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THE MASSMEDIA, CHANGING PARTISANSHIP AND BRITISH
ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR: AN EVALUATION OF LONG-TERM
DECLINE IN LABOUR AND CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT

presented by

Isaac Iheanyichukwu Ihiasota

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of the requirements for

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**THE MASS MEDIA, CHANGING PARTISANSHIP AND BRITISH ELECTORAL
BEHAVIOR: AN EVALUATION OF LONG-TERM DECLINE IN LABOUR
AND CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT**

By

Isaac Iheanyichukwu Ihiasota

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE MASS MEDIA, CHANGING PARTISANSHIP AND BRITISH ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR: AN EVALUATION OF LONG-TERM DECLINE IN LABOUR AND CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT

By

Isaac Iheanyichukwu Ihiasota

The effects of the mass media on political attitudes and electoral behavior have remained the concern of media consultants, politicians and social scientists. The predominant view in the scientific literature suggests that the media (especially the emerging pattern of television as the dominant source of political information) have contributed to the rising cost of political campaigns, lower levels of political knowledge, less trust in politicians and government, a growing electoral instability, and instability of partisanship strength or direction. As a result, many scholars fear that the declining turnout during elections and party support, for example, will lead to increase alienation from political participation and eventually lead to the collapse of the political system. However, the effects of the mass media, especially television, on electoral volatility have not been adequately explored by political scientists.

This study examines the possibility that the mass media affect voter turnout and party identification between elections in Great Britain. First, I reviewed the current research in mass communications and voting behavior relating the mass media and political participation or voting behavior. I explored the theories of party identification

and media effects. I then tested these theories using the British Election Studies, BES, (a series of three successive studies) data set to explore the putative relationship between the mass media, particularly television, political attitude and electoral behavior in Great Britain over the last twenty-three years (the period covered by BES).

This study concluded that the mass media have had no significant negative influence on the strength of partisanship and electoral behavior in Great Britain as many social scientists have feared. Mass media use during election campaigns may indeed not be as effective as politicians, media consultants and pundits in Great Britain think. However, this study found evidence of some linkage between partisanship strength and mass media use, the image of the political parties and mass media use, and between mass media use and voting in general elections in the United Kingdom.

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To my parents Michael Onyeaguhele and Angelinah Nwanyikwereonye,
who inspired me to get to the "bottom" of education.
To Alfred Uzoma Uzoije Ibemere who showed me the way.

Παρά τῷ Θεῷ πάντα δυνατά.

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St. Michael and All Angels' Day

September 29, 1994

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INTRODUCTION

"Into this feverish world of atomic bombs balanced so perilously between peace and war, has come a new menace, the menace of television - Jekyll and Hyde of the atom ... a force capable of bringing a revolution to culture and entertainment, yet at the same time repulsive in its inherent evil, its latent power to destroy." (D. Horton, 1951:11).

Since the 1920s when the effects of the press on political behavior captured scholarly attention,¹ the effects of the mass media of communication on political attitudes, elections and voting behavior have remained the concern and anxiety of social scientists, political consultants and practitioners. The exact extent of the effects, as well as the social and political changes that have resulted from the evolution of mass media of communication and rapid communications have also provoked an enormous amount of research.

In the literature, earlier theorists saw the media as a powerful agent of propaganda, and posited what came to be known as the "hypodermic needle" or "direct effect" model. For many years, many scholars viewed the media as influential in a

¹ The study of the effects of the media on elections and voting behavior dates back to the beginning of this century. One of the earliest studies in the United States was in 1926 by George Lundberg in 'The Newspaper and Public Opinion', Social Forces, in which he attempted to assess the effects of the press on political behavior. However, the first major social science research on the media in Britain was in 1958, by H. T. Himmelweitt, A. N. Oppenheim, and P. Vince, in Television on the Child, Oxford University Press, 1958, in which they looked at the effects of television on social behavior.

variety of ways from shaping values and views about the world to determining electoral choices and outcomes, thus, attributed to the media a kaleidoscope of effects.²

However, about two decades ago, McLeod and Becker (1974:137) pronounced dead and 'buried under a mound of rhetoric' the all powerful "hypodermic" needle model of mass media effects - that is, 'the tacit assumption that media content equals audience effect' - because empirical studies (Klapper, 1960; Trenaman and McQuail, 1961; and Blumler and McQuail, 1967) found the model to be far too simplistic. Although McLeod and Becker (1974:161) admitted that this does not mean that 'the mass media do not change the attitudes and behaviors of smaller numbers of people.' Citing a study by Douglas, Westley and Chaffee (1970), they suggested that repetitive exposure to unfamiliar media messages may produce affective change. However, one earlier study by Klapper (1960), found weak or non-existent effects of the media on the attitudes of individual voters towards political candidates. That finding lead to the famous dictum that media campaigns have "minimal" consequences or the "limited effects" model.

Other studies (Chaffee, 1975; Kraus and Davis, 1976; McGuire, 1985) later confirmed the finding that the mass media have only minimal effects. Citing the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates as an example of minimal effects of the mass media on voters' partisan preferences, one study suggested that media campaigns only reinforced the pre-existing dispositions of the American voters. So, it was a reaction to the simplicity and overstatement of media effects in the hypodermic needle model that lead to the birth of

² In a 1986 study, Susan Harold, 'A Synthesis of 1,043 Effects of Television on Social Behavior', in George Comstock, ed., (1986) listed about 1,043 effects of television on social behavior.

the "uses and gratifications" model. And, for a long time in the United States, the notion of minimal effects and/or the uses and gratifications model persisted despite a subsequent finding (Funkhouser, 1973; McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Erbring, Goldenberg and Miller, 1980; Iyengar and Kinder 1985 and 1987) - the "agenda-setting effects" - that suggested that the media set agenda on political issues or on what the voters perceive as important national problems.

In the 1980s, and in recent election campaigns, the fear of the effects of the media reemerged with a particular intensity, due in part to increased salience of the mass media (television, radio, newspapers, and magazines) and the use of negative campaign advertising during election campaigns. These concerns are again based on the premises that the media influence political behavior. Some scholars in the United States, point to the decline of the political parties as a direct effect of the use of the media during election campaigns. These scholars argued that the media have more influence where political parties are weak.³ And, indeed, there is not dispute that the political parties are now weaker than ever, whilst there has been increased use of the media or media-related spending by political candidates during election campaigns.

For instance, Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar (1991), noted that in 1952, political candidates in the States spent less than 5% of approximately \$140,000,000 of their campaign money on radio and television time. But between 1972 and 1988 the

³ But E. E. Schattschneider, (1942:1) had argued that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties. Since he made that assertion in 1942, any indications that the political parties are becoming weak have raised a great concern among political scientists.

figures increased from about 15% of \$452,000,000 to about 20% of approximately two billion dollars. If the salaries of media consultants and advertising production costs are included, political candidates in the States in 1988 spent approximately 40% of their campaign money on radio and television or on political communication.⁴ For instance, in 1990, political candidates for the United States Senate spent about \$60 million on television and radio advertisement alone. In recent elections, the new media of communication technologies (direct mails, computers, fax-machines, mobile telephones, computers, etc.) have also been incorporated into the political arena raising further concerns.

This salience of the media and money during election campaigns and their perceived potential effects have refueled the old fear of manipulation and instability in the political process.

What is surprising, however, is that despite the fact that earlier researchers showed countless examples of "minimal" or small effects of the media during election campaigns, the belief in the power of the media to influence ideas and political behavior has persisted in the literature over these years. Indeed, the salience of the mass media in recent election campaigns is a reflection of the importance politicians and political consultants attach to the power of the media. Because the media and money have become prominent during election campaigns, they have raised the fear of manipulation and volatility in the political system. And, because voters are now bypassing the party

⁴ According to Luntz, 1988, Senatorial and gubernatorial candidates, each spent about 60% of their total campaign expenditures in 1988 on television alone.

system and relying more on the media for the information they need for making decisions on election day (more than they did when political parties were salient), this has also exacerbated the classic fear of the effects of the media on political behavior.

For one thing, political campaigns are now becoming increasingly "television centered" or "media image" rather than campaigns based on issue position and political experience. Many scholars fear that a shrinking electorate that relies less on political parties for the information they need for making decision during election will be more likely to be influenced by media campaigns. Furthermore, because of the paucity of the political information voters acquire from the media, some scholars fear that voters will be easily susceptible to political manipulation in the media.

In recent election campaigns, many political observers have continued to express their concerns about the effects of the media on political behavior. They fear not only increased salience of the media and money during election campaigns, but also the increased use of negative campaign advertisements. Negative political advertisements, for example, rather than emphasizing political issues and party stands on the issues tend to emphasize the negative characters of the candidates.

It should be noted here, however, that one of the main reasons why the effects of the media on political behavior attracted a lot of attention in the literature is the great theoretical importance attributed to the concept in earlier research. The political significance of such effects or possible effects on the voters became the concern of social scientists. In short, many political observers and social scientists fear the effects of the media on electoral behavior. However, the normative appeal of the concept leads many

politicians and their consultants to accept the media as a political tool.

For example, scholars of voting behavior in earlier studies (Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield, 1949; Hovland and Wise, 1951-52; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954) documented quite a number of the influence of the media on the behavior of the voters during presidential elections in the United States. One of these earlier studies showed that media use and interpersonal communications during election campaigns were related to political participation and voting (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954), leading to a general acceptance of the effects and importance of the media for political campaigns by political consultants and politicians. So, over the years, in many election campaigns, political consultants and politicians in the United States as well as in Britain,⁵ came to view the media as influential; and spent much of their money and effort in media campaigns hoping to exert some influence on the voters. In short, in most Western industrialized democracies the media have taken a center stage during elections. But at the same time, the political parties in these nations are declining in importance, as effective organizations for mobilizing large number of campaign workers and voters during elections. Indeed, this has meant that the political parties have declined in their traditional role resulting in greater reliance on the mass media to reach the voters.

Put simply, in most Western industrial democracies, political campaigns are now media campaigns or "televisual" campaigns, whilst political "party identification"

⁵ For example, Mrs Thatcher was convinced that a set of personal television interviews turned the 1987 general election in favor of her party.

(partisan attachment or partisanship - the terms are used interchangeably in this study) - has plummeted. This declining partisanship affiliation in Western democracies has resulted in fundamental political changes dubbed 'partisan dealignment' and 'partisan realignment' in the literature. Scholars of voting behavior, for example, argue that partisan dealignment leads to the electorate being much more susceptible to the effect of mass media campaigns. Indeed, as voters become less tied to political parties, they also become less likely to be guided by them when making decision on how to vote. It is reasonable, therefore, to say that political parties are now playing a lesser role during elections, contrary to their traditional functions of assisting voters in their electoral decision making, interest articulation, and public policies formulation; whilst the media have taken over these functions of the political parties. No wonder in most Western industrial democracies, political parties and partisanship identifications are on the decline.

The declining of the political parties' role in most Western industrialized democracies together with the declining political party identification are the most widely discussed political trends in the literature. Many studies in the literature have rarely considered the media in their attempts to explain this important political change in party support or the declining of the role of the parties; although some have mentioned the role of the media and found them to have played a major part in every election. In the burgeoning literature, there is a general agreement that the prominence of the media during elections has effected the candidates' campaign styles, their strategy, and the electorate as well. Indeed, there has been a growing volatility during election

campaigns,⁶ together with an increase in "candidate-centered" campaigns, as opposed to partisan campaigns during elections in recent years. Candidate-centered campaign behaviors or election tactics, for example, are widely believed to have displaced the traditional functions of the political parties. Intuitively, the growing importance of the media during elections suggests that the media have some effect on election results. And by default, it also suggests that the media have some effect on the declining of importance of political parties and the decline in partisanship. However, the salience of the media during election campaigns could be attributed to the simplistic understanding of media effects by political consultants and the candidates.

In summary, in many Western democracies, especially in the United States, political scientists have alleged that the parties are now either in ideological disarray and organizationally weak, suggesting in fact that the party is altogether over. And because the parties are declining, the electorate now rely more on the media for the information they need for making decisions on election day than they did when parties were predominant. As a result, political parties are declining in salience, whilst there has been an increased salience of the media or a shift toward candidate-centered campaigns. It is not counter-intuitive, therefore, to conclude that the media have effects on elections and electoral behavior. Corollary, it is reasonable to say that political parties and party identification are declining as party elites lose their influence in the political system to

⁶ Large net movements of support for the political parties during campaigns were reported in the literature between the 1970s and 1980s more than in any decade before. For example, the proportion of the electorate who claimed to have 'seriously thought of voting for another party' during the campaigns in Great Britain increased substantially between 1964 and 1987.

media elites. In fact, some scholars, for example, Ranney (1983) argue that the coming of mass media of communication in most Western democracies have undermined the role of traditional party-based channels for campaign communications.

For most observers, the political implications of the effects of the media on the political parties, the electorate and the electoral success of the candidates, and consequently on the electoral process and political stability are enormous. For instance, because partisan strength implies political stability, it is feared that where political party identification is weaker or less stable, the potential for instability as a result of media effect is greater. Thus, as voters become more open to persuasive arguments in the media, they are more likely to switch political affiliation leading to a volatile political environment. Some scholars have argued that the information the candidates disseminate to the voters via the media are more likely to affect voters with limited commitment to any political party. These scholars claim that the declining influence of the political parties and political party identification over time, may open up greater effect of the media during elections. The ensuing decline of the influence of the political parties and political party identification as a result of the influence of the media will lead to political volatility. Other scholars have pointed out, that lack of strong party identification, in part, explains why new democracies are more volatile than established ones (Converse, 1969). One thing is sure, political parties provide the major link between democratic publics and the governments. However, because the media have become more important than the political parties during and after elections campaigns, they have exacerbate the old concerns and anxieties about political volatility.

The hypothesized consequences of the influence of the media on elections, the political parties and political party identification include not only political instability and governmental incapacity, but demagoguery and extremism, alienation of the citizens from government and from each other, a growing intra-party conflict, and a reduction in the accountability of governments to the public (Reiter, 1989:326).

It is easy to see why the salience of the media in the political process might create instability, because partisan strength implies political stability. It is also easy to see why a decline in the influence of the political parties can lead to political alienation, but it is difficult to accept that the media have contributed to the decline of the political parties and party identification.

However, the basic hypothesis of this study is that the media are partly responsible, because the evidence in the last three or four decades suggests a trend or a relationship between the decline of political party identification and increased media importance during election campaigns.

In this study, I present a new approach to an intuitive question - Is there really a causal relationship between the advent of the media and the decline of political parties? In particular, has the rise of voters' use of the media for information during elections lead to a weakening of party ties among the voters? Do the mass media affect political attitudes, elections and voting behaviors? And if so, how?

Needless to say these questions have interested political scientists for awhile (Seymour-Ure, 1992); and, in the literature, a connection between the media and electoral behavior seems plausible. However, there are important theoretical and

empirical questions that are raised by my basic hypothesis.

The questions are: first, have the mass media actually altered the political process, or do the media, particularly television, promise a more effective and democratic political system, by opening up channels for communicating more directly and personally with a larger segment of the society? Second, have the mass media brought about new political campaigning, better informed voters, greater voter participation in the electoral process? Third, how do the voters' use of the mass media relate to their perception and attachment to the established political parties? Fourth, in what ways do voters make use of the media for forming their orientations toward the candidates, the political parties and the electoral process? And finally, can we rightly attribute the kaleidoscope of effects of the media found in the literature in the last three or so decades to the media?

I cannot hope to offer anything approaching a definitive test of my basic hypothesis from the existing data. All I seek to achieve is to suggest that the media should be integrated into the explanation of the declining influence of the political parties, political party identification and political behavior in general.

It is important to point out here that when television arrived in the 1950s, it was seen as the medium with the greatest potential for informing the public. Unlike the other media of communication, its nature requires no special literacy. It was then seen as the medium that would unite, educate, inform, and improve the actions and decisions of the electorate. It was also thought of as the medium that would increase involvement or "political participation" - by reminding the people to vote, by raising interest levels and by making people feel closer to the candidates. Thus, it was seen as the ultimate

instrument of democracy;⁷ and, because of all the perceived potentials of the medium, Marshall McLuhan (1964) predicted that television would break down national barriers and transform the world into a "global village".

Although McLuhan's central thesis still remains valid today, the effects of the medium on individual's opinion, behavior and elections remains a topic of psephological (studies of voting behavior) debate and will continue for some time to come too.⁸

In the literature, there is a broad consensus among academicians and political observers that for most people, the media (especially television) have become "the major learning experience of democratic polities" (Katz, 1972). There is no dispute that the media have socialization effects, and that voters are exposed to a larger body of rational evidence on which to base their electoral choices on the media (especially television) now than ever before. However, from all indications, the picture that emerges in many psephological literature on the effects of the media on the voters suggests that voters in most industrialized democracies are more informed, better educated with high level of political interest and a broad political concerns that extend to a growing range of issues (Dalton, 1988; and Inglehart, 1990) in part because of the influence of the mass media. But, these developments have also lead to a paradox: many studies that focused explicitly on whether the voters are better informed by the media and why reveal that despite the

⁷ It is interesting to note that during the 1992 general election campaigns in Great Britain, Peter Jenkins in the *Independent* on March 24 complained that television far from extending the democratic process, 'today stands in danger of subverting it.'

⁸ For excellent overview of the debate on media's influence in politics in the United States and Britain, see Dy and Zeigler, 1983; Harrop, 1987; McQuail, 1987; Negrine, 1989; Newton, 1990.

fact that the voters are more informed, better educated and highly interested in politics, partisan attachment and turnout during elections have declined in the last few decades in these nations.

Generally, the evidence from many Western democracies in the last forty years suggests that there has been a breakdown of the traditional bases of electoral behavior at the individual voter level, a decline of political party identification, a decline in voter turnout and a decline in the influence of the political parties. In short, it seems that increased salience of the media during elections in these countries has also coincided with volatile electoral behavior, a decline in the role of political parties and a decline in political party identification.

The Present Study:

Given all the presumed negative effects of the media in the literature on political attitudes and electoral behavior, it is appropriated to investigate carefully both the extent to which the media have actual effects and the degree of the effects.

This study, therefore, explores a classic conundrum of the behavioral sciences: are the mass media politically powerful, in the sense that they have effects on partisanship and electoral behavior in Great Britain, or is their role a minimal one, restricted to only reflecting or reinforcing attitudes?

Put succinctly, what role do the media play in election campaigns? Have the advent of the media contributed to an undermining of the parties in the Western democracies?

However, let me hasten to note at this juncture that empirical studies do not all

support some of the effects attributed to the media in the literature, not at least in Great Britain. Though it may sound trite to say this at this point, but it is a point worth making. Indeed, the advent of television (as the dominant source of political information) may or may not have contributed to electoral instability, both in Britain and in most industrialized democracies as some may think. This conceptual assumption seems reasonable even though there have been studies that have found television viewing to be associated with, for example, lower rather than higher level of electoral volatility.

In this study, the relative importance of the mass media's effects (especially radio, television and newspapers) are empirically tested. This study is solely concerned with the influence of the mass media on political attitudes of the British electorate. It incorporates the seeming or potential influence of the mass media on political attitudes and behavior in general into the analysis. The influence of the mass media over time is explored in this study using a long-term cross-sectional sample of the British Election Studies,⁹ (BES). The data analyzed in this study are therefore based on the cross-sectional samples for each year rather than from the panel samples.

This study examines empirically the relationship between viewing/listening to political election broadcasts, PEBs, or following the general election campaigns in any

⁹ The British Election Study is a collaborative venture between Oxford University and Social and Community Planning Research and funded jointly by the Sainsbury Trusts, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Data Archive and Pergamon Press. The data for the 1964, 1966, 1970, 1974 (February and October), 1979 and 1983 post election surveys were obtained through the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The data for the 1987 post election surveys were obtained through the ESRC Data Archive. I am particularly grateful to the University of Essex for permission to use the data. They are not, however, in any way responsible for any conclusion drawn from the material.

national daily newspaper and voting behavior in Great Britain at every election from 1964 to 1987 inclusive, using the BES data. (There were eight general elections in this period). References are also made in this study to other studies by scholars who have used the British Social Attitudes Studies, (BSAS) and other survey data in explaining voting behavior in Great Britain. But my analysis deals specifically with the BES and reports the results of the eight contests (and the first study in 1963 when relevant to my argument) covered by the data. Ideally, one should compare the possible effects of television with those of newspaper, (particularly as it is often assumed that television is more authoritative, less politically biased and therefore, more influential than the press), but I have in many instances emphasized radio and television use over newspapers because newspapers in Great Britain tend to be overtly partisan.

Unfortunately, the BSAS asks no questions about television viewing and radio listening, in the periods that are covered by the BES, therefore most of the variables used in this study are from the BES. The variables from the BSAS are as a result not included in the analysis as such a comparative study will be limited in scope.

The aim of this study is to explore the putative relationship between the mass media, particularly television, political attitudes, partisanship and electoral behavior in Great Britain over the last twenty-three years (the period covered by the British Election Studies).

In order to achieve this aim, it will be necessary to examine and appraise the fundamental characteristics or the role of the mass media in election campaigns in the British electoral system. It is only in understanding the media philosophy, the political

structure and the use of the media in any country that it becomes possible to assess the effect of the media on the system. For instance, the outcome of the general election in Britain determines the parliament - the British House of Commons. The Prime Minister as the head of government is not elected by the people but is usually the elected leader of the majority party in parliament (or a coalition of two or more parties, although this has not happened since the end of world war II). However, the use of the media in recent general elections campaigns in Great Britain by political party leaders - campaigning like United States presidential candidates; or the "leadership-centered" election campaigns - has prompted some scholars to compare British parliamentary elections with the United States presidential elections; or to talk of the "Americanization" or the "presidentialization" of the British general elections.

For instance, Kingdom (1991:328), argues that British general election today is a 'little more than a presidential contest, people voting mainly on the basis of their feelings towards the party leaders.' Foley (1992) in The Rise of the British Presidency lists nineteen reasons for the rise of the "presidentialization" of the British general elections. One of the most important reasons he noted is the nature of the modern campaign (especially the salience of the media) and the use of the media by Labour and Conservative party leaders. However, there are significant differences between British general elections and the American presidential elections. Yet, the nature of the British general elections today has made the party leaders more concerned with their personal image rather than with policies and issue positions. And, because general elections in Britain are becoming more influenced by the media and the party leaders or are becoming

"presidential". It also follows that political parties are or will be pressured to replace not so popular or not so telegenic leaders. Although a coalition party campaign (like in the 1983 general election when the Social Democrats and the Liberal parties joined to form the Alliance party) makes a truly presidential-style campaign in Britain impossible. For instance, in the British general election campaign of 1983, the two leaders of the Alliance party were often seen as "tweedledum and tweedledee" because they did not seem presidential.

This study, therefore, is predicated on the intuitive or conventional wisdom that the mass media affect voters either by disenchanting them from the political parties or by activating them to turn out to vote in elections through the mobilizing efforts of political parties, and the candidates or the image of the candidates through mass media channels of political communication. The truth of the matter is that when people watch television twenty-four hours or so every week (as we shall see in chapter one), they cannot escape the political impacts of political messages they receive in the medium.

This study therefore builds on the basic hypothesis which explicitly states that the media (especially television) affect political attitudes and electoral behavior (partisanship strength and direction, voter turnout, and so on). The dynamic effects of the media on partisan attachment, class dealignment, and other demographic variables such as gender, union membership and social class are also explored.

To see whether the arrival of the media (especially television) have been more coincidental than instrumental in the changes in partisanship and electoral behavior in general elections in Britain in the last twenty-three years, the alternative explanation (that

it is not the advent of media, in particular, or television per se, that accounts for these changes but the new technology of campaign polling) is also alluded to in this study. Exploration of the relationship between the images of the political parties today and changes in the political process, recommendations for further investigation and suggestions to decision makers are outlined.

In conclusion, this study is a long-term empirically demonstrable exploration of the effects of the media on changing partisanship and British electoral behavior. I have argued that the proposition that 'the mass media have no effects' is just as oversimple and inaccurate as the proposition that the 'media make all the difference.' The conclusion as demonstrated in this study is that the mass media have had no significant negative influence on the strength of partisanship and electoral behavior in Great Britain as many social scientists have feared. Mass media use during election may indeed not be as effective as politicians, media consultants and pundits in Great Britain think. However, this study found evidence of some linkage between partisanship strength and mass media use, image of the political parties and mass media use, and between mass media use and voting in a general election in the United Kingdom; although the full effects of the media may not be known precisely. This study highlights that it is debatable that the media are solely responsible for, a major contributor, or a partial contributor of the declining partisanship strength in Great Britain, nor all the changes, developments or the kaleidoscope of effects that have been attributed to the media in the literature, as the evidence are based on qualitative and conceptual rather than quantitative or empirical research.

Overview of this Study:

By way of introduction, this study does not follow strictly the conventional format of having all literature review in one chapter. Instead, some of the chapters have their own literature review as well as the method used for empirical analysis. This format is necessary because each chapter deals with an entirely different concept and uses an entirely different methodology.

Chapter one describes the context of mass media use and effects in the British campaigns. This chapter incorporates a general model of causes and consequences of media use as proposed by Miller (1991) and outlines the use of the model in testing using the BES. The control variables used in the analysis are similar to (but less than) those of Miller, in order to make my model broadly comparable with his. However, the similarities and differences between Miller's model and the model employed here are highlighted. This chapter also discusses the methodology and the data used in this study.

Chapter two compares the mass media of communication systems in the United States and Great Britain, that is, the media philosophies and the role of the media during elections in the two nations. The similarities and differences in both countries give a comparative as well as a transatlantic perspective of mass media use and effects. This chapter highlights these similarities and differences in the two cultures, their political systems, media systems, and likely implications or consequences during election campaigns.

Chapter three examines the literature on mass media theories and effects. The discussion is divided into two main theoretical schools in the literature - the early studies

and contemporary studies. This chapter highlights the early and contemporary studies on the media, politics and voting behavior that focused on the political functions and effects of 'explicitly' political media content, such as newspaper editorials, broadcast (radio and television) news and public affairs programs, campaign advertising, and so on. It also highlights some of the political changes that have emerged from the dominance or the increased salience of the mass media as the main source of political communication.

Chapter four addresses the fundamental issue of mass media use during election campaigns in Great Britain, the candidates and the parties' use of the mass media, the involvement of the voters and the political parties.

Chapters five and six are the core of this study. They test the model of causes and consequences of media use using a long-term empirical analysis. The analysis explores the association of media use or exposure with voting behavior, looking, for example, at whether or not people say they voted at all and who they voted for (or would have voted). The effects overtime of media use on political party identifications are also examined. These chapters in general look at the impact of the media on partisan, political attitudes and voting choice. They offer some reflections about the explanatory scope and empirical foundations of the various theoretical approaches, and the debates about the role of the media in democratic politics.

Chapter six in particular takes the exploration of chapter five a little further by explaining the effects of mass media use on partisanship and voting behavior, and projects the consequences of such effects.

Finally, a summary, conclusion and recommendations for future studies and likely future political changes are outlined.

The Core Concepts of this Study:

What follows is a normative description of the concept of mass media effects, the concept of political party identification and related concepts. This is necessary because reference to them arises repeatedly in the chapters.

First, in many studies in the United States and in Great Britain, the most frequently mentioned bases for voter's choice during elections is "party identification" - defined as the 'long-standing attachment to or identification with a political party' (Campbell, et al., 1960:12). This psychological tie to the political parties has a significant influence on voting behavior (Abramson, 1983), as voters who are strongly partisan are most likely to vote during election.

However, past studies in the United States and Great Britain, suggest that a fundamental change has occurred in the politics of these two nations. This change has been described as "partisan dealignment" - defined in some studies as either a decline in the proportion of partisanship (Carmines, et al., 1980), or as a decline in the overall strength of partisan attachments (Särilvik and Crewe, 1983). At other times the change has been described as "partisan realignment" - defined as a change in the balance of partisanship among the voters. The differences are simply this: whenever the major political parties are seen as being more vulnerable and subject to dramatic declines in the proportion of the voters that support them, we know that partisan dealignment has occurred. But partisan realignment occurs when the political party formerly seen as a

minor party or with the minority party identifiers suddenly becomes the major political party or the party with the plurality of support (Campbell, 1980; Clubb, et al., 1980). In the literature, the party with the plurality of party identifiers usually wins any given election (Converse, 1966). However, in both the United States and Great Britain, partisanship has declined in the last few decades, with obvious political consequences.

For instance, in many studies in Great Britain, many voters have left the two major parties - the Conservative and Labour party, with the result that the proportion of the electorate in the British Election Studies cross-sectional data who identified with the Conservative and Labour party has fallen by about half between the 1960s and 1980s; while the proportion not identifying with a party has increased from 11% in the mid-1960s to 30% in 1983. The 1970s in particular witnessed a significant erosion of the strength of identification with both major parties (Crewe, Särilvik, and Alt, 1977). Clarke and Stewart (1984) observed this weakening of party ties continuing into the 1980s, although "turnout" (the percentage of the registered voters who voted) in general elections in Britain remained steady, unlike in most industrialized democracies.

Second, complementing the concepts of party identification is the concept of "political participation". According to the traditional models of political participation, in an ideal liberal democracy, well informed and interested electorate would participate in politics, identify with political parties and turnout during elections. Contrary to expectation, these have not happened as predicted, at least, not in the general elections in Britain in the last twenty-three years. Instead, we see a highly informed electorate who are politically aware; but, we have also noticed a fluctuation in voter turnout and

a steady decline of the proportion of the electorate who identify with the two main political parties - Labour and the Conservative party.

Can it be that because the electorate are now more educated and more politically aware that they are more likely to consider issues before making voting decision? Or, do the increased salience of the media and the attention paid to the performance and the image of the leaders have any impact on the electoral process? Although these are not directly the research questions of this study, still they are worth asking as we consider the effects of the mass media on partisanship and electoral behavior in the United Kingdom.

Third, in many past studies on voting behavior, the British electorate exhibited an unusual class basis voting behavior, that for a long time, "class cleavage" (defined as seeing oneself as belonging to upper, middle or working class) was a very good predictor of electoral outcomes. However, scholars of recent elections and class cleavage in Britain have noted that class cleavage has not followed a compelling framework as suggested by previous studies, instead, class cleavage has weakened or lost its salience. In recent years, for example, the strength of alignment between Labour and the manual working-class versus the Conservative and the non-manual middle class has declined.

Finally, in recent years, Britain has experienced a high "volatile electoral environment" or "floating voters", less stable than the electorate of Lazarsfeld's earlier studies in the United States. Heath, et al., (1991:200) link the volatile electoral environment or the political changes in Great Britain to 'the growing number of middle-class, less religious, more educated electorate, the extension of franchise to younger

voters and the changing ideological position of the political parties.' However, the predominant view in the literature suggests that the emerging pattern of television as the dominant source of political information has contributed to this growing electoral instability (McLeod and Blumler, 1987). For instance, Butler and Ranney (1984:233) summarized the situation in these words:

Almost all studies of the attitudes and behavior of voters in Great Britain and the United States in recent years agree that in both countries there has been a sharp decline in the voter's party loyalties, which were shown to be so strong and influential in the 1960s. In both countries substantially fewer people in the 1980s feel strongly attached to a particular party and can be counted on to vote for its candidates in election after election. In both countries some of these defectors have transferred their loyalties to other parties, but most of them have become disillusioned with *all* parties - and perhaps even with parties as desirable institutions.

No doubt many factors have contributed to this transatlantic decline in party loyalties, but there is general agreement that television has played a major role.

If these scholars are correct that the media (especially television) are responsible for the declining party support or partisan attachment and the fluctuating turnout during elections, they raise an important question: Will the voters' disillusionment or disenchantment with the major parties lead to the electorate not voting during elections? Will the electoral volatility that results lead to the collapse of the electoral process or an increase alienation from the political system?

In conclusion, this study examines the influence of media use, on political attitudes and behaviors in Great Britain, that is, the effects of the media on the declining party identification, attitude toward the parties, turnout, and so on. Specifically, how the mass media have influenced party attachment, "extreme" or "moderate" perceptions of the political parties and turnout during elections are examined. Although it is not easy

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to disentangle the influence of the media from that of other alternative causal forces, this study demonstrates that among the major influences on voters' decision-making, whether it is socio-political background, ascribed characteristics, political attitude, etc., *ceteris paribus*, the mass media, especially television, are very crucial and need further examination in future studies of voting behaviors. It shows that television, in recent years, has a little substantial and statistically significant impact on partisan loyalty when all other variables are controlled, although this could be attributed to collinearity of the independent variables in the model.

A final remark should be made about this study. Over the years, data have been collected, collated and analyzed showing significant decline of partisan attachment (see, for example, Crewe, 1983; William et. al., 1990; and Rose and McAllister, 1983). These studies have paid very little attention, however, to the influence of the media on the declining class based voting and/or declining support for the Labour and the Conservative parties; although many have mentioned the increased salience of the media (especially television) during election campaigns as a contributing factor. Kraus (1988:15) summarized this position very well when he wrote: 'despite the growing influence of (the media) television ... studies failed to seriously investigate the role of the media in electoral politics.'

Have the media actually played any part in the voters' severing of their psychological ties with the Conservative and Labour parties?

Ironically, with all the attention paid to the media's influence on politics and with all the impressive body of research literature (Butler and Stokes, 1976; Crewe, Särilvik,

and At, 1977; Franklin and Mughan, 1978; Särilvik and Crewe, 1983; Alt, 1984; Franklin, 1985; and Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985) on the decline in class based voting and the significant erosion of partisan attachments among traditional Labour and Conservative, and even Liberal supporters, few empirical attempts have been made to integrate the effect of the media on the declining of political party identification or the decline of partisan attachment, and this is particularly true of studies in the United States as well as in Great Britain. Although a lot of descriptive work has been done on media campaigns, describing campaign coverage, none have given sustained attention to the effect of the media on the declining political party identification. This lack of empirical research that explicitly examines the impact of the media on partisan decline, especially in Britain, has prompted this study.

CHAPTER I

THE CONTEXT

An Overview of the Subject

British politics has undergone dramatic changes for much of its over 300 years history. However, the most dramatic changes occurred in the last century or so. These changes Pugh (1988:254) noted include, 'the extension of parliamentary vote to all men and women over the age of eighteen, the move toward direct taxation of incomes, the rise of a "welfare state", ... the decline of British industry, two debilitating world wars, the retreat from the empire, and the loss of major-power status.' Others changes are the development of a highly stable two-party system¹ whose political cleavages are based on class rather than on ideology, and the development of a European parliamentary politics.

Given that these changes all have social and political consequences, however, the

¹ In recent elections, more than two political parties have actually competed for power within a system in which two parties previously contested creating an increasingly volatile political situation. The third parties are in 1981, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) that emerged as the new alternative party on the "left" (although prior to that time, the Liberal had contested as the "center" party); the Alliance Party - an alliance of the Social Democratic Party and a rejuvenated Liberal Party - was formed in 1983; in 1988, the Liberal and the SDP merged to form the Liberal Democrats; and in 1992, the Liberal Democrats. The other minor parties are the Scottish Nationalists, Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalists, the Greens, the Natural Law Party; and the others (like the Northern Ireland parties) that do not have national support nor pose any significant volatile situation.

advent and rapid expansion of the mass media (television, radio, newspapers and magazines) is seen by many scholars as the most important change since the end of second world war. Butler and Ranney (1984:213) called the mass media of communications 'one of the most powerful forces shaping the environments within which political parties' must operate; and described the advent of television as 'the greatest change in the political environment since the 1950s.' The development of the new media of communication (direct mails, computers, fax-machines, mobile telephones, teletex, etc) in recent years has also attracted some attention. The development of the new media in particular and the massive expansion of the mass media in general have increased their importance in every aspect of the society.

In both the United States and Great Britain, there is increased media saturation; although this is more in Britain than in the States. In Britain, nearly everyone is within a television signal. In 1950, there were just less than a million television sets in Great Britain. By 1987 the figure had jumped close to nineteen million.² In 1987, almost every British households had a television set, and the percentage that have two television sets has increased ever since - Figure 1.1. At the same time, television viewing has also reached an all time high in Britain. In 1990, on the average, people in Great Britain watched television for almost twenty-four hours each week, and listened to radio for about ten hours each week. Today, it seems that television has virtually

² According to Central Statistical Office, (1992), Annual Abstract of Statistics 128, pp. 177-178, the figure by 1991, was 19.5 million (98% - almost all households in Great Britain). About 60% of the British households had video cassette recorder and 19% had home computer. (Compare, Social Trend 22, 1992).

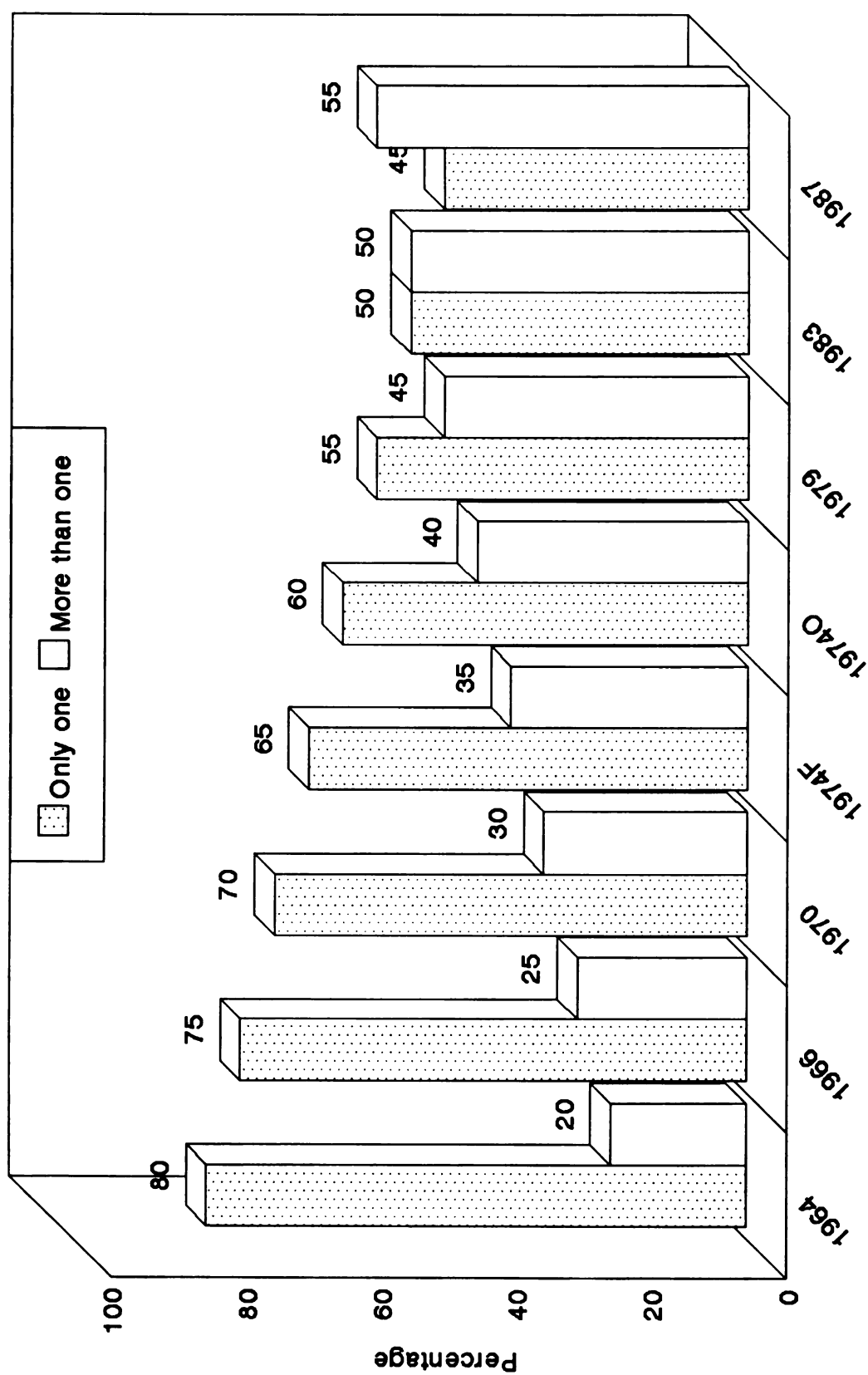


Figure 1.1: Television sets in home: 1979-1987

Source: Gunter and Svennevig (1988)

become an important part of people's lives in Britain as well as in most industrialized nations. Other media have also expanded in the past four decades.

A number of studies in the United States and Britain suggest that most people in both countries claim that they get most of their political news from television rather than from newspaper or radio. According to the 1963 British Election Studies, for example, the distribution of the respondents who got most of their information about politics from the media is as follows: 46.3% reported from television, 32.1% from newspaper and 11.5% from the radio. That is, about 89.9% of the respondents got their information about politics from the media. It appears that the media, seen by many social scientists as the most influential agent of socio-political change, dominate the life of the British society with obvious social and political consequences.³

In the United States, since the 1960s many scholars have seen the media (especially television) as influential in a number of ways, but especially very influential in popular opinion formation. In recent years, many have argued that the media have become more important than the political parties in articulating or disseminating information about the political parties and in formulating popular opinion; although some scholars think that both the parties and the media are equally influential. However, politicians running for elected offices have often viewed the media, particularly the electronic media (radio and television), as essential to influencing how the voters perceive

³ Compare the work of Daniel Lerner's (1958) research on the Middle East which has come to be called the "modernization perspective". Although his research originally applied to developing nations, the basic theoretical framework can apply here in explaining the influence of the media on change, development and in increasing or decreasing political participation in Britain.

them, their political issues, and the electoral processes. These politicians obviously see the media as essential tool for influencing the views of the voters as well as winning elections. Therefore, they spend a tremendous amount of money and time in media related communication during election campaigns. Even those who see the media and the traditional or old-fashion campaign technique of house-to-house canvassing as an important electoral tactic, rely more on the media or use the media more than canvassing.

In most recent elections campaigns, most politicians and their strategists overwhelmingly relied more on the media in presenting their messages. They used the media (including the new media of communication such as computers, pollsters, direct mails, etc) in their political campaigns aimed at influencing the voters. This is not simply an American phenomenon, but is the case in Great Britain as well as in many industrialized democracies - Canada, Italy, Japan, etc.⁴ In Britain, for example, the many references to "the prime minister going public", or the "Americanization" of the British general election or the "presidentialization" of the British politics are all due in part, to the salience of the media. This salience of the media in British politics has become the object of increasing attention; and reflects not only the importance politicians, their consultants and pundits attached to the media, but also the concerns the effects of the media may possibly have on the system and on the voters during elections.

Paradoxically, paid "media specialists" conjure "positive" effects of the media for

⁴ However, paid political campaign advertising on television is illegal in most Western democracies except in Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States (see, Butler, et. al., (eds.), 1981:173-175).

their clients, while many media observers blame the media for a variety of "negative" effects ranging from the declining voters turnout to helping to the establish a capitalist hegemony (Keller, 1990).

In the literature, the media are accused of contributing to a variety of political maladies, and there seems to be many good reasons for this. These maladies include contributing to the decline of public meetings and canvassing (McAllister, 1985), the cementing of the idea of two-party system being the norm (Ingle, 1989), the dealignment of partisan ties (Denver, 1989), the declining of the political parties, the declining party identification or the erosion of public support for all parties, the decline in class based voting and the rise of issue voting (Rose and McAllister, 1986), the increase tendency towards extremism in both major parties in Great Britain,⁵ the transformation of the masses from participants in political and cultural debates to consumers of media images and information (Habermas, 1989), decreased participation in the political process, reduced voter turnout during elections (Morgan and Shanahan, 1992), the discounting of substantive issues in political campaigns, automatic reelection of incumbents, increased use of rhetorical symbolic rather than problem-solving strategies of leadership governance, and lots of other fundamental changes and maladies in the political system (Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar, 1991; Keller, 1990; Butler and Mortimore, 1992).

In the United States, though, many scholars see the media as an integral part of politics that has a systemic effect on everything within the political structure. However,

⁵ Though there is some evidence to the contrary as recent studies suggest that both the Labour and Conservative parties have moved to the "center" rather than to the "extreme".

others scholars accuse the media (especially television - the dominant medium of political communication), of turning the political structure in Washington into a 'fishbowl' in which all the many private arrangements for reaching public agreements are compromised by exposure. These critics allege that such a compromise 'constrains bargaining strategies, and make government look disorderly and heightens tendencies for personality and organizational clashes' (Rockman, 1984:139; and Livingstone, 1986).

Furthermore, critics in the United States, often point at the long and often torturous process from the presidential primaries to the nominating conventions as the byproduct of the salience of the media during elections. These critics argue that this long process (the presidential primaries leading to the nomination) developed in 1952 when, for the first time, television discovered the primaries as news worthy. Since then, they argue, there has been an increased use of the media (especially television) during elections, and great attention is paid to the images political candidates project on television over their stands on issues. Often during elections campaigns, politicians rather than emphasizing political issues and their stands on the issues employ political consultants and advertisers to make them "look good" on television. As a result, the mass media have taken a center stage during elections campaigns, and rightly or wrongly are blamed for a variety of maladies.

Similar attacks on the media have been made by critics in Britain, where some have blamed the media, as I mentioned earlier, for contributing to the displacement of political canvassing (McAllister, 1985), and the declining membership of the two major parties. These critics assumed that the effects of the media are negative and seem to

threaten the democratic process and raise great concerns in most industrialized democracies. Many observers, for example, fear the manipulative activities of professional image brokers. They argue that the growing dominance of "image" over substance during election campaigns, creates an atmosphere of volatility and instability in the political system. They conclude therefore that the media have had negative if not dangerous influence on traditional democratic institutions.

Postwar Britain is perhaps the best available research site for a systematic and thorough exploration of the dynamics of the media (especially television) on political attitudes and electoral behavior for a number of reasons, although we might expect mass media to have a less significant effect on partisanship and voting behavior in Britain, and possibly a lesser effect than in the United States, because partisanship, as measured by both the proportion of strong partisans and non-partisans is stronger in Great Britain than in the United States.

The first reason why Britain is perhaps the best ideal research site is because past studies on the cause and extent of partisan change in the United States have all focused on individual elections. These studies employed idiosyncratic explanations that emphasize the importance of issues, personalities, and specific events like political debates during elections. Generally speaking, most of the studies have focused on relatively short periods of time (see for example, Richardson, 1991), and on specific elections or events. Unlike these studies, this study takes a long-term trend approach. For, if the effects of the media on partisanship, political attitude, voting behavior and public opinion are to be found, they should be apparent not in an isolated election, but

rather in a long-term trend. Admitted that time is not itself an agent of causation (Converse, 1976), however, the British Election Studies, BES, cross-sectional study data provide long-term trend information, comparable to the American National Election Studies, NES. These data sets are useful in measuring the effects of political variables (media use effects, for example) over a period of time.

The second reason is that mass media of communication operate within the boundaries of the political culture of a society. The political culture and the societal structure in any country impose some constraints on the performance, the role or the function of the media. As I noted earlier, the British media market is a highly saturated media environment where every home is within the reach of television signal. Despite the highly saturated media market in Britain, there is a wide choice of alternative media sources, which include a number of national and regional dailies, Sunday papers, weekly magazines. However, unlike in the United States where there are several radio stations and television channels, there are fewer radio and television channels in Britain. In short, when compared to the United States, Britain has very limited television channels - the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC (TV and Radio), and the Independent Broadcasting Authority, IBA (ITV and Commercial Radio).⁶ The limited television channels constrain the audience to fewer channels leading to a highly saturated media

⁶ It was feared in the 1980s, that cable television would revolutionize the British audience, however, this has not happened. A study by the Peacock Committee in 1986, predicted a mass revolution. It anticipated many television channels, voice and video, telephone, etc, and predicted over 8 million cable subscribers by 1990. However, its predictions have not materialized, because there are still only about 200,000 cable subscribers (i.e, less than 1% of the British households).

environment.

The third reason for suggesting that Great Britain is an ideal site for a systematic study of the effects of the media is because many studies reveal that the British media audience trust the accuracy and fairness of the media (especially television). Unlike in the United States, the broadcast media outlets (radio and four television channels) in Britain do not compete for media audience. There are no high level competitive pressures, nor the kind of audience determined survival of the fittest of the networks in the United States. The BBC prohibits advertising in all its services. The BBC is not financed by advertising revenue, nor is it supported by the government as ordinary public expenditure. Instead, it is financed by 'license fee' - a special tax levied on those who own television sets - determined by the Home Secretary.

Fourth, the British media philosophy is based on the 'social responsibility' or 'public service' model. The ethos of this model are a duty to inform, educate and entertain the public. An important corollary of this public service ethos of broadcasting is that most people in Britain use the media for information, education and entertainment; and most agree that there is freedom and competition in the media between the channels.⁷ As a result, British voters trust the media and perceive that there is always consensus between the channels when there are main political or social issues. Furthermore, the electorate in Britain, like in most Western industrial societies, rely

⁷ Though Blumler, Gurevitch, and Nossiter (1989) and Semetko (1989), fear that imminent technological and policy developments, plus increased competition, commercializing on IBA/TV and more channels could diminish the public service ethos of the broadcast media in Britain.

greatly on the media (especially television) for information during elections, as we shall see in chapter five. In Britain, television is, in fact, the most credible medium that provides political information to most people (Roper, 1984; Robinson and Levy, 1986).

Miller (1991:32) summarized the situation in Britain in these words:

... fully 98 percent of the whole electorate claimed that they regularly watch some television news, and 75 percent claimed that they regularly watch both the BBC and the ITV.

... (The British public) seem addicted to television news. Two-thirds regularly watched four or more television programmes, almost half watched five or more, and over a quarter watched six or more.

This heavy reliance on the media or a saturated "media use" environment creates an ideal laboratory for the study of the dynamic dimensions, if any, of the effects of the media on political behavior.

One final reason why Britain is an ideal environment or the best available research site for a systematic and thorough exploration of the dynamics of the media is that the act of voting itself is an important reinforcement of a voter's political identification (Upton and Särilvik (1981). Upton and Särilvik's model suggests that voter turnout is a measurable indicator of political party identification. However, voter turnout in Britain, unlike in the United States and most industrialized nations, has been considerably higher. In Britain, voter turnout has remained high and steady over the years. On the other hand, there is no dispute among academic analysts that the percentage of the total vote won by the two major political parties - Labour and Conservative parties has declined steadily in the last few election - Figure 1.2. There is, in fact, convincing evidence in the literature suggesting a steady decline in the percentage of the total vote won by the two major parties, as well as a decline in

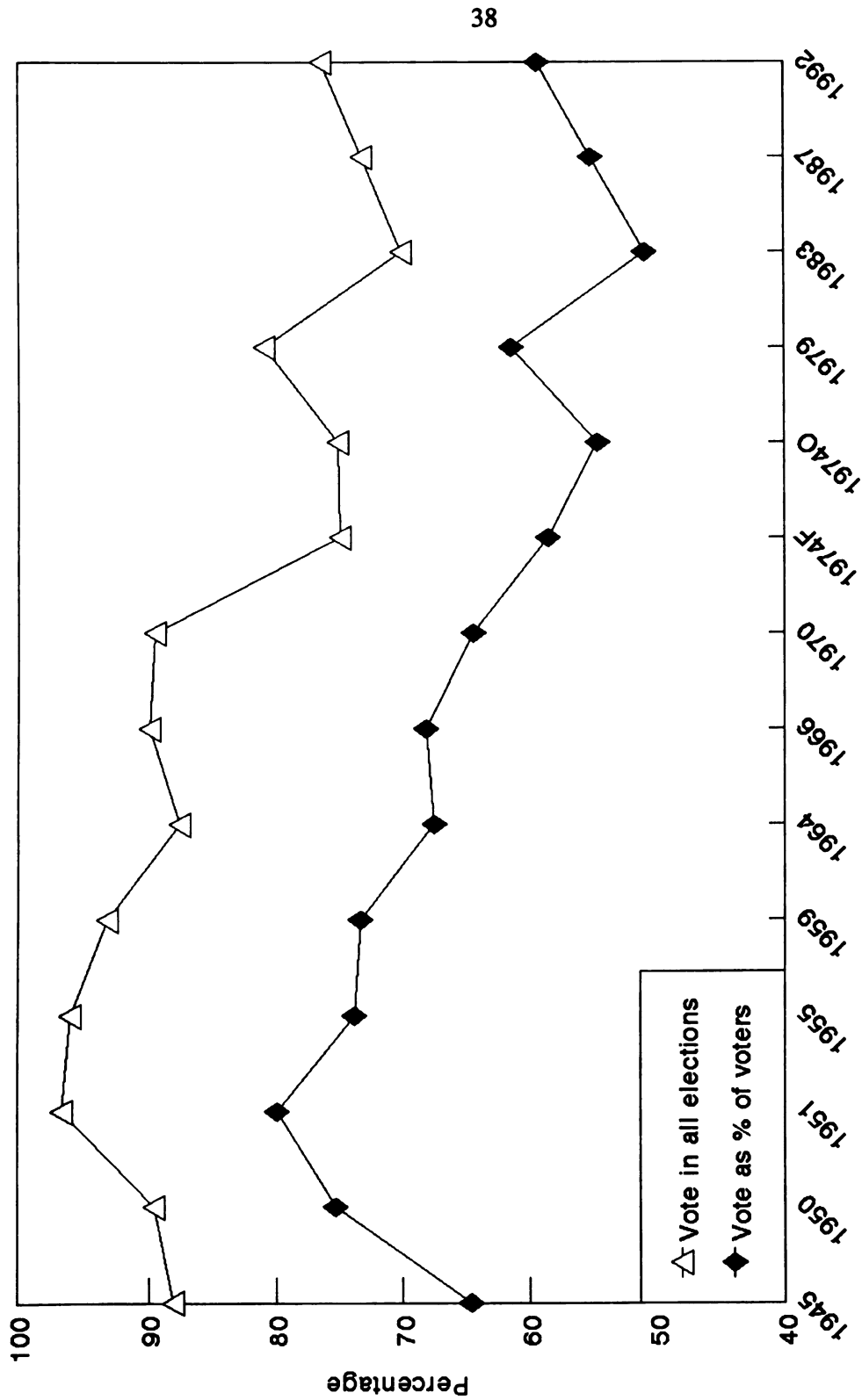


Figure 1.2: The two-party vote in general elections 1945-1992

Source : Butler and Kavanagh (1992)

the number of the voters who identify with any particular party (Crewe, 1983; Miller, et. al., 1990; and Roes and McAllister, 1986). This decline was somewhat reversed in 1992 with a few percentage drop in the total vote won by the Liberal Democrats (that is, the percentage of votes won by the Liberal-SDP Alliance dropped from 22.6% in 1987 to 17.8% of the Liberal Democrats in 1992). The Communist party did not contest in 1992. However, the other minor parties - the Welsh and Scottish Nationalists, and the others in Northern Ireland slightly increased their votes from 1.7% in 1987 to 2.3% in 1992, and from 2.6% in 1987 to 3.5% in 1992 respectively. In short, while Labour party increased its percentage vote from 30.8% in 1987 to 34.4% in 1992, the Conservative party vote dropped from 42.3% in 1987 to 41.9% in 1992.

The British Electorate

As I pointed out in the introduction, in 1951, 96.8 percent of the total electorate who voted in Britain supported either the Labour or the Conservative parties, compared with about 73.1 percent in 1987 (Heath, et al., 1991; and Coxall and Robins (1989). In the 1983 general elections, the total vote won by the two parties in the postwar period dropped to its lowest point when only 70 percent of the voting population cast their ballots supporting Labour and Conservative. The figures remained visibly low in 1987. Thus, considering the total number of eligible voters in Britain, only 55.1 percent voted Labour or Conservative - Figure 1.3. Although the Conservative party won the general election in 1992 by 41.9%, the proportion of the voters who voted for it was lower than in 1979 when it won by 43.9%. On the other hand, in 1987 the Liberal/Alliance gained about 22.6% of the votes compared with a minimal 11.2% in 1964 general election;

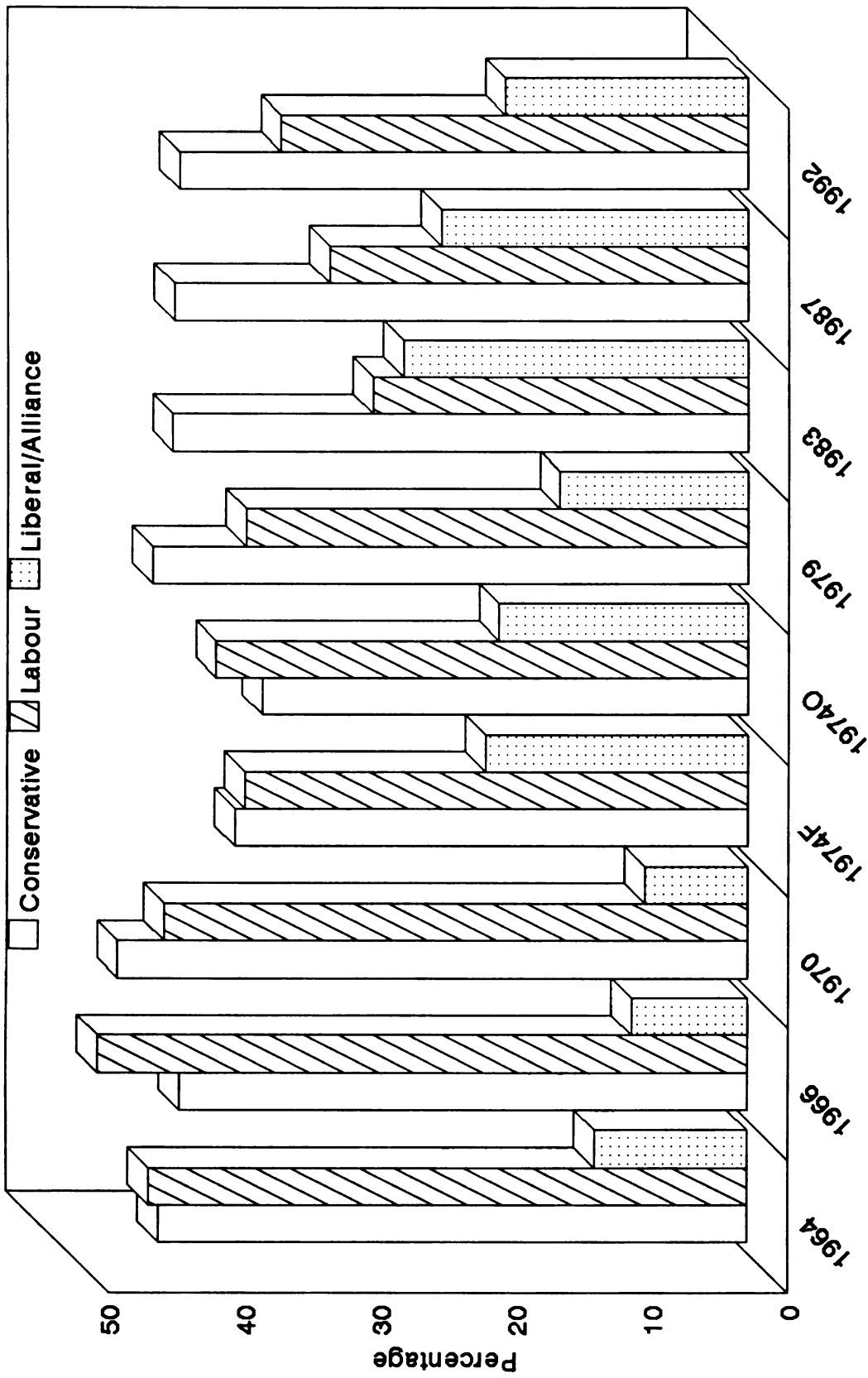


Figure 1.3: General election results 1964-1992

Source: Butler and Kavanagh (1992)

although, as I noted earlier, the Liberal Democratic votes dropped from 22.6% to 17.8% in 1992. However, since the 1960s, the success of the minor parties in capturing seats in parliament suggests that a fundamental political change has taken place in Britain. The major political parties no longer rely on the loyalty of the party members during election. Besides, the number of voters who identified 'very strongly', 'fairly strongly', and 'not very strongly' with the major parties has fallen from 92.61% in 1964 to 79.6% in 1987; while those who 'very strongly' identified dropped from 42.3% to 19.7% - Figure 1.4.

