this should be beneficial to voters, especially in their comprehension of issues and their development of preferences. I focus on public opinion in this study because much research suggests that public opinion produces important effects on policy-making (see, for example, seminal studies by Page and Shapiro (1983) and Monroe (1983)).

Experimental studies provide solid evidence for the claim that access to information benefits individuals. One particularly interesting and relevant study comes from Druckman (2004) who found that framing effects (the degree to which an individual's preferences can be altered simply by asking a question in a particular manner) can be mitigated by contextual factors such as elite competition and heterogeneous group deliberation. That is, individuals will tend to be less affected by framing if they are exposed to "counter-framing" by opposing elites, or if they engage in interpersonal debates that introduce alternative perspectives. At the mass-level, Gordon and Segura (1997) argued and demonstrated that because electoral institutions shape the availability, clarity, and usefulness of political information, citizens in multiparty

countries tend to outperform citizens in countries with fewer parties on indicators of political knowledge.

The key questions I seek to answer in this study, then, are the following. First, do electoral institutions significantly affect the diversity of perspectives included in the policy-making process? And, second, does this diversity produce some of the mechanisms found to occur in small groups in ways that affect a country's "problem-solving" capacity? In this dissertation it is argued that the answer to these questions is yes. Through their influence on the diversity of the legislature and the executive, electoral institutions first influence the diversity of the political discourse produced by elites and that captured by the media. This mechanism influences how quickly political issues are debated and addressed. Via a second mechanism, the limitation of dissent, majoritarian systems tend to produce groupthink, and this produces a style of political competition that privileges short-term/survival-oriented solutions to problems. This mechanism produces more aggressive, short-term policy responses to problems. Both of these mechanisms produce important consequences for public opinion and policy outcomes.

Electoral Institutions Influence Elite Diversity

The question of whether electoral institutions influence the diversity of perspectives included in the policy-making process is answered by perhaps one of the most extensive bodies of literature. Decades of research confirm that electoral institutions impact the amount of diversity that is expressed at various stages of the policy-making process, including 1) the campaign process, 2) the legislature, 3) the executive, and ultimately 4) within the actual society.

Electoral institutions are expected to influence the information produced by the political system, first, by influencing the heterogeneity of party systems. This is, of course, the Duvergerian theme at the core of electoral studies. Countries with institutions such as proportional representation (PR) tend to have more parties contesting elections (Katz 1997); they also tend have more parties winning seats in the legislature (Duverger 1954; Cox 1997; Lijphart 1994; Rae 1971); and more parties in the legislature also ensures that more issue dimensions will be contested (Lijphart 1999). As noted by Powell (2000), PR is also associated with committee rules facilitating opposition influence in the legislature, and executives in PR systems tend to include more parties, through coalition governments (Blais and Carty 1987). Consequently, we should expect proportional systems to increase the diversity of issues discussed in a political system and also the various solutions offered for given policy problems.

A second set of expectations on the way in which electoral systems can influence information processes follow early assertions by both Duverger (1954) and Downs (1957) and have been elaborated from a variety of theoretical perspectives (e.g., Cox 1990; Inglehart 1990: p. 270-2). It is generally expected that majoritarian/pluralitarian electoral systems produce greater centripetal incentives that encourage politicians and parties to gravitate toward the median voter's preferences and this tendency should limit the range of political discourse.

According to Downs, majoritarian institutions should also encourage parties to adopt "catch-all" strategies, where they try to appeal to the greatest number of voters by employing tactics such as ambiguity and emphasizing popular issues and positions while avoiding those that are controversial. Thus, two-party systems are expected to provide

less policy information and encourage voters to base evaluations of parties on non-ideological/non-policy factors, such as the horse race – who is winning or moving in the latest poll – and the personal characteristics of the candidates.

These incentives contrast sharply with the promulgation incentives produced by multiparty systems. Parties operating under proportional representation do not have to seek voters by gravitating to the median voter's position, but instead can win seats by capturing enough support to overcome a relatively small electoral threshold. In this case, parties have a greater incentive to distinguish themselves from one another and they will therefore promulgate more distinct policy programs. Again, we should not expect that parties in majoritarian systems will always avoid discussing sensitive issues, but we should expect that parties in proportional systems (especially minor parties) will be relatively freer to explore sensitive issues.

There are claims that two party systems are not particularly convergent (Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Grofman 2004; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) and multiparty systems may not be particularly divergent (Lin et al. 1999). In general, however, we should expect that two party systems are more convergent than multiparty systems. In a study that compared levels of convergence and divergence across electoral systems rather than in a single system—as virtually all other studies have done—Dow (2001) found that parties and candidates in the majoritarian/pluralitarian systems are located significantly closer to the center than parties and candidates in proportional systems. Thus, while parties in majoritarian systems may not gravitate exactly to the center, Dow's study suggests that the breadth of political discourse will, nevertheless, tend to be wider in proportional systems than in pluralitarian systems.

The diversity produced by electoral institutions also reshapes the diversity found in the society. Downs suggested that "in a plurality structure, since a two-party system is encouraged and the two parties usually converge, voters' tastes may become relatively homogeneous in the long run; whereas the opposite effect may occur in a proportional representation structure" (1957, 125). Evidence for this effect comes from Norris' (2004, 119-121) finding that cleavage politics are stronger under PR than under majoritarian systems. That is, majoritarian systems produce more centrist voting patterns than proportional systems.

Thus, based upon the above dynamics, it is expected that electoral institutions will particularly affect public preferences on "sensitive" issues and "sensitive" policy positions. Formally, my conceptualization of sensitivity involves two concerns. First, sensitive issues and sensitive policy positions are those which politicians find more difficult to discuss. Many of these kinds of issues and positions can only be introduced by minor parties. Second, sensitivity is a time-dependent concept. An issue that is sensitive at a particular point in time is one that could be ordinary in another. For example, an issue like racial equality was once a sensitive issue in most countries and today it is largely taken for granted that discrimination based on race should be illegal. More recently, an issue like homosexuality appears to be undergoing the transition from sensitive issue to ordinary.

It should be emphasized that I am not suggesting that this evolution of issues does not occur in majoritarian systems. I am suggesting, rather, that the evolution is more rapid under electoral institutions that facilitate the expression of diverse ideological perspectives. All democratic systems permit the flow of information, but electoral

institutions such as proportional representation should facilitate the discussion of sensitive issues and the expression of sensitive policy positions on various issues, enough to affect public consideration of such issues and positions, and enough that electoral institutions can help explain the variation in attitudes towards sensitive issues that exists across countries.

Electoral Institutions, Dissent, and Reactionary Policies

Not only should we find a greater degree of diversity under PR systems, but I argue further that majoritarian/pluralitarian systems are more limiting of dissent and are therefore more likely to suffer from groupthink. For many issues, political competition encourages the largest parties to appeal to survival-oriented motives of voters and this approach often engenders a reactionary style of policy making, especially for issues linked to personal security. Dissent can mitigate this dynamic, but in majoritarian systems dissent is limited and marginalized.

If we assume that survival is at the core of human motivation (Maslow 1943), then it is reasonable to expect that parties and candidates in all political systems have an incentive to compete for support by exploiting survival-oriented motivations. Majoritarian systems, however, tend to exacerbate this phenomenon because they limit dissent. Winning a plurality of votes requires that parties in majoritarian systems avoid sensitive topics and solutions, and also that they emphasize "safe" (valence) issues and solutions. Perhaps the easiest place to look for safe issues and solutions is along a survival-security dimension. In majoritarian systems, moreover, the kind of political debate that tends to emerge from this emphasis on survival often takes on a "one-upsmanship" dynamic, especially in issue areas such as law and order and economic

security. For example, candidates may seek to emphasize their "tough-on-crime" credentials and suggest more and more punitive measures for dealing with crime, they may attack one another for not doing enough to keep gas prices down, or they may attack each other for suggesting that taxes may need to be raised.

Maslow (1943) suggested that abundance and security will decrease the monopolization of consciousness by survival needs, and here it is suggested that diversity and dissent also produce mitigating effects. Under most decision-making situations, it is perhaps impossible to achieve complete consensus and a contrarian approach is always likely to be present and supported by at least a small proportion of a group or population. Whether or not this contrarian position is "correct," it can serve a useful purpose by introducing criticisms and alternative solutions that deepen deliberation. In a multi-party setting, these contrarian positions are more likely to be represented by a legislative party, they are more likely to receive considerable public attention, and they are ultimately more likely to become part of the decision-making calculus.

In two-party systems, on the other hand, contrarian positions are more frequently ignored, especially if a super-majority of the public prefers an emotional response. Both major parties will likely adopt the response preferred by a super-majority of the citizenry, and the contrarian response is likely to be marginalized. For example, if a super-majority of the public supports the use of capital punishment, low gasoline taxes, or opposes same-sex marriage, then major parties in majoritarian systems will likely adopt those positions. To a great extent, thus, parties in majoritarian systems have a greater incentive to follow the preferences of a majority rather than lead with alternative ideas. They will alter their position on an issue only when public (or a powerful lobby's) support for that position

has risen above a certain level (perhaps, somewhere around a near majority). It can be expected that the public responds to this dynamic by accepting, in the main, that survival-oriented approaches are the most legitimate and "correct," while also viewing contrarian ideas as less legitimate and eccentric.

As a rough example, the American public may believe that gas should be inexpensive because both major parties say it should be, and yet the fact that taxes are high in most other advanced industrial democracies suggests that the idea of higher gas taxes is at least worthy of debate. In the U.S. setting, any party suggesting that gasoline taxes should be raised (to help prevent global warming, to reduce dependency on foreign oil suppliers, or for any number of other reasons) hurts its chances of winning an election. In a multiparty setting, a small party supporting gasoline taxes can win representation with a small proportion of support and therefore can take the risky position that voters may not want to hear.

Chapter 3 Electoral Institutions and Information Diversity

As argued in the previous chapter, because electoral institutions affect political competition they also influence the nature of political communication. Here I concentrate on how electoral institutions influence information diversity in the political discourse and in the media. The idea that electoral institutions influence political information has already been suggested in the literature. Downs (1957) hypothesized about this relationship, specifically noting that two-party systems would tend to encourage message convergence between competitors, whereas message divergence would tend to occur in a proportional representation structure. Since Downs, several studies (including for example Gordon and Segura (1997) and Westholm and Niemi (1992)) have assumed that electoral institutions influence the political information environment, and consequently various elements of public opinion and behavior.

Despite this attention, the relationship between electoral institutions and political information has not been formally examined, and this result is likely an artifact of empirical circumstances. For the most part, electoral systems vary and provide empirical leverage only cross- or sub-nationally, while substantial variations across time (major electoral reforms) are relatively rare. Furthermore, while media systems certainly vary cross-nationally, linguistic barriers and confounding cultural variation have sharply limited cross-national comparative research on political media (Curran and Park 2000; Hallin and Mancini 2004). To overcome these obstacles, I provide evidence for these claims through an analysis of New Zealand, which underwent an electoral reform from a plurality system to proportional representation in the 1990s and experienced all of the

expected party system effects. This case provides a unique quasi-experimental opportunity to gain empirical leverage on the expected effects of electoral systems on political discourse and media coverage of politics.

The empirical evidence presented in this chapter shows that electoral systems do affect the nature of political information produced by the political system and the information reported in the media. These effects include relatively intuitive relationships (e.g., if an electoral system encourages a more fragmented and dispersed party system it will also encourage a more diverse political discourse and news agenda), but it also includes various effects that are consonant with the spatial dynamics described by Downs. Finally, the lower levels of diversity in majoritarian systems (in relation to proportional systems) are associated with lower levels of dissent, and this dynamic encourages the formulation of more aggressive discourse, especially on issues related to personal security.

Electoral Institutions and Political Information

As discussed in chapter 2, the theoretical preconditions for my hypotheses relating the electoral system and political information are the relationships between the electoral institution and the party system. To briefly review these preconditions, electoral institutions are expected to influence the information produced by the political system, first, by influencing the heterogeneity of party systems, and thereby we should expect proportional systems to increase the diversity of issues discussed in a political system and also the various solutions offered for given policy problems.

Second, electoral systems can influence information processes through spatial incentives that encourage politicians and parties to gravitate toward or away from the

median voter's preferences and this tendency should limit the range of political discourse. Moreover, these parties will attempt to resemble one another and will adopt a catch-all strategy, where they try to appeal to the greatest number of voters by employing tactics such as ambiguity and emphasizing popular issues and positions while avoiding those that are controversial. Thus, in comparison to multi-party systems, two-party systems are expected to provide less policy information and encourage voters to base evaluations of parties on non-ideological/non-policy factors, such as the horse race and the personal characteristics of the candidates.

The final precondition is derived from the expectation that diversity can mitigate the problem of groupthink, especially by facilitating minority dissent. Minority viewpoints are important because they stimulate divergent attention and thought, and thus deepen deliberation and encourage more complete and innovative solutions to problems. I frame this last expectation in reciprocal terms. That is, we should find a greater degree of dissent under PR systems, in relation to Majoritarian systems, but because majoritarian systems reduce dissent I expect them to encourage a form of groupthink.

As we will see, groupthink in this case is characterized by a style of political competition that privileges reactionary solutions to problems. That is, majoritarian systems encourage parties to seek votes by emphasizing survival-oriented issues and solutions, and they marginalize contrarian/dissenting perspectives. This dynamic is particularly visible for issues related to personal security, such as law and order and national security. For example, candidates may seek to emphasize their "tough-on-crime" credentials and suggest more and more punitive measures for dealing with crime, or they may attack one another for not doing enough to keep gas prices down.

In light of the discussion below of the New Zealand case, I frame these expectations in terms of a reform from a standard plurality system to a standard proportional representation system. Broadly, a move from a plurality electoral system to a proportional representation system encourages a more fragmented party system with parties as a group advocating a more diverse and dispersed set of policy positions. After long serving as a better example of the two-party / plurality / majoritarian Westminster model than even the original (Lijphart 1984), New Zealand underwent a reform process in the mid-1990s leading ultimately to use of a new mixed-member proportional system based roughly on the German model. In New Zealand's post-reform system, parties can win seats with 5% of the national vote (or less, if they can win a single-member district). To reach this threshold and its electoral rewards, small parties can seek out fairly small niches of ideology or policy space, picking at the major parties from all sides. Moreover, the major parties may find it relatively advantageous to fight off attacks from their ideological flanks, rather than compete with each other for the center. In general then, we should expect parties as a whole to become more programmatic in post-reform New Zealand.

While New Zealand's reform has had a number of consequences, some anticipated and some not (Barker et al. 2001; Boston et al. 2000; Vowles et al. 1998; Vowles et al. 2002), there is little debate as to whether the basic expected consequences – more political parties, more programmatic parties, etc. – have been observed. Below, I revisit some of these consequences and compare them with consequences for political news coverage.

Party Systems and the Media

With respect to the media system, I argue that the media in New Zealand abide by the principal of *political parallelism*, according to which the media tend to reflect or parallel the party system. Simply put, if an electoral reform induces changes in the party system, we should expect to see parallel changes in the political news. Parallelism demands that the media demonstrate responsiveness to changes in the party system. Therefore, as a party grows or shrinks in popular support, coverage of that party and its policies should also grow or shrink.

