

## Notes

- 1 For example, W. Peters, 'New Zealand First's Coalition Policy' (public address), Christchurch, 9 Oct. 1996.
- 2 *NZ Herald*, 25 Oct. 1996.
- 3 Television New Zealand, 'Decision 96: Holmes Leaders' Debate', 7 Oct. 1996.
- 4 *NZ Herald*, 26 May 1995.
- 5 *NZ Herald*, 25 May 1995.
- 6 *National Business Review*, 12 May 1995.
- 7 *National Business Review*, 24 March 1995.
- 8 *National Business Review*, 11 Oct. 1996.
- 9 The Constitution Act 1986 required that Parliament be convened by 13 December.
- 10 T. Henare, 'A Pivotal Moment', New Zealand First Annual Conference, Auckland, 20 July 1997.
- 11 *NZ Herald*, 22 July 1996.
- 12 *NZ Herald*, 21 Nov. 1996.
- 13 *NZ Herald*, 20 Nov. 1996.
- 14 *NZ Herald*, 21 Oct. 1996.
- 15 *NZ Herald*, 14 Oct. 1996.
- 16 *National Business Review*, 6 Dec. 1996.
- 17 *NZ Herald*, 23 Oct. 1996.
- 18 The following analysis is based on responses to the question, 'When you were voting, which parties did you WANT to be part of the next government?'
- 19 One Network News/Colmar-Brunton Poll, Colmar-Brunton Research, Auckland, 15 July 1997.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 18 Oct. 1997.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 24 June 1997.

## CHAPTER 9

## REPRESENTATION UNDER A PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM

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One of the primary justifications for MMP was that it would provide New Zealand with a more effective method of representation. The Royal Commission on the Electoral System was concerned not only with the fairness of the existing political system but also with the increasing heterogeneity of the population and the lack of ethnic diversity in Parliament. In its report, the Royal Commission argued that 'New Zealand society is steadily developing in a more diverse way and is no longer as homogeneous as it once was'. The commission concluded that proportional representation would lead to better representation by creating a multi-party system with ethnic minority parties and coalition governments. Four of the ten criteria used by the Royal Commission to judge alternative electoral systems related to representation: parties should be represented in Parliament in proportion to their vote; membership of Parliament should reflect significant characteristics of the electorate, such as gender and ethnicity; Maori should be fairly and effectively represented in Parliament; and the system should facilitate accountability between individual MPs and their constituents.

New Zealand combines representative and direct democracy. Citizens regularly elect MPs, from whom government ministers are drawn, and also vote directly on policies through the referendum process. Most decisions, however, are made by MPs chosen by citizens to represent them. How are citizen preferences translated into policy by elected representatives? How well do representatives mirror their constituents? In other words, how well are citizens being represented? In this chapter we explore these questions, focusing on how MMP has changed the nature of representation in New Zealand.

### Representative Democracy

In long-standing democracies such as New Zealand, citizens have grown accustomed to the idea of representation. Generally there are two ways in which representation can occur, and where elected representatives can be trusted to act on behalf of citizens and not solely pursue their own interests: sociological representation and agency representation. The representative may share

with constituents a similar background or other characteristics such as gender, ethnicity or occupation, so that the representative's views are likely to reflect constituent views. This link is at the heart of sociological or descriptive representation, which occurs when the representative assembly resembles the population in these respects. Besides the potential sharing of similar views, descriptive representation lends legitimacy to representative institutions if they actually appear to be a reflection of society. Pitkin (1967) refers to sociological representation as 'passive' because it is achieved simply by the representative possessing certain characteristics rather than through action on behalf of constituents.

The second way in which one person can be trusted to represent others is through agency representation, when representatives are held accountable through the formal arrangement of elections. If representatives are not reflecting citizens' views in Parliament, constituents can elect a new representative. Likewise, representatives have an incentive to pay attention to citizens' interests if they want to be re-elected. In essence, the representative acts as an agent for his or her constituents.

### Sociological Representation

The importance of descriptive or sociological representation was underscored in the Royal Commission's Report recommending the adoption of MMP. One of the primary weaknesses of FPP was its failure to accurately represent minorities. Under FPP, in terms of age, occupation and ethnicity, the New Zealand Parliament was a poor reflection of the community from which it was drawn (Royal Commission 1986, 18). Women in particular were under-represented. In comparison to other countries using the FPP system, though, New Zealand consistently ranked highest for the number of women represented in Parliament. Prior to 1996, women's representation in the New Zealand Parliament exceeded that of almost half of the proportional representation nations (Darcy, Welch & Clark 1994, 141). Nevertheless, effective representation, according to the Commission, requires the membership of the House to accurately reflect significant characteristics of the electorate (Royal Commission 1986, 11). In particular, the Maori minority, which in 1996 made up about 15 per cent of the population, should be fairly and effectively represented in Parliament (p.11).<sup>1</sup> The Royal Commission argued that this representation could be accomplished through the adoption of party lists.

PR systems produce, on average, twice as many elected women as FPP systems (Darcy, Welch & Clark 1994, 141). Several factors help to explain why electoral systems affect women's representation: ballot structure (party lists, STV, or single candidate), district magnitude (the number of seats per district), and party competition. These factors are related. Some argue that party élites are reluctant to nominate women in a single-member district (SMD) because women may be perceived as an electoral risk as standard-bearers of the party. In multi-member districts, women are perceived as being less likely to pose a risk and thus are more likely to be nominated. In party list

systems, party élites have a 'rational incentive' to produce a gender-balanced ticket which might broaden the appeal of the party (Norris 1993, 315). PR systems are also likely to yield an increase in the number of parties competing for seats. With more parties competing for seats, there is a greater opportunity to become a candidate (Norris 1993, 317). Among these factors, the most significant appears to be a party list system with a large number of seats per district (Norris 1996, 199).