In addition, voters now seem to be more interested in issues and rely more on the media and the image of party leaders presented to them in the media when making decisions on how to vote. Although economics, social and national security issues as well as the environment dominated the general election campaigns in recent years, still, more attention was paid to the image or performance of the party leaders in the media. So, it could be argued that there has been a substantial change in British electoral behavior or an increased volatility since the 1950s and early 1960s. For example, Richardson (1991:756) observed the greatest inter-election volatility in Britain 'where net inter-party shifts of 5% to 6% were registered between 1979 and May 1983, and roughly 12% of the electorate shifted party preferences between 1970 and 1974.' In 1987, the decline of the two major parties votes continued that years despite the fact the election campaign in 1987 witnessed one of the most highly sophisticated media campaign in the history of British politics. In fact, in 1987, Miller et al., (1990), noted that more than a fifth of the British electorate voted for a party other than the one they had been initially inclined to vote for at the outset of the general election campaign. With so many floating

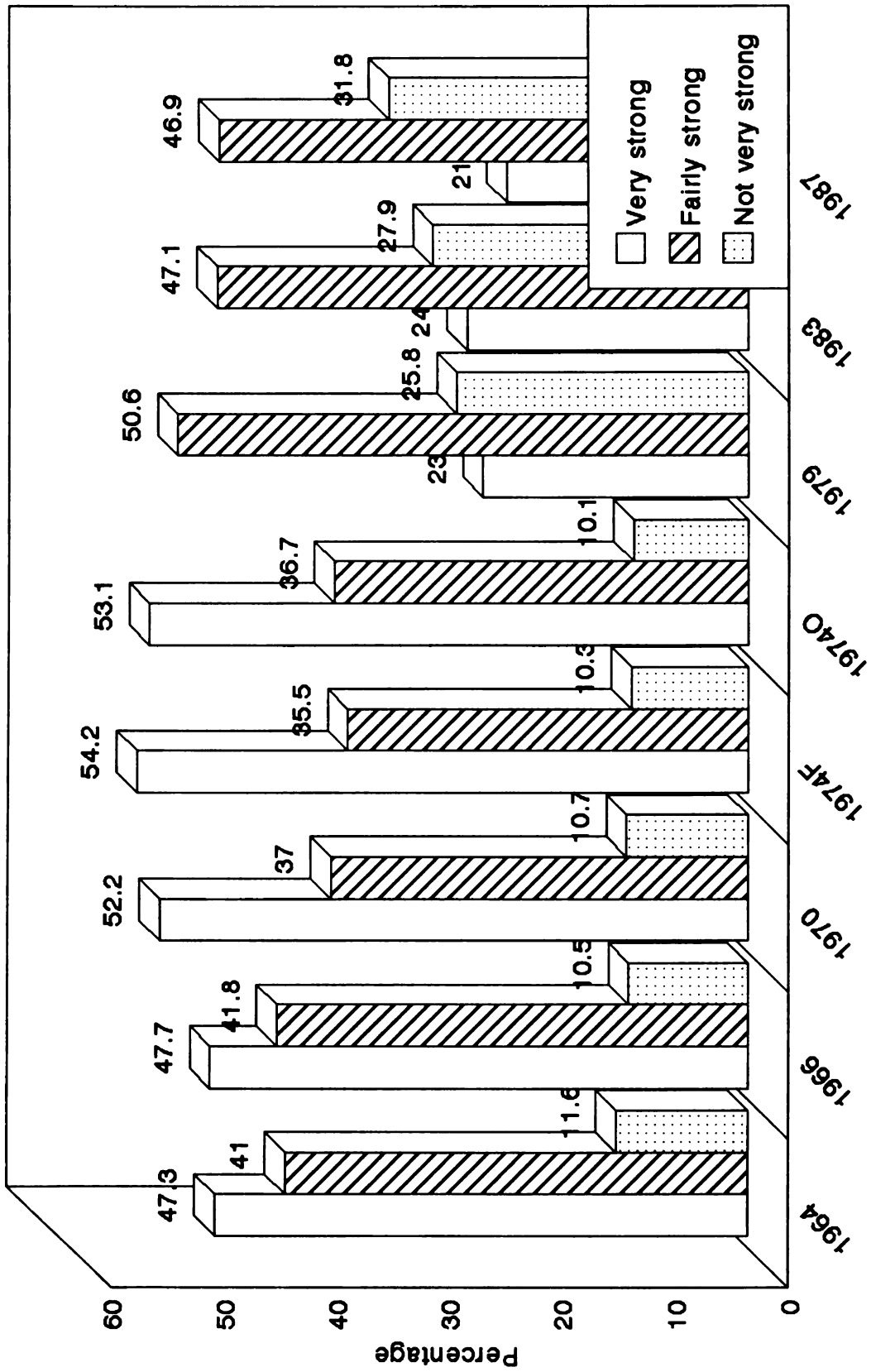


Figure 1.4: Strength of partisanship 1964-1987

Source: BES

voters, media campaigns are now designed to convince skeptical voters (voters who are skeptical of the political parties and the politicians), and to capture them rather than to confirm existing ones. Over the years, from Figure 1.5, although the proportion of floating voters or those who were inclined to vote for a different party other than the one they originally intended had remained steady, there were slight significant increases in 1979, 1983 and 1987. These three recent elections (especially the last two) witnessed the most intense use of the mass media in during election campaigns. Thus, supporting the view that mass media campaigns make all the difference, or that the media in an environment of an increasingly fluid electorates are a vital component in the campaign process, or both.

The changes in the electoral behavior of the British electorate in the past few decades have important implications for the future of British politics. If the electorate are less like to identify with or less likely to express loyalty to the political parties, then the erosion of the major parties will definitely have obvious political consequences on British politics. If, for example, the minor parties gain more seats in parliament than it currently has, this could undermine the stability of British politics, especially the two party dominance. Similarly, if the voters are influenced more by the image of the party leaders on television, it is possible that the parties will be more incline to present candidates that are telegenic rather than capable or substantive leaders.

What is puzzling, however, is that the "communication revolution" or the era of "media politics" - an era widely touted as the "media age" - has also meant an era associated with increased "non-support" for the two major political parties in Britain,

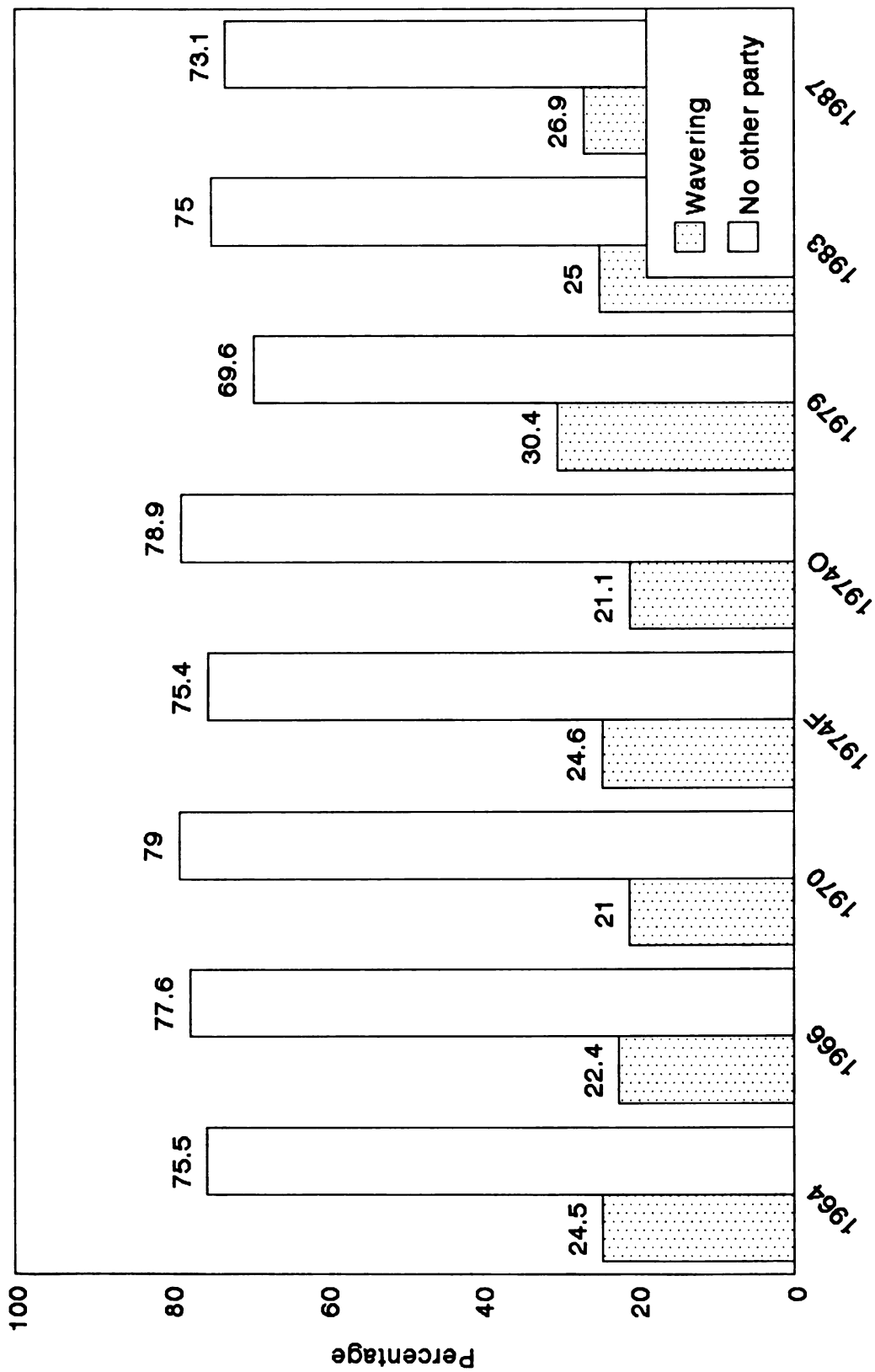


Figure 1.5: Campaign wavering 1964-1987

Source: BES

the abandonment of traditional voting patterns, increased fluid electoral environment and all the other effects attributed to the advent of the media in the literature.

However, the evidence suggesting that the media are solely responsible for these maladies is problematic because there is no definitive proof that they are. If in fact the media have no effect, the vast amounts of money politicians raise and spend for media campaigns are wasted. Denver (1989) asked, if television has little impact upon voters why do the professionals in the political parties assiduously tailor their campaign to television?

It is noteworthy at this point that there are a number of rival explanations in the literature that explain the phenomenon of declining support for the two major parties in Britain.

To begin with in the literature, British politics has been described by some scholars as a "two-and-half" party system. Britain is also well known for high level of voter turnout during general elections than, for example, the United States of America. Since the end of the second world war, Labour and Conservative parties have taken turns rotating the prime ministership, the majority and opposition roles in the House of Commons. On the other hand, the Liberals have remained the centralist party; although the center parties have often undergone dramatic changes like David Owen's Social Democrat. As Butler and Kavanagh (1992:5) have noted, the Social Democrats, 'after a lively struggle, faded away while the rest of the Alliance, in its new Liberal Democratic guise, behaved in some ways as a party of practicality rather than of gestures, more like the SDP than the old Liberals.'

In the literature, in late 1960s and early 1970s, Britain witnessed a sudden political change. This sudden change brought about the decrease in partisan support for Labour and Conservative parties. In an attempt to explain this abrupt change, Crewe (1983) introduced the concept of "dealignment" to explain what happened. In his original thesis, Crewe argued that until the 1970s, political parties in Britain were stable. After 1970, he argued that the two party system began to changed, ushering in what came to be known as the 'era of partisan dealignment'.

Many subsequent studies agreed with Crewe that the decline and/or the dealignment of political parties began about this time in the early to mid-1970s, with the fall in the vote of the two major parties, together with the growth in Liberal support, and aided by the formation of new Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1981 (Borre, 1980; Crewe and Denver, 1985; Dalton, Flangan, and Beck, 1984; Maguire, 1983; Pendersen, 1983). However, Denver (1989), argued that the increased coverage of politics on television is the source of the dealignment. Butler and Ranney (1984:234) agree with Denver (1989) when they argued that the increased use of television in 1960s and 1970s made it 'harder for the ordinary voters to be profoundly partisan, convinced that their side were angels and the other side devil.' Furthermore, they argued that the 'tendency of television to focus on individuals instead of parties and to portray all politicians as self-seeking players of a sometimes boring and sometimes disgusting game, and there can be little doubt that television has done a good deal to weaken party loyalties.'

Other studies of the phenomenon, point out that the declining of the parties may have indeed started much earlier than the 1970s. Coxall and Robins (1989:265), for

example, noticed that the trend was 'recorded by political scientist in election surveys; in 1964 eight out of ten electors thought themselves as being Labour or Conservative whilst only seven out of ten did so in 1983.' They observed that for every fifty Labour or Conservative supporters who described themselves as "very strong" supporters of Labour or Conservative, only thirty-five did so in 1983. Whether the decline in party identification was earlier or recent, one thing is clear, most observers (Abramson, 1992) agree that support for both parties in Britain is lower, and has remained consistently so in the 1980s than in the comparable period during the past quarter century.

One other important concept - generational replacement has also been introduced in the study of this phenomenon. In a recent article, Abramson (1992:393), points out that 'it seems reasonable to conclude that (generational) replacement has not been the main force eroding British partisanship.' He suggests that 'an additional factor may be the growing impact of television, which probably weakens the importance of partisan loyalties.'

It should be noted, that before election campaigns, the British political parties present their case to the electorate through their political party broadcasts, PPBs, and during elections through their party election broadcasts, PEBs. During elections campaigns, the political parties do not buy air time, and are not permitted to buy. Unlike in the United States where political parties and the candidates buy time for political spots on television, political parties in Britain are given free air-time in blocks of 5 to 10 minutes, to present their case to the electorate. Again, unlike in the United States, there are no 30-second television or radio political campaign commercials and

nothing like the Willie Horton campaign advertising on British radio and television. In 1979, the ratio of the PEBs on television was 5:5:3 for Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties respectively; while in 1983 the ratio was 5:5:4 for Conservative, Labour and Liberal-SDP Alliance. The basis for the ratio are worked out by the political parties and the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Independent Broadcasting Authority.⁸ In addition to the free air-time allocated to the political parties by BBC and IBA, election campaigns are extensively covered in the news bulletins.

Furthermore, the national dailies in Britain are very strongly partisan - Table 1.2; and most daily newspaper readers in Britain, often claim that there is bias in the newspapers. This is in part because the British newspapers tend to have well defined political stances. However, television channels in Britain to provide balanced broadcast; although Eaton and Pimlott (1987:133) have noted: '"Balance" in broadcasting is a strange concept.' Thus, Miller, Sonntag, Broughton, (1989:629) summarized the situation in the United Kingdom in these words:

The concept of balance in political broadcasting is difficult but the practice is easy; the concept is complex but the practice is simple. In theory 'balance' might mean 'objectivity', an accurate reflection of the real world, and an accurate reflection would have to be a representative selection since all the truth about a day in the life of the world cannot be packed into a 30-minute news bulletin. Philosophers might argue that such objectivity could not exist and even news editors might occasionally doubt their own ability to supply it.

⁸ However, the rules for radio differs from the rules for television. For example, in 1983, television PEBs was a minimum of 5 minutes each, whereas the minimum length of a radio PEBs was 2 minutes. The PEBs are no longer broadcast simultaneously on all channels as was the case prior to 1983.

Table 1.1: National Newspaper Circulation in Britain, 1987

Paper	Circulation (000)	Percentage of total	Political Party preferred
DAILIES			
Mirror/Record	3,618.9	25.5	Labour
Sun	3,587.7	25.3	Conservative
Mail	1,667.6	11.8	Conservative
Express	1,517.7	10.7	Conservative
Telegraph	1,046.4	7.4	Conservative
Star	803.7	5.7	Conservative
Today	483.5	3.4	Conservative
Guardian	418.3	2.9	Qualified Labour
The Times	389.4	2.7	Conservative
Independent	374.2	2.6	Independent
Financial Times	290.7	2.1	Labour
SUNDAYS			
News of the World	4,716.8	29.6	Conservative
Sunday Mirror	2,782.4	17.4	Labour
People	2,141.2	13.4	Labour
Sunday Mail	1,974.7	12.4	Conservative
Sunday Express	1,679.3	10.5	Conservative
The Sunday Times	1,173.9	7.4	Conservative
Sunday Telegraph	560.1	3.5	Conservative
Observer	542.4	3.4	Labour
Independent on Sunday	386.7	2.4	Independent

Source: These figures are taken from Anthony King, et al., (1993). However, compare Harrop (1986), p. 139, and Butler (1989), pp. 94-5.

However, in the case of newspapers, the assumption has always been an imbalance. Each newspaper has often reflected a particular editorial or proprietorial point of view, while television broadcasters have often claimed that they are committed to balanced broadcasting.

According to audience surveys conducted by Independent Broadcast Authority, IBA, for example, in the last few years, there is evidence to support the claim by television viewers' that they perceive some bias in the television channels, especially on BBC1 - Figure 1.6. Over the years, although the proportion of voters who see bias on television favoring other parties other than the Conservative party has remained more or less constant, those who see bias favoring the Conservative party has grown steadily - Figure 1.7. In short, television viewers have consistently claimed seeing bias in the medium. Most viewers in the surveys claimed that television news bulletins often favored the party they did not identify with. As I noted earlier, although the proportion of those who perceive bias in the medium has remained constant; the question of bias and impartiality in the British broadcast media has continued to be a topic of debate between broadcasters and those who are highly politically committed.

If Miller, Sonntag, Broughton, (1989) and the IBA surveys are correct that there is partisan bias in television news coverage and a massive gap between television's priorities and the public's prior during elections. If there is a massive imbalance in the newspapers as well as in television news, coupled with the heavy doses of PPBs and PEBs before and during elections: how can we explain or

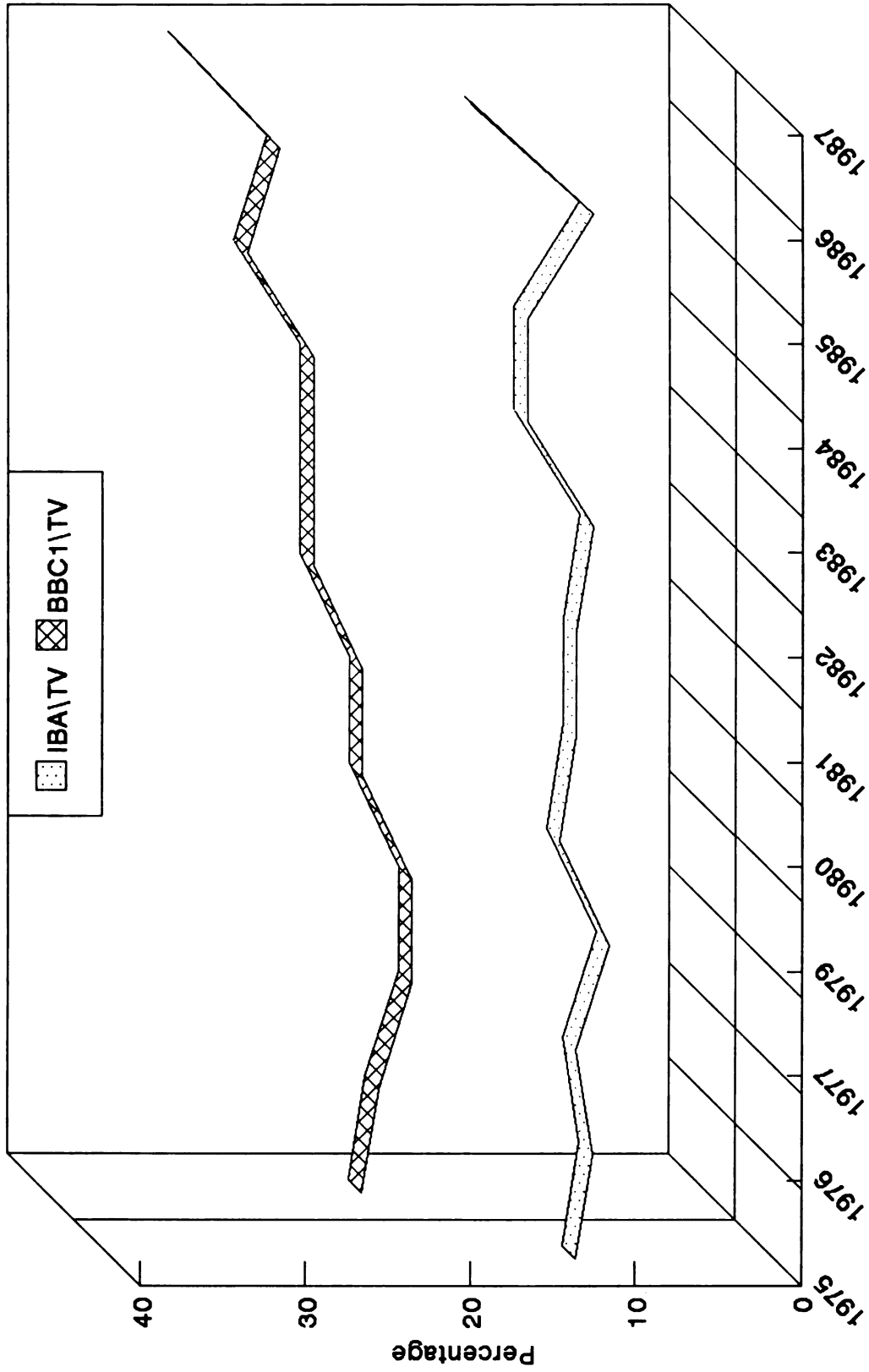


Figure 1.6: Viewer's perceptions of political bias on TV

Source: Gunter and Svennevig (1988)

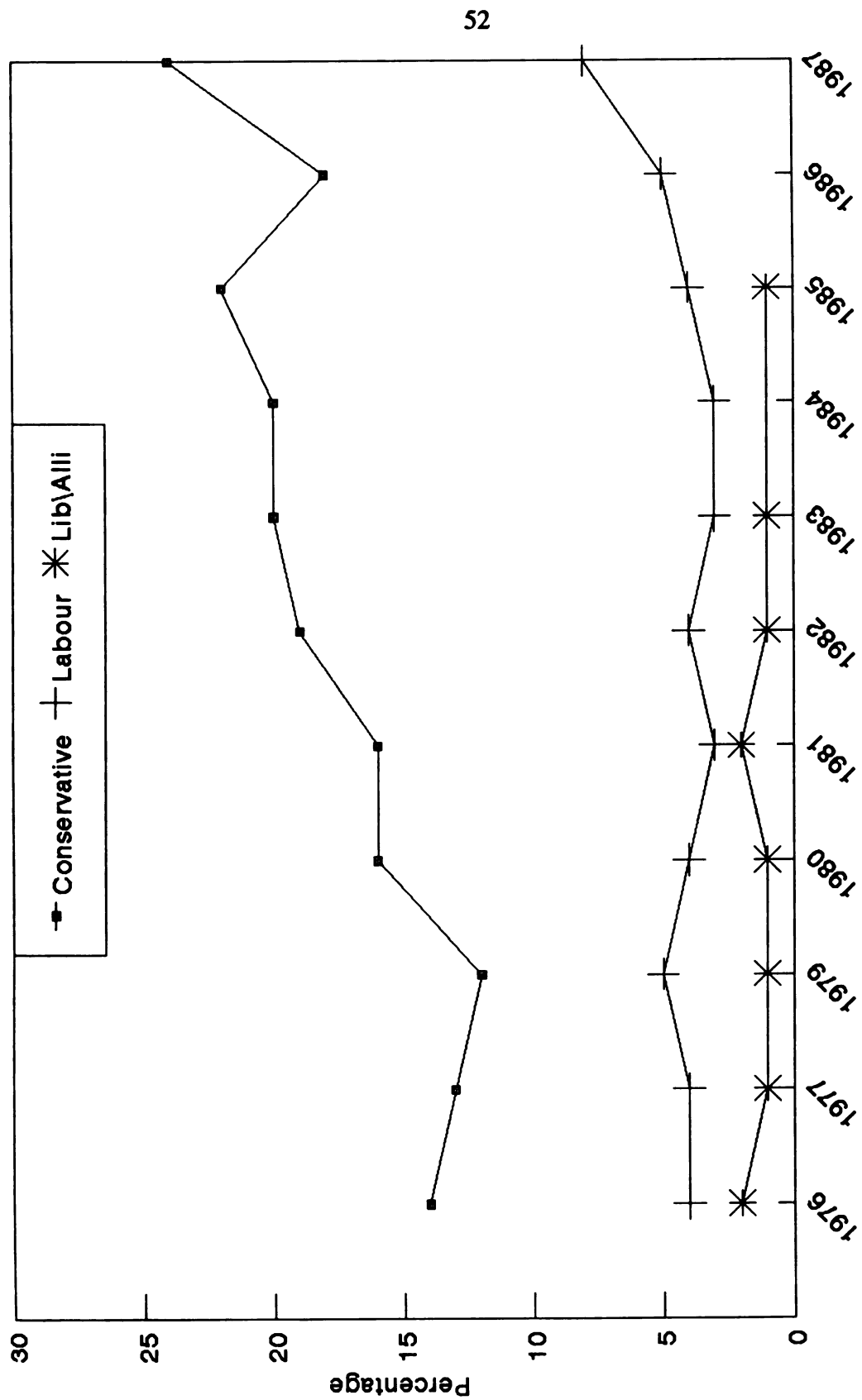


Figure 1.7: Direction of perceived bias on BBC1\TV

Source: Gunter and Svennevig (1988)

demonstrate the behavioral implications of these patterns of biased media coverage and presentations on voting?

The intention of this study is neither to prove that the mass media are solely responsible for all the changes and developments in British politics nor simply to say that the media have minimal effect, let alone no effect at all, but to point to a problem that has remained acute during the past four decades and to offer some insight.

While I must admit that it is not easy to propose a single theory that is perfect in explaining fully all aspects of the recent changes and development (including but not limited to the declining support for the Labour and Conservative parties in Britain); yet, one cannot stop to wonder about the actual root causes of electoral volatility - weakening partisan loyalty and the decline of the two party system. One thing is though certain: with more voters using television as their primary source of information, with a large emphasis on the image of the candidates and the declining salience of the political parties, the prospect for an increased relationship between the mass media, political attitude and electoral behavior is high. Thus, as the mass media become more salient than the political parties during elections, their potential link to electoral behavior becomes more obvious.

In the literature, it is not clear how the media have affected political attitude and behavior, but reviewing research literature on "voter volatility" in the United States, Bybee, et al. (1981), argued that the emerging pattern of television as the dominant source of political information may have contributed to growing electoral instability. As a result, many observers fear that the declining turnout, and the

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declining party support for the two major parties in Great Britain would lead to (Swaddle and Heath, 1989:551) 'the collapse of the political culture, increased alienation from the political system and so on.' Although, some observers in Britain have suggested that the advent of a relatively strong third party (in terms of its share) is the root cause of the problem; however, the potentials of tactical voting⁹ in 1987, for example, did not change the percentage of votes won by the two major parties. Instead, tactical voting distorted the correlation between party identification and such demographic as social class, with the result that in 1987, the percentage of votes won by Labour and Conservative still declined. As I have noted earlier, this declining trend was slightly reversed in the 1992 general election.

Coxall and Robins (1989), have suggested that one of the major causes of the decline of the two party system, is weakening levels of partisan attachment. They argue that as the links between voters and parties grow weaker, fewer and fewer voters identify themselves with one particular political party. Apparently, very many voters no longer have strong emotional ties to a particular party ("party identification" or "partisan self-image", as Butler and Stokes (1969) termed it), with obvious consequences for increased electoral volatility. However, for a long time party identification has been viewed as an important motivation for individual political participation. Voters who strongly identified with a political party seem more likely

⁹ Tactical voting is, for example, Labour voters supporting Alliance candidates in seats where only the Alliance candidates can hope to topple the Conservatives; while Alliance voters support Labour where Labour is the only party able to defeat the incumbent Conservative.

to vote, attend campaign meetings and rallies, and work for the success of the party than voters with weak or non-existent party attachments (Budge, Crewe and Fairlie, 1976; Campbell, et. al., 1960; Dalton, 1988, Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978).

In past studies, most scholars agreed that strong party support among voters would contribute to political stability by inhibiting the rise of minor parties and possibly anti-democratic mass movements. Strong party support, they argued, reflects the supporter's understanding that he or she is fully integrated into the established electoral and political system. This conviction promotes conventional forms of political participation and makes elite or system challenging behavior less likely to occur. This claim is consistent with the "mass society" theories of the 1950s (Kornhauser, 1959) which argued that party and other secondary groups attachments among individuals provide basis for stability of democratic regimes.

In 1969, Butler and Stokes (1969) introduced the concept of partisan self image to explain the electoral behavior and attitudes of the voters in Britain. Prior to that time, the term "party identification" was used in the United States in the study of voting (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; and Campbell, et al., 1954, 1960. In 1983, for the first time in Britain and following the work of Butler and Stokes, Särilvik and Crewe (1983), presented convincing evidence that suggested that partisanship strength or voters' attachment to the Conservative and Labour parties has weakened in Britain.

In the past, most voting studies relating media use to partisan behavior assumed party identification to be stable over time; while none of them considered the

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possibility that party identification itself can change as a result of media exposure or vice versa. However, Richardson (1991:768), suggests that 'it would be nice to know the extent to which stable schema of partisanship reflects enhanced cognitive competence resulting from social changes (Dalton, 1984; Heath and McDonald, 1988) or greater information exposure resulting from television's enormous importance in recent years.' Put simply: is it possible, that the decline in party identification strength is a result of mass media (especially television) exposure, since this phenomenon became noticeable for the first time during the period mass media were emerging? Todd and Brody (1980:292) have argued:

It is difficult to imagine that the rise of the electronic media - television in particular - has not had some consequences for political party membership. At the same time it is clear that simple exposure to media explains little of the variation in party direction or strength. More sophisticated measures of media use and the isolation of critical variables that operate in conjunction with media variables are necessary to say anything more.

This study does just that. It focuses on the effects of the mass media on the declining partisanship strength or the erosion of public support for the Labour and Conservative parties, the displacement of political canvassing, the moderate/extreme image of the two major political parties, and the declining voters turnout during elections.¹⁰

¹⁰ Compared to the United States, voter turnout in general elections in Great Britain is high. Traditionally, about 95 percent of eligible voters in Great Britain are registered to vote in each election, while the official rate of turnout (the number of votes cast over the number of entries on the electoral register) in 1987 and 1992, for example, were 75% and 77.7% respectively. That is to say, about one in four persons on the registration roll voted in both general elections in the United Kingdom.

I examined the effects of the mass media on both the decline of party identification and voter turnout during election campaigns, via an intricate web of relationships between the media and other factors. As McGuire (1973) has rightly pointed out media variables do not always act as independent agents, their impact often involves other intervening variables or specify the communications effect.

This study tries to explain the impact of media use on party identification strength, voter turnout, and the attitude of the voters toward the two major parties in Great Britain.

The Data, Theory, Model and Methodology

The problem that is of particular importance and interest to this study is the possible effects of the mass media on political party identification, political attitudes and electoral behavior.

Specifically, I propose that voters's use of the media (especially television) for information during election campaigns affect their feelings towards the political parties and electoral outcomes.

First, it is possible that the feelings of hostility or estrangement toward the political parties which we find among the British electorate today came from 'greater information exposure resulting from television's enormous importance in recent years' (Richardson, 1991:768). Secondly, it is possible that these feelings also result into heightened alienation from the political parties. And, thirdly, the resulting hostility in turn becomes an important cause of long term instability in political party loyalties.

In looking at the effects of the mass media on political party identification, I

considered the fact that the media have apparently subsumed or substituted traditional activities of the political parties, a factor that has encouraged less partisan attachment and voting conformity. In most Western democracies, the political parties have been displaced as the central organizations for political communication. A growing number of the electorate, for example, are no longer enthusiastic about attending party meeting or rallies, putting up posters or canvassing for the political parties.

Suffice it to say that most research on media influence have dealt with the impact of the television or other media coverage on public opinion, in shaping attitudes toward presidential candidates in the United States (Patterson, 1980), or in defining issues facing the country in these areas, and/or have tended to focus on voting behavior and political interests or awareness (Bohr and Iyengar, 1985). This study employs a different approach - a long-term analysis.

The model investigated in this study is largely based on Miller's (1991) model of mass media use and consequences. The model related the voters' use of the media within a broader context of their approach to politics.

In the model, media use assumes the role of both dependent and independent variable. Mass media use and the other variables in this study are operationalized later. Suffice it to say for the moment that my basic assumption is that voters use the media for a variety of purpose but are also possibly influenced by their use of the media for information during election.

The model (based on Miller's, 1991 model of mass media use and consequences) can be represented simply as follows in Figure 1.8.

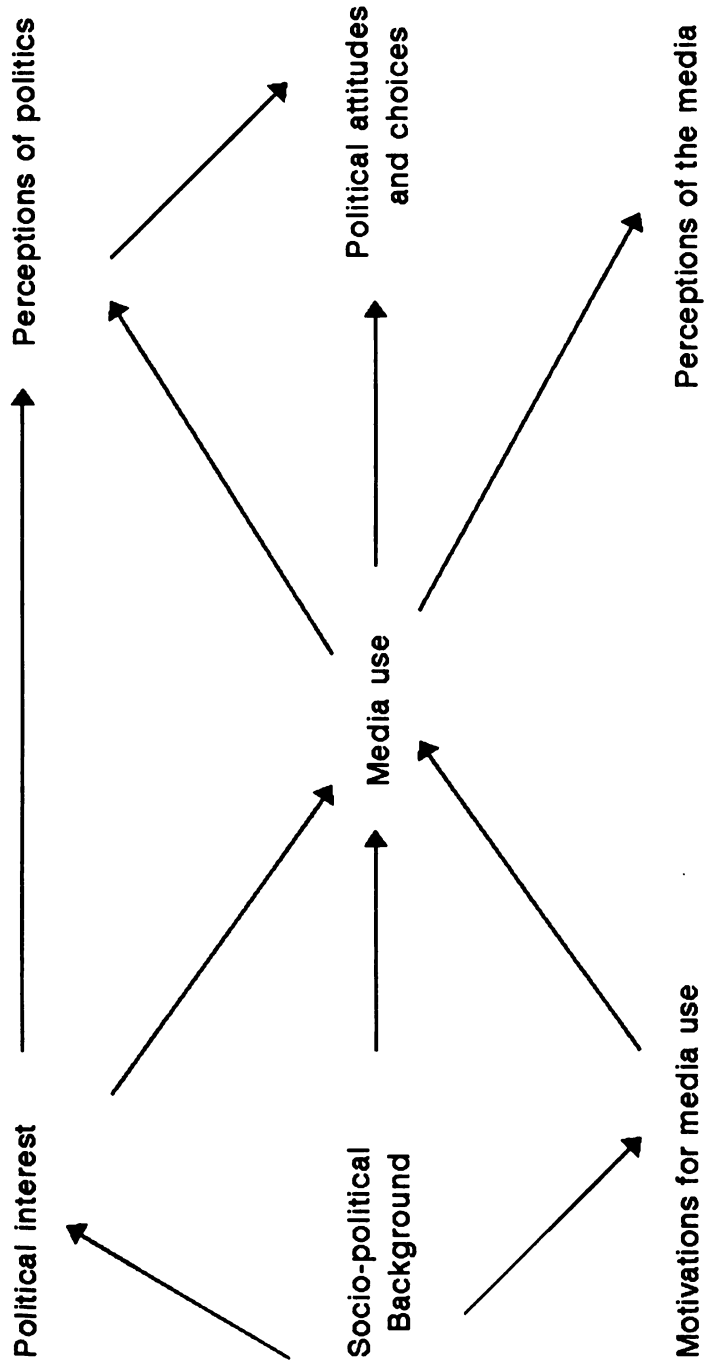


Figure 1.8: Mass media use and consequences

Source: Milner (1991)

The model, according to Miller (1991:5) assumes the following:

1. That socio-political backgrounds influence voters'
 - a. interest in politics, and
 - b. motivations for media use.
2. That actual media use is influenced by
 - a. socio-political background,
 - b. interest in politics, and
 - c. motivations for media use.
3. That voters' perceptions of the media, politics and their attitudes towards politics are influenced by
 - a. their media use, but also by
 - b. their interest in politics, and
 - c. their socio-political background.

Miller suggests that there is a degree of circularity in this model, as this decades's political attitudes form part of the next decade's political background.

Using the British elections studies, BES data, I applied this model in the analysis in chapter six of this study.

My primary assumptions are as follows:

ASSUMPTION 1: More voters now turn to television than to any other medium for information in making their decisions during general elections.

ASSUMPTION 2: Political canvassing has declined with the advent of the mass media of mass political communication.

ASSUMPTION 3: Television is more likely to substitute the canvassing function of political parties and weaken party loyalty.

ASSUMPTION 4: The amount of time an individual spends watching television relates systematically and consistently to how close that individual identifies with a particular political party.

ASSUMPTION 5: The more viewers watch and pay attention to news and

campaign messages on television the more they are less likely to identify with a particular political party.

ASSUMPTION 6: Heavy television viewers are more likely to approach the political world in more homogeneous and conventional terms than light viewers living under similar conditions.

If these assumptions are valid, then it will be possible to find systematic relationship between television viewing and attitudes and behavior of the voters, and it can be seen that this decades's political attitudes form part of the next decade's political background; hence, the use of a long-term approach in the analysis.

To illustrate further, political parties have the challenging function of engaging the voters in the political process. This important role of mobilizing the voters during elections is crucial to the democratic process. One of the oldest ways of doing this is through the electioneering techniques of door-to-door party canvass of voters. Through canvassing, party workers contact the individual voters to participate in elections. More often than not, canvassing is intended mainly to identify potential voters so that they could be reminded to turnout to vote on election day. Other functions of canvassing include soliciting money from party faithful, persuading those who are leaning toward a political party to cross over and to persuade those wavering to continue with the party. Indeed it was the most important form of encounter between the voters and the political parties, and also the most widely studied in the literature. However, studies in the United States, where the use of the media during election campaigns has certainly been more evident than in Great Britain, confirmed

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that the practice of canvassing has declined.

In Britain, the practice of political canvassing dates back to well before the 1832 Reform Act. In modern British general elections, television has almost replaced the door-to-door canvassing and the hand shake of the candidates. Although canvassing is still used by local political campaigners, it is used more in marginal districts than in less marginal ones. Even in marginal constituencies, the level of contact by political parties is very low. However, television reaches a higher proportion of the voters in both marginal and less districts. Most political parties and their candidates have come to view canvassing, in terms of rational goal-seeking, as an unequivocal waste of time and a bad deployment of resources. As a result many have turned to television to reach more voters. Now, television in the voter's living-room symbolically substitutes for the candidate's handshake or political party canvassing. However, the reported incidence of party contacts among the voters is higher now than it was in the early 1950s when political parties were thought to be more vibrant because almost every voter is reached in some way by all candidates through television and the other mass media outlets. Thus, the media (especially television) have replaced canvassing and some other activities of the party. With less direct contact with the political parties few electorates now identify with a particular political party.

It is important to note that the main function of the media during election campaigns is communication between the politicians and the voters. Today, campaign consultants see the electorate as individuals who vote on the basis of "image" - the

kind of person the voters think the candidate is. Television communicates and magnifies this image. As a result, all political parties have made television their first priority. At the same time, mass media consultants and advertising agents (particularly in the States) have replaced party leaders in the designing and directing election campaigns. With increased reliance and/or salience of the media during elections, it seems that the media have subsumed the traditional roles of the political parties. It is therefore fair to say that broadcasters (in the States in particular, and to some extent in Britain) have taken advantage of the opportunity offered to them by technology to influence the voters with obvious political consequences.

One obvious political consequences is that the media (especially television) have replaced the canvassing functions or activities of the political parties. Before television, party workers canvassed or called on the voters on behalf of the candidates. As I noted earlier, the calls were made to provide information that would influence the behavior of the voter. But, over the years, with the rise of mass electorate with no countervailing rise in resources to deal with it, less emphasis has been placed on personal contact through canvassing with the individual voter. Although political strategists know that familiarity in politics generally breeds affection, not contempt; they know too well that the voter who touches the candidate in some way is much more likely to vote for him or her. However, for most media strategists, the most effective way to reach the voters nowadays is through personal contact via the media.

In the United States, for example, Mann and Wolfinger (1980) observed that

in 1978, about 50 percent of voters saw House incumbents on television, 24 percent saw their challengers, and 48 percent saw candidates for open seats. In the same year, 80 percent of voters saw the Senate incumbents on television, 70 percent saw their challengers and 78 percent saw the candidates for open seats. Similarly, voters in Britain, since the 1960s have often reported television over newspaper as their main source of political news (Harrop, 1987). During the 1987 general elections, for example, Harrison (1989) observed that the political campaign in Britain was in many ways designed to capture favorable attention from television. This observation supports the finding of Blumler, Gurevitch and Ives, (1978) about a decade earlier that modern election campaigns have to a considerable extent become fully and truly television campaigns, as all parties (including the Greens) now use the television medium to communicate with the voters.

In recent election campaigns, we have also seen media consultants and broadcasters becoming powerful players in the political arena. Needless to say that technology has increased the concentration of power over election campaigns in their hands.

When the model of mass media use and consequences is applied to the declining party identification in Britain it would test the assumptions:

ASSUMPTION 7: Voters who view more political campaign messages, are less likely to turnout to vote during elections.

The decision to participate in an election is affected by campaign communications, not only on the voters' political beliefs and attitudes, but on their

behavior as well. Other assumptions incorporated in the arguments are as follows:

ASSUMPTION 8: Political party rallies are less frequent because of the use of television in political campaign.

ASSUMPTION 9: When voters do not attend rallies, they do not identify themselves with any particular political party.

ASSUMPTION 10: Mass communications change very few votes during a campaign.

There is no reason to suggest that these are the only factors that influence the individual's media use and political behavior during election campaigns. There are other factors including the stage at which a new communication technology becomes popular. It is believed, for example, that it is the cohort between the ages of 30 and 50 that is most likely to purchase the equipment that became popular when they were growing up and to use it at a higher rate through life stages than other cohorts (Bogart, 1972). Television became the "new medium" of popular interest in the early 1950s. As Bogart (1972) observed, people who were between the ages of 30 and 40 were dominant in purchasing television sets from 1949 through 1956. It is possible that the stage in which a cohort is located when a new communication technology becomes popular may lead to some cohort effects. Danowski and Ruchinokas, (1983:81) summarized this point in the words:

It may be the case that individuals are most likely to purchase communication equipment necessary to participate in a new medium during a life stage in which disposable income is high and when psychological concerns about staying in tune with new trend are highest.

Table 1.2 which shows television and radio viewers and listeners between

**Table 1.2 Television and radio:
average viewing and listening per week, by age 1984-1987**

	Television viewing				Radio listening			
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1984	1985	1986	1987
Age groups (hours:mins per week)								
4-15	16:10	19:59	20:35	19:14	2:46	2:24	2:12	2:07
16-34	18:16	21:36	21:10	20:03	11:42	11:42	11:24	11:18
35-64	23:24	28:04	27:25	27:59	9:59	9:43	9:56	10:16
65+	29:50	36:35	36:55	37:41	8:01	8:04	8:27	8:44
Reach* (percentage)								
Daily	74	79	78	76	46	43	43	43
Weekly	90	94	94	93	81	78	75	74

Source: Data from Social Trends 19 (1989: Table 10.4)

*Percentage of age 4+ who viewed television for at least three consecutive minutes or listened to radio for at least half a programme over a day (averaged over 7 days) or a week.

1984 and 1987 which seems to support this argument. From all indications, 65 years plus are more likely to spend time on television, followed by 35 to 64 year old.

Although cohort analysis is not included in this study, but it is a point worth noting that there are differential media use among cohorts. This last point deserves further investigation.

Other assumptions considered in this study include: one, the fact that there are two types of electoral behavior - the decision to vote or not to vote (turnout), the decision to vote for a particular candidate or political party (candidate of party choice). Two, the consideration that personal characteristics related to turnout. For example, an individual's amount of formal education has been found to be the variable most strongly and consistently related to the individual's mass media use (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). The more education a person has, the more likely he/she is to vote - though minor relationships remain between income, occupation, age, sex, marital status and turnout. Three, political attitudes - political efficacy, sense of civic duty and the strength of party identification are closely related to turnout. Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) suggest that the stronger a person's party identification, sense of civic duty and political efficacy, the more likely he/she is to vote. This assumption is important for this analysis. Four, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) have observed that voter registration requirements, the political culture and the level of partisan activity and competition are closely related to turnout levels. The political environments in Britain are also considered in this study. Finally, Heath, Jowell and Curtice (1985:114) and Crewe, (1983:285)

observed that among the supporters of the Conservative, Labour and Alliance, the latter voters occupied the "center" of the political spectrum in British politics. As I pointed out earlier, there is some evidence that suggests that both the Labour and Conservative parties have recently moved to the center ground.

One of the question I tried to answer in this study, for example, is whether the mass media have contributed to this "ideological center" ground commitment.¹¹

When the Social Democratic Party emerged in 1981, for instance, it was seen as the party on the left. But by 1987, it merged with the Liberal (traditionally the center party) to form the Alliance.

Can the Alliance becoming the party of the central ground or the shift to the center of both the Labour and Conservative parties be attributed to the "mainstream" influence of the media, (in the tradition of the "mainstream" hypothesis of Gerbner and his colleagues, 1982)?¹²

One explanation by Rose and Mcallister (1986:144), for instance, is that:

... on most issues an individual who held the dominant view of the electorate could be Conservative, Alliance or Labour voter; there is no difference in the dominant preference of supporters of all three parties ... All three parties have most of their voters in agreement with one or both of their competitors in the great majority of issues.

¹¹ I am aware of the arguments of critical theorists like Keller (1992) who argued that the mass media, especially television, have created "conservative hegemony" rather than "center ideology", and as a result blame the media for helping to produce what they call a "crisis of democracy".

¹² Gerbner, et al. (1986:102), hypothesize that heavy television viewers opt for a moderate rather than a conservative or liberal political label and perceive themselves as belonging to a generalized middle class rather than an upper-middle or working class.

From the foregoing, the "mainstream" hypothesis seems plausible and is a major part of my analysis in this study. However, the finding of this research, as we shall see is that the media have a major or dominant influence on the image of the political parties, but have statistically significant positive rather than negative and non-trivial effect on partisanship and voting behavior.

The Research Hypotheses

This study's hypotheses can be summarized as follows:

HYPOTHESIS 1: The use of the media for political information is positively influenced by a person's social political background.

HYPOTHESIS 2: The use of the media for political information is negatively related to voter turnout during elections.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Media use or the use of the mass media for information during elections campaigns will negatively predict strength of partisanship.

HYPOTHESIS 4: Voters' "moderate" image of the winning political party is positively related to mass media use during election.

The Research Variables

The research variables are taken from the British Election Studies, BES, data set. The Economic and Social Research Council, ESRC, always insists on the same question wording in the surveys, however, there were some changes in both question wording and answer categories between surveys in the BES. The differences of variable wording and answer categories used in this study are explained in the Appendix A, although some of the research variable wording used in the study are

included in the text in some cases when necessary.

The major dependent variable in this study is political party identification, while mass media use is the major independent variable. However, party identification strength is actually the dependent variable of primary interest; and is indexed by the proportion of the respondents who identified "very strongly" or "strongly" with a political party in the bivariate model, but measured as a three-point scale in the regression models. In the regression model, if a respondent identified "very strongly" with any political party, a 3 was coded for that respondent. Similarly, if a respondent identified "fairly strongly", and "not very strongly", the respondent was coded 2 and 1 respectively, with a 0 coded for no party affiliation at all.

Media use is the first independent variable in two of the models in my analysis as well as the first dependent variable in another model. Mass media use is operationalized as watching/listening to party election broadcast, PEBs, or following the election in any daily national newspaper during election campaigns. In the bivariate analysis in chapter five, it is indexed as the proportion of the voters who claimed that they watched/listened to the election campaigns on television or radio, or followed the election campaigns in any newspapers. While in chapter six, mass media use is a nominal scale variable, and, therefore, is treated as a categorical dummy variable (that is, whether a respondent watched/listened to the PEBs or followed the election campaigns in any national news paper during the elections). If a respondent did not watch/listen to the PEBs, or follow the elections in any newspaper,

that respondent was coded a 0 and 1 for using the media.

The other dependent variable in the model is the feeling or the attitude of the voters toward the two major political parties in Great Britain, indexed by the proportion of the voters that felt that the two major parties are extreme, moderate or neither in their political ideology. For the final logit model, the "moderate" image of the winning political party was treated as dummy variable, 1 for moderate image, and 0 otherwise.

Several independent variables, such as demographic variables - age, sex, union membership, for example, are treated as control variables in the analysis. To test the effects of the media use on partisanship strength and vice versa, it became necessary to use these variables as controls.

Since this research involves the use of probit, logistic and multiple regression analyses to determine the individual and collective power of the variables and to explain the variance and the statistical significance of each variable, other independent variables used in the analysis are discussed briefly in the texts where possible, and in the Appendixes A and B.

The first independent variable in the second and major equation of this study is media use indexed as in the dependent media use variable.

The analysis and the results present in this study is based on secondary analysis of the BES conducted between 1963 and 1987. Not unlike most secondary analysis, this study is handicapped by the fact that the variables and survey questions were not geared toward tapping what I originally set out to investigate - the effects of

the mass media use during election campaigns on partisanship strength.

However, I analyzed a measure of media use which include questions about the respondents' viewing/listening or reading habits during the general election campaigns throughout the periods covered by the studies. There were altogether eight elections, plus the initial study in 1963 before the 1964 general elections when necessary for a broader analysis of the trend.

In all the data sets, questions were asked about the voters' use of the media for information during the campaigns. In their first study in 1963, Butler and Stokes asked the respondents whether 'they followed politics on television or radio', or 'read a morning newspaper' or 'evening newspaper regularly'. In 1964 to 1970, they modified their questions wording to read: 'Has the respondent been following the campaign on television' or 'read morning newspaper'. Except in February and October 1974 and 1979, this simply question wording was followed in all the BES surveys. But in February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the general election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?' The 1979 through 1987 studies followed the question wordings of 1964 through 1970. On the whole, two essentially different question wordings and answer categories were reported here. The different question wording and coding are explained in the texts and in the Appendix A and B.

Unlike the equivalent study in the United States, the NES, that measures the amount of media use among the respondents, the BES asked a general 'yes' or 'no' questions in the majority of the surveys. And as I pointed out earlier, it is because of this lack of a measure of the amount of media use relative to each respondent, that I dichotomized (except in 1974 February, October and 1979 that I trichotomized) the responses and was forced to use dummy variables in running the regression models in the analysis. Besides, it was impossible to measure, say, an absolute amount of media use by each respondent in the surveys.

Finally, media use and the effects of the media are strongly influenced by socio-political backgrounds and demographic factors, as a result, in running the regression models, I included a maximum of twelve relevant variables in some of the years. These variables include, gender, age, housing, religion, social class, union membership (of the respondent and spouse in most cases) interest in politics, care about election outcome, party identification strength and direction and feeling towards the political parties.

Literature Review

★ Over the years, there has been an accumulation of a large body of literature (Wyckoff, 1968; MacNeil, 1968; and McGinnis, 1969) on mass communications and voting behavior aimed at explaining how and why the media affect political behavior. Lots of research have been done on the implications of the media (especially television viewing) on turnout and political party in general, but little on the effects of media on political party identification in particular.

Suffice it to say, however, that most scholars of voting behavior have remained skeptical on the impact of the media during election and on election outcome. The first major skeptical evidence was presented by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944), at the cradle of the electronic age. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues contended that there is little evidence that mass communications affect voters in any significant way. Other investigations of the effects of media (especially television) on elections also discovered that there is no evidence that the media have an impact on the behavior of the electorate. Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield, (1949), for example, observed that television viewers are not in any way more likely to vote, to vote differently, or to know more about the election than non-viewers. Similarly, other scholars (Simon and Stern, 1955; Glasser, 1965; Campbell, 1962) uncovered little evidence that mass communications affect the behavior of the voters.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, political scientists were lead to believe that people pick and choose a newspaper for reinforcement, and that their views were not subsequently influenced by partisan coverage. Newspaper readership between Conservative and Labour papers within that period was roughly balanced, and helped to support the argument in Britain. Similar arguments were made for television and other broadcast media in the 1960s, although radio and television were displacing newspapers as the primary source of political information in Britain at this period. But recent studies (Miller, Sonntag, Broughton, 1989) reveal that British Newspapers are overwhelmingly "right wing", politically biased, and that readership are unequal between Labour and Conservative supporters. Furthermore, there are differences in

Table 1.3 Reading of national daily newspapers by sex 1987

	Readership (millions)	Percentage of adults reading each paper	
		Men	Women
Daily newspapers			
The Sun	11.3	28	23
Mirror	9.1	23	18
Mail	4.5	11	10
Express	4.3	10	9
Star	3.9	11	7
Telegraph	2.8	7	5
Guardian	1.5	4	3
The Times	1.2	4	2
Today	1.1	3	2
Independent	0.9	3	1
Financial Times	0.8	3	1
Any national morning paper	68.0	73	63
Sunday newspapers			
News of the World	12.8	30	27
Sunday Mirror	9.1	22	19
The People	8.1	20	17
Sunday Express	6.1	14	13
Mail on Sunday	5.1	12	11
Sunday Times	3.6	9	7
The Observer	2.3	6	5
Sunday Telegraph	2.2	5	4
Any national paper	74.0	76	71

Source: Data from Social Trends 19 (1989: Table 10.9)

Table 1.4 Reading of national newspapers by social class 1987

	Percentage of adults in each social class reading each paper					
	A	B	C1	C2	D	E
Daily newspapers						
The Sun	5	10	20	32	37	27
Mirror	4	8	16	27	29	19
Mail	14	14	14	9	6	5
Express	9	12	13	10	6	6
Star	2	2	6	12	15	9
Telegraph	28	16	8	3	1	2
Guardian	9	10	4	1	1	1
The Times	16	8	3	1	1	1
Today	1	2	3	3	3	1
Independent	6	6	3	3	3	1
Financial Times	8	5	2	1	-	-
Any daily newspaper	74	67	67	70	72	59
Sunday newspapers						
News of the World	9	12	23	36	40	30
Sunday Mirror	5	10	17	27	27	18
The People	3	8	16	23	25	17
Sunday Express	24	22	18	12	8	7
Mail on Sunday	16	16	16	11	7	4
Sunday Times	35	22	10	3	3	2
The Observer	14	14	7	3	3	2
Sunday Telegraph	19	11	7	3	2	1
Any national paper	78	75	74	76	76	64

Source: Data from Social Trends 19 (1989: Table 10.9)

readership between the genders and between social classes - Tables 1.3 and 1.4.

But let me point out here one extensive literature review on the persuasiveness of mass communications undertaken by Klapper (1960) and Roberts and MacCoby (1985). In that review, Klapper stunned those who believed in the "all powerful" media model when he argued that 'mass communication "ordinarily" does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects,' and that its major function is to reinforce existing values and attitudes. In other words, he claimed that the evidence revealed that mass communications effectively influence audience attitudes only in the absence of a "nexus of mediating factors", which include prior attitudes and identifications of the individuals in the audience as well as the social influences on them (Jacobson, 1975). His study revealed that the media motivate the prior attitudes and reinforce the dispositions of the electorate.

However, in the last two decades, there has been a renewed interest in the areas of communication research, psychology and political science, particularly on the "agenda setting" power of the mass media (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, and Tichenor, 1982), and a growing interest on the so-called "priming effects."¹³ The agenda-setting theorists, for example, posit that increased salience of a topic or political issue in the media influences the salience of the issue among the public. This growing interest in the agenda-setting and priming effects of the media calls for further

¹³ Priming effect is defined by Iyengar and Kinder (1987) as the effect whereby television news through its coverage patterns are seen as subliminally influencing the priorities the voters assign to national problems and the standard by which they judge the candidates, political parties and their policies.

examination of the relationship between the media and political behavior.

A few examples of the studies of the relationship between media and political behavior in the literature are: one, in the 1952 presidential election in the United States, when Simon and Stems (1955) found no differences in voter turnout between Iowa counties with and without television; two, in 1956 election, when Glasser (1965) found that those who did not watch television were likely to vote, but among those who watched at all, amount of television viewing made no difference in voter turnout; and three, in a recent study, Morgan and Shanahan (1992:17), concluded that 'heavy television viewers are less likely to say that they voted in US presidential elections, and that, among those who say they voted, heavy viewers are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidates (or say they would have, among the non-voters).'

Although Morgan and Shanahan admitted that the relationships may be largely spurious because under multiple simultaneous controls the relationships seem to disappear.

Apart from these few examples that specifically addressed mass media use and voter turnout, most of the research in this area have focused on explaining media campaigns, or the popular belief that mass advertisement campaigns on the electronic media win elections. But in Britain, as I pointed out earlier, political parties and candidates are not permitted to buy campaign commercials or air-time in the electronic media; instead they are given free air-time. Besides, there are severe limits placed on the amount of money the parties can spend. There are other numerous differences between the United States and Great Britain in their media philosophy and

political structure.

With respect to the relationship between the mass media and British politics, one of the classic studies of the effects of the mass media in Great Britain was undertaken by Trenaman and McQuail (1961). They concluded that 'the evidence strongly suggests that people think about what they are told ... but at no level do they think what they are told.' However, McQuail (1987:275-6) seems to reverse this view when he observed that:

The evidence at that time and since collected consists of data showing a correspondence between the order of importance given in the media to issues and the order of significance attached to the same issues by the public and the politicians ... Such evidence is insufficient to show a causal connection between various issue agendas ... There are certainly alternative models of this relationship, of which the main one would reverse the flow and state that the underlying concerns of the public will shape both issue definition by political elites and those of the media, a process which is fundamental to political theory and to the logic of free media.

McQuail claims that most of the accumulated evidence is inconclusive and that the media-dominated agenda setting hypothesis has 'the status of a plausible but unproven idea.'

The debate on the notion of agenda setting in the "classical" McCombs and Shaw (1972) tradition continues to range (see Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch, and Weaver, 1991). Miller, Sonntag and Broughton (1989), for example, have questioned the popular belief that television in British general elections is neutral; while some political scientists have also recognized that the conventional view of minimal media political effects is radically inconsistent with our everyday experience of political dynamics.

Thus, it seems obvious now that with the growing power of the media, the efforts of politicians and the political parties to influence the media during election campaigns; and all the improvements in communications which invariably have allowed, for example, a more centralized campaign by the candidates and the parties. Therefore, the media should have some kind of influences on the electorate. The media's influences in the United Kingdom, no doubt, seem powerful enough in the 1980s and 1990s to affect a large proportion of the voters who supported the Liberal, the Alliance or the Greens. Furthermore, the two concepts - "agenda-setting" or "cultivation effect" hypothesis have dominated the literature on media effect in recent years, and deserves further investigation. Dunleavy, Gamble, and Peale (1990:465) have rightly pointed out that the media's 'heavily conditioned presentation and ranking of issues, form a critical part of the institutional power structures which shape voting behavior.' Therefore, this study attempts to empirically test the relationship between mass media use and political behavior.

The Theoretical Framework

There are two main theoretical frameworks in the literature on the study of media effects that are followed in this study - media use and partisan behavior.

First, the media use framework can be subdivided into two. The first is the "cultivation" hypothesis approach - so-called because it argues that television messages achieve effects by virtue of the cumulative systematic repetition over time of the messages (Gerbner, et al., 1980). This approach suggests that the more time a person spends watching television, (that is, the more television dominates a person's

source of information, "entertainment", and consciousness), the more likely the person is to hold conceptions of reality that are congruent with television's most stable and recurrent portrayals of life and society.

In most recent studies, researchers are nearly unanimous in saying that for most voters, television is the unquestionable main source of their political information during elections, and the main basis for voting decisions. While it is undoubtedly true that television is the main source of political information, the evidence, however, is not supportive that it is also the main source of voting decisions. Because, although television supplies the information, in the short term, in the long run the voters make the final decision. Is it possible that in the longer term, the media influence the decisions of the voters in the ways that are not apparent even to the voters themselves?

This study in the tradition of the "cultivation" approach examines whether the voters could resist the continuous dripping of selected information designed to sustain a particular view point (especially the Conservative newspapers and the preponderance of the coverage of the prime minister over the opposition party leader) in the media in Great Britain.

The second approach which is similar to the first is the "mainstream" hypothesis approach, which suggests that television cultivates homogeneity among otherwise divergent groups (Gerbner, et al., 1980, 1982). Gerbner and colleagues in their "classic studies" in this area (Gerbner, et al., 1986:120) hypothesize that 'heavy television viewers opt for a moderate rather than a conservative or liberal political

label and perceive themselves as belonging to a generalized middle-class rather than an upper-middle or working class.' To be precise, this approach suggests that heavy television viewing blurs and distorts the impact of political party spectrum: with the result that people who usually identify with a particular party, who watch more television are more likely to call themselves "moderate" and conversely "independent".