The notion of parallelism comes from Hallin and Mancini (2004). Their study represents a substantial advance in the comparative study of politics and the media, and appears to be the only prior study that explicitly notes the relationships between political institutions and media systems. Focusing on North American and West European cases, they group countries into three broad cultural / institutional "systems" – *Liberal*, *Democratic Corporatist*, and *Polarized Pluralist* (these have geographic identities as well: respectively, *North Atlantic*, *North/Central European*, and *Mediterranean*) – which they note have partial parallels in Lijphart's (1984, 1999) notions of *majoritarian* and *consensual* government. Their Liberal systems – the United States, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom – in addition to all being Anglophone, also are broadly majoritarian systems in Lijphart's formulation, especially in their electoral and party systems.[3] Countries in the other two Hallin/Mancini groupings are all broadly consensual nations in

[3] Though Ireland, with single transferable vote and a multiparty system is at least a partial exception.

continental Europe, all using some form of proportional representation and supporting multiple parties.

Prior to its electoral reform and subsequent party system changes, New Zealand met all of Hallin and Mancini's criteria for a Liberal media system. Hallin and Mancini note that the Liberal systems all have media systems in which the parallelism is *internal*, meaning that each media outlet is pluralistic in its coverage and each provides a full reflection of the political environment.[4] In the continental systems, parallelism is largely *external*, meaning that outlets are tied to particular partisan viewpoints and pluralism is achieved at a systemic level. My claim is conditioned on the presence of internal pluralism as, certainly, are my empirical tests using a single media outlet in New Zealand.

This brings us to formal expectations about how electoral reform affects political information. Combining the theoretical precondition of media parallelism with theoretical preconditions on the party system effects of electoral reform produces six general hypotheses. Framing these hypotheses to parallel the reform in New Zealand from plurality to proportional representation, they are as follows:

> **H1:** Relative shares of media attention allocated to political parties will be responsive to parties' expected seat share, under both plurality rule and proportional representation.

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[4] Here the United Kingdom is a partial exception; I also return to this below

H2: The effective number of parties, as represented by media attention, will be greater under proportional representation.

H3: The media attention given to specific issues (relative to horse race and other non-issue coverage) will be greater under proportional representation.

H4: The relative media attention given to "new politics" issues and policy positions will be greater under proportional representation.

H5: The dispersion of policy positions discussed (or solutions offered) on any given issue, weighted by media attention to those positions, will be greater under proportional representation.

H6: There will be more reactionary discourse especially on issues related to personal security.

Empirical Investigation

As noted, I use the quasi-experiment of the New Zealand electoral reform as the setting for the empirical investigation. While not a case in the Hallin and Mancini study, pre-reform New Zealand is a clear example of their Liberal model. I therefore expect the hypotheses to be reflected in the pre- and post-reform content of any given newspaper, ceteris paribus. For this study, I examined the election coverage in the *New Zealand Herald*, the largest circulation newspaper in New Zealand. The *Herald* has the additional feature of not having been a participant in "public journalism" reforms undertaken by

other papers at the same time, allowing for a clear separation between my explanation and that of McGregor et al. 2000—which I will describe further below.

To get clear comparisons of pre- and post-reform media coverage, I focus primarily on the elections of 1990 and 1999. During the election of 1993, there was already some anticipation of possible reform (including the referendum that would introduce a new system in the next election), so this election may not give a clear indication of pre-reform behavior. Conversely, during the election of 1996 there was no experience with the new institutions, so it may be unreasonable to expect behavior to have yet approached equilibrium. Primary data, then, are based on content taken from the *New Zealand Herald's* special campaign coverage for the three-week period prior to the 1990 and 1999 elections. For almost all the days analyzed in this period there were two pages of special campaign coverage that appeared each day, and this format remained conveniently consistent across the years examined.[5] I provide more details of specific measurements in the hypothesis testing discussions below.

The Distribution of Media Attention to Political Parties

The first set of hypotheses make predictions about how media attention will be distributed to political parties relative to their expected electoral and parliamentary strength. I measure media attention as a simple count of articles or editorials in the *Herald* election coverage sample that mention each political party. Election results, votes

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[5] It is worth noting that the only records of the *Herald* available prior to 1997 were microfiche versions stored at the Library of Congress, which had to be copied and manually coded. As a result, each data point was relatively expensive.

or seats as appropriate, serve as the relevant comparison standard.[6] These data are shown in Table 3.1. First note that the electoral result data comport completely with standard theoretical preconditions. There are clearly fewer parties winning representation under plurality, in 1990, and more winning representation under proportional representation, in 1999. To put this more formally, I look at the standard measure of *effective number of parties* winning representation in the legislature, which rose from 1.74 in 1990 to 3.46 in 1999.

With respect to the first two hypotheses, the evidence supports the notion that media attention is positively related to expected seat share and that minor parties receive more coverage under proportional representation. In Table 3.1, we can see that media coverage abides by the Duvergerian effect toward more parties in media coverage. The effective number of parties receiving mentions in the media rose from 2.54 to 5.78.[7] In fact, it appears that the norms of media neutrality cause the Duvergerian difference to be more dramatic in media coverage than that reflected in actual votes. The media depicted 3.24 more parties after reform while the election results reflected only 1.72 more parties.

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[6] Media attention is delivered *before* votes and seats, of course, but the actual results are completely reasonable estimates of what results were expected weeks before the election.

[7] Hayward and Rudd (2000) report a measure of space [sq. cm.] given to parties in the *New Zealand Herald* in 1999 over a different sample frame, four weeks rather than three. There are differences for particular parties, but the implied effective number of parties is roughly identical to ours, 6.04.

Table 3-1 Votes, Seats, and Media Attention

Party	1990, %			1999, %		
	Votes	Seats	Mentions[a]	Votes	Seats	Mentions[a]
National	48.2	70.1	47.2 (134)	30.5	32.5	23.5 (99)
Labour	35.1	28.9	41.2 (117)	38.7	40.9	23.7 (100)
New Labour	5.2	1.0	2.5 (7)	-	-	-
Social Credit	0.9	0.0	1.1 (3)	-	-	-
New Zealand	0.0	0.0	0.7 (2)	-	-	-
Mana Motuhake	0.6	0.0	2.8 (8)	-	-	-
Green	6.8	0.0	1.4 (4)	5.2	5.8	15.9 (67)
Christian Heritage	0.5	0.0	1.1 (3)	2.4	0.0	0.1 (2)
Democratic	1.7	0.0	1.1 (3)	-	-	-
McGillicuddy Serious	0.0	0.0	0.7 (2)	0.2	0.0	0.1 (2)
Communist League	0.0	0.0	0.4 (1)	0.0	0.0	0.0 (0)
Alliance	-	-	-	7.7	8.3	12.3 (52)
ACT	-	-	-	7.0	7.5	11.8 (50)
New Zealand First	-	-	-	4.3	4.2	8.5 (36)
United	-	-	-	0.5	0.8	0.1 (4)
Future NZ	-	-	-	1.1	0.0	0.1 (2)
Legalise Cannabis	-	-	-	1.1	0.0	0.1 (2)
Piri Wiri Tua	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.1 (3)
Mana Maori	-	-	-	0.3	0.0	0.1 (2)
Maori Pacific	-	-	-	0.2	0.0	0.0 (1)
Eff. # of Parties, N_p^S	2.75	1.74	2.54	3.89	3.46	5.78

[a] Raw counts in parentheses.

Under plurality rule, the media depicts a nearly perfect two-party-and-change system, with equalizing coverage for the two large parties and trivial coverage for the remainder. Under proportional representation, the large parties lose only 15% of their

collective vote share, but 50% of their media attention, leaving a media picture of a party system more highly fragmented than it really is.

There are further subtleties here that reinforce the notion that it is in fact the electoral system, and not other coincidental changes, impacting media behavior. Note in particular the coverage of the Green Party detailed in Table 3.1. In 1990, they received nearly 7% of the vote, but anticipating correctly that this would translate under plurality into no seats and no post-election relevance, the *Herald* accorded them only 1% of its coverage. In 1999, the Greens' popular support *dropped* to 5%, but anticipating that this would now translate into seats and even possible membership in a governing coalition, the *Herald* accorded them 16% of its coverage. A similar effect is seen with New Labour and its partial successor, the Alliance. Under plurality, 5% of the vote translates into half as much (2.5%) coverage, but under proportional representation, 8% of the vote translates into increased (12%) coverage. The media attends to parties not in response to their expected popular support (vote share) but to their expected relevance (seat share). In short, when the electoral system began taking small parties seriously, so did the *Herald.*

The Distribution of Media Attention to Political Issues

I now turn the focus from the media attention that parties receive to the media attention that topics receive. I am concerned both with (a) how much attention the media gives to issues rather than non-issue campaign coverage, and (b) how much attention the media gives to "new" rather than traditional issues. My expectations are that parties will increase their issue-specific campaigning and their relative focus on new issues, and these increases will be reflected in media attention.

The expected effect is then that the media will make less reference to valence and purely political issues and more references to specific policy positions. Again, for my purposes, only the comparative statics – more issue competition on more issues – need to hold for the story to have bite. Unfortunately, there are no current means (using the historical data available) to gain separate leverage on the theoretical precondition (that the parties collectively focus more on issues) and Hypothesis 3 (the media focus more on issues). Nonissue campaigning occurs largely outside the realm of historically available sources like manifestos, which are consistently issue-dominated documents, and analysis of media coverage alone would conflate the two. Thus, with the current data, I can only assume the theoretical precondition and look for the net effect of increased media issue coverage (Hypothesis 3).

I did not expend resources collecting horse race and valence mentions, because Hypothesis 3 is strongly supported in the work of others. In their analysis of New Zealand's newspaper coverage, McGregor et al. (2000) look at this issue specifically. They reported a significant drop in "horse race", personality, and other traditional campaign coverage, relative to issue-reporting, from 1993 to 1996. They found that horse race coverage dropped from 16.5% of coverage in 1993 to 15.6% in 1996. More dramatically, coverage that focused on candidates (as opposed to policies or issues) fell from 33.4% to 21.3%. (McGregor, et al. 2000: 143, Table 3). I have noted that the party system – and in turn, news coverage – had already begun to anticipate the new multiparty reality by 1993, so this effect might appear stronger with data from 1990 or earlier. It should be noted also that McGregor, et al. attributed this effect not to electoral reform but

to media reform, specifically a turn to "public journalism"—an issue further addressed below.

Hayward and Rudd (2000) similarly reported an increase in "interpretive" coverage, relative to campaign coverage, from 1987 to 1999. Their measure is space (sq cm) and they examine the five largest New Zealand newspapers. They found 9% of space devoted to interpretive news in an earlier study of the 1987 election, but 34% in the 1999 election. This varied considerably across papers, with the *New Zealand Herald* having the highest ratio of interpretive news to all others. Like McGregor, et al., Hayward and Rudd were also not looking at this as an electoral system effect, but rather as evidence against the hypothesis that election news has followed a secular trend of becoming more "trivialized".

So, while collected for different purposes and in support of different theories, the data gathered by McGregor et al. and Hayward and Rudd supports Hypothesis 3. On this particular point, the expectations are observationally equivalent. Note, however, that Hayward and Rudd's is a null theory that does not produce any hypotheses in the other areas I examine. To the extent that McGregor et al.'s expectations overlap with my own—and one could argue that public journalism might produce some of the same effects independent of electoral reform—they should do so only in papers that undertook public journalism reforms. The *Herald* did not do so, and therefore, the effects that appear in either my data or Hayward and Rudd's would not do so if the explanation were public journalism rather than electoral reform.

More interesting, perhaps, is the expectation that competition will become multidimensional. In a majoritarian system like pre-reform New Zealand, I expect

competition between the two major parties to be centripetal and to be primarily on the traditional economic / materialist left-right dimension. Post-reform, I expect minor and new parties to attempt to carve out niches by seeking out opportunities to meet latent demand in other dimensions. Through much of the industrialized world, the prominent emerging second dimension in electorate preference has been "postmaterialism" or "postmodernism" (Inglehart 1990, 1997, 2000), defined by attitudes towards such general areas as the environment, minority rights, women's rights, and cultural permissiveness. The New Zealand Election Study found postmaterialism to be emerging as a second dimension in voter attitudes prior to reform (Vowles and Aimer 1993). So, as more relevant parties emerge to press the saliency of such new issues, we should expect parallelism to create greater media discussion of news issues (Hypothesis 4).

Economic issues fall most clearly in the "old" materialist dimension. Issues related to the environment, race relations, gender, nuclear weapons, and "enlightened" approaches to law and order are among those that are categorized most clearly in the "new" postmaterialist dimensions. Note that this does not just mean typical postmaterial positions, but also positions in direct opposition, such as tougher immigration practices or returns to family values. We should expect to see an increase in the attention given to these sorts of issues, in relative terms. Issues associated with the welfare state conflate both materialist and postmaterialist dimensions (see, e.g., Vowles, et al. 1993: 65), and consequently, I have no firm expectation about this issue area.

To develop these measures, I count articles or editorials in the sample that mention 22 particular issue categories. These are reported in Table 3.2. Like the party measures, I count only one mention of each issue per article. Since exogenous factors are

likely to affect the relative attention given to any particular issue in any given campaign, and this effect is likely to be more substantial than any anticipation or learning effects outside of the 1996 election, data were collected from for samples from four election years. The two elections prior to 1996 (1990 and 1993) constitute the pluralitarian sample and the two elections subsequent to 1996 (1999 and 2002) constitute the proportional representation sample.

I also rely on a second source of evidence: the attention accorded these issues by parties, weighted by party size and not filtered through the media. I measure this attention through a count of mentions of relevant word stems in the *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) of the New Zealand House of Representatives*, the official record of parliament for two periods pre- and post-reform, 1988-1992 and 1997-2003.[8] These data are also reported in Table 3.2.

I operationalize attention to new issues as the proportion of mentions given to environmental issues, law and order, immigration, minority relations, and children/families. It is important to reiterate that many of these new issue mentions are for policies that could perhaps be described as opposed to postmodern values: tougher immigration policy, crackdowns on abuses of the Treaty of Waitangi, advocacy of family values, and mandatory sentencing laws.

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[8] These are as archived by the Virtual Democratic Infrastructure Group, www.vdig.net, which has made *Hansard* available, with a search engine, for Nov. 1987 through the present. The counts are of "hits" in the database, with a hit being a speech or debate contribution that contains the word stem at least once. Some debate contributions will be counted more than once if contributing to more than one topic; this is also true of articles in the *Herald* data.

Table 3-2 Issue-Specific Mentions in Media and the House of Commons

New Zealand Herald	1990	1993	1999	2002	*Hansard*	1988-1992	1997-2003
Taxation	4	15	25	11	"tax..."	3836	4747
Employment	18	24	9	8	"job..."	5201	7340
Trade	8	4	9	5	"trade..."	3817	4708
Privatization / Nationalization	5	14	10	15	"privatis..."	516	827
Regulation	0	1	9	4	"regulat..."	1584	3024
Inflation	11	0	3	1	"inflation"	1679	674
Wage Rate	8	5	2	1	"wage..."	1555	1821
Other Industrial Relations	9	6	13	5	"union..."	1931	2138
Agriculture / Rural Issues	2	1	4	0	"rural..."	1712	1367
Total Economy:	45% (4%)	47% (4%)	33% (3%)	18% (2%)		47% (0.2%)	43% (0.2%)
Superannuation	1	8	6	9	"superannuat..."	1721	1655
Education	12	16	19	28	"educat..."	4316	5409
Health	6	14	13	14	"heath..."	4063	6356
Other Welfare	5	7	9	6	"welfare..."	3327	1970
Total Welfare State:	17% (3%)	39% (4%)	19% (2%)	21% (2%)		28% (0.2%)	25% (0.2%)
Foreign Affairs	8	2	4	11	"defenc..."	1352	2173
Total Foreign Policy:	6% (2%)	1% (1%)	2% (1%)	4% (1%)		3% (0.1%)	3% (0.1%)
Drugs / Cannabis	1	0	14	11	"drug..."	491	902
Other Law and Order	15	11	19	41	"crim..."	1113	2270
Total Law & Order:	11% (2%)	7% (2%)	13% (2%)	19% (2%)		3% (0.1%)	5% (0.1%)
Children / Families	3	6	11	12	"family/ies"	2771	5291
Maori / Treaty of Waitangi	12	10	27	17	"Waitangi"	794	1502
Immigration	1	2	3	18	"immigra..."	501	1477
Total (Other) Social:	11% (3%)	12% (3%)	16% (2%)	17% (2%)		9% (0.1%)	13% (0.1%)
Roads / Public Transport	0	0	11	9	"transport..."	1878	2499
Other Environment	14	3	31	52	"environment..."	2230	3972
Total Environment:	10% (3%)	2% (1%)	17% (2%)	22% (2%)		8% (0.1%)	10% (0.1%)
Total:	145	149	251	278		46388	62122
Proportion new issues, v_i^S:	27% (3%)		52% (2%)			20% (0.2%)	28% (0.2%)

Standard errors of proportions in parentheses.