Although the effects of the electoral system on ethnic minorities are less clear, the Royal Commission was nonetheless persuaded that the use of party lists would ensure a more diverse representation of interests in Parliament. Parties, according to the Report, would have a strong incentive to include Maori in high positions on their lists and compete for the Maori vote on a nationwide basis. While the Commission had recommended abolishing the separate Maori electorates and reducing the threshold for parties primarily representing Maori interests, strong support among Maori led Parliament to retain the separate seats. In maintaining the Maori roll, the Electoral Reform Act of 1993 stipulated that the number of electorates would vary with the number of voters on the Maori roll. As a result, the combination of party lists and enrolment offers Maori the ability to increase their representation dramatically, up to and perhaps beyond proportionality (Nagel 1994, 528). This may be one reason why Maori voted two to one in favor of MMP. From Table 9.1 it is apparent that a majority of Maori believe there should be more Maori MPs, compared to only 11 per cent of non-Maori. Women also believe they are under-represented, though the differences between men and women are not nearly as great as those between Maori and non-Maori. From a descriptive point of view, Maori were better represented than women in 1993. Although Maori comprised about 14 per cent of the population, they held 6 of the 99 seats in Parliament compared to 21 women (Sawer 1997, 8).<sup>2</sup> These survey data suggest that Maori, given their strong desire for more MPs, may place greater weight on descriptive representation than women.

Table 9.1: Attitudes Towards Under-Representation, by Gender and Ethnicity (%)

	More Women MPs		More Maori MPs	
	Male	Female	Non-Maori	Maori
Yes	25	34	11	57
No	18	13	30	3
Depends	51	48	52	32
Don't Know	6	6	7	8
N	1911	2094	3675	276

Aside from the structure of the electoral system, there are two other general types of explanations for why women and other political minorities do not hold political office in proportion to their population. These focus on

sociological and cultural factors, and voter and party-leader hostility. Women and Maori may lack the resources, such as education, income and occupation, to compete for elected office. Additionally there may be a cultural bias against having women and Maori participate in politics and they may be faced with overt hostility by party recruiters or the voters when they decide to seek political office. Typically, however, the gender of the candidate is not the predominant factor in predicting voter choice; characteristics such as party, popular image and incumbency play a bigger role. When appearing on a party list, characteristics related to individual candidates become even less important.

Is there any evidence that shows New Zealanders might apply a double standard to women and Maori candidates? Previous research has found that the few women who stood as candidates during the post-war era prior to 1975 actually performed slightly better than men (Hill & Roberts 1990, 72), although this was not the case in 1993 when they performed very slightly worse (Vowles *et al.* 1995, 165). After 1975, National's female candidates received fewer votes than their male colleagues while Labour's female candidates continued to do consistently better than men. These results coincide with research from other countries which suggests that voters do not significantly discriminate against women. The small number of Maori candidates contesting seats outside the Maori electorate makes it difficult to draw any conclusions over whether they face discrimination by non-Maori voters.

Do gender and ethnicity influence voters in their opinions of candidates as party leaders? When Helen Clark replaced Mike Moore as leader after the 1993 election, it was unclear how this would affect the party. Previous research has indicated only a minor gender gap on attitudes toward Helen Clark (Vowles *et al.* 1995, 158-9). Data from the NZES pre-election survey suggests a wider gender gap in 1996. Over the five weeks prior to the election, women (25 per cent) were more than twice as likely to prefer Helen Clark as prime minister than men (10 per cent). These gender differences could be attributable in part to Labour's emphasis on social policy issues, which women might find more attractive than men. Indeed, women are more likely to favour Labour than men.

Among Labour's own supporters, women are more likely than men to prefer Clark. Clark's position at the top of the list may have cost Labour some support, but not just from men: although Labour's share of the vote declined in 1996 from 34.7 to 28.2, women were just as likely to leave Labour as men. However, our panel data suggests that rather than driving men away, Clark attracted more women to Labour. Of the new Labour voters, almost twice as many were women than men.

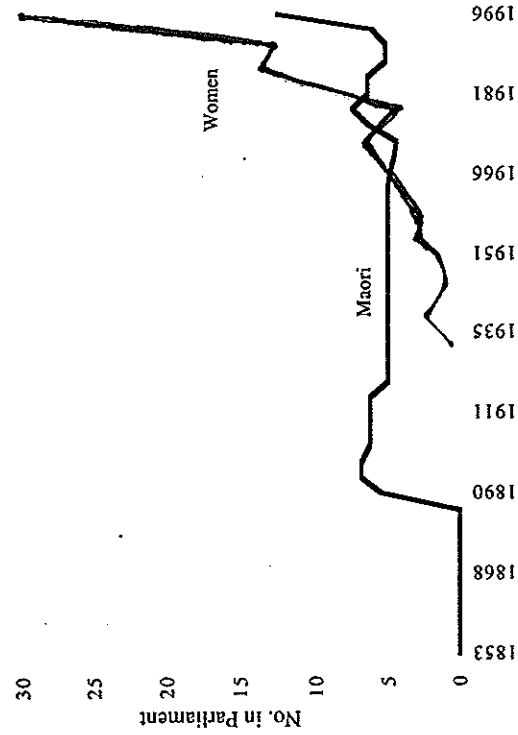
A gender gap is also evident in evaluations of Jim Bolger. Even among National identifiers, women are less likely than men to prefer Bolger as prime minister. However, the widest gap in preferences for prime minister is between Pakeha and Maori on evaluations of Winston Peters. Among Maori voters, 58 per cent favoured Peters as prime minister compared to only 16 per cent of Pakeha voters. Among New Zealand First identifiers, however, Pakeha are just as likely (if not more so) to prefer Peters than Maori (see Chapter 11).

### Results of 1996 Election

The case of Germany and its use of MMP is often used to support the hypothesis that PR, and in particular party lists, improve the representation of women. Like New Zealand, Germany's electoral system provides two pathways to representation: candidates can be elected directly, or they can be elected via their placement on the party list. Most of the women serving in the Bundestag entered through the party list route (Norris 1993, 313), but the lack of women in party leadership positions and the party's control over candidate recruitment and party list membership is seen as a barrier to women's representation (Hoecker 1994).