Although voters deny any effects or being influenced by the media in most studies, this study explores the possibilities of the voters resisting a "media consensus", especially when the same viewpoint is adopted by ostensibly competing media channels as is the case in Great Britain, for example, on BBC/TV and IBA/TV.

Finally, the partisan behavior framework looks at the concept of party identification as it relates to the mass media use. The conceptualization of party identification which we find in the literature is that one's partisanship is an individual characteristic. This traditional view of partisan identification which has generally been accepted by political scientists, as I noted earlier, was introduced by Campbell, et al., (1960). This view emphasizes stability and holds that partisanship develops quite early in life, even before the individual is mature enough to vote. Campbell, et al., argue that the individual develops this partisan identification through socialization through the family (Converse, 1969). If changes occur later in life, they argued, it is as a result of other exogenous individual characteristics (Fiorina, 1981). These exogenous characteristics include marriage, job changes or migration.

The most important work in this area includes the work of Campbell, et al.,

(1960) and Converse (1969). In their pioneering work, for example, Campbell, et al., (1960) argued that party identification can be measured along at least two dimensions - a directional and strength components. The directional component indicates choice of party while the strength reflects the degree of commitment to the party. The evidence they collected from their data reported in The American Voter, showed high stable partisan. Converse (1969) further demonstrated 'the micro-level process that can contribute to partisan stability among mass electorates' (Abramson, 1992). After analyzing the same data, Dryer (1973) also concluded that whatever change occurred was random, although this has been disputed.

However, in contrast to this view of stability of partisanship, Dobson and Meeter (1974), and Franklin (1984) found systematic changes in partisan attachment over a period of time. Similarly, Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954:116) had earlier discovered a 'breakage' effect among the electorate when a voter's personal environment was split in political preference. Other studies in this area including the work of Abramson (1975, 1979), Converse (1969, 1976) and Brody (1977), who have documented changes in the strength and direction of party identification in most industrialized democracies.

This study explores the possible effects of the media in helping or hindering voters' ties with the political parties in Britain.

In summary, most of the studies in the literature examine either the strength component or the directional component. It is unclear among these researchers (although all appear to agree to some extent) about the relationship of media exposure

and political attitudes and behavior. Schramm (1973), for example, has suggested that the effects of the media on attitudes is more likely to be that of reinforcement than change, especially, where there is an existing attitude. While DeFleur (1982), on his part concluded that the impact of the media are probably relevant to attitude alteration only as it relates to individuals in a state of ambiguity, that is, with uncrystallized attitudes. Similarly, Strouse (1975) has argued that the less information the voters have to begin with, the more susceptible they are to the media effects.

In conclusion, the forgoing discussions are the contextual background, few of some of the views and hypotheses incorporated in this study in an attempt to explore the effects of the media on political participation in British general elections and political environment. In short, how important are the media during election campaigns? What is the role of the media during election campaigns? And, what are their effects on the political process and the voters?

CHAPTER II

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN MASS MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Before attempting a study of the effects of the mass media of communication on political behavior and electoral outcomes in any country, some background information is needed on what is known about how the media are organized in it or its media philosophy. This kind of knowledge known as "normative theory", deals with how the media ought to or are expected to operate in a given country. Each nation has detailed and distinctive media philosophy that fits its particular form of political system and government. So, to understand the role of the mass media and their effects in British politics requires some knowledge of the mass media philosophy, the pattern of access, as well as the structures of the political system in Britain. And, to do this a comparative analysis of the well documented United States media philosophy becomes a necessary point of reference, followed by a brief comparative review of the British media philosophy.

Literature Review

Several attempts have been made in the literature, to spell out the different definitive forms of media philosophies (or theories) in the world. The first attempts at a truly comparative analysis of the major media philosophies was undertaken by Siebert,

Peterson, and Schramm (1956). Their four original typologies are - the "authoritarian", "libertarian" (renamed "free press" by McQuail, 1987), "social responsibility", and the "soviet-socialist" model. A reclassification of all the systems was attempted by Altschull (1984). His typology, however, corresponds to the three world political orders at the time he undertook this task. These are the First World (liberal-capitalist), the Second World (Soviet-socialist) and the Third World (developing) models. Altschull simply labelled these three models as 'market', 'Maxist' and 'advancing' model respectively. However, in the literature, there are six or more normative theories of the media systems in the world. These theories include Siebert and his colleagues' original four theories of the media, plus several more typologies including but not limited to McQuail's (1974) "developmental" and "democratic-participant" theories.

In the literature, however, Siebert and his colleagues' seminal work remains the major source or point of reference for looking at the different media philosophies or for classifying national media systems in the world. Siebert and his colleagues' original four theories are usually the starting point for describing the different media philosophies in the world. However, their typology and subsequent attempts to reclassify the media systems in the world have failed to yield a clear form or definition of media philosophies in the world. In fact, there is no actual media system in the world that is governed by any of the several theories in the literature. No media system in the world practices any one theory. Most media systems in the world reflect some elements of two or more of Siebert, et al's original theories of the media. The only exception for sometime, was the Soviet-socialist model. However, even at the time it was appropriate to describe the

media philosophy in the Soviet Union as a soviet-socialist model, in practice it resembled the authoritarian model.

The Four Theories of the Press

A comparative exploration of the media philosophies in the United States and Great Britain must begin with a review of Siebert, et al's four theories of the press as a starting point. Therefore a brief summary of Siebert et al's four theories of the press found in the literature is as follows: the first model is what Siebert and his colleagues called the "authoritarian" model of the press. They identified an authoritarian model as the kind of media system practiced in a society where a king or monarchy rules. In such a system, the media were expected to be subordinate to the state power and the interests of the ruling class. In contemporary society, their typology would fit only those mass media systems that support or are neutral to the state and government in which they operate. In these societies, the media are an arm of the government or the state authority and are structured to achieve the goals of the ruling class.

In an authoritarian system, as proposed by Siebert and his colleagues, censorship and punishment of journalists who deviated from the guidelines of the government in power are common practice, especially when the guidelines deal with political matters or ideological matters. Under the authoritarian model, government controls the media or enforces a wide range of the day to day operation of the media, including production, and distribution. Even codes of conduct for the journalists are dictated by the government. Since under this model, the media are an arm of the government in power, the financing of the system rests with the government, together with the appointment of

the management, editorial staff and the day-to-day running of the media. It is worth noting, however, that this kind of system exists only in pre-democratic, dictatorial or repressive systems such as under a military government, martial law, or in societies that are totalitarian in nature.

The second model of the media in the literature is the "free press" model, or what Siebert and his colleagues called the "libertarian" model. This model is based on the premise that public expression is the best way to arrive at the truth and expose error in the polity. Siebert and his colleagues traced the origin of this model to the advent of the printing press, and to the political theories of the enlightenment that valued the good of the society, the general will, the good or welfare of the individual in the society. According to Siebert et al's theory, this kind of media system derives its philosophy from the popular enlightenment thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. And, in keeping with the thinking in those periods, the print medium (the dominant medium) was supposed to be free from official government control and was expected to share or express the general will of the people.

In short, the basic philosophical principles of the model were based on the liberty or the supremacy of the individuals in the polity. Under this system, the individual is allowed to publish whatever he or she likes; the individual is allowed to hold free opinions, to be able to express those opinions freely in the media. In such a society, the individual has rights to peaceably assemble and to organize with others. These rights are regarded as the fundamental rights of the individual in the society. Needless to say that this model exists only in free and rational societies - or a liberal-democratic societies that

believe in the liberty or the supremacy of the individual. In these kinds of societies, there is a general belief in reason, truth, progress and the sovereignty of the general will of the individuals in the society.

In the literature, this model came to be identified with private ownership of the media and freedom from interference of the market or the laissez faire media system as practiced in the United States; because the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States declares that 'Congress shall make no law abridging ... the freedom of the press.' Over the years, through several judicial interpretations or series of Supreme Court rulings, the First Amendment's prohibition has been broadly interpreted. The individual in the States has a right to the media, for political campaigns and for other purposes. This right has further been extended by Congress in 1970 through the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act. In short, this Act guarantees the individual in America, including journalists and scholars, complete access to official information.

The third media philosophy as proposed by Siebert and his colleagues is called the "social responsibility" model. Although the "free press" model in practice resembles more of the media philosophy in the States, however, Siebert and his colleagues traced the social responsibility model to the media philosophy as practiced in the United States. Based on their interpretation of the Commission on Freedom of the Press (Hutchins, 1974), they identified the United States' media philosophy as an example of a social responsibility model. However, this categorization does not really fit the American media system, as I have earlier identified the United States media philosophy with the

"free press", or as will be clear soon.

The main premise of the social responsibility model comes from the knowledge that the market does fail or that free market has not fulfilled the promise of press freedom, nor has it delivered to the society the expected benefits of a free market. As a result, Siebert and his colleagues argued that under such a situation, the government steps in to regulate the media industry; and to set limits for their operation. According to Siebert and his colleagues, the basic philosophical principles of the model are the belief that the media can and do serve the society in political and social matters. They concluded that it is therefore the duties of the media under the social responsibility model to entertain, inform and educate the public.

Under the social responsibility model, ownership of the media is supposed to be in the hands of the public not in private hands. Furthermore, the media are supposed to serve the public, and to be free from laissez affaire or free-market ideas.

Britain is one of the Western democracies that have at one time or another practiced some kind of socialism. There has never been any laissez affaire media system in Britain. In fact, the British official Secret Acts, can restrict newspapers from reporting about government actions, thus, giving the government the right to keep secrets. Therefore, the British media model or the media philosophy as practiced in Britain can accurately be described as a social responsibility model, although, in practice the system is a mixture of the social responsibility and free market commercial television.

The fourth model of the media according to Siebert and his colleagues is called the "soviet-socialist" model. In the literature, Siebert and his colleagues traced the origin

of the model to the reorganization of the Russian press after the Revolution in 1917. According Siebert and his colleague, the basic philosophical principles of this model was derived from the philosophical principles of Karl Marx and Engels under the rule of Lenin. They argued that under the rule of Lenin, the "all powerful hypodermic needle" (direct or propaganda) effect became the popular view in the literature for a number of reasons. One of the reasons, was the perceived potential of the mass media to influence the behavior of the individuals in the polity. Under this model, the control of the media is supposed to reside with the working class (the communist party) that controls the means of 'mental production'. Siebert and his colleagues further argued that under this model, the media are to be an organ of the state, controlled by the ruling powers, and an integral instrument of social and political life.

Although in principle the media under this model was supposed to be self-regulatory, and responsive to the needs and wishes of their audiences, it turned out that they were subjected to arbitrary or unpredicted governmental interference, censorship and punishment of the journalists who failed to follow the guidelines of the government in power. Besides, under the system journalist were accountable only to the governmental authorities. However, as many scholars have pointed out, in many ways, this model resembles more of the authoritarian model.

Despite the good intentions of scholars to present definitive media philosophies in the literature for describing the media systems in the world, there are problems with some of the basic philosophical principles of all the typologies. Because each nation's media system often exhibits a mixture of alternative principles, this has lead to further

attempts to reclassifying some of the different media philosophies in the world. For example, some scholars see the mixture of public service ("social responsibility") of the BBC, and commercial ("free market") of the IBA media in Britain as a example of a compromise between two alternative media systems or philosophies.

On one hand, for example, there is the BBC, a non-commercial radio/television broadcasting organization which develops and produces its own programs and broadcasts the programs to the nation as a whole. The BBC is not controlled by the government, although the government in power appoints the Director General. On the other hand, there is the IBA, a commercial company that also develops and produces its own programs for broadcasting throughout the nation without government control.

In conclusion, it is clear from the foregoing that a comparative analysis or an understanding of the media philosophy in any country is relevant for understanding the part the mass media play in campaigns and the impact they have on the social and political behavior of the electorate and electoral outcomes, hence the foregoing attempt for definitive typologies of the media philosophies in the world, but especially the British and American media philosophies.

The Need for Definitive Typologies

From the foregoing discussion, definitive typologies of the media and political system in Great Britain and the United States is relevant here for achieving a comparative analysis of the two countries. So, to attempt a comparative study of the mass media of communication systems in the two countries, the media philosophy of each is described in this section. What follows is a review of the American system, since a lot has been

documented about the media and the effects of the media on political behavior in America. A discussion of national elections and the political role of the mass media in campaigns in the two countries are also attempted. These two countries are of particular interest not only because of their different media philosophies, which affect the pattern of media use (and plausible effects), but also because of the differences in their political systems and forms of parties.

Since a lot has been written about the mass media in the United States, it is necessary to start by giving a background information of what is known about the media philosophy or how the media is organized and the effects of the media on political behavior in the States. Needless to say that a comparative analysis of this kind is worth examination and relevant to understanding the part the media play in political campaigns, their impact on political campaigns, and on political behavior and electoral outcomes.

Although it is difficult to distinguish between the roles the media play in social concepts and political phenomena, I believe that understanding how these two countries media philosophies are similar and different can throw light on the pattern of use and how their influence are felt.

To begin with, in many significant ways Great Britain and the United States differ quite substantially in both their political structure and mass media philosophy.

Politics in the United States is presidential politics. General elections and congressional election campaigns vary across districts. Goldenberg and Traugott (1987), for example, made a distinction between four different types of congressional campaigns. These differences mean that political campaigns differ from district to district. However,

in most elections in the United States, the two major political parties contest for offices on the national and local (state, county, etc) levels. On both local and national levels, there are very many visible local candidates and visible national political party leaders during election campaigns.

Election campaigns in the United States often do not seem to represent united parties speaking with one voice. There are often different voices from the same party. Besides, the media in the United States pay more attention to individual politicians and little attention to the political parties as united organizations (except during national convention). Even during national conventions, the media (especially television) have the tendency to portray the convention delegates, as Butler and Ranney (1984:226) observed as 'mobs of delegates milling about (or waving banners or sleeping) at national conventions.' In short, there is no strong party discipline in the United States as there is in Great Britain and in most parliamentary democracies. Political parties in the US do not often seem to be united during election campaigns.

By contrast, politically, Britain is a parliamentary democracy with a multiparty system in which national election campaigns have strong policy and ideological overtone. There are about 651 single-member districts in Britain, with approximately 65,000 voters¹. Like in the United States, each constituency varies greatly in its characteristics, from highly urbanized, inner-city districts to suburban, or rural districts. During general election campaigns in Britain, there are highly visible national leaders who dominate even

¹ However, among each of the 72 districts in Scotland, the average is about 53,000 electorates; compare with about 30,000 in each electoral district for the House as required by the Constitution of the United States.

local elections. These national political leaders try during general election campaign to persuade the voters to vote for their political parties. The party that wins a majority of seats in the House of Commons forms the Government; while the prime minister and his/her cabinet ministers are usually members of the Parliament who won the election in their respective districts. Consequently, and in part due to the strict party discipline in Britain, the political parties often seem united in their efforts to win control of parliament and the government during election campaigns. They try to ensure that their leaders and spokes persons speak with one voice on important issues.

One important or noteworthy similarity between the United States and Great Britain is the electoral system in both countries. Unlike in most European countries, in both the United States and Great Britain, the electoral system used in electing the members of Congress or the Parliament is the first-past-the-post electoral system. In recent years, the minor parties, especially the Liberal Democrats have called for a more representative system - proportional representation - that takes into account the multiparty system in Britain,² but the two major political parties see proportional representation as inimical to a stable government for the same reason the other parties have called for proportional representation - the unstable nature of multiparty coalition politics. In short, the first-past-the-post electoral system in both countries, tends to reward the winning party more than a strong opposition party. This system affects the campaign styles and presentations of the candidates as each political party tends to package its candidates as

² For instance, in the *Independent* on April 12, 1992, Peter Jenkins described proportional representation as an 'essential precondition for a stable coalition.'

the best candidates through the help of media professionals. This kind of candidate-centered campaign has the tendency for the political parties and the professionals to present slick images of the candidates in well-prepared sound-bite and media-orchestrated appearances.

Some important differences between the two countries deserves special mentioning here also. The British Parliament, like the United States Congress is bicameral. But unlike the United States Congress in which both chambers are significant in passing legislation, the significant chamber in Britain is the House of Commons. The other chamber - the British House of Lords does not author legislation (though amendments by the House of Lords are often respected by the House of Commons). The House of Lords also can delay and have sometimes delayed the passage of a legislation.

Apart from these differences in the chambers, the number of political parties and the visibility of the party leaders during election in the two countries, there is also a great difference in the strength of political parties, the strength and commitments of voters to the political parties and their candidates, the nature of their legislative constituencies and the media philosophy. These differences in the organization, political orientations, and media philosophies are likely to affect the way the candidates use the media, and the way voters perceive and use the media for making their decisions on election day.

The United States Media Philosophy

In the United States, the media are independent of partisan and governmental control, fragmented and decentralized. The American media philosophy can accurately be described as a "libertarian" or "free press" model. Almost all broadcast and print

outlets in the United States are privately owned. In the United States, there are several commercial broadcast stations and several noncommercial stations too. The commercial stations (together with the newspapers) are privately owned and operated by private individuals for profit. On the other hand, the noncommercial stations are owned and operated by either universities and public agencies. These noncommercial stations do not operate for profit, and have limited appeal to political candidates during elections.

The media audiences in the United States tend to read local newspapers, listen to local radio, and watch local television news. However, the development of the cable and the popularity of the Cable News Network, CNN, has made it possible for more and more people to watch national and world news on television. Again, because most of the American television stations are dominated through the system of network "affiliation", and recently, by the four national networks - the American Broadcast Corporation, ABC, Columbia Broadcast System, CBS, the National Broadcast Company, NBC, and the Fox Network. The local stations also tend to broadcast national news bulletins.

By contrast, the media system in Britain is highly centralized and national in focus. There is little local programming on television in Britain. Local radio programming in Britain started only in the last few decades and cover only a limited area. The political parties leaders in Britain always appear in the news, while most local legislators and their challengers receive little or no national coverage during elections. Secondly, by contrast to the United States, the cable industry in Britain has not developed as much as in the United States. In the 1980s, as I pointed out in chapter one, it was

feared that cable television was going to revolutionize the British audience. In the Peacock Committee study in 1986, it was predicted that the cable would bring in a revolution in the British media audience. Many channels of television, voice and video, telephone, etc, were anticipated. Many people predicted about 8 million or more cable subscribers by 1990, but, these predictions have not materialized. There are only about 200,000 cable subscribers (that is, about less than 1 % of the British households).

So, to understand the media philosophy in the United States, the effects of the media on political campaigns and outcomes, it is important to review separately the print and broadcast outlets in the country.

First, the major newspapers in the United States are owned and run as independent businesses. All the major newspapers take a free market approach to advertising - including political advertisements and depend on advertising revenue for paying their bills for staffing, printing, and distribution. In principle, in the United States, anyone who has the money can start a newspaper business; although in recent years, the newspaper industry has been undergoing through some dramatic changes. These changes include a decline in the number of independent daily newspapers and a rapid growth in the number or chains of large media conglomerates. In the United States, unlike in the past when voters could choose to read the local newspaper with the most congenial political slant (Lazarfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944); today, the majority of the newspaper markets in the United States, small or medium-sized, most readers have only one daily newspaper to read about local news coverage; although in the largest urban areas, multiple newspapers still compete for readership audience.

By contrast, radio and television broadcast outlets in the United States require a license from the Federal Communication Commission, FCC, to operate. The license issued by FCC must be renewed (and can be revoke) every few years. Since its establishment in 1934, the FCC has had the responsibility or the authority to allocate frequencies, power and the hours of broadcasting to the radio and television stations. Over the years, the FCC and Congress of the United States have imposed some restrictions or issued rules to the stations on how to operate. The majority of the rules deal with how the broadcast stations should operate during election campaigns or deal with the political parties and the candidates.

This distinction between the newspapers and the broadcast media has important consequences for the political content of their news and other coverage in both media. It also has important consequences for editorial endorsements of the candidates, the access the candidates have to the media, for the strategic use of the media by political candidates during election campaigns, and probably effects on political behavior and electoral outcome.

In the United States, the press are independent of political party control.³ They are editorially independent from the political parties and operate with separate editorial and news departments. For a long time in the States, editorial endorsement of candidates were uncommon, while television and radio news were perceived as non-partisan.

³ Tunstall (1983:10) notes that in the United States, 'the media's independence from the party has been one factor in the decline of party discipline and the emergence of 'personal parties' built around individuals with the ability to attract votes and (consequently) to attract the money required to fight elections.'

The press and the broadcast media in the States operated under three important principles established by Congress and interpreted by the FCC. These three principles are the right to "equal time," the right to "fairness doctrine" or "fair treatment," and the right to "rebuttal", thus, the media in the United States are expected to be "fair" and "balanced" in their reporting.

The first principle of equal time provision ensures that all candidates for elected office receive "free access" to the media to campaign if any of them does. In other words, if a station permits a candidate for public office access to the station for purpose of campaigning, either free or by purchasing air time, that station must also offer all the other candidates for the same public office the same amount of time under the same condition. This provision, for example, covered events such as presidential (states or local) debates on television, as well as regular news shows.

The second principle - the so-called fairness doctrine or the right to fair treatment means that reasonable amount of time must be allowed to those who hold opposing views on highly controversial issues to discuss them through the media. This principle implies that it does not matter whether the issue occurs during election campaign or not.

The third principle - the right to rebuttal provides for a response to a personal attack on the media that might damage a candidate's reputation. In other words, if a candidate for elected office is attacked on a broadcast station, and the candidate feels that the attack damages his/her honesty, character, or integrity, the person has a right to reply to the charges against him or her in the same media and free time donated to him or her by the station.

By contrast, newspapers editorial in the States have always endorsed political candidates. Most of their editorial positions have tended to be fairly politically conservative (Graber, 1984), although their news coverage are still seen by many as "objective" reporting. For one thing, most newspapers in the United States apply a standard of fairness in deciding what is and what is not newsworthy in their reporting. However, due to changes in the FCC regulations since 1988 regarding "free access" and "equal time", newspapers can now not only endorse political candidates but also support or attack their policy position on their editorial pages. Besides, newspapers are no longer required to provide equal access to the medium to candidates on the opposite side so long as their criticisms are not libelous.

Let me hasten to add here that one of the important similarities between the United States and Great Britain is that in both countries, the newspapers have a very loyal and captive audience for news. In both countries, the newspaper audiences tend to be educated, politically active and ideologically conservative. The potential for the influence of the newspapers on the political behavior of such a captive audience and electoral outcomes is feared in both countries. By contrast to the newspapers in the United States, the broadcast media (radio and television) still operate under the three principles of equal access, fair time and rebuttal. Political candidates are permitted to buy commercial time in any available time slot to deliver their messages or stand on issues. Political candidates can buy time whenever and wherever they wish and also purchase as much air time as they can pay for or afford so long as the advertising slots are available.

Consequently, during election campaigns in the United States, political campaign advertisements (including but not limited to negative advertisements) are numerous. These political campaign advertisements are carefully crafted by skilled professionals and pundits who hold strongly to the belief that the media have effects. These so-called communication consultants strongly believe in the efficacy of media political advertisements, and cling to the belief that their messages relayed through the mass media channels produce results. They reason that "if people are given the facts, their subjective perceptions will begin to align with scientific judgement." The faith political candidates now have in the professionals or communication consultants have resulted in their salience during election campaigns and have continued to raise several concerns.

Moreover, the activities of these professionals, pollsters, advertising agents and consultants over the years have revolutionized the way political party policies, campaigns and images are presented. Because television has replaced the newspapers as the prime means of political communications to the voters, some scholars see enormous potential for media effects. Secondly, the activities of the professional media consultants involve huge sums of money, therefore, some scholars (Jacobson, 1978, 1980, 1985) complained that money has taken on an increasing significance in elections. From all indications, most candidates in recent elections spent a lot of their resources and efforts on the media in an effort to influence the voters and electoral outcome. Many scholars (Jacobson, 1990) noted that in each election cycle, more and more money are becoming available to the candidates for media campaigns. In 1988, for example, incumbents in the United States spent more than challengers. However, the marginal return on

challengers expenditure were larger than the marginal returns on the incumbent expenditure. This finding has not calmed the concerns of those scholars who fear that the candidates who spend much money on the media presenting their messages to the voters will increase their visibility, and may influence electoral outcome.

The British Media Philosophy

Although I have touched on some of the similarities between the United States and British media philosophies in the course of discussing American media philosophy, yet, a brief description of the British media philosophy will substantially bring out the differences and similarities in both systems. Unlike in the United States, the media in Britain are predominantly national, with only few exceptions due to economies of scale and for political reasons. Scotland is one of the exceptions to the national media audience in Great Britain. In many respects, Scotland is seen as somewhat a separate 'nation' in terms of media audience and newspaper industry. A few years ago, the Fleet Street that dominates the newspaper industry in Great Britain tried unsuccessfully to takeover the newspaper industry in Scotland, making the Scottish newspapers purely regional. Another exception to the national media audience is Wales, where both television and radio outlets are local, although BBC and IBA signals are also received everywhere in both Scotland and Wales.

Apart from these few exceptions in Scotland and Wales, the British media are centralized. Like in the United States, the broadcast media in Britain are independent of the political parties. Similarly, the British newspapers, like in the States, are free to editorialize and often are strongly partisan in attitude. The centralized nature of the

media in Great Britain reflects its media philosophy that sees the media as performing public service duty - the social responsibility model.

As with the United States, the British media philosophy is better understood in part by reviewing separately the print and broadcast outlets in Great Britain.

Like the newspapers in the United States, British newspapers are free to editorialize and are often partisan (or fairly conservative). The newspaper audience in Britain tends to be national, have wide circulations and intensely complete for readership. However, there are also widely read local evening newspapers in most cities and towns in Britain. One new development in recent years has been the proliferation of the so-called "free-sheets" - weekly papers that are supported entirely by large amounts of advertisements. These weekly newspapers now number over 800 in Britain. They employ quite a few professional reporters. They have some editorialization, and are distributed door-or-to door. In recent years, many of them have proven to be outlets for political parties and political candidates. Many observers perceive them to be a threaten to the established local newspapers.⁴ Compared to the United States or most West European nations, the magazine industry in Britain is weak because the newspapers and the television dominate the media audience.

By contrast to the print media, the broadcast media in Great Britain are relatively centralized. There is little regional programming on the British Broadcasting Corporation Television, BBC-TV. The BBC broadcasts its programs on two channels on over a

⁴ For example, in the late 1980s, the Shelffield Morning Telegraph, that was founded in 1855 and was for some time one of the oldest local daily newspapers outside London, closed when it lost 50% of its advertising revenue to a local "free sheet".

hundred transmitting stations distributed throughout the entire nation. All the transmitters receive their programs from the BBC headquarters in London and do not produce their own local programs. Likewise, the Independent Television, IBA-TV, which is a federation of 20 companies, has a national network output. These include the Granada Television and Thames Television. Again, like the BBC, the IBA has two channels and several transmitting stations throughout Britain. In Britain, there is no equivalent of locally-owned network affiliates and independent stations as in the United States. However, as I noted earlier, there has been a growing number of local radio stations in the past two decades.

The media philosophy in Britain is based on the "social responsibility" or public service model, although the BBC has a relatively close ties to the political establishment in Parliament. Under the British social responsibility model, all four television channels (BBC-1, BBC-2, IBA/TV, and Channel 4) and the BBC national and local radio services are strictly obliged to cover controversial issues. They are also required not only to entertain, but to inform and educate the public in the spirit of the social responsibility model. Corollary to the social responsibility model in Britain is the principle of "due impartiality". The due impartiality is operationally defined, during election campaigns as giving free air-time to the political parties based on their relative strength in Parliament.

Since the 1970s, some critics of the British media have accused the media in Britain of being Conservatively biased. As I noted earlier in chapter one, surveys conducted by IBA, since 1975, seems to support this view. These surveys have

continued to show an increase in the proportion of the British public who see bias in the media, especially in the BBC. Many scholars point out that this partisan bias in the British media is reflected in the amount of the support the media give to existing patterns of sociopolitical and economic inequality, and consequently affects political behavior in the country. Often the media in Britain, for example, are accused of being biased against trade unions and in favor of big business and management, hence Labour party tends to receive overwhelmingly the support of the trade unions members. Again, the media are often accused of being biased against women and in favor of traditional male dominated chauvinistic values; against ethnic minorities; and against certain age groups - especially certain sections of both the young and the elderly (Tunstall, 1983). This bias feeling toward the media among the British public as evident from the IBA surveys (especially since 1979) has political consequences; hence, union members tend to support Labour party (Figure 2.1); while young people also tend to be supporters of the Labour party and the parties on the Left such as the Green party (Figure 2.2), as is evident from the BES data (Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991).

Furthermore, the media in generally are seen differently in their patterns of bias among the British electorate. A likely reason for the differences in the audience perceived bias in the media is due in part to 'the differential strength and stability of the images of newspapers, which tend to have well defined political stances, and the television channels with obligations to provide balanced output' (Berry, 1990:234). Furthermore, most newspaper readers often agree that newspapers are biased, while television viewers often claim that the medium is biased again the party they identified

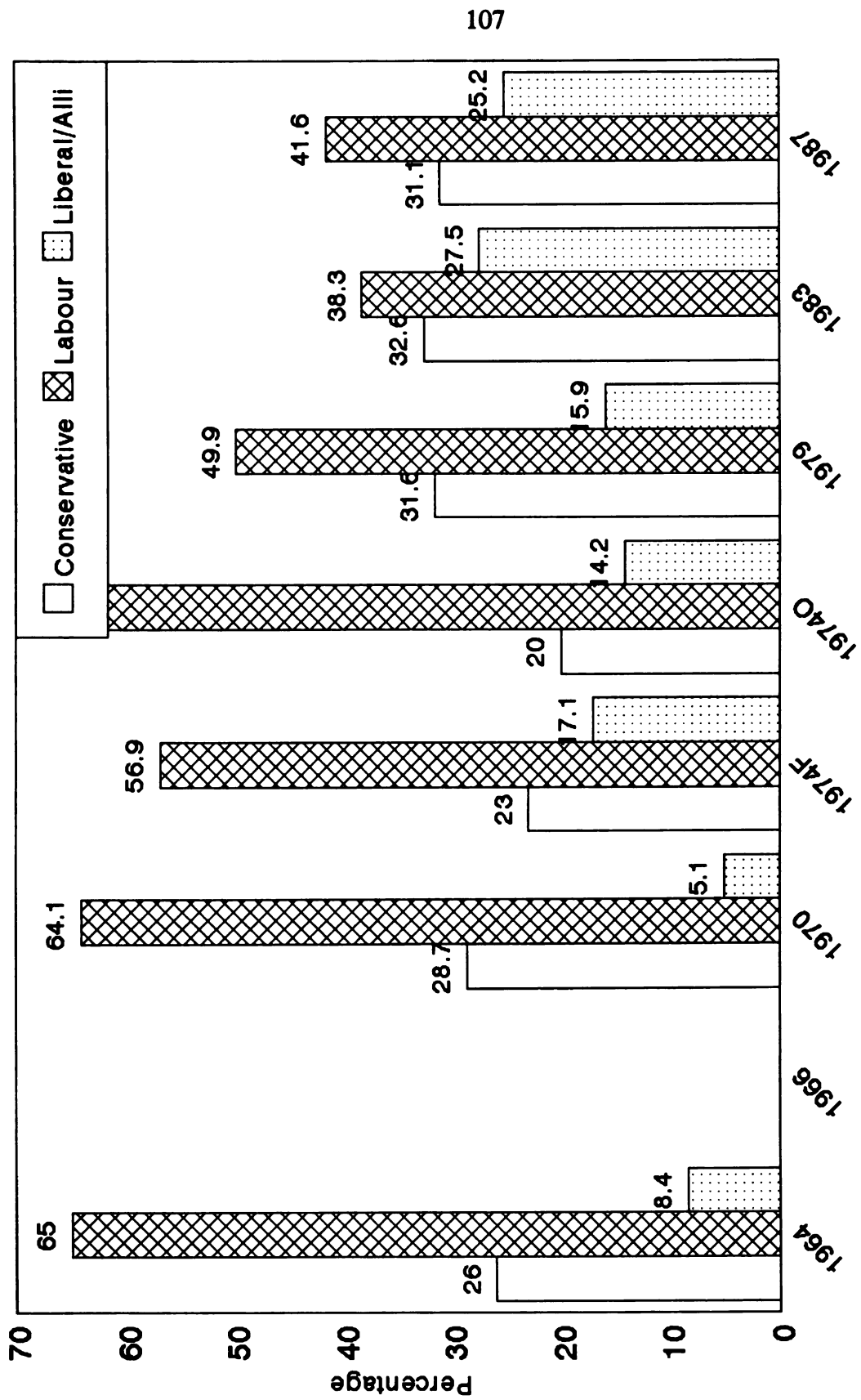


Figure 2.1: Union members vote 1964-1987

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991)

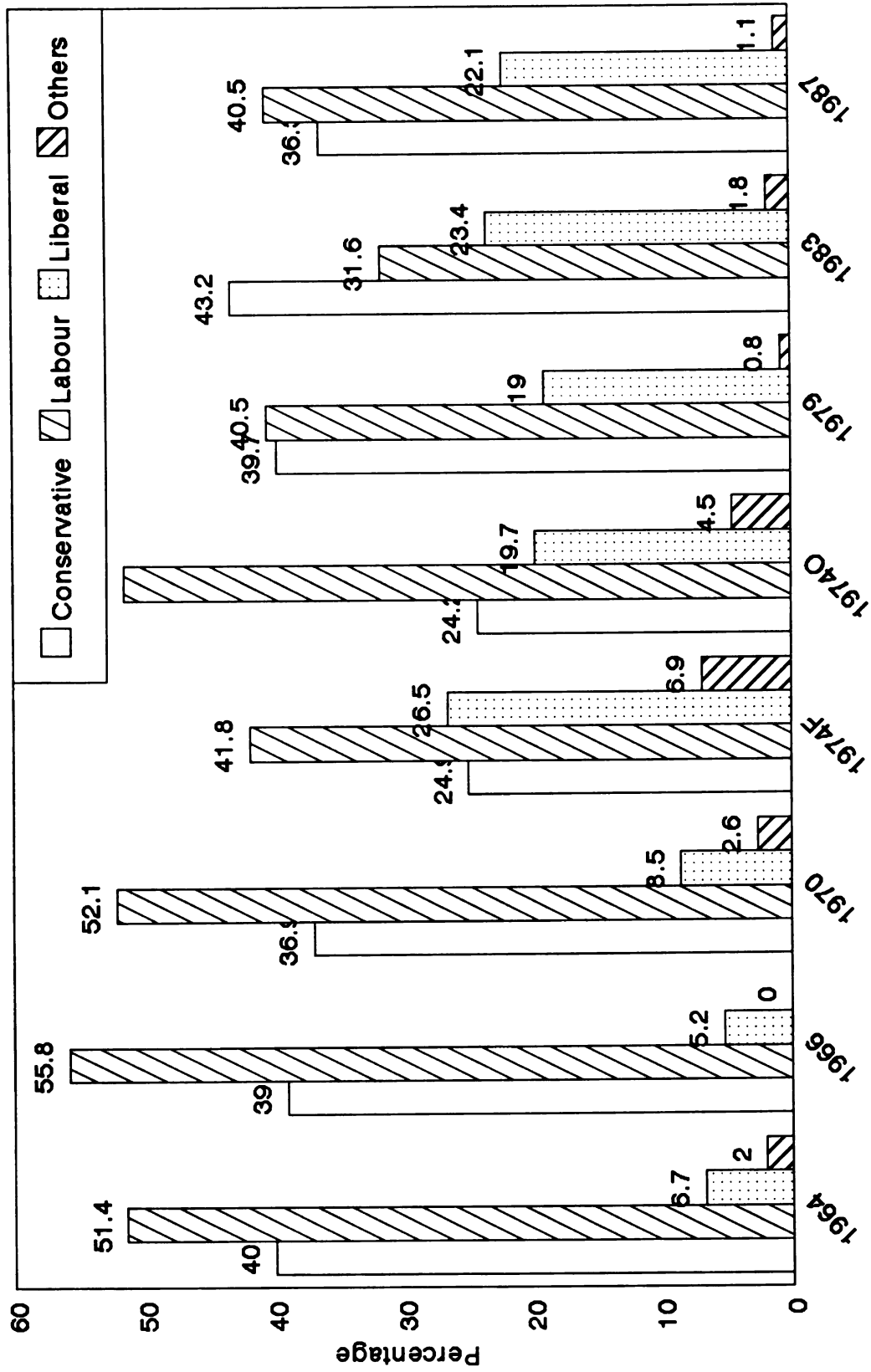


Figure 2.2: Young voters (under 25)

Source: BES, however, compare, Crewe, Day and Fox (1991)

with. Although the television viewers claim that the television news are factual and unbiased, they often accused the medium of paying more attention to the government or the party in office, simply because it is more newsworthy to cover the government. In the last few decades, the Conservative party has been in office and as a result has received undue attention from the media. This undue attention given to the government has attracted fierce criticism from the Labour party, the trade unions and the political parties on the left.

National Election Campaigns and the Role of the Mass Media

In any democratic representative nation, political parties compete for control of key institutions in the government through elections. For the citizens, elections campaigns offer them the opportunity to decide on the individuals, and party or parties that should control the affairs of their government after voting. For many citizens, the opportunity to vote in a national election offers the most, if not, the only important form of political participation. To enable the citizens to make up their minds about who they should vote for or who should be in government, political parties and political candidates campaign to communicate with them sufficiently about their character and other relevant information. Through election campaigns the political parties and the candidates communicate to the voters about how honest and effective they will perform their duties in office. For most voters, the news media, especially television, offer them the information they need to acquire before making up their minds. And, for most candidates and their party (party officials and leaders) the media offer them the most cost effective and important channel for reaching the largest audience and possibly for

attracting the greatest possible number of supporters on election day. The main aim of the candidates and their parties during election campaigns is that through the information they present to the voters, they will be able to influence them, win their votes and influence the outcome of the election.

In most democratic nations, election campaigns over the years have changed in part due to changes in electoral laws and regulations, but the predominant view in the literature is that the advent and increasing use of the media during election campaigns have changed campaigns round the world. This transformation of electioneering has been most dramatic between 1950 and 1990, not only in the United States but also in Great Britain as well. Because of the potentials of the media to influence the public and the technical innovations in the media and marketing technique, election campaigns have continued to be more sophisticated than they have ever been. One noticeable change often cited in the literature is the transformation of election campaigns into candidate-centered or the presidential-style campaigns in Great Britain.

Changing Campaigns and the Role of the Mass Media

In the literature, several changes in election campaigns have taken place in both Great Britain and the United States. Although these changes are often traced back to the United States in the literature, they are, in fact, more often than not simultaneous in both countries. For example, one of the often cited change in the literature is the growing salience of the media during election campaigns. In the last forty years or so, election campaigns have changed dramatically in both countries as well as in many parts of the world because of the advent and rapid expansion of the mass media.

The remaining part of this chapter is a comparative review of how national election campaigns have changed over the years, the role of the media in bringing about these changes and current role of the media in the political election campaigns. It is helpful, however, to review further some of the basic differences and similarities between the British and the American political systems. One important element of a study such as this is that it offers a close look at the similarities and differences in the two systems.

The British political system, as I noted earlier, is a parliamentary democracy in which national general election campaigns are held in large part as political "party-centered" campaigns. In such a system, a political party and party workers try to gain the support of the voters for their party and candidates. In a parliamentary system such as in Britain, although the party leaders sometimes receive special attentions, the main emphasis is usually not on the leader but on the party and its stand on the issues and policies. In recent years, many observers have noticed that due to increased use of the media during election campaigns, there has been a shift in emphasis. Election campaigns have shifted to the "party-leader-centered" leading to references like the "presidentialization" of the British election campaigns. However, the American presidential system, by contrast, means that there are separate elections for separate offices - from the executive office of the presidency to the legislators in Congress, and down to the state and local elections. This important differences means that the political parties are decentralized in the United States. Consequently, there is also low party discipline, with more emphasis being placed on the individual political candidates than on the party, although every candidate running for elected office seeks the support of a

political party (Epstein, 1986).

National Election Campaign in the United States and the Role of the Mass Media.

Since the 1945, election campaigns in the United States have undergone dramatic changes. Although there are many factors, the earliest and most often cited factor is the growing salience and the electoral potential of the mass media, and the involvement of media consultants and strategists during election campaigns (Kelly, 1956). The other factors include the decline in party identification and the influence of money during elections (Jacobson, 1980). For example, Field (1994:59) noted an increase in campaign cost of running for all offices at all levels in the United States that rose from \$200 million in 1964 to \$1,800 million in 1984, an increase in 900 percent.'

These changes have attracted a lot of debate among social scientists, political and media observers. But most scholars agree that these changes have achieved one thing - the increasing "candidate-centered" election campaigns. It seems that political candidates now more than ever are campaigning as individuals who do not necessarily represent the ideology of their political party.

In the literature, the two most often cited noticeable effect of the media during election campaigns in the United States were in 1948 and 1952 (Dinkin, 1989). In 1948 Harry Truman achieved one of the greatest upsets in modern presidential elections in the States. Although he had an elaborate grass-root organization, and effectively used the tactic of whistle-stop election campaign speeches; his success is generally attributed to his effective use of the enormous potentials of the new medium of radio during that campaign, thus, ushering in the "mass media age."

Another often cited noticeable effect of the media was in 1952 in the contest between Dwight Eisenhower, a Republican candidate and Adlai E. Stevenson II, a Democrat. At this time, a far more new powerful medium - television - had arrived on the political arena. It is generally believed among scholars that Eisenhower who had never had any political experience before when he ran with Richard Nixon, defeat Stevenson II mostly because of their effective use of the mass media - the "Checkers Speech". What happened was that although Eisenhower's campaign was rocked by embarrassing financial revelations about Nixon, they were able to overcome the negative public reaction as a result of a nationally televised speech by Nixon at 5:50 p.m. on September 23, 1952, dubbed "checkers" speech (named after Nixon's dog - Checkers which he claimed was the only campaign gift he had accepted). It is generally believed that Nixon's Checker speech on television was the major factor that contributed to the victory of Eisenhower and Nixon in 1952, thus, ushering in a new era - the era of television election campaign.

Since 1952, election campaigns in the United States have become increasingly media campaign. In 1960, for example, John F. Kennedy debated Richard M. Nixon on television. For most people who listened to the debate on radio, Nixon was the winner, but for those who saw a tired looking Nixon on television, John F. Kennedy was the winner. Since then, television has become a major, if not the major tool for winning presidential elections. Throughout the 1960s, television played important roles in politics. Another important example that comes to mind here is the "Daisy Girl" campaign commercial in 1964 in which Lyndon Johnson tried to portray his opponent

Barry Goldwater as a warmonger by showing a young girl picking wild flowers with the image of a thermonuclear atomic explosion on the background. In 1968 election, television played an important role when it showed the police beating hundreds of demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic national convention in Chicago. In the 1970s and 1980s, many scholars documented several effects of the media on the electorate and electoral outcome (Patterson, 1980; Joslyn, 1984; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Orren and Polsby, 1987) ushering in fully the salience of the mass media into the political arena.

In short, since television entered the political arena, there have been changes in presidential elections in the United States and these changes no doubt have increased the role the mass media play in elections, from delegate selections to the nomination process, and to activate election outcome. Television is always there and has, in fact, become the preferred medium for reaching the voters in the midst of declining political parties.

In the literature, this increasing use of the media (especially television) for election campaigns and the role of the media in general elections in the States have attracted a lot of debate. The increasing use of television for campaigns is often cited as one of the most significant factors in changing the electoral landscape in the States. However, the media and the voters interact with each other, but no one knows the exact causal connections between the two.

Though most scholars agree that the primary role of the media during election campaigns is to communicate the message of the candidates and their parties to the voters, the decline of the traditional roles of the political parties - as effective organizations for communicating their message to the voters, mobilizing both party

campaign volunteers and voters to turn out to vote on election day - have made it increasingly necessary for the media to play more important roles in the electoral process. Thus, there has been an increased reliance on the media to perform the duties of the political parties and their campaign workers. Concomitantly, there has also developed the now well documented candidate-centered or presidential-style campaigns in Great Britain.

In conclusion, political candidates facing election or re-election in the United States have often turned to the media, media consultants and pundits for help. This is not limited to the candidates to the prime minister of Great Britain and executive office of the president, but has extended in recent elections to the by-elections and local level as well. The literature in this area is numerous (see, for example, Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Piven and Cloward, 1988). Many scholars fear that many candidates running for election or re-election in the United States or in Britain, and in many industrialized democracies are now devoting a considerable time and money to getting their message across to the voters on television. At the same time, political parties that used to mobilize the voters have declined or lost their influence to media elites.

CHAPTER III

THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION EFFECTS

Literature Review

In most Western democracies, political candidates in recent election campaigns have increased their use of the media in disseminating numerous political messages on television, radio, the newspapers and magazines. These campaign communications or political messages have different content, but their ultimate purpose is to influence how voters perceive them and their stands on political issues. For most voters, the messages political candidates present to them in the media constitute the information, if not the only information, they need for evaluating the candidates, their stands on the issues and for making up their minds on how to vote on election day. In the literature on campaign communication and voting behavior, the nature and the extent of the effects of these messages on voting behavior, or political environment has generated an enormous amount of research. However, there are different opinions about the effects of campaign messages and their importance during elections.

In the literature, the basic assumption of most of the early studies is that the media affect social and political behaviors, because 'common sense' suggests that the media must have some impact on the audience. Furthermore, early study of the propaganda campaigns during the first and second world war had concluded that the

media have immediate and direct effect on the audience of media messages - the "direct effect" hypothesis (Lasswell, 1927, 1948). Unfortunately, this view was not very easy to prove conclusively because later researches (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944, and Klapper, 1960) found little evidence to support it, thus, leading to the development of another hypothesis the "limited" or "minimal" effect hypothesis. Klapper (1960:8)¹ summarized the conclusion of his research in these words: 'mass communication seems usually to be contributory cause of effects ... [it] ordinary does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of effects, but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences.' But over the years, political scientists developed a number of other theories about the effects of media messages on people's attitudes, opinions and political behavior. All the several theories, as I noted in the last chapter, developed out of several different circumstances and times just like the "direct effect" and the "limited" or "minimal" effect hypotheses.

In the communication research literature, one of the predominant views of mass media effect is the view that the media 'reinforce' but do not 'change' political attitudes or social behaviors. According to this view, the media only reinforce pre-existing views and attitudes but do not significantly change the way voters vote or convert them from one party to another. Suffice it to say that there are two distinct periods of the study of the effects of the media in the literature. These are described as the early and contemporary study periods. Both the earlier and contemporary media studies can

¹ Although Joseph Klapper published his study the 1960, it is generally agreed that he and these other scholars came to this conclusion in 1949 when he conduct his study.

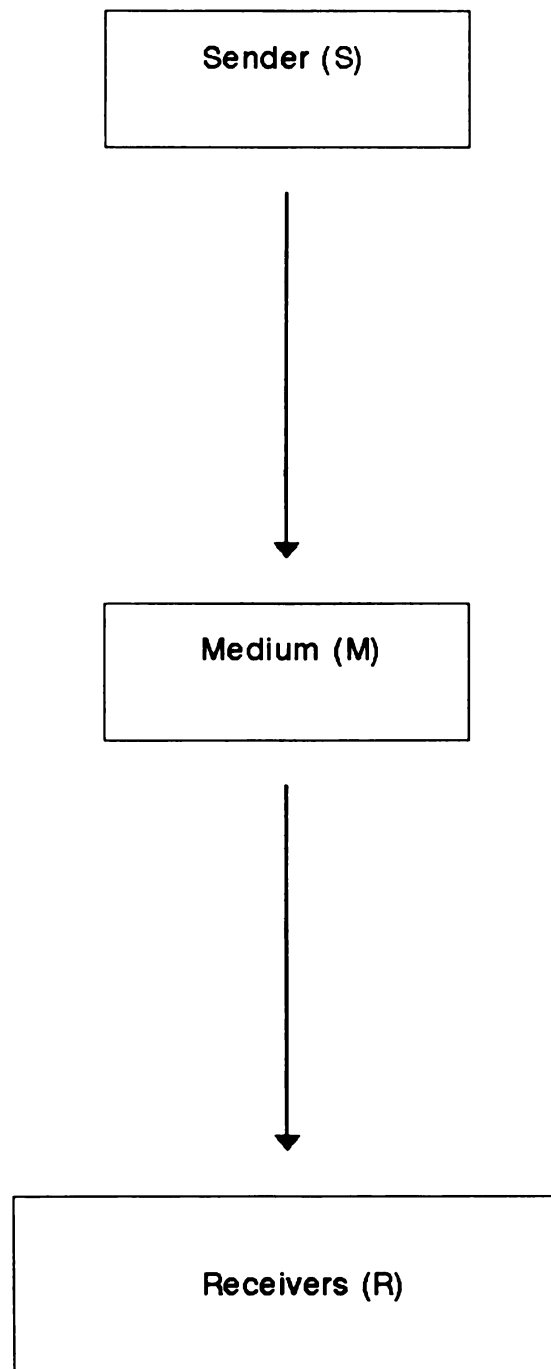


Figure 3.1: Model of direct media effect

be traced to studies and experiences of researchers in the United States, therefore, what follows is understandably a brief review of the early and contemporary studies in the United States.

The Early Studies - The "Hypodermic Needle" Effect

The earliest attempt to model the effects of the mass media came out of the studies in the United States. Early media researchers were impressed by the apparent power of the media propaganda of the Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Stalinist Soviet Union. However, the potential effects of the media also created concern for political theorists. Their anxiety over the potential effects of the media is self-evident in their studies or attempts to understand the effect of the media using experimental research method. These studies thought of the media's messages as 'injected' into passive audiences resulting in change of opinion, beliefs and behavior, in accordance with the will of those who own and control the media and the content (Bauer and Bauer, 1960). As a result, the model came to be known as the "direct effect" or the "hypodermic needle effect". The model which these earlier researchers used can be represented as shown in Figure 3.1. The model posited a source or sender, S, who communicates information through a medium, M, (print, radio, or television) to receivers, R. When the receivers accept the message, it produces a direct effect on them.

However, the model was not based on empirical scientific observations but came out of the conventional wisdom, beliefs and systematic observations, but most important, it was aided by the popularity of the press and the film industry - the popular media in

those days. Besides, the manipulative power of the propagandists during the first world war, and the use of the medium of radio by the emerging dictatorial states in Europe after the war, confirmed the belief that the media are powerful. As a consequence, Marxists, for example, saw the media as a powerful tool for governing. However, there was something lacking in the model or the belief that the media are powerful. There were no realistic empirical studies that were aimed at studying and understanding what went on between the sender, the channel and the receivers of the message in the direct media communication model. There was no clear understanding of the world of the sender and the receivers in the communication process.

In an attempt to understand or study what goes on in the communication process and/or to confirm the belief that the media are indeed powerful, media scholars attempted a critical understanding of the media's effects. These investigators from the social psychological school began using surveys and experimentation, aimed at trying to fully understand the phenomenon. The original group of researchers were mainly scholars in the United States (see for example, Blumler, 1933; Blumler and Hauser, 1933). These scholars tried to understand the contents and the effects of the media on the audiences - the society. Unfortunately, these scholars were mainly interested in understanding how to use the media for making persuasive speeches and disseminating information to the society (see for example, Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield., 1949; and Lazarsfeld and Stanton, 1949), without fully analyzing what goes on in a communication process.

Later in the 1960s, subsequent studies uncovered that the earlier model was too simplistic. Out of the several empirical studies came Klapper's popular conclusion that

'mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects; but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors' (Klapper, 1960). Similarly, Trenaman and McQuail, (1961) discovered that the American voters did not come to the political media in a vacuum. These researchers argued that voters come to the political media with their pre-existing opinions, values and experiences which affect the way they use the media for information, their perceptions and interpretation of the messages they receive from the media. Thus, the "hypodermic needle" effect was replaced with the "minimal effect" or "limited effect" model.

The Minimal or Limited Effect Model

In the literature, the "minimal" effect model is severally know as "limited" or "filter" effect model. It came out of the cognitive dissonance theory borrowed from psychology. According to the behavioral theorists and psychologists, cognitive dissonance is a psychological state of uneasy or tension which occurs when an individual encounters a message, facts or arguments that are at variance with his or her belief or attitudes. When this happens, one naturally builds up a defense or filters out the messages that are at variance with his/her pre-existing belief or attitude.

According to behavioral theorists, the first stage in the cognitive dissonance is what they call "selective exposure". When a person in the communication process encounters a message that is at variance with his or her beliefs or attitudes, he or she naturally tries to avoid the message, fact or argument, or, tries to 'screen out' the unwanted message, while at the same time, receiving and accepting the message that agrees with his/her in the communication process. These behavioral theorists came to

describe the process as processes of 'selective exposure', 'selective perception' and 'selective retention.' According to these theorists, selective exposure involves people reading, listening or watching what they want to hear or see, while at the same time avoiding what they do not want to hear or see. The theory posits that people read newspapers, listen to radio or watch the news on television, but selectively expose themselves to and selectively accept the messages they read or see that support their view points; while some people simply go to the media just to be entertained.

For instance, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944), reporting on their findings during the presidential elections in the United States in 1940, wrote that voters tended to expose themselves predominantly to information and propaganda of the party they strongly identified with. Their finding lead to the notion that the media do not change but only reinforce pre-existing opinions. A subsequent study by Festinger (1957) developed the theory that people tend to avoid information that would create dissonance with their pre-existing notions and so would seek information that would reduce dissonance. However, one of the earliest studies of the media and voting behavior found little evidence of a smooth working defence mechanism against what people dislike in the communication process. Besides, another study in the United States on how voters in the 1960s fluctuated in their political party identification, Converse (1969), observed that political ideology fluctuated among the voters and was not well structured for the average voter, although a small minority of voters had their ideologies fixed.

The second stage in the cognitive dissonance is "selective perception". When people are confronted media messages they consider contrary to their belief, they

selectively re-interpret it to suit their original belief and perspectives. The idea is simply - people hear only what they want to hear and do not hear what they do not want to hear. However, recent studies suggest that, perhaps, people receive from the media more than they want to hear or want to see (Gunter, 1987).

The final stage in the cognitive dissonance is "selective retention". People remember selectively. People do not remember everything they heard or saw in the communication process, but tend to remember every thing that fits their view and forget the things that do not fit in. According to social psychologists, receivers of media messages go through the process of communication "decoding" the messages that were "encoded" by the sender(s). In the process of decoding the message, they 'screen out' or "filter" what they do not want and accept what they want. As a result, for example, despite the efforts of politicians and media experts to communicate to the voters during campaigns, voters select what they want to hear to reinforce their predispositions.

So, out of the minimal effect theory came the "uses and gratifications effect" model (Blumler and Katz, 1974; McLeod and Becker, 1981). The model can be represented diagrammatically - Figure 3.2. It posits that different people approach the media differently and obtain different gratifications. Put differently, different people approach the media from different socio-political backgrounds and view points and obtain different gratifications from the media at the same time. These backgrounds include political party identification, group affiliations and other demographic characteristics. Each individual in the society has affective, cognitive, socio-political, personal and psychological needs. The individual's background and view points determine the needs

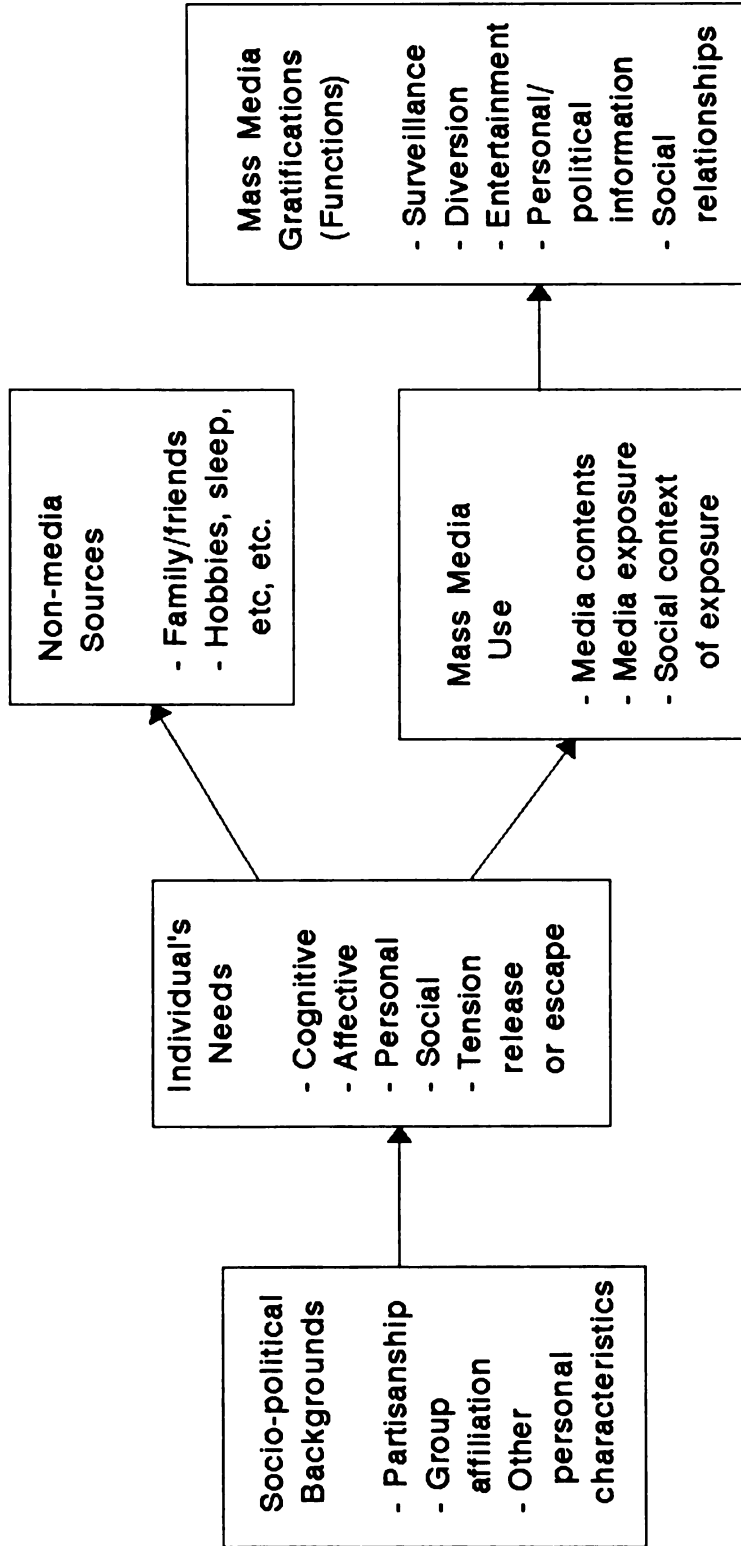


Figure 3.2: Mass media uses and gratifications model

Source: Adapted from Tan, 1981.

he or she seeks from the media. Some of the needs can be satisfied through other means - like the family, friends, hobbies, etc. However, the uses and gratifications model is interested in the needs the individual seeks from the media as a part of an audience. The audience, according to this model, are active participants who approach the same medium to obtain different gratifications at the same time. Since the audience are active rather than passive, they are selective in both media and media content; and the uses to which they put their gratifications are a product of their different socio-political backgrounds.

Contemporary Studies

The arrival of the television in the late 1950s to early 1960s, and the quest for explaining the effects of the mass media on social and political behavior, prevented by the nature of earlier studies led contemporary scholars to reconsidered the potential effects of the media or the long-term effect of the media on society. Previous studies had relied on direct cause and effects, but contemporary scholars look at indirect or continuous effects of the mass media overtime.

Considering the apparent impact of the television, especially the power of television to set the tune for presidential elections in the States, media scholars posited a short-term effect - the "agenda-setting" hypothesis. The theory posits that increased salience of a topic or issue in the media influences the salience of that topic or issue among the public. McCombs and Shaw (1972) coined the term agenda-setting to describe the phenomenon. They argued that the media set the agenda and encourage their audience to think about some issues more than they would have otherwise. Earlier in the literature, Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) had referred to the phenomenon as the power

of 'structure issues'. However, Trenaman and McQuail (1961) in a ground breaking study, pointed out the weakness of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues original theory; and argued that the evidence strongly suggests that people think about what they are told ... but at no level do they think what they are told.'

For sometime, the agenda-setting effect of the media dominated the communication research literature. However, over the years, scholars of the media came to conflicting results about the agenda-setting effects of the media (for example, Behr and Iyengar, 1985). Recent interest in the agenda-setting function of the media has been rekindled (see for, example, Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990; Neuman, 1990; Rogers and Dearing, 1988) by several scholars who have insisted that the agenda-setting of the media needs to be investigated carefully. These scholars note several positive effects that news stories or political communication can have on agenda-setting or recognition of candidates during election campaigns (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, 1982; Behr and Iyengar, 1985).