Table 3.2 reports the full data set. Given these assumptions, the theoretical precondition is met with parliamentary attention to new issues rising from 20% to 28%. Hypothesis 4 is strongly supported with media attention to new issues rising from 27% to 52%. As was the case with party mentions, media attention exaggerates the information produced by the political system; the increase in media attention of 25% is much larger than the parliamentary increase of 8%.

The Distribution of Media Attention to Issue Positions

Perhaps even more interesting than the distribution of attention to parties and issues, is the distribution of attention to *ideas*. This is where we get some concrete sense of institutions shaping the richness and diversity of the political information system; and as it turns out, the impact of electoral reform is dramatic. As noted earlier, under the Downsian incentives of pre-reform New Zealand the two major parties are expected to be roughly convergent, espousing similar positions on any given policy issue. In the post-reform world, small parties can find electoral success by carving out small portions of space not just in secondary dimensions, but also on the extreme flanks of the major parties. Not only should we see a greater variety of positions expressed directly by these newly successful parties, but we should expect them to exert some centrifugal pull on the major parties as well (Cox 1990). For any given topic area, therefore, we should expect relatively greater attention given to more extreme issue positions (Hypothesis 5).

I develop variance measures using more nuanced versions of the issue mention data from 1990 and 1999. These consist of the text surrounding each issue mention (roughly the same as a "quasi-sentence", the coding unit in the Comparative Manifestos

Project (Budge et al. 2001)).[9] As a comparison, I also have sentences describing the positions of the parties on each issue, as described in its manifesto or similar declaration. The hypotheses should hold for any given issue. Here, results are reported for three of the largest issue areas: taxation, pre-tertiary education, and law and order.

Within any single issue category, the quasi-sentences are coded as positional data. Bundling the *Herald* and manifesto statements together, with party labels removed, the positions are placed on a seven-point scale from –3 to 3. I use –3 to represent the most "left" position expressed, +3 the most "right" position, and 0 for an endorsement of the status quo or for statements that are vague in left-right terms.

Figure 3.1 shows the results for taxation. Each graph depicts two distributions. The distribution made up of the darker bars on the left of each pair depicts the distribution of policy positions in the party programs – the height of a bar indicates the combined proportion of the vote at that particular election for the parties (party list votes in 1999) coded at that policy position. The lighter bar on the right of each pair depicts the proportion of issue mentions in the media sample that are coded at that location. For several positions, the figure gives examples of manifesto or media statements that have been coded at that location. On the left I code statements favoring more progressive tax rates – higher for high-income and/or lower for low-income – or shifts in the mode of

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[9] I do not use the CMP coding method directly because it does not translate well to the media data, which can include negative statements about others' positions, defenses against purported misstatements, and so on. I note that Gibbons (2003) analysis of the New Zealand manifestos using the CMP method gives unambiguous evidence of the theoretical precondition: dispersion of the parties in multiple dimensions.

Figure 3.1 Positions and Media Mentions: Taxation

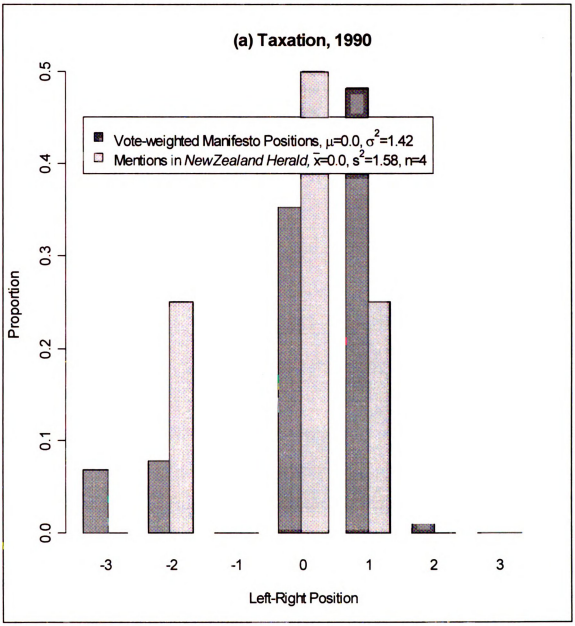
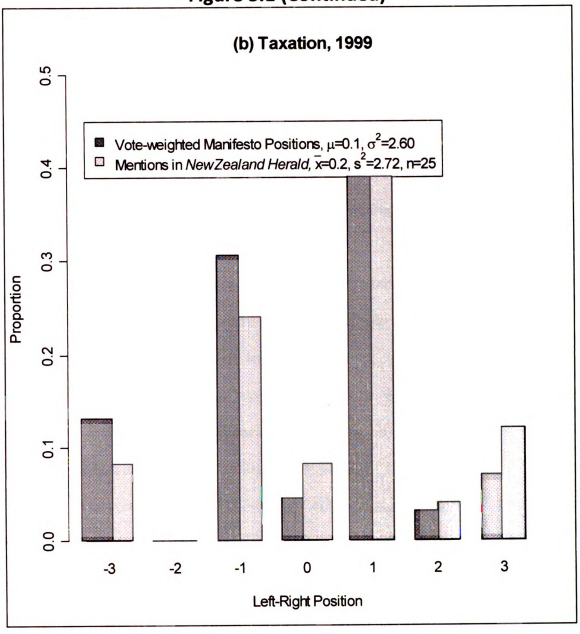


Figure 3.1 (Continued)



taxation away from GST (sales tax) or toward taxes on capital gains, financial transactions, transfer (estate) tax, corporations, pollution, and that sort of notion. With regard to the former, for example, in 1999 each party made an explicit pledge about the level at which the top tax rate (then at 33%) should be set, with proposals ranging from 20% (ACT) to 47% (the Alliance). Thus, the data on taxation are supportive of the theoretical precondition, with an 85% increase (2.60/1.42=1.85) in the dispersion of manifesto positions from 1990 to 1999. Hypothesis 5 is also supported with an increase in dispersion of media mentions of 72%.

Figure 3.2 shows more compelling results for pre-tertiary education.[10] The primary left-right distinction is a public-private debate, with full state funding of a completely free education on the left, and a largely private system supported by a voucher system on the right. Other important issues were "bulk funding", teacher pay, and national testing. Again we can see a centered unimodal distribution in 1990, with manifesto pledges on valence issues like truancy and bland slogans such as "education is working". It is worth noting that left-leaning positions of the Greens, the New Labour Party, and Social Credit (aka the Democrats) were completely ignored in the 1990 media sample. The theoretical precondition again holds, with an 89% increase in dispersion of manifesto positions. As predicted by Hypothesis 5, there is a dramatic increase in the dispersion of media mentions of 237%, and again, the media increase is 78% larger than that in the manifestos.

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[10] This is a conservative narrowing of the education topic. Higher education issues of student loans and university funding were widely discussed, with highly variable opinions, in 1999, but mostly unmentioned in 1990. If this is included, the support for the hypotheses is even stronger.

Figure 3.2 Positions and Media Mentions: Education

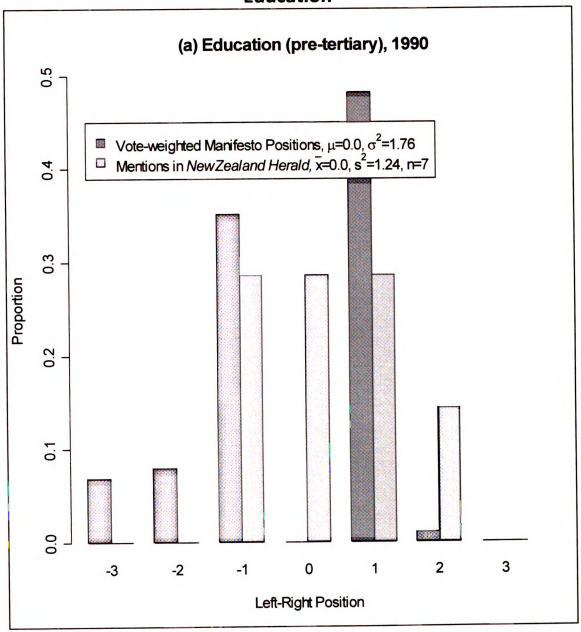

Figure 3.2 (Continued)

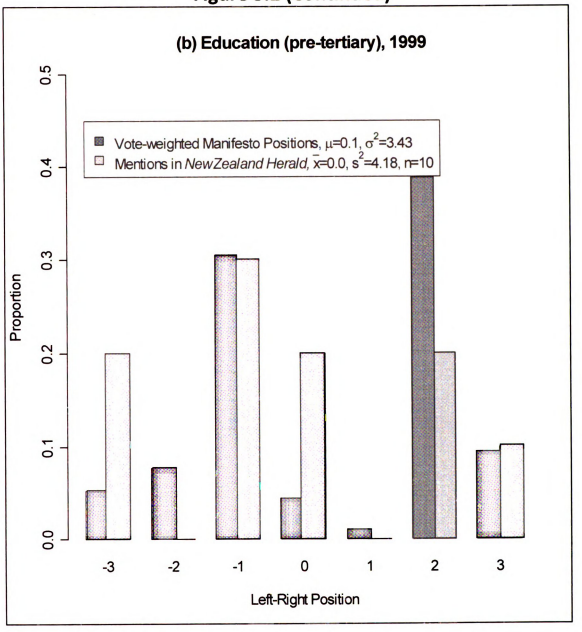

Figure 3.3 Positions and Media Mentions: Law & Order

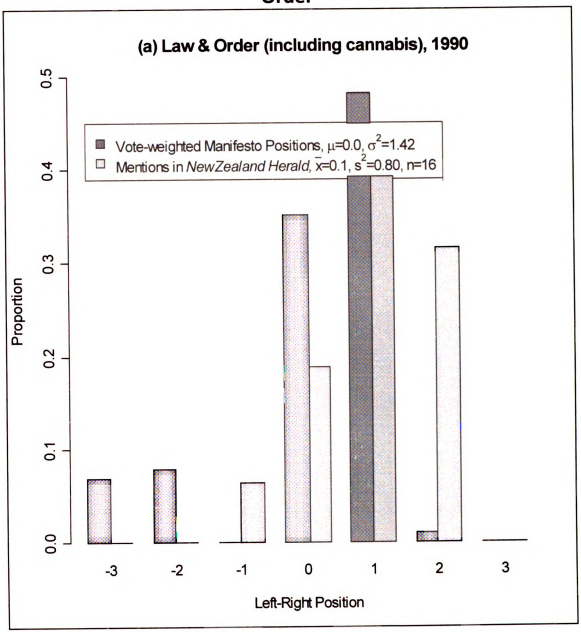

Figure 3.3 (Continued)

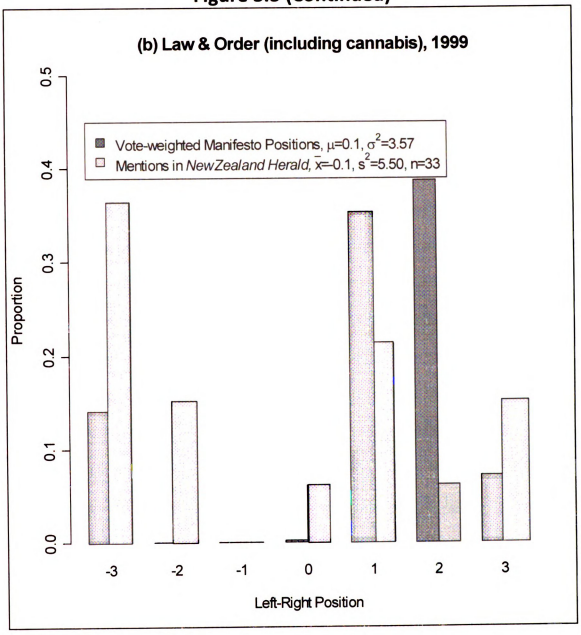

Figure 3.3 shows the most dramatic results, for law and order issues including cannabis legalization. Again, we see largely unimodal distributions of manifesto positions and media mentions in 1990, ignoring the far left and centered slightly to the right of status quo. In 1999, the Greens, Alliance, and Legalize Cannabis parties struck positions on the far left (e.g., drug legalization, rehabilitation centers instead of prisons) while the other major parties all took positions to the right of the status quo, ranging from mildly so (e.g., tougher bail requirements) to sharply so (e.g., doubling prison sentences, hard labor). The evidence for the hypothesis is dramatic in this case, with a clear increase in attention to extreme positions on law and order. This is largely driven by the controversy over drug legalization, especially as sparked by revelations of a criminal background of one Green candidate (that would have likely been ignored under the previous system), but we also see "over-attention" to policies on the far right. With this issue, the increase in dispersion is extreme and the effect is unambiguous. There is strong evidence for the theoretical precondition (manifesto dispersion increased 157%) and for Hypothesis 5 (media mention dispersion increased 589%). Again, the increase in media dispersion is 167% greater than the increase in manifesto dispersion.

The Groupthink Dynamic

The evidence from the previous section also hints at hypothesis 6 – that there will be a greater tendency for groupthink in majoritarian systems. For the issue areas discussed here, it appears that majoritarian systems are especially likely to attenuate perspectives from the left and there is a strain toward a center-right consensus. It is reasonable to expect that this pattern is especially relevant for issues associated with personal security because these kinds of issues are most likely affected by human instinct to focus on short-

term responses rather than reflecting on root causes. The introduction of unpopular alternatives, that may address the root causes of problems, is not likely to occur if most voters support the short-term solution. Indeed, in majoritarian systems, if a party or candidate proposes long-term solutions for these kinds of issues, the other party may suggest that it or he is weak.

We can gain a little more insight on this dynamic by taking a closer look at the discourse on law and order. Table 3.3 displays the complete list of crime-related statements (in a "quasi-sentence" format) that appeared in the *New Zealand Herald* in the three weeks before the 1990 and 1999 elections.[11] It is possible to note that when New Zealand operated under a majoritarian system, in 1990, the campaign discourse that unfolded emphasized punishment and enforcement as solutions to crime. The statements from the conservative National party were particularly aggressive, while Labour's statements were mainly defensive and at times also aggressive. In general, there were no statements about reducing crime through preventative measures.

When New Zealand switched to MMP, a wider variety of positions emerged. In 1999 (the second election under MMP) there were still calls for punishment and enforcement but there was also a promulgation of alternative solutions aimed at addressing root causes. For example, the Green Party and the Alliance favored the ideas of "restorative justice" and spending money on mental health, and these kinds of ideas therefore received media attention.

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[11] Again, this involved a content analysis of usually two pages of special campaign coverage.