In New Zealand, the number of women candidates representing National and Labour has increased rapidly, doubling between 1984 and 1990 (see Figure 9.1). As more women run for political office, their chances of gaining representation improve. In 1990 women held 15.6 per cent of the 99 parliamentary seats; this increased to 21.2 per cent in 1993. The trend has continued in 1996, representation increasing to 29.2 per cent (of the 120 seats). As expected, women were better represented on the party lists than as electorate candidates (see Table 9.2), although they are not evenly distributed across parties. Previous research shows that party ideology plays a role in the recruitment of female candidates (Norris 1993, 320). The parties on the left, such as Labour and the Alliance, continued to field a larger number of women candidates on both the party list and as electorate candidates and, consequently, elected more women than parties on the right such as National, United and the Christian Coalition.

Figure 9.1: Representation of Women and Maori in Parliament, 1853-1996



Party	Electorate	Per cent women	Per cent Maori	Number of candidates	Per cent women elected	Per cent Maori elected	Number elected	Placement on list	Top third	Middle	Bottom third
National	Electorate	21.5	12.3	65	28.6	7.1	14	Maori	35.7	28.6	35.7
	List	23.4	7.9	64	6.3	0	30	Maori	16.7	16.7	66.6
Labour	Electorate	35.4	7.7	65	23.1	36.4	30	Maori	37.5	37.5	25
	List	49.1	14	57	63.6	0	11	Women	39.3	35.7	25
NZ First	Electorate	22.6	19.5	63	36.4	9.1	11	Women	35.7	42.9	21.4
	List	24.6	12.3	65	0	100	6	Maori	50	16.6	33.3
Alliance	Electorate	40	12.3	65	58.3	16.7	13	Women	38.5	34.6	26.9
	List	32.3	9.2	65	0	0	1	Maori	50	25	25
ACT	Electorate	23.2	1.8	56	42.9	14.3	8	Women	61.5	38.5	0
	List	19.4	1.5	62	0	0	1	Maori	100	0	0

Table 9.2: Pathways to Representation: Women and Maori on Party Lists and Electorate Seats

The inclusion of more women on party lists means that women are better represented than they would have been otherwise.<sup>3</sup> Women candidates were elected in only 15 per cent of the 65 electorates but filled 45 per cent of the list seats. The re-election rate for women was 68.8 per cent, compared to 78.6 per cent for men. Women candidates who were not MPs previously also performed slightly worse than men, with 2.8 per cent of women elected compared to 9.9 per cent men. Women now comprise 18.2 per cent (half from the party list and half from the electorate) of National's MPs, which is the highest ever number of women National MPs (Levine & Roberts 1997, 230). Labour was the only party to have fewer women MPs than previously (35.1 per cent), though they have more than twice as many as National. Because they placed women candidates higher on the list, ACT and Alliance, which only had one electorate winner each, had women list candidates elected in much higher proportions. Due to the gender balance of the list, women now make up a majority of Alliance's caucus.

Figure 9.1 also reveals the increase in Maori representation that took place in 1996, doubling from 6.5 to 12.5 per cent. Maori representation has primarily been confined to the four Maori electorates which operated from 1867 until 1967, when National altered the electoral law to allow Maori to stand for European seats.<sup>4</sup> Despite the change in law, few Maori contest seats outside the Maori electorates. Some notable exceptions in the mid 1970s were Manuera Ben Riwai Couch, William Rex Austin, and Winston Peters. In 1996, 40 per cent of Maori entering Parliament came through the electorates, though all of these MPs (with the exception of Winston Peters) were elected from the Maori roll. The six who won electorate seats were all members of New Zealand First, leaving subsequent Maori representation to their prominence on party lists. The number of Maori were evenly distributed across most of the major five parties, with New Zealand First having the highest percentage and ACT the lowest. Maori were given greater prominence by New Zealand First and Alliance: half of the Maori on these parties' lists were placed in the top third. National's Maori in comparison fell disproportionately at the bottom of the list, resulting in fewer than 10 per cent Maori who would represent National as list MPs. Labour had the highest percentage of Maori elected from their list, followed by Alliance and ACT. Since most of the Maori placed in the top third of New Zealand First's list were also viable candidates in the Maori electorates, only one of New Zealand First's Maori entered Parliament through the list.

### Agency Representation and Multiple Parties

The effect of electoral systems on representation has tended to focus on aspects of descriptive representation by assessing how the numbers of women and minorities in Parliament vary with electoral rules. However, policy responsiveness is also an important dimension of representation. When an elected representative is acting on behalf of constituents, we are concerned about how well citizens' demands are reflected in the legislative body. Do the views of politicians reflect those of the citizens? Under a proportional system,

an increase in the number of parties contesting elections, the number of parties represented in Parliament, and the behaviour of parties should contribute to an increase in representation of diverse interests.

Changes in the electoral system should not only change the number of parties contesting elections but also alter the behaviour of the parties. In FPP systems, the number of viable parties is not likely to exceed two (see Chapter 1). In the event that more than two parties are contesting elections, the vote may be split such that the successful party wins with less than a majority of votes. This was the case in 1993 when the National Party candidate won in the Albany electorate with only 38 per cent of the vote. In fact, only 24 out of 99 electorates were won by candidates who gained more than 50 per cent of the vote. In the remaining electorates the elected representative was supported by less than half of the voters, resulting in a Parliament that represented the interests of a minority of voters. Advocates argue that under PR the entire electorate is represented since parties are represented in approximation to the number of votes they receive. PR also encourages more consensual democracy where more than a single party is involved in decision-making (Lijphart 1984, Chapter 2).

Not only are more interests supposedly represented under PR, but the parties are likely to offer more diverse platforms. If one assumes that the primary interest of parties is to win elections, a strategic party operating under FPP rules will alter its platform to appeal to the largest number of voters (Downs 1957). This results in a convergence of policy positions as parties tailor their platforms to appeal to the median voter – the voter in the centre of a distribution such that there are an equal number of voters who prefer a policy to the right and to the left. As both parties converge toward the median voter, each party begins to resemble its rival. Under a proportional electoral system, where multiple parties have the opportunity to gain representation without appealing to a plurality of voters, the strategy of political parties is likely to differ. Under these rules, parties have less of an incentive to widen their appeal to the largest group of voters, allowing them to maintain ideological purity.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in a multi-party system, rather than converging toward the median voter, parties will strive to distinguish themselves on ideological and policy matters (Downs 1957, 126–7).<sup>6</sup> This strategy will have the effect of appealing to the full spectrum of interests in the electorate rather than simply the median voter. A transition to PR should result in a more diverse offering of parties competing for representation.