Closely resembling the agenda-setting model is the "cultivation effect" or the "mainstream" model. According to Gerbner (1973), in the last few decades, television has acquired such a central place in our daily life that it dominates our 'symbolic environment'. However, television's presentations are 'distinctive and deviant from reality' Gerbner (1973). The enormous information and depiction of the world that is different from reality often lends to what Gerbner described as "cultivation" or "mainstream" effect - more of the same view about social and political world. Morgan and Shanahan (1992) argued that television mainstreams or homogenizes the views or perceptions of viewer, about social and political reality. For example, television

cultivates mistrust of political candidates and nurtures alienation from the political system. Gerbner (1982) explains that television news programs affect the way people judge political leaders and issues.

A brief distinction between agenda-setting and cultivation² effect is important at this point. According to Gerbner, agenda-setting is the effect of television news coverage on how people perceive the importance of a national issue, while priming effect is the effect such news coverage have on the importance the people attach to the issue in making their political judgements. Stated baldly, when people perceive a political issue to be important to the nation, for example, they tend to attach greater importance to the issue in making their political judgements.

Gerbner et al., (1980, 1982), have argued, for example, that the media, especially television tend to follow the non-ideological middle ground position that many people in the society hold. The media do this in an effort to attract large audience, to appeal to the largest possible audience through appealing to all or being "all-things-to-all-people". Consequently, the media in large part, tend to be moderate in ideology in order to maintain a large audience. This tendency of the media to maintain moderate ideological ground while communicating a homogenized presentation of social and political issues to the audience Gerbner et al., (1973) called "mainstreaming" presentation. However, I have described this kind of homogenized presentation in this study as "homo-ideologized" presentation.

One of the most important insights in the communication literature on the concept

² The cultivation effect is also described as priming effect in the literature.

of "mainstreaming" (Gerbner et al., 1984:287) is the view that heavy television viewers are 'more likely to approach the political world in a more homogenous and conventional terms than light viewers living under similar conditions.'

Evidence for mainstream effect can be found in the BES surveys. For instance, in February and October 1974, 1983 and 1987, respondents were asked if they 'followed the election on television', and if they did, their attitudes toward the Conservative and Labour parties were explored in these words: 'On the whole would you describe the Conservative party as extreme or moderate? And about Labour party nowadays, is it extreme or moderate'.

As will be evident in chapter five, voters who voted for the winning party thought that the winning party was "moderate" rather than "extreme". In other words, the majority of the respondents who identified very strongly or fairly strongly thought that the party they identified with is moderate. Secondly, voters who viewed/watched the PEBs or followed the election in the media in recent elections in 1983 and 1987, saw the two major parties in Britain as "extreme", but overwhelmingly voted for the party they perceived to be "moderate". In short, in four election years (February 1974, October, 1974, 1983 and 1987) those who followed the election very closely tended to choose the party they considered a 'moderate' and identified strongly with it. Although one may argue that this can be attributed to the violent strikes between 1970 and February 1974, for example, but it is hard to argue that the same happened there after when the majority of the respondents who watched saw their party as 'moderate' in 1983 and 1987.

This finding seems to support the 'mainstream' or 'cultivation' effect hypothesis

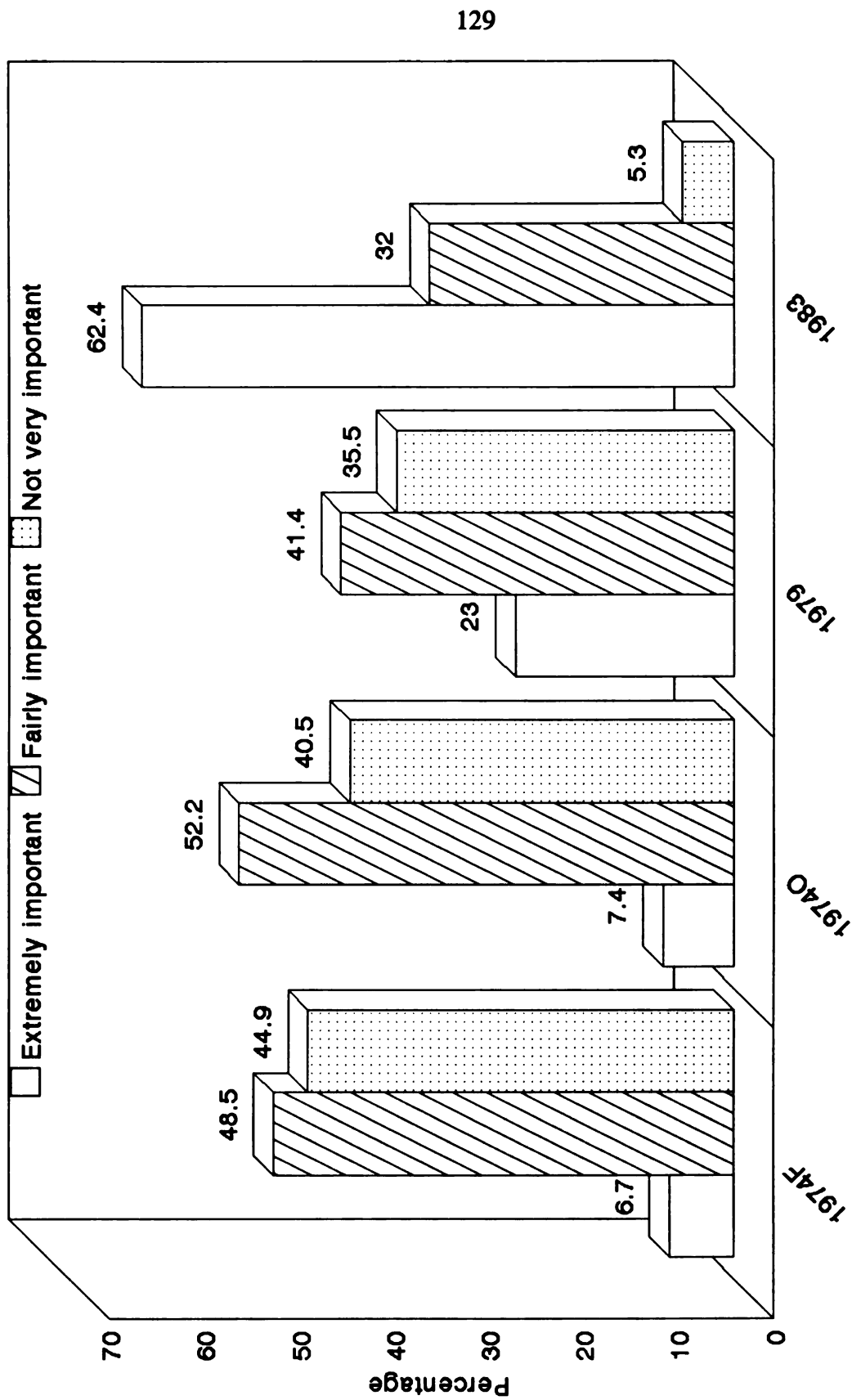


Figure 3.3: Importance of social service as an issue

Source: BES.

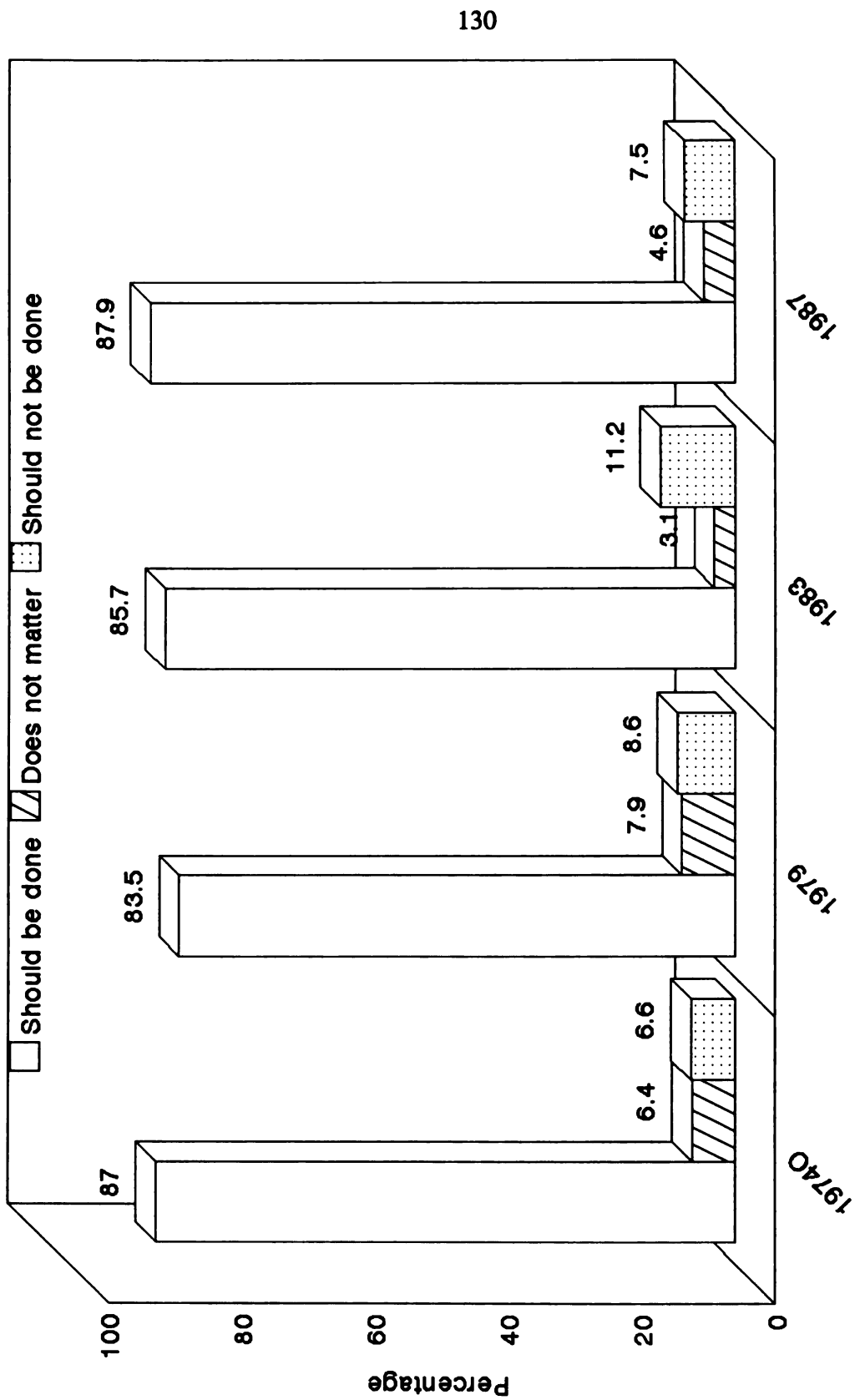


Figure 3.4: Government expenditure to get rid of poverty

Source: BES.

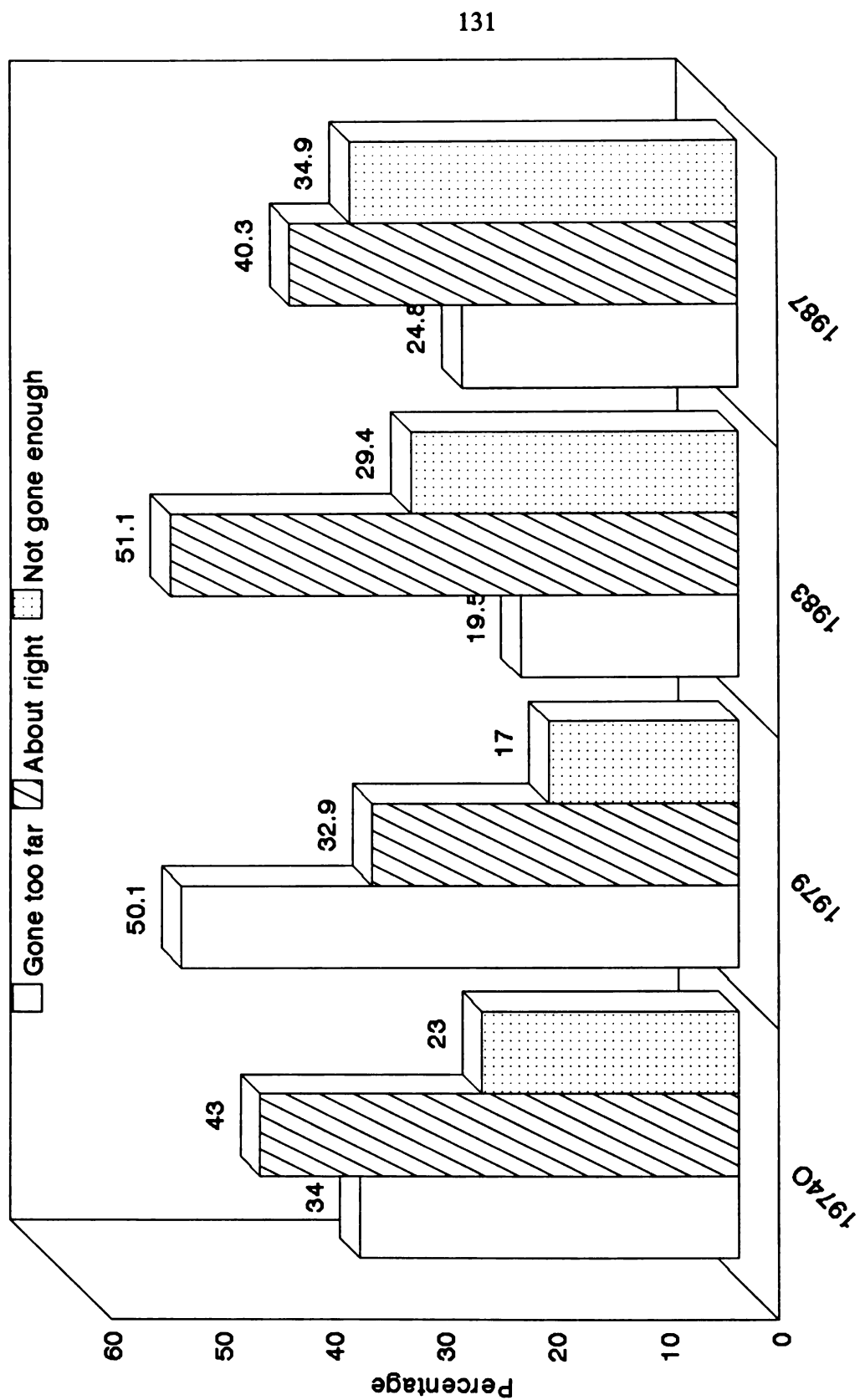


Figure 3.5: Government welfare benefits

Source: BES.

of Gerbner and his colleagues who argued that the more time one spends watching television (that is, the more television dominates one's source of information, "entertainment" and consciousness) the more likely the individual is to hold views that are moderated or that are congruent with the major view of the society. In other words, the media (especially television) cultivate homogeneity or create a mainstream effect.

Secondly, in October 1974 through 1987 general elections, the BES surveys asked the respondents about their view toward such social issues as government expenditure on poverty, redistribution of income and wealth, the availability of welfare benefits and capital punishment. Figures 3.3 to 3.5 show the results of the British attitude toward these social issues. From these figures, it can be seen that although the majority of the respondents voted for the Conservative party in 1979 through 1987, yet, the proportion of those who would, for example like the government to spend more money to get rid of poverty remained very high, while those who said that the government had not done enough towards welfare benefits increased from 23 percent in 1974 to 34 percent in 1987. These policies are distinctively not Conservative policies like privatization and poll tax. One would expect voters who voted for the Conservative party of Mrs Thatcher to think that her government had done enough to increase over the years. Instead, most were in favor of radical change to improve the welfare of the poor and to spend more on social services - policies that received mass sentiment in those years.

The Media and Political Change

Over the years, there have been political changes and changes in the nature of political campaigns in Great Britain. But it seems that British general election campaigns

have significantly been changed by modern mass media of communication. One such important change in recent years is what has been termed the 'Americanization of the British general election.'³ In recent general elections in 1992, 1987 and 1983, for example, all the political parties spent more of their resources in political communications. In all these elections, we also witnessed the incorporation of the media consultants, the use of such tactics as photo-opportunities to stimulate news coverage. In the process, the electorate are exposed to more political messages now than ever before. However, despite the volume of political messages that the voters are exposed to, it seems that the consequence of all these is cynicism on the part of the electorate, less partisanship attachment, no real political discussion and lack of political information. This is feared not only in the United States but also in Great Britain.

However, as I noted earlier, one of the most important developments in the study of the effects of the mass media has been the development of the mainstream or cultivation effect - the understanding that the media have continued to add to the blurring or distortion of political ideology. In Great Britain, Conservative and Labour party identifiers who used the media very much, as evident in February and October 1974, 1983 and 1987, tended to move toward or called the party they identified with or voted for as a "moderate" party instead of an extreme or even neither moderate nor extreme.

³ For a comprehensive comparative analysis of electioneering campaigns and all the changes that have taken place during election campaigns in many democratic nations around the world see Butler and Ranney (ed.), (1992). Not surprising, they found several instances of "Americanization" of election campaign style in many parts of the world. Field (1994) disagreed with their premise. However, he concluded (Field, 1994:62) that 'the impact of television and rapid communication has been dramatic in many countries throughout the world.'

In other words, voters who viewed PEBs on television overwhelmingly claimed that the party they identify with is more "moderate" than "extreme" or "neither".

Another important development in both the United States and Great Britain in recent elections is that the gap between the stands on issues in both the Conservative and Labour parties is getting closer. As I will argue in the analysis in chapter five, in the past, stands on social issues were better predictors of political party identification than they were in the 1980s and 1990s. But one noticeable development in recent years is the narrowing of the political differences between the Labour and the Conservative party on issues such as defense and health. In 1987 election, and more so in 1992 election, some observers noted that there was a noticeable erosion of the traditional Labour Union view, and even more so because of the heavy dependence on the mass media for political campaigns and for political contacts. Some scholars in past studies observed that there was a very strong relationship between socio-economic characteristic of the British voters and their levels of support for the two major parties, but as will be apparent in chapter six, union membership which used to be a good predictor of partisanship strength and direction in the past is one measure that clearly failed the statistical test of strength of party identification in the analysis. This comes as no surprise because from all indication, Labour is gradually losing its strong union base constituency. Between 1964 and 1987 (Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991), the proportion of the working class that voted for Labour party dropped from 68 per cent to 48 per cent - Figure 3.6.

Crewe (1992) also noted that this can not be attributed to a waning of working class solidarity but is due in part, to the Conservative government's policies in the

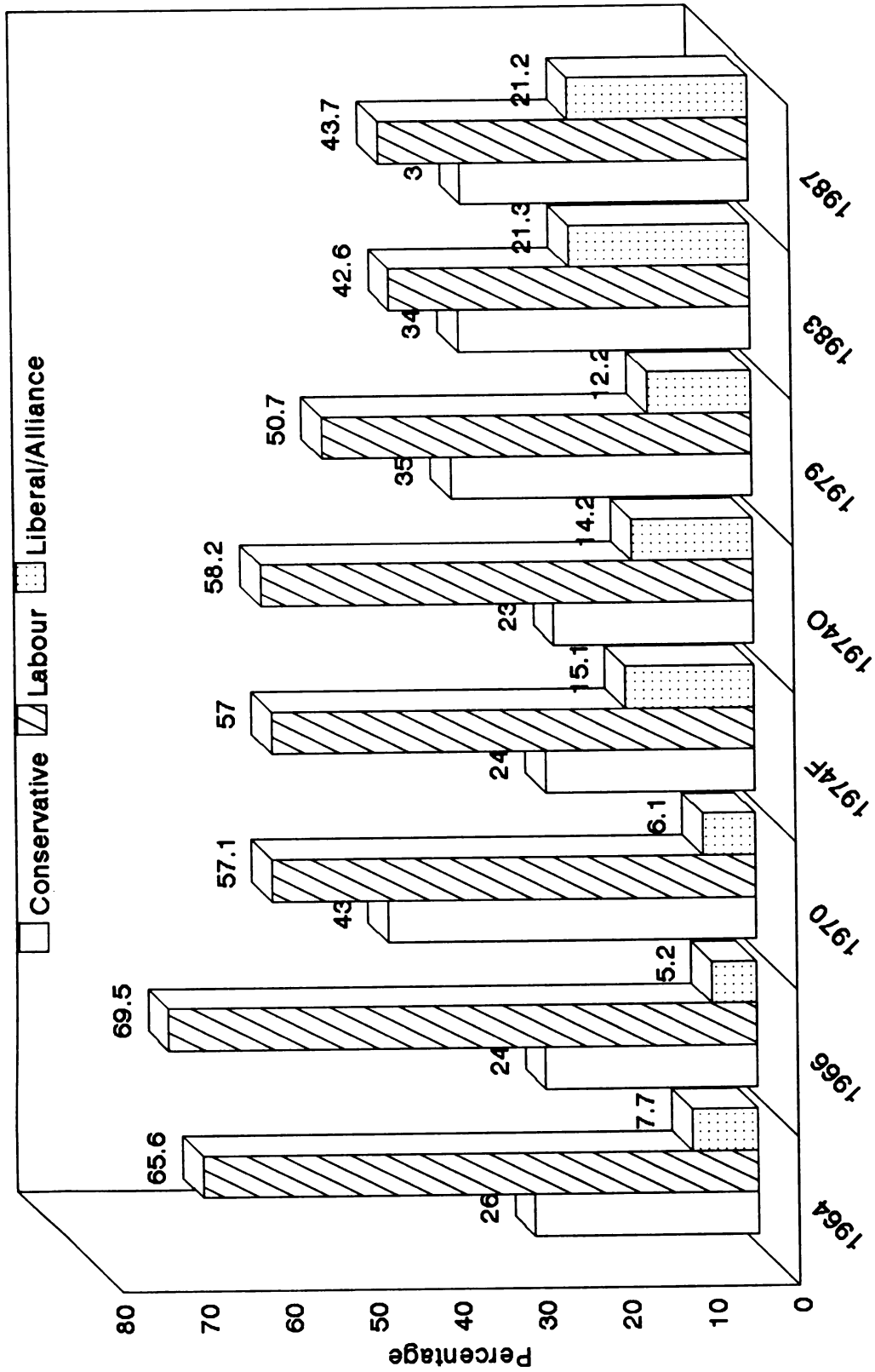


Figure 3.6: Working class vote 1964-1987

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

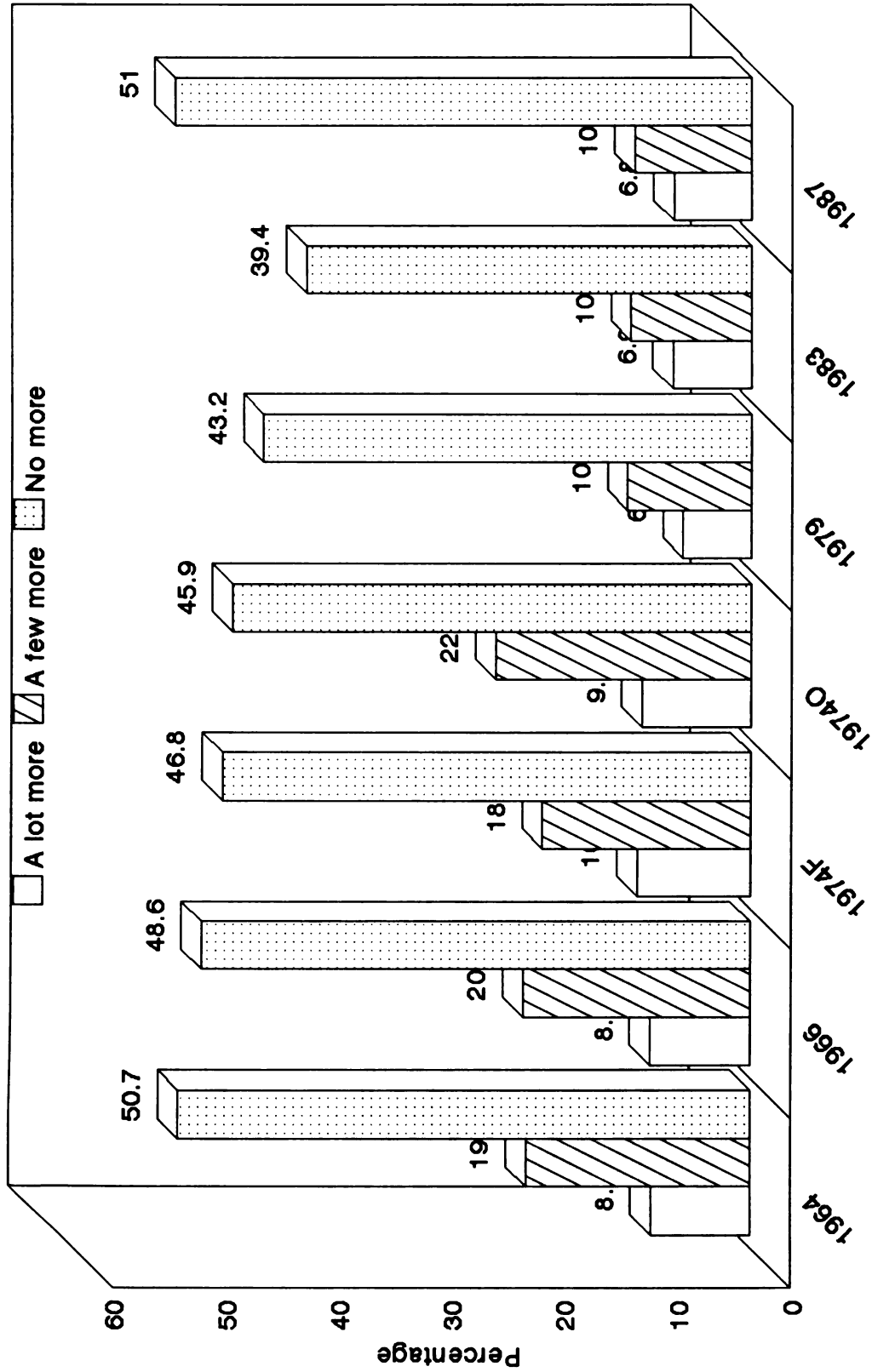


Figure 3.7: Attitudes toward nationalization

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991)

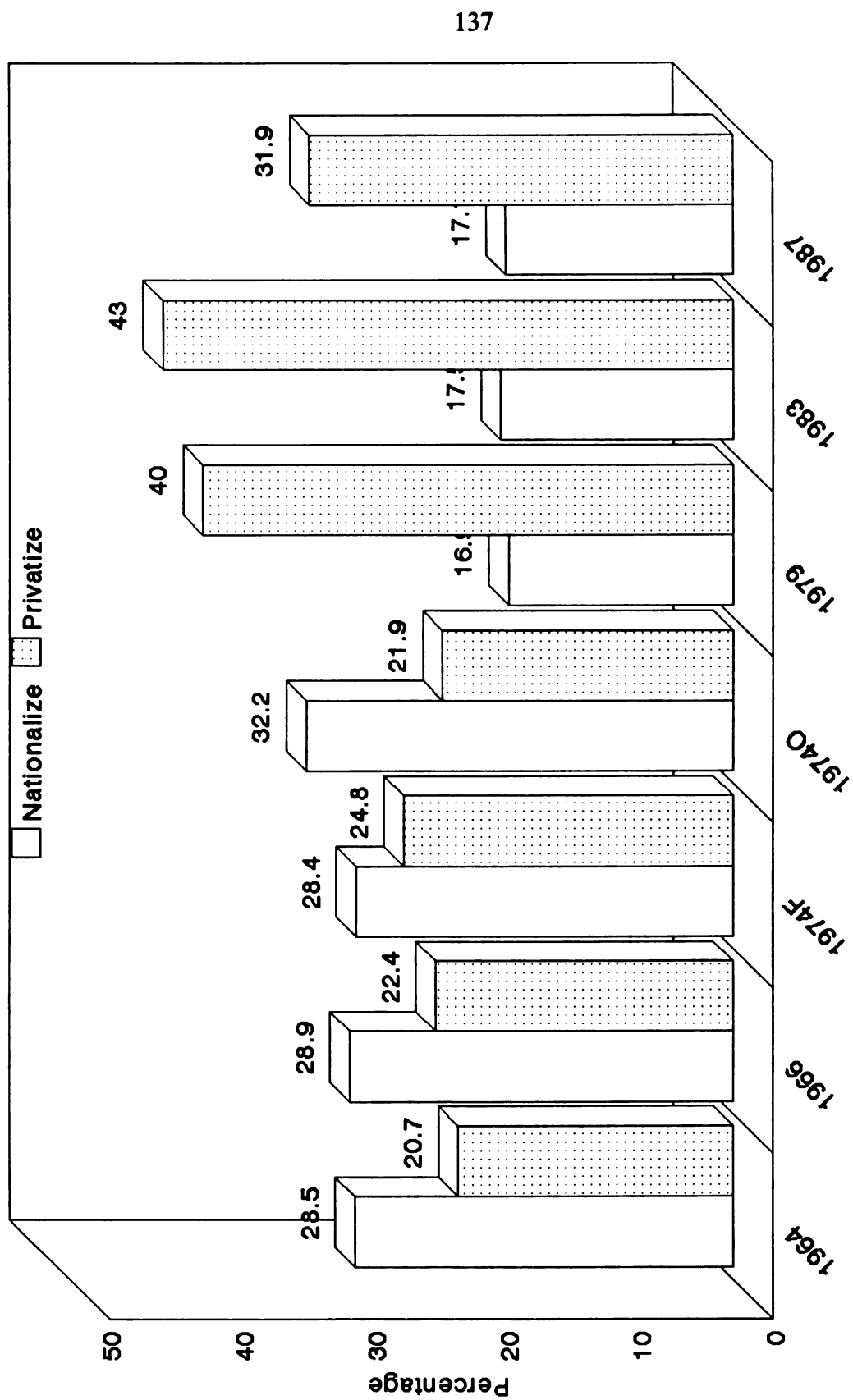


Figure 3.8: Privatization and nationalization

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991)

past four successive terms that have been seen by many as an erosion of the traditional Labour values - "mainstreaming" or the homogenization of Conservative party values. Although the policies pursued by Conservative government in the past four terms, such as cutting taxes, curbing the unions and building up the defense budget clearly reflect traditional Conservative party issues, there were however, other policies such as privatization of the British coal, opting out of schools from local authority control and hospital trusts under Mrs Thatcher that were seen by many as central policies. These central policies have eroded Labour support in the 1980s and 1990s. Figures 3.7 and 3.8 are based on Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991, figures. However, when Butler and Stokes published Political Change in Britain twenty-five years ago, they observed a durable, balance and alternating two-party system that had deep foundations in the political life of the British electorate. The picture they painted then was a picture of British voters who from early adulthood, identified strongly or very strongly with either of the two political parties - Conservative or Labour party. Butler and Stokes also observed that partisan self-image was acquired earlier in life, either through the family or the class structure. Each successive general election, they argued, the vast majority of the voters identified strongly with a political party and voted for that party. About the time Butler and Stokes published their work, party identification was seen as stable and unchanged. If there was any change, it was gradual and limited. Furthermore, they observed that when there was a change, in the form of social or demographic changes, the changes were usually in favor of the Labour party. However, between 1964 and 1987, Labour vote fell by about 13 per cent, while the center vote rose by about 12 percent and the

Conservative stayed the same (Crewe, 1992).

Heath et al. (1985) in How Britain Votes, argue that less than half of the fall in Labour vote between 1964 and 1983 could be attributed to the changing class structure in Britain and the remainder was due to Labour's political failures. Heath et al. (1985) identified five significant changes in the political structure that were responsible for Labour's losses. These are the lowering of the voting age, the increase in Liberal candidates, ideological polarization, the formation of the SDP and tactical voting. However, it is my view that the most important or significant cause of the changes in recent years is what I have previously described as the "homo-ideologization" of political issues (or to use Heath et al's term, ideological polarization). The media setting the political agenda and cultivating mainstream political attitudes among the electorates and politicians have tended to homogenize the ideology of the British public. This development, Heath et al. (1985), argued, may have contributed to the rise in the number of Liberal candidates from 332 in 1970 to 517 in 1974; and since the 1970s, in all the general elections in Britain, the Liberal party have contested in virtually every constituency, except in Northern Ireland.

Although it is hard to prove that the media have contributed to the decline of political parties in Great Britain, it is often cited as the root cause of the decline in partisanship, the rise in the center parties' vote, and increased electoral volatility. For example, Crewe (1992a:338), argues that the primary reason for both the rise in the center parties' vote between 1964 and 1987 and for the apparent growth of electoral volatility is:

Because in 1972-73 the Liberal party won four by-elections in spectacular fashion, and did well in the 1973 local election. As a result the party enjoyed a rise in the opinion polls and a surge of new members; defunct local associations revivals and felt encouraged to run candidates. It was the increased volatility of the early 1970s - and the expression of that volatility in the form of voting Liberal rather than Labour - that prompted the increase in Liberal candidates in the first place. It was not sudden changes in the political environment that created partisan dealignment, but vice versa.

There is little dispute among scholars that there has been a dealignment in British politics. Crewe (1992) suggested that it was 'a rise in the opinion polls' that led to 'a surge of new members to the Liberal party, and the formation of the SDP. However, public opinion polls are often presented in the media, suggesting that the media may have contributed to the surge of new members to the Liberal party. Many observers, including Crewe (1992a) have pointed out that it was SDP's centralist position and rise in public opinion that persuaded a reluctant Liberal party to enter an electoral pact that led to SDP's successes on the Warrington, Cosby and Glasgow, Hillhead by-election between July 1981 and March 1982 (and the local by-elections).

In recent elections, opinion polls have also played important parts in the United States, in Great Britain, as well as in many countries. Field (1994:61) argues that:

The impact of opinion polling and other types of surveying cannot be underestimated in many countries. They are pivotal where the sitting government can call an election at anytime, such as in Britain and in Denmark. They are also important in guiding campaign strategy, although their utility in this field varies tremendously from country to country and from government level to government level. Even in the United States they are most prominent in Presidential elections and are used less effectively at local levels. They are greeted with great scepticism in some countries, such as India and Italy, and are not always successful in capturing the political mood of a country. Nevertheless, opinion polls have added a new dimension to many levels of campaigning in many countries.

The impact of the rapid expansion of mass media of communication and opinion polls

on partisanship and electoral behavior will remain the subject of discussion among political scientists and commentators alike for a long time to come.

In summary, I have argued that voters who use the media for information tend to hold views or claim to vote or support the party that they considered moderate. From the foregoing discussion too, I have argued that one of the most important changes in recent elections is the ability of the media to create a "homogenized ideology" among the electorate. Most voters not only in Britain but in the United States as well have the tendency to support the party they consider moderate. This tendency of the electorate to identify with the center (or moderate party) was in part responsible for Neil Kinnock's attempts, between 1987 to 1992, to move the Labour party toward the center in an ambitious and aggressive effort to win sufficient votes to unseat the Conservative government in 1992 (Rose, 1992). Similarly, in the United States, Bill Clinton in 1992 fashioned himself and the democratic party as the 'New Democrats', thus, trying to maintain centralist issues throughout his campaign for the United States presidency. There is the tendency today for most voters wishing to be associated with the parties they consider moderate rather than extreme, as most voters prefer to be seen as moderate party supporters.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRITISH GENERAL ELECTIONS 1964-1987

Literature Review

The first systematic study of the British general elections dates back to 1945 when the first Nuffield Election Studies was published. This first study along with subsequent studies attempted to explain the general election campaigns in Great Britain, the issues that were involved in the campaigns, the political parties, and the part played by the party leaders and the mass media. However, these studies lacked the conceptual and theoretical or rigorous methodological flavor of the study of voting behavior that existed since 1948 in the United States in the tradition of V. O. Key, Jr.

In short, the Nuffield studies were mainly nominative descriptions of the British general election campaigns. The study in the 1951 general election, for example, devoted a considerable amount of space describing the local campaigns in particular constituencies; while one third of the study was devoted to contributors' reports of individual constituency campaigns without explaining the voting behavior of the individual voters. Despite the lack of theoretical, methodological or intellectual nature of these first studies, they were, however, useful in understanding particular elections, although they failed to explain electoral behavior from one election to another.

In the literature until 1963, there were little quantitative research on how the

British voters behaved. In 1963, in response to the "atheoretical" nature of the first Nuffield studies, David Butler (who was involved in these first Nuffield studies) in collaboration with Donald Stokes (from the University of Michigan) undertook the first quantitative nationally representative sample of the British electorate.¹ Prior to this study, the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan in the United States had conducted series of nationwide sample surveys of the American voters. The first of such studies was in the 1944 presidential election. Between 1948 and 1956, the center published the classic The American Voter in 1960.

It is important to note here that the Michigan studies were in response to earlier studies in the United States - the Columbia studies established by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues. The Columbia studies simply conducted repeated surveys of a randomly selected panel of voters in a single district. For example, during the 1940 presidential campaign between Roosevelt and Wilkie, they conducted surveys in Erie county, Ohio; and in 1948, during the presidential contest between Truman and Dewey, they conducted another survey in Elmira county, New York. These studies were simply aimed at specific or limited districts. These studies could not be generalized across the country or between elections.

In response to the limitations of the Columbia model, the Michigan studies developed theoretical generalizations about electoral behavior and a national survey of

¹ Subsequent studies were directed by Butler and Stokes until 1970. The February 1974, October 1974 and May 1979 studies were undertaken by Ivor Crewe and Bo Särilvik of the University of Essex; while the 1983 and 1987 studies were by Heath, Jowell and Curtice.

presidential elections. Their surveys transcended specific historical circumstances and particular localities. The Michigan model attempted to study long-term trends in electoral behavior of the American electorate rather than short-term trends. In the model, the key to understanding the electoral behavior of the American voter turned out to be "party identification". The evidence presented in the studies showed that political party identification or the enduring affective orientation towards a party which one identifies strongly with remained stable over a period of time.

Now, turning to the first Nuffield studies between 1945 and 1963: these studies were modelled on the Columbia school, that dwelt mainly on panel studies of voters in selected districts, but were lacking theoretically. As a result, Butler and Stokes in the 1964 general election in Britain, in Political Change in Britain, applied the Michigan model for the first time in explaining the voting behavior of the British electorate. They found that (Heath and Pierce, 1992:93) 'partisan self-images in Britain displayed many of the properties associated with party identification in the United States.' Voters in both countries, for example, identified with a particular political party, based on some psychological feeling toward a party, and used the general elections to express their party preferences; thus, the term party identification came to be used in describing the British voters. However, as I have noted earlier, Butler and Stokes (1964) preferred to describe the phenomenon in Britain as "partisan self-image" rather than the usual term in the United States. In their first study, Butler and Stokes discovered that this partisan self-image in Britain had many similar properties as party identification in the United States, but according to Heath and Pierce (1992:94) they 'were more stable than partisan

electoral choices across time; and partisan self-image were associated with the 'homing tendency' displayed in the United States by voters who defect at election time from their standing party identification.' However, in their recent study, Heath and Pierce (1992:94) claimed that:

... partisan self-image in Britain appeared to differ from party identification in the United States in two ways:

1. Across roughly equivalent electoral intervals, US voters were some four times more likely than British voters to change their partisan electoral choices but retain their party identifications (partisan self-image) than they were to vary their party identifications (self-images) but maintain their partisan electoral preferences.

2. British voters were twice as likely as US voters to change both their party identifications (self-images) and their partisan electoral preferences across roughly the same electoral intervals.

Heath and Pierce (1992:94) concluded that 'Britons and Americans are almost surely not as different in their electoral behaviour as Butler and Stokes thought they were.'

However, the most important feature of Butler and Stokes' partisan self-image in Britain was the salience of class during general elections. They couched their party self-image theory in class identification. Based upon the evidence in their study, Butler and Stokes, (1974:88) argued that 'the individual identifying with a particular class, forms a positive bond to the party which looks after the interest of the class.' In support of their argument, Butler and Stokes, (1974:88) pointed out that, 'Labour is for the working class. It is only right to vote for people who will try to help you.' Following in their footsteps, other scholars, Pulzer (1967:98) proclaimed that 'class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail.' And, for quite sometime, a stable "two-class two party" model dominated the literature on British electoral behavior.

The two-class two-party model posited electoral stability, and predicted a

continued and strengthened two-party system in British politics in the future. However, the 1970 election revealed cracks in the model. The nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales won parliamentary representations. First, they won in the by-elections in the 1960s and the 1970 and again in 1974 general elections. By the mid-to-late 1970s, the National Front had won council seats in Scotland and Wales. These alternative social identities (in Scotland and Wales) and ethnicity (in the inner city) seemed to challenge the predominant social class and party identification models.

The Nuffield series in February 1974, October 1974, and May 1979 undertaken by Crewe and Särilvik, both of the University of Essex further revealed more cracks in the model. In short, to use a familiar expression, although the emperor is not entirely naked, there are significant gap in apparel! In February and October 1974, the Liberals won one fifth of the vote in the general elections. Following the May 1979 election and the Conservative victory, Crewe and Särilvik made an important observation in Decade of Dealignment - that both party identification and class identification had weakened, giving rise to what they called "partisan dealignment". Again, Crewe (1984:193) argued that, 'the period of partisan dealignment is also one of class dealignment: it is easier to vote against one's class once party loyalties weaken, easier to abandon one's party once class loyalties wither.' Finally, after the 1983 general elections, Crewe (1984) upheld his first finding announcing that indeed class and party identification in Britain had withered. Dunleavy and Husbands (1985), Franklin (1985), and Rose and McAllister (1986) all seem to concur with Crewe that party identification and social class (especially the working class) have weakened and lost their ideological overtone and social base.

As I have noted earlier, the decline of party identification led to the concept of "partisan dealignment" defined by Dearlove and Saunders, (1991:89) as 'the trend whereby fewer and fewer voters feel attached to the Labour and Conservative Parties in ways that can be measured on various dimensions.' Denver (1985:40), however, defined partisan dealignment as 'a concept which has both individual-level and aggregate-level strands.' At the individual level, he argued, it refers to a situation in which there is weakening in the psychological attachment of the voter to his or her party. According to him, 'for a variety of reasons, voters become less committed to their parties. The vote is no longer cast on the basis of traditional loyalty, it is no longer a near-automatic response.' Similarly, the concept of class dealignment defined as the 'weakening association between occupational class and voting for the Conservative and Labour parties' was also introduced to account for the decline in social class voting in Great Britain.

However, some scholars in Great Britain have argued that what happened is not dealignment but some form of realignment across the cleavages. Bogdanor and Field (1993) in particular point at the increase in the combined level of support for Labour and Liberal from around forty to fifty per cent in the 1950s to fifty to sixty per cent in the 1980s as a sign of this realignment. Butler and Kavanagh (1984:8) seem to agree with this view when they described what has happened in Britain since mid-50s as the "loosening" of the social structure.² Rose and McAllister (1986:82) described it as a

² Indeed, Butler and Kavanagh (1984:8) argue that as social class, the factor which had stabilized the two-party system, continues to weaken, or as social structure become 'looser' so Britain becomes less two-party and two-class.

process of 'opening up' of the electorate. Other scholars, Robertson (1984:86) and Crewe (1986:633) both described this phenomenon as a process of 'class secularization' and a decline on the 'ideological consciousness and solidarity of the working class.'

But, Heath, Jowell and Curtice (1985) who conducted the Nuffield 1983 and 1987 general election studies surveys, in 1983, in How Britain Votes, reported what seemed to challenge the basic premise of the class and partisan dealignment theories. Reporting on the 1987 general election in Understanding Political Change, Heath and his colleagues further confirmed the continuing of the decline of party identification. However, they noted that 'it has not gone very far and may merely signify that voters are less satisfied with their party, rather than less loyal' (Crewe, 1992:336). In short, Heath, et. al., (1991:63) concluded that based on the evidence they collected that their central argument is that, 'while the classes had indeed changed in size, there was little evidence that they had changed in sociological character - in their social cohesion or ideological distinctiveness.' In addition, they argued that both class and party identification 'still had the potential for collective class action, and that the rise of the (Liberal-SDP) Alliance owed more to the political factors - the failure of the other parties when in office or their changed policy stances - than to sociological one.' In conclusion, they argued, that 'the failure of Labour governments to satisfy their supporters are in many ways more plausible' in explaining change in the size of class voting in Britain than those other factors 'which focus on changes in the character of the social class.'

In the literature, there are many plausible explanations for the apparent class or partisan dealignment (or for the matter, the shrinking of class and partisanship) in Great

Britain. This study is aimed at exploring and explaining the British voting behavior in relationship to voters' use of the mass media and the parties media communications during election campaigns. Perhaps, the root cause of the partisan dealignment or the shrinking of both class and partisanship can be found in the power of the media to influence our view of the world. As Negrine (1989) has pointed out, we live in a 'second-hand world' that relies heavily on the media for both presenting information and making decision. Other scholars seem to concur with this view. For instance, Dearlove and Sauders (1991:436) have described the British electorate in these words:

'Fewer of us attend political meetings, or go on rallies and marches, or sit in the Strangers' Gallery in the Palace of Westminster. Fewer still get inside the corridors of Whitehall, or sit in offices in Brussels, or rub shoulder with union leaders and business tycoons. And even the best-informed and most interested of us are unlikely to be able to grasp unaided the intricacies of many contemporary policy issues. Most of us rely almost totally on the media to explain many of the most crucial political issues ... What the newspapers tell us about what is going on, and how they present their information, is therefore likely to be crucial in shaping both our knowledge and opinions'.

The British General Election Campaigns and the Mass Media

The Situational Environment

To begin with, a closer look at the British media and their effect on the political environment could throw light on the decline of partisanship in Britain. As I noted in the last chapter, general election campaigns in Britain are political party campaigns to elect six hundred and fifty or so members of parliament - the British House of Commons. Since 1935, the party that won enough seats in parliament to form the government has always been declared the winner. The Prime Minister as the head of government has been the leader of the majority party. In other words, elections in Britain are meant in

theory to be periods for electing the legislatures. In practice, Britain is a parliamentary democracy in which representation in parliament are based on the first-past-the-post (or single-member-plurality) electoral system. The intellectual case in favor of this practice has remained a topic of serious debate. Some scholars claim that the system facilitates choice between alternative governments, thereby ensuring that government is clearly accountable to the electorate; while opponents argue that the aim of a general election should be the election of a body which is representative of all the main shades of popular opinion - a political microcosm of the nation - and that the representative legislatures as a whole should be able to decide who should form the executive.

In recent elections in 1983, 1987 and 1992, scholars of British politics have noted that the first-past-the-post method of electing the members of parliament, together with the rise of three-party politics have resulted in a parliamentary landslides, with about sixty per cent of the seats in parliament won with only forty-two per cent of the votes, for example, in 1983 and 1987 general elections. But since 1931, in all the general elections except in the brief parliament of February to October 1974 and the October 1974 Labour slim majority, one party has always won an overall majority of seats in the House of Commons. Indeed, no single party has ever won a majority of all the votes cast in any general election since 1945. Because of this, it is not uncommon for the majority party leader to command the confidence of the House of Commons, and as a result is asked by the Sovereign to form the next government after a general election.

The government in office is expected to be in power for a maximum of five years, but can call for the dissolution of parliament when the House of Common loses

confidence in him/her or when the Prime Minister feels that another election will be in favor of his/her party. Usually, the Prime Minister goes to Buckingham Palace to tender his/her resignation, while the sovereign announces the date for the general election. The British general election campaigns are usually very brief - about three to four weeks. During the campaigns the political parties present their manifesto and are allotted free time on television and radio to present their political election broadcasts, PEBs. The political parties are also given extensive and prominent coverage in the news. For example, in the 1987 general election, news about the elections were given prominence over everything else, absorbing about 60 percent of the main news bulletins on BBC1, 52 per cent on ITV, and 72.5 per cent on Channel 4. Butler and Kavanagh (1992) noticed that in 1992, the figures were 65 per cent, 52 per cent, and 80 per cent respectively; while news 37 per cent of the news bulletins on radio in 1987 covered the general election.

Overwhelmingly, the newspapers in Great Britain are partisan, as I pointed out in the last chapter. As presented in Table 4.1, because the press in Britain is partisan, a substantial number of voters avoid or ignore the press and party leaflets. Those who read the newspapers seem to confirm the mass media "uses and gratifications" model and/or the "selective perception" model of media of communication. In short, the Table 4.1 seems to suggest some kind of selectivity - that is in the tradition of selective exposure hypothesis: that when people encounter a media message that is at variance with their belief or attitude, they often try to avoid the medium that is at variance with their view and its message, while at the same time, they go to the medium that agrees with

Table 4.1: Daily newspapers by distribution of space between parties, 1964-1987

1966		% Con.	% Lab.	% Lib.
Mirror/Record	Labour	33	59	8
Sun	Labour	44	42	13
Mail	Conservative	61	33	6
Express	Conservative	59	33	7
Telegraph	Conservative	52	31	18
Guardian	Lab/Liberal	29	43	28
The Times	Labour?	40	47	13
Sketch	Conservative	51	38	11
Star	---	--	--	--
Today	---	--	--	--
1970				
Mirror/Record	Labour	35	58	8
Sun	Labour	37	47	16
Mail	Conservative	50	38	6
Express	Conservative	49	42	7
Telegraph	Conservative	53	36	11
Guardian	Lab/Liberal	45	40	15
The Times	Con/Liberal	42	51	6
Sketch	Conservative	51	40	9
Star	---	--	--	--
Today	---	--	--	--
1974 February				
Mirror/Record	Labour	41	49	10
Sun	Conservative	49	36	14
Mail	Conservative	49	33	18
Express	Conservative	43	42	15
Telegraph	Conservative	54	34	12
Guardian	Con/Lab/Liberal	40	40	19
The Times	Con/Liberal	43	39	18
Sketch	---	--	--	--
Star	---	--	--	--
Today	---	--	--	--

Table 4.1: (cont'd)

1974 October		% Con.	% Lab.	% Lib.
Mirror/Record	Labour	34	59	7
Sun	all-party coalition	39	53	8
Mail	Con/Lib. coalition	39	54	8
Express	Conservative	43	54	12
Telegraph	Conservative	49	40	11
Guardian	more Liberal	35	45	20
The Times	Con/Liberal	40	46	14
Sketch	---	--	--	--
Star	---	--	--	--
Today	---	--	--	--
1983				
Mirror/Record	Labour	59	30	9
Sun	Labour	44	41	13
Mail	Conservative	43	35	18
Express	Conservative	37	41	16
Telegraph	Conservative	44	37	15
Guardian	Conservative	37	34	19
The Times	Conservative	35	40	16
Sketch	---	--	--	--
Star	Conservative	35	40	16
Today	---	--	--	--
1987				
Mirror/Record	Labour	48	44	6
Sun	Conservative	22	73	5
Mail	Conservative	35	54	10
Express	Conservative	40	44	15
Telegraph	Conservative	31	39	26
Guardian	Labour	36	32	17
The Times	Conservative	34	34	28
Sketch	---	--	--	--
Star	Conservative	34	46	17
Today	Con. coalition	32	36	25
Independent	Independent	35	35	24
Financial Times	Labour			

Source: These figures are taken from Nuffield election studies series.

their belief and selectively receive and accept its messages. However, for most people in Britain, television has remained the common and most helpful medium for making decision on election day. Miller et. al. (1990) noted that, 'for the electorate as a whole, television is unquestionably the main source of campaign information and the main basis for campaign decisions.' It is also possible that television audience in Britain, in the tradition of the selective retention hypothesis, selectively retain the messages that they want to hear and ignore the ones they do not want to hear.

The Parties' Use of the Mass Media

In understanding the effects of the mass media during election campaigns in Britain in the last forty years or so, I would first analyze how political parties have used the media in the past and in recent years as well.

To begin with, there are four types of political party media communication programs in Great Britain. These are: 1) party election broadcasts, PEBs, which are series of political broadcasts by the political parties during election campaigns - that is, the period before national wide general elections for the House of Commons; 2) party political broadcasts, PPBs, which are also political broadcasts but by party spokes-persons between general elections; 3) ministerial broadcasts or reports to the nation by government spokes-persons; and 4) budget broadcasts which are talks by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Shadow Chancellor. However, this study does not consider all, but examines the political parties' use of the political election broadcasts, PEBs, how the voters respond to the messages and the effect of the messages on the electorate.

The first PEBs in Britain dates back to the 1924 general election when Ramsay

MacDonald (Labour candidate) and Herbert Asquith (Liberal candidate) made public broadcasts from public meetings on radio, while Stanley Baldwin (Conservative candidate) talked to the electorate from the BBC studio in London. At that time, the radio medium was still in its infancy. The general attitude of the electorate then was described by one author as that of doubt and timidity. But, with the advent of television and the perceived power of the medium to influence the electorate or the concern for media effects, stringent regulations were adapted to regulated the activities of the broadcasters and the use of the media by political parties during general election campaigns. As a result of the regulations, political parties were allocated free time on BBC radio and television to present their programs to the electorate. As I noted in the last chapter, the allocations of the times are calculated based on the proportion of the parties' strength in the House of Commons. Both radio and television PEBs are scheduled during the peak hours of the evening. The party in government is allowed to present its message first, followed by the other political parties. At the end of the presentations, the party in government makes the final remarks. There are no PEBs on the day before or on election day, so as to not give the party in government an undue advantage (having the last say on election day) over the other parties. The format or the topics for broadcasts are selected by the political parties. Each party uses the time allocated to it as it sees fit. Most of the programs are pre-recorded by BBC, or somewhere by the political parties, and in recent elections, both Labour and Conservative parties have sort the help of media consultants to help them in designing and producing their political party programs. As consequence, the cost of producing the PEBs have

gone up since 1979.

When IBA/ITV came on the air in 1955 the stringent regulations of allocating free air time to the political parties were equally extended to it. Although the IBA is not a public corporation like BBC, the IBA Act expressly excluded it from selling time to political parties for PEBs during election campaigns. Unlike in the United States, where Section 315 of the Communication Acts of 1934 specified that, 'if any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station, he shall afford equal opportunity to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station,' the British media have no such regulations. The only exceptions to the rules in the United States are if a candidate is being interviewed by a newscaster or in a news documentary.³ Again, as I have noted earlier, unlike in the United States where national election campaigns run for months, general elections campaigns in Britain usually do not last more than three to four months.

Since 1969, a political candidate in Britain is not allowed to present PEBs in his/her constituency unless all the other candidates in that constituency either take part or gave their consent for such. With the result that a candidate who does not wish to give his/her opponent an undue advantage in a constituency can refuse to take part in any such program or give his/her consent to the opponent. Again, unlike in the United States where broadcast stations provide time to candidates with enough money to buy time to present their program, and (until recently) to make provision to provide equal opportunity

³ The rules were, however, changed during the Bush administration in the late 1980s.

to all the other candidates - the so-called "equal time" or "fairness doctrine" abolished by Bush administration in late 1988. The British media have no equivalent of equal time or fairness doctrine.

In recent elections in Britain, the mass media have become the major tool of political campaign. Harrison (1989:652) observed that:

One feature of recent British general election campaigns on which all observers would surely agree is the ever-increasing extent to which they have been designed to capture favourable attention from television. Labour's 1987 campaign was proof, if proof was still needed, that the last bastions of resistance to 'modern' techniques had crumbled. Even the Greens, ostensible exponents of an 'alternative' approach to politics, have shown in their broadcasts that they are prepared to be and unsentimentally (and as sentimentally) manipulative as the old-style politicians they seek to displace.

All political parties have reverted to using the media to present their messages to the electorate. So, based on the principle of balance in broadcasting, political parties are offered free television advertising to present their party messages - the party election broadcast, PEBs.

And, as I pointed out earlier, the ratio of the free time are usually worked out between the broadcasters and the inter-party committee. However, in 1987, the inter-party committee and the broadcasters agreed that an exact equal time should be given to each of three political parties - Conservative, Labour, and Alliance.⁴ In addition to using PEBs to present their political messages, political parties also rely on the news coverage and make considerable efforts to obtain favorable news coverage on television.

Over the years, two important developments have taken place in Great Britain -

⁴ In 1992, minor parties - the nationalists, the Natural Law party, the Liberals and the Greens were given free air-time to air their PEBs.

the employment of expertise or media professionals and the continued improvement on the use of the free air-time by the political parties. For example, it has been noted by some observers that in the 1979 general election, Labour lost to the Conservative party due in part to Conservative media image. In that year, the Conservative party hired Gordon Reece as Mrs Thatcher's media adviser. His job was to package and present Mrs Thatcher to the electorate. Gordon Reece in turn hired Saatchi and Saatchi to advise him and the Conservative party on how best to present their PEBs to the electorate. In 1979, most political observers, including Labour leaders, were impressed with the image of Mrs Thatcher and the Conservative party presented on television that in the next election, Labour opted to improving its chance of winning by using the media extensively like the Tories in its campaign.

In 1983, in an effort to win the voters and change the negative image of the party, the Labour party adapted a 'middle ground' stance in presenting their 'dream ticket' of Neil Kinnock as leader and Roy Hattersley as the Deputy. Although Labour adapted this strategy in an effort to win, yet it lost to the Conservative party, again in part, due to the Tory's use of sophisticated media communication run by Cecil Parkinson as co-ordinator. The Conservative party strategy during the 1983 general election was to focus on a specific issue each single day when presenting all major Conservative speakers including Mrs Thatcher. Despite the change in political posture, Labour party lost in 1983.

In 1987, Labour party decided to use aggressive media consultants in presenting their PEBs on television and to present their party leader Neil Kinnock. They brought in the Shadow Communications Agency who in turn employed Peter Mandelson, an ex-

television producer, as the Labour party's director of communications and Hugh Hudson of the Chariots of Fire to help them present good images of Labour party and their leader. In turn, the Conservative party continued its use of sophisticated communications machine with Saatchi and Saatchi. In keeping with Labour's use of media celebrity, Saatchi and Saatchi also employed the services of a star director John Schlesinger of Midnight Cowboy to present Mrs Thatcher to the electorate on television.

In 1992, Neil Kinnock and the Labour party adapted fully the American presidential-style campaign - full of stage-managed media events and photo opportunity; while John Major and the Conservative party adopted a "soapbox" persona, which according to Margetts (1993:197) 'introduced a sense of politics for the people.' Based in part on Labour's glossy and glittering media campaign, a Harris/ITN poll conducted two days before the election predicted a Labour victory. The poll, in fact, had predicted Labour 40% of the vote, the Conservative 38%, and the Liberal Democrats 18%. Labour's lead in the polls the week before the election was indeed as much as six percentage points. However, the final result was: Labour 34%, Conservative 41.9%, and Liberal Democrats 17.8%. So, despite Labour's aggressive media campaign, it was defeated by the Conservative party.

The increased use or the salience of the media and media consultants or the growing emphasis on the use of the media during political campaigns has generated a lot of concern among politicians and political observers. For example, some scholars in the United States (Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar, 1991:111), have complained about these developments noting that one of the consequences of these has been 'a weakening of the

traditional role of the political parties and increased autonomy for individual candidates.' In Great Britain as well, scholars (Butler and Kavanagh, 1992), politicians and broadcasters are concerned about the impact or the effects of the mass media during campaigns and are seriously thinking about how to handle PEBs in the general election in 1996.

The Role of the Mass Media in the British Election Campaigns

The extension of universal suffrage in Great Britain took place in 1918; while young unmarried women were added to the electorate in 1928. Indeed, since the beginning of this century, politics in Britain has undergone dramatic changes. Like in the United States, the most dramatic change cited in the literature occurred between 1959 and 1964 due in part to the advent of the mass media of communication. The changes and developments in modern communications, especially since 1959 when television entered the political arena, have further changed election campaigns in Britain. Prior to 1959, the media did not play a very important role during general elections in Britain. However, television coverage of the general elections began in 1959. Since then, media coverage of election campaigns have expanded with each successive general election. Most of the coverage have centered on highlighting national political and social issues during elections through interviews of candidates and discussion programs. However, over the years, with the rapid expansion in communication technology and rapid communications we have also noticed what some scholars have described as the "Americanization" or the "presidentialization" of the British general elections. This Americanization of the British general elections have raised great concerns among

political analysts in Great Britain.