Table 3-3 Semi-sentences on Law & Order in New Zealand Herald

Law and Order in 1990 Under Majoritarian System	Law and Order in 1999 Under Mixed Member Proportional Representation
I think big things are help for more police in trying to control crime (Cit)	impressed with L's fighting crime w/ more family support not prisons (Cit)
gave party's plans for crime (N)	dismisses N's move to give police powers to take DNA from burglary suspects (Cit)
N's advertisement deceptive, claiming crime had increased during L's term in gov't (L)	he is supporter of Act's tougher longer prison sentencing, Nat's DNA test plan (Cit)
latest official figures showed decline in crime; problem was inherited got out of control under N (L)	nervous about Act, it is now edging harder on crime (N)
false advertising about crime rates	NZ voters impressed with tough law-and-order policy (Act)
N spokeswoman said she would not be opposed to use of mace to disable attackers	restorative justice: make offenders accept responsibility, apologize, pay restitution (GP, All)
under N people would understand they had more than even chance of being dealt with if they offended (N)	wanted to register all guns as well as owners (All)
promised NZlanders would no longer be too frightened to go out at night (N)	spend extra on mental health, for helping families of criminally ill (All)
question from floor for former PM (L), whether an extra 900 police would reduce crime	N/Act outbid each other on who can be toughest on crime, but go quiet on how to stop crime (All)
NZ did not have effective deterrents (former L PM)	claims GP is against prisons and for breaking the law (N)
promised legislation to deny bail to violent criminals charged w/ similar offences (N)	supports prison for violent offenders, is against breaking laws, unless no other option (GP)
N would amend legislation to give police powers to deal w/ young criminals	continue conditions for security (N)
introducing tougher bail laws would be one of top priorities for N	making its stance on longer prison sentences for criminals a bottom line in coalition (Act)
L attacked N's bail proposal, 99% of people do not commit crimes of violence while on bail	N has tried to crush GP on candidates' confrontations w/ law
he laid out themes: collar the crims (N)	in his decent society, police have resources to do their job (L)
	referendum: favour reform emphasizing needs of victims, imposing minimum sentences hard labor (Cit, NZF, N, Act)
	favour restorative justice aspects of crime petition, are softer on longer sentences (L, All, GP)
	she laid down same hand: a harder line on burglaries (L)

Abbreviations: Act=Act Party, All=Alliance, CH=Christian Heritage, FNZ=Future New Zealand, GP=Green Party, L=Labour Party, ALCP=Legalise Cannabis Party, MP=Maori Pacific, MMM=Mana Maori Movement, MS=McGillicuddy Serious Party, N=National Party, NZF=New Zealand First, PWT=Piri Wiri Tua party, UP=United Party, Cit=citizen

Discussion

This chapter provides confirmatory evidence for what researchers such as Downs theorized (and others have assumed) about how electoral institutions affect information processes. Electoral institutions influence the diversity of messages produced by the political system, with proportional systems tending to encourage the representation of more perspectives than majoritarian systems. The political discourse is also influenced by the spatial incentives associated with each type of electoral system, with PR systems encouraging a more programmatic discourse.

Morevoer, I believe this is the first study to (a) specify theoretical relationships between electoral institutions and media coverage of politics, and (b) provide empirical evidence of their existence. The findings here suggest that we need to be aware of institutional context in otherwise institution-free media studies. In the context of a media system roughly corresponding to the Hallin and Mancini Liberal model, a more permissive and fragmentation-encouraging electoral system will lead to a more diverse political news agenda. More parties will get attention, more issues will get attention, and a more diverse array of policy options will get attention. Furthermore, the norm of political neutrality appears to amplify these effects such that increases in the diversity of the political system are magnified in their reflections in the media.

We already have a good idea that this affect on information can influence important political phenomena, such as voter behavior, but the results in this study may point to many other important and unexplored consequences of these information processes for public opinion and policy-making. I explore some of these consequences in

the following chapters, including how these information processes affect public opinion and public policy toward new issues and toward issues linked to personal safety.

There are important caveats to consider. First, the research design is quasi-experimental, and comes with all of the weaknesses inherent in such a design. Other changes in the New Zealand system at roughly the same time as electoral reform could contaminate the inferences, and the same can be said of any endogeneity in the electoral reform – i.e., that increases in party system fragmentation *caused* electoral reform, and not the reverse. Some might note the Green Party's relative electoral success prior to reform (7% in 1990) as evidence of this, but the dramatic increase in media attention to the Greens post-reform gives a much more comfortable fit with my narrative. Second, the evidence might be viewed as conditional in various ways. It is certainly conditional on the media system meeting the basic parameters of Hallin and Mancini's Liberal model. Furthermore, it is possible that there are peculiarities—about New Zealand, about the *New Zealand Herald*, or about the sampling frame—that could affect the results observed.

Ultimately, addressing these concerns will require the accumulation of expensive data. With respect to the case of New Zealand, this may require the examination of a larger sample from more newspapers. Another tactic is to conduct more quasi-experimental analyses, particularly cases with significant shifts from pluralitarian to proportional electoral systems, or vice versa. A final approach is to conduct cross-sectional examination of several cases—some pluralitarian and some proportional. Unfortunately, pursuing these approaches will require relatively extensive resources and will likely not become available for some time.

Chapter 4 Electoral Institutions and Public Opinion

If electoral institutions affect the kind of information that citizens can access, then we should expect them to influence a crucial component of the policy-making process: public opinion and behavior. As noted earlier, this possibility has already received attention. Several studies, for example, have found that electoral institutions affect participation in elections, satisfaction with political institutions, the tendency to cast tactical votes, and attachments to parties (Karp et al. 2002; Niemi et al. 1992; Norris 2004).

Studies of this kind have argued that institutional context influences the type of information produced by political systems and thereby influences various elements of public opinion. Westholm and Niemi (1992) noted, for example, that the transfer of ideological orientations and the relationship between ideological orientation and partisanship is stronger in multiparty systems than in systems with fewer parties because parties in the former systems have a strategic incentive to maintain ideological distinctions and because multiparty systems increase the need for voters to employ a cognitive spatial ordering of some kind. Similarly, Gordon and Segura (1997) argued and demonstrated that because electoral institutions shape the availability, clarity, and usefulness of political information, citizens in multiparty countries tend to outperform those in countries with fewer parties on indicators of political knowledge.

This chapter extends this line of work by arguing that electoral institutions actually help shape public preferences toward specific political issues and may even help shape cultural change in ways that impact policy problem-solving. If the diversity of

multi-party systems does facilitate public consideration of sensitive issues (such as material sacrifices for the sake of protecting the environment or the extension of rights to same-sex couples), then can we expect that there will be greater public support for these issues in diverse systems? Conversely, if majoritarian systems encourage a reactionary style of political debate, can we expect there to be greater public support for short-term policy responses in such systems?

Data from the 1999 World Values Survey and the International Crime Victimization Survey are used to show that the answer to both of these questions is yes. Electoral institutions do help explain the variation in attitudes observed across countries on several sensitive issues. I show that citizens from countries with proportional electoral systems (i.e., countries with institutions that increase the flow of more diverse ideological information) are more likely to support the sensitive issues promoted by parties on the left of the political spectrum. This finding matches expectations derived from an interdisciplinary body of research showing that individuals with access to more information tend to hold more "cosmopolitan" or "postmodern" social attitudes. I show also that citizens in countries with majoritarian electoral institutions tend to hold more reactionary policy preferences, especially on issues related to crime.

It is argued in this chapter that these results can be interpreted as showing a) that proportional systems facilitate social learning and permit the public to think in a long-term manner and b) that majoritarian systems encourage survivalistic preferences. Tolerance toward the sensitive issues discussed here generally reveals that people are willing to think outside the box and that they are willing to accept short-term costs for the sake of long-term gains. This is especially true for the environment where the long-term

gains are often long term and not immediately apparent. Support for punitive responses to crime shows that people are thinking about short-term solutions that do not necessarily address the root of the social problem. I show in chapter 5 how these findings are connected to policy-making.

Electoral Institutions, Information Diversity, and Cosmopolitanism

When political elites settle on the electoral institutions their countries should adopt they probably give little thought to how these institutions may influence public opinion. It may seem a leap to expect that electoral institutions are somehow related to citizen preferences, and yet, researchers have begun to uncover the contours of just such a relationship. Several studies document how electoral institutions influence various elements of public opinion and behavior via their influence on the political information environment (see for example Gordon and Segura (1997) and Westholm and Niemi (1992)). Here, I show how the information mechanisms associated with electoral institutions influence public attitudes in rather fine ways; they actually influence citizens' preferences on specific issues.

The information mechanisms described in chapters 2 and 3 provide clear expectations for public opinion. Recall that electoral institutions affect the diversity of party systems, issue dimensions, and policy ideas; they influence the degree to which campaigns provide programmatic versus candidate centered information; and they influence the degree to which dissent will be expressed in a political system. These mechanisms suggest that electoral institutions will affect how frequently the public is exposed to certain messages. Mainly, I expect electoral institutions to affect access to information on what I refer to here as "sensitive" issues and "sensitive" policy positions.

My conceptualization of sensitivity involves two concerns. First, sensitive issues and sensitive policy positions are those which more centrist politicians will find difficult to discuss. Consequently, many of these kinds of issues and positions are more likely to be introduced by minor parties. Second, sensitivity is a time-dependent concept. An issue that is sensitive at a particular point in time is one that could be ordinary in another. For example, an issue like racial equality was once a sensitive issue in most countries and today it is largely taken for granted that discrimination based on race should be illegal. More recently, an issue like homosexuality appears to be undergoing the transition from sensitive issue to ordinary.

Based upon the New Zealand media studies, I expect therefore that, for the period analyzed in this chapter (1999), the institutional dynamics discussed above will be particularly relevant to "new politics" issues.[12] In the New Zealand media studies it is clear that the issues promoted by the Green Party received greater attention under proportional representation than under majoritarianism. On the other hand, the inclusion of more diverse perspectives also led to greater attention for marginal issues and positions (such as immigration) promoted by small parties on the right of the political spectrum. How, then, will exposure to these marginal topics affect public opinion? Should we expect that exposure to greater ideological diversity will lead the public to become more accepting of sensitive issues and positions from the left and right, or might we expect that certain sensitive issues are more likely to gain support than others?

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[12] For a different time period, perhaps circa 1950, the relevant set of issues might have been linked more closely to economic issues Exploring this possibility appears interesting but less feasible due to data constraints.

Insights into this question can be gleaned from an interdisciplinary body of research on the effects of information on individual attitudes and cultural change. First, modernization theorists have argued that socioeconomic development is associated with technological innovations, increases in labor productivity, occupational specialization, rising levels of education, rising levels of income, and the diversification of human interactions, and these forces consequently produce coherent changes in culture and political life (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Rokeach 1960; Inkeles 1983; Inkeles and Smith 1974; Lerner 1958). In general, these forces encourage the development of more "cosmopolitan," "secular," "tolerant," and "self-expressive" social attitudes. With respect to particular attitudes and behaviors, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) note that in recent decades wealthy societies have experienced cultural changes that include the supplanting of institutionalized religion with individualized spiritual concerns, greater support for protecting the environment, and greater tolerance toward issues such as homosexuality, gender equality, and divorce.

Modernization theorists such as Inglehart have emphasized the importance of existential security in producing these cultural changes, but much of modernization research concentrates on the importance of cognitive mobilization. Modernization theorists such as Lerner (1958), Inkeles and Smith (1974), and Inkeles (1983) emphasized the importance of knowledge and education in the modernization process, noting that individuals with the highest levels of education tended to hold more secular and modern worldviews. Cognitive mobilization is also enhanced by the emergence of service and knowledge sectors that permit citizens to exercise individual judgment and creativity, and

the evolution of mass media and information technology that give people access to knowledge and increase information autonomy.

We can draw similar insights from social psychological studies on the differences between urban and rural individuals. These studies rely on a classical theory from Wirth (1942) who suggested that the differences observed across urban and nonurban cultures could be largely explained by three factors of residential space: size, density, and heterogeneity. He expected that, in general, individuals residing in heterogeneous, more densely populated areas will tend to be tolerant, "psychologically sophisticated," impersonal, and generally cosmopolitan. On the other hand, individuals residing in areas that are smaller, more sparsely populated, and with more homogeneous groups will tend to be more conservative, judgmental, parochial, and to maintain more personal relationships. Empirical studies in this field have consistently supported this theory. Recently, for example, Carter and Borch (2005) found that people living in more urban areas are likely to espouse more liberal attitudes toward the changing roles of women in varying spheres of social life.

Finally, a prediction of "cosmopolitanism" can be inferred from a smaller literature in political science on information effects and public preferences (see Althaus 1998; Bartels 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Gilens 2001). These studies use statistical models to impute "fully informed" preferences to less informed respondents. Each respondent's political preferences are adjusted to match the predicted preferences of a respondent who shares the same set of demographic characteristics but who also possesses the highest level of political information. Thus, the imputed, fully-informed preferences can be compared with the sample's observed preferences. Althaus (1998)

used this approach to ascertain fully informed preferences across a wide range of issues. In general, he found that these preferences were more liberal on a number of social issues. Fully informed preferences included: more dovish attitudes on foreign policy, and more support for abortion and gay rights. Attitudes toward government spending were more ambivalent: fully informed preferences included opposition to the idea of "big government," but also a greater willingness to pay more taxes to pay down the deficit and to fund social services.

Based on these literatures, therefore, I expected that because electoral institutions help shape the political information environment they should produce attitudinal and cultural consequences similar to those we observe with other information mechanisms (e.g., education). Electoral institutions that facilitate the expression of a greater number of perspectives should help produce "more cosmopolitan" dispositions that lead to greater support for sensitive issues from the "left" of the political spectrum and not necessarily for those of "right." *I hypothesize, then, that citizens in countries with electoral institutions that permit a more diverse political discourse (e.g., proportional representation) will tend to have more positive attitudes toward sensitive issues and policy positions promoted by the left (such as the environment and homosexuality) than citizens in countries with electoral institutions that limit the diversity of the political discourse.*

It should be noted that I am not suggesting that this evolution of issues does not occur in majoritarian systems. I am suggesting, rather, that the evolution is more rapid under electoral institutions that facilitate the expression of diverse ideological perspectives. All democratic systems permit the flow of information, but electoral

institutions such as proportional representation should facilitate the discussion of sensitive issues and the expression of sensitive policy positions on various issues, enough to affect public consideration of such issues and positions, and enough that electoral institutions can help explain the variation in attitudes towards sensitive issues that exists across countries.

Electoral Institutions, Information Diversity, and Reactionary Preferences

As shown in the New Zealand study, electoral institutions influence not only the perspectives to which citizens are exposed, but also majoritarian systems exaggerate the prestige of reactionary issues and policy positions. This dynamic should be especially relevant for issues tied to personal security, such as law and order. The question in this case, then, is how the exaggeration of reactionary approaches will influence public attitudes.

In this situation, I base expectations on a study by Druckman (2004), which essentially shows how asymmetrical information can influence individuals. Druckman showed that when they are only exposed to one frame individuals are susceptible to framing effects. That is, their preferences can be altered based simply on how questions are asked. When exposed to multiple frames at the same time (if they are exposed to "counter-framing" by opposing elites, or if they engage in interpersonal debates that introduce alternative perspectives), the framing effects are drastically mitigated or disappear.

Thus, I expect that if individuals are being almost exclusively exposed to reactionary positions on issues (as was the case in New Zealand's political discourse on law and order), then these individuals will be more likely to support these positions. I

hypothesize, then, that citizens in countries with majoritarian systems will be more likely to support reactionary policy positions. On an issue like law and order, this will mean that citizens in majoritarian countries are more supportive of punitive approaches to dealing with crime.