Because one party is not likely to gain a majority of seats, coalition governments will be necessary under a proportional system. Representation of diffuse interests in decision-making is encouraged through bargaining among elected members, who represent different parties and thus different interests. The coalition is likely to adopt a wider spread of policies to get the support of a majority of voters in spite of the fact that each party stands for a narrower spread of policies (Downs 1957, 156). Additionally, PR systems appear to be better suited to manage conflicts that arise from economic, cultural, religious and ethnic divisions in society. European experience demonstrates that the emergence of new parties may also cause major parties to change positions on issues in order to pre-empt the appeal of new parties (Lijphart, Rogowski &

Weaver 1993, 329). Therefore, fuller policy representation can arise through the emergence of new parties as well as the major parties increasing responsiveness to diffuse interests.

### Measuring Representation

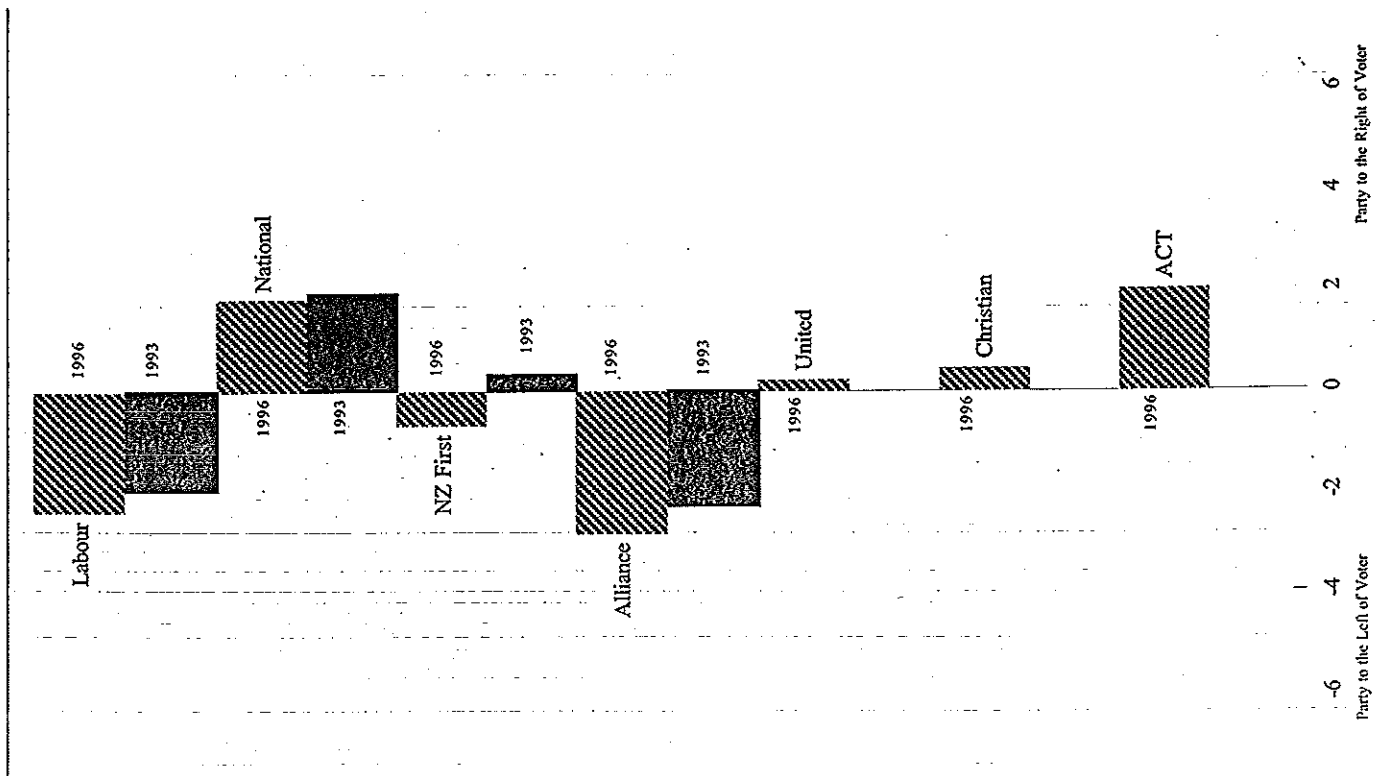
One way to test the validity of these theories is to measure the congruence between the views of party members and the views of voters. While the actual process of representation is much more complicated, we can compare candidate responses with voters' responses to gauge the extent to which parties and elected representatives mirror constituent interests. During the actual process of representation, elected members of Parliament may play an important role in shaping public opinion as well as reflecting it. Because of the uncertain and interdependent nature of the representative process, we use the term 'congruence' to denote the degree of similarity between the opinions of elected representatives and citizens.

There are at least two ways of measuring congruence between elite opinion and public opinion: collective and dyadic. In a representative democracy we would want to know the extent to which overall elite opinion reflects the policy positions of the entire public. Congruence between overall elite opinion and the entirety of public opinion is referred to as collective representation (Weissberg 1978). Along with an overall assessment of agreement, we are also concerned with how political parties reflect public opinion. Given Downs's prediction about the movement of parties in ideological space under a two-party-versus-a-multi-party system, the agreement between party elite opinion and mass opinion is also an important measure of collective opinion congruence. In contrast, dyadic representation refers to the relationship between an elected representative and his or her constituents (Weissberg 1978). In parliamentary systems with strong party discipline, such as New Zealand, dyadic representation focuses on the congruence between a party and its voters (Dalton 1996).

Our data allows us to make comparisons between citizens and elites to assess the degree of congruence. A series of issue and policy questions were asked of both candidates and citizens after the 1993 and 1996 elections. These issues ranged from the presence of nuclear-powered ships, to government responsibility in providing for the elderly. Since there were over 20 issues, we have reduced the number to eight issue dimensions using factor analysis.<sup>7</sup> These eight issue dimensions are: privatisation, welfare (role of government), regulatory policy, unions, nuclear issues including defence ties with the US, Maori issues, morality, and the environment.