For one thing, although it may seem plausible in the United States that television decides who wins an elections, the role of the media, or for that matter what the role should be in the British general elections still remains a subject of great debate. This is understandable because even in the States where the role of the mass media is generally accepted, there are scholars (Patterson and McClure, 1976, Patterson, 1980) who question the effectiveness of the media and have dismissed altogether the notion that television is as powerful as many politicians and their consultants think. However, the controversy in Britain in recent general elections centers on the tendency of the broadcast media to "presidentialize" their presentations of the leaders of the political parties. In a recent study, Harrison (1992) presented a pattern of broadcast media presentations (the number of times politicians were quoted in radio and television news) and party share of news coverage⁵ in the 1992 general election campaigns which were dis-proportionately high for the three main political parties and their leaders. These kinds of media presentation or coverage have refueled the fear of the parties' techniques of manipulation. However, there are special differences between the British and the American mass media of communication and political structure. These differences affect the role of the media in election campaigns. So, to assess the role of the media in general elections campaigns in Great Britain, it is important to attempt a description of the special features of the British political structure.

In Great Britain, unlike in the United States, general election campaigns are to

⁵ See, Harrison (1992, pp. 169 and 171).

some extent national elections, and the political parties are traditionally well known for their firm party discipline. Among the currently 651 or so single-member constituencies, as I noted earlier in the last chapter, there are approximately 65,00 voters in each constituency and each is also different. Like in the United States, some constituencies are highly urbanized, while others are inner-city, or suburban, or rural constituencies, including the Welsh and Scottish Highlands. The increased number of recent immigrants into Britain have also changed the political geography of the constituencies. Every five years (except in the event of loss of a vote of confidence in parliament), Britons elect 651 members of parliament to represent them in the British lower house - the House of Commons. These seats are shared between the multi-parties who won in their constituencies.

In Great Britain, unlike in the United States, members of parliament are not required to live in their constituencies. The prime minister as the head of government is usually the leader of the majority party in parliament. He/she, together with all the members of cabinet are also members in parliament. Because of the strong British party discipline, debates in parliament and governments are highly structured. During the period a Parliament is in session, there are usually many by-elections, as a result of the death of sitting members or due to the resignation of a member. Between 1945 to 1959, Britain had two strong parties and very weak ones too. The British political party system has been described as a "two and half" party system (Blumler and Semetko, 1987). Over the years, voters have mainly split their party loyalties between the two major parties - Conservative and Labour. However, since 1959 and later (especially in the 1970s), there

has been a noticeable decline in the support of the two major parties. Crewe (1983:183) observed what he described as 'an era of partisan dealignment' between 1945 to 1970. Blumler and Semetko (1987) argue that this period has also been marked by fluctuating voter turnout, an increased electoral volatility, lower associations of social class with voting preferences, and greater support for third parties. These changes are often blamed on the mass media and their salience during election campaigns.

The Effects of Mass Media in British Election Campaigns

In the literature, the most often studied effects of the media during elections has been on the change of voting preferences. However, understanding the issues at stake, and being able to participate in the electoral process and having an image of the candidates, for example, are all part of the understanding of the effects of the mass media on election campaigns. In other words, if the media do not influence voting decisions, they may have some influence on the voters in ways that we may not often be able to explain empirically. For example, in 1964, respondents in the BES data were asked if they talked about politics with others. The majority of those who watched or listened to the PEBs also talked about politics more than those who did not otherwise.

A preliminary analysis of the BES data will suffice to clarify a point here. In the BES data, in February and October 1974, 1983 and 1987 general elections, the respondents were asked about their image of the political parties in Britain. Mass media users overwhelmingly had a "moderate" image of both the Labour and Conservative parties in February 1974 and October 1974; while non-media users tended to have "extreme" image of the two political parties - Table 4.2a. The only exception to

**Table 4.2a: Extreme/Moderate party image 1974
Conservative party image**

Voters who watched/listened PEBs					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No	χ^2
1974 February Election					
Extreme	40.4	36.3	41.0	25.3	
Moderate	49.7	49.3	45.0	52.0	
Neither	9.8	14.4	14.0	22.7	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(386)	(842)	(964)	(75)	***
1974 October Election					
Extreme	43.2	43.9	44.7	37.8	
Moderate	50.9	48.8	46.2	50.0	
Neither	5.9	7.4	9.1	12.2	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(393)	(800)	(899)	(74)	
Labour party image					
Voters who watched/listened PEBs					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No	χ^2
1974 February Election					
Extreme	41.6	38.3	35.7	40.0	
Moderate	47.4	48.7	49.3	37.3	
Neither	11.0	13.0	15.0	22.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(382)	(836)	(964)	(75)	*
1974 October Election					
Extreme	54.9	52.1	47.6	57.5	
Moderate	40.0	41.1	44.6	35.6	
Neither	5.1	6.8	7.8	6.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(390)	(804)	(908)	(73)	

Table 4.2a: (cont'd)
Conservative party image

Voters who read a daily NEWSPAPER					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No	χ^2
1974 February Election					
Extreme	42.9	34.8	40.0	39.8	
Moderate	47.5	52.0	46.1	33.3	
Neither	9.6	13.2	13.9	26.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(280)	(735)	(1176)	(78)	***
1974 October Election					
Extreme	39.9	40.2	46.5	49.4	
Moderate	51.4	52.8	45.1	45.5	
Neither	8.7	7.0	8.4	5.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(288)	(709)	(1083)	(77)	*
Labour party image					
Voters who read a daily NEWSPAPER					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No	χ^2
1974 February Election					
Extreme	39.8	43.5	34.8	29.1	
Moderate	49.5	43.4	50.9	49.4	
Neither	10.8	13.1	14.3	21.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(279)	(731)	(1169)	(79)	***
1974 October Election					
Extreme	59.8	54.2	47.5	42.9	
Moderate	34.3	38.6	45.5	53.2	
Neither	5.9	7.2	7.0	3.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(286)	(708)	(1095)	(77)	***

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 3; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.
 SOURCE: BES. Analysis author's.

Table 4.2b: Extreme/Moderate party image 1983 and 1987
Conservative party image

Voters who watched/listened to PEBs				Voters who read a newspaper		
Year	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1983 Election						
Extreme	52.6	46.9		53.4	46.7	
Moderate	41.5	47.1		40.2	48.6	
Neither	5.9	6.0		6.4	4.7	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(3045)	(684)	*	(2676)	(1054)	***
1987 Election						
Extreme	52.4	41.0		52.1	46.4	
Moderate	41.2	50.9		41.2	46.9	
Neither	6.4	8.1		6.7	6.7	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2930)	(629)	***	(2486)	(1073)	***
Labour party image						
Voters who watched/listened to PEBs				Voter who read a newspaper		
Year	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1983 Election						
Extreme	53.9	45.6		55.6	44.2	
Moderate	38.0	46.0		36.1	47.9	
Neither	8.1	8.4		8.3	7.9	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(3017)	(680)	***	(2646)	(1051)	***
1987 Election						
Extreme	54.0	47.0		55.2	47.4	
Moderate	38.9	45.8		36.6	47.6	
Neither	7.2	7.2		8.3	5.0	
Total	100.1	100.0		100.1	100.0	
Number	(2935)	(636)	***	(2480)	(1091)	***

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 1; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.
Source: BES. Analysis author's.

this observation is among newspaper readers in October 1974 who perceived Labour as being extreme. This extreme image of the Labour party among newspaper readers in October 1974 was not significantly different from television viewers in that same year. However, in that election year, the proportion of newspaper readers who had extreme party image of the Labour was higher than those who had moderate image of the Labour party. There are two possible explanations to this: one, as I noted earlier, most newspapers in Great Britain tend to be pro-Conservative party, two, the readers who are pro-Conservative, through the process of selective exposure and selective perception select the extreme images of the Labour party in the newspapers. From these figures, in Table 4.2a, it seems that the concept of selective exposure (the assumption that people tend to avoid media content which is dissonant to their political predispositions and seek media that support their view) which many scholars thought died at the end of the 1960s, may still be alive and well. But, it hard to tell from these figures. By contrast, Table 4.2b presents a different image. Mass media users in recent elections tended to see Labour and the Conservative party as extreme parties. These feelings are also statistically significant, and deserves further probing.

Furthermore, the respondents who watched/listened to the PEBs or followed the election campaigns in any daily newspaper had different feeling about which party would win the election in 1987 (the only year this question was asked in the data set). In that year, more television viewers thought that Labour would win, while more newspaper readers thought Conservative party would win. The difference in their perception of which party would win in 1987 can be explained in terms of Labour party leader - Neil

Kinnock's television campaign in 1987. The general election of 1987 was seen by many analysts as the first truly television campaign in Britain. In that year, all the political parties leaders in Britain virtually conducted their campaigns through television. There were many carefully prepared 'photo-opportunity,' and gatherings of many flag-waving faithful at party leaders' rallies. However, television coverage of elections always tend to be based on these kinds of superficial campaigns, sound bits and one liners, with the result that many analysts predicted in both the 1987 and 1992 general elections that Kinnock would win the election before the campaigns were over. However, Kinnock lost in both election in the end. Indeed, judging from the media campaigns, there was no dispute among political and media observers that Kinnock won both campaigns on television but lost the elections.

In Britain, as I have argued earlier, there are no regional or local media outlets. The implications of this during election campaigns is that most voters receive, to some extent, the same news coverage about the elections. In other words, the level of information through the media is more or less equal everywhere in Great Britain. As the figures in Table 4.3 shows, those who followed the election campaigns in a daily newspaper may have known more about the political developments; hence, they were more aware of the party that would win more than television viewers and non-newspaper readers. And, indeed in 1987, the Conservative party got the majority of the votes cast in that general election.

The BES data also show that although the majority of the British voters decided how they would vote before the general election campaigns Table 4.4. However, this

Table 4.3: Political party voters thought would win in the general election 1987

Voters who watched/listened to PEBs				Voters who read a NEWSPAPER		
Year	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1987 Election						
Conservative	57.1	59.4		58.3	55.9	
Labour	35.7	34.9		34.9	36.9	
Lib/Alliance	7.2	5.6		6.8	7.2	
Total	100.0	99.9		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2865)	(621)		(2411)	(1076)	

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * $p = < 0.05$; ** $p = < 0.01$; * $p = < 0.001$.

Source: BES. Author's analysis.

Table 4.4. Time of voting decision 1964-1987

	'64	'66	'70	'74F	'74O	'79	'83	'87
A long time ago	78.2	77.0	69.8	63.5	60.2	57.4	60.1	62.2
Last year	10.7	11.7	18.3	13.7	17.7	14.6	18.1	17.1
During campaign	11.1	11.3	11.9	22.7	22.0	28.0	21.8	20.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N. of cases	1156	1526	1416	2069	2006	1594	3292	3270

Source: BES, however, these figures are taken from Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

table also shows an increase in the proportion of late deciders from 11.1% in 1964 to as high as 28% and 20.7% in 1979 and 1987 respectively. There has also been an increase in the proportion of wavering voters. Many studies have noted that in most elections, undecided voters are usually the primary targets of media political messages during election campaigns. In Great Britain, a very high proportion of the voters are reached by the media messages Figure 4.1. However, whether all the voters that were reached by the media were convinced by the messages is another matter, but they were potentially susceptible to such mass media messages during election campaigns if they had weaker partisanship affiliation.

Voters' Involvement with the Elections

The majority of British voters use the media for information during election campaigns as seen in Figure 4.1. And, it seems that they use the media very heavily and the information offered them through the mass media. Blumler (1968) studied voters use of the media during election campaigns in Great Britain, and found that the majority of the voters followed political campaigns on television, either for information or out of habit. The use of the television for information during election campaigns in Britain have remained high, although as I pointed out earlier, there has also been a decline from the high of 96% of the voters who claimed that they had watched/listened to the PEBs, or following the elections in a daily newspaper in February of 1974 to as low as 71.7% in 1970. The use of the newspaper has also remained high, although there has also been a considerable drop in the proportion of those who use the newspaper for information during election campaigns. In fact, the proportion of those who follow the election

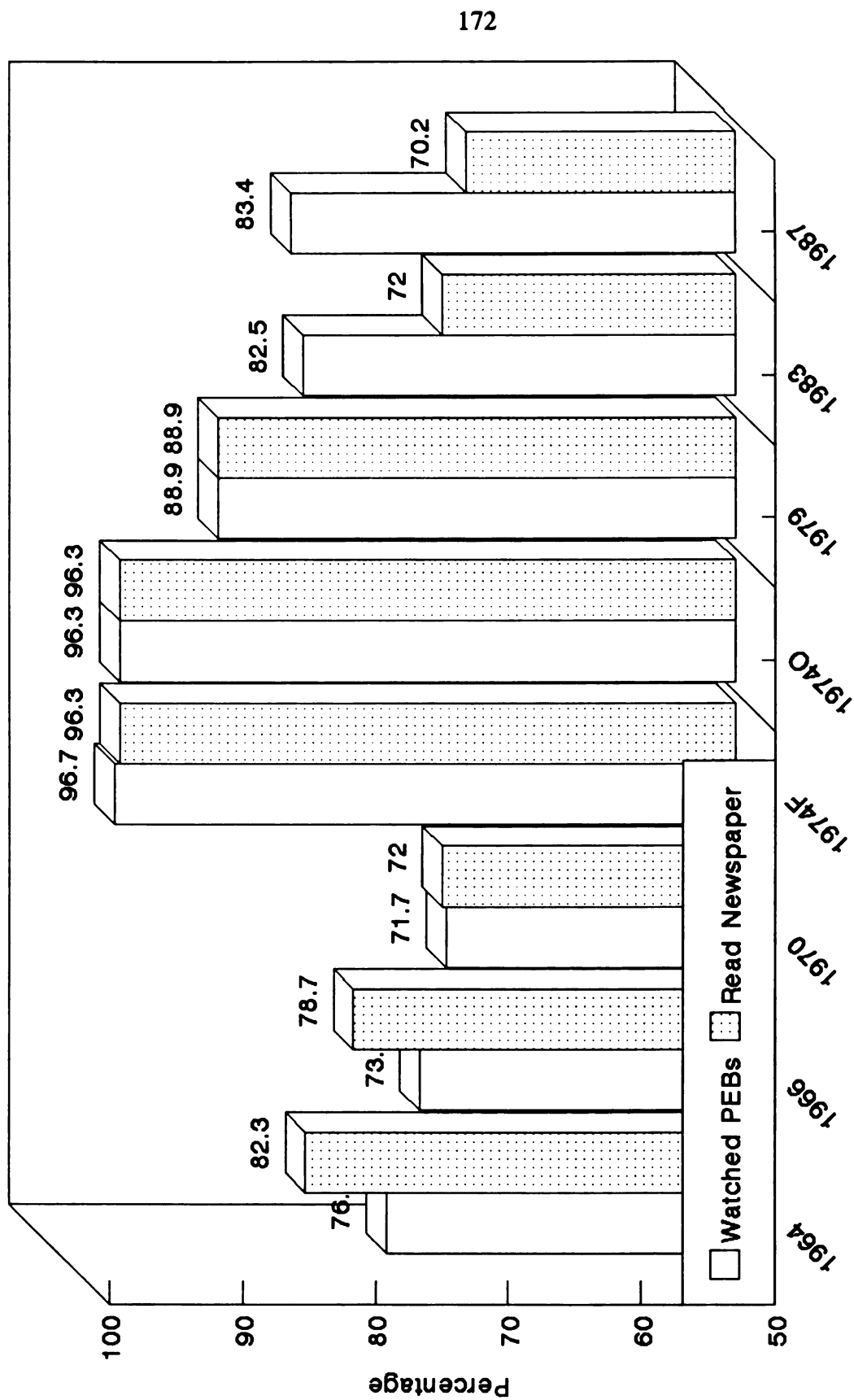


Figure 4.1: Mass media use during elections

Source: BES.

campaigns in the newspapers have dropped steadily in recent years.

In most studies, television has remained a major source or the most major source of political information in Great Britain. Newspapers are the second most cited source of political information, especially among better or well-educated voters, and radio is the third. In most studies, personal conversation is the least form or source of political communication. As I have pointed out, the newspapers in Great Britain are highly partisan. Most Britons read a newspaper that he/she considers has favorable feelings toward his/her own partisan affiliation. Again, with the decline in political party affiliations in Great Britain, there is likely going to be more decline in partisan support as a result of the negative images of the political parties and party leadership in the newspapers.

In many studies in the past, political interest and mass media use have been interrelated. In 1979, the last time respondents in the BES data set were asked about their interest in politics, among those who followed the elections on television and newspaper, voters who followed the election campaign in the newspapers had high degree of interest in politics than television viewers. Whether or not being interested in politics is as a result of watching PEBs on television or following the elections in a newspaper is hard to say, but high level of trust for government was expressed among newspaper readers than among television viewers. In other words, the mistrust of the candidates during election campaigns among viewers seem to support the view that television creates mistrust among voters.

Do the voters gain more knowledge from the media during election campaigns?

Studies in the United States suggest that more voters gain more knowledge about the election in the newspaper than on television; however, television remains the most important medium for election, probably influencing turnout, interest and views about issues as well. I measured perceived knowledge about politics in 1987 (again, the only year the question was used) from the question: 'Agree/disagree: Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on.' About 55.5% of those who followed the election on television either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed', while among those who did not follow the figure was 67.2%. Among newspaper readers, the figures were 51.6% for those who strongly agreed or agreed, while the figures for non-readers were 71.2% respectively. Generally, the less educated were the less knowledgeable, for them politics is too complicated. Despite increased mass media campaigns, the less educated and those who follow the election campaigns on television continue to be less well informed about politics than those who followed the election campaigns in a daily newspaper or the well educated.

In conclusion, in most studies, political interest is always associated with strength of party identification: the greater the interest in politics, the greater the strength of party identification across elections or vice versa. In these studies, voters with strong partisanship affiliation usually decide earlier on how to vote before even the election campaigns begin. It is likely that election campaigns influence those voters with lower interest and weaker partisanship affiliation. This conclusion is strongly supported by the BES results in the 1979 general election. In that election, voters with low interest in politics and who were exposed to mass media campaigns wavered more than those who

were strongly partisan suggesting that election campaigns had an impact and should be aimed at those who have low interest and little knowledge about politics. However, despite Kinnock's fluency and Labour party's stage-managed media campaigns in 1987 and 1992 general election campaigns, they lost in both elections. Admitted, Labour increased its share of the vote from its low 27.6% in 1983, to 30.8% in 1987 and to 34.4% in 1992 - an average of about 3.5% points per year, but it lost in all three general elections!

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CHAPTER V

THE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Literature Review

The central hypothesis of this study is that mass media use during general election campaigns in Great Britain has decreased political party identification in that country in the last three or four decades. That is, media use (operationalized as watching/listening to party election broadcast, PEBs, or following the election campaigns in any daily national newspaper), during general election campaigns in Britain is negatively related to direction or strength of political party identification.

To begin with, in the literature, mass media use as a research variable has been measured in a number of ways, although there are disagreements as to how to measure or what constitutes media use. Some studies have used a simple question like - 'How many hours of television do you watch on an average day?' (Tan, 1982; Morgan, 1984, 1986, O'Keefe, 1984), or 'How many evenings per week do you watch television at least one hour?' (Fox and Philliber, 1978). In some experimental studies, respondents were presented with a viewing diary to fill out (Hawkins and Pingree, 1981) and a long list of programs and asked to check the programs they regularly watched (Slater and Elliott, 1982), or to check the programs they watched in the past seven days (Weaver and Wakshlag, 1986); while others have used different questions and methods (Hawkins and

Pingree, 1981; Weaver and Wakshlag, 1986).

In one study, for example, media use was operationalized to be the sum of hours of television viewed on an average weekday and an average weekend day (Hawkins, Pingree and Adler, 1987). In another, media use was operationalized as the average between two measures: amount of television watched yesterday (a weekday) and the amount of television usually watched on an average weekday (Rubin, Perse and Taylor, 1988). In some other studies, media use was operationalized as voters' use of television for news and information during election campaigns (Morgan and Shanahan, 1992); and respondents were placed in groups of high, medium, and low media users (Volgy and Schwarz, 1980; Gerbner et al., 1982; Huesmann, Lagerspetz and Eron, 1984), or simply divided into two groups of high and low media users (Gerbner et al., 1979). In a number of these studies, voters who rely more on television for news and information during election campaigns, seemed to have lower levels of political knowledge, less trust in government, attached more importance to the personal qualities of candidates in making their voting decision and were less likely to participate in the political process at every level (Choi and Becker, 1986; and Keeter, 1987).

For instance, when Whitney and Goldman (1985), looked at how voters' use of specific news media in the 1980 United States presidential election, they found that media use affected voter's time of voting decisions. Whitney and Goldman (1985:527) concluded that 'a voter's decision time is a useful explanatory typology for examining interactions, of media use, communication, demographics and political cognition and attitudes.' St. George and Robinson-Weber (1983) in another study of the effects of the

media on behavior and attitudes observed that there is a differential effect of the media on blacks than whites in the United States, and that specific media forms operate differently for blacks than for whites. However, Zimmer (1981) using the 1968 and 1972 presidential elections in the United States, tested the hypothesis that media exposure influences beliefs about the closeness of an election and in turn determines voting. They concluded that media use or exposure did not substantially influence voters' perceptions nor influence political involvement in the elections.

In the literature, many studies have examined the link between media use or exposure and voting, but few have looked at media use and its effects on partisanship (Todd and Brody, 1980); although Pomper (1975:34) suggested that 'the mass media are major sources, providing essentially cheap and reliable information independently of the parties, and leading to a reduced impact on partisanship on voting.' As I noted in the introduction, I am not suggesting that no one has ever contemplated that there might be a relationship between the salience of the media for political communication or media use during election campaigns and the decline of party identification. However, there has not been serious straight forward empirical test of the relationship between mass media use and partisanship; although there are numerous references to the idea that there might exist some connection between increased use of the media by the voters during election campaigns and the decline in political party identification.

In the literature, many of the studies of the effects of the media, often measured media use as a continuous variable that lends itself to a correlation analysis. But in this study, following the theoretical approaches of Volgy and Schwarz, 1980; Gerbner et al.,

1982; Huesmann, Lagerspetz and Eron, 1984; and Morgan and Shanahan, 1992, media use is measured as a dichotomous variable or simply as a categorical variable. Mass use in this study is indexed using the questions in the British Election Studies, BES, data. The question wording in the data has varied slightly from year-to-year. For example, in 1964, 1966 and 1970, the question wording was: 'Have you been following the election campaign on television?' Or, 'Have you been following the election campaign in a daily news paper?' In February 1974 and October 1974 general elections, the respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely, once in a while or not at all?' Or, 'How closely do you follow newspapers for news and comment about politics - very closely, fairly closely, once in a while or not at all?' In 1979 the question wording was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in a newspaper or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely or hardly at all?' While in 1983 and 1987 the question was: 'During the election campaign, did you watch/listen to any broadcast on TV or radio?' Or, 'During the election campaign, did you read about politics in the newspaper?'

These variations in the question wording across the years make a straight forward year-by-year trend analysis impossible. However, I have analyzed the years with same or comparable question wording in the same table, hence, the presentation of the tables in the format of Tables a and b.

An Overview of the Hypotheses

The analysis in this chapter examines the effects of the media on partisanship and electoral behavior - voting, turnout and perception about the two major parties in Britain and the political world.

In Britain in the past twenty-eight years, there have been declines in political party identification, canvassing, displaying of party posters, and attendance to party meetings, as I have pointed out earlier.

For example, Blumler and McQuail (1968:33), and Butler and Kavanagh (1984:245) reported the following drop in the percentage of voters who reported that they had read at least one election address dropped from 69 percent in 1959 to 64 percent in 1964 and down further to 49 percent in 1983. Likewise, the percentage of voters who had been canvassed by local party workers dropped from 48 percent in 1959 to 37 percent in 1964, down to 29 percent in 1983. While the proportion of the electorate that reported having attended a public meeting also dropped from 11 percent in 1959 to 4 percent in 1983. These figures confirm some of my assumptions in chapter one. So, to test each of the hypotheses that:

H₁: The use of the media for political information is positively influenced by a person's social political background. (That is, there are differential use of the mass media for information during election campaigns).

H₂: The use of the media for political information is negatively related to voter turnout during elections. (That is, the use of the mass media for political news and information during election campaigns lead to voters abstaining from voting).

H₃: Media use or the use of the mass media for information during elections campaigns will negatively predict strength of partisanship. (In other words, the use of the media by the voters for information during election campaigns or exposure to party election broadcasts, PEBs, and newspapers have direct and negative effect on political party identification, indicated by decreased "strong" party support for the two major parties among mass media users in Britain).

H₄: Voters' "moderate" image of the winning political party in an election is positively related to their use of the media for information during election. (Or, the image of a political party as a "moderate" party is negatively related to voters' use of the media for information during election campaigns; that is, heavy media users are more likely to approach the political world in a more homogenous and conventional terms).

Any attempt to explain the effects of media use during election campaigns on the voters, requires multivariate analysis to sort out the potential intervening effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable(s). However, to explore the effects of mass media use on party identification, I begin by looking at simple percentages and bivariate analysis of partisanship and mass media use in the British general elections between 1964 and 1987, followed by multivariate analysis.

The measure of mass media use is an indicator of whether a respondent followed the general elections campaigns in the media - radio, television and newspaper, while partisanship is measured both as the proportion of party identifiers and the proportion of the voters who strongly identified with a political party in Britain.

Bivariate Analyses of Mass Media Use

To begin with, a formal specification of the model of this study is important, however, it is necessary, first, to examine the simple bivariate relationships between the dependent and independent variables. For example, what is the relationship between partisanship and mass media use in Britain looking at each of the general elections that we have the data?

This initial evaluation is important because it illuminates the relationship between the dependent variable - "strength of party identification", and the independent variable - "media use". As will be seen later, Tables 5.1a to 5.2b, the bivariate relationship between mass media use and partisanship direction and strength, suggests that on the average, over seventy-one percent¹ of the voters who watched/listened to the PEBs during the general elections, identified or strongly identified with the two major political parties; though this interpretation must be accepted with caution in the absence of control variables that might account for the relationship. I will thus employ later in the next chapter, multivariate analyses and statistical techniques that are useful for establishing such controls.

The intention of this study is not only to demonstrate that watching/listening to PEBs or following the general election campaigns in a daily newspaper during general elections in Great Britain may, under certain condition, have independent impact on the

¹ The percentages of media users in February and October and May 1979 are based on subtracting the percentage of non-media users (that is, voters who did not followed the elections in the media 'very closely,' 'fairly closely,' or 'once in a while') from a 100% of the total respondents. The respondents with 'no answer' or 'do not know' were excluded from the analysis.

strength of party identification and turnout, but to explore the possibility of meaningful patterns within specific sub-groups. That is, the extent to which one group is "susceptible" to using the media for information and/or the influence of the media on such a group. As Gerbner et al. (1980) have suggested, the main reason for doing this first, is that the absence of a significant effect of media use under stringent multiple regression controls does not necessary mean that there are no significant and theoretically meaningful patterns within specific sub-groups. Under close observation, it could be seen that there are significant relationship within sub-groups.

Tables 5.1a to 5.5b summarize the results of the simple bivariate relationships between partisanship and mass media use during general elections campaigns in Britain, 1964 to 1987. They show 1) the percentage of mass media users (voters who watched/listened to PEBs in Britain or followed the election campaigns in any daily national newspaper and those who did not) and their party affiliations, 2) the percentage of mass media users and how strong their affiliations with a political party, 3) the percentage of media users who voted and those who did not during the general elections, 4) the percentage of media users who voted for the winning party in the general elections; and 5) the percentage of non-voters who said that they would have voted for the winning party, if they had voted.

Tables 5.1a and 5.1b show the bivariate relationship between mass media use (i.e. watching/listening to PEBs or following the election campaigns in any national daily newspaper) and partisanship direction; while Tables 5.2a and 5.2b (which I shall refer to later) provide comparable information on partisanship strength. In other words,

Table 5.1a: Party identification by mass media use, 1964-1970, 1983-1987

Voters who watched or listened to PEBs				Voters who followed the election in a NEWSPAPER		
Year	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1964 Election						
Conservative	40.2	49.3		43.2	39.4	
Labour	47.7	36.8		44.2	48.5	
Liberal	12.1	14.0		12.6	12.1	
Total	100.0	100.1		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1280)	(400)	***	(1378)	(297)	
Gamma = -.11; Tau-c = -.05.				Gamma = 0.02; Tau-c = 0.05		
1966 Election						
Conservative	38.6	43.7		40.3	38.6	
Labour	51.7	44.6		48.8	53.4	
Liberal	9.7	11.7		10.9	8.0	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1386)	(494)	**	(1478)	(399)	
Gamma = -.06; Tau-c = -.03.				Gamma = -.003; Tau-c = -.001		
1970 Election						
Conservative	45.0	49.9		46.3	46.3	
Labour	44.6	43.2		43.2	46.9	
Liberal	10.4	7.0		10.5	6.8	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(872)	(345)		(876)	(341)	
Gamma = -.11; Tau-c = -.05.				Gamma = -.03; Tau-c = 0.05		
1983 Election						
Conservative	43.6	39.3		44.5	38.4	
Labour	35.7	44.4		35.3	42.1	
Liberal	20.7	16.3		20.2	19.5	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2723)	(577)	***	(2376)	(924)	***
Gamma = .01; Tau-c = .05.				Gamma = 0.07; Tau-c = .04		
1987 Election						
Conservative	44.3	45.2		46.4	39.9	
Labour	35.4	39.9		34.1	40.8	
Liberal	20.3	14.9		19.5	19.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2655)	(529)	***	(2233)	(950)	***
Gamma = -.06; Tau-c = -.02.				Gamma = 0.08; Tau-c = .04		
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.						

Table 5.1b: Party identification by mass media use, 1974 and 1979^a

Voters who watched/listened PEBs					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb.) Election					
Conservative	40.8	43.1	36.3	41.2	
Labour	47.7	42.4	48.6	39.7	
Liberal	11.5	14.5	15.2	19.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(365)	(779)	(877)	(68)	*
Gamma = 0.07; Tau-c = 0.04					
1974 (Oct.) Election					
Conservative	39.5	40.7	36.1	40.0	
Labour	44.5	43.8	46.5	41.3	
Liberal	16.0	15.5	17.4	18.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(375)	(740)	(817)	(75)	
Gamma = 0.05; Tau-c = 0.03.					
1979 Election					
Conservative	47.0	47.0	42.4	31.1	
Labour	40.8	39.8	43.0	55.4	
Liberal	12.1	13.3	14.5	13.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1	
Number	(355)	(732)	(337)	(177)	***
Gamma = 0.10; Tau-c = 0.06.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

Table 5.1b (cont'd).^c

Voters who followed the election in a NEWSPAPER					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^d	χ^2
1974 (Feb.) Election					
Conservative	43.9	48.3	34.5	26.9	
Labour	45.4	40.1	48.5	56.0	
Liberal	10.7	11.6	17.0	14.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(262)	(666)	(1077)	(78)	***
Gamma = 0.19; Tau-c = 0.12.					
1974 (Oct.) Election					
Conservative	44.0	44.5	34.5	23.7	
Labour	43.6	41.2	45.8	64.5	
Liberal	12.4	14.3	19.7	11.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(275)	(665)	(982)	(76)	***
Gamma = 0.16; Tau-c = 0.11.					
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.					

^c In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow newspapers for news and comments about politics - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^d % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all'.

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

these tables examine whether the respondents watched/listened to PEBs or followed the election campaigns in any daily national newspaper during the election campaigns between 1964 and 1987.

The patterns presented here are very clear. The relationship between watching/listening to PEBs and following the elections in a newspapers is surprisingly strong. (Many voters followed the election campaigns in the media). The majority of the voters who were media users, that is, those who watched/listened to PEBs or followed the campaigns in a daily newspaper were substantially Labour and Conservative identifiers. In short, between 35% to 52% of those voters who followed the election campaigns on television identified with one of the two major parties in Britain. The percentage of those who followed the elections in the newspapers are not in any way significantly lower than those who followed the elections on radio and television. However, the strength of the relation in all the years is not very strong, although the relationship between watching PEBs and partisanship are statistically significant far beyond the traditional 0.05 significance level in all the general election years, except in 1970 and October 1974. However, the relationship was not significant among newspaper readers between 1964 and 1970; but were very significant in recent elections in 1983 and 1987.

Furthermore, from Tables 5.1a and 5.1b, the direction of the relationship between mass media use and partisanship, (in four out of the eight general elections in this study), seems to support the hypothesis that mass media use (especially watching/listening to PEBs) is negatively related to partisanship direction. However, this interpretation is

suspect as partisanship direction in this particular table is a nominal rather than ordinal level data.² Besides, the strength of the relationship is not really strong (gamma range between -.03 to .10) and the interpretation that mass media use is negatively related to partisanship from these figures is subject to further close observation. Therefore, the actual effect of mass media use on party identification is not yet answered empirically.

To assess the impact of media use during election campaigns on the strength of party identification, we turn to a test of relationship using gamma (a test of the direction of relationship between variables) and econometric analysis of the impact of mass media use on the strength of party identification in the next chapter.

Testing the Relationships Using Gamma

As I pointed out in the last section, from Tables 5.1a and 5.1b that summarize the results of the percentage of media use by the direction of party identification, the hypothesis that media use has weakened party identification seems to hold from the figures (gamma -.03 to .10), and the relationship between the two variables are statistically significant across the years (except in 1970 and October 1974) among television viewers, and (except in 1964 to 1970) among newspaper readers. It seems, therefore, that watching/listening to PEBs or following the election campaigns in any newspaper is statistically significantly related to party identification. However, to really test the hypothesis that: voters who watch/listen to PEBs or follow the general election

² Although it could be argued that mass media use is negatively related to partisanship from these figures based on interpretation of Kendall's Tau-c (a measure of both ordinal and nominal level data) values ranging between 0.013 to -.05. However, the Tau-c values are very low or insignificant.

campaigns in any national daily newspaper in Britain are weaker partisan than those who do not, let us look at Tables 5.2a and 5.2b.

First, all the BES surveys used the traditional question used in numerous surveys for tapping partisanship, although this kind of questions has been called into question in a number of studies or not seen as an ideal for cross-national comparative study of the concept of party identification (Budge, Crewe, and Farlie, 1976). The BES survey question wording in 1987 was: 'Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal, Social Democrat (IF SCOTLAND: Nationalist/IF WALES: Placid Cymru) or what)?' However, this question is not the only variable in the BES surveys that asks about partisanship, a second question in all the BES surveys asked the respondents if they identified with a party: 'Would you call yourself a "very strong" (name of the party), "fairly strong" or "not very strong"?'³ However, in this study, partisanship strength is measured or operationalized by examining voters' responses to the second question in the BES surveys: 'Would you call yourself a "very strong" (name of the party), "fairly strong" or "not very strong"?' According to the BES, in 1987, 32.7% of the respondents claimed that they were "very" or "fairly" strong supporters of the Conservative party, 25% said they were "very" or "fairly" supporters of the Labour party, while 10.4% said this of the Alliance party (compare, Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991). These figures can be compared to the National Election Studies, NES, 18% of the respondents in 1988 United States presidential election describing themselves

³ Although the wording of the party identification strength item differed somewhat in some of the BES election years; however, the year-to-year wording are basically similar.

as "strong" Democrats, 14% claiming to be "strong" Republicans, while 36% saying that they were independents, or independently inclined Democrats or Republicans (NES, 1988 data set).

Second, as I mentioned earlier, for each of the election years, I used watching/listening to PEBs or following the general election campaigns in a national newspaper to measure mass media use. The bivariate cross-tabulation of the two variables - mass media use and partisanship strength or intensity of partisanship are shown in Tables 5.2a and 5.2b. From these tables, on the average, over 46% of those who watched/listened identified 'very strongly' or 'fairly strongly' with a political party in Great Britain. The tables, therefore, suggest that the voters who followed the elections campaigns on radio and television or in any national daily newspapers were more likely to identify and identify strongly with a political party than those who did not.

Third, the sign of the ordinal measure of association, gamma, tells if the association between two variables is in the direction predicted. In this case, if the sign is **positive**, then those who watched/listened to PEBs or followed the general election campaigns in the newspapers were indeed **more** likely than those who did not to be **strongly** tied to a political party; if the sign is **negative**, those who watched/listened to PEBs or followed the general election campaigns in the newspapers were **weaker** partisan than those who did not watch/listen to PEBs or follow the election campaigns. Next, I looked at the values of the gamma to see whether they are statistically significant at the traditional .05 level of significance.

Finally, Tables 5.2a and 5.2b present the results of this procedure, which

Viewers: VIEWERS who watched or listened to PEBs				Viewers: READERS who followed the election		
	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1964 Election						
Very strong	48.0	45.1		48.7	40.3	
Fairly strong	41.4	39.8		40.2	45.4	
Not v. strong	10.6	15.1		11.1	14.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1278)	(397)	*	(1377)	(293)	*
Gamma = 0.08 Tau-c = 0.04.				Gamma = 0.15; Tau-c = 0.05		
1966 Election						
Very strong	49.7	42.1		48.2	45.6	
Fairly strong	41.9	41.5		41.6	42.8	
Not v. strong	8.4	16.5		10.2	11.6	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1383)	(492)	***	(1477)	(395)	
Gamma = 0.18 Tau-c = 0.08.				Gamma = 0.05; Tau-c = 0.02		
1970 Election						
Very strong	54.2	47.2		54.1	47.5	
Fairly strong	36.1	39.4		35.8	40.2	
Not v. strong	9.7	13.3		10.1	12.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(878)	(345)	*	(882)	(341)	
Gamma = 0.14 Tau-c = 0.06.				Gamma = 0.12; Tau-c = 0.06		
1983 Election						
Very strong	26.5	17.4		27.5	18.4	
Fairly strong	48.1	42.7		49.0	42.3	
Not v. strong	25.4	39.9		23.5	39.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2650)	(562)	***	(2300)	(912)	***
Gamma = 0.27 Tau-c = 0.10.				Gamma = 0.28; Tau-c = 0.15		
1987 Election						
Very strong	22.3	16.4		23.5	16.3	
Fairly	49.4	34.4		49.7	40.4	
Not v. strong	28.3	49.2		26.9	43.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2786)	(567)	***	(2341)	(1011)	***
Gamma = 0.31 Tau-c = 0.11.				Gamma = 0.28; Tau-c = 0.15		
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.						

Table 5.2b: Party identification strength by mass media use, 1970-74 and 1979^a

Voters: VIEWERS who watched/listened to PEBs					
	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb.) Election					
Very strong	69.1	52.0	48.2	63.6	
Fairly strong	22.3	36.7	41.3	25.5	
Not very strong	8.6	11.4	10.5	10.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(372)	(766)	(816)	(55)	***
Gamma = 0.15; Tau-c = 0.09					
1974 (Oct.) Election					
Very strong	67.1	53.4	46.3	51.6	
Fairly strong	24.7	37.1	42.9	28.1	
Not very strong	8.2	9.4	10.8	20.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(365)	(741)	(779)	(64)	***
Gamma = 0.19; Tau-c = 0.11.					
1979 Election					
Very strong	38.0	22.2	12.2	22.1	
Fairly strong	44.1	55.3	53.1	41.2	
Not very strong	17.9	22.5	34.7	36.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(374)	(785)	(360)	(204)	***
Gamma = 0.27; Tau-c = 0.17.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

Table 5.2b (cont'd).^c

Voters: READERS who followed the election					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^d	χ^2
1974 (Feb.) Election					
Very strong	71.6	54.8	48.9	55.2	
Fairly strong	20.5	36.1	39.7	27.6	
Not very strong	7.8	9.0	11.3	17.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(268)	(664)	(1014)	(58)	***
Gamma = 0.19; Tau-c = 0.10.					
1974 (Oct.) Election					
Very strong	68.1	54.8	48.2	42.4	
Fairly strong	23.7	36.3	40.9	42.4	
Not very strong	8.1	8.9	10.9	15.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(270)	(661)	(942)	(66)	***
Gamma = 0.19; Tau-c = 0.10.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^c In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow newspapers for news and comments about politics - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^d % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all'.

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

examines the linkage between mass media use and strength of partisanship during the general election campaigns in Great Britain between 1964 to 1987. As the tables demonstrate, the majority of mass media users were stronger partisans than non-media users, however, the differences are statistically significant far beyond the .05 level for television and radio than for newspaper users in all the general election years.

In short, in all eight general election years, watching/listening to PEBs is moderately positive and statistically significantly related to the strength of party identification, gamma ranging between .08 in 1964 to .31 in 1987. In seven of the eight BES studies, voters were asked about their newspaper readership or how closely they followed the elections in any daily newspaper: readership was statistically significant at the .05 level in five out of the seven elections. Among newspaper readers, media use and partisanship strength showed a gamma .31 and p-value less than .001 - a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between mass media use and strength of partisanship (gamma .31; $p < 0.001$).

Clearly, it is therefore safe to say from these figures, that in all the election years, that mass media use during election campaigns is positively related to partisanship. In other word, mass media use during elections is associated with stronger party identification rather than weaker affiliation; and, that the relationship between the two are statistically significant.

However, from the tables presented here, we can see that in most of the general election years, the results were in the opposite direction of the hypothesized relationship between mass media use and degree of partisanship: voters who used the media during

elections were more partisan than those who did not. In all the general election years (except for newspaper readership), this relationship was statistically significant, while in no election year was it not significant nor was there any case of a significant relationship in the hypothesized direction based on these tables.

Furthermore, from this simple test, the overall patterns are very clear. Compared with the voters who watched/listened to PEBs in Great Britain and those who did not; those who watched/listened to PEBs or followed the elections in any newspapers were by far more likely to identify or 'very strongly' identify with a political party - from a very negligible gamma of 0.08 in 1964, to a very moderate gamma 0.27 in 1983 and a moderate gamma 0.31 in 1987. One plausible explanation for this observation, as I pointed out in chapter four and as will become obvious later in this chapter, is that most newspapers in Great Britain are partisan in both their editorials and pro-party stance, with the majority being pro-Conservative Party. When a newspaper in Britain is not pro-Conservative, the majority of the readers tend to belong to parties other than the Conservative party. Indeed, the fact that most newspapers readers in Britain are by far more likely to identify or 'very strongly' identify with a political party seems to support the uses and gratifications research tradition.⁴ So, one noticeable trends from this observation is that, over time in Britain, there has been an increased reliance on the

⁴ The mass media uses and gratifications model, as I noted in chapter three, begins with an 'active rather than a passive' audience (Swanson, 1979:41) that deliberately uses the media to achieve specific goals. The model posits, for example, that this active audience seeks information from the media to reinforce their political attitudes and choices. The British newspapers through their editorials and outright partisan support for a political party seem to serve this purpose among newspaper readers (Compare, for instance, Blumler and McQuail, 1968).

media, probably for the information the voters needed for making decision or for reinforcing their pre-existing views during election campaigns.

However, what is not very clear is whether the increased use or reliance on the media for information is the result of the weakening party identification or whether the media have weakened party identification strength. For one thing, over the years, general election campaigns have become more personalized (especially in the recent election in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992) due in part to increased use of the media (especially television) during election campaigns. Today's voters see the faces of the candidates making speeches on television everyday during election campaigns (Semetko, et al., 1991). Lots of media coverage of the elections, lots of the PEBs and news bulletins; yet, at the same time, there has been no increase in the voters' knowledge about the candidates and their stands on the issues (Converse and Pierce, 1986, Smith, 1989,) and no increase in partisanship. However, a higher proportion of the voters have perceived a "great deal" of differences between the political parties in Great Britain, from about 48% in 1964, dropping to 33% in 1970 and picking up to an all time high of 84.6% in 1987 (Figure 5.1).

Past studies of the relationship between partisanship and other possible independent variables have concluded that a factor that has contributed to the weakening of party identification, for example, in the United States is the increased use of primaries before presidential elections. But writing well before all the political reforms that lead to the current primary system in the United States, V. O. Key, Jr., (1958:376) hypothesized that: 'By permitting more effective direct appeals by individual politicians

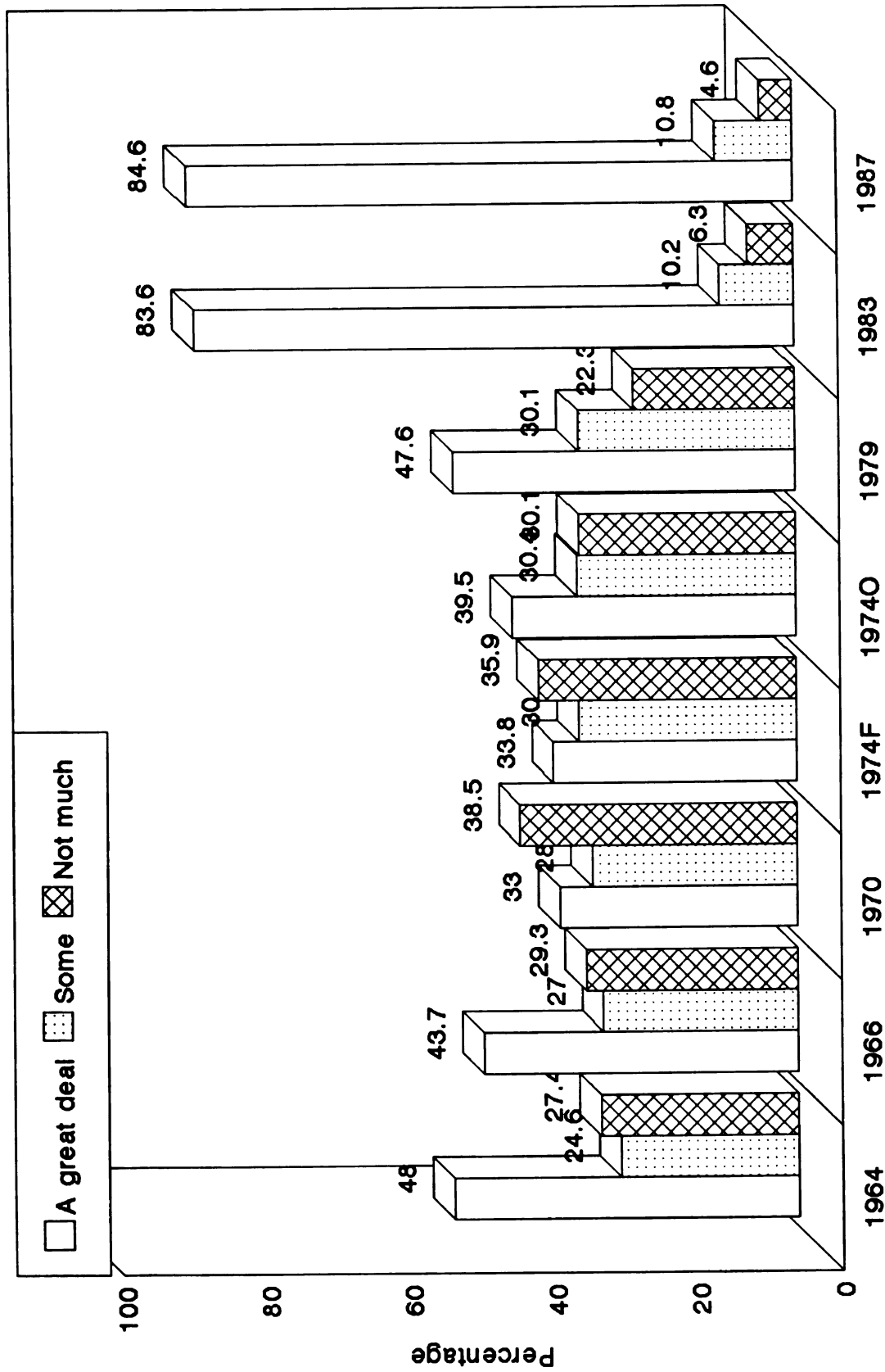


Figure 5.1: Perceived difference between parties

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

to the party membership, the primary system freed forces driving toward the disintegration of party organizations and the construction of factions and cliques attached to the ambitions of individual leaders.'

One would expect direct effects now that a more forceful phenomenon - the mass media, that are capable of doing what Key feared - direct face to face communication with the voters - as politicians using the media, now bypass the party organizations and appeal to the voters directly. One would expect therefore a much more weakening of the party system as a result of increased mass media use during election campaigns. However, this seems not to be true from the forgoing discussion. This observation provides a counter evidence that media use have decreased party identification. However, because the impact of the media in Britain and in many countries throughout the world has been dramatic, one would suspect that the decline of party identification in the last twenty-eight years, or the variation in individual party identification between elections is as a result of the mass media or prominence during election campaigns.

Again, in Britain, we have also noticed continued high proportion of the voters who care about the outcome of the elections, an increase in the proportion of those who watch/listen to PEBs in Britain or follow the elections in the newspapers (or use the media for information during election), but a decrease in interest in politics and a decline in political party identification. In short, voters in Britain generally care about the outcome of the elections and follow the general election campaigns closely in the media, but express that they are not interested in politics as shown in Figure 5.2. Apparently, they are very cynical of politics and distrustful of politicians as well.

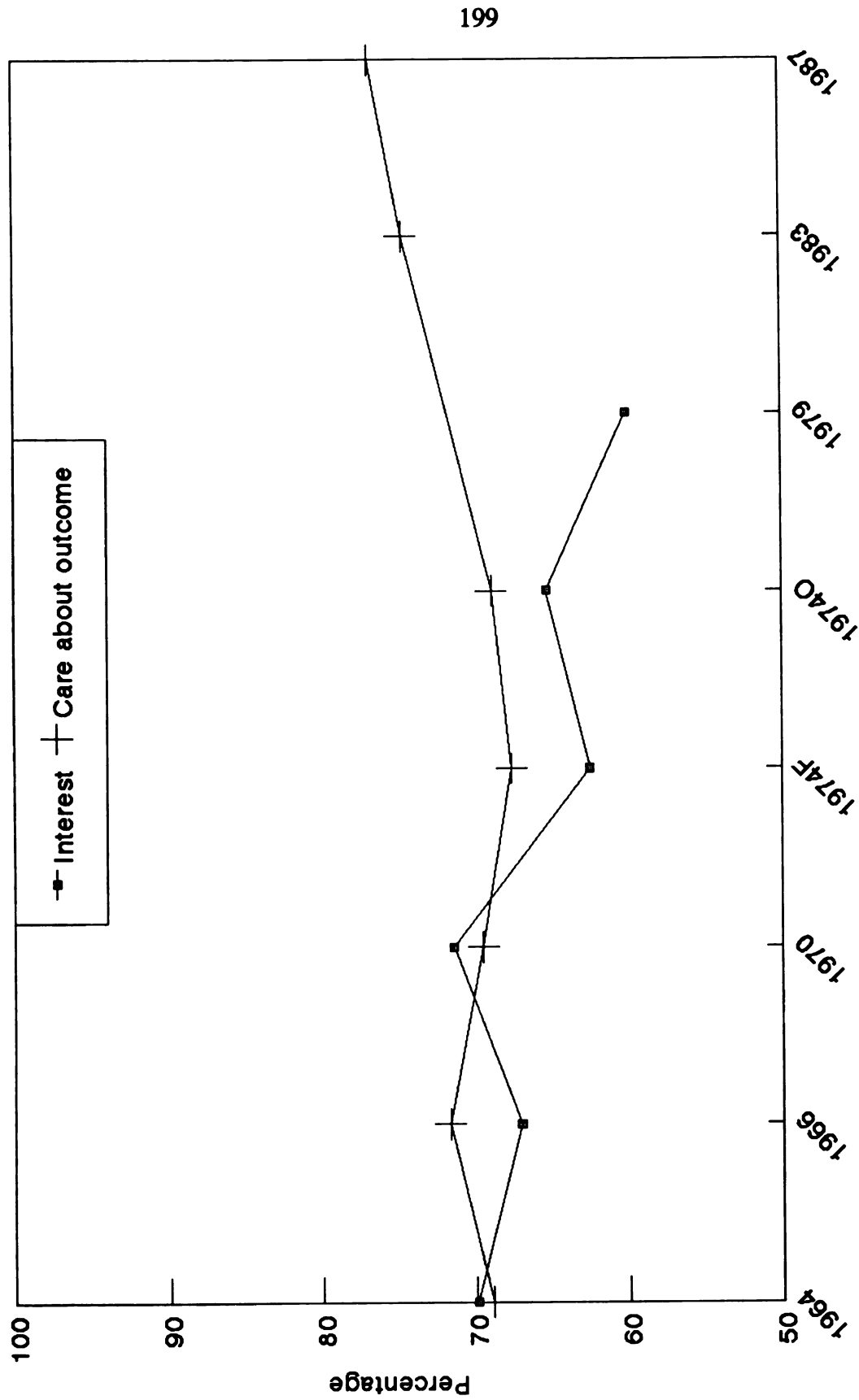


Figure 5.2: Interest in politics 1964-1987

Source: BES

Table 5.3a: Voting by mass media use, 1964-1970, 1983-1987

Year	Voters who watched/listened			Voters who followed the election in a newspaper		
	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1964 Election						
Voted	89.8	84.2		89.6	83.2	
Did not vote	10.2	15.8		10.4	16.8	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1365)	(455)	***	(1476)	(339)	***
Gamma = 0.25 Tau-c = 0.14.				Gamma = 0.27; Tau-c = 0.15		
1966 Election						
Voted	87.4	74.2		85.2	78.7	
Did not vote	12.6	25.8		14.8	21.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1496)	(581)	***	(1617)	(456)	***
Gamma = 0.41; Tau-c = 0.11.				Gamma = 0.22; Tau-c = 0.12.		
1970 Election						
Voted	88.4	72.7		84.9	80.9	
Did not vote	11.6	27.3		15.1	19.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(957)	(396)	***	(976)	(377)	
Gamma = 0.48; Tau-c = 0.13.				Gamma = 0.14; Tau-c = 0.13.		
1983 Election						
Voted	87.2	67.4		87.5	73.3	
Did not vote	12.8	32.6		12.5	26.7	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(3177)	(773)	***	(2776)	(1175)	***
Gamma = 0.53; Tau-c 0.12.				Gamma = 0.44; Tau-c = 0.12.		
1987 Election						
Voted	88.5	76.1		89.9	78.1	
Did not vote	11.5	23.9		10.1	21.9	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(3099)	(725)	***	(2591)	(1234)	***
Gamma = 0.41; Tau-c = 0.08.				Gamma = 0.43; Tau-c = 0.10.		
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 1; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.						

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 1; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 5.3b: Voting by mass media use, 1974 and 1979^a

Voters who watched/listened PEBs					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb) Election					
Voted	96.0	91.1	84.7	74.1	
Did not vote	4.0	8.9	15.3	25.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(397)	(862)	(1023)	(85)	***
Gamma = 0.41; Tau-c = 0.11.					
1974 (Oct) Election					
Voted	90.3	89.1	81.4	76.2	
Did not vote	9.7	10.9	18.6	23.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(404)	(833)	(962)	(84)	***
Gamma = 0.28; Tau-c = 0.07.					
1979 Election					
Voted	93.0	90.0	79.4	67.9	
Did not vote	7.0	10.0	20.6	32.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(385)	(847)	(399)	(253)	***
Gamma = 0.39; Tau-c = 0.11.					
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 3; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.					

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

Table 5.3b (cont'd).^c

Voters who followed the election in a newspaper					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^d	χ^2
1974 (Feb)					
Voted	95.8	92.5	85.7	73.7	
Did not vote	4.2	7.5	14.3	26.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(284)	(746)	(1237)	(95)	***
Gamma = 0.42; Tau-c = 0.10.					
1974 (Oct)					
Voted	91.2	90.4	81.6	73.1	
Did not vote	8.8	9.6	18.4	26.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(295)	(731)	(1155)	(93)	***
Gamma = 0.34; Tau-c = 0.08.					
1979					
Voted	93.0	90.0	79.4	67.9	
Did not vote	7.0	10.0	20.6	32.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0		
Number	(385)	(847)	(399)	(253)	***
Gamma = 0.39; Tau-c = 0.11.					
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 3; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.					

^c In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow newspapers for news and comments about politics - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^d % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all'.

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

Table 5.3a presents another dominant and very clear trend. As a group, voters who followed the election campaigns on radio and television are not less likely than newspaper readers to exercise their rights to vote in all the general elections. However, there are usually differences in political participation between newspaper readers and television viewers in the literature. These differential levels of participation have been explained in terms of the characteristics of the readers and viewers. Newspaper readers tend to be well educated, higher class and often Conservative party identifiers; while television viewers tend to be lower class, the young and the unemployed who do not always participate in politics.

So, we expect television viewers in Britain to be less likely to vote and newspaper readers to be more likely to vote. However, in Britain voters who followed the election campaigns on television (and many watched the PEBs) were similar to voters who followed the elections in the newspapers in exercising their rights to vote. All the eight election year comparisons show χ^2 results significance with p-value as high as .001 (the only exception, in fact, being among newspaper readers in 1970 general election). However, in 1983 and 1987 general elections, voters who followed the elections on television were less likely to vote than those who followed the elections in the newspapers.

Furthermore, Tables 5.3b presents the results of the heavy, medium and light media users in February 1974, October 1974 and May 1979. In these three elections, voters were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely, and just once in a while?' Using these categorizations -

"high", "medium" and "low" to represent "heavy", "medium" and "light" media users, respectively; Tables 5.3b show that "heavy" media users are more likely than "light" media users to say they voted in all three general elections. For example, in February 1974 general election, 95.8% of heavy media users claimed that they voted, 92.5% of medium users voted, while 85.7% of light media users claimed that they voted. In all three elections, the direction of the relationship is positively and statistically significant. Except in October 1974 general election, the measure of association between the variables (gamma .30 to .44) are moderately high and statistically significant. However, Morgan and Shanahan (1992) had argued that there are strong grounds to expect heavy television viewers in the United States to be less likely to vote than light viewers. They cite a study by Lemert (1981) that argue that since media coverage during elections tends not to provide 'mobilizing information', it can decrease political participation. However, in Britain, turnout has always been higher than in the United States - Figure 5.3.

Secondly, some scholars in the United States (O'Keefe and Mendelsohn, 1978), claim that the declining salience of political parties and the rise of the commercial press have contributed to the depoliticization of the American public, for the simple reason that newspapers are more critical of the candidates and the political process, and as a result readers are more likely to be non-voters. These scholars speculate that the critical attitude of the newspaper editorials toward the candidates and the political process have the tendency of corroding the readers' sense of civic obligation and even of the social desirability of voting. Paradoxically, newspaper readers tend to be highly educated who are known to be active participants in the electoral process.

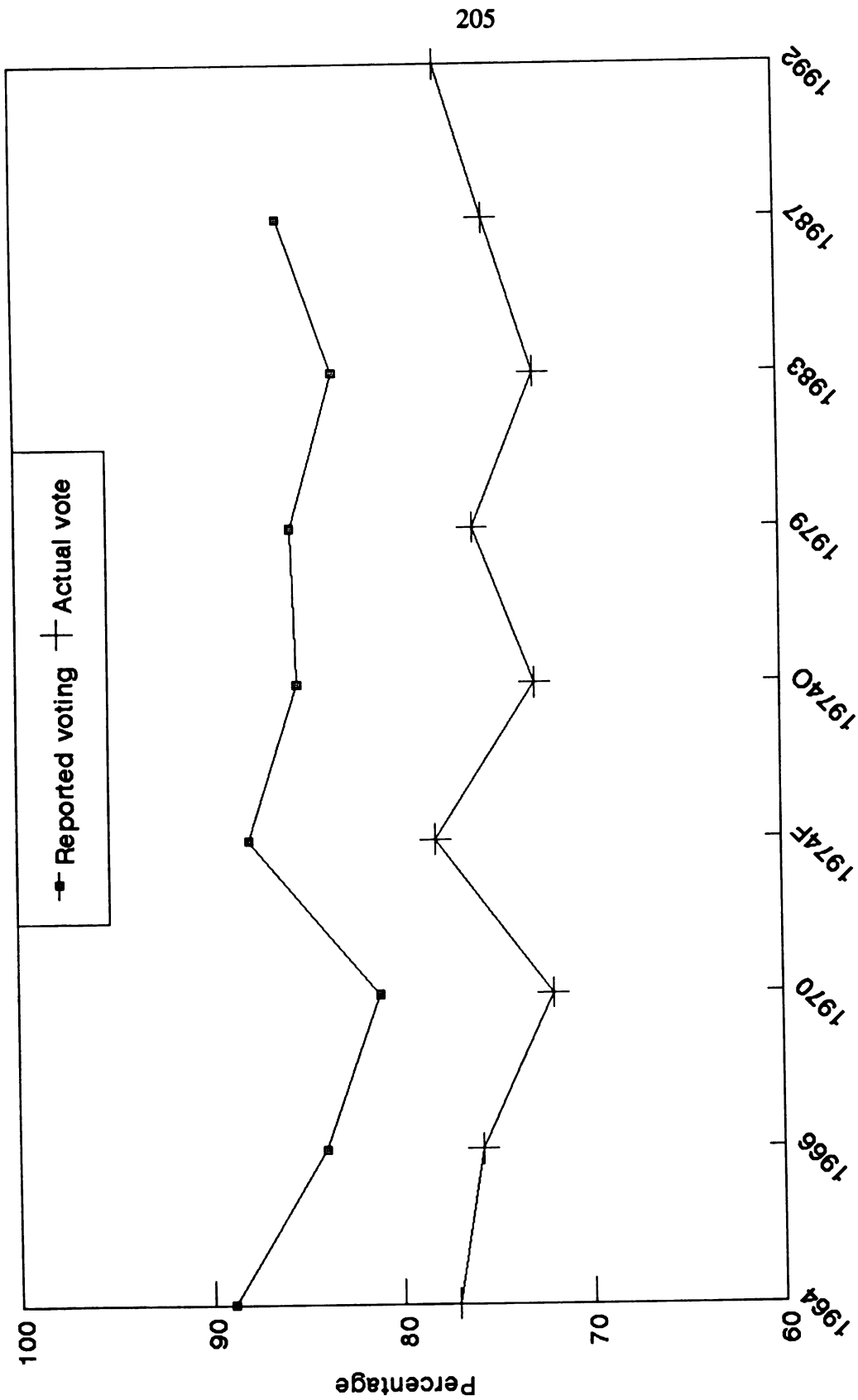


Figure 5.3: Voter turnout in Britain 1964-1992

Source: BES and Butler and Kavanagh (1992).