Aggregate Level Evidence

Measurement

To explore the cosmopolitanism hypothesis, I use data from the World Values Survey (European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association 2004) for the year 1999. Table 4.1 lists 16 issues appearing in the World Values Survey. These include several "new politics" issues, such as protecting the environment and the justifiability of homosexuality. For this time frame, I expect to find differences in attitudes across countries on several "new politics" issues. These are issues that have more recently become salient—relative to more traditional economic issues which have been salient for a much longer period of time. The list also includes a question addressing the tolerance of immigration, an issue that should be promoted mainly by parties on the right of the political spectrum. Analyzing this issue should provide insight into how messages from the right affect public preferences. The list also includes four questions related to economic issues. Examining these economic issues allows for comparison with more traditional issues. Table 4.1 also shows the responses to the survey questions in the binary form in which I recoded them, at the individual level. A value of 1 signified a positive response and a value of 0 signified a negative response. The aggregate score for each country, then, is the proportion of citizens that revealed a positive response to each question.

Table 4-1 Dependent Variables

Disagree that protecting environment shouldn't cost me, so 1 = support for protection
Justifiability of homosexuality, 1 = support for
Justifiability of abortion, 1 = support for
Justifiability of divorce, 1 = support for
Justifiability of euthanasia, 1 = support for
Justifiability of taking marijuana, 1 = support for
Justifiability of experiments with human embryos, 1 = support for
Agree that marriage is outdated, 1 = yes
Disagree that men make better leaders, 1 = yes
Do not attend religious service once month or more, 1 = yes
Tolerant of immigration, 1 = yes
Should country provide more aid to poorer countries, keeping it the same or giving more = 1
1 = support for incomes being more equal
1 = support for more government ownership of business and industry
1 = support for government taking more responsibility
1 = agree that competition is harmful

To explore the reactionary hypothesis, I use data from the International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS International Working Group et al. 2003) which asked respondents what punishment they considered most appropriate for a recidivist burglar--a man, aged 21, who is found guilty of burglary for the second time. Respondents could choose between the following alternatives: community service, imprisonment, a fine, suspended sentence, other sentence, and don't know. For the aggregate-level analysis, I concentrate on the percentage of people in each country that support imprisonment. I interpret this choice as reflecting a public preference for short-term solutions to the problem of crime, rather than considering solutions that might address the root causes of crime.

The independent variables used in the aggregate level analysis are the following:

Effective Threshold. Rather than relying on categorical measures that distinguish between majoritarian, mixed-member, and proportional systems, this study employs Lijphart's (1994) effective threshold measure,[13] which provides a continuous measure of the type of electoral system employed by a country. The effective threshold can be expected to affect diversity via its impact on the number of parties that win representation and via the incentives it generates for political elites. The effective threshold is a more refined indicator of the barriers parties must overcome to win seats, taking into account the average district magnitude[14] (the number of seats up for grabs in a district) and any national legal threshold present in a country. As such, it is also a good indicator of the incentives parties will face when they compete for support and thus it captures the degree to which parties may need to moderate their policy agendas and messages in order to receive enough votes to win legislative seats. More moderation and ambiguity will be required in more majoritarian systems (such as in the United States, which are coded as requiring 35 percent of the vote in order for a party to win a seat in a single-member district), while parties (and especially small parties) will be quite free to explore a wider range of policy issues and positions in systems such as the Netherlands, where the effective threshold is .67 percent. Data from the World Bank Database of Political

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[13] Effective Threshold = $\frac{50\%}{(M+1)} + \frac{50\%}{2M}$ where M = the average district magnitude. If a national legal threshold represents a higher barrier to party entry, then that value is used instead.

[14] According to Cox (1990), district magnitude is the factor that may have the largest influence on spatial incentives.

Institutions (Beck et al. 2000) are used to calculate the average effective threshold for the lower chamber in each country over the years 1975 to 1999.[15]

Demographic Heterogeneity. Demographic heterogeneity can be considered another source of diversity. In the small-groups literature its effects are found to be ambiguous. For example, Jehn *et al* (1999) find that information diversity tends to improve group performance while value and demographic diversity have complicated effects, and Polzer *et al* (2002) find that when groups have high interpersonal congruence (i.e. the congruence between how one views himself and how he is viewed by his group) demographic diversity can enhance creative task performance. In macro-social contexts, social heterogeneity has been found to negatively affect a public's support of social programs (Gilens 2000) and consequently wealth redistribution (Alesina and Glaeser 2004). To capture the effect of this factor, data are taken from Yeoh Kok Kheng's (2001) measure of ethnic fractionalization, which accounts for religious, racial, and linguistic cleavages.

Years Free. The effects of electoral institutions require time to take hold. It is possible, for example, that a country may have several political parties present in the political system, but if these parties lack the democratic means to express their

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[15] For this study, one adjustment is made to this measure. Rather than coding runoff systems as requiring 35 percent of the vote (as done by Lijphart), they are coded here as requiring 20 percent of the vote. This is done because runoff systems tend to increase the number of candidates competing for office (Shugart and Carey 1992), and should therefore encourage multi-partism and a broader political discourse (especially during campaigns) at least more so than majoritarian systems that rely solely on plurality rules. Runoff systems can also affect public expectations regarding elite behavior. Westholm and Niemi argue that "systems with proportional representation...or runoff elections...will force voters to think in terms of coalitions and second choices" (1992, 31).

perspectives, then their impact will be significantly limited. For this reason, the number of years that a country is regarded as free (by Freedom House) is controlled for. For most models the values are taken for the period from 1972 to 1999. For the civil union legislation model, the values are taken for the period from 1972 to the year when the country adopted the civil union legislation.

Economic Development. Modernization studies suggest that citizens with greater material wealth begin thinking less about "lower order" issues such as economic security and more about "higher order" issues such as quality of life and concern for the environment (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). For this reason, economic development is controlled for by including a measure of GDP per capita taken from the CIA World Factbook for the year 1999.

Religious Background. Historically Roman *Catholic* societies have tended to resist secularization even in the face of communist rule and socioeconomic development (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 75). This has direct consequences for issues such as the adoption of civil union legislation. *Protestant* and *Muslim* backgrounds are also controlled for.

Results

To analyze how political information systems influence public preferences across countries, I regressed the proportion of positive responses for each issue, in each country, on the log of the effective threshold—the log should reflect the expectation that there is a diminishing rate of return from moving to more and more proportional electoral systems. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 display the results of the regressions for a sample of countries

considered democratically free by Freedom House for at least 10 years. I only report the regressions for which the effective threshold produced statistically significant effects.

Table 4-2 Electoral Systems and Public Preferences

	Environment	*Homosexuality*	*Abortion*	*Divorce*	*Euthanasia*
Effective threshold	-0.062**	-0.080***	-0.046**	-0.059***	-0.049**
(logged)	(0.037)	(0.026)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.026)
Ethnic fractionalization	-0.167	0.254**	0.045	0.237***	0.226**
	(0.198)	(0.115)	(0.101)	(0.091)	(0.108)
Years free	-0.001	0.011**	0.006	0.011**	0.003
	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)
GDP per capita	0.010	0.007	0.004	-0.002	0.008**
	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Catholic	-0.108	-0.135	-0.203***	-0.269***	-0.289***
	(0.105)	(0.088)	(0.078)	(0.070)	(0.082)
Protestant	0.154	0.082	0.086	-0.038	-0.016
	(0.117)	(0.093)	(0.082)	(0.074)	(0.087)
Muslim	4.027**	-1.633	-0.360	-2.771***	-1.584
	(2.233)	(1.202)	(1.059)	(0.955)	(1.320)
Constant	0.378***	0.175	0.269***	0.495***	0.390***
	(0.142)	(0.114)	(0.100)	(0.090)	(0.107)
R^2	0.619	0.703	0.698	0.641	0.684
N (countries)	26	35	35	35	34

* p ≤ .1, ** p ≤ .05, *** p ≤ .01 (one-sided). Standard errors in parentheses.

We can see in the table that the effective threshold significantly predicts attitudes toward several "new politics" issues, including making material sacrifices to protect the environment, and tolerance of: homosexuality, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, experimentation on human embryos, attendance of religious services, and agreement with the idea that marriage is outdated. As the effective threshold increases, as we move toward greater majoritarianism, attitudes on all these issues become more negative. Conversely, I interpret this pattern as suggesting that as we move towards more proportional systems citizens become more cosmopolitan.

Table 4-3 Electoral Systems and Public Preferences

	Embryonic	*Religious Services*	*Marriage Outdated*	*Immigration*	*Prison for Recidivist*
Effective threshold (logged)	-0.039**	-0.063**	-0.024*	0.003	7.831***
	(0.017)	(0.036)	(0.017)	(0.038)	(2.999)
Ethnic fractionalization	0.359**	0.166	0.188***	0.183	1.625
	(0.152)	(0.148)	(0.069)	(0.168)	(16.360)
Years free	0.036**	0.002	0.000	0.008	-1.110
	(0.015)	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.008)	(1.036)
GDP per capita	-0.011**	0.003	0.003	-0.003	0.045
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.820)
Catholic	-0.009	-0.474***	0.000	-0.040	-43.884***
	(0.039)	(0.112)	(0.052)	(0.119)	(13.104)
Protestant	0.036	0.026	-0.055	-0.053	-33.322***
	(0.040)	(0.120)	(0.056)	(0.128)	(11.573)
Muslim	-3.784*	-2.637*	-0.406	-3.644**	-68.179
	(2.250)	(1.812)	(0.841)	(1.983)	(411.079)
Constant	-0.632**	0.856***	0.164**	0.376**	62.489***
	(0.303)	(0.147)	(0.068)	(0.156)	(23.240)
R^2	0.741	0.656	0.364	0.172	0.649
N (countries)	12	34	34	33	21

* p ≤ .1, ** p ≤ .05, *** p ≤ .01 (one-sided). Standard errors in parentheses.

Substantively, a change in the effective threshold from its lowest value to its highest value (which is equivalent to switching from a nearly pure proportional system like the Netherland's to a pluralitarian system like Great Britain's) is associated with a 6.2% drop in support for the environment, an 8% drop in support for homosexuality, a 4.6% drop in support for abortion, a 6% drop in support for divorce, a 5% drop in support for euthanasia, a 4% drop in support for experimenting with human embryos, a 6.3% drop in respondents who say they attend religious services once a month or more, and a 2.4% drop in agreement with the idea that marriage is outdated.

The effective threshold was not statistically related to any other of the 16 World Value Survey issues considered here. For several of these issues, this finding may largely reflect two phenomena. First, the lack of a relationship may suggest that some variables were too controversial (in 1999), even for countries with low effective thresholds. For example, it is possible that tolerance for prostitution will not increase until sometime in the future, or it is possible that support for this issue may never increase, regardless of the electoral system. Second, the lack of a relationship may also result from a process of cross-national attitude convergence. A convergence of attitudes is more likely to occur for issues that have been salient for a longer period of time (such as gender equality and economic issues). Thus, the idea of gender equality has become prevalent in all advanced democracies to a degree that the effective threshold will no longer be useful in predicting attitudes toward this issue. Longitudinal analyses may help reveal if both of these phenomena are indeed occurring, however, the required data is not readily available and therefore such an approach should be addressed by future work.

In Table 4.3 we can also see that there is no statistical relationship between the effective threshold and immigration, suggesting that though proportional representation likely increases exposure to more intense anti-immigrant messages citizens in countries with proportional representation are not more likely to hold anti-immigrant views than citizens in majoritarian systems. In the sample of countries used here, Sweden has the highest level of tolerance for immigration (70%), while Denmark has the lowest (31%). Support in the United Kingdom is low (at 39%), while it is moderately high in the United States (57%). This finding suggests that other factors are more relevant for explaining attitudes toward immigration. More importantly, this result suggests that citizens are

making a distinction between sensitive ideas from the left of the political spectrum and sensitive ideas from the right. This is only a preliminary glance at a topic that should be addressed more extensively in future research, but the results do suggest that in a diverse information environment, ideas on social issues from the left of the political spectrum have an advantage over ideas coming from the right.

Table 4.3 also shows that countries with higher effective thresholds (or more majoritarian electoral systems) tend to have higher levels of support for more punitive approaches toward addressing crime. Citizens in more majoritarian countries were significantly more likely to recommend prison sentences for a man, aged 21, who is found guilty of burglary for the second time. A change in the effective threshold from its lowest value to its highest value (which is equivalent to switching from a nearly purely proportional system to a pluralitarian system) is associated with a 7.8% increase in support for incarceration. This result comports with the expectation that because majoritarian institutions privilege punitive responses to crime and limit dissenting positions on addressing crime citizens in countries with these systems will be more likely to support punishment.

No other variable predicts the attitudes considered here as consistently as the effective threshold, but it is interesting to note that ethnic fractionalization predicts positive support for several issues, including: homosexuality, divorce, euthanasia, embryonic experimentation, and the idea that marriage is outdated. This finding suggests that ethnic fractionalization acts somewhat like ideological diversity; it also serves to introduce individuals to diverse perspectives, especially on social issues, and this introduction to different perspectives encourages cosmopolitanism.

As for the control variables, the religious variables generally work as expected, though their influence is less consistent than that of the effective threshold. Catholicism does significantly decrease support for abortion, divorce, euthanasia, and it increases the likelihood that respondents attend religious services. Catholicism also strongly reduces support for the use of prison sentences to deal with recidivism. This result is likely consonant with the Church's tradition of promoting social justice. Respondents with a Muslim background are more likely to oppose divorce, immigration, and (weakly) embryonic experimentation, and they are more likely to attend religious services. Muslims are also more likely to support protecting the environment, and this result may be tied to religious principles which I have insufficient knowledge to properly expound on.

It should also be noted that economic development only affects euthanasia and embryonic experimentation (in an unexpected direction) and democratic freedom only affects homosexuality, divorce, and embryonic experimentation (all in the expected direction). These results should be interpreted with caution because countries were in part selected on these variables; most countries in the sample are at least relatively wealthy and democratic. Moreover, these two variables, democratic freedom and economic development, are known to be collinear.

Multilevel Analysis

The clear pattern that emerges from the previous section is that the electoral institutions which increase the flow of information (e.g., proportional representation) significantly increase support for social issues that have a more recent history of salience and that tend to come from the left of the ideological spectrum. In this section I seek to take advantage

of the multilevel nature of the data to explore the effects of individual-level factors.[16] Based on the results of the aggregate-level regressions, which fit well with the insights from modernization theory and the institutional mechanisms outlined in the previous section, I construct a sensitive-issues-and-policy-positions (SIPP) scale that I then analyze with a hierarchical linear model (HLM).[17]

The SIPP scale is a summated rating scale composed of the issues for which the effective threshold was a significant predictor, including: the environment, homosexuality, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, experimentation on human embryos, attendance of religious services, and agreement with the idea that marriage is outdated.[18] Not all the questions were asked in all of the countries, but I included all the questions in the scale because summated rating scales "standardize" the scores: they divide a respondent's total score by the number of questions answered.[19] Higher values on the SIPP scale can be interpreted as indicating higher levels of support or tolerance toward sensitive issues and sensitive policy positions, particularly those promoted by parties from the left of the political spectrum.

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[16] An HLM analysis also offers two key benefits to this study. First, because they decompose the relationship between variables into separate level-1 and level-2 components, HLMs reduce the loss of information encountered with strictly aggregate-level analyses. Second, HLMs account for the misestimation of standard errors that could result from the dependence of individual responses within the same organization (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002).