These eight issue dimensions are comparable to previous findings regarding the structure of attitudes in New Zealand (Vowles *et al.* 1995). The results of the factor analysis for 1996 are included in Appendix B. Additive indexes for each issue dimension have been constructed with the relevant questions. The indexes range from a low value of 0, indicating a position on the particular issue area that is on the extreme right of the political spectrum, while a 10 indicates a position on the extreme left. For example, a score of 10 on the

Figure 9.2: Party Difference from Median Voter, Left-Right Scale, 1993 and 1996



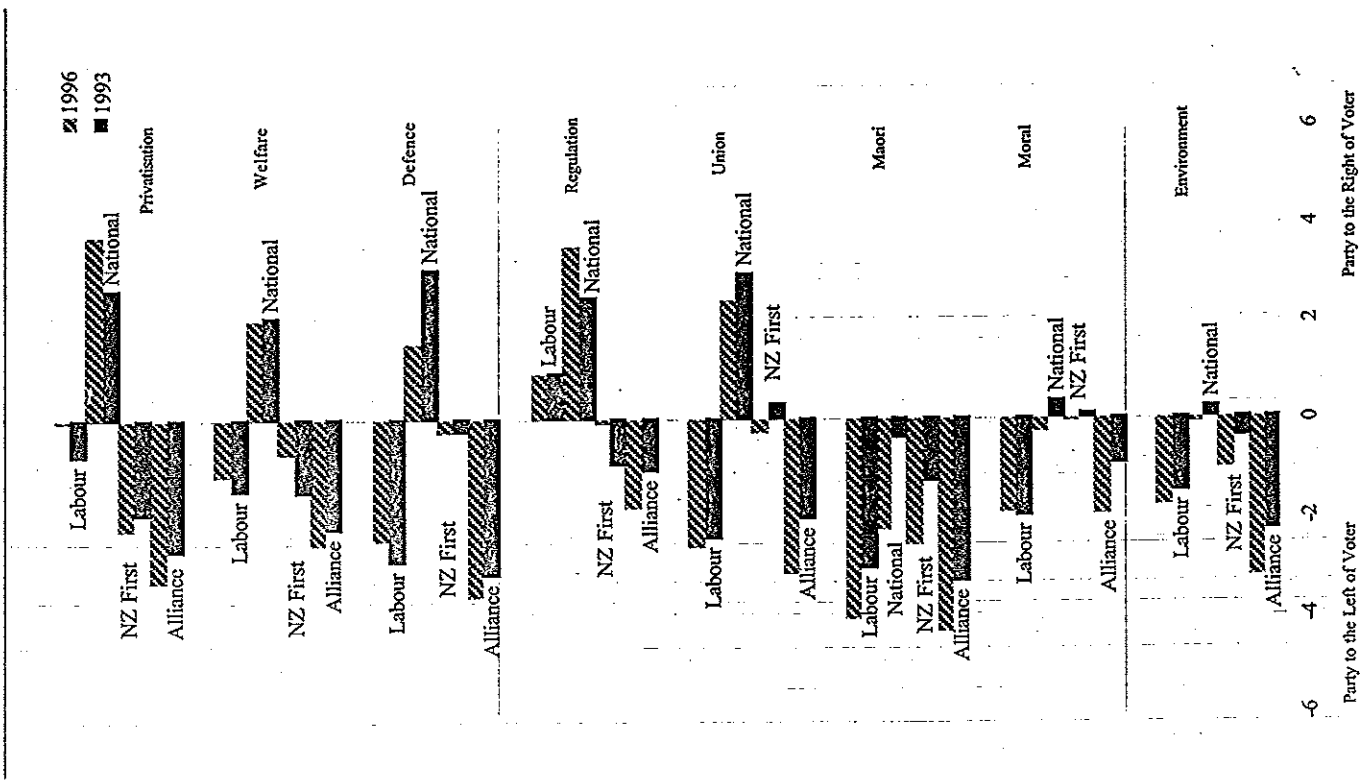
privatisation scale indicates a person or candidate who wants government to fully own the industries listed under privatisation. In addition to these issue scales, a general measure of ideology was used, based on a question which asks candidates and citizens to place themselves on a continuum ranging from the left to the right of the political spectrum.<sup>8</sup>

The arithmetic mean of respondents to the voter survey is used to indicate the median voter on all issue scales. To examine whether parties will move away from the median voter under PR, we can compare the effect of system change on ideological and policy congruence by party. We measure collective congruence by comparing the median voter to elite opinion on the same issue scales. Figure 9.2 uses data from elite candidates from Labour, National, New Zealand First, and Alliance, who placed themselves on a left-right scale in 1993 and in 1996, and compares this to the self-placement of voters on the left-right scale. In 1996 the parties tend to be further from the average voter than in 1993, with the exception of National, which is just as close to its voters in 1996 as it was in 1993. Comparisons between 1993 and 1996 cannot be made for United, Christian Coalition or ACT since these parties did not exist in 1993. Nevertheless, we have included them in the figure to indicate the proximity of these candidates to the voters in 1996. Elites from United and Christian Coalition place themselves closer to the average voter than Labour, National, Alliance, and New Zealand First. ACT and National are furthest to the right of voters and Alliance is furthest to the left. This placement of parties on the left-right scale by elites matches the placement of parties by Boston *et al.* (1996), with the exception of the Christian Coalition, which Boston and his colleagues place to the right of National but to the left of ACT.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 9.3 shows elite-voter differences on the eight issue dimensions. (United, ACT and Christian Coalition have not been included because comparisons cannot be made between 1993 and 1996.) Following the argument made by Downs, we should see greater differences between candidates and voters on these issues in 1996 than in 1993, since parties do not have to revise their platforms to appeal to the largest number of voters. Maori issues fit Downs's expectation. All parties have moved further to the left on Maori issues: the parties have become more favorable toward compensating Maori for land, increasing the Maori voice in government, and keeping references to the Treaty of Waitangi in the law. But Alliance is the only party to consistently move away from the median voter in 1996, except on welfare issues, where the party position changed little. Regarding the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, all parties, except Labour which shows the greatest degree of congruence on this issue, moved away from the median voter. Alliance was the only party to further distance itself from the average voter on nuclear policy and moral issues.