Using the 1960, 1964 and 1968 presidential elections in the United States, for example, Robinson (1976) found that voters who relied more on television news during election campaigns lacked political efficacy. His main argument is that television news coverage fosters a political 'malaise' by virtue of its repetitive negative portrayal of the candidates and the political process. O'Keefe and Mendelsohn (1978) seem to agree with him when they argued that non-voters who pay more attention to political news on television are more likely to claim that they did not vote because they distrust the candidates or are cynical of the political process and have low political efficacy. Their findings seem to support the claim of Lazarsfeld and Merton (1974) that mass media serve as 'narcotizing dysfunction'. Besides, some scholars have argued that because the quantity of information presented to the voters in the media are so great, that the voters come to mistake the process of 'keeping informed' for any kind of actual social action. The result, they argue, is that the voters tend to feel complacent, apathy toward the political process and depoliticized or demobilized to participate.

The results presented in Table 5.3a and 5.3b contradicts some of these findings. Overall, on the average, over 85 percent of voters who followed the elections in the media in each of the BES election years said they voted. This figure is slightly higher than the actual turn out in all the British general elections, Figure 5.3. From these figures, it seems that voters in Britain do indeed over report turnout, like voters in the United States. In the United States, over-reporting of voting among the voters (in the NES after each election) has been documented by several studies (Traugott and Katosh, 1979). Part of the reason for over-reporting, in the United States, has been attributed

to the social desirability of voting. Because, voting is a socially desirable thing to do, voters in the States tend to over report voting in the general elections. The same could be said of the voters in Britain, as over reporting apparently seems to be a problem in Great Britain as well and in the United States (Swaddle and Heath, 1989). In all the general elections, the figures or the proportions of the voters who used the media for information and claimed that they voted does not closely correspond to turnout.

One more point needs to be made here. In the literature, the tendency for over-reporting in the US has been documented and explained in several ways. One explanation is that non-validated voters in the United States are essentially similar to validated voters on their demographic and attitudinal characteristics (Hill and Hurley, 1984). Although Abramson and Clagget, (1984), observed a major demographic difference - the tendency of blacks in the United States to over-report voting more than whites; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, (1986), seem to suggest that the over-reporting can be explained in terms of the respondent's level of education, political efficacy, and commitment to the American democratic system or the 'regime norms'.

From the foregoing, it is fair to conclude from the figures presented in Tables 5.3a and 5.3b, that British voters who reported viewing/listening to the PEBs or following the election campaigns in a daily newspaper during election campaigns were more likely to vote than non-viewers and non-readers to vote. But in a recent study in the United States, Morgan and Shanahan (1992:7) argued that 'the many negative images of politicians, the distractions from the political concerns, potentially engendered by 'escapist' entertainment, and so on, all suggest that heavy television viewing is more

Table 5.4a: Voters' voting behavior by mass media use, 1964-1970, 1983-1987

Voters: Viewers/listeners' voting behavior				Voters: Readers' voting behavior		
Year	% Yes	% No	x^2	% Yes	% No	x^2
1964 (Labour won)						
Conservative	40.2	48.1		43.4	36.5	
Labour	50.1	37.4		46.6	49.5	
Liberal	9.7	14.5		10.0	14.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.1	
Number	(1201)	(372)	***	(1292)	(277)	*
Gamma = -.07; Tau-c = -.03.				Gamma = 0.14; Tau-c = 0.02.		
1966 (Labour won)						
Conservative	38.6	43.4		40.2	38.8	
Labour	54.1	45.8		51.5	53.7	
Liberal	7.3	10.8		8.3	8.0	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1280)	(424)	***	(1352)	(350)	
Gamma = -.04; Tau-c = -.02.				Gamma = 0.02; Tau-c = 0.01.		
1970 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	48.5	54.3		49.8	50.5	
Labour	42.1	38.3		41.0	41.4	
Liberal	9.4	7.4		9.2	8.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(822)	(282)		(807)	(297)	
Gamma = -.11; Tau-c = -.05.				Gamma = -.02; Tau-c = -.01.		
1983 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	45.8	43.4		47.2	40.1	
Labour	28.9	33.6		28.2	33.7	
Liberal	25.3	23.0		24.5	26.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		99.9	99.9	
Number	(2675)	(479)		(2339)	(815)	***
Gamma = 0.007; Tau-c 0.002.				Gamma = 0.10; Tau-c = 0.05.		
1987 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	44.3	45.2		46.4	43.3	
Labour	30.9	35.6		30.1	34.0	
Liberal	24.8	19.2		23.5	23.7	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(2637)	(522)	**	(2250)	(908)	*
Gamma = -.06; Tau-c -.03.				Gamma = 0.06; Tau-c = 0.03		

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 5.4b: Voters' voting behavior by mass media use, 1974 and 1979^a

Voters: Viewers/listeners' voting behavior					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 Feb. (Conservative won) ^c					
Conservative	38.4	42.5	35.2	42.9	
Labour	44.6	38.7	43.5	37.5	
Liberal	17.0	18.8	21.3	19.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(365)	(750)	(795)	(56)	
Gamma = 0.06; Tau-c = 0.04.					
1974 (Oct.) (Labour won)					
Conservative	37.5	37.7	33.1	37.1	
Labour	45.8	41.5	43.2	37.1	
Liberal	16.7	20.8	22.9	25.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(351)	(708)	(715)	(62)	
Gamma = 0.07; Tau-c = 0.04.					
1979 (Conservative won)					
Conservative	48.3	49.1	48.3	38.4	
Labour	38.6	35.9	37.4	51.0	
Liberal	13.1	15.0	14.2	10.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(350)	(725)	(302)	(151)	*
Gamma = 0.03; Tau-c = 0.01.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

^c Conservative party won the general election by 38%; while Labour won 37% of the votes, but won 301 seats in parliament (four seats more than the Conservative party).

Table 5.4b (cont'd).^a

Voters: Readers voting behavior					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 Feb. (Conservative won) ^c					
Conservative	43.5	45.9	33.6	26.7	
Labour	42.7	36.4	43.7	58.3	
Liberal	13.7	17.6	22.7	15.0	
Total	99.9	99.9	100.0	100.0	
Number	(262)	(653)	(984)	(60)	***
Gamma = 0.17; Tau-c = 0.10.					
1974 (Oct.) (Labour won)					
Conservative	42.4	42.7	33.1	23.9	
Labour	43.5	38.9	46.3	59.7	
Liberal	14.1	18.5	20.6	16.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(262)	(633)	(864)	(67)	***
Gamma = 0.14, Tau-c 0.08.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 3; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, the question was: 'How closely did you follow the General Election campaign on television or in the newspapers or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?'

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

^c Conservative party won the election in February 1974 by 38%; while Labour won 37% of the votes, but won 301 seats in parliament (four seats more than the Conservative party).

Table 5.5a: Non-voters' voting behavior by mass media use, 1964-197, 1983-1987

Non-voters: Viewer/listeners who would have voted for the winning party				Non-voters: Readers who would have voted for the winning party		
Year	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1964 (Labour won)						
Conservative	46.0	44.6		45.2	47.8	
Labour	45.2	41.1		45.2	39.1	
Liberal	8.7	14.3		9.6	13.0	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(126)	(56)		(135)	(46)	
Gamma = 0.07; Tau-c = 0.04.				Gamma = -.009; Tau-c = -.004.		
1966 (Labour won)						
Conservative	38.1	40.7		40.9	34.2	
Labour	50.0	53.4		49.0	58.2	
Liberal	11.9	5.9		10.1	7.6	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(160)	(118)		(198)	(79)	
Gamma = -.10; Tau-c = -.06.				Gamma = 0.08; Tau-c = 0.04.		
1970 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	44.2	46.3		45.2	45.3	
Labour	46.2	48.4		47.4	46.9	
Liberal	9.6	5.3		7.4	7.8	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(104)	(95)		(135)	(64)	
Gamma = 0.05; Tau-c = 0.03.				Gamma = 0.002; Tau-c = 0.001.		
1983 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	47.8	42.9		45.2	46.9	
Labour	28.6	35.0		30.2	31.7	
Liberal	23.6	22.2		24.6	21.4	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(364)	(203)		(305)	(262)	
Gamma = 0.05; Tau-c = 0.03.				Gamma = -.05; Tau-c = -.03.		
1987 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	47.7	47.8		50.8	44.1	
Labour	31.9	34.1		31.8	33.8	
Liberal	20.3	18.1		17.4	22.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(310)	(138)		(
Gamma = -.02; Tau-c = -.03.				Gamma = 0.12; Tau-c = 0.08.		
NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.						

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 2; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 5.5b: Non-voters' voting behavior by mass media use, 1974^a

Non-voters: Viewers/listeners who would have voted for the winning party					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 Feb. (Conservative won) ^c					
Conservative	42.9	39.7	24.8	31.3	
Labour	42.9	44.4	48.1	50.0	
Liberal	14.3	15.9	27.1	18.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(14)	(63)	(133)	(16)	
Gamma = 0.21; Tau-c = 0.11.					
1974 (Oct.) (Labour won)					
Conservative	35.1	41.6	30.1	41.2	
Labour	29.7	39.0	45.8	47.1	
Liberal	35.1	19.5	24.1	11.8	
Total	99.9	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(37)	(76)	(161)	(17)	
Gamma = 0.013; Tau-c = 0.007.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

^c Conservative party won the general election in February 1974 by 38%; while Labour won 37% of the votes, but won 301 seats in parliament (four seats more than the Conservative party).

Table 5.5b (cont'd).^a

Non-voters: Readers who would have voted for the winning party				
	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b
1974 Feb. (Conservative won)^c				
Conservative	25.0	45.7	28.6	15.8
Labour	41.7	39.1	47.6	63.2
Liberal	33.3	15.2	23.8	21.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(12)	(46)	(147)	(19)
Gamma = 0.17; Tau-c = 0.09.				
1974 (Oct.) (Labour won)				
Conservative	56.5	42.9	31.2	22.7
Labour	30.4	41.2	41.3	59.0
Liberal	13.0	15.9	27.5	18.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(23)	(63)	(183)	(22)
Gamma = 0.25; Tau-c = 0.13.				

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

^c Conservative party won the general election in February 1974 by 38%; while Labour won 37% of the votes, but won 301 seats in parliament (four seats more than the Conservative party).

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

likely to promote disaffection and a sense of futility of voting (or of lack of a need to vote).' They also concluded that 'heavy television viewers are less likely to say they voted in US presidential elections.' However, my finding while agreeing with the finding of Blumler and McLeod (1974) in Great Britain; in fact, contradicts the finding of Morgan and Shanahan (1992) and those of many other scholars in the United States. Mass media use during election campaigns in Great Britain seems indeed to be associated with voting in the general election from the figures so far presented. I shall explore this later in the next chapter using a series of multivariate logistic regression techniques to identify the determinants of respondents' voting behavior.

Furthermore, Tables 5.4a to 5.5b present the associations between media use and voting behavior. The patterns again seem very clear; although the relationships in Table 5.5a and 5.5b (except in October 1974) are not statistically significant. Of course, Table 5.5a and 5.5b represent non-voters who may not have developed very strong party identification. Overall, there is a general trend in Tables 5.4a to 5.5b. A higher proportion of those who followed the election in the media, voted for the winning party, more than those who did not follow the elections in any medium. The only exception being in October 1974 among non-voters. One would have expected those who did not follow, who were probably less interested in the elections to vote with less consistency, that is, voting one party in one election and another party in another election (in other words, being consistently inconsistent). However, those who did not follow the elections in the media probably voted for the party they identified with rather than voting for the winning party. As will be seen in Table 5.6, there is a strong positive relationship

between partisanship and voting for the two major parties in Britain.

In other words, those who used the media were more likely than those who did not to vote for the winning party or to switch their votes from one election to another. Perhaps, they were influenced to vote the way they did by the message of the winning party. Perhaps, the PEBs mobilized the party faithful and floating voters to vote for the winning party, instead of voting for the party they usually identified with. According to Noelle-Neumann's (1974) "spiral of silence" theory, heavy television viewer, for example, are more likely to report that they voted for the winning party. Morgan and Shanahan (1992:7) argue that perhaps, 'heavy television viewers are highly volatile group, whose political loyalties are particularly susceptible to the ebbs and flow of shifts on the popularity of leaders according to political expediency.' In short, the media may have encouraged split voting among the British electorate, although it is hard to tell from the available data.

But, one thing is very clear, Table 5.6: the British electorate seem to be rational voters who use the general elections to express their preferences. In all of the eight election years in the BES studies, there were strong positive relationship between partisanship and voting. Overwhelmingly, voters who identified with either the Labour or the Conservative party voted for these two parties in each of the general elections since 1964. This does not mean that there were no Labour or Conservative identifiers who voted for the party they did not identify with. In all eight general elections, Labour and Conservative identifiers often voted for the party they identified with. However, the same could not be said of SDP/Liberal/Alliance. The majority of the electorate who

Table 5.6: Voting behavior and partisanship in Britain 1964-1987.

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1964 (Labour won)				
Conservative	94.4	1.5	19.3	
Labour	2.7	96.6	16.6	
Liberal	2.9	1.9	64.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1	
Number	(628)	(683)	(187)	***
Gamma = 0.87; Tau-c = 0.73.				
1966 (Labour won)				
Conservative	94.3	1.3	17.8	
Labour	3.1	96.9	26.1	
Liberal	2.6	1.9	56.1	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(628)	(683)	(187)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1970 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	96.1	3.6	22.4	
Labour	2.1	92.5	14.3	
Liberal	1.8	3.9	63.3	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	
Number	(487)	(441)	(98)	***
Gamma = 0.90; Tau-c = 0.75.				
1974 February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	89.3	2.0	12.4	
Labour	2.1	89.2	8.3	
Liberal	8.7	8.8	79.3	
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(774)	(848)	(266)	***
Gamma = 0.83; Tau-c = 0.68.				

Table 5.6: (cont'd).

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1974 October (Labour won)				
Conservative	90.7	1.6	12.8	
Labour	2.7	92.8	7.6	
Liberal	6.7	5.6	79.5	
Total	100.1	100.0	99.9	
Number	(675)	(792)	(288)	***
Gamma = 0.84; Tau-c = 0.69.				
1979 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	95.6	4.6	19.2	
Labour	1.4	87.7	9.3	
Liberal	2.9	7.7	71.4	
Total	99.0	100.0	99.9	
Number	(623)	(587)	(182)	***
Gamma = 0.87; Tau-c = 0.73.				
1983 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	95.3	4.5	12.1	
Labour	0.7	83.5	3.5	
Liberal	4.0	12.1	84.4	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(1198)	(1004)	(577)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.75.				
1987 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	90.8	4.4	12.6	
Labour	2.4	86.3	5.5	
Liberal	6.8	9.3	82.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1	
Number	(1246)	(994)	(549)	***

Gamma = 0.86; Tau-c = 0.73.

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 4; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

identified with the SDP/Liberal/Alliance, gave between 56% and 99% of their votes to the party they identified with in some years. While the majority of Labour and Conservative identifiers gave more than 85% of their votes to the party they identified with. From these figures and the foregoing discussion, it could be seen that there is a very strong positive relationship between direction of partisanship and general election vote in Great Britain.

In conclusion, it could be said that British voters are rational voters who use the general elections to express their party preferences not unlike the American voters. For one thing, the results in Table 5.6 show very strong positive relationship between voting and the direction of partisanship. As Table 5.6 shows, the percentage of voters who identified with Labour and Conservative parties voted for overwhelmingly for the party they identified with in all the general elections. Liberal/SDP/Alliance voters probably shifted vote from one election to another, as a result voted for the Liberal/SDP/Alliance between 56% and 84%.

Finally, overall, from Tables 5.6, there is a strong positive relationship between vote and direction of partisanship. But non-voters who followed the elections in the newspapers (Table 5.5a and 5.5b) were more likely than those who followed on the radio and television to vote for the winning party. The tendency of non-voters to overwhelmingly claim that they would have chosen the winning party seems to suggest that the media (radio, television and newspapers) may have been a factor in their decision rather than party affiliation and other socio-political factors.

A Preliminary Multiple Control

From the tables presented so far, the pattern between watching/listening to PEBs and strength of party identification seems to be positive and weak, although the relationship are significant. Overall, we see a general trend for people who watched/listened to PEBs or followed the election campaigns in a daily newspaper claiming that they identified more with Conservative party, except in the years Labour won the elections. In other words, voters who watched PEBs fairly consistently claimed that they identified more with the Conservative party - the party that has been in power more than Labour party in the past twenty-five years. However, the proportion of the voters who watched/listened to PEBs and identified with Labour in 1970 are higher than for the Conservative party and may explain or be a reflection of Labour's good showing in the 1974 February general election. Overall, voters who watched or listened to PEBs in Great Britain generally are more likely to report that they identified with the Conservative than with Labour party in the past few decades. These patterns are generally similar even among union members, who followed the PEBs, as we shall see in chapter six, although union members are generally well known for being pro-Labour. Perhaps, union members in Great Britain by a long tradition claim they support Labour party but vote for the winning party.

One important preliminary multiple control test needs to be performed here. Early empirical research on voting in the United States, in the past, spent considerable amount of time examining the behavior of late deciders (Lazarsfeld, et al., 1949; Berslson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; and Campbell et al., 1960). Two studies in

Table 5.7a: Mass media use and late deciders voting behavior 1964-70, 1983-87.

Voting for winning party by mass media use						
Viewers: controlling for late deciders				Readers: controlling for late deciders		
	% Yes	% No	χ^2		% Yes	% No χ^2
<hr/>						
1964 (Labour won)						
Conservative	29.1	20.5			46.9	37.1
Labour	44.7	33.3			47.3	55.3
Liberal	20.6	10.0			5.8	7.6
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0
Number	(141)	(39)	*		(975)	(197) *
Gamma = 0.31.				Gamma = 0.18		
<hr/>						
1966 (Labour won)						
Conservative	34.9	31.7			33.3	35.4
Labour	44.2	40.0			44.7	37.5
Liberal	20.9	28.3			22.0	27.1
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0
Number	(129)	(60)			(141)	(48)
Gamma = -.12.				Gamma = 0.03.		
<hr/>						
1970 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	48.3	50.0			48.1	50.0
Labour	37.9	42.9			40.7	33.3
Liberal	13.8	7.1			11.1	16.7
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0
Number	(58)	(14)			(54)	(18)
Gamma = -.08.				Gamma = 0.02.		
<hr/>						
1983 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	31.0	38.2			32.9	30.7
Labour	19.6	26.4			20.0	22.3
Liberal	49.5	35.5			47.1	47.0
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0
Number	(562)	(110)	*		(456)	(215)
Gamma = -.20.				Gamma = 0.02.		
<hr/>						
1987 (Conservative won)						
Conservative	30.4	33.3			29.4	33.9
Labour	24.8	36.4			27.0	27.3
Liberal	44.8	30.2			43.5	38.8
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0
Number	(516)	(129)	**		(418)	(227)
Gamma = -.17.				Gamma = -.07.		

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 1; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$..

Table 5.7b: Mass media use and late deciders voting behavior 1974-1979.^a

Voting for the winning party by mass media use Viewers: controlling for late deciders					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb.) (Conservative won)					
Conservative	40.0	35.2	20.0	23.1	
Labour	31.7	30.1	39.5	30.8	
Liberal	28.3	34.7	40.5	46.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(60)	(176)	(190)	(13)	**
Gamma = 0.21.					
1974 (Oct.) (Labour won)					
Conservative	37.7	37.8	33.3	33.3	
Labour	39.3	32.1	37.9	41.7	
Liberal	23.0	30.1	28.8	25.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(61)	(156)	(153)	(12)	
Gamma = 0.06.					
1979 (Conservative won)					
Conservative	34.7	34.6	43.9	37.0	
Labour	44.0	37.4	28.0	50.0	
Liberal	21.3	28.0	28.0	13.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(75)	(214)	(82)	(46)	
Gamma = -.06.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

Table 5.7b: (cont'd).^a

Voting for the winning party by mass media use Readers: controlling for late deciders					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb.) (Labour won)					
Conservative	28.6	37.7	23.5	25.0	
Labour	40.0	26.0	37.8	50.0	
Liberal	31.4	36.3	38.7	25.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(35)	(146)	(238)	(16)	*
Gamma = 0.10.					
1974 (Oct.) (Conservative won)					
Conservative	39.5	34.9	33.5	27.8	
Labour	34.9	30.2	33.5	50.0	
Liberal	25.6	34.9	33.0	22.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(41)	(120)	(143)	(11)	
Gamma = 0.10.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

particular that addressed the effects of mass media on late deciders (Hofstetter and Buss, 1980 and Chaffee and Choe, 1980) arrived at two different conclusions. As a result, not very much has been known about later deciders in the literature.

In a recent study, Gopoian and Hadjiharalambous (1994) observed that late deciders in the United States are unique from the other voters in many ways. Gopoian and Hadjiharalambous (1994:76) observed that late deciders 'are less interested in the political outcome, less subject to conventional political forces, and far less predictable than other voters.' But, in Great Britain, there has been an increase in the proportion of late deciders during general elections over the years as we saw in chapter four. And, indeed, Miller, et al., (1990) present very strong evidence that the media in Britain, especially the newspapers had more influence than television on late deciders. Although they speculated that neither the prior partisanship stance of the newspapers nor that of the readers may have contributed to the change in support or the party they eventually voted.

However, one major observation from the bivariate analysis in Tables 5.7a and 5.7b is that the party that got a higher proportion of mass media users among late deciders in each of the eight general election years we have considered won the election. In the February 1974 general election, when Conservative party got a higher proportion of the viewers who were late deciders, the Conservative party won more popular vote, although Labour won more seats in parliament. Perhaps, media affects late deciders more than the literature has been able to show.

In conclusion, overall, in all the BES studies data, over 75 percent of all the

Table 5.8: National daily newspapers by direction of partisanship 1974, 1983-87.

Percentage national daily newspaper readership by partisan identifiers				
	Party Support ^a	Conservative	Labour	Liberal
		%	%	%
1974 (Feb) Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	15.6	45.0	29.6
Sun	Conservative	10.8	28.5	19.9
Mail	Conservative	16.1	6.1	8.8
Express	Conservative	35.8	14.5	18.1
Telegraph	Conservative	17.4	1.7	11.1
Guardian	Con/Lab/Liberal	0.9	3.5	9.3
The Times	Con/Liberal	2.5	0.7	3.2
Star	---	--	--	--
Today	---	--	--	--
Financial Times	Conservative	0.8	0.0	0.0
Total		99.9	100.0	100.0
1974 (Oct) Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	17.2	41.4	29.2
Sun	all-party coalition	11.1	30.8	19.3
Mail	Con/Lib. coalition	15.9	6.7	9.9
Express	Conservative	32.8	14.3	21.9
Telegraph	Conservative	18.8	2.3	9.9
Guardian	more Liberal	1.2	3.6	7.7
The Times	Con/Liberal	2.4	0.8	1.7
Star	---	--	--	--
Today	---	--	--	--
Financial Times	Conservative	0.7	0.2	0.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.8: (cont'd).

Percentage national daily newspaper readership by partisan identifiers				
	Party Support ^a	Conservative	Labour	Liberal
		%	%	%
1983 Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	11.7	42.4	24.3
Sun	Labour	15.0	25.0	13.4
Mail	Conservative	24.2	5.6	14.7
Express	Conservative	22.3	6.0	12.6
Telegraph	Conservative	0.1	0.1	0.5
Guardian	Conservative	3.0	0.8	5.1
The Times	Conservative	3.5	0.4	3.4
Star	Conservative	2.6	8.9	4.3
Today	Conservative	18.9	2.2	10.7
Financial Times	---	2.2	8.8	14.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
1987 Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	8.7	47.5	21.6
Sun	Conservative	17.6	17.2	13.3
Mail	Conservative	22.6	5.6	15.3
Express	Conservative	19.3	5.5	10.1
Telegraph	Conservative	18.5	1.5	9.8
Guardian	Labour	1.4	12.5	7.8
The Times	Conservative	4.6	0.6	5.2
Star	Conservative	1.9	6.1	3.5
Today	Con. coalition	1.6	0.9	3.5
Financial Times	Conservative	0.6	0.1	0.6
Independent	Independent	3.2	2.5	9.5
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: BES. Author's calculation, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991.

^a The party newspaper supported during the general election campaigns.

Table 5.9 National daily newspapers by strength of partisanship 1974 - 87.

Percentage of very strong, fairly strong and not very strong identifiers				
Party Support ^a		very strong	fairly strong	not very strong
		%	%	%
1974 February Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	31.3	33.2	26.3
Sun	Conservative	19.6	19.5	20.5
Mail	Conservative	11.0	10.1	9.6
Express	Conservative	23.2	23.5	21.2
Telegraph	Conservative	10.7	9.5	9.6
Guardian	Con/Lab/Liberal	2.2	2.5	7.7
The Times	Con/Liberal	1.4	1.5	4.5
Star	---	---	---	---
Financial Times	Conservative	0.7	0.2	0.6
Today	---	--	--	--
Independent	---	--	--	--
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
1974 October Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	31.0	29.1	26.5
Sun	all-party coalition	20.1	19.9	19.1
Mail	Con/Lib. coalition	11.4	11.0	11.8
Express	Conservative	24.0	22.5	20.6
Telegraph	Conservative	8.5	12.7	14.0
Guardian	more Liberal	3.4	3.0	5.1
The Times	Con/Liberal	1.4	1.2	2.9
Star	---	--	--	--
Financial Times	Conservative	0.3	0.6	0.0
Today	---	--	--	--
Independent	---	--	--	--
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.9 (cont'd).

Percentage of very strong, fairly strong and not very strong identifiers				
Party Support ^a		very strong	fairly strong	not very strong
		%	%	%
1983 Election				
Mirror/Record	Labour	25.7	24.0	28.3
Sun	Labour	18.2	16.8	20.8
Mail	Conservative	15.8	16.0	14.3
Express	Conservative	12.2	14.5	16.2
Telegraph	Conservative	0.2	0.2	0.2
Guardian	Conservative	2.4	2.8	2.4
The Times	Conservative	---	---	---
Star	Conservative	4.3	6.2	4.4
Financial Times	Conservative	8.3	7.6	5.7
Today	Conservative	12.9	12.0	7.7
Independent	---	--	--	--
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
1987				
Mirror/Record	Labour	28.0	22.9	22.8
Sun	Conservative	15.6	16.3	19.0
Mail	Conservative	15.4	15.4	15.1
Express	Conservative	12.2	12.7	13.0
Telegraph	Conservative	13.3	11.0	7.4
Guardian	Labour	8.0	7.7	4.1
The Times	Conservative	2.1	3.2	4.4
Star	Conservative	2.7	3.9	5.4
Financial Times	Conservative	0.6	0.3	0.6
Today	Con. coalition	0.8	1.7	2.3
Independent	Independent	1.3	4.8	6.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: BES. Author's calculation, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991.

^a The party newspaper supported during the general election campaigns.

respondents who watched/listened to PEBs or followed the election campaigns in a daily newspaper identified strongly or fairly strongly with a political party. However, the general view about party identification in Britain is that party identification has gone down over the last few decades, although voters, care very much about the outcome of the general elections, but are not very much interested in politics probably because of the negative portrayal of the candidates in the media. It seems that a large proportion of the voters who identify with and those who do not simply use the media for information not necessarily to make up their minds but to reinforce their pre-existing views about the political party they identify with. Voters who use the media for information during election campaigns are generally more likely to vote during general election. And, it is possible that media effects during election campaigns can be found among late deciders who are also rootless in partisanship or are highly volatile in their support.

Applying the Uses and Gratifications Model

Placed in a broader conceptual framework, the results presented so far seem to confirm in part the concept of "uses and gratifications" and the concept of "mainstream" effect. In the literature, the uses and gratifications as I noted earlier is defined as the tendency of the public to go to the media not so much as to acquire new information about the political world, but to support their pre-existing feelings about the party they identify with. For the past forty years or so, much research has been undertaken to explain why people use and what they expect or get from the media using the uses and gratifications model. In the literature, the uses and gratifications model (Swanson, 1979:41) posits that voters:

'are active rather than passive, mechanical responders as assumed by earlier effects approaches. In the uses and gratifications view, audience members actively form intentions, create expectations of mass media, and construct lines of action in order to achieve gratifications.'

Using the uses and gratifications model Zillman and Bryant (1985) came to the conclusion that there is some 'selectivity' by the voters as they approach the media and digest the content of the media. Although some scholars (Barwise and Ehrenbert, 1988) dispute the extent of the selectivity, however, there is a lot of evidence that suggests that audience selectivity of the media exists and is influenced by socio-political background (Blumler, 1979). This is more obvious in the Great Britain, where there is a correlation between the type of newspaper the individual in the society reads and his or her political party affiliation (Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985; Miller, 1991; and Miller, et al., 1990). For instance, Dunleavy and Husbands, (1985:115) observed that in 1983 general election, that the newspapers had some effects on the political attitudes and voting behavior of the British electorate when they concluded that: 'the Conservative vote is some 30 percentage lower amongst people primarily exposed to non-Tory messages than it is amongst readers of the Tory press, a high level of association that has few parallels amongst either social background or issue influences.'

The uses and gratifications model posits that voters are not passive consumers of media information but are active participants in the communication process. The BES data provide some evidence to support the uses and gratifications model. Conservative, Labour, Liberal/Alliance identifiers, all use the media during election campaigns. It seems that they use the medium that supports their party rather than the medium that does not support their party. These figures suggest or seem to point to the uses and

Table 5.10: Voting by party image, 1974, 1983 and 1987

Year	Voting and Conservative party image			χ^2
	% Extreme	% Moderate	% Neither	
1974 February				
Conservative	18.0	59.3	24.0	
Labour	59.8	22.1	48.5	
Liberal	22.2	18.6	27.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	***
Gamma = -.21.				
1974 October				
Conservative	15.7	57.0	32.2	
Labour	63.4	23.7	34.2	
Liberal	20.9	19.3	33.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	***
Gamma = -.31.				
1983				
Conservative	25.4	70.2	56.4	
Labour	41.4	15.2	17.3	
Liberal	33.2	14.5	26.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	***
Gamma = -.53.				
1987				
Conservative	21.1	71.9	61.1	
Labour	46.9	13.8	14.1	
Liberal	31.9	14.2	24.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	***

Gamma = -.57.

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 4; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 5.10: (cont'd)

Year	Voting and Labour party image			χ^2
	% Extreme	% Moderate	% Neither	
<hr/>				
1974 February				
Conservative	59.4	23.6	30.5	
Labour	18.8	57.4	42.4	
Liberal	21.8	18.9	27.1	
Total	39.1	47.6	13.3	***
<hr/>				
Gamma = 0.30.				
1974 October				
Conservative	51.2	19.7	33.3	
Labour	24.0	63.9	42.3	
Liberal	24.8	16.4	24.4	
Total	51.0	42.3	6.6	***
<hr/>				
Gamma = 0.24.				
1983				
Conservative	58.0	28.2	40.7	
Labour	14.4	52.0	28.4	
Liberal	15.0	19.8	30.9	
Total	54.4	37.5	8.1	***
<hr/>				
Gamma = 0.22.				
1987				
Conservative	58.0	25.8	47.7	
Labour	13.2	56.6	28.8	
Liberal	28.8	17.6	23.4	
Total	53.3	39.3	7.4	***
<hr/>				
Gamma = 0.18.				
NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 4; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.				

gratifications model which is sometimes described as the functionalist theory of the media (McQuail 1987).

In conclusion, generally the bulk of the literature suggests that voters are not passive media users but actively participates. From Tables 5.8 and 5.9, it is seems obvious that voters in Britain who have strong political party affiliation sought information from the newspaper or newspapers that seemed to support their political party or party ideology. For instance, in 1987, *The Mirror/Record* and *The Guardian* were both pro-Labour newspapers. The majority of their readers were Labour Party supporters. On the other hand, *The Mail*, *The Express* and *The Telegraph* - all pro-Conservative newspapers, attracted the majority of their readers from among Conservative Party supporters.

Applying the Mainstream Effect Model

We have seen that in all the general elections, voters who watched or listened to PEBs are more likely than those who did not watch or listen to vote against the party that they claimed that they identified with, while the voters who neither listened nor watched are more likely to vote for the party they claim to identify with. This pattern of voting suggests that the media creates a homogenous culture or 'create a homogeneity in political ideology' among the voters who would have never been agreeing on social and political issues.

Table 5.10 shows another clear pattern. In 1974 (February and October), voters were asked whether the Conservative or Labour party 'nowadays is extreme or moderate'. In 1983 and 1987, respondents in the BES were asked: 'On the whole would

you describe the Conservative party as extreme or moderate? And the Labour party nowadays, is it extreme or moderate?'⁵ Table 5.10 shows the proportion of partisanship direction of voters who perceived "extremism" or had "moderate" image of the party they voted. Voters who identified with a political party consistently reported that the party they voted for in the general elections are "moderate" rather than "neither" or "extreme". This finding seems to support Gerbner et al's., (1980, 1982) claim that the media create what they called 'mainstream' effect. It also seems to confirm one noticeable impact of the media in recent years, that is, the ability of the media to create 'mainstream' effect (Piepe, Charlton and Morey, 1990).

The simple bivariate relationship, Table 5.10, between the voters' image of the Conservative and Labour parties and voting behavior in these four general elections, reveals very striking patterns. The majority of Conservative and Labour voters who voted for them, saw the party they voted for as being moderate, while the majority of the voters who did not vote for a party, saw the party they did not vote for as extreme (gamma moderately high or on the average 0.4). In recent elections in 1983 and 1987, for example, over 70% of the voters who saw the Conservative party as a moderate party voted Conservative; while in the same years, over 50% of the voters who saw the Labour

⁵ The question about the extreme/moderate image of Conservative and Labour party in February and October 1974 was: 'On this card are listed some choices of opposite words or phrases, and I'd like you to say how much each one applies to a [October 1974: different political party]. [February 1974: 'I'm going to ask you about the Conservative party and the Labour party.] In which box would you put the Conservative party? In which box would you put the Labour party?' In 1983 and 1987, respondents were asked: 'On the whole would you describe the Conservative party as extreme or moderate? And the Labour party nowadays, is it extreme or moderate?'

party as moderate voted Labour. This relationship is statistically significant across all the general election years we have the data. It seems that voters who voted for Conservative or Labour, over the years are less likely to think that the party they voted for is increasingly becoming extreme, while those who do not identify think otherwise. Again, those who voted for the winning party are less likely to claim that the party they voted for is "neither", "extreme" nor "moderate". All claim that their party or the party they voted in the general election is moderate.

In summary, voters who used the media for information during election campaigns were more likely than those who did not to be homogenous in their feeling toward other parties. If we control for party identification, voters who watched/listened the PEBs 'very closely' will be more likely to see the party they identified with as 'moderate', while those who identified with other parties see the others parties differently. Table 5.10 illustrates this important point. Indeed, Gerbner et. al. (1982) have argued that media users, especially those who rely heavily on the media for information tend to hold positions which are very clearly Conservative. For instance, in 1987 voters were asked about their opinion on such social issues as defence, unemployment, prices, national health, crime and nationalization. An equivocal effect of watching or listen to PEBs on these social and political issues is that most media users tended to support Mrs Thatcher's Conservative social and political agenda.

In conclusion, the data do not directly support the basic hypothesis of this study that the media use (especially watching or listening to PEBs) has weakened political party identification in Great Britain. However, there is a little evidence that media use is

related to voting behavior (especially voting in any general election), party identification and the perceptions of the political parties by the electorate. Therefore, further examination or additional diagnostic tests on the relationships between the variables are necessary.

CHAPTER VI

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Multivariate Controls

From the results presented in the last chapter, there are sometimes positive association between watching/listening to PEBs or following the election campaigns in a national daily newspaper and partisan direction (and no negative association with partisanship strength) in most of the years examined one-by-one. There is also a strong positive relationship between vote and direction of partisanship in Britain from the BES data. However, the question remains whether watching/listening to PEBs or the combined influence of the various independent variables explain direction or strength of party identification in Great Britain.

There are a number of possible outcomes using multiple regression or multiple controls: (1) watching or listening to PEBs could still remain related to partisanship direction and strength beyond the controls, (2) the contribution of watching/listening to PEBs could be erased, or (3) specifications of the effects could emerge with the contribution of watching/listening to PEBs and its effect on strength of party identification strength greatly enhanced or systematically diminished.

Tables 6.1a to 6.2b present the results using controls, that is, the within group association between media use and voting, using the BES data and controlling for sex,

Table 6.1a: Mass media use and voting by sex, 1964-1970, 1983-1987

Percent who voted by mass media use						
Viewers/listeners: Controlling for sex				Readers: Controlling for sex		
	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1964 Election						
<i>Males</i>						
Voted	90.9	87.4		90.7	86.7	
Did not	9.1	12.6		9.3	13.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(656)	(190)		(722)	(120)	
<i>Females</i>						
Voted	88.9	81.9		88.6	81.3	
Did not	11.1	18.1		11.4	18.7	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(709)	(265)	**	(754)	(219)	***
1966 Election						
<i>Males</i>						
Voted	89.0	70.6		85.3	78.3	
Did not	11.0	29.4		14.7	21.7	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(735)	(255)	***	(831)	(157)	*
<i>Females</i>						
Voted	85.8	77.0		85.0	78.9	
Did not	14.2	23.0		15.0	21.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(761)	(326)	***	(786)	(299)	**
1970 Election						
<i>Males</i>						
Voted	88.7	77.4		86.0	84.6	
Did not	11.3	22.6		14.0	15.4	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(461)	(168)	***	(499)	(130)	
<i>Females</i>						
Voted	88.1	69.3		83.9	78.9	
Did not	11.9	30.7		16.1	21.1	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(496)	(228)	***	(477)	(247)	

Table 6.1a: (cont'd)

Percent who voted by mass media use						
Viewers/listeners: Controlling for sex				Readers: Controlling for sex		
	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
1983 Election						
<i>Males</i>						
Voted	86.1	66.9		86.4	68.7	
Did not	13.9	33.1		13.6	31.3	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1514)	(353)	***	(1450)	(418)	***
<i>Females</i>						
Voted	88.2	67.9		88.8	75.8	
Did not	11.8	32.1		11.2	24.2	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1663)	(420)	***	(1326)	(757)	***
1987 Election						
<i>Males</i>						
Voted	88.3	74.1		88.9	75.4	
Did not	11.7	25.9		11.1	24.6	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1486)	(348)	***	(1373)	(463)	***
<i>Females</i>						
Voted	88.7	78.0		91.1	79.8	
Did not	11.3	22.0		8.9	20.2	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1613)	(377)	***	(1218)	(771)	***

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 6.1b: Mass media use and voting by sex, 1974-1979^a

Percent who voted by mass media use Viewers/listeners: Controlling for sex					
	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb) Election					
<i>Males</i>					
Voted	96.2	90.8	85.4	70.3	
Did not	3.6	9.2	14.6	29.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(223)	(424)	(453)	(37)	***
<i>Females</i>					
Voted	95.4	91.3	84.0	77.1	
Did not	4.6	8.7	16.0	22.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(174)	(438)	(570)	(48)	***
1974 (Oct) Election					
<i>Males</i>					
Voted	91.2	88.3	80.5	85.0	
Did not	8.8	11.7	19.5	15.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(238)	(427)	(440)	(40)	***
<i>Females</i>					
Voted	89.2	89.9	82.2	68.2	
Did not	10.8	10.1	17.8	31.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(166)	(406)	(522)	(44)	***
1979 Election					
<i>Males</i>					
Voted	92.8	88.7	77.7	68.3	
Did not	7.2	11.3	22.3	31.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(221)	(415)	(166)	(101)	***
<i>Females</i>					
Voted	93.3	91.3	81.9	68.5	
Did not	6.7	8.7	18.1	31.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(164)	(425)	(227)	(149)	***

Table 6.1b: (cont'd)

Percent who voted by mass media use Newspaper readers: Controlling for sex					
	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb) Election					
<i>Males</i>					
Voted	95.7	92.3	85.0	80.0	
Did not	4.3	7.7	15.0	20.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(184)	(392)	(527)	(35)	***
<i>Females</i>					
Voted	96.0	92.7	86.2	70.0	
Did not	4.0	7.3	13.8	30.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(100)	(354)	(710)	(60)	***
1974 (Oct) Election					
<i>Males</i>					
Voted	90.6	89.8	81.0	78.8	
Did not	9.4	10.2	19.0	21.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(202)	(381)	(527)	(33)	***
<i>Females</i>					
Voted	93.5	83.1	82.5	70.0	
Did not	6.5	16.9	17.5	30.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(93)	(350)	(628)	(60)	***

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 0; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

union membership and partisanship; between strength of partisanship and mass media use controlling for voting for the two major parties - Labour and Conservative parties only; between vote and direction of partisanship controlling for mass media use; and the possible interaction terms between and within the variables that will be included in the regression models later.

In the Tables 6.1a and 6.2b, sex produced a sizable and significant interactions with watching or listening to PEBs (in 1964 and February 1976). Men in Great Britain seem to claim following PEBs more closely than women - showing a generally stronger relationship among men than among women. However, in 1979 when Mrs Thatcher entered the race as the leader of the Conservative party (and subsequent re-election campaigns in 1983 and 1987) one would expect more women to be interested in these elections campaigns than men and vote Conservative than men. In the three years that Mrs Thatchers was in the race, it seems clearly that more women than men were interested in her candidacy, and were highly interested or motivated to use the media by watching/listening to PEBs as shown by the figures in 1979. Furthermore, the proportion of women who voted for the Conservative party in those three years are slightly higher than men who voted for the Conservative party. The proportion of women who voted for the Conservative party in 1979 was 48.5 percent (Crewe, Day and Fox, 1991). Mrs Thatcher's election campaign in 1979 seemed to have galvanized more women than men in Britain, and the percentage of women who watched/listened or followed her campaign also seem to confirm this finding. It seems that more women than men were interested or curious about Mrs Thatcher's bid for the Number 10

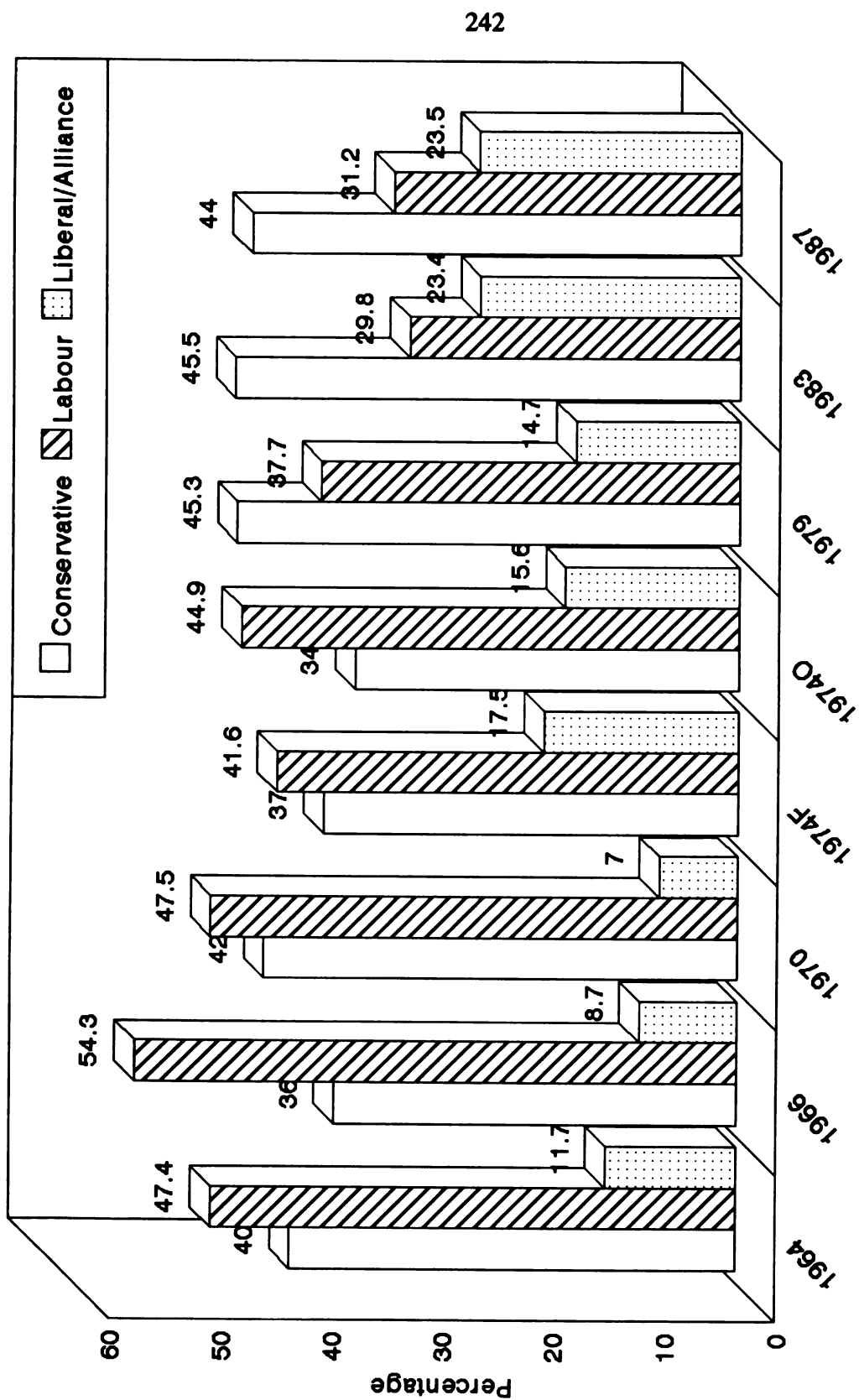


Figure 6.1: Men's voting record 1964-1987

Source: BES, however compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

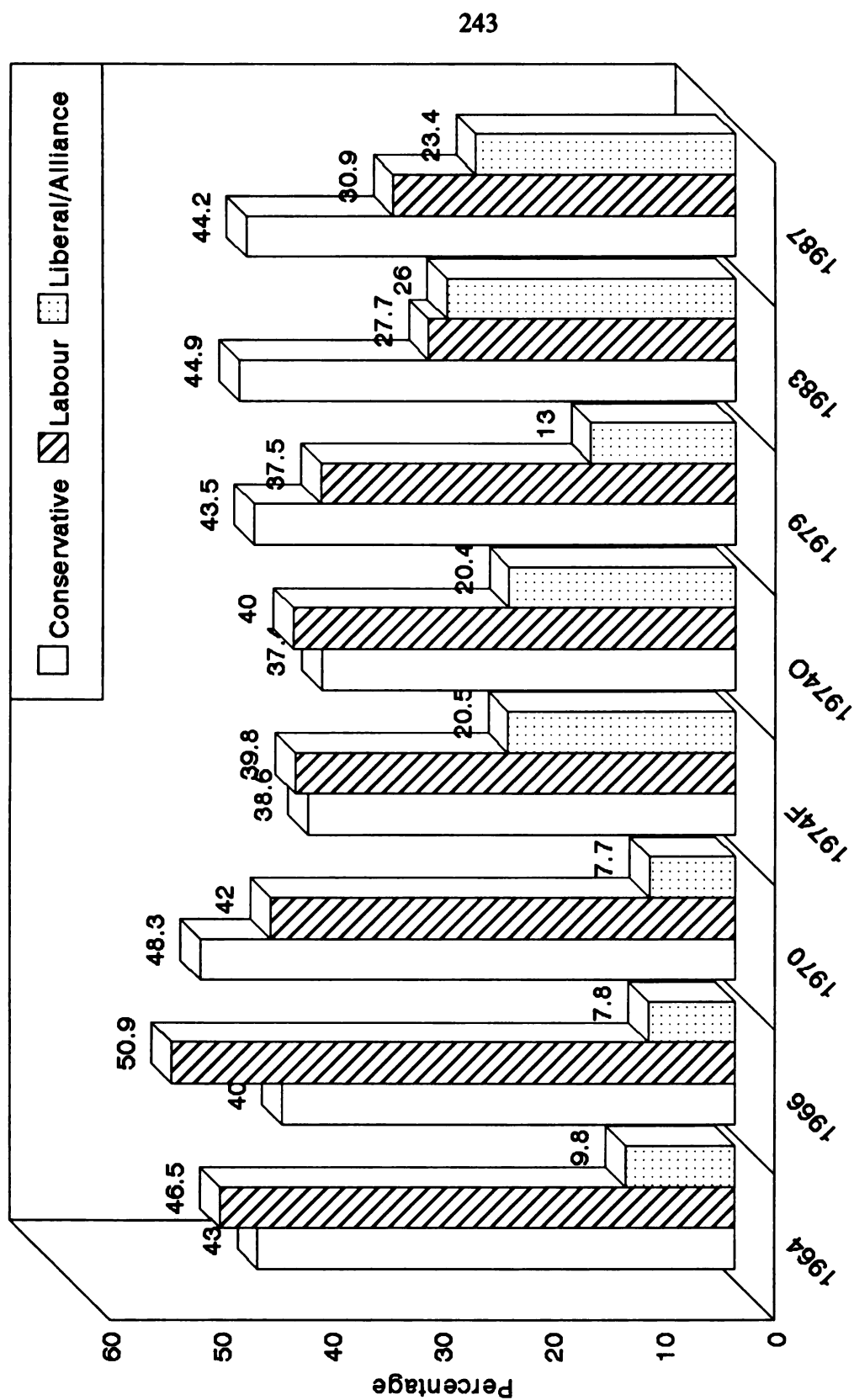


Figure 6.2: Women's voting record 1964-1987

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

Table 6.2a: Media use and voting by union membership, 1964, 1983-1987

Percent who voted by mass media use					
Viewers: Controlling for union members			Readers: Controlling for union members		
	% Yes	% No x^2		% Yes	% No x^2
1964 Union-member					
Voted	88.5	73.5		86.9	83.7
Did not	11.5	26.5		13.1	16.3
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
Number.	(183)	(34) *		(168)	(49)
Non-member					
Voted	88.2	83.8		87.6	83.7
Did not	11.8	16.2		12.4	16.3
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
Number.	(321)	(130)		(364)	(86)
1983 Union-member					
Voted	89.7	77.5		89.8	81.9
Did not	10.3	22.5		10.2	18.1
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
Number	(478)	(80) ***		(431)	(127) **
Non-member					
Voted	89.6	64.9		86.7	81.3
Did not	10.4	35.1		13.3	18.7
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
Number	(298)	(57) ***		(279)	(75)
1987 Union-member					
Voted	91.1	78.0		91.3	81.6
Did not	8.9	22.0		8.7	18.4
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
Number	(798)	(164) ***		(716)	(245) ***
Non-member					
Voted	88.2	75.7		78.1	78.1
Did not	11.8	24.3		21.9	21.9
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
Number	(2174)	(526) ***		(1777)	(925) ***

NOTE: x^2 d.f. = 1; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 6.2b: Mass media use and voting by union membership, 1974-1979^a

Percent who voted by mass media use Viewers/listeners: Controlling for union membership					
	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 (Feb) Union-member					
Voted	98.1	92.6	84.2	55.6	
Did not	1.9	7.4	15.8	44.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(104)	(203)	(221)	(9)	***
<i>Non-member</i>					
Voted	95.1	91.0	85.2	76.1	
Did not	4.9	9.0	14.8	23.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(283)	(634)	(768)	(71)	***
1974 (Oct) Union-member					
Voted	93.5	91.4	80.3	66.7	
Did not	6.5	8.6	19.7	33.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(108)	(210)	(228)	(9)	***
<i>Non-member</i>					
Voted	89.5	88.2	81.9	77.5	
Did not	10.5	11.8	18.1	22.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(285)	(595)	(703)	(71)	***
1979 Union-member					
Voted	94.0	93.8	75.2	65.3	
Did not	6.0	6.2	24.8	34.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(117)	(243)	(137)	(75)	***
<i>Non-member</i>					
Voted	92.9	88.3	83.1	69.2	
Did not	7.1	11.7	16.9	30.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(267)	(592)	(255)	(169)	***

NOTE: χ^2 * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 6.2b: (cont'd)^a

Percent who voted by mass media use				
Newspaper readers: Controlling for union membership				
	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b
				χ^2
1974 (Feb) <i>Union-member</i>				
Voted	97.3	94.6	84.6	72.2
Did not	2.7	5.4	15.4	27.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(75)	(184)	(260)	(18) ***
<i>Non-member</i>				
Voted	96.0	91.9	86.3	74.6
Did not	4.0	8.1	13.7	25.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(198)	(543)	(939)	(71) ***
1974 (Oct) <i>Union-member</i>				
Voted	92.4	91.2	79.9	69.2
Did not	7.6	8.8	20.1	30.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(78)	(186)	(271)	(17) ***
<i>Non-member</i>				
Voted	89.5	88.2	81.9	77.5
Did not	10.5	11.8	18.1	22.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(204)	(525)	(848)	(72) ***

NOTE: χ^2 * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^b % High = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'very closely';
 % Medium = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely';
 % Low = Percent of voters who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely';
 % No = Percent of voters who 'hardly at all.'

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

Downing Street and turned to the media for more information they needed about her candidacy and for making their decision.

In 1979, as I have pointed out, more women identified with Conservative party than men; unlike in the 1960s when more women voted Labour than men, in 1979, the Conservative party won 48.5 percent of women's vote and 45.3 percent of men's, while Labour won 37.5 percent of women and 37.7 percent of men's. The figures were 44.9 and 44.2 percent of women's for Conservative and 27.7 and 30.9 percent for Labour in 1983 and 1987 respectively. In all three elections more women voted for Conservative party, while more men voted Labour than women - Figures 6.1 and 6.2 from Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

Tables 6.2a and 6.2b present the relationship between mass media use and voting among union members. Union members are generally more likely to report following the election campaigns as well as voting. The figure is even higher in 1979, probably because of the 1979 winter of contention. Furthermore, among union members, heavy media users are more likely than light users to report voting. And indeed, there is a slightly stronger relationship between following the PEBs and voting among union members than among non-union members.

Multivariate Models

The bivariate analysis presented in the last chapter and the multivariate controls above provide some support for the conclusions that the mass media have not weakened political party identifications in Great Britain, but instead, that the mass media use during election campaigns have affected voting behavior and the perceptions of the voters of the

Table 6.3: Television viewers, voting and partisanship direction 1964-87.

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of VIEWERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1964 (Labour won)				
Conservative	94.5	1.8	19.1	
Labour	3.3	96.8	16.9	
Liberal	2.2	1.4	64.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(455)	(557)	(136)	***
Gamma = 0.88; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1966 (Labour won)				
Conservative	94.9	1.1	14.3	
Labour	2.7	97.0	29.5	
Liberal	2.6	1.9	56.1	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(474)	(632)	(112)	***
Gamma = 0.90; Tau-c = 0.75.				
1970 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	96.0	3.3	22.5	
Labour	2.3	92.9	12.5	
Liberal	1.7	3.9	65.0	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	
Number	(348)	(336)	(80)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1974^a February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	90.1	1.2	12.5	
Labour	2.8	91.6	7.5	
Liberal	7.1	7.2	80.0	
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(141)	(166)	(40)	***
Gamma = 0.84; Tau-c = 0.68..				

Table 6.3: (cont'd).

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of VIEWERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1974^b February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	89.3	2.7	17.5	
Labour	2.3	89.2	4.9	
Liberal	8.4	8.1	77.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(308)	(295)	(103)	***
Gamma = 0.80; Tau-c = 0.64..				
1974^c February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	88.8	2.0	7.5	
Labour	1.4	87.9	11.3	
Liberal	9.7	10.1	1813	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	
Number	(277)	(348)	(106)	***
Gamma = 0.83; Tau-c = 0.68..				
1974^a October (Labour won)				
Conservative	90.9	2.0	16.0	
Labour	3.0	96.0	14.0	
Liberal	6.1	2.0	70.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(132)	(151)	(50)	***
Gamma = 0.83; Tau-c = 0.68.				
1974^b October (Labour won)				
Conservative	90.6	1.7	10.8	
Labour	3.0	91.3	6.9	
Liberal	6.4	6.9	82.4	
Total	100.0	99.9	100.1	
Number	(265)	(289)	(102)	***
Gamma = 0.86; Tau-c = 0.69.				

Table 6.3: (cont'd).

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of VIEWERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1974^c October (Conservative won)				
Conservative	90.6	1.3	14.3	
Labour	2.1	93.5	5.9	
Liberal	7.2	5.2	79.8	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	
Number	(235)	(307)	(119)	***
Gamma = 0.82; Tau-c = 0.66..				
1979^a (Conservative won)				
Conservative	96.1	3.8	17.5	
Labour	1.3	88.7	7.5	
Liberal	2.6	7.5	75.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(154)	(133)	(40)	***
Gamma = 0.90; Tau-c = 0.71.				
1979^b (Conservative won)				
Conservative	94.9	3.8	19.0	
Labour	1.6	87.1	8.3	
Liberal	3.5	9.1	72.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9	
Number	(312)	(263)	(84)	***
Gamma = 0.88; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1979^c (Conservative won)				
Conservative	96.6	6.1	19.5	
Labour	1.7	87.0	14.6	
Liberal	1.7	7.0	65.9	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(116)	(115)	(41)	***
Gamma = 0.88; Tau-c = 0.70.				

Table 6.3: (cont'd).

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of VIEWERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1983 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	95.0	4.5	12.8	
Labour	0.7	82.8	4.0	
Liberal	4.4	12.7	83.2	
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(1034)	(841)	(506)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.75.				
1987 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	90.9	4.5	11.5	
Labour	2.3	85.9	4.5	
Liberal	6.8	9.6	83.9	
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9	
Number	(1053)	(822)	(485)	***

Gamma = 0.86; Tau-c = 0.73.

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 4; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^a = Viewers who followed the election campaigns 'very closely' vote;

^b = Viewers who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely' vote;

^c = Viewers who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely' vote;

Because of empty cell among some % "No" media users, this category was excluded from the analysis.

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

Table 6.4: Newspaper readers, voting and partisanship direction 1964-87.

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of READERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1964 (Labour won)				
Conservative	95.1	1.6	19.6	
Labour	3.0	96.4	19.0	
Liberal	1.9	2.0	61.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(531)	(550)	(153)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1966 (Labour won)				
Conservative	94.1	1.0	17.3	
Labour	3.3	97.0	27.1	
Liberal	2.7	2.1	55.6	
Total	100.1	100.1	100.0	
Number	(522)	(626)	(133)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1970 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	96.3	3.2	21.7	
Labour	2.0	93.9	14.5	
Liberal	1.7	2.9	63.9	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.1	
Number	(351)	(312)	(83)	***
Gamma = 0.89; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1974^a February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	91.2	0.9	20.8	
Labour	2.7	92.7	4.2	
Liberal	6.2	6.4	75.0	
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(113)	(110)	(24)	***
Gamma = 0.84; Tau-c = 0.68..				

Table 6.4: (cont'd).

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of READERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1974^b February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	90.5	2.1	9.9	
Labour	1.4	89.3	5.6	
Liberal	8.1	8.6	84.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(296)	(243)	(71)	***
Gamma = 0.86; Tau-c = 0.68..				
1974^c February (Conservative won)				
Conservative	87.3	2.5	12.9	
Labour	2.5	87.7	9.0	
Liberal	10.2	9.8	78.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(322)	(440)	(155)	***
Gamma = 0.79; Tau-c = 0.64..				
1974^a October (Labour won)				
Conservative	91.8	1.9	9.1	
Labour	3.6	95.2	9.1	
Liberal	4.5	2.9	81.8	
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	
Number	(110)	(105)	(33)	***
Gamma = 0.90; Tau-c = 0.69.				
1974^b October (Labour won)				
Conservative	92.4	2.0	12.9	
Labour	0.8	90.8	4.7	
Liberal	6.8	7.2	82.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1	
Number	(263)	(249)	(85)	***
Gamma = 0.86; Tau-c = 0.64.				