[17] Unfortunately, because not all of the fifteen questions were asked in all of the countries analyzed, a factor analysis could not be conducted to determine the presence of attitude dimensions that underlie the issues examined here. In any case, scales created by using those techniques would likely miss the "sensitive issues dimension" that I am aiming to capture because they do not account for changes in salience across time.

[18] The Cronbach's alpha statistic for this scale is equal to 0.767, which suggests a high level of reliability. Various versions of this scale (where one or two questions were removed or one or two questions were added) produced similar alpha and regression results.

[19] I also attained similar results using variations of the scale, where I dropped various issues or added others.

It should be repeated that the HLM analysis of this scale is not specifically meant to examine the effects of the effective threshold; instead, it is meant to explore the effects of individual-level predictors. Given that the scale is composed of issues for which the effective threshold produced significant effects, we should expect that the effective threshold will have a significant effect on the SIPP scale. It should be noted, however, that the SIPP scale can be interpreted as telling us something about cultural change. The scale created here is similar to indexes of postmodernism developed in the modernization literature, including for example, Charnock and Ellis' (2004) postmodernism index, which they based on Inglehart's suggested new, non-class based dimension. They showed that, for Australia, a postmodernism index created from 23 items (including issues such as euthanasia, gender equality, and the environment) is independent of the traditional left-right dimension.[20]

Explanatory Variables

Controls are introduced for several individual-level demographic variables, available in the World Values Survey. I explore the effects of the respondent's *gender, education, age,* and *political interest,* and *religious background.*[21] In accordance with modernization theory, it is expected that education increases a respondent's exposure to information and his/her capacity to process it, and should therefore increase levels of

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[20] Indeed, indexes of postmodernism that include responses to several issue items are likely less controversial than a measure often used by Inglehart. Inglehart's measure of postmaterialism--based on either a single or multiple ranking exercise of four national aims (two materialist and two postmaterialist) and which results in classifications of survey respondents as "materialist", "postmaterialist", or "mixed"—has been criticized as invalid and as not representing an actual value dimension (Davis and Davenport 1999; Davis et al. 1999).

[21] Other interesting variables, such as the size of the respondent's town, were available for some countries, but unfortunately they were not asked across a sufficient number of countries.

cosmopolitanism or liberalism. Modernization theorists have also argued that cultural change occurs through generational replacement (Abramson and Inglehart 1992) and we should therefore expect that younger respondents will tend to be more cosmopolitan than older respondents. I also expect that an interest in politics means that a respondent will be exposed to higher levels of information and this variable should therefore be positively associated with cosmopolitanism.

The education variable is a three-category variable. The lower category (*Education 1*) includes:

1. Inadequately completed elementary education
2. Completed (compulsory) elementary education
3. (Compulsory) elementary education and basic vocational qualification

The medium category (*Education 2*) includes:

4. Secondary, intermediate vocational qualification
5. Secondary, intermediate general qualification
6. Full secondary, maturity level certificate

The upper category (*Education 3*) includes:

7. Higher education - lower-level tertiary certificate
8. Higher education - upper-level tertiary certificate

Age is also a three category variable: 15-29 years (*Age 1*), 30-49 years (*Age 2*), and 50+ years (*Age 3*). A respondent's political interest is measured by a summated rating scale created from responses to the following questions:

> (A062) When you get together with your friends, would you say you discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never?

(E023) How interested would you say you are in politics?

(E150) How often do you follow politics in the news on television or on the radio or in the daily papers?

For religious background, I now use individual-level data on Roman *Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim* backgrounds. Recall that these religious factors are expected to reduce the tendency toward secularization and cosmopolitanism.

Model Construction

Here, I outline the steps taken in constructing the HLM. The first step is to run a one-way ANOVA model with random effects to determine how much of the variation on the sensitive issues scale lies within and between countries. The results indicate that 26 percent of the variance is between countries.[22] Moreover, the ANOVA model shows that the variability in country means is significantly different from zero (χ^2=15158.686, $p <$ .001).

As a second step, I run a model with only the individual-level variables. This step provides a baseline to compare the effects of individual level variables with country-level variables. The individual level model is:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta 0 + \beta 1*(\text{FEMALE})_{ij} + \beta 2*(\text{AGE 2})_{ij} + \beta 3*(\text{AGE 3})_{ij} + \beta 4*(\text{EDUCATION 2})_{ij} + \beta 5*(\text{EDUCATION 3})_{ij} + \beta 6*(\text{CATHOLIC})_{ij} + \beta 7*(\text{PROTESTANT})_{ij} + \beta 8*(\text{MUSLIM})_{ij} + \beta 9*(\text{POLITICAL INTEREST})_{ij} + R$$

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[22] Proportion of variance in cosmopolitanism between countries = between group variability/(between group variability + within-group variability) = 0.76712/(0.76712 + 2.21203) = 0.26

where Y_{ij} is the score on the sensitive issues scale for an individual *i* in country *j* and $\beta 0$ is the individual level intercept. The remaining coefficients match the descriptions in the previous section.

The third step is to introduce the country-level variables only for the model intercept $\beta 0$. This step will examine the effects of the country-level variables on the sensitive issues scale. The country-level equation for the model intercept is:

$$\beta 0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*(\text{EFFECTIVE THRESHOLD}_j) + \gamma_{02}*(\text{ETHNIC}$$

$$\text{FRACTIONALIZATION}_j) + \gamma_{03}*(\text{GDP CAP}_j) + \gamma_{04}*(\text{YEARS FREE}_j) + U_{0j}$$

where γ_{00} is the country-level intercept and γ_{01}, γ_{02}., γ_{03}, and γ_{04} are the effects of the country-level variables.

Finally, HLM permits us to explore whether the electoral institutions significantly predict the within-country slopes. That is, we can explore if countries with high effective thresholds differ from countries with low effective thresholds in terms of the strength of the association between an individual-level variable and scores on the sensitive issues scale. Cross-level interaction terms can introduce model instability mainly because of the multicollinearity they introduce. Therefore, this part of the analysis is limited to the variables of highest theoretical interest. I explored the interaction of the effective threshold on education. The question, then, is whether the effective threshold significantly influences how strongly education is associated with high scores on the sensitive issues scale. Is the slope for education significantly steeper in countries with higher or lower effective thresholds? In other words, is the effect of education

significantly stronger in countries with greater information diversity? The cross-level interaction equation examined here is the following:

$$\beta 5 = \gamma_{50} + \gamma_{51} (\text{EFFECTIVE THRESHOLD}) + U_{5j}$$

where γ_{50} is the intercept for the higher education slope and γ_{51} is the coefficient of the effective threshold on this slope.

Results

Table 4.4 reports the results of the microlevel model (Model 1), the country-level model (Model 2), and the full model with interaction effects (Model 3). The microlevel model includes only the individual-level predictors, controlling for the multilevel nature of the data structure. Here, all of the individual-level parameter estimates are consistent with the expectations derived from modernization theory and other literatures.

Respondents with higher levels of political interest and education score significantly higher on the SIPP scale. Increasing political interest from the lowest score to the highest increases the value of the SIPP scale by .4 points, or by about 6%. The shift to a secondary education is associated with an increase in the SIPP scale of .32 points, or approximately 5%. Tellingly, the shift to a tertiary education is associated with a considerably stronger increase (.6 points or 9%) in the SIPP scale.

Older respondents and respondents identifying as Catholic, Protestant, or Muslim score significantly lower on the SIPP scale. The shift to the second age group (30-49 years) is associated with an increase in the SIPP scale of .21 points, or approximately 3%, while the shift to the third age group (50+ years) is associated with a considerably stronger increase (.71 points or 10%) in the SIPP scale. Identifying as Catholic decreases the SIPP score by .66 points or 9%; identifying as protestant decreases the SIPP score by

.49 points or 7%; and identifying as Muslim decreases the SIPP score by 1.5 points or 21%.

The variance components at the bottom of Table 4.4 can be used to assess whether the introduction of the country-level variables in Models 2 and 3 improves our ability to explain cross-national variations on the SIPP scale. Using the components in Model 1 as a baseline, we can gauge the explanatory power of the country-level variables by observing the change in size of the components as we move from Model 1 to Models 2 and 3.

When the country-level variables are introduced, for Model 2, we can note first that the variance component of this model is considerably smaller than for Model 1. With the introduction of the country-level variables there is a 32% reduction in the unexplained cross-national variance over the baseline model. As expected, the effective threshold is significantly and negatively related to the SIPP scale ($p < .05$). Substantively, a change in the effective threshold from its lowest value to its highest value (i.e., moving towards a more majoritarian system) is associated with a decrease of .28 points on the sensitive issues scale. This represents about 4% of the range on the sensitive issues scale.

With respect to other country-level variables, only economic development significantly affects scores on the SIPP scale ($p < .1$). A ten thousand dollar increase in a country's GDP per capita increases an individual's score on the scale by .4 points. This result matches the findings in the modernization literature and should be considered particularly robust given that the influence is significant even though all of the countries

Table 4-4 Multilevel Model of Cosmopolitanism

	Model 1 Microlevel Only	Model 2 Country-level Intercept Effects	Model 3 Full Model with Interaction Effects
Macro-level			
Effective threshold (logged)		-0.278** (0. 145)	-0.222** (0.134)
Ethnic Fractionalization		0.210 (0.530)	0.209 (0.530)
Years free		0.038 (0.030)	0.037 (0.030)
GDP per capita		0.038* (0.027)	0.039* (0.026)
Individual-level			
Political Interest	0.099***(0.030)	0.098*** (0.030)	0.100*** (0.029)
Female	0.020 (0.022)	0.020 (0.022)	0.018 (0.023)
Age 2	-0.208*** (0.031)	-0.208*** (0.031)	-0.211*** (0.030)
Age 3	-0.714*** (0.067)	-0.714*** (0.067)	-0.719*** (0.066)
Education 2	0.324*** (0.040)	0.324*** (0.040)	0.326*** (0.038)
Education 3	0.599*** (0.079)	0.599*** (0.079)	1.086*** (0.278)
Effective Threshold			-0.202** (0.108)
Catholic	-0.662*** (0.070)	-0.662*** (0.070)	-0.661*** (0.070)
Protestant	-0.485*** (0.082)	-0.486*** (0.082)	-0.484*** (0.082)
Muslim	-1.541*** (0.632)	-1.541*** (0.633)	-1.536** (0.624)
Constant	3.863*** (0.130)	2.916*** (0.512)	2.777*** (0.499)
Random Effect			
Variance Component	0.767	0.525	0.520
Percent Explained		58.5	56.8
N (35 countries)	46885	46885	46885
Degrees of freedom	34	30	30
$\chi 2$	14159.721	8454.654	8404.645

* p ≤ .1, ** p ≤ .05, *** p ≤ .01 (one-sided). Robust standard errors in parentheses. HLM 6.04 was used to calculate restricted maximum likelihood estimates.

included in this study are at least moderately developed. As noted earlier in this chapter, the results for democratic freedom should be interpreted with caution because countries in the sample were in part selected on this variable and because democratic freedom is known to be collinear with economic development.

The results for ethnic fractionalization suggest that this type of diversity does to an extent differ from the ideological diversity produced by electoral institutions, at least with respect to the SIPP scale. Ethnic fractionalization is positively correlated with the SIPP scale, but the influence is not statistically significant. Future work should give greater attention to the distinction between ideological and ethnic diversity. It would be particularly useful to focus on whether ethnic fractionalization produces significant results for other issue areas, especially those associated with ethnic interests and competition.

The final model, with the cross-level interaction of education and the effective threshold, does not improve the variance explained over Model 2, and in fact, decreases it. There is also little change in the coefficients for most variables, though the magnitude of the effective threshold declines from .28 to .22. Of primary interest for this model, there is a tendency for countries with higher effective thresholds to have smaller within-country slopes for higher education. This finding indicates that higher education is more strongly related to SIPP scores in countries with lower effective thresholds. People with higher education are even more likely to support sensitive issues and positions when they reside in countries with institutions that facilitate the expression of diverse ideological perspectives. This result is theoretically reasonable because it suggests that when two mechanisms of information are combined, the effects on individual attitudes are considerably stronger.

Conclusion

The findings of this chapter are to some extent preliminary because one time point is used to explore what is likely a dynamic process that ideally should be analyzed with data

from many time points and over several decades. The evidence presented here is not rich enough to detail the dynamic effects of electoral institutions on cultural change, but it is strong enough to support the conclusion that among the many unintended consequences of constitutional engineering lie its important effects on how and what citizens think. This study shows that, via their influence on the diversity of information to which citizens have access, electoral institutions influence citizen preferences even on particular political issues.

This study also identifies a specific mechanism by which modernization leads to cultural change. Specifically, it suggests that information diversity is a key mechanism contributing to cultural change. Though research on information processes has focused on factors such as knowledge, education, and communications systems, diversity has been largely overlooked in political science. Yet, diversity clearly increases the flow of information and facilitates the introduction of new information, and the findings in this paper suggest that these forces significantly influence public preferences and cultural change.

Particularly, while information diversity means that the public will be exposed more frequently to sensitive issues from the right and left of the political spectrum, it appears that diverse information environments tend to favor the formation of "cosmopolitan" or "postmodern" outlooks that are more favorable to the acceptance of issues from the left. It is beyond the scope of this paper to establish possible cognitive processes that explain these results, but it has been suggested by Inglehart and Welzel (2005, Ch. 6) that the factors associated with socio-economic development (such as existential security and cognitive mobilization) help reveal the most fundamental human

motivations, including the desire to exercise autonomous choices. That is, humans have a fundamental desire to be free, but this desire is suppressed by survival needs and a lack of cognitive mobilization.

With respect to the relationship between electoral institutions and other issue areas, such as government intervention in the economy, I suggest that the lack of a relationship is surprising. Cross-national studies of the welfare state show that countries with fewer veto players and with proportional representation tend to have higher levels of wealth redistribution (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Huber and Stephens 2001), and this suggests that we should find attitudes more supportive of government intervention in the economy in countries with proportional representation. There are three plausible explanations for the absence of relationship. First, as noted earlier, the survey data were taken at a specific point in time, and this limits our ability to see how attitudes toward government intervention in the economy changed over time. It is possible that economic attitudes differed some decades ago and have now converged. This explanation would suggest that we may eventually see a convergence on sensitive issues, as well.

The second explanation is that economic issues may not be dealt with through the public opinion mechanism. That is, government policy on economic intervention may not follow public preferences but instead may be shaped by political competition at the elite level. Therefore, policy outcomes in areas such as economic intervention may not match public opinion patterns. The third possibility is that the questions in the survey simply did not capture public attitudes on government intervention. Addressing the first two explanations would likely be aided by time series data, which currently do not exist.

The third explanation may be addressed by the use of alternative cross-national survey sources.

A final point to consider is how differences in the rate of cultural change are consequential to the policies of a nation. The importance of the dynamics described in this chapter is magnified by the extent to which public opinion influences public policy. In fact, this is the subject matter of chapter 5.

Chapter 5 Electoral Institutions and Policy Outcomes

We have seen that electoral institutions can influence the political information environment and public opinion. I show in this chapter that the mechanisms and effects identified in this project are also relevant for policymaking. Particularly, I argue that these information mechanisms help explain two features of policy-making: policy innovation (how quickly governments take action on certain issues) and the tendency to use reactionary policy responses.

As I have argued, diversity is a form of openness and, as such, it should affect a society's flow of information. This implies that many policy issues will be debated earlier in environments that include a more diverse range of perspectives, and that consequently, certain policies will be adopted earlier in those societies. Because electoral institutions significantly influence the diversity of perspectives that a political system brings to bear on policy problems. they should influence various processes that contribute to policy innovation. They should influence how quickly a country's political system will debate particular problems, how quickly public attitudes will change on given policy positions, and as a result, how quickly certain policies are adopted (or policy innovation).