Originally applied to the relationship between a representative from a geographical district and the constituents living within the district, dyadic representation may also be applied to the linkage between a political party and its supporters. The legislator-constituent relationship is more important in the absence of a party government system, while the party-supporter relationship is more appropriate to consider in a parliamentary system where party discipline is strong. One of the primary linkage mechanisms between the citizen

Figure 9.3: Party Differences from Median Voter, All Issues, 1993 and 1996



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and public policy is the political party. Theoretically, elections are competitions between political parties, with each party presenting different policy positions to the voters. Voters then compare the policy positions of the parties and vote for the party or candidate that comes closest to his or her views. Theoretically, the winning party implements the policies on which they campaigned, thus completing the link between voter and public policy. Therefore, one would expect close agreement between a party and its supporters.

To measure dyadic representation, we compare average party elite opinion to the average opinion of the voters for that party. Under FPP, theoretically voters are more likely to cast a vote for a less congruent party if the ideologically closer party is unlikely to win. Under a proportional system, this incentive to vote strategically or vote for a less preferred party should be minimised as all parties crossing the threshold will gain representation.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the parties do not have as strong an incentive to move away from their core base of support. As a result, we should expect there to be greater agreement between a party and its voters.

Figures 9.4 to 9.6 plot public opinion (as indicated by the median voter) against the average position of political candidates for 1993 and 1996. The diagonal line in the figures represents perfect congruence between the political elite and the voters who voted for the party. Points on the graph below (to the right of) the line indicate that the candidate respondents are to the political right of the median voter; points above (to the left of) the diagonal line indicate that the elite are to the political left of the median voter. We would expect the actual positions of the points representing voter and elite to be closer to the line in 1996 than in 1993.

Figure 9.4 displays the left-right scale by plotting the average score of voters and the average score of party elites. On the left-right scale, all parties that were represented in 1993 moved closer in 1996 to the line representing perfect dyadic congruence. By examining the relative location of the points we can assess how average elites and voters changed issue positions during this time. Whereas National was somewhat to the right of its voters in 1993, its average candidate and average voter in 1996 were in almost perfect agreement. This increased level of agreement is due primarily to the movement of National voters, which is illustrated by the vertical distance between National in 1993 and National in 1996. Our panel data suggests that the more centrist National voters broke away from the party and voted for New Zealand First or Labour, while those who remained moved slightly to the right. That National voters moved to the right also appears to indicate that ACT did not capture all voters on the extreme right. Indeed, while ACT is further to the right than National in 1996, the difference between the two is small.

Alliance also achieved a higher degree of congruence: Alliance voters either moved leftward toward the party position or, as is more likely, the reduced proportion of the voters who voted Alliance in 1996 comprised those more ideologically committed to Alliance policies than the average voter in the larger 1993 pool of Alliance voters. The average Alliance candidate, by contrast, moved little between 1993 and 1996. New Zealand First voters moved to the right, also increasing congruence between elites and voters.

Figure 9.4: Dyadic Congruence, Left-Right Scale, Party Élite and Party Voters 1993 and 1996

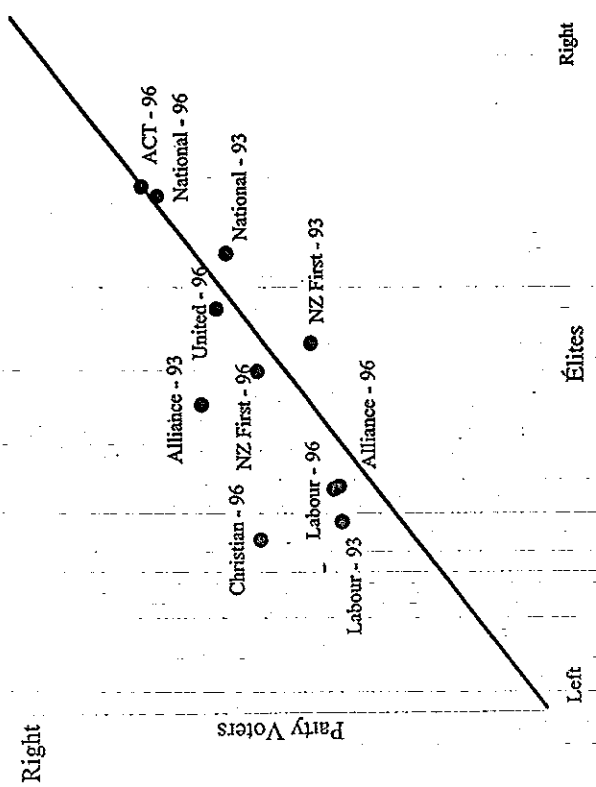


Figure 9.5: Dyadic Congruence, Old Politics, Party Élite and Party Voters 1993 and 1996