Table 6.4: (cont'd).

Percentage of general election vote by direction of partisanship Controlling for percentage of READERS' vote only				
Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	χ^2
1974^c October (Conservative won)				
Conservative	89.5	1.4	13.3	
Labour	3.0	94.6	8.2	
Liberal	7.5	4.1	78.5	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(266)	(370)	(158)	***
Gamma = 0.82; Tau-c = 0.66..				
1983 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	94.7	4.5	13.3	
Labour	0.6	83.1	3.3	
Liberal	4.7	12.5	83.4	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	
Number	(937)	(714)	(427)	***
Gamma = 0.88; Tau-c = 0.74.				
1987 (Conservative won)				
Conservative	90.9	4.7	10.6	
Labour	2.6	86.6	6.0	
Liberal	6.5	8.7	83.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(933)	(689)	(397)	***

Gamma = 0.87; Tau-c = 0.74.

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 4; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

^a = Readers who followed the election campaigns 'very closely' vote;

^b = Readers who followed the election campaigns 'fairly closely' vote;

^c = Readers who followed the election campaigns 'not very closely' vote; and because of empty cell among some % "No" media users, this category was excluded from the analysis.

SOURCE: These figures are from BES; while the analysis is the author's.

Table 6.5a: Partisanship strength, mass media use and voting 1964-70, 1983-87.

Partisanship strength by mass media use							
Viewers: controlling for election vote			Readers: controlling for election vote				
	% Yes	% No	x^2		% Yes	% No	x^2
<hr/>							
1964							
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>							
Very strong	50.1	51.5			51.5	44.6	
Fairly strong	41.9	36.3			40.3	41.3	
Not v. strong	8.0	12.3			8.3	14.1	
Total	100.0	100.1			100.0	100.0	
Number	(465)	(171)			(544)	(92)	
Gamma = 0.02.				Gamma = 0.15.			
<i>Voted for Labour</i>							
Very strong	52.6	45.0			52.2	46.1	
Fairly strong	39.2	45.0			39.1	46.1	
Not v. strong	8.2	10.1			8.7	7.8	
Total	100.0	100.1			100.0	100.0	
Number	(576)	(129)			(575)	(128)	
Gamma = 0.13.				Gamma = 0.07.			
<hr/>							
1966							
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>							
Very strong	52.6	50.6			53.2	47.6	
Fairly strong	39.3	36.0			37.8	41.3	
Not v. strong	8.0	13.4			9.1	11.1	
Total	99.9	100.0			100.1	100.0	
Number	(473)	(172)			(519)	(126)	
Gamma = 0.0.				Gamma = 0.10.			
<i>Voted for Labour</i>							
Very strong	54.0	48.0			52.4	53.8	
Fairly strong	40.5	43.5			41.7	39.2	
Not v. strong	5.5	8.5			5.9	7.0	
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0	
Number	(656)	(177)			(660)	(171)	
Gamma = 0.0				Gamma = -.01.			

Table 6.5a: (cont'd).

Partisanship strength by mass media use						
Viewers: controlling for election vote			Readers: controlling for election vote			
	% Yes	% No	χ^2	% Yes	% No	χ^2
<hr/>						
1970						
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>						
Very strong	57.9	57.0		60.4	50.4	
Fairly strong	35.0	35.2		32.5	41.7	
Not v. strong	7.2	7.7		7.1	7.9	
Total	100.1	99.9		100.0	100.0	
Number	(363)	(142)		(366)	(139)	
Gamma = 0.02.			Gamma = 0.17.			
<i>Voted for Labour</i>						
Very strong	59.3	55.3		59.4	55.8	
Fairly strong	33.1	34.0		31.7	37.5	
Not v. strong	7.5	10.7		8.9	6.7	
Total	99.9	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(332)	(103)		(315)	(120)	
Gamma = 0.09.			Gamma = 0.04.			
<hr/>						
1983						
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>						
Very strong	28.1	21.7		29.0	21.2	
Fairly strong	50.4	49.7		51.3	47.1	
Not v. strong	21.5	28.6		19.7	31.8	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Number	(1043)	(161)		(930)	(274)	***
Gamma = 0.16.			Gamma = 0.23.			
<i>Voted for Labour</i>						
Very strong	40.0	21.8		40.4	28.6	
Fairly strong	44.6	47.4		46.2	42.7	
Not v. strong	15.4	30.8		13.5	28.6	
Total	100.0	100.0		100.1	99.9	
Number	(695)	(133)	***	(587)	(241)	***
Gamma = 0.38.			Gamma = 0.30.			

Table 6.5a: (cont'd).

Partisanship strength by mass media use							
Viewers: controlling for election vote			Readers: controlling for election vote				
	% Yes	% No	χ^2		% Yes	% No	χ^2
<hr/>							
1987							
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>							
Very strong	24.7	21.5			26.7	16.9	
Fairly strong	53.5	43.0			52.5	50.0	
Not v. strong	21.9	35.5			20.8	33.1	
Total	100.1	100.0			100.0	100.0	
Number	(1079)	(200)	***		(947)	(332)	***
Gamma = 0.0.				Gamma = 0.27.			
<i>Voted for Labour</i>							
Very strong	31.0	19.9			31.0	24.7	
Fairly strong	50.2	34.9			51.2	39.2	
Not v. strong	18.8	45.2			17.8	36.1	
Total	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0	
Number	(765)	(166)	***		(639)	(291)	***
Gamma = 0.40.				Gamma = 0.27.			

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 1; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 6.5b: Partisanship strength, mass media use and voting 1974-1979.^a

Partisanship strength by mass media use Viewers: controlling for election vote					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 February					
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>					
Very strong	68.6	50.8	55.2	66.7	
Fairly strong	22.1	38.2	36.6	25.0	
Not v. strong	9.3	11.0	8.2	8.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(140)	(319)	(279)	(24)	**
Gamma = 0.05.					
<i>Voted for Labour</i>					
Very strong	75.5	59.3	52.3	75.0	
Fairly strong	19.0	31.7	38.7	20.0	
Not v. strong	5.5	9.0	9.0	5.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	***
Number	(163)	(290)	(344)	(20)	
Gamma = 0.21.					
1974 October					
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>					
Very strong	72.6	57.9	48.2	60.9	
Fairly strong	18.5	33.3	41.8	26.1	
Not v. strong	8.9	8.8	10.0	13.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(135)	(273)	(251)	(23)	***
Gamma = 0.22.					
<i>Voted for Labour</i>					
Very strong	72.1	64.0	54.5	60.9	
Fairly strong	22.4	31.7	38.2	17.4	
Not v. strong	5.5	4.3	7.2	21.7	
Total	99.9	100.0	99.9	100.0	
Number	(165)	(300)	(319)	(23)	***
Gamma = 0.21.					

Table 6.5b: (cont'd).

Partisanship strength by mass media use Viewers: controlling for election vote					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1979					
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>					
Very strong	31.1	24.5	11.9	30.9	
Fairly strong	51.8	55.5	53.0	38.2	
Not v. strong	17.1	20.1	35.1	30.9	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	
Number	(164)	(339)	(134)	(55)	***
Gamma = 0.21.					
<i>Voted for Labour</i>					
Very strong	53.1	27.6	18.8	21.4	
Fairly strong	30.8	55.5	60.7	50.0	
Not v. strong	16.2	16.9	20.5	28.6	
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(130)	(254)	(112)	(70)	***
Gamma = 0.29.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

^a In February and October 1974, respondents were asked: 'How closely do you follow programmes about politics on television - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?'; while in May 1979, non-voters were not asked the question about which party they would have voted for in the general election.

Table 6.5b: (cont'd).^a

Partisanship strength by mass media use Readers: controlling for election vote					
Year	% High	% Medium	% Low	% No ^b	χ^2
1974 February					
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>					
Very strong	78.9	55.7	49.4	68.8	
Fairly strong	16.7	35.7	38.8	18.8	
Not v. strong	4.4	8.7	11.8	12.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1	
Number	(114)	(300)	(330)	(16)	***
Gamma = 0.25.					
<i>Voted for Labour</i>					
Very strong	72.3	59.7	57.6	54.5	
Fairly strong	21.4	32.8	34.3	30.3	
Not v. strong	6.3	7.6	8.2	15.2	
Total	100.0	100.1	100.1	100.0	
Number	(112)	(238)	(429)	(33)	
Gamma = 0.14.					
1974 October					
<i>Voted for Conservative</i>					
Very strong	72.1	59.6	49.7	40.0	
Fairly strong	18.9	32.6	40.2	33.3	
Not v. strong	9.0	7.8	10.1	26.7	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(111)	(270)	(286)	(15)	***
Gamma = 0.21.					
<i>Voted for Labour</i>					
Very strong	75.4	66.5	56.5	48.7	
Fairly strong	18.4	29.0	36.4	46.2	
Not v. strong	6.1	4.5	7.0	5.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number	(114)	(245)	(398)	(39)	
Gamma = 0.22.					

NOTE: χ^2 d.f. = 6; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

winning political party.

Tables 6.3 to 6.5b show the multiple control - that is, 1) the relationship between partisanship direction and voting behavior, controlling for mass media use; 2) general election vote and partisanship direction, controlling for mass media use; and 3) partisanship strength and mass media use, controlling for voting for Labour and Conservative parties only. All the relationships are, not surprisingly, statistically significant. For example, there is a strong positive relationship between general election vote and direction and strength of partisanship controlling for mass media use. Likewise, there is a positive relationship between mass media use controlling for general election vote.

However, it is hard to identify whether, for example, the independent variable (mass media use) has independent effect on the dependent variable (partisanship strength). To determine this, I examined the impacts of the independent variable in multivariate models. In doing so, I employed three statistical techniques - probit, logistic and multiple regressions.

Because the simple percentages and bivariate analyses only examined the relationship between the variables, I employed three statistical techniques in four phases to estimate the relationship between the variables. The first dependent variable (mass media use) and the second dependent variable (voting) are both nominal or categorical dichotomous variables. I used probit and logit regression analysis for both mass media use and voting, but I used multiple regression for the partisanship strength -an ordinal level variable. I also used logistic regression analysis to perform a diagnosis of the

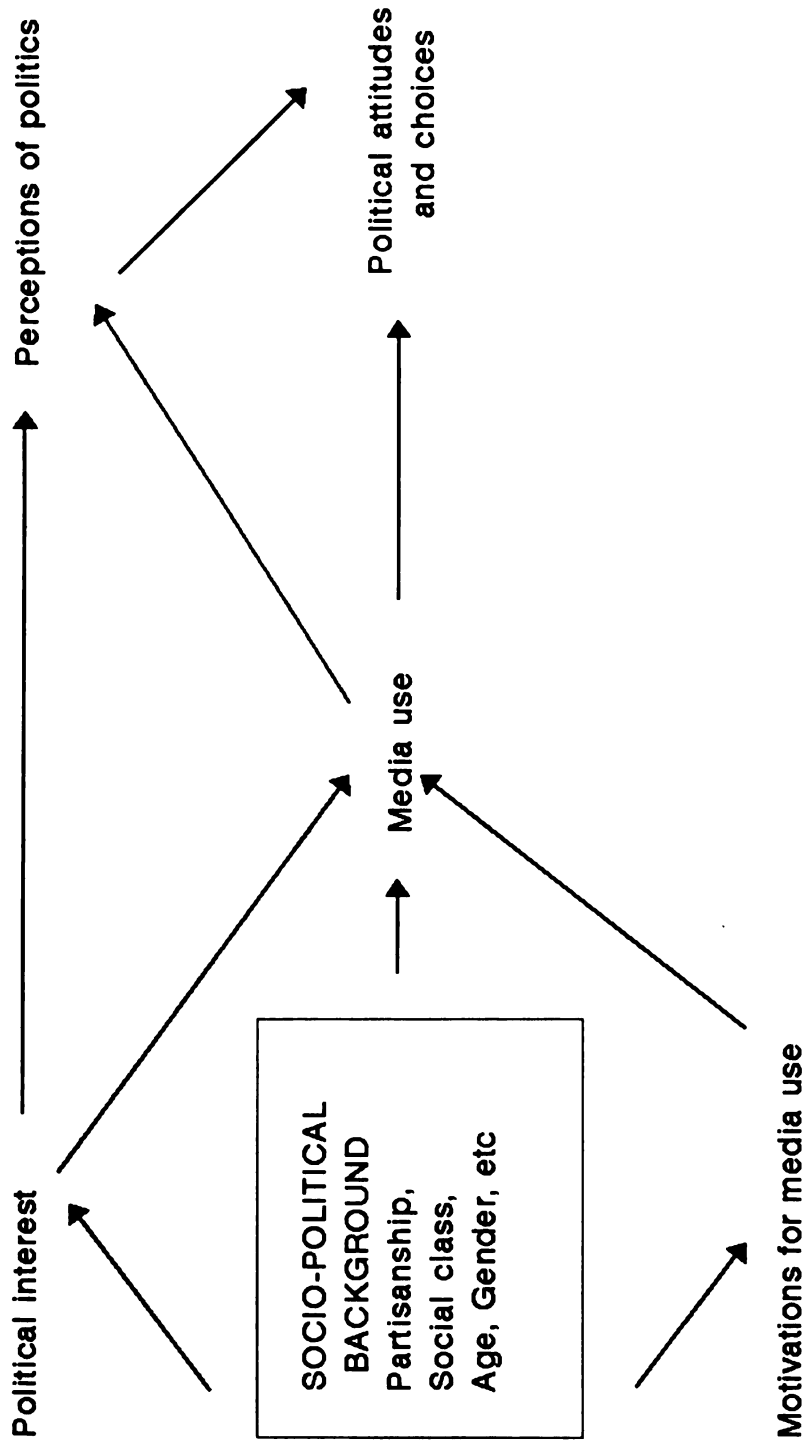


Figure 6.3: A modified version of mass media use and consequences model

Source: Miller (1991)

determinants of "moderate" image of the winning political party. However, before looking at the different phases of the analysis, a formal specification of the model is required.

Formal Specification of the Model

In its broad terms, the basic theoretical model of this study is presented in Figure 6.3. The model is a variation of Miller's (1991) general model of causes and consequences of mass media use. The major difference between this model and Miller's is that perceptions of the media variables are not included, since this study is basically about the effects of the media on partisanship strength. The expected variable relations or the hypothesized cause effects are indicated by the direction of arrows in Figure 6.3. The model is fairly intuitive and straight forward. Political interest, for example, is expected to affect the voter's need to use the media for information and perceptions of politics (that is, the image or attitude toward the political parties) say at a time point t_1 . Media use also influences political attitudes and choices (that is, party identification strength, voting, etc. at a time t_2 , directly and indirectly, through voters' perceptions of politics variables. Socio-political background (partisanship direction, age, gender, union membership, religion, etc) is presumed to have no direct impact on political attitudes and choices but has indirect effect through both media use and perception of politics. For instance, the regression model posits that media use has a direct impact on political attitudes (party identification strength) at a time t_1 , t_2 , t_3 , etc.

From the model I employed four models based on four different dependent variables: a) a model that predicts media use during election campaigns using probit

regression statistical technique, b) a logistic regression model that predicts voting by media users, c) a multiple regression model using partisanship strength as the dependent variable, and d) a model using logistic regression analysis to explain the 'moderate' party image, that is, the attitude or feeling toward the winning political party in 1983 and 1987 general elections only)¹. The variables for each model and their descriptions are explained at each phase of the analysis and also in Appendix B.

The Need for Probit and Logistic Models

Given that two dependent variables in this study, mass media use and voting, are both dichotomous categorical variables, and because categorical dependent variables violate the technical assumptions of ordinary least square regression, I used probit and logistic regression techniques to test the relationships in the first two hypotheses.

In the first phase of the analysis, I employed probit regression technique to test the relationship between media use and the predictor variables; that is, that the use of the media for political information is positively influenced by a person's social and political background. Probit is appropriate here since the dependent variable, mass media use, is measured as a dichotomy: 1 for watching/listening to the election campaigns in the media and 0 otherwise.² While OLS will yield similar results, probit is preferred here since it is an appropriate procedure for a dichotomous nominal level dependent variables

¹ The decision to use only these two is based on the availability of comparable data in the BES data set.

² This test is based on television viewers only. I have argued in the last chapter that newspapers in the United Kingdom are overtly partisan; and the characteristics of newspaper readers are well documented.

(McKelvey and Zavoina, 1975); and since the estimates of the coefficients will be efficient; that is, there will be minimum variance in the standard errors (Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1981). The purpose of this test is to test the relationship between media use and socio-political backgrounds, to see which of the variables, if any, are better predictors of media use for information during election campaigns. In short, who are the people who use the media for information? In what ways are they similar to or different from other voters?

In the second phase, I presented the logit for each of the eight general elections in Great Britain to test the relationship between voting and the independent variables, including mass media use variables; that is, the hypothesis that the use of the media for political information is negatively related to political participation or voter turnout during elections (Lemert, 1981; and Morgan and Shanahan, 1992). In each logit, the dependent variable is the binary variable of "vote". Vote equals 1 if the respondent voted in the general election and 0 if not. This test again helps to explain the characteristics of voters and non-voters.

In the fourth phase, I also presented a logit for two elections (1983 and 1987) in which we have data about the feeling about 'extreme' and 'moderate' image of the political parties in Britain. Since, my research hypothesis is that voters' use of the media for information during election campaigns is positively related to their moderate image of the winning political party, I coded this variable as a dummy variable - thus, 1 if the respondent agreed claimed that the winning party was moderate and 0 otherwise.

Thus, for both the probit and logistic regressions, positive coefficients for the

independent (explanatory) variables imply that having the characteristics presumed to generate the dependent variable, and, that the independent variable is associated with a greater propensity to use the media, to vote or to claim that the winning party was moderate.

In conclusion, probit and logistic regressions are used here for a number of reasons. First, both media use and voting are dichotomous categorical variables which are best handled using logistic and probit estimation techniques, and because categorical dependent variables violate the technical assumptions of OLS. Secondly, a small proportion of the electorate did not use the media for information in recent general elections in 1983 and 1987. Thirdly, voter turnout in Britain, like in most industrialized nations, has remained much higher than say in the United States. The slight decrease in voter turnout in Britain in the last few elections is better estimated by logistic regression analysis. Finally, the extreme/moderate image of the political parties is better handled in this manner since the categories are not truly ordinal and not interval level data either.

Probit and Logit Regression Model Equations

As I said, probit and logistic regression analysis are more appropriate than ordinary least square, OLS, regressions for these kinds of procedure. Aldrich and Cnudde, (1975), have argued that logit and probit regressions functional form make more substantive sense in these kinds of procedure. The percentage predicted correctly for each year using the modal response is given in the tables.

The models take the following form which define the usual logistic and probit regression models respectively (Aldrich and Nelson, 1986:124):

$$P(Y_i) = \frac{\exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1})}{1 + \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1})} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} \dots + \beta_k x_k + e \quad [6.1]$$

and

$$P(Y_i) = \int_{-\infty}^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \frac{-u^2}{2} du = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} \dots + \beta_k x_k + e \quad [6.2]$$

where $P(Y_i)$ represents the probability of a voter voting or not voting;

or, watching/listening or not watching/listening to PEBs during the campaigns;

β_0 is a constant term, while $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 \dots \beta_k$, represent the values of the individual independent variable parameters given by $P(Y_i)$; and

the x_i 's represent the independent variables that will be employed in the model.

As I have pointed out, equations 6.1 and 6.2 are generally the specifications of choice probabilities used in logistic and probit regression analysis respectively.³

Briefly, the estimation of these models are usually done using two procedure methods - "maximum likelihood" and "minimum chi-square" techniques. The former is used here for interpreting the probit model, while the later is used for the logistic regression model. Secondly, both the probit and logistic regression models are used to estimate the direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable(s), in this case, "mass media use," "voting in a general election" and "party image." Finally, as I have pointed out earlier, all three variables are treated here as dichotomous dependent variables, and as a result require that one uses a nonlinear distribution model

³ The behavior of these two equations are beyond this study, however, for the details see, Aldrich and Nelson (1986:115-155); Maddala (1983); and Pindyck and Rubinfeld (1981).

such as probit or logit model to estimate the coefficients, in this way, one avoids bias results (Hanusheka and Jackson, 1977; Aldrich and Nelson, 1984; and Walsh, 1987).

However, the interpretation of the probit maximum likelihood estimates is based on the interpretation of a linear function of the independent variables (say, "mass media use" or the "mass media use proclivity" - the probability of using the media for information during election campaign). When the "mass media use proclivity" index for a voter exceeds that voter's personal critical value of this index, that voter turns to the media for information during an general election campaign. In every general election campaign in Britain in the last three or more decades, there were voters who cared about who won the elections, were also interested in politics, and so turned to the media for their much needed information for making election decision. So, these voters had low critical value, while others who did not care about the outcome and were less interested or were too busy to follow the election campaigns in the media had high critical values. The probit model assumes that these critical values are normally distributed among the voters.

The Probit Model Estimation of Mass Media Use

The importance of the media for information during election can be illustrated by a closer examination of the magnitude (the probability of using the media) on the predictor variables, that is, the simple linear relationship between the outcome probability and the exogenous variables. Unlike OLS regression coefficient, probit maximum likelihood estimates and logistic coefficients do not have straight forward interpretations (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984:43); however, the formula of the coefficients and the constant

can be used to compute the probabilities. These probabilities $P(Y_i)$ are represented by Equations 6.1 and 6.2, where the value 1 represents using the media for information, or voting in a general election, or seeing the winning party as a "moderate" party and 0 otherwise. Thus, for example, for the probit analysis, the dependent variable, WATCHETV, the probit regression assesses the impact of the independent variable on the probability of using media for information during general election campaign.

One can appreciate, for example, the need voters have for using the media for information during election campaigns on their propensity or probability to use them by looking at the values of the predictor variables.

Since I am interested in testing, for example, the hypothesis that: The use of the media for political information is positively related to a person's socio-political background, minimizing standard error is important here for testing the associated level of significance. I have, therefore, reported both the standard error and the ratio of the coefficient to the standard error.

Ten variables were employed in estimating the probability of mass media use (in this case, viewing/listening to PEBs) during general election campaigns.

The dependent variable, WATCHETV, whether the respondent used television for information or watched/listened to PEBs during the election campaigns, is represented by a dichotomous variable. WATCHETV is coded 0 if the respondent did not watch and 1 if the respondent watched.

The independent variables, AGELASTE is coded 1 for under 25 years, 2 for 25 to 34, 3 for 35 to 44, 4 for 45 to 54, 5 for 55 to 64, 6 for 65 to 74 and 7 for over 74

years.⁴ GENDER denotes the gender of the respondent, coded 1 for men and 0 for women. HOUSINGR denotes the proportion of the respondents who owned their homes, live in council housing or other renters, coded high if the respondent owned home, thus, 1 if the respondent lived in a council house, 2 for private tenants, and 3 if the respondent owned his or her home. RELIGION is a vector of indicator variables corresponding to the religion of each respondent, coded 0 if the respondent had no religious affiliation, 1 if the respondent was a non-conformist, 2 if the respondent was a Roman Catholic and 3 if the respondent was an Anglican.⁵ SESCLASS denotes the social economic class of each respondent. UNIONMEB, a dummy variable is coded 0 if the respondent is not a union member, and coded 1 if the respondent is a union member. INTEREST is an ordinal variable and equals 3 if the respondent expressed that he/she was 'greatly' interested, 2 if 'somewhat' interested, 1 if 'not much' interested, and 0 if 'not at all.' CAREPWON is a dummy variable, and equals 1 if the respondent cared about election outcome, 0 otherwise. PPARTYID represents the party identification of the respondents. In this study, Conservatives are coded as high and other parties as low. IDSTRENT denotes whether the respondent claimed that he/she supported any of the political parties. Following Crewe (1985), IDSTRENT, is coded 3 if 'very strongly' identifier, 2 for

⁴ The actual age of the respondents at the time of election would have been ideal, but the data were not consistent, besides, voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1969 making it impossible to use actual years.

⁵ Religiosity of the respondents would have made good sense here, however, the data set was not consistent. The variable "religiosity" was not included in the survey in February 1974 and October 1974. However, my decision to use religion here instead is based upon the popular notion that the Anglican Church (Church of England) is usually considered the Conservative party at prayer.

'fairly strong' identifiers, 1 for 'not very strong,' and 0 for no party identification.⁶

Appendix Table B summaries the variables operations in details.

One more comment about coding procedure: sex, union membership and whether a respondent cares which party wins, were coded as dummy variables to allow for the possibility that there are major demographic and other differences in characteristics in media use, for example, men and women, non-union members and members, or low and higher social economic class. Thus, perhaps these characteristics may account for the overall association between media use and political party identification strength and voting behavior, especially in terms of voting behavior - voting or not voting, or voting for one party or the other.

The expectation is that lower social economic class and union members tend to use the television medium more. But, what is the effect of using the media for information during election have on these two groups? For example, in 1987, according to the BES, about 45.7% of the manual working class Britons voted for the Labour party, while about 31.6% voted Tory. In the same election year, about 41.6% union members voted for Labour while 31.1% voted Tory. In Britain, Labour party has traditionally drawn its support among these two groups. Indeed, despite party dealignment union members still tend to identify strongly with and vote for Labour party.

To see which of the predictor variables predicts media use after controlling for the other variables, I have estimated separate probit regression equations for each general

⁶ Although this is not a true interval scale, its close approximation to interval scale and ease interpretation makes it appropriate here.

election year.

I used the SPSS-X mainframe version of probit and logistic regressions.

I began the probit estimation by examining each of the independent variables alone (strength of party identification first) before introducing additional terms to accommodate potential intervening effects. The maximum likelihood estimates are reported in Table 6.1 below. I reported one tail significance test as a guide to the robustness of coefficients because I clearly expected direct effects as the model posits.

The model used in the probit estimation take the general form:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{WATCHETV} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{AGELASTE} + \beta_2 * \text{UNIONMEB} + \beta_3 * \text{GENDER} \\ & + \beta_4 * \text{RELIGION} + \beta_5 * \text{SESCLASS} + \beta_6 * \text{HOUSINGR} + \beta_7 * \text{INTEREST} \\ & + \beta_8 * \text{CAREPWON} + \beta_9 * \text{IDSTRENT} + \beta_{10} * \text{PPARTYID} + e. \quad [6.3] \end{aligned}$$

where

WATCHETV = the probability of watching\listening to PEBS;

IDSTRENT = strength of partisanship 1964-1987;

AGELASTE = the age of the respondent 1964-1987;

GENDER = the gender of the respondent 1964-1987;

RELIGION = religious affiliation of the respondent 1964-1987;

SESCLASS = the social class of the respondent 1964-1987;

UNIONMEB = whether the respondent belonged to a trade union 1964-1987;

PPARTYID = the political party identification 1964-1987;

INTEREST = the respondent's level of interest in politics 1964-1979;

CAREPWON = whether the respondent cared about election outcome 1964-1987;

α = constant;

e = normally distributed error term, as defined by the usual probit model.

A complete description and coding of the variables used in this study can be found at in the Appendix (Appendix B).

The dependent variable, WATCHETV, is posited to be a function of the independent variables on the right-hand side of Equation 6.3 above. That is, the dependent variable WATCHETV (unknown) probability of paying attention or not paying attention to PEBS is depends on a number of measurable and unmeasurable factors. For example, the estimated value and signs for β_1 parameters are of special interest to me because they carry with them the effect associated with AGELASTE in that general election year. The other independent variables in the equation are IDSTRENT, GENDER, RELIGION, SESCLASS, UNIONMEB, etc, which affect the probability of WATCHETV. All the parameters (except the intercept) are expected to take the signs of the hypothesized effects.

The estimated equation for the 1987 general election campaign, for example, is represented below, with the asymptic (large sample) standard errors in parentheses:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{WATCHETV} = & 4.770 + .124*\text{IDSTRENT} + .047*\text{AGELASTE} - .034*\text{GENDER} \\
 & (.149) \quad (.045) \quad (.068) \quad (.018) \\
 & + .172*\text{PPARTYID} + .606*\text{CAREPWON} + .083*\text{UNIONMEB} \\
 & \quad (.028) \quad (.070) \quad (.068) \\
 & - .034*\text{SESCLASS} + .047*\text{AGELASTE} + .004*\text{HOUSINGR} \\
 & \quad (.023) \quad (.017) \quad (.059) \\
 & + .04*\text{RELIGION} + .014*\text{EMPLOYME} + \text{error} \\
 & \quad (.014) \quad (.012)
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{6.4}$$

Using the general form of the probit equation 6.2 given above, I am interested in testing the hypothesis:

$$H_0 : \beta_1 \leq 0$$

$$H_a : \beta_1 \geq 0$$

that is, whether the coefficient for the independent variables are statistically and different from zero. Using probit, the ratio of the estimated coefficient to the estimated standard error is approximately the normal distribution for a large sample size. So, the t-tests can be applied here to test the hypothesis (Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1981). The ratios of the coefficient to the standard error that are greater than or equal to 1.96 are significant at the .05 level, two tail test, while the ratios on the magnitude of 2.33 are significant at the .01 level for one tail test significance (Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1981).

As I said earlier, I began by examining IDSTRENT alone before introducing additional variables to account for the potential intervening effects. The maximum likelihood estimates of the media use model with the associated standard errors are presented in Table 6.6. The parameter estimates are presented for easy interpretation and comparability with OLS coefficients. However, the discussion focuses on the statistically significant independent variables, the maximum likelihood estimates, standard error and standard error of coefficient. These provide information on the relative influence of each of the independent variables.

I reported one tailed significant tests as a guide to the robustness of the coefficients because of my expectation of the direction of effects. I anticipated, voters who identified 'strongly' or identified with a party were more likely to use the media for

Table 6.6: Probit maximum likelihood estimates of mass use model
(Dependent variable - whether or not a voter paid attention to PEBs, 1964-1987)

Independent Variables	Maximum Likelihood Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient/ Standard Error
1964 Election			
AGELASTE	.037	.084	.44
GENDER	-.525	.267	-1.96**
HOUSINGR	.065	.142	.45
RELIGION	.083	.081	1.02*
SESCLASS	-.168	.094	-1.79*
UNIONMEB	.941	.461	2.04**
INTEREST	-.127	.158	-0.81*
CAREPWON	.546	.268	2.04**
IDSTRENT	.155	.199	.78
PPARTYID	.202	.187	1.08*
INTERCEPT	5.815	1.191	5.76***
<i>n</i>	2,777		
Chi-squared (df)	142		
Log Likelihood	147.73		
1966 Election			
AGELASTE	.049	.024	2.02**
GENDER	-.171	.084	-2.04**
HOUSINGR	---	---	---
RELIGION	-.028	.018	-1.47*
SESCLASS	.024	.027	.86
UNIONMEB	---	---	---
INTEREST	-.349	.044	-7.86***
CAREPWON	.415	.084	4.97***
IDSTRENT	.072	.054	1.33*
PPARTYID	.035	.052	.68
INTERCEPT	6.050	.245	24.70***
<i>n</i>	1,795		
Chi-square (df)	1,316		
Log Likelihood	1810.19		

Table 6.6: (cont'd)

Independent Variables	Maximum Likelihood Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient/ Standard Error
1970 Election			
AGELASTE	.057	.035	1.78*
GENDER	-.252	.105	-2.40**
HOUSINGR	-.014	.050	-0.29
RELIGION	-.053	.023	-2.28**
SESCLASS	.032	.043	.73
UNIONMEB	---	---	---
INTEREST	-.528	.066	7.82***
CAREPWON	.497	.127	4.94***
IDSTRENT	-.053	.079	-0.67
PPARTYID	.135	.067	2.01**
INTERCEPT	6.557	.425	15.44***
<i>n</i>	2,084		
Chi-squared (df)	827		
Log Likelihood	838.13		
1974 February Election			
AGELASTE	.100	.067	1.49*
GENDER	.203	.058	3.50**
HOUSINGR	-.234	.051	-4.76***
RELIGION	---	---	---
SESCLASS	.015	.029	0.54
UNIONMEB	.058	.070	.84
INTEREST	.913	.062	14.71***
CAREPWON	.147	.038	3.85***
IDSTRENT	.104	.029	3.26***
PPARTYID	-.084	.037	-2.26**
INTERCEPT	4.801	.478	10.72****
<i>n</i>	2,153		
Chi-squared (df)	2,142		
Log Likelihood	2150.88		

Table 6.6: (cont'd)

Independent Variables	Maximum Likelihood Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient/ Standard Error
1974 October Election			
AGELASTE	-.065	.103	-.71
GENDER	.245	.058	4.18**
HOUSINGR	-.076	.023	-3.27**
RELIGION	-.012	.006	-1.79*
SESCCLASS	-.004	.017	-0.29
UNIONMEB	.059	.066	.88
INTEREST	.970	.064	15.26***
CAREPWON	.221	.051	4.29***
IDSTRENT	.097	.024	4.09**
PPARTYID	-.028	.036	-0.78
INTERCEPT	5.557	.810	6.86***
<i>n</i>	2,081		
Chi-squared (df)	2,070		
Log Likelihood	2081.17		
1979 Election			
AGELASTE	.292	.067	4.38***
GENDER	-.045	.017	-2.63**
HOUSINGR	-.066	.031	-2.10*
RELIGION	-.018	.009	-1.93*
SESCCLASS	.018	.019	.96
UNIONMEB	-.195	.074	2.63**
INTEREST	-.694	.046	15.15***
CAREPWON	---	---	---
IDSTRENT	.185	.046	4.05**
PPARTYID	-.004	.019	-.22
INTERCEPT	4.993	.434	11.51***
<i>n</i>	1,852		
Chi-squared (df)	1,842		
Log Likelihood	2119.20		

Table 6.6: (cont'd)

Independent Variables	Maximum Likelihood Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient/ Standard Error
1983 Election			
AGELASTE	.114	.042	2.69**
GENDER	.013	.120	.11
HOUSINGR	-.003	.004	-0.87
RELIGION	.025	.026	.94
SESCCLASS	.023	.044	-0.52
UNIONMEB	.101	.113	.89
INTEREST	---	---	---
CAREPWON	.677	.139	4.88***
IDSTRENT	-.049	.084	-0.58
PPARTYID	.087	.052	1.68*
INTERCEPT	4.928	.286	17.25***
<i>n</i>	3,130		
Chi-squared (df)	814		
Log Likelihood	837.94		
1987 Election			
AGELASTE	.047	.017	2.72*
GENDER	-.034	.059	-0.42
HOUSINGR	.004	.003	1.13*
RELIGION	.040	.014	2.95**
SESCCLASS	-.034	.023	1.37*
UNIONMEB	.083	.068	1.15*
INTEREST	---	---	---
CAREPWON	.606	.070	8.73***
IDSTRENT	.172	.045	3.98**
PPARTYID	.124	.028	4.46***
INTERCEPT	4.770	.149	35.51***
<i>n</i>	3,097		
Chi-squared (df)	2,892		
Log Likelihood	2902.42		

NOTE: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$, one-tailed test.

SOURCE: These figures are based on author's probit model using the BES data set.

information during general election campaigns. The estimates that are significant at the 0.05, 0.01 confidence levels are indicated by one and two asterisks respectively, while those that are significant at 0.001 level are indicated by three asterisks.

The results indicate that media use is negatively related to interest in politics but positively related to caring about which party wins the election, party identification strength and direction.

For example, in 1987, caring about which party wins the elections, with a parameter estimate of .606 - a magnitude more than eight times its standard error of .070, it is immediately obvious that caring may well have impart - a positive influence on the probability to use the media. For one thing, voters who care about the outcome of an election might consider getting more information about the candidates and issues in a newspaper. On the other hand, interest in politics, for example in 1979, with a parameter estimate of -.694 is negatively related to using the media and has a magnitude of fifteen times more than its standard error of .046. However, newspapers are lengthy and for most Labour identifiers, many of the newspapers are biased against the Labour party. As a result, most voters considering the opportunity costs opt for the short cut - watching/listening to PEBs rather than reading news papers.

One more important needs to be made here, it is difficult to distinguish the effects of 'care about the outcome of the elections' and 'interest in politics' from the general effect of the other independent variables by the indicators in the model: it is, in fact, difficult theoretically to separate the variables - care and interest in politics. That is to say, that it is quite impossible to separate the effects of all the other independent

variables independently from care and interest. Using the media for information during election campaigns, in fact, may be dependent on both care and interest. Suggesting that an interaction exists between watching/listening to PEBs or following the elections in any newspaper, care about election outcome and interest in politics, and all two may significantly influence using the media for information during election campaigns.⁷ However, one may still have some reservation about the specification of the model. Specifically, the tendency to follow election campaigns in the media and care may be highly collinear to interest. It may be possible that the significant of the interaction term is spurious.

Furthermore, interest in politics and being a member of the trade union in 1964 had greater probability of using the media for information during the election campaigns than say in subsequent years (especially in the 1983 and 1987). This can be attributed to the character or structure of union membership in the 1960s as opposed to the 1980s. In the 1950s and 1960s, manual workers made up about sixty-eight per cent of the work-force in Britain. At the end of the 1980s, the figure fell to forty-eight per cent. Between 1979 and 1987, trade union membership fell from about fifty per cent to about thirty-six per cent of the work-force in Britain. This also meant a reduction in the power or strength and cohesiveness of the union members. Indeed the working class or union members become the new minority in the 1980s. When the union was strong, most members were active interested in politics, cared about the outcomes and probably used

⁷ The same argument could be made about using the mass media for information during election campaigns, care about the outcome of the elections and interest in politics, and their influence on voting or not voting in the logistic model below.

the media for information during election campaigns. When the union became weak in the 1980s, the potential for being actively involved and using the media for information diminished.

The other characteristics, other than the socio-economic class in the 1960s are not significantly related to media use during general election campaigns. Social class, gender and age had no effect on whether or not to use the media for information during election campaigns. Generally, there are differences between social classes, age groups and gender in their media use (television, radio and newspapers). Indeed, there is a marked differences between social classes, age and gender, but this does not seem to reflect in differential use of the media for information during the general elections between 1964 and 1987.

The variable for housing failed to yield any evidence of any effect on whether to use the media for information during general elections or not. The reason why I considered housing in this model is because in the literature, Labour party has traditionally won the support or a higher proportion of public sector or "council" housing tenants in all constituencies in most of the general elections. Using the media during election campaigns might help them make up their minds or re-enforce their existing support for the Labour party. In 1950, there was about twenty-nine per cent home ownership in Britain; that means that there were a large proportion of council housing tenants. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990 the figure of home owners went up to sixty-seven per cent. This rise in home ownership is attributed to Conservative party policies between 1979 and 1990 (Figure 6.4).

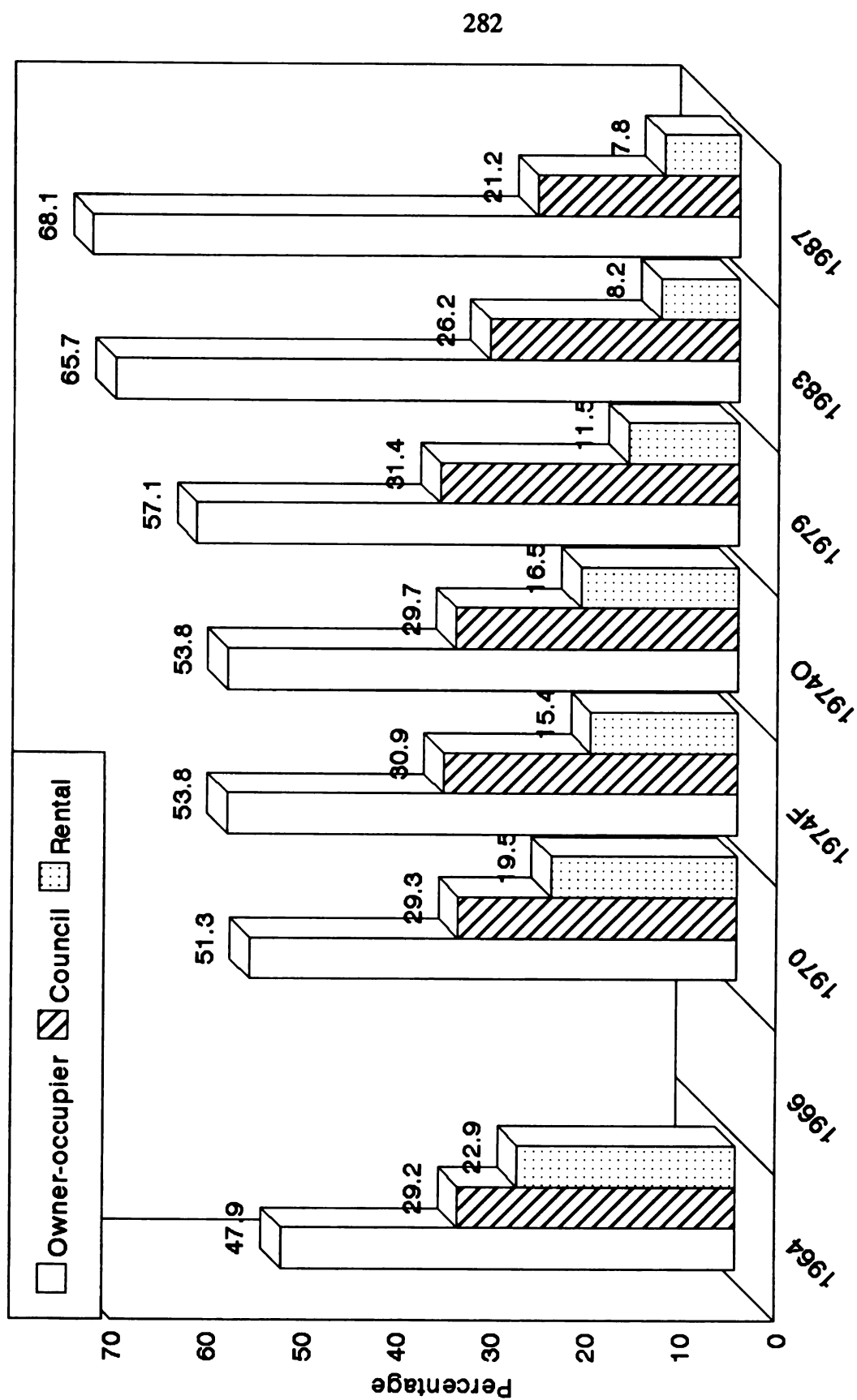


Figure 6.4: Housing situation 1964-1987

Source: BES, however, compare Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

Contrary to the expectation that new home owners, might be more interested in politics and identified strongly with Conservative party in the 1980s, did not apparently turn to the media for information as expected. Instead, a reduction in the proportion of Council tenants made no difference either to using or not using the media during election campaigns. This finding does not support the view that new home owners were more Conservative in the 1980s, if they were, they did not show a greater propensity to watch or follow the election campaigns on television.

In conclusion, in all the general election years, voters who cared about which party won, and identified with a party were positively influenced to use the media for information. By the same token, those who were interested in politics had higher and negative proclivity to use the media for information during general election campaigns.

Test of Goodness of Fitness Indicator

One final word, the first test of the fit of the model is in the χ^2 goodness-of-fit associated with the model. Except in 1979, the summary chi-squared value for all eight elections years indicated no significance suggesting, perhaps, that the independent variables in the model are not the principal determinants of media use. For example, χ^2 value of 2,084 and 827 df, $p \leq .386$ associated with the model in 1970 is not particularly bad, although the p-value is not very good. Goodness-of-fit χ^2 usually range from 20 to 1 (ratios of χ^2 to degrees of freedom), the results of the model for each election year is less than 20. Finally, the 1979 p-value that is less than .001 shows a strong significance and suggests another closer look at the model.

The Logistic Model of Voting

As I mentioned earlier, in a recent study, Morgan and Shanahan (1992), observed that television viewing has a statistically significant effect on voting behavior in the presidential elections in the United States between 1972 to 1989; and as the simple bivariate analysis in chapter five indicated, mass media use correlates to voting.

As I noted earlier, a logistic regression model is used to estimate direct effects of the explanatory variables (especially mass media use) on voting. Voting in all the general elections, a dichotomous variable requires that I use a nonlinear distribution such as logistic or probit regression model in order to avoid biased results (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984). Like probit coefficients, logistic coefficients do not lend themselves to easy interpretations, however, the formula of coefficient and the constant can be used to compute probabilities. Again, as I noted earlier, these probabilities represent $P(Y = 1)$, where 1 represents voting in a general election and 0 represents not voting. Thus, for the dichotomous dependent variable - voting, logistic regression assesses the effect or the impact of the explanatory variables on the probability of voting in a general election.

I expect to find statistical significant effects of the media use on voting behavior in the general elections in Great Britain. I also expect other factors to influence the probability of voting in an election, so I included the control or the explanatory variables to see the impacts of these other independent variables on the dependent variable - voting.

The model used in the estimation, although similar to the probit model suggests the following regression equation:

$$\text{MANAVOTE} = \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{WATCHETV} + \beta_2 * \text{READNEWS} + \beta_3 * \text{AGELASTE} \\ + \beta_4 * \text{UNIONMEB} + \beta_5 * \text{PPARTYID} + e \quad [6.5]$$

where

MANAVOTE = the probability of voting in any of the general election;

READNEWS = following the election campaign in any daily national newspaper;

α = constant;

e = normally distributed error term, as defined by the usual logit model.

All the other variables have been defined in the previous equation.

The dependent variable in this equations, MANAVOTE, the probability of voting or not voting any of the general elections, is posited as a function many factors including but not limited to the factors on the right-hand side of the equation.

Like in the probit analysis, the first two variables - the media use variables - are measures of the respondents' media use for information during election campaigns. WATCHETV equals 1 if the respondent watched/listened to PEBs during the election and 0 otherwise. Similarly, READNEWS equal 1 only if the respondent used the medium during the election campaigns, age, union membership, partisanship and social class are categorical variables, and the coding are further explained in the Appendix B.

To determine to what extend the respondents' use of the media for information during the election, affect their ability to vote during the elections, it is important first to show that media use affect voting behavior.

To test this, I used the BES survey responses to evaluate the null hypothesis, that media use during election campaigns has no effect on voter turnout.

For example,

$$H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$$

or

$$H_0 : \beta_2 = 0$$

When the coefficient for newspapers is significantly more or less than 0, I reject the null hypothesis. After determining that these are significant, I then entered the other independent variables to determine which of the variables better predict the propensity to vote in a general election.

Table 6.7 shows the results of the logistic regression - the list of the variables used in the logit model, and the parameter estimates. However, the discussion here focuses on mainly the statistically significant independent variables, their coefficients and standard errors. The coefficients shown in Table 6.7 are the actual SPSS-X statistical output. These figures are different from those obtained from using SAS. To make the figures comparable to SAS values, SPSS-X suggests that these values must be multiplied by two (2), and that the intercept must have five (5) taken away from the printed value and the difference then multiplied by 2. So, to compute the values for 1964, for example, we have:

WATCHETV	$-.135 \times 2 = -.270$
READNEWS	$.125 \times 2 = .250$
AGELASTE	$.161 \times 2 = .322$
GENDER	$.085 \times 2 = .170$
HOUSINGR	$.026 \times 2 = .052$

RELIGION	$-.081 \times 2 = -.162$
SESCCLASS	$-.053 \times 2 = -.106$
UNIONMEB	$-.211 \times 2 = -.422$
INTEREST	$-.588 \times 2 = -1.176$
CAREPWON	$.612 \times 2 = 1.224$
IDSTRENT	$-.354 \times 2 = -.708$
PPARTYID	$-.021 \times 2 = -.042$
Intercept	$(3.69 - 5) \times 2 = -2.63$

However, I have reported the actual SPSS-X output as these figures are intuitively the same. From the figures in Table 6.7, the coefficients show that this model performs reasonably well. It correctly classified between 99% to 86.1% of the cases on the dependent variable - whether the respondents voted or did not vote during the general elections in Great Britain since 1964. The model also provides a respectable 86% to 99.7% in classification error - from what was obtained by chance given the marginal distribution of the dependent variables.⁸

The parameter estimates highlight important differences in each variables' contribution in the model. The most important variable here is mass media use. One of the indicators of mass media use in this test is WATCHETV (that is, watching/listening to PEBs during general elections). The other indicator of mass media use is READNEWS (that is, following the election campaigns in a daily newspaper).

⁸ The procedure for assessing error reduction is based on Goodman and Kruskal's tau. Because it is sensitive to the distribution of non-modal cases, it is a superior measure of error reduction.

Table 6.7: Logistic regression estimates for general election vote 1964-1987

Independent Variables 1964	Minimum chi-square Estimate	Standard Error	Expo(B)
WATCHETV	-.135	.276	.87
READNEWS	.125	.304	1.13
AGELASTE	.161	.093	1.18
GENDER	.085	.283	1.09
HOUSINGR	.026	.135	1.03
RELIGION	-.081	.055	.92
SESCCLASS	-.053	.111	.95
UNIONMEB	-.211	.276	.81
INTEREST	-.588	.176	.56***
CAREPWON	.612	.271	1.84*
IDSTRENT	-.354	.185	.70*
PPARTYID	-.021	.182	.98
Intercept	3.685	1.093	----***
<i>n</i>	2,922		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	552.55		
End -2 Log Likelihood	504.74		
% correctly classified	90.36%		
Pseudo-R ²	.23		
1966 Election			
WATCHETV	.172	.047	1.19***
READNEWS	.034	.054	1.03
AGELASTE	-.123	.059	.88*
RELIGION	-.023	.044	.98
SESCCLASS	-.009	.077	.99
INTEREST	.382	.125	1.47***
CAREPWON	.127	.054	1.14
IDSTRENT	.647	.141	1.91***
PPARTYID	.164	.136	1.18
Intercept	-4.404	.614	----***
<i>n</i>	2,922		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	956.49		
End -2 Log Likelihood	847.39		
% correctly classified	86.94%		
Pseudo-R ²	.30		

Table 6.7: (cont'd)

Independent Variables 1970	Minimum chi-square Estimate	Standard Error	Expo(B)
WATCHETV	.175	.057	1.19***
READNEWS	.020	.059	1.02
AGELASTE	-.022	.076	.98
HOUSINGR	.016	.117	1.02
RELIGION	.081	.050	1.08
SESCCLASS	.070	.101	1.07
INTEREST	.210	.151	1.23
CAREPWON	.314	.064	1.37***
IDSTRENT	.110	.166	1.12
PPARTYID	-.282	.179	.75
Intercept	-3.463	.825	----***
<i>n</i>	2,922		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	668.17		
End -2 Log Likelihood	596.92		
% correctly classified	86.16%		
Pseudo-R ²	.22		
1974 February Election			
WATCHETV	.052	.226	1.05
READNEWS	.014	.253	1.013
AGELASTE	.075	.233	1.08
GENDER	-.111	.305	.90
HOUSINGR	-.477	.267	.62
SESCCLASS	-.128	.145	.88
UNIONMEB	-.009	.008	.99
INTEREST	-.266	.173	.77
CAREPWON	-.093	.109	.91
IDSTRENT	14.64	16.44	
PPARTYID	.375	.053	1.45***
Intercept	-1.593	1.906	----
<i>n</i>	2,462		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	1,638.98		
End -2 Log Likelihood	302.56		
% correctly classified	97.49%		
Pseudo-R ₂	.22		

Table 6.7: (cont'd)

Independent Variables 1974 October Election	Minimum chi-square Estimate	Standard Error	Expo(B)
WATCHETV	1.129	.538	3.09*
READNEWS	.225	.557	1.25
GENDER	-1.137	.962	.32
HOUSINGR	.513	.406	1.67
RELIGION	.009	.116	1.01
SESCLASS	-.505	.355	.60
UNIONMEB	-1.470	.891	.23
INTEREST	-1.290	.660	.28*
CAREPWON	.698	.889	2.01
IDSTRENT	4.089	5.481	59.69
PPARTYID	-.141	.173	.87
Intercept	25.890	43.820	----
<i>n</i>	1,852		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	1964.36		
End -2 Log Likelihood	50.90		
% correctly classified	99.70%		
Pseudo-R ²	.13		
<hr/>			
1979			
WATCHETV	.167	.074	1.18*
AGELASTE	-.217	.214	.81
GENDER	-.096	.044	.91
HOUSINGR	.173	.020	1.19
RELIGION	.055	.023	1.19**
SESCLASS	-.017	.047	.98
UNIONMEB	.012	.046	1.01
INTEREST	.441	.114	1.55***
IDSTRENT	.389	.122	1.47
PPARTYID	-.074	.112	.93
Intercept	-2.624	1.562	----
<i>n</i>	1,893		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	1150.09		
End -2 Log Likelihood	1083.19		
% correctly classified	88.19%		
Pseudo-R ²	.06		

Table 6.7: (cont'd)

Independent Variables 1983 Election	Minimum chi-square Estimate	Standard Error	Expo(B)
WATCHETV	.792	.295	2.21***
READNEWS	-.003	.284	1.00***
AGELASTE	-.100	.091	.90
GENDER	-.900	.276	.41***
HOUSINGR	-.012	.011	.99
RELIGION	.067	.048	1.07
SESCCLASS	.100	.094	1.10
UNIONMEB	.064	.243	1.07
CAREPWON	1.280	.281	3.60***
IDSTRENT	.441	.179	1.55**
PPARTYID	-.182	.153	.83
Intercept	-4.184	.917	----***
<i>n</i>	3,217		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	555.14		
End -2 Log Likelihood	491.05		
% correctly classified	87.40%		
Pseudo-R ²	.16		
<hr/>			
1987 Election			
WATCHETV	.225	.155	1.25*
READNEWS	.226	.138	1.25
AGELASTE	-.039	.036	.96
GENDER	-.169	.127	.85
HOUSINGR	-.005	.005	.99
RELIGION	.100	.032	1.11***
SESCCLASS	.016	.050	1.38
UNIONMEB	.324	.153	1.38*
CAREPWON	.993	.142	2.70***
IDSTRENT	.375	.049	1.46***
PPARTYID	.151	.059	1.16**
Intercept	-.052	.312	----
<i>n</i>	6,000		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	2001.87		
End -2 Log likelihood	1852.62		
% correctly classified	89.08%		
Pseudo-R ²	.33		

SOURCE: BES data set. NOTE: *** p < .001 ** p < .01 p < .05

Table 6.7 shows that media use in six of the eight elections (and especially in recent years) is a statistically significant determinant of voting behavior. In fact, the result almost indicate that mass media use (especially watch/listening to PEBs) was a sufficient cause of voting in 1983.

For instance, in 1983 general election, according to the result in Table 6.7, a respondent who watched/listened to PEBs had a higher (.79) probability of voting (all other variables controlled) whereas a respondent who followed the elections in the newspaper had a negative and near zero (-0.003) probability of voting. Watching/listening to PEBs came close third after 'care which party wins' and gender. In fact, watching/listening to the PEBs performed better than strength of party identification in 1983. In 1987, watching/listening to PEBs and following the elections in a daily newspaper tied close second, however, following the election in a newspaper was not statistically significant in that year. Furthermore, the exponential B value of 2.21 in 1983 shows that mass media use was associated with three times greater chance that the respondent who watched/listened to PEBs would vote in that year's general election. The impact of media use is, in fact, especially important because it predicts voting. However, logistic coefficients do not provide much intuition about the absolute magnitude of the hypothesized relationship.

From the forgoing, the variables that make strong contributions to the model, or that achieved statistical significance are interest in politics and care about the outcome of the elections. In fact, in all the election years, interest and care achieved high levels of significance. Other independent variables did not appear to be highly significant.

In conclusion, the data present here offer strong support that mass media use during election campaigns is related to voting. Contrary to the hypothesis and most of the literature, during election campaigns in Great Britain, mass media users were more likely to vote than non-media users. Although this may seem to contradict Morgan and Shanahan (1992) and all the literature on media and its effects on voter turnout, it is however consistent with earlier studies that posited that the media mobilize the electorate. Because in most of the general elections (especially in recent elections, 1979, 1983 and 1987) watching/listening to PEBs is a significant predictor of voting, although, it was not stronger than partisanship strength (except in 1970 and 1987). This finding suggests that the media are important agent for mobilizing the electorate to vote.

Test of Goodness of Fitness Indicator.

There are two usual tests of goodness-of-fitness for logistic regression models - Pseudo- R^2 ,⁹ and the 'Pearson goodness-of-fit chi-square' and Aldrich and Nelson, (1984:57) proposed that the pseudo- R^2 could be characterized as 'being in the spirit of R^2 .' However, it cannot be taken as the variance explained as in OLS regression, but it has the useful quality of its values ranging between 0 and 1, where a value approaching 1 is seen as a quality of improvement in the goodness-of-fit test. Again, unlike the test for significance for multiple regression, logistic regression models goodness-of-fit indicator requires the value of $p > 0$, that is, a p-value = .25, for

⁹ For a complete or detailed discussion of the relative advantage of using this as a measure of goodness-of-fit indicator, see for example, Hagle and Mitchell (1992). However, the measure of Pseudo- R^2 in this study is based upon Aldrich and Nelson (1984) and Walsh (1986:182) formula: $\text{Pseudo-}R^2 = C/(N + C)$: where C = the chi-square goodness-of-fit statistics; and N = the sample size.

example, actually indicates that the model is a good fit. The logistic regression models for all the eight election years (except in 1987) are significant p-value ranging between 1 and .25. However, the pseudo- R^2 values (for example, 0.33 in 1987), indicate that the model provides a reasonably good fit for the data (except in October 1974), and the probability is small that the results observed using this model are due to chance ($p < .001$).

The Multiple Regression Model of Partisanship Strength

The third phase in this analysis involves multiple regression analysis test of the relationship between partisan strength and the predictor variables for the election years 1964 to 1987 (the first, BES study in 1963 excluded). To test the hypothesis, that mass media use or the use of the media for political information during election campaigns will negatively predict strength of partisanship, the model regressed the dependent variable (that is, strength of party identification at a point in time t_2 time, t_3 on its value at an earlier point in time t_1); and, the other independent variables at the earlier point in time t_1 . The analysis takes the following basic textbook algebraic formula (see for example, Pindyck and Rubinfeld, (1981); and Kmenta (1986:392) with γ indicating the dependent (endogenous) variable - partisanship strength:

$$\gamma = \alpha + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \beta_3 x_{i3} \dots + \beta_k x_{ik} + e \quad [6.6]$$

where γ is the dependent variable, partisanship strength, at that point in time,

α is the intercept,

β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are empirically determined weights,

x_{i1} , x_{i2} , x_{i3} , etc, are the independent variables - social class, gender, etc.

and e is the error term.

The basic model is extended in the analysis to examine the effects of media use on strength of party identification.

The second equation for the model although similar to the first is this:

$$\gamma = \alpha + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \beta_3 x_{i3} + \beta_4 x_{i4} c_1 + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik} + e \quad [6.7]$$

If Equation 6.7 explains significantly the variation, then, it is reasonable to conclude that there is an interaction between the dependent and the independent variables. The ideal thing would have been to employ some type of time-series (or logistic regression test) here to assess recent trend in the decline of political party identification strength and direction in relation to the salience of mass media in Great Britain. Fortunately, this method is as reliable as time-series analysis, hence, it is appropriated to use it here.

To test the hypothesis, that mass media use has decreased party identification, a maximum of twelve independent variables (with some control variables not included in all years as these were not in the data set across the years) were entered in three stages (although what is reported here are the final stages for each election year): the first stage consisted of the demographic variables, age, gender, housing, union membership and social economic class; at the second stage, the political attitude and participation variables were entered; and finally the media use variables were added to detect any systematic relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. That is, all the twelve variables were entered in the equation.