This mechanism of diversity should most clearly apply to sensitive or controversial issues that are more likely to receive attention in diverse systems. As argued earlier, these sensitive issues largely include "new politics" issues, such as environmental protection and homosexuality. I show here that countries with electoral institutions that increase the number of perspectives included in the policy-making process (i.e., proportional representation systems) tend to act earlier on these kinds of

issues. They tend to have higher scores on environmental performance indicators and tend to be early adopters of civil-union legislation.

Additionally, as demonstrated in previous chapters, majoritarian institutions not only limit dissent, but they also encourage reactionary discourse and public preferences. I show in this chapter that this mechanism helps explain why countries with majoritarian systems are more likely to use reactionary policies, especially when dealing with issues linked to personal security, such as crime. Thus, countries with more majoritarian electoral systems tend to have higher incarceration rates and are more likely to use the death penalty.

Electoral Institutions, Policy Innovation, and Reactionary Policies

Studies of policy innovation have by now identified many factors that lead entities (e.g., organizations, countries, or American states) to adopt various policies sooner than other entities (for extensive reviews of policy innovation research see Berry (1994), Dobbin et al. (2007), Dolowitz and Marsh (1996), and Wejnert (2002)). As noted by Dobbin et al. (2007), an important category of factors contributing to policy innovation is associated with information and social learning.[23] The general theme in this category is that policy actors change their beliefs as new evidence emerges. Studies based on this approach all say something about the information environment and its effects largely on elites. Information is identified as originating from a variety of sources, including elite networks, and observation or quasi-experimental evidence from an organization's own experiences, and more frequently from the experience of other organizations.

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[23] This branch of factors can be further subdivided into three approaches: the political science approach on social knowledge, Bayesian learning, and channeled learning.

Despite this concern for the information environment, policy innovation research has overlooked the importance of *diversity*. Yet, the diversity of perspectives expressed in a political system clearly affects the kind of information that elites and citizens will encounter and should therefore influence policy innovation. Indeed, it is a common theme in the small-group literature that varied perspectives, knowledge, skills, and approaches tend to increase a group's level of creativity and innovativeness, under certain conditions (see Milliken et al. (2003) and Nemeth and Nemeth-Brown (2003)).

The inclusion of more perspectives in the decision making process takes advantage of human variation in interpretation and heuristics, and consequently increases the probability that a person with the right perspective to solve a particular problem will become available (Page 2007). This mechanism implies that breakthroughs and innovations are the result of an individual seeing a problem in a novel way. Moreover, as suggested by De Dreu and West (2001, 1192), diversity is linked to minority dissent, which appears to prevent groupthink, or a premature movement to consensus. Minority viewpoints, then, are important because they stimulate divergent attention and thought (Nemeth 1986) and consequently deepen deliberation and lead to the identification of new ideas and solutions.

The diversity framework, then, appears particularly relevant to policy innovation research. But it is also a framework tailor-made for cross-national studies of innovation. Indeed, few settings present such a clear variation in the number of perspectives that are included in decision making processes. I expect that because electoral systems affect how quickly new issues and positions will be introduced to the arena of political competition they will consequently affect how quickly certain policies will be adopted.

The findings in the previous two chapters tell us that we should expect electoral systems to most clearly affect innovation on new politics issues. These are issues that for the period analyzed here can be considered sensitive or difficult to introduce. In this chapter, attention is given to the protection of the environment and the extension of rights to same-sex couples.[24] These two issue areas are relatively difficult for policy-makers to address because they are imbued with controversy and political costs. Protecting the environment requires asking the public to make material sacrifices while extending rights to same-sex couples involves advancing the interests of a historically unpopular minority group. Environmental sustainability, moreover, represents the type of problem that requires long-term, "nonlinear" planning (identifying economic externalities, for example).

Diverse systems can more readily inform their citizens of the long-term costs of ignoring economic externalities and they can acquaint the public with the plight of a historically unpopular minority. Under PR, we are more likely to see the emergence of what Kitschelt (1988) calls "left-libertarian parties" (a category that includes green parties) that routinely emphasize "quality of life" and environmental sustainability over increasing economic prosperity. These same minor parties are also most likely to take controversial positions on social issues such as the rights of same-sex couples. Under

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[24] To explore the relationship between electoral institutions and policy innovation, regressions were run only for the issues of environmental performance and homosexuality. There is not yet enough variation across the issue of euthanasia because at this time too few countries have adopted relevant legislation. It should be noted, however, that the only two countries to formally legalize euthanasia--The Netherlands and Belgium--are countries with consensual electoral institutions. For the issues of abortion and divorce, data from earlier time periods is required for the independent variables. This data is not readily available, especially the data for electoral institutions.

PR, therefore, we should see that minor parties, in particular, are more capable of taking up difficult issues and that their presence increases the likelihood that controversial approaches to problems will become part of the policy-making calculus.

Chapters 3 and 4 also identified a second information mechanism—the groupthink dynamic. As discussed, the groupthink dynamic limits dissent and thereby privileges the promotion of survivalistic messages, especially for issues linked to personal security. This mechanism is most likely to emerge under majoritarian systems because these systems lack the minor parties that can provide the dissenting perspectives that mitigate groupthink. In fact, a clear example of this dynamic can actually be observed in the current American presidential elections. On foreign policy, the two major parties actually engage in a one-upsmanship dynamic, where they offer tougher and tougher approaches to dealing with international security threats.

In future work, I will explore how electoral systems influence foreign policy, but here I concentrate on the issue of law and order. Again, in the United States, both presidential candidates have staked tough-on-crime positions, including support for the death penalty. And no dissenting candidates are receiving any significant media attention. Thus, I expect this groupthink dynamic to increase the tendency for a country to rely on punitive approaches when dealing with crime and this should help explain why countries with majoritarian institutions have higher rates of incarceration and why they are more likely to use the death penalty.

Thus, the hypotheses explored in this chapter are the following:

> **H1**: Electoral institutions that facilitate the expression of diverse perspectives (i.e., PR) should have an advantage in addressing

controversial problems, and in particular they should be innovators on issues such as environmental protection and the extension of rights to historically unpopular minorities—in this case, same-sex couples.

H2: Majoritarian electoral institutions (i.e., those that use small district magnitudes) should privilege survival-oriented solutions to problems and this should be revealed most clearly by outcomes in the arena of law and order, where we should see a greater reliance on punishment as a solution to crime.

Measurement

Data for this study are taken from 21 to 60 countries, the number of observations depending mainly on the availability of data for each of the dependent variables. The independent variables are those used in Chapter 3, including: the effective threshold, ethnic fractionalization, the number of years a country is considered democratic, GDP per capita, and religious background (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim). Countries include a mix of advanced democracies (especially for the smaller datasets) and developing democracies. The sample also includes countries from several regions of the world.

There are four dependent variables analyzed in this chapter. As noted above, I analyze environmental performance and tolerance of homosexuality because data is readily available for these issues. Protecting the environment and extending rights to same-sex couples can be considered difficult to address because they tend to involve high political costs---costs which minor parties are more willing to bear and actually profit from.

The index used here to measure environmental performance is the Pilot Environmental Performance Index (EPI) developed for 2002 by the Global Leaders of Tomorrow World Economic Forum in collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network of Columbia University (2002). It is designed to measure environmental results at a national level, by gauging performance on and rates of change in air quality, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and land protection. The extension of rights to same-sex couples is operationalized as the amount of time it takes a country to adopt *civil union legislation.* The period under consideration begins in 1988 (the year before Denmark became the first country to adopt civil union legislation) and ends in 2006. Each country received a score based on the number of years it took to adopt the legislation.

The impact of the survival-oriented dynamics produced by majoritarian systems is explored in the arena of law and order. As a result of a greater emphasis on survival, countries with majoritarian systems should tend to more frequently rely on punishment as a solution to crime. Consequently, I expect them to have higher *incarceration rates* and they should be more likely to rely on *capital punishment.* The data for incarceration rates are taken from the International Centre for Prison Studies (2006) and are measured as the number of people in prison per 100,000 of the national population. For most of the countries the data are for 2004. The data for capital punishment come from Lijphart (1999), who used a three-point scale to distinguish between countries that use capital punishment for ordinary crimes (coded 2), countries that had capital punishment but only

for exceptional crimes or that had it but did not use it (coded 1), and countries that did not have it in law at all (coded 0).

To examine the relationships between electoral institutions and policy outcomes, ordinary least squares is used to analyze the continuous dependent variables of environmental performance and incarceration rates, and an ordered probit model is used to analyze the categorical dependent variable of capital punishment. An event history model is used to analyze the adoption of civil union legislation because the sample of countries can be considered censored. Through 2006, only 21 countries had adopted civil union legislation and this figure is likely to rise with the passage of time. Event history models permit the modeling of the probability that an event will happen, given that, through the period observed, the event has not happened (see Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). A Weibull hazard model is used to analyze a total of 60 countries (for which data are available) because it is capable of handling the expectation that the hazard rate changes as time passes. In this case, it is expected that once the first nations have adopted civil union legislation it should become easier for other nations to do so.

Results

Results for environmental performance and civil union legislation are reported in Table 5.1. In the case of environmental performance, the results of the OLS regression suggest that the effective threshold has a negative, nonlinear (logged), and significant impact (at the .01 level). Holding all other explanatory variables constant, a move from a system of pure proportional representation to a pure majoritarian system (equivalent to moving from the Netherlands to Great Britain) would decrease the environmental performance index by approximately 6%. Ethnic fractionalization, an alternative source of diversity,

has a positive influence on environmental performance, but it is only weakly significant at the .1 level

With respect to other control variables, only Protestant background has a significant effect on environmental performance. An explanation for this outcome that takes account of the nature of each religious tradition cannot be offered here, but it is possible that this result is linked to other cultural features associated with Northern Europe. All other variables were not significant and to some degree this is likely because the effects of variables such as economic development and democratic freedom are reduced by the use of a sample that over-represents wealthy, democratic countries, and by collinearity.

Table 5.1 also demonstrates that the effective threshold has a negative and significant effect (at the .01 level) on the adoption of civil union legislation. The more majoritarian a country the less like it is to adopt this kind of legislation. In particular, a change from a pure proportional system to a pure majoritarian system is associated with a 64% decrease in the "hazard" or "risk" that a nation will adopt civil union legislation.[25]

Protestantism weakly predicts the adoption of civil union legislation (at the .1 level), and again, this may be related to cultural features associated with Northern Europe. All other explanatory variables do not significantly predict the adoption of civil union legislation, even though this model does include more developing countries. Again, democratic freedom and economic development may suffer from collinearity. The duration parameter (p) for this model is significantly above 1.0, at 2.83, indicating

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[25] The percentage change in the hazard associated with a unit change in a covariate is: 100*(Hazard Ratio – 1)

that the risk that a nation will adopt civil union legislation does indeed increase with time. Once the first country adopts civil union legislation it becomes easier for other countries to do so.

Table 5-1 OLS Analysis of Environmental Performance and Event History Analysis of Civil Union Legislation

	Environmental Performance Index (OLS)		Civil Union Legislation (Weibull Model)	
Predictors	β	β (Stndrdzd)	β	Hazard Ratio
Effective threshold (logged)	-5.912***	-0.510	-1.025***	.359
	(2.137)		(0.322)	(0.116)
Ethnic Fractionalization	19.753*	0.397	1.070	2.915
	(12.097)		(1.110)	(3.236)
Years free (through 1999)	0.001	0.0003	-	-
	(0.447)			
Years free (before civil union)	-	-	0.034	1.035
			(.050)	(0.051)
GDP per capita	-0.031	-0.020	.020	1.020
	(0 .439)		(0.051)	(0.052)
Catholic	10.300	0.333	-0.267	0.765
	(6.266)		(0.963)	(0.737)
Protestant	30.624***	0.842	1.525*	4.593
	(7.111)		(1.017)	(4.671)
Muslim	-461.114	-0.298	-.506	0.603
	(299.339)		(3.289)	(1.983)
Constant	51.009***	-	-8.275***	
	(9.542)		(1.803)	
p (duration parameter)	NA		2.826	
			(0.561)	
N (No. countries with civil-union)	21		60(21)	
R^2	0.717		NA	
Log-likelihood	NA		-30.935	

* p ≤ .1, ** p ≤ .05, *** p ≤ .01 (one-sided). Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 5.2 displays the regression results for the law and order issues. The effective threshold is found to have a positive and significant effect (at the .05 level) on incarceration rates. That is, as we move towards a higher level of majoriatarianism the

incarceration rate increases. Moving from a pure proportional system to a pure majoritarian system increases the incarceration rate by approximately 49%. This is a remarkable result, considering that the sample includes Israel, a strong outlier. Israel has one of the most proportional systems in the sample but it also has a relatively high incarceration rate—likely related to national security issues. The effect of ethnic fractionalization is not statistically significant for this model, suggesting that social diversity does not increase the tendency for incarceration. No other explanatory variables have significant effects on incarceration rates. Again, economic development and democratic experience may not be significant because the sample includes mainly wealthy, democratic countries, and because these two variables are also known to be collinear.

For the capital punishment model, the ordered probit estimates reveal that the effective threshold has a positive and significant effect (at the .01 level) on the probability that a nation will employ capital punishment. Moving from the minimum effective threshold (e.g., in the Netherlands) to its maximum (e.g., in the United States) increases the predicted probability of using the death penalty by .59, holding all other variables constant at their means. The effects of ethnic fractionalization are again not significant, suggesting that, while this form of diversity does not reduce the likelihood of using the death penalty, it also does not increase it. All other control variables are not significant.

Table 5-2 OLS Analysis of Incarceration Rates and Ordered Probit Analysis of Capital Punishment

	Incarceration Rates (OLS)	Capital Punishment (Ordered Probit)
Predictors	β	β
Effective threshold (logged)	49.087**	--
	(28.171)	
Effective threshold	--	0.097***
		(0.029)
Ethnic fractionalization	46.505	-0.562
	(116.555)	(1.474)
Years free	-3.672	0.019
	(5.280)	(0.116)
GDP per capita	3.066	0.005
	(3.670)	(0.044)
Catholic	32.038	0.144
	(29.885)	(0.327)
Protestant	24.924	-0.902
	(78.875)	(1.088)
Muslim	175.391	7.833
	(794.265)	(8.032)
Constant	37.438	--
	(109.771)	
N	44	36
R^2	0.166	NA
Pseudo- R^2	NA	0.325
Log-likelihood	NA	-22.796

* p ≤ .1, ** p ≤ .05, *** p ≤ .01 (one-sided). Standard errors in parentheses.

Discussion and Conclusion

The argument presented in this chapter is that diversity influences a political system's flow of information and therefore its capacity for policy innovation and its capacity to limit the effects of groupthink and its concomitant reactionary policy making. It was shown that countries with consensual institutions that encourage early debate on sensitive issues (i.e., proportional representation) tend to act earlier on those issues. Moreover, countries with majoritarian institutions that limit dissenting perspectives (i.e.,

pluralitarian systems) are more likely to rely on punitive policies to deal with issues like crime.

It should be noted that compared to the results in chapter 4 the effects of demographic diversity diverge from ideological diversity. Its effects are not significant for any of the models, in either direction, which indicates that demographic diversity neither encourages nor hinders policy innovation, and it does not encourage the formation of punitive policies for issues like crime. This suggests that, with respect to policy making, demographic diversity does work differently from ideological diversity or produces much weaker effects. Further research will be required to uncover if there are conditions under which demographic diversity can encourage innovation or hinder it. Further research may also identify issues for, and conditions under which, ethnic diversity may produce conflict that damages policy problem solving. We also may wish to focus on situations in which ideological diversity works differently from what has been found in this project.