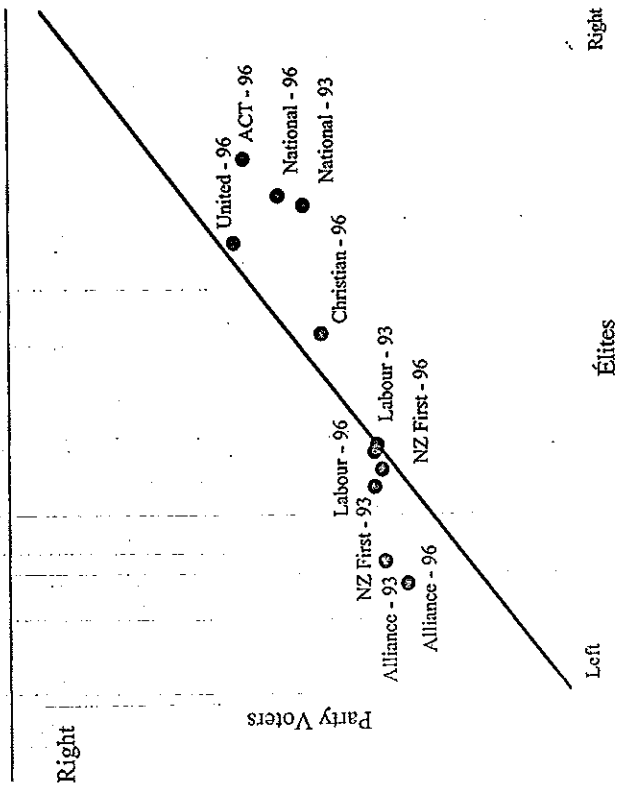
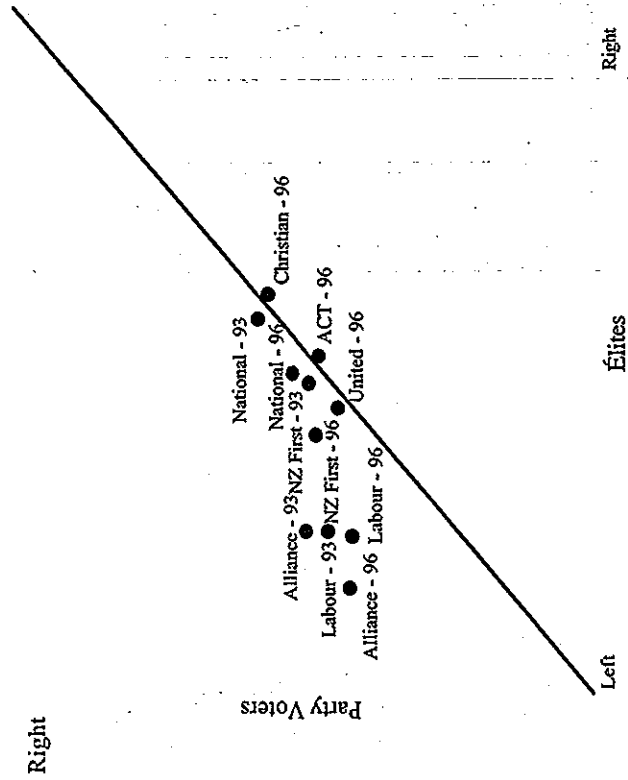


Figure 9.6: Dyadic Congruence, New Politics, Party Élite and Party Voters 1993 and 1996



Labour had only a slight shift in congruence but in 1993 and 1996 they are fairly close to the line. ACT and United are also fairly close to their average voter.

In order to simplify the presentation of party-voter differences on the issue dimensions, the eight issue areas have been classified into 'old' and 'new' politics. A factor analysis of the eight issue scales confirms that they load onto two separate factors consistent with old and new politics (see Vowles *et al.* 1995, 116). Old politics refers to traditional debates over the role of the state in areas of economic regulation and deregulation, state ownership or privatization, welfare, and unions (pp.100-101). Presumably, the traditional class cleavages relating to these issues are being replaced by cleavages based on new issues (Inglhart 1990). Issues considered to be part of new politics refer to important themes in New Zealand politics in the 1980s, and include opposition to nuclear weapons, concern for the environment, moral issues and the question of justice for Maori (Vowles *et al.* 1995, 101-102). On the old politics scale, higher scores (on the right) denote a preference for a limited role for the state, while low values (on the left) indicate a preference for government intervention. On the new politics scale, lower scores indicate a stance that is anti-nuclear, and pro-environment, gay rights, abortion and Maori rights. Figures 9.5 and 9.6 compare party voters and party élites on two dimensions representing old and new politics.



In this context, Vowles *et al.* (1995) concluded that in 1993 the party system was still based on the issues defined as old politics. By the 1990s, conflict over new politics issues had been neutralised while debate over the neo-liberal market reforms of the 1980s continued. From the distribution evident in Figure 9.5 we can see that partisan divisions over old politics issues continue. The parties for which there are comparable data show that, on average, party candidates have moved to more extreme positions in 1996. For example, National and New Zealand First average candidates have moved to the right, while Alliance and Labour average candidates moved to the left; these shifts are primarily due to changes in positions on privatisation and regulation. National and Alliance party voters show the biggest shift from 1993 to 1996. As with the party élite, their average voters have shifted toward the extremes on old politics, with National voters moving to the right and Alliance voters moving to the left. In 1996 both Labour and New Zealand First are closer to their voters than to the other parties.

The pattern of movement of party and voter positions on new politics issues is quite different from that of old politics. Instead of the parties moving toward the ends of the political spectrum – the liberal side becoming more liberal and the conservative side more conservative – all parties have shifted in a liberal direction. Both parties and their voters have moved up on the new politics scale, indicating an increased anti-nuclear stance as well as increased tolerance for gay and Maori rights. Of all of the parties in 1996, the Christian Coalition is most conservative, largely due to their position on moral issues. The Christian Heritage Party, one of the two parties in the Christian Coalition, seeks to advance biblical principles on the national agenda (Rainbow & Sheppard 1997, 179). However, the average position of the Christian Coalition candidates and voters is quite moderate on all of the other issues. The average candidates see themselves as in the centre on the liberal-conservative continuum, while the average voter is slightly conservative; Boston *et al.* (1996) placed the Christian Coalition to the right of most other parties. Both candidates and voters see themselves as more moderate than ACT, National and United on all but moral issues.

### Conclusion: A More Representative Democracy?

Consistent with the expectations of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System, the switch to MMP has increased the descriptive representation of women and Maori in Parliament. The number of women MPs has been increasing since the 1970s and prior to the first MMP election New Zealand had the highest proportion of women representatives among the FPP systems. The proportion of women in Parliament increased even further with the advent of MMP, with the use of party lists contributing significantly to the representation of women and Maori. However, the number of women in electorate seats declined from the number of women represented under the FPP system. The incumbent re-election rate for women in electorates was well below that of men and the number of women put forward by parties in electorate seats was also lower than on the party lists. Because they owe their election to the party

rather than to a geographical constituency, they appear to have less independence in Parliament and thus they may have less status.

While MMP's effect on descriptive representation seems clear, the evidence for increased policy congruence seems less so. From comparing average candidate and voter positions we find limited evidence to support Downs's hypothesis that parties will be more ideologically distinct from the median voter under PR. On the left-right scale there is indeed a greater degree of congruence between parties and voters, but parties were not consistently more responsive to voter interests across all issues in 1996 as compared to 1993. While we find no consistent evidence for greater congruence between parties and their voters on issues, we do note that there is greater variation in party and voter positions on old politics issues than on new politics issues. The entry of more parties into the electoral system has also influenced existing parties. Most notably, ACT has tended to pull the National Party further to the right on old politics and left on issues involving new politics.