Table 6.8 presents the zero-order relationship of mass media use and party identification with all the other eleven independent variables. The relationship between

Table 6.8: Zero-order relationship of mass media use and partisanship strength

Variable	Zero-order	Part correl	Partial correlation
1964			
SESCCLASS	.032830	.015563	.018857
READNEWS	.086832	.033760	.040878
GREATDIF	-.208491	-.123117	-.147568
WAVERING	.250844	.093306	.112359
GENDER	.066596	.065049	.078587
WATCHETV	.099388	.068326	.082520
AGELASTE	.175693	.057165	.069111
GENEVOTE	-.065519	.052924	.064006
HOUSINGR	-.070153	-.022136	-.026817
CAREPWON	-.375682	-.245221	-.284863
WHENDECI	.424334	.303435	.345128
1966			
SESCCLASS	.050307	.005200	.006023
WAVERING	.210320	.076646	.088433
READNEWS	.077716	.028044	.032467
AGELASTE	.123313	.053403	.061740
GREATDIF	-.222257	-.120948	-.138742
GENDER	.006960	.025485	.029507
WATCHETV	.154251	.090775	.104570
GENEVOTE	-.145927	-.055294	-.063918
HOUSINGR	-.117371	-.068869	-.079521
CAREPWON	.343673	.220378	.247338
WHENDECI	.354674	.215370	.242050
1970			
SESCCLASS	-.006308	-.030614	-.037407
WATCHETV	.020728	-.006401	-.007827
GREATDIF	-.232298	-.100347	-.121785
GENDER	.074003	.039443	.048173
AGELASTE	.192628	.092982	.112966
WAVERING	.258627	.105562	.128013
READNEWS	.037347	.027427	.033517
HOUSINGR	-.061145	-.007311	-.008939
GENEVOTE	-.088208	.098269	.119300
CAREPWON	.371887	.270019	.313518
WHENDECI	.446174	.304206	.348629

Table 6.8: (cont'd)

Variable	Zero-order	Path correl	Partial correlation
1974 February			
CAREPWON	-.243915	-.154798	-.172074
GENDER	-.143552	-.103142	-.115609
HOUSINGR	-.060446	-.058318	-.065666
SESCLASS	-.002612	-.007216	-.008143
WAVERING	.131531	.039782	.044846
WATCHETV	.105696	.066683	.075035
GREATDIF	-.098303	-.063777	-.071783
READNEWS	-.083130	-.080813	-.090815
WHENDECI	-.368126	-.310837	-.330989
INTEREST	.015139	.006112	.006897
UNIONMEB	-.119275	-.085373	-.095894
GENEVOTE	-.074667	.039810	.044878
1974 October			
CAREPWON	-.268988	-.182246	-.211185
HOUSINGR	-.056356	-.037393	-.044287
SESCLASS	.003720	.037630	.044567
GENDER	.010892	-.028129	-.033329
WATCHETV	.061400	.056951	.067364
WAVERING	-.277449	-.110665	-.130082
GREATDIF	-.277070	-.182592	-.211569
READNEWS	-.086842	-.046150	-.054630
UNIONMEB	.032889	.004072	.004827
INTEREST	.055990	-.017252	-.020448
WHENDECI	-.427627	-.291306	-.326434
GENEVOTE	.075908	.041707	.049385
1979			
SESCLASS	-.082316	-.047957	-.052324
GENDER	-.017856	.043389	.047351
WAVERING	.178595	.092016	.100028
HOUSINGR	-.031892	-.040446	-.044146
GREATDIF	-.186961	-.106672	-.115761
GENEVOTE	-.006020	.038515	.042042
WATCHETV	.163708	.059061	.064392
UNIONMEB	.026224	.045092	.049205
WHENDECI	-.285170	-.196748	-.210156
INTEREST	.232104	.162054	.174340

Table 6.8: (cont'd)

Variable	Zero-order	Path correl	Partial correlation
1983			
SESCCLASS	-.062404	-.054829	-.061770
AGELASTE	.213937	.102830	.115296
GREATDIF	.032574	.023011	.025965
GENDER	.085290	.036492	.041156
GENEVOTE	-.146123	-.018079	-.020402
WATCHETV	.058080	.030622	.034544
UNIONMEB	.009641	.050797	.057243
READNEWS	.088318	.040780	.045981
WAVERING	.243855	.066240	.074560
HOUSINGR	-.099468	-.065376	-.073593
CAREPWON	.189783	.116790	.130696
WHENDECI	-.405779	-.260672	-.282268
1987			
SESCCLASS	-.086722	-.067366	-.075776
UNIONMEB	-.053168	-.014797	-.016690
WHENDECI	-.362795	-.215154	-.235865
HOUSINGR	-.078456	-.092530	-.103818
WATCHETV	.119621	.044549	.050192
GREATDIF	-.065767	-.003349	-.003778
GENDER	.016957	.000234	.000265
AGELASTE	.208708	.118240	.132214
GENEVOTE	-.155602	-.044769	-.050439
READNEWS	.138425	.056042	.063094
CAREPWON	.250308	.158309	.175806
WAVERING	.224713	.078346	.088039

SOURCE: These figures are author's based on BES data.

mass media use, WATCHETV or READNEWS, and partisanship strength, IDSTRENT, are not in the expected direction in all the years except READNEWS in February 1974. In all the general election years, mass media users were likely to identify strongly with a political party in Great Britain than non-media users. This is true for television viewers as well as for newspaper readers. Even in February 1974 that newspaper readers were more likely to express a negative partisanship strength, one unique thing happened in that year - the Conservative party that is often supported by the newspapers and also attracts the support of the majority of the readers won the election even though the Labour party won more seats in parliament.

The hypothesis in question here is that mass media use has decreased political party identification in the last few decades. In order to assess this hypothesis, we now turn to the statistical technique of multiple regression that is able to do that.

From Table 6.9, reports the multiple regression results. From these figures, the relationships between mass media use and strength of partisanship are not in the expected hypothesized direction. In all eight general elections, voters who followed the elections on radio and television were more likely to identify strongly with a political party in Britain. In no general election was mass media use negatively related to partisanship strength, except in 1970 that mass media use had a negative partial correlation with strength of partisanship. Between 1964 and 1970, the time of voting decision or when a voter decided on how to vote set high scores and were positively related to strength of partisanship, however, from February 1974 to 1987, it continued to score high but were negatively related to partisanship strength. However, two variables that consistently

**Table 6.9: Multiple regression test of the effect of mass media use
on strength of party identification**

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1964				
SESCCLASS	.010972	.021357	.016323	.514
READNEWS	.076207	.068381	.034285	1.114
GREATDIF	-.131270	.032299	-.129692	-4.064***
WAVERING	.067334	.021861	.100289	3.080***
GENDER	.108504	.050530	.065379	2.147*
WATCHETV	.141733	.062838	.069236	2.256**
AGELASTE	.035242	.018675	.060189	1.887*
GENEVOTE	.068031	.038940	.055642	1.747
HOUSINGR	-.021295	.029142	-.023058	-.731
CAREPWON	-.120262	.014856	-.263466	-8.095***
WHENDECI	.110125	.010994	.340809	10.017***
(Constant)	1.220983	.224459		5.440***
<i>n</i> of cases =	754			
Multiple R	.56488			
R Square	.31909			
1966				
SESCCLASS	.003756	.024236	.005470	.155
WAVERING	.056116	.024566	.081551	2.284*
READNEWS	.064262	.076888	.028452	.836
AGELASTE	.033168	.020840	.056454	1.592
GREATDIF	-.124121	.034434	-.125585	-3.605***
GENDER	.042174	.055527	.025708	.760
WATCHETV	.182514	.067464	.093555	2.705***
GENEVOTE	-.075493	.045810	-.058522	-1.648*
HOUSINGR	-.065781	.032049	-.072254	-2.053*
CAREPWON	.471418	.071776	.236498	6.568***
WHENDECI	.081367	.012677	.246051	6.419***
(Constant)	1.298590	.256992		5.053***
<i>n</i> of cases =	674			
Multiple R	.50467			
R Square	.25469			

Table 6.9: (cont'd)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1970				
SESCCLASS	-.022741	.019069	-.031876	-1.193
WATCHETV	-.012862	.051581	-.006473	-.249
GREATDIF	-.110275	.028210	-.107207	-3.909***
GENDER	.068764	.044752	.040084	1.537
AGELASTE	.055862	.015422	.095911	3.622***
WAVERING	.085449	.020779	.116250	4.112***
READNEWS	.054213	.050741	.028000	1.068
HOUSINGR	-.007220	.025351	-.007654	-.285
GENEVOTE	.128385	.033537	.106672	3.828***
CAREPWON	.614587	.058428	.295556	10.519***
WHENDECI	.136500	.011519	.342137	11.850***
(Constant)	.346808	.210886		1.645
<i>n</i> of cases =	1027			
Multiple R	.57545			
R Square	.33115			
1974 February				
CAREPWON	-.139429	.037015	-.162181	-3.767***
GENDER	-.161454	.064330	-.111915	-2.510**
HOUSINGR	-.083124	.058576	-.060589	-1.419
SESCCLASS	-.005328	.030339	-.007347	-.176
WAVERING	.041343	.042708	.048635	.968
WATCHETV	.050789	.031300	.068318	1.623
GREATDIF	-.057157	.036830	-.065655	-1.552
READNEWS	-.060464	.030748	-.085111	-1.966*
WHENDECI	-.254531	.033652	-.327806	-7.564***
INTEREST	.009721	.065363	.006586	.149
UNIONMEB	-.151353	.072856	-.093340	-2.077*
GENEVOTE	.045704	.047180	.049245	.969
(Constant)	3.186911	.322847		9.871**
<i>n</i> of cases =	478			
Multiple R	.46334			
R Square	.21468			

Table 6.9: (cont'd)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1974 October				
CAREPWON	-.194898	.024624	-.187861	-7.915***
HOUSINGR	-.021909	.013491	-.040251	-1.624
SESCCLASS	.014229	.008707	.038139	1.634
GENDER	-.037923	.031043	-.030103	-1.222
WATCHETV	.036964	.014945	.057449	2.473**
WAVERING	-.074162	.015431	-.121795	-4.806***
GREATDIF	-.146982	.018535	-.190163	-7.930***
READNEWS	-.025811	.012878	-.048777	-2.004*
UNIONMEB	.006212	.035127	.004458	.177
INTEREST	-.025490	.034021	-.018590	-.749
WHENDECI	-.263380	.020818	-.325034	-12.651***
GENEVOTE	.059037	.032593	.046738	1.811*
(Constant)	3.527691	.103399		34.117***
<i>n</i> of cases =	1355			
Multiple R	.53713			
R Square	.28851			
1979				
SESCCLASS	-.019810	.015795	-.048717	-1.254
GENDER	.016249	.014320	.046941	1.135
WAVERING	.055923	.023239	.104399	2.406**
HOUSINGR	-.057167	.054044	-.040878	-1.058
GREATDIF	-.093235	.033420	-.111992	-2.790***
GENEVOTE	.040524	.040232	.039984	1.007
WATCHETV	.099311	.064296	.066745	1.545
UNIONMEB	.072888	.061807	.049341	1.179
WHENDECI	-.177631	.034522	-.222349	-5.145***
INTEREST	.166460	.039277	.184373	4.238***
(Constant)	1.847813	.254590		7.258***
<i>n</i> of cases =	584			
Multiple R	.40279			
R Square	.16224			

Table 6.9: (cont'd)

Variables	B	SE B	Beta	T
1983				
SESCCLASS	-.027873	.018205	-.055089	-1.531
AGELASTE	.056766	.019770	.109098	2.871***
GREATDIF	.030146	.046916	.023717	.643
GENDER	.056793	.055733	.037048	1.019
GENEVOTE	-.016533	.032750	-.019614	-.505
WATCHETV	.073460	.085910	.031878	.855
UNIONMEB	.075122	.052961	.051821	1.418
READNEWS	.076240	.066952	.042800	1.139
WAVERING	.045568	.024636	.075327	1.850*
HOUSINGR	-.064898	.035550	-.068926	-1.826*
CAREPWON	.262455	.080478	.125117	3.261***
WHENDECI	-.279193	.038356	-.311590	-7.279***
(Constant)	1.879007	.246457		7.624***
<i>n</i> of cases =	625			
Multiple R	.46380			
R Square	.21511			
1987				
SESCCLASS	-.036110	.009218	-.067745	-3.917***
UNIONMEB	-.024642	.028640	-.015384	-.860
WHENDECI	-.222111	.017753	-.247117	-12.511***
HOUSINGR	-.083462	.015512	-.095332	-5.380***
WATCHETV	.094030	.036298	.047408	2.590***
GREATDIF	-.005209	.026750	-.003482	-.195
GENDER	3.461528	.025386	2.424244	.014
AGELASTE	.051108	.007433	.122706	6.875***
GENEVOTE	-.041394	.015901	-.048217	-2.603***
READNEWS	.096588	.029639	.060681	3.259***
CAREPWON	.329062	.035746	.172612	9.205***
WAVERING	.049462	.010857	.087894	4.556***
(Constant)	1.861795	.111178		16.746***
<i>n</i> of cases =	2670			
Multiple R	.46282			
R Square	.21420			

NOTE: *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$.

SOURCE: These figures are author's based on BES data.

scored positive in all the general election years were age and mass media use. Generally speaking, the relationships connecting mass media use and partisanship strength are not in the expected direction in all eight elections. From the bivariate analysis in chapter five, we know too that mass media use relates to strength of partisanship. The analysis now turns to the question of the extent of mass media use during election campaign can be used to predict the strength of party identification.

Recall that the hypothesis of this study is that mass media users are more likely to express less strong party affiliation in Britain. Such a result would help us to understand the root causes of the decline of partisanship in Britain and in other industrialized democracies. In order to assess this hypothesis, the statistical technique of multiple regression is employed. Multiple regression, Kmenta (1986:392) argues, assesses the extent to which changes in one variable can be explained by reference to changes in several other variables. Table 6.9 displays the results of the multiple regression analysis of the effect of mass media use during election campaigns has on strength of partisanship.

Since this study is primarily interested in the relationship between media use and party identification strength, I attempted to improve upon the predictive powers of the model by trying regression through the origin. Regression through the origin means excluding the intercept α (or the regression constant) in Equation 6.7 above.

Including or excluding the intercept in a regression model is fundamentally the same. For one thing, the intercept α is the mean of γ when each of the explanatory or the independent variables is equal to zero (Kmenta, 1986:394), or the values that are

common to all observations regardless of the predictive values. Therefore, regression through the origin, means that one is simply explaining the variance in the outcome variable without the amount which are common to all the observations regardless of the predicted values. Basically, the amount of values are the same, but it is the variance explained that is different. However, the R-square which measures the proportion of variability in the outcome variable explained by regression. The R-square through the origin, is different from the R-square for models which include an intercept. The correlation matrix for the eight general elections are presented in Table 6.9, while the correlation matrix through the origin is presented in the Appendix C for comparison.

When media use variables were entered in the final stage, I wanted to see whether they explain any variance above and beyond the other controls. The interaction terms between media use (that is, watching/listening to the PEBS and following the elections in the newspapers) and all the other independent variables were thus kept out of the equation (to avoid multi-collinearity)¹⁰ and their contributions assessed through partial regression coefficients. The regression was run for each election (separately for each year) year's sample.

The important figures from Table 6.9 are the multiple correlation or correlation predicted (R); the proportion of the variance explained for the overall model for each election year (R-squared), which as I pointed out earlier, measures the proportion of variability in the outcome variable explained by regression; the regression coefficients

¹⁰ For example, party identification direction was excluded from the model to avoid multi-collinearity problem.

(B); and the standard errors.

Table 6.9 presents the statistics for predicting partisanship strength as the dependent variable. The amount of variation explained by the model for each of the election years is impressive. All control variables entered together explained between 16 percent to 58 percent of the variance in strength of party identification strength. The high correlation for the correlation matrix through the origin presented in the Appendix C maybe seen as an indication that multi-collinearity maybe a problem in the model. But I do not think that this is the case because this is based on regression through the origin, and the significant statistics associated with the regression (Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1981). The overall model for most of the election years are statistically significant ($p < .05$). As the sign of the coefficients for each of the election years indicate, both mass media use variables, WATCHETV and READNEWS, are positively related to partisanship strength, IDSTRENT. However, both media use variables are not highly predictive of partisanship. For instance, watching/listening to PEBs has betas between low of $-.013$ and high of $.183$, while newspapers have betas between $-.025$ and $.10$. Furthermore, although the R^2 for all the general election years range from $.16$ to $.57$, meaning that between 16% and 50% or about half of the variance in IDSTRENT can be explained by the model. Finally, the F-statistics of the model for each were all highly significant, indicating that the overall fit of the model is good.

Further Discussion

One more point needs to be made here. The results presented here are identical with the results of the correlation matrix through the origin (or without the constant), the

only difference being that the value of the multiple Rs and the R-square in both are different. For example, while the Multiple R and the R-square in October 1974 are .53713 and .28851 respectively, the values without the intercept are slightly higher (.96042 and .92241 respectively).

Furthermore, before running the multiple regression analysis, I employed stepwise regression initially to examine the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables. First, I ran a stepwise regression analysis with multiplicative interaction terms to see which of the variables best fit the data. This is not the best technique but was used here only to test the variables that will be included in the final equation. Finally, the maximum twelve (12) variables in the final equation were all entered into the equation as I explained above. In this regression model, only the variables that were statistical significant or showed statistical significant relationship in a number of general years were included in the final analysis. The linkages are reported in Tables 6.9.

Specifically, the table presents the results of the multiple regression analyses in which strength of party identification is the dependent variable, and media use is the independent variables (watching/listening to PEBs and following election in a newspaper). The other independent variables or predictors of party identification strength, indicate that of the number of multiple regression analysis reported, for each year, media use variable produced a number of significant positive correlations in a number of the general election years. The independent variables as a group scored or constituted significant predictors of party identification strength with explained variance of the significant analysis ranging from $p < 0.05$ to $p < 0.001$.

Thus, the hypothesis that media use (especially watching PEBs on television) have decreased strength of party identification or is negative related to partisanship is not strongly supported for the set of variables in the BES data analyzed here.

In fact, media use is not as important a variable in predicting strength of party as the voters' caring about the outcome of the election, nor the voters' perceived differences between the parties and time of voting decision. In general, across the British general election years, the expected impact of the mass media use did not materialize as hypothesized. It seems that media use had little negative influence on the strength of political party identification. The correlation of between -0.0128 in 1970 and 0.183 in 1966 are very low. In short, a correlation of say 0.036964 in October 1974 is very low suggesting that media use adds very little to explaining the variance beyond the other control variables (that is, it does not serve as the best variable for explaining why people identify 'very strongly' with a particular political party).

However, the model identifies a couple of variables that are significant predictors of strength of party identification. These include perceived differences between the parties, whether voters cared which party won the general elections, interest in politics and time of voting decision. By contrast, social economic class which is often used to predict strength of party identification seem to have declined in importance in Great Britain, from .010972 in 1964 to -.036110 in 1987). It seems from these figures that class voting in Great Britain has greatly declined, although some scholars have argued otherwise (Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 1985). However, let me add here that the definition of what social class actually means is a topic of debate among scholars

(Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985). But, if we accept the definition of social economic status as defined in the BES data, this model confirms Crewe (1985) finding that the alignment between class and party has declined among the British electorates in the last twenty five years.

One final word about the regression equation. As I pointed out earlier, some of the variables are better in explaining the variance of partisanship strength than the media use variable. However, the multiple R-squares range from low of 0.40279 in May 1979, and a high of 0.57545 in 1970 and .56488 in 1964, an average of 0.4968 suggests that the model is powerful enough. It is worth pointing out that the one variables that are the most consistent predictors of party identification strength are "care which party won" and "interest in politics" and the difference they make is large across all the election years.

The Logistic Model of "Moderate" Image of the Winning Party

The fourth and final phase of this analysis uses logistic regression technique to test the hypothesis that people who use the media for information tend to think that the winning party is ideologically "moderate" rather than "extreme." In 1983 and 1987, voters were asked about their views about the "extreme" or "moderate" image of the two major parties. In both election years, the Conservative party won. I expect the probability of the respondents claiming that the Conservative party is a moderate party to be higher among voters who used the media for information during these two elections.

The model used in the estimation is similar to the same as equation 6.5 model and suggests the following regression equation:

$$\text{IMAGECON} = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \text{WATCHETV} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{READNEWS} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{AGELASTE} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{UNIONMEB} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{PPARTYID} + e \quad [6.8]$$

where

IMAGECON = the probability of the respondents claiming that the Conservative party is ideologically moderate;

α = constant;

e = normally distributed error term, as defined by the usual logit model.

All the other variables have been defined in the previous equation.

The dependent variable in this equation, IMAGECON, is posited as a function of the right hand side variables. The operationalizations of IMAGECON is summarized in Appendix B.

Because logistic regression analysis requires a dichotomous dependent variable, IMAGECON is treated as a dummy variable, coded as 1 if the respondent claimed that the Conservative party is "moderate", and 0 if the respondent claimed that the Tories are "extreme" or "neither".

In both elections, Table 6.10, only care about the outcome of the election variable had a consistent positive effect on moderate image of the winning party. All the other variables had negative effect on the respondent's propensity to claim that the Conservative was "moderate", except WHENDECI in 1983 and UNIONMEB in 1987. The magnitude measurement, WATCHETV, have a higher negative effect on the respondent's propensity to claim that the Conservative party is moderate. The coefficients estimate for WATCHETV in both election years are statistically significant

Table 6.10: Logistic estimates for "moderate" image of the winning party

Independent Variables 1983 Election	Minimum chi-square Estimate	Standard Error	Expo(B)
WATCHETV	-.326	.245	.72*
READNEWS	-.056	.202	.95
AGELASTE	-.020	.059	.98
GENDER	-.151	.166	.85
UNIONMEB	-.152	.163	.86
CAREPWON	.022	.231	1.02
WHENDECI	-.348	.231	.92*
GREATDIF	.028	.134	1.03
IDSTRENT	-.167	.093	.85*
PPARTYID	-.015	.006	.99****
Intercept	.423	.511	----
<i>n</i>	3,955		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	969.13		
End -2 Log Likelihood	953.02		
% correctly classified	61.62%		
Pseudo-R ²	.16		
<hr/>			
1987 Election			
WATCHETV	-.315	.118	.73****
READNEWS	-.097	.096	.91
AGELASTE	.039	.024	1.04*
GENDER	-.202	.082	.81***
UNIONMEB	-.503	.095	.60****
CAREPWON	.122	.118	1.13
WHENDECI	-.261	.109	.77****
GREATDIF	-.302	.081	.73****
IDSTRENT	-.096	.062	.91*
PPARTYID	-.004	.002	.99**
Intercept	1.129	.281	----****
<i>n</i>	6,000		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	3613.74		
End -2 Log likelihood	3526.83		
% correctly classified	56.76%		
Pseudo-R ²	.31		

NOTE: **** p < .001; *** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .10.

SOURCE: These figures are author's based on BES data.

at the 0.10 and 0.001 level in 1983 and 1987 elections respectively. These results do not support the hypothesis that the moderate image of the winning party is positively related to the probability of a respondent who used the media for information claiming that the winning party (the Conservative party in the case of 1983 and 1987 elections) was moderate. The coefficients of READNEWS in the two election years are not statistically significant and also have negative effect on the propensity of the respondents to claim that the Conservative party is a moderate party. However, the magnitudes of READNEWS coefficients are very low compared with that of WATCHETV. One explanation of the difference between newspaper readers and television viewers, as I have pointed out earlier in the previous chapters, is that newspapers in Great Britain are partisan and overwhelmingly pro-Conservative party.

The foregoing discussion does not seem to support the view that the mass media tend to blur the "extreme" image of the political parties or that the media create a "moderate" image of the winning party. This is not consistent with the findings of Piepe, Charton, and Morey (1990) that heavy media user (television viewers in their research) are more likely to place themselves in the "center" or "moderate" rather than on the Left or Right spectrum. This is inconsistent with the view of Gerbner et al., (1982:102-103), who hypothesized that heavy television viewers opt for a moderate rather than a conservative or liberal political label and perceive themselves as belonging to a generalized middle class rather than an upper-middle or working class. The mainstream effect which seemed apparent in the British media disappeared under stringent multiple regression control. However, the media in the United States are known to be 'the

cultural arm of consumerism or the need to optimize audiences in relation to purchasing power' (Piepe, Charton, and Morey, 1990). It could be said therefore that mainstream in the media in the United States can be traced to the free-market media philosophy in that country, whilst the media philosophy in Great Britain is based on the social responsibility model.

In summary, in every election since 1964, voters who watched/listened to PEBs, who called themselves Labour identifiers were more likely than non-viewers or non-listeners to vote for Conservative and against Labour. On the other hand, Labour identifiers who viewed/listened to the PEBs were generally more likely to vote for the Conservative party than Conservative to vote for Labour. Mass media use during election campaigns does not decrease partisanship strength nor turnout in Great Britain. Analysis of the path coefficient and appropriate zero-order correlation (not presented here) suggests, except in one of two years, that mass media use had no significant negative impact on the strength of party identification. The data do not also seem to support the finding of scholars in the United States that the media have blurred the correlates of traditional political party labels nor the "moderate" or "extreme" image of the political parties, especially the winning party.

In conclusion, the data presented here do not support the hypothesis that media use during election campaigns have negatively affected partisanship strength nor turnout during elections in Great Britain. In short the data do not support the hypothesis that the media has decreased political strength of political party identification. In stead, the data seem to suggest that the media are important for providing information for voters who

identify with political parties. However, the quality of information provided is another question. The hypothesis that the media have blurred the ideological differences between the political parties is not also supported by the data presented here. This assertion needs to be qualified, in view of the fact that we did not have survey questions that attempted to tap such feeling directly.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study dispels the concerns and anxieties of social scientists that the use of mass media of communication during election campaigns has decreased political party identification and voter turnout in most Western industrialized democracies. Even if the media have affected the strength of partisanship and turnout in other countries, there is no sign of these in Britain in the last twenty-five years. Instead, the analyses of the British election studies, BES, data presented in this study demonstrate that the use of the mass media during election campaigns has an independent and positive rather than negative effects on the British public's support for the Conservative and Labour parties and turnout during elections. However, mass media use has a negative effect on the "moderate" party image of the winning political party.

The results of this study also demonstrate rather convincingly that the use of the mass media during election campaigns positively predicts voting in a general election in Great Britain. That is, there could be a mobilizing effect generated by the political parties' PEBs on the voters who use the media for information during elections campaigns, suggesting that the British media philosophy that sees the media as an instrument for political participation or heightening voter turnout is not misplaced. However, this result seems inconsistent with the findings of some scholars (Morgan and Shanahan, 1992) about the effects of the mass media on voter turnout in the United

States. But, it parallels the work of earlier scholars who saw the media as an instrument for mobilization. In all the election years, voters who watched/listened or followed the election campaigns in the media turned out to vote. Furthermore, this finding is inconsistent with the work of those scholars who fear that the salience of the media during election campaigns, for example, the use of public opinion polls and negative political campaign advertising creates negative image or effect on the electorate.

The results also suggest that the tendency to use the media for political information during election campaigns is somewhat dependent upon many factors, including but not limited to the interest the individual voter has in politics and caring about the outcome of the elections. This study demonstrates that voters who care about the outcome of the elections follow the campaigns in the media, voted and identified strongly or fairly strongly with one of the political parties in Great Britain. However, most voters who used the media for information felt that the political parties are more extreme than moderate. In short, voters who watched/listened to the PEBs or followed the election campaigns in a daily newspaper perceived a great deal of difference between the two major parties in Great Britain. Although many voters perceived the two major parties in Britain to be extreme in their political ideology, the majority of the voters voted for the party they perceived to be moderate.

However, this study did not find a strong direct negative effect of the use of the media during election campaign on political party identification and voter turnout. Instead, this study shows that there is a statistically positive relationship between party identification and mass media use, voter turnout and mass media use, and attitudes

towards the political parties and mass media use. This does not, however, mean that there is a causal relationship between them, for (Kendall and Stuart, 1961:279) 'a statistical relationship, however strong and suggestive, can never establish causal connection: our ideas of causation must come from outside statistics, ultimately from some theory or other'. Besides, in political science, as well as in communication research, it is not very easy to establish causation conclusively. The electorate, the electoral process, voting behavior and political attitudes are all very complex. Voters go to the media for a lot of reasons during election campaigns. Their behavior can be influenced by a variety of factors which are not easily explainable to social scientists.

For instance, there are several factors that influence one's political party identification or partisanship, political attitudes and the salience of any political issue. Often these are developed earlier in life, or across a period of time. Britain is still a class conscious society where people perceive themselves as belonging to one class or another, where the voters see themselves as union members, working class, etc. It is not very easy therefore to disentangle the effects of the short-term versus long-term political communication effects on such an important phenomenon as party identification.

However, one important finding of this study which is supported by other studies in this area is that voters go to the media not as passive audience but as active participants who selectively expose themselves to media messages and selectively receive what information they wish to receive in the communication process. Although many studies have shown that political communication can influence the views of the voters in a number of ways, it is hard to imagine that there is a direct or minimal effects as many

scholars would want us to believe. It is possible that voters approach the media with their pre-existing views and values, and despite the information provided to them by politicians and their strategists, aimed at influencing their behavior, voters selectively expose themselves and selective receive what they want to read, see or hear.

For instance, studies of the actual content of political communication in the United States have shown that political advertisements often stress relevant issues and personal traits of the candidates (Joslyn, 1984). These little bits of information, some scholars argue can help voters learn something about the candidates and how to make up their minds on such issues (Markus, 1982). The analysis of this study suggests that PEBs and newspaper coverage of general election campaigns in Great Britain, while providing the voters with the information about the candidates, also recast the relevance of the voters' pre-existing values and views. From all indications, the strength of partisanship explains mass media use among the voters during election campaigns in Great Britain; that is, strong partisans are both more likely to watch/listen to PEBs or to follow the elections in a national daily newspaper, and are highly stable in their voting behavior. This major finding confirms the classic Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) work that mass media use for political information is highly correlated to voting stability.

However, there is no indication from this study that the media exposure actually decide election outcomes. From many past studies, we already know that the media can shape the nature of campaigns and set the agenda for the election campaigns, thus, influencing both the politicians and the voters. From all indications in this study, the impact of the media may even be higher on politicians (who try hard to use the media

that they think have powerful effect on the voters) than on the voters.

Furthermore, this study dispels the concerns of scholars who fear the influence of money and the moneyed on elections as a result of increased use of the mass media, especially the use of campaign advertisements and media consultants during election campaigns. For one thing, money does not play a very important part in British politics. Political candidates in the United Kingdom (that is, candidates for the House of Commons) may raise and spend only about \$15,000 in an election campaign. Any candidate that spends more than this is disqualified. The April 1992 British general election, for example, the election of both the legislative and executive branches of government, cost the equivalent of about \$45 million. By contrast, this amounts to about a fraction of the sum of what the United States presidential candidates alone spent in 1992 presidential election. According to the Federal Election Commission each of the two major party candidates, working under the statutory limits imposed on those who received matching funds, spent about \$55 million each; while Ross Perot, the independent candidate, under no restrictions, spent about \$70 million of his own money. Yet, this was the first time in recent elections a Republican candidate did not substantially out-spend a Democrat. Secondly, the political parties are given free air-time, although there is no restriction on how much they can spend on programming their PEBs. Though the cost of producing PEBs has gone up, especially in recent elections, in real term, there is not real increase in the amount of money political parties spend on these during election campaigns. Besides, the political parties, as I noted earlier, are restricted on how much money they can spend during an election campaigns.

This study demonstrates that an area in which there is no dispute that the media have had some effect on is the changing political structure of British politics - the "presidentialization" of the British election campaigns. British political campaigns are gradually becoming more and more national election campaigns or campaigns to elect the prime minister. In recent elections, the amateurish production (talking heads) of the PEBs have also become more sophisticated documentary-style or consumer advertising productions. Finally, this study demonstrates that the proposition in earlier studies that suggested that the mass media of communications have no effects is simply inaccurate or oversimplified. On the other hand, the proposition that the media have decreased partisanship and voting in the United Kingdom is also not accurate. This study suggests that we may not fully know the precise effects of the mass media on partisanship and electoral behavior, more research needs to be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study failed to confirm the fears of social scientists that the mass media have negative effects on partisanship and political behavior. There are a number of reasons why this may not be the case. One, media or political communication in the media may not be as important as politicians, media consultants and pundits think. For one thing, there are many long term factors that structure the individual's views about the world and the political world. These factors include sociological backgrounds, class cleavages, the image of the political leaders, and the effects of public opinion or opinion leaders that may be more influential than a short term media messages during campaigns. Two, as I pointed out in the conclusion of this study, maybe the effects of the media on the electorate are so complex that we cannot easily explain them. Finally, maybe the BES data is not truly suited to test the effects of mass media use during general election campaigns on the partisanship strength or direction of the British electorate.

But, what is the role of the media during election campaigns? What are the effects of political communications during election campaigns? Is there any relationship between the increased number of late deciders or floating voters and political communications in the mass media? Is there a causal relationship between mass media use during election campaigns and the apparent decline in political party identification and political participation? In short, do the mass media affect political attitudes and

electoral behavior?

As I noted in this study, mass media political campaigns are often aimed at the late deciders and floating voters who vote for one political party in one election and vote for another in the next election. It is my suggestion, one, that future BES studies should include questions that attempt to tap, for example, the effects of mass media use on the strength or direction of partisanship; two, future studies of the effects of the mass media political communication during election campaigns should be directed at the impact of the media on the later deciders and floating voters.

For instance, to illustrate with the last suggestion, an analysis of the effect of the mass media on the late deciders in the last two general elections in Great Britain will help to illustrate this point. Table 7.1 presents the logistic regression model estimates for late deciders and mass media use in the last general elections in 1983 and 1987. The determinants with the model used in the estimation is suggests the following regression equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{WHENDECI} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{WATCHETV} + \beta_2 * \text{READNEWS} + \beta_3 * \text{AGELASTE} \\ & + \beta_4 * \text{UNIONMEB} + \beta_5 * \text{PPARTYID} + e \end{aligned} \quad [7.1]$$

where

WHENDECI = the probability of being late deciders;

α = constant;

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, etc = estimated coefficients;

e = error term.

The dependent variable, WHENDECI, is posited as a dummy variable to allow

Table 7.1: Logistic regression estimates for late deciders and mass media use

Independent Variables	Minimum chi-square Estimate	Standard Error	Expo(B)
1983 Election			
WATCHETV	.582	.369	1.79*
READNEWS	-.029	.270	.97
AGELASTE	-.467	.097	.63****
GENDER	-.103	.243	.90
UNIONMEB	.244	.231	1.28
CAREPWON	-.823	.301	.44***
GREATDIF	.878	.360	2.41***
IDSTRENT	-1.090	.176	.34****
Intercept	-.415	1.078	----
<i>n</i>	3,955		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	633.56		
End -2 Log Likelihood	530.01		
% correctly classified	81.74%		
1987 Election			
WATCHETV	.064	.142	1.07
READNEWS	-.002	.118	.99
AGELASTE	-.201	.031	.81****
GENDER	-.251	.105	.78***
UNIONMEB	.132	.114	1.14
CAREPWON	-.654	.125	.52****
GREATDIF	.048	.074	1.05
IDSTRENT	-.912	.082	.40****
Intercept	1.296	.281	-----****
<i>n</i>	6,000		
Begin -2 Log Likelihood	2751.76		
End -2 Log likelihood	2453.50		
% correctly classified	81.01%		

NOTE: **** $p < .001$; *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$.

for logistic regression procedure. As a dichotomous variable, WHENDECI is coded as 1 if the respondent is a late decider, 0 if decided long time ago in which case the political election broadcast, PEBs made no impact on them. The summary and description of the other variables follow the variable operationalization of this study.

The logistic regression model usually test linear probability - logit and probit estimates. However, the logit results, coefficient estimate and *t*-statistics are reported here Table 7.1. From these figures, although the coefficient estimates of WATCHETV in these two general elections are not statistically significant at the traditional 0.05 level, the magnitude of the variable has very high positive effects on the proclivity to late deciding in these two elections. In fact, apart from GREATDIF and UNIONMEB variables, WATCHETV is the only variable in the model that has a positive effect on late deciding. The coefficients of READNEWS in the model not surprising have negative effects and are not also statistically significant. One explanation could be that most newspaper readers during election campaigns tend to be Conservative party identifiers who approach the already partisanship press to support their pre-existing views. These readers decide earlier during the elections and are not greatly influenced by the political election broadcast put out there by the Labour party.

In conclusion, further research needs to be done as to the role of media (especially television) during election campaigns. Is television responsible for the growing number of swing votes? Since television has become the primary medium or the indispensable medium for political communication; is it possible that television will eventually replace the print media and the political parties as arenas for political

communication? What are the implications of increased use of the media for election campaigns in the midst of weakening of strong partisanship identification?

APPENDIX A

The definition and question wording of the research variables used in this study are as follows:¹ The variable names in this study were formed by me, since the codebooks did not specify any variable names. The variables are listed here in the order of listing following the British General Election Survey 1987 codebook. The variables are as follows:

CAREPWON: Care about the outcome of the elections. The question wording in 1964, 1966, 1970, February 1974, October 1974, 1983 and 1987 was: 'Would you say that you cared a good deal which party won the election or that you didn't care very much which party won?' However, the question was not asked in 1979 general election studies.

WATCHETV: Watching\listening to political election broadcast, PEBs. The respondent were asked in 1964, 1966, 1970 was: 'Do you follow news about politics much on television?' In February 1974 and October 1974, the question word read: 'How closely do you usually follow programmes about politics on television - very closely,

¹ A comprehensive information about the variables are found in the codebooks themselves and in the appendixes of the numerous British election studies. However, an easy to read information about the definition and construction of select variable in the studies can be found in Crewe, Day and Fox (1991).

fairly closely or just once in a while?', whilst in 1979, the question wording read: 'How closely did you follow the general election campaign on television or in the newspaper or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all?' In 1983 and 1987, the question wording read: 'During the election campaign, did you watch/listen to any broadcasts on TV or radio?'

READNEWS: Followed the elections in any daily newspaper. In 1964, 1966, 1970, the respondents were asked: 'Do you read a morning newspaper paper regularly?' IF YES: Which newspaper is that?' And, 'Did you follow the election campaign in (first paper)? In February 1974 and October 1974, the question wording read: 'How closely do you follow newspapers for news and comment about politics - very closely, fairly closely or just once in a while?', while in 1979, the survey asked about both press and broadcast media in these words: 'How closely did you follow the general election campaign on television or in the newspaper or on the radio - very closely, fairly closely, not very closely, or hardly at all? In 1983 and 1987 the question simply read: 'During the election campaign, did you read any newspaper articles about the election?'

PAPERRE: Name of newspaper read. In all the years except in 1979 the respondents were asked about which newspaper they usually read. In 1964, 1966, and 1970, the question word was: 'Do you read a morning newspaper paper regularly?' IF YES: Which newspaper is that?' In February 1974 and October 1974, the question was: 'Which, if any morning daily newspaper do you read regularly? (By regularly I mean 3 out of every 4 issues.) Any other?' While in 1983 and 1987, the question read: ' During the election campaign did you read newspaper articles about the election campaign? IF

YES: Which daily (1987: morning) newspaper did you read most? The respondents named more than one newspaper in most of the studies, but the first newspaper was used in this study where this variable was used. However, in 1983 and 1987, **Financial Times, Morning Star** were excluded from this variable.

PMEETING: Attendance to political party meetings. This variable was only used in 1964, 1983 and 1987. In 1964 respondents were asked: 'Did you attend any political meetings during the election campaign?' In 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'Did you go to hear any candidate at a political meeting?'

CANVASPA: Canvassing for any political party. The variable was used only in 1964, 1983 and 1987. The question wording in 1964 was: 'Did you do any party work during the campaign?' while in 1983 and 1987 the question wording was: 'Did you do any canvassing or other work for a candidate?'

PPOSTER: Putting up party poster. The variable question was asked in 1983 and 1987 only. 'Did you have any political party poster in your window?'

PARTYCAL: Political party that called. This variable was used in 1983 and 1987 only. 'Did a canvasser from any party call at you home during the election campaign?'

MANAVOTE: Voting during the elections. In all the general elections, voter were asked differently each year although the questions were similar. In 1964, 1966 and 1970, the question wording was: 'We find many people around the country who have good reasons for not voting. How about you? Did you vote in the general election this year (1964 and 1966: or did something prevent you from voting)? In February 1974,

October 1974, the question wording was: 'Talking to people about the election, we have found that a lot of people were not able to vote this time, because they were away or ill on election day or found that they didn't have the time to vote. How about you? Did you vote in the recent election?' In 1979, the question read: 'Talking to people about the general election, we have found that a lot of people didn't vote. How about you? Did you vote in the general election?' While in 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'Talking to people about the general election, we have found that a lot of people didn't manage to vote. How about you? Did you manage to vote in the general election?'

GENEVOTE: In 1964, 1966 and 1970, respondents were asked: 'Which party did you vote for?', while in 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'Which party did you vote for in the general election?'

NONVOTER: Non-voters preferred party. In all the general election years, the respondents who did not vote, were asked, in 1964, 1966, 1970, February 1974, October 1974: 'If you had voted, which party would you probably have voted for?' While in 1983 and 1987, respondent were asked: 'Suppose you had voted, which party would you have been most likely to vote for?'

WAVERING: Campaign wavering. The respondents who voted Conservative, Labour or Liberal-Alliance were asked in 1964, 1966 and 1970, 'Did you think of voting for any other party?' IF YES: 'Which party (1970: is) was that?' While in February 1974, October 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'Was there any time during the general election campaign when you seriously thought you might vote

for another Party?' IF YES: 'Which party?'

PPARTYID: Direction of partisanship. In 1964, 1966, 1970, the question wording was: 'Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal or what? The question wording in February 1974, October 1974 and 1979 read: 'Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal (in Scotland: Scottish Nationalist; in Wales: Plaid Cymru) or what?' While in 1983 and 1987 the question was: 'Generally speaking, do you think yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal, Social Democrat (Scotland: Scottish Nationalist; Wales: Plaid Cymru) or what?'

IDSTRENT: Strength of partisanship. If the respondent gave a party affiliation, he/she was asked in 1964, 1966, 1970, 'How strongly (Conservative, Labour, Liberal, etc,) do you generally feel - very strongly, fairly strongly, or not very strongly?' While in February 1974, October 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1987, the respondents were asked: 'Would you call yourself (a) very strong Conservative (Labour\Liberal), fairly strong, or not very strong?'

IMAGECON: Extreme\moderate Conservative party image. In February 1974 and October 1974, respondents were asked about their image of the Conservative party in these words: In February 1974, the question was: 'I'm going to ask you about the Conservative party and the Labour party. In which box would you put the Conservative party? In October 1974: 'On this card are listed some choices of opposite words or phrases, and I'd like you to say how much each one applies to different political parties.' While in 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'On the whole would you describe

the Conservative party as extreme or moderate?

IMAGELAB: Extreme\moderate Labour party image. In February 1974 and October 1974, respondents were asked about their image of the Labour party as follows: In February 1974, the question was: 'I'm going to ask you about the Conservative party and the Labour party. In which box would you put the Labour party? In October 1974: 'On this card are listed some choices of opposite words or phrases, and I'd like you to say how much each one applies to different political parties.' While in 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'On the whole would you describe the Labour party as extreme or moderate?

WHENDECI: Time of voting decision. This variable was tapped using these words in 1964, 1966 and 1970: 'How long ago did you decide to vote the way?' In February 1974, October 1974 and 1979 the question read: 'How long ago did you decide that you would definitely vote the way you did - a long time ago, sometime this year, or during the campaign?' While in 1983 and 1987, the question was: 'How long ago did you decide that you would definitely vote the way you did: was it a long time ago, sometime last year, sometime this year, or during the campaign?'

INTEREST: Interest in politics in general. The question wording for 1964, 1966 and 1970 were: 'How much interest did you have in the campaign - a good deal, some, or not much?' While in February 1974, October 1974 and 1979 the question read: 'How much interest would you say you take in politics - a great deal, some, not much or none at all?' This variable was omitted in 1983 and 1987.

GREATDIF: Difference between the political parties. The question was in 1964,

1966, 1970, February 1974, October 1974: 'Considering everything the parties stand for would you say that there is a good deal of difference between the parties (between them in February 1974, October 1974), some difference or not much difference?' While in 1979, 1983, and 1987, the question was: 'Considering everything the Conservative and Labour parties stand for, would you say that there is a great (deal of in 1979) difference between them, some difference, or not much differences?'

AGELASTE: Age of the respondent. In 1964, 1966 and 1970, there was no standard question, but the interviewer were asked to collect information about the age of the respondents. In February 1974, this variable was tapped using the question: 'In what year were you born?' In October 1974, the question was reversed to read: 'Could you say what year you were born?' In 1979, the question read: 'Would you say in which year you were born?' Whilst in the 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'What was your age last birthday?'

HOUSINGR: Type of housing. The respondents were asked, in 1964, 1966 and 1970, 'Do you or your family rent or own your own home?' In February 1974, the question read: 'Could you tell me whether this home is owned or rented? IF RENTED: 'Is it rented from the Council or from someone else?' This variable was omitted in October 1974, however, it was re-introduced in 1979 in these words: 'Would you tell me whether your home is owned or rented? Whilst in 1983 and 1987, the question wording was: 'Do you - your household - own or rent this (house\flat\accommodation)?' IF RENTED: 'From whom?'

UNIONMEB: Trade union membership. In 1964, 1966, 1970 and 1979, the

question simply read: 'Are you a member of a trade union?' In February 1974, 'Do you or anyone else in your household belong to a trade union?' In October 1974, 'Do you belong to a trade union? In 1983, 'Are you now, or have ever been, a member of a trade union?' Whilst in 1987, the question wording was: 'Are you now a member of a trade union or staff association?'

RELIGION: The religion of the respondents was tapped using: in 1964 and 1966: 'What is your religion?' In October 1974, 'Do you belong to any religious denomination?' In 1979, 'Do you belong to any church or religious group? IF YES: 'Which is your denomination?' While in 1983 and 1987, the respondents were simply asked: 'Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?' IF YES: 'Which one?'

GENDER: The gender of the respondent.

Two variables that change question wording most over the years were:

EMPLOYME: Employment status. The question wording of this variable is one of the most varied in the data set; and **SESCLASS:** The social economic class of the respondent. However, their final outcomes were comparable.

APPENDIX B

Table B-1: Variables and descriptions: WATCHETV equation.

Variable	Description
WATCHETV	Zero if the respondent did not pay attention to broadcasts; one if the respondent paid attention to political election broadcasts.
AGELASTE	The age of the respondent coded one if under 25 years; two if the respondent was between 25 to 34 years at election; three if the respondent was between 35 to 44 years at election; four if the respondent was between 45 to 54 years at election; five if the respondent was between 55 to 64 years at election; six if the respondent was between 65 to 74 years at election; seven if the respondent was over 75 years at election.
GENDER	Zero if the respondent was a female; one if the respondent was male.
HOUSINGR	One if the respondent was a council tenant; two if the respondent was a private tenant; three if the respondent lived in owner occupier home.
RELIGION	Zero if the respondent had no religious affiliation; one if the respondent was a non-conformist; two if the respondent was a Roman Catholic; three if the respondent was an Anglican.
SESCCLASS	One if the respondent belonged to a manual working class; two if the respondent belonged to an intermediate or routine non-manual classes; and three if the respondent belonged to a professional or managerial classes.

Table B-1: (cont'd).

Variable	Description
UNIONMEB	Zero if the respondent was a non-union member; one if the respondent was a union member.
INTEREST	One if the respondent was not much or none interest in politics; two if the respondent had some interest in politics; three if the respondent had a great deal of interest in politics.
CAREPWON	Zero if the respondent was did not cared which party won; one if the respondent cared which party won the elections.
IDSTRENT	One if the respondent did not identify very strongly with any party; two if the respondent identified fairly strongly with a party; three if the respondent identified very strongly with a party.
PPARTYID	One if the respondent belonged to the Conservative party; two if the respondent belonged to the Labour party; three if the respondent belonged to the Liberal-Alliance party; four if the respondent belonged to any other party.

Table B-2: Variables and descriptions: MANAVOTE equation.

Variable	Description
MANAVOTE	Zero if the respondent did not vote in the last election; one if the respondent voted in the last election.
WATCHETV	Zero if the respondent did not pay attention to broadcasts; one if the respondent paid attention to political election broadcasts.
READNEWS	Zero if the respondent did not follow the election in a newspaper; one if the respondent followed the election in a daily newspaper.
AGELASTE	The age of the respondent coded one if under 25 years; two if the respondent was between 25 to 34 years at election; three if the respondent was between 35 to 44 years at election; four if the respondent was between 45 to 54 years at election; five if the respondent was between 55 to 64 years at election; six if the respondent was between 65 to 74 years at election; seven if the respondent was over 75 years at election.
GENDER	Zero if the respondent was a female; one if the respondent was male.
HOUSINGR	One if the respondent was a council tenant; two if the respondent was a private tenant; three if the respondent lived in owner occupier home.
RELIGION	Zero if the respondent had no religious affiliation; one if the respondent was a non-conformist; two if the respondent was a Roman Catholic; three if the respondent was an Anglican.
SESCLASS	One if the respondent belonged to a manual working class; two if the respondent belonged to an intermediate or routine non-manual classes; and three if the respondent belonged to a professional or managerial classes.
UNIONMEB	Zero if the respondent was a non-union member; one if the respondent was a union member.

Table B-2: (cont'd).

Variable	Description
INTEREST	One if the respondent was not much or none interest in politics; two if the respondent had some interest in politics; three if the respondent had a great deal of interest in politics.
CAREPWON	Zero if the respondent was did not cared which party won; one if the respondent cared which party won the elections.
IDSTRENT	One if the respondent did not identify very strongly with any party; two if the respondent identified fairly strongly with a party; three if the respondent identified very strongly with a party.
PPARTYID	One if the respondent belonged to the Conservative party; two if the respondent belonged to the Labour party; three if the respondent belonged to the Liberal-Alliance party; four if the respondent belonged to any other party.

Table B-3: Variables and descriptions: IDSTRENT equation.

Variable	Description
IDSTRENT	One if the respondent did not identify very strongly with any party; two if the respondent identified fairly strongly with a party; three if the respondent identified very strongly with a party.
WATCHETV	Zero if the respondent did not pay attention to broadcasts; one if the respondent paid attention to political election broadcasts.
READNEWS	Zero if the respondent did not follow the election in a newspaper; one if the respondent followed the election in a daily newspaper.
GENEVOTE	One if the respondent voted for the Conservative party; two if the respondent voted for the Labour party; three if the respondent voted for the Liberal-Alliance party; four if the respondent voted any other party.
WAVERING	One if the respondent considered voting for the Conservative party; two if the respondent considered voting for the Labour party; three if the respondent considered voting for the Lib-Alliance party; four if the respondent considered voting any other party; five if the respondent considered no other party.
WHENDECI	One if the respondent decided long time ago; two if the respondent decided over the last year or two; three if the respondent decided during the election.
INTEREST	One if the respondent was not much or none interest in politics; two if the respondent had some interest in politics; three if the respondent had a great deal of interest in politics.
CAREPWON	Zero if the respondent was did not cared which party won; one if the respondent cared which party won the elections.
GREATDIF	One if the respondent found not much or no difference; two if the respondent found some difference between parties; three if the respondent found a great deal of difference between the parties.

Table B-3: (cont'd).

Variable	Description
AGELASTE	The age of the respondent coded one if under 25 years; two if the respondent was between 25 to 34 years at election; three if the respondent was between 35 to 44 years at election; four if the respondent was between 45 to 54 years at election; five if the respondent was between 55 to 64 years at election; six if the respondent was between 65 to 74 years at election; seven if the respondent was over 75 years at election.
GENDER	Zero if the respondent was a female; one if the respondent was male.
HOUSINGR	One if the respondent was a council tenant; two if the respondent was a private tenant; three if the respondent lived in owner occupier home.
UNIONMEB	Zero if the respondent was a non-union member; one if the respondent was a union member.
SESCLASS	One if the respondent belonged to a manual working class; two if the respondent belonged to an intermediate or routine non-manual classes; and three if the respondent belonged to a professional or managerial classes.

Table B-4: Variables and descriptions: IMAGECON equation.

Variable	Description
WATCHETV	Zero if the respondent did not pay attention to broadcasts; one if the respondent paid attention to political election broadcasts.
READNEWS	Zero if the respondent did not follow the election in a newspaper; one if the respondent followed the election in a daily newspaper.
AGELASTE	The age of the respondent coded one if under 25 years; two if the respondent was between 25 to 34 years at election; three if the respondent was between 35 to 44 years at election; four if the respondent was between 45 to 54 years at election; five if the respondent was between 55 to 64 years at election; six if the respondent was between 65 to 74 years at election; seven if the respondent was over 75 years at election.
GENDER	Zero if the respondent was a female; one if the respondent was male.
UNIONMEB	Zero if the respondent was a non-union member; one if the respondent was a union member.
CAREPWON	Zero if the respondent did not care which party won; one if the respondent cared which party won the elections.
WHENDECI	One if the respondent decided long time ago; two if the respondent decided over the last year or two; three if the respondent decided during the election.
GREATDIF	One if the respondent found not much or no difference; two if the respondent found some difference between parties; three if the respondent found a great deal of difference between the parties.

Table B-4: (cont'd).

Variable	Description
IDSTRENT	One if the respondent did not identify very strongly with any party; two if the respondent identified fairly strongly with a party; three if the respondent identified very strongly with a party.
PPARTYID	One if the respondent belonged to the Conservative party; two if the respondent belonged to the Labour party; three if the respondent belonged to the Liberal-Alliance party; four if the respondent belonged to any other party.

Table B-5: Variables and descriptions: WHENDECI equation.

Variable	Description
WHENDECI	Zero if the respondent did decide during the election; One if the respondent decided during the election.
WATCHETV	Zero if the respondent did not pay attention to broadcasts; one if the respondent paid attention to political election broadcasts.
READNEWS	Zero if the respondent did not follow the election in a newspaper; one if the respondent followed the election in a daily newspaper.
AGELASTE	The age of the respondent coded one if under 25 years; two if the respondent was between 25 to 34 years at election; three if the respondent was between 35 to 44 years at election; four if the respondent was between 45 to 54 years at election; five if the respondent was between 55 to 64 years at election; six if the respondent was between 65 to 74 years at election; seven if the respondent was over 75 years at election.
GENDER	Zero if the respondent was a female; one if the respondent was male.
UNIONMEB	Zero if the respondent was a non-union member; one if the respondent was a union member.
CAREPWON	Zero if the respondent was did not cared which party won; one if the respondent cared which party won the elections.
GREATDIF	One if the respondent found not much or no difference; two if the respondent found some difference between parties; three if the respondent found a great deal of difference between the parties.
IDSTRENT	One if the respondent did not identify very strongly with any party; two if the respondent identified fairly strongly with a party; three if the respondent identified very strongly with a party.

APPENDIX C

**Table C-1: Multiple regression test through the origin of the effect of media use
on strength of party identification**

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1964 Election Year				
SESCCLASS	.059799	.019748	.112149	3.028**
CAREPWON	-.105284	.014877	-.120232	-7.077***
WATCHETV	.226677	.062027	.083728	3.654***
WHENDECI	.120758	.011025	.316498	10.953***
READNEWS	.173086	.067280	.065517	2.573***
GREATDIF	-.101834	.032449	-.081335	-3.138***
HOUSINGR	.049674	.026555	.050839	1.871
GENEVOTE	.138071	.037450	.105747	3.687***
AGELASTE	.057002	.018590	.094346	3.066**
GENDER	.205739	.048164	.136418	4.272***
WAVERING	.110272	.020775	.209394	5.308***
<i>n</i>	754			
Multiple R	.95720			
R Square	.91624			

Table C-1 (cont'd)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1966 Election Year				
SESCCLASS	.051415	.022734	.094592	2.262*
WATCHETV	.231703	.067982	.083035	3.408***
GREATDIF	-.074974	.033637	-.060814	-2.229*
CAREPWON	.554413	.071152	.200395	7.792***
HOUSINGR	.005304	.029324	.005302	.181
READNEWS	.150878	.076327	.056560	1.977*
WHENDECI	.087263	.012854	.228276	6.789***
GENEVOTE	.006728	.043608	.005017	.154
GENDER	.136071	.053284	.089175	2.554**
AGELASTE	.061602	.020434	.103301	3.015**
WAVERING	.103714	.023105	.202313	4.489***
<i>n</i>	674			
Multiple R	.95580			
R Square	.91355			
1970 Election Year				
SESCCLASS	-.010202	.017493	-.018701	-.583
READNEWS	.070839	.049765	.024523	1.423
WATCHETV	-6.097910	.051083	-2.140000	-.012
CAREPWON	.646398	.055179	.231377	11.714***
GREATDIF	-.094279	.026502	-.079260	-3.557***
HOUSINGR	.012066	.022494	.012014	.536
GENEVOTE	.149110	.031106	.107360	4.794***
AGELASTE	.062055	.014968	.109047	4.146***
GENDER	.090418	.042807	.058358	2.112**
WHENDECI	.139119	.011417	.373279	12.185***
WAVERING	.098453	.019232	.186676	5.119***
<i>n</i>	1,207			
Multiple R	.95881			
R Square	.91932			

Table C-1 (cont'd)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1974 February Election				
CAREPWON	-.094257	.040354	-.074279	-2.336**
WATCHETV	.059704	.034373	.033081	1.737
UNIONMEB	-.090351	.079752	-.021924	-1.133
SESCCLASS	.014064	.033261	.008354	.423
GENDER	-.126795	.070568	-.039340	-1.797
INTEREST	.079754	.071385	.029811	1.117
GENEVOTE	.275549	.045080	.260117	6.112***
WAVERING	.276393	.038951	.336766	7.096***
WHENDECI	-.214457	.036700	-.230866	-5.844***
GREATDIF	.065874	.038075	.070571	1.730
READNEWS	.026326	.032369	.034835	.813
HOUSINGR	.318972	.046245	.542795	6.897****
<i>n</i>	478			
Multiple R	.94430			
R Square	.89171			
1974 October Election				
CAREPWON	.003904	.032681	.002065	.119
UNIONMEB	-.080178	.047859	-.016461	-1.675
WATCHETV	.056489	.020399	.025939	2.769**
GENDER	.108385	.041998	.029480	2.581**
WAVERING	-.008830	.020915	-.006047	-.422
INTEREST	.412893	.043030	.132294	9.595***
SESCCLASS	.117971	.011145	.176802	10.585***
READNEWS	.111995	.016703	.119938	6.705***
HOUSINGR	.190427	.016351	.198609	11.646***
GREATDIF	.017660	.024445	.013483	.722
WHENDECI	-.165696	.028167	-.107340	-5.883***
GENEVOTE	.754278	.034747	.467494	21.708***
<i>n</i>	1355			
Multiple R	.96042			
R Square	.92241			

Table C-1 (cont'd)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T
1979 Election Year				
SESCCLASS	-.019810	.015795	-.035430	-1.254
UNIONMEB	.072888	.061807	.018783	1.179
WATCHETV	.099311	.064296	.037376	1.545
GENDER	.016249	.014320	.027560	1.135
WHENDECI	-.177631	.034522	-.151414	-5.145***
GREATDIF	-.093235	.033420	-.083248	-2.790**
GENEVOTE	.040524	.040232	.035829	1.007
WAVERING	.055923	.023239	.112801	2.406**
INTEREST	.166460	.039277	.211309	4.238***
HOUSINGR	-.057167	.054044	-.058897	-1.058
AGELASTE	.263973	.036370	.839256	7.258***
<i>n</i>	584			
Multiple R	.95795			
R Square	.91768			
1983 Election Year				
SESCCLASS	-.001123	.018678	-.001566	-.060
GENDER	.077417	.058204	.020020	1.330
UNIONMEB	.128490	.054887	.046563	2.341**
GREATDIF	.151210	.046158	.090859	3.276***
WHENDECI	-.153375	.036202	-.124414	-4.237***
READNEWS	.113838	.069812	.047478	1.631
GENEVOTE	.068771	.032182	.063480	2.137*
CAREPWON	.452020	.080028	.196069	5.648***
AGELASTE	.110971	.019287	.196901	5.754***
WATCHETV	.217175	.087635	.095580	2.478**
HOUSINGR	.040430	.034248	.051243	1.181
WAVERING	.151262	.021293	.322133	7.104***
<i>n</i>	627			
Multiple R	.95218			
R Square	.90665			

Table C-1 (cont'd)

Variabile	B	SE B	Beta	T
1987 Election Year				
SESCCLASS	.001157	.009404	.001789	.123
UNIONMEB	-.010038	.030094	-.002536	-.334
GENDER	.037784	.026584	.012723	1.421
READNEWS	.146171	.031003	.060026	4.715***
WHENDECI	-.089387	.016700	-.075217	-5.352***
AGELASTE	.087936	.007465	.174710	11.781***
CAREPWON	.515123	.035717	.227110	14.422***
GENEVOTE	.052833	.015634	.050935	3.379***
GREATDIF	.167587	.025945	.102159	6.459***
WATCHETV	.212213	.037430	.094442	5.670***
HOUSINGR	.014384	.015106	.018442	.952
WAVERING	.155472	.009272	.336950	16.767***
<i>n</i>	2,670			
Multiple R	.94687			
R Square	.89657			

NOTE: *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$.

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