This chapter only scratches the surface of the importance of the diversity framework for policy problem-solving. For example, it is highly likely that this framework extends to a much broader range of issues and this may be revealed by greater attention to the effects of time. My explorations into other issue areas were cursory and did not account for how policy convergence reduces policy variation over time. Thus, for example, it is possible that if time could be accounted for, the innovation patterns observed in this chapter may be observed in issue areas such as welfare state innovation. This was not possible to analyze with the public opinion data used in this study because the earliest wave of the World Values Survey was collected in 1981, well after most

welfare states took on their characteristic forms. Historical data on electoral institutions would also need to be gathered.

It was the aim of this chapter to pair public opinion phenomena with policy actions, and this reduced the number of policy actions that could be examined. That is, the issues examined here required public opinion and policy outcome data. It may be possible to extend this analysis to several other issues, if public opinion data (which are not readily available) need not be gathered. For example, the reactionary dynamic could have more readily been applied to issues such as military spending. In the future, I will likely rely more frequently on this approach.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

I have demonstrated in this project that, through their effects on the information environment, electoral institutions influence important elements of policy making. They influence the information available to citizens and elites and thereby affect their preferences. They specifically influence how quickly certain policy issues and solutions can be debated and thereby influence how quickly governments will respond to these issues and solutions. This dynamic helps explain why countries with more proportional electoral systems tend to act earlier on "new politics" issues such as protecting the environment and extending rights to same-sex couples. Furthermore, electoral institutions influence the prevalence of dissent and thereby influence the prevalence of groupthink. Especially for issues connected to personal security, majoritarian systems limit dissent and therefore favor the use of more aggressive, short-term policies. This dynamic helps explain why majoritarian systems tend to have high rates of incarceration, more frequently rely on capital punishment to deter crime, and have publics that are more willing to rely on punishment to deal with crime.

The mechanisms described here provide a step toward fleshing out the black-box that lies between political institutions and the numerous policy outcomes they are thought to affect. To date, the literature on electoral institutions and policy outcomes has focused on the behavior of elites and depended on correlations between measures of electoral systems and policy outcomes. For example, a common mechanism advanced is based on the assumption that policies can be divided into those that benefit the population broadly

and those that benefit narrow, geographic constituencies.[26] In this view, electoral institutions are said to influence which of these types of policies parties will favor. In majoritarian systems political parties only need to win half the districts and to win each district only requires a party to win half the vote. This will encourage parties to pursue narrow, geographically oriented policies a) because they are trying to win over voters that are distributed in this manner and b) because they do not need to maximize their share of the vote (50% plus 1 is good enough). Under proportional representation a party has a greater incentive to pursue broad-based policies. Parties in pure PR systems will not have geographically distributed voters and they will seek to maximize their share of the vote and will therefore favor policies that appeal to a broader portion of the electorate.

Evidence for this mechanism (and for others offered in the literature) tends to come from correlations between measures of electoral systems and policy outcomes. My information-based analysis shows how electoral institutions influence the information environment. I also develop test expectations about public opinion—an intermediary factor in policy making—from these patterns of information. And finally, I connect my findings on the information environment and public opinion to specific policy outcomes.

Researchers have already hinted at the importance of diversity, but they have conceptualized it more as collegiality (Gerring et al 2005, Lijphart 1999). My project suggests that we should focus on the number of perspectives that are expressed in the deliberation process—e.g., in legislative discourse, in campaign discourse, and in the

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[26] Some examples of work employing this theme include: Persson and Tabellini (2003), Milesi-Ferretti et al. (2002), Lizzeri and Persico (2001), Alesina and Glaeser (2004), and Fredriksson and Millimet (2004).

discourse that appears in the media. Steiner et al. (2004) have already developed a Deliberation Quality Index (DQI) that measures the quality of deliberation in several countries, and they find that consensual (proportional) systems tend to produce higher quality deliberation than majoritarian systems.[27] The problem from my perspective is that this index is aimed more at measuring collegiality rather than the diversity of perspectives included deliberation.

Broader Implications

The mechanisms described here may also help explain and predict outcomes across a broader range of policy areas. The dynamics described here could, for example, extend to areas such as drug-policy, scientific research (such as genetic engineering), military spending, and even international conflict. In fact, Leblang and Chan (2003) have already found that democracies with proportional representation are significantly less likely to engage in international conflict than democracies that employ majoritarian systems. Though the authors found that the relationship is strong, they suggested that more work needs to be done to identify the mechanisms producing this result.

Many of the broader implications of the ideas outlined in this dissertation have a normative bent, but ultimately these are questions worth asking and exploring in future work—especially for those who might be interested in questions of cross-national competitiveness. We can ask, then, if countries with institutions that permit the expression of diverse perspectives possess advantages over countries that limit diversity.

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[27] The researchers also explored the impact that quality of deliberation had for policy outcomes. They found that when quality of deliberation was high, support for legislation tended to be higher. They also found that high quality deliberation is not associated with policies that produce greater redistribution.

Do countries with institutions such as proportional representation diversity produce societies that run more efficiently? Are these societies more sustainable in the long term?

For example, based on my findings, I suggest that Continental Europe has an advantage over other regions of the world. These countries tend to employ policies that focus on long term consequences rather than short term consequences. Thus, for example, we can see that because Europe tends to spend more on social programs that benefit people early in life they then use fewer resources on law enforcement. Conversely, my findings may help explain why countries like the United States struggle with these policy areas. The U.S. is currently struggling with a skyrocketing prison population, such that, according to a report from the Pew Center on the States (2008), the U.S. now has one in every one hundred adults confined in a jail or prison. Furthermore, as the study suggests, the tough approaches to solving this problem have not produced a clear impact on recidivism or overall crime. Indeed, many American states are finding it difficult to deal with the soaring costs of incarceration.

Another example is Continental Europe's lead in protecting the environment. While environmentalism has recently become more popular in the United States, such that corporations and even universities are touting their green credentials, many countries in Continental Europe have for decades allowed environmentalist parties to influence public policy. The results are reflected in the Environmental Performance Index (discussed in Chapter 5) but we can also see it in responses to global commitments, like the Kyoto Protocol. While Sweden is ahead of schedule in meeting its obligations under the treaty (*Sweden 'is beating Kyoto emissions targets'* 2007), majoritarian countries

such as the UK are struggling with the requirements (Black 2005) and the U.S. has yet to sign on to the protocol.

It should be noted, in this discussion of implications, that most democracies are open and allow for the emergence of a great degree of diversity, and we should therefore expect that they all have a high capacity for coping with the complexities of policy-making.[28] Nevertheless, it is important to think about the long-term consequences of differences in problem-solving capacities. Even if the effects are incremental, could large consequences emerge over the course of several decades, such that countries PR systems improve their position in the world on several fronts?

If diversity is ultimately deemed important to good governance, then the question is: how do we procure it? Does this mean that countries should move to adopt more proportional electoral systems, or can they find other means of expanding diversity? Can governments and media in majoritarian systems find ways to include the perspectives offered by minor parties? Great Britain, for example, already gives minor parties the right to free air time during election campaigns. Is it sufficient and feasible to expand programs like these such that minor parties could become a regular part of a nation's political deliberation, even if they cannot win seats in their respective legislatures?

Loose Ends

The subject matter of this dissertation is substantial and labyrinthine, meaning naturally, that many concerns have been overlooked. To begin with, a more complete analysis of this topic will require fieldwork. An extended stay in Northern Europe, for example, may allow for the identification of other important elements tied to the processes I have

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[28] This is probably true even in more authoritarian societies.

described. It would also allow for a closer analysis of efficiency, or how policies interact to help societies function more effectively. Do social welfare and education policies affect the long-term costs of law and order?

Another concern is that, while the small group literature has discovered that diversity produces a number of benefits, the literature has also discovered that diversity produces many drawbacks. In fact, there are a wide range of factors—such as fear of evaluation or breakdowns in communication—that can lead diverse groups to underperform more homogeneous groups (Milliken et al. 2003). Fortunately, many of these factors are not present in legislative deliberation—indeed, for this reason I would suggest that legislatures actually represent ideal places to study the dynamics of diversity. For example, we are not likely to see legislators and parties fearing social judgment in ways that produce breakdowns in legislative communication.

Nonetheless, it is still necessary to consider conditions under which diversity might produce negative results in legislative deliberation. Future research may find, for example, that ideological and ethnic diversity produce negative results in less developed, less democratic countries. In this study, ethnic diversity did not produce any considerably negative results and, in fact, was more likely to produce positive results. Yet, results from other studies do suggest that ethnic diversity can produce negative outcomes. Ethnic diversity, for example, has been found to undermine wealth redistribution (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Gilens 2000) and is seen by a number of political scientists as a hindrance to democratization (e.g., Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1977)—though on this latter view a dissenting position is emerging (see Fish and Brooks 2004).

Causality

A particularly large concern is that the relationships described in this study involve some degree of endogeneity. The hypothesized dynamic between the key variables, depicted in Figure 6.1, likely involves a tri-angular loop, with a reciprocal relationship between electoral institutions and public preferences, and a reciprocal relationship between public preferences and policy outcomes. Indeed, there is a growing body of literature concerned with the factors involved in the selection of institutions and whether the existence of these factors suggests that institutional effects suffer from endogeneity (see Shvetsova 2003). Unfortunately, the use of statistical methods that can address endogeneity is hampered by a lack of appropriate instrumental variables and the relatively small number of countries for which data are available. Indeed, testing the full model in Figure 6.1 was not possible with the data available for this study.

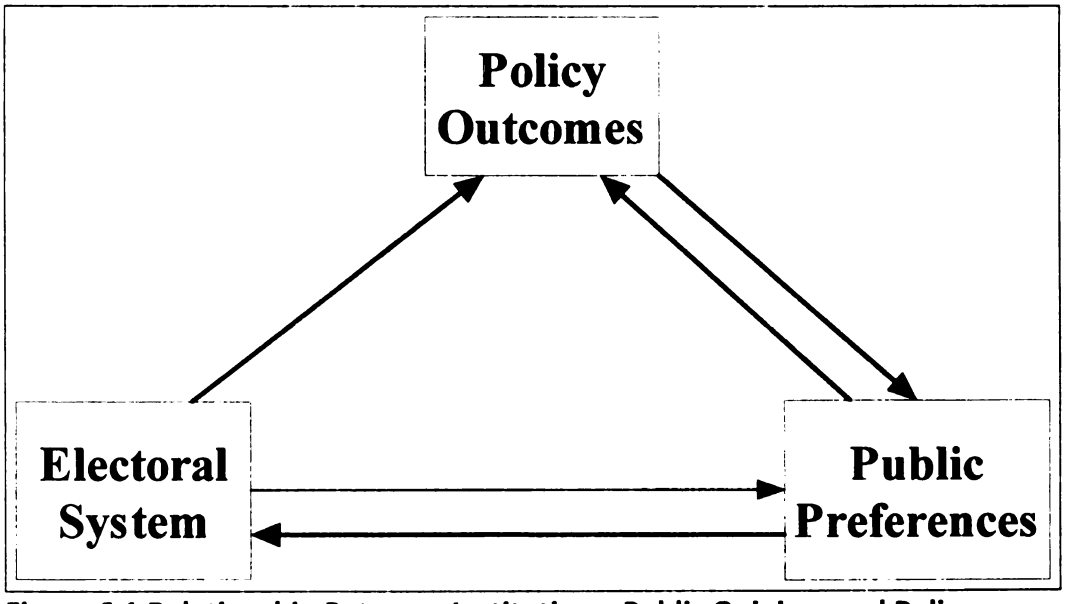

Figure 6.1 Relationship Between Institutions, Public Opinion, and Policy

I have, however, tested for simultaneity on the relationship between electoral institutions and public preferences because this is the part of the model most likely to raise questions about causality. A Hausman test of endogeneity showed that there was no statistically significant simultaneity between attitudes toward each of the issues explored in this study and the electoral institutions.[29] Theoretically, it is a reasonable to expect this result because, as argued by the modernization literature, issues such as protecting the environment and extending rights to same-sex couples may represent the emergence of a new dimension of political competition that has only in the past several decades reached the forefront of the political agenda. This is long after most of the countries in this study established their electoral institutions. Moreover, for the issues considered here, the changes in public preferences and in policy outcomes exhibit a pattern of cross-national convergence. As argued by Inglehart (1997), support for the protection of the environment and tolerance for homosexuality has increased over the past several decades in all modernizing countries. Here, I am suggesting that these changes should unfold earlier and more extensively in political systems that foster diversity.

Cox (1997, 19-27) and Duverger (1954, 218-220) have furthermore pointed to evidence suggesting that electoral institutions independently affect societal behavior. Cox controlled for the social diversity of a society by comparing the number of parties that won seats in the house and senate of a country when the electoral institutions for

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[29] The instrumental variables used here for the effective threshold are geographical area and an interaction between geographical area and ethnic fractionalization. Boix (1999) found that these variables strongly predict the type of electoral system used by a country. The instrumental variables for public preferences include economic development, number of years a country is free.

these chambers differed. He found that different electoral systems do produce different party systems, even in the same society. Duverger noted that when proportional representation was tried in local settings in the United States—which is known for its rigid two-party structure—multiparty systems emerged (as in New York between 1936 and 1947). Thus, the effects of electoral institutions on social structure are likely more consistent and systematic than are the effects of social structure on electoral institutions.

Finally, we can also gain some leverage on causality by examining historical evidence. The extension of voting rights to women is an issue that became salient for many democracies at the end of the 19th century. In Table 6.1 it is possible to observe that the countries that became today's multi-party systems (and that therefore tend to act more readily on modern sensitive issues) have not always been at the forefront of policy innovation. On the contrary, the first two countries to grant women the right to vote (New Zealand and Australia) employed majoritarian electoral systems, and several other majoritarian countries (Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States) were not far behind. This indicates that at some point countries with majoritarian systems held the "openness" (information flow) advantage, likely because they tended to have been democratic for a longer period of time.

Circa 1900, three of the four most democratic countries (with a polity score of 10) were majoritarian countries, while most of the countries that became today's multi-party systems tended to have autocratic characteristics (indicated by the negative polity scores). This suggests that the development of openness appears to proceed in a dialectical manner. At one point, the development of free and fair elections provided countries with a significant openness advantage. More recently, the openness advantage appears to have

shifted to countries that have not only developed free and fair elections but that have also developed institutions that foster the expression of diverse perspectives. Cultural approaches do not easily account for this historical pattern.

Table 6-1 Women's Suffrage

Countries	Year Rights Extended	Polity Score Circa 1900
New Zealand	1893	10
Australia *	1902	10
Finland	1906	8 (1917)
Norway *	1913	10
Denmark, Iceland	1915	-3
Canada	1918	9
Ireland *	1918	8 (1921)
United Kingdom *	1918	7
Austria	1918	-4
Georgia *	1918	NA
Germany	1918	1
Estonia	1918	8 (1917)
Kyrgyzstan	1918	NA
Latvia	1918	7 (1920)
Poland	1918	8 (1918)
Russian Federation	1918	-10
Belarus,	1919	NA
Belgium *	1919	6
Luxembourg	1919	NA
Netherlands	1919	-2
Sweden *	1919	-4
Ukraine	1919	NA
United States	1920	10
Albania	1920	-2
Czech Republic	1920	7 (1918)
Slovakia	1920	7 (1918)

Source: Inter-parliamentary Union (1997).
Polity scores are for the year 1900 or the earliest year for which data are available for a country. The dates for the latter scores are noted in parentheses.
* Right subject to conditions or restrictions

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