One aspect of representation or responsiveness to constituents not addressed here but likely to be influenced by the change in electoral systems is the role of constituency service. Constituency service includes casework: personalised service given to individuals in the district, as well as to local governments and businesses. The Royal Commission (1986) saw constituency service as one benefit of the FPP system and sought to preserve that by recommending a mixed system of party list and electorate representatives. The Royal Commission saw no differentiation in terms of the expectation to provide constituency service; they expected that list members would attach themselves to a constituency because parties would demand good constituency service as a requirement for continued high placement on the list (p.53).

The Higher Salaries Commission did distinguish between list and constituency members in setting allowances. They allow equal salaries for list and constituency MPs but distinguish between them on allowances, reasoning that the 65 electorate MPs would now be doing the work of 99 MPs (Boston *et al.* 1996). For operating costs of offices outside Parliament, MPs receive \$55,000, while list MPs receive \$34,200 (Smeete 1997). Constituency MPs receive an additional support staff member as well as a basic allowance of \$7,000, while list MPs are given \$4,000 in basic allowance. Electorate MPs are also given an additional 'constituency allowance', which depends on the size of the electorate and ranges from \$8,000 to \$20,000. Research on the difference between list and constituency members of the German Bundestag indicates that constituency MPs are more likely to believe that providing tangible benefits to the district is more important in helping them to get elected (Lancaster & Patterson 1990).

In New Zealand, the importance of constituency service is likely to increase under MMP. Because the party vote is separated from the electorate vote, there is a greater incentive for MPs to cultivate a base of support beyond the fortunes of the party. Voters can support an electorate candidate who has provided good service to the electorate while also giving support to a preferred national party (Mulgan 1996, 131). Additionally, as electorate MPs have more resources than list MPs, and as evidence from other countries that use a mixed constituency-list system indicates (Boll 1994, 159; Shugart

1992), list members have an incentive to become constituency MPs. They will need to build support in a geographical constituency by providing personal service. Alternatively, list MPs may cultivate service among those constituents not tied to a geographical area, such as business or ideological interest groups. Questions regarding the behaviour of list and constituency members and responsiveness to constituents will require further investigation as members adjust to working under MMP.

### Notes

- 1 In 1996, 523,374 people identified with the Maori ethnic group. This is an increase of 20.4 per cent on the 1991 figure of 434,844. The Maori ethnic group is now 14.5 per cent of the population, up from 12.9 per cent in 1991 (1996 Census).
- 2 Two other MPs elected in 1993 acknowledge some degree of Maori descent, which would increase Maori representation to 8 out of 99 seats in 1993 and 17 out of 120 seats in 1996.
- 3 This assumes that the proportion of women candidates contesting electorate seats would have remained the same with or without MMP. It is possible that had the party list option not been available, more women would have stood as electorate candidates. Nevertheless, the proportion of women contesting electorate seats was similar if not more in 1996 than in 1993, and thus did not depart from the overall trend over the past 10 years.
- 4 James Carroll, who was part-Irish and part-Maori, stood successfully for two European seats from 1893 to 1919 after representing Eastern Maori for six years. For a history of Maori representation in Parliament, see Appendix B of the Royal Commission's Report (1986).
- 5 According to Downs, this depends on the distribution of preferences and not necessarily on electoral rules. Multi-party systems – those with three or more major parties – are likely to occur whenever the distribution of votes is polymodal (p.125). In these circumstances, parties will place themselves at each mode. Assuming an equal number of votes at each mode, parties will have little incentive to move toward one another if they cannot gain more votes. Later in his argument, Downs states that under a multi-party system with a unimodal distribution of opinion, the range of policy positions is likely to be much wider than in a two-party system (p.148).
- 6 See Chapters 1 and 3 for further discussion of these issues. While parties other than the two major contenders have incentives to develop more ideological policies, the two leading parties in a PR system may still have substantial incentives to remain 'catch-all' parties (Kirchheimer 1966).
- 7 A factor analysis derived seven factors. However, we have created a separate scale for environmental spending as it did not clearly load onto one factor.
- 8 The question reads: 'In politics, people sometimes talk about the left and the right. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10?' Higher numbers indicate the left side of the scale; lower numbers indicate the right side of the scale.
- 9 Boston *et al.* (1996, 60) place the parties on a left-right continuum according to their general attitudes to the role of the state in the economy.
- 10 Since New Zealand's system is not purely proportional, voters who prefer extremely small parties might still vote strategically for fear of casting a wasted vote.

## CHAPTER 10

# VOTER SATISFACTION AFTER ELECTORAL SYSTEM CHANGE

*Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci*

In PR countries, voters vote more and complain less, and politicians enjoy greater popular respect and more satisfying professional lives. Perhaps this contrast between plurality and PR countries is the most convincing evidence in favor of PR!  
(Arend Lijphart, 8 March 1995)

Growing cynicism has become one of the defining characteristics of the New Zealand electorate. Confidence in Parliament declined from 33 per cent in 1975 to less than 10 per cent in 1988 (Miller & Catt 1993, 31). Following the 1993 election, a majority of voters believed that public servants do not care much about what people think, and that the New Zealand government is largely run by a few big interests (Vowles *et al.* 1995, 133). Far fewer had trust in New Zealand's two major political parties, Labour and National.

The adoption of a new electoral system in 1996 raises the question of whether such high levels of discontent will remain a predominant feature of the New Zealand electorate. Proponents of MMP argued that voters would be more satisfied with a democracy that accommodates a more diverse representation of interests. Cross-national comparisons show that citizens in countries with proportional systems are more content and have higher rates of participation. Indeed, the adoption of MMP by voters in 1993 was partly due to discontent (Lamare & Vowles 1996). Has the new electoral system mitigated or reversed the trend of increasing cynicism? Though it may be too soon to judge whether a change in electoral systems has redefined how New Zealanders view government, we can nevertheless begin to approach this question by evaluating levels and sources of discontent.

### Voter Discontent

Previous research in New Zealand has suggested that the source of discontent lies with the behaviour of politicians and parties. According to Miller and Catt