

Anatomy of a Labour Landslide

BY PIPPA NORRIS

The long campaign was flat, the opinion polls unwavering, the public overwhelmed by political ennui. Yet on 1st May 1997, and well into the following morning, as Tory after Tory was defeated, and defeated badly, at the polls, commentators floundered to pinpoint the appropriate adjective to describe the scale of the Labour victory, whether a 'landslide', a 'political earthquake' or a 'sea change in British politics'. The government lost a quarter of its 1992 vote, a third of its Cabinet and over half its seats (178). The Conservative share of the UK vote fell from 41.9% to 30.7%, their worst result since modern party politics began in 1832. The party was reduced to an English rump, obliterated in Scotland and Wales, and in most major cities. With only 165 MPs, Conservative representation was the lowest since 1906.

After eighteen years in the opposition wilderness, Labour surged to power with 419 MPs (including the Speaker), their highest number ever, overflowing the government benches in the Commons. Tony Blair won an overall majority of 179, the largest for any administration since the National government of 1935, and the biggest in Labour history. Labour recovered most in areas where the party had been weakest throughout the Thatcher years, storming back in Greater London, the South East and the Midlands. Blair's landslide was in seats, not votes: Labour's share of the UK vote (43.3%) was about the same as they achieved when they lost in 1970 (32.1%), and less than their peak in 1966 (48.0%). The centre parties also triumphed, with the election of 46 Liberal Democrats, their best result since 1929, despite a drop of one percent in their vote. Scotland elected six SNP MPs, their strongest showing since October 1974, with 22% of the Scottish vote, while four Plaid Cymru MPs were returned in Wales. There were more candidates than ever before (3,717). Most fringe parties had their moment of glory but lost their deposits. The eurosceptic Referendum Party got three percent of the vote, but only after spending £20 million, or £24.68 per vote. Ironically the net effect was probably to let in a few more Europhile Labour members. All-in-all, the record books of modern British politics were less broken than smashed and overturned. So, after four successive victories, what produced the Conservative rout on 1st May 1997? After being written off in the early eighties, how did Labour recover middle England? And what are the implications of the results for the future of British

party politics? Let us summarise the longterm run up to the election, the impact of the campaign, and then who shifted, where, when, and why.

<1.The Change in Seats, 1992-97 about here>

<2.The Change in Votes, 1992-97 about here>

The longterm Conservative collapse

The headline story of the election was the disastrous long-term collapse of Conservative support, which started on 'Black Wednesday' (16 September 1992) with the withdrawal of Britain from the European Monetary Union. On a single day base interest rates at the bank bounced from 10 to 12%, then 15% a few hours later, then back to 12% by the end of the day. As Paul Whiteley argues later, the ERM debacle destroyed notions of Conservative economic competence and simultaneously sowed the seeds for bitter internal divisions within the government over Britain's future within the European Union.¹ After this, poll after poll reported the government in the doldrums. Labour support hovered comfortably between 40 to 50%. The election of Tony Blair as Labour leader after the sudden death of John Smith, in May 1994, and the transformation of 'New Labour', consolidated and boosted their lead in the opinion polls. Throughout 1995 the Conservatives languished at the lowest point for any government since regular polling began in 1945 (see Figure 1).

<Figure 1 about here>

Conservative fortunes were also reflected in real votes at the ballot box. Byelections are usually an opportunity for people to protest against the government but from 1992-97 the Conservative share of the byelection vote plummeted by 20%, almost twice the drop experienced by successive governments under Mrs Thatcher. Minor parties commonly benefit and during 1992-7 the Liberal Democrats won Newbury, Christchurch, Eastleigh and Littleborough and Saddlesworth, while the SNP took Perth and Kinross. Nevertheless it was Labour which increased their share of the byelection vote most significantly (+7.4%), while gaining Dudley West, South East Staffs, and Wirral South. The last byelection won by the Conservatives was in 1988.

Successive local elections, maintaining the grassroots party machine, wiped out Tories in town halls up and down the land. In 1979, when Mrs Thatcher first won power, Conservatives had 12,143 councillors, and control of such

major cities as Greater London, Birmingham, and Edinburgh, as well as metropolitan counties like Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the West Midlands. After the May 1996 local elections the party was left with only 4,400 councillors, well behind Labour (11,000) and the Liberal Democrats (5,100). While Labour controlled 212 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Liberal Democrats held 55, the Conservatives were left with just 13 (see Rallings and Thrasher in this volume). The June 1994 European elections underlined Conservative decline: they held only 18 out of 89 seats (none in Scotland and Wales), with 26.9% of the UK vote. In 1992-97, Conservative party membership plummeted from 780,000 to under 400,000, falling below Labour for the first time this century (The Times 6.6.97). The writing on the wall was plain for all to see (see Figure 2). The question obsessing journalists and commentators in the long, long run up to polling day was whether the Major government was suffering from another bad case of 'mid-term blues', from which they could recover along with the economic 'feel-good' factor, or whether this signified a more fundamental challenge to almost two decades of Conservative predominance.

<Figure 2 about here>

Stability and change in the election campaign

As the six-week campaign opened, despite the accumulated evidence, few contemporary observers seemed to expect that Labour could achieve such an overwhelming victory, not even Tony Blair, according to insider accounts (Robert Harris, The Sunday Times, 3.5.97). Memories of the opinion poll fiasco in 1992, discussed in this volume by Ivor Crewe, meant commentators cautiously hedged their bets. The panel of twenty psephologists appointed by Reuters predicted an average Labour majority of 92. Earlier models by David Sanders had estimated that given the 'feel-good' factor in the economy the Conservatives should get around 37% of the vote.² Even on election day Michael Heseltine was boasting of a Conservative majority of around 60 seats, some commentators clung to predictions of a hung parliament, while pollsters like Bob Worcester expected a Labour majority of 101. Few expected a melt-down by the once-formidable Conservative election machine. Given the insistent drumbeat from opinion polls, local, European and by-elections, the defeat of the Major government should not have surprised anyone. Yet the size and scale of the Conservative rout did.

The launch of the official election on 17th March resulted in the longest campaign in recent history. John Major wanted to allow the Conservatives to build momentum by a triple strategy: by emphasising the positive economic performance of the government, by reassuring voters to trust John Major rather than the inexperienced and untested Tony Blair, and by attacking Labour on the old issues of taxes and trade unions. As discussed by Paul Whiteley and Dennis Kavanagh in this volume, the Conservative campaign was dogged throughout by stories of sleaze and derailed by European divisions, while the Mandelson Millbank machine stayed resolutely and tightly 'on message' throughout most of the campaign, and Paddy Ashdown fought an energetic, positive albeit largely one-man campaign for the Liberal Democrats. An analysis of the major issues covered by television and the press during the campaign found that the conduct of the election (including opinion polls, discussions of party strategy and the role of the media) occupied a third of all coverage, and substantive discussion of policy issues focussed on Europe, sleaze, education, taxation, constitutional reform, privatisation, health, social security, and Northern Ireland, in that order (The Guardian, 2.5.97). The dominance of sleaze stories during the first two weeks, and the subsequent rise of Europe to the top of the media agenda in the third week, was particularly notable. Both

stories provided negative coverage of the government, and prevented them from trumpeting their own message about the health of the British economy. Indeed it is striking how another content analysis study of the press found that when the economy was reported, bad news slightly outweighed good, despite the 'objective' economic indicators looking remarkably healthy³ (see also Gavin and Sanders this volume).

The Conservatives usually enter the campaign assured of a sympathetic press, so they can be confident of getting their message across. Yet in this election, as Colin Seymour-Ure points out, six out of ten national dailies gave Labour largely unqualified support. The papers' party backing first began to shift in the 1992 election, but they became heavily hostile to John Major following Black Wednesday, and the government never really recaptured their loyalties. The shift was most dramatically symbolised by the defection of The Sun ('THE SUN BACKS BLAIR') on the first day of the official campaign, although it is not clear how long Blair's honeymoon with the press will last. One intriguing issue which needs to be explored further is why this shift occurred, and in particular whether papers led or followed their readers' surge to Labour.

Despite increased pressures from the proliferation of satellite and cable stations, the main terrestrial channels on television maintained high standards of public service broadcasting in Britain. Given the flatness of the horse-race, as well as the lessons of the 1992 fiasco, broadcast news devoted less time to opinion polls, down from 14% of stories in 1992 to only seven percent in 1997 (The Guardian, 5.5.97). Television could not resist covering some of the trivia and fluff (the headless chicken fight, sex in the park for one MP, cash for questions for others). Nevertheless much news was devoted to balanced and informative analysis of serious policy issues (see Semetko, Scammell and Goddard later). Television devoted extensive coverage to the campaign. As a proportion of domestic news space, election stories were 14% of the tabloids, about 28% of the broadsheet press, but about 41% of broadcast news(The Guardian). Yet the result of the flat election was that more viewers turned off the flagship BBC1 and ITV evening news. During the period of the official campaign, according to the Broadcaster's Audience Research Board (BARB), the audience for BBC1's 9 O'clock News dropped from an average of 6.3 million per night during the 1992 campaign down to 4.2 million this year, while

ITN's News at Ten fell from around 6.8 million per night in the 1992 campaign down to about 5.6 million. Still, on the Election '97 specials, at the peak 12.7 million viewers were glued to the results (about 29.5% of the electorate). Between one to two million stayed switched on well into the early hours of the following morning and all the next day.

Did the campaign matter? Some commentators claimed that despite all the sound and fury of the official campaign, and the strenuous attempts by parties and the media to control the agenda, in the end this had little impact on the outcome, which was decided on Black Wednesday five years ago. In this regard in a model of punctuated equilibrium, the ERM fiasco, like the Falklands war before it, could be regarded as a decisive event which ratched public opinion into a new direction. Yet regarding the outcome as inevitable following Black Wednesday seems far too deterministic. Currency crisis do not usually, by themselves, produce a change of government. As noted by Ivor Crewe, the opinion polls showed a glacial slide in Labour support from the start to the end of the campaign, with the Liberal Democrats the main beneficiaries. True, the campaign probably did not decide the outcome, given Labour's lead, but this evidence suggests it still mattered for votes. Ivor Crewe demonstrates that Labour support declined by seven points (from an average of 51.4% in the first two weeks of the campaign down to 44.4% on polling day), Liberal Democrat support climbed 4 points (from 12.98 to 17.2% during the campaign), while the Conservatives rose by two points (from 29.8 to 31.5%) (see Crewe Table 4 in this volume). Overall campaign swing was slightly higher than average, compared with many previous elections.⁴ While Labour support was probably over-inflated at the beginning of this period, if the polls are believed to have their finger on the nation's pulse this swing still indicates significant movement.

<Figure 3 about here>

The effect of the campaign can also be estimated from the NOP/BBC exit poll when people were asked about the timing of their voting decision. Over half (57%) said they had decided how to vote before the election was called, while one quarter decided during the last week of the campaign, including one in ten who decided on election day. The Liberal Democrats were particularly strong among late deciders (see Kellner Table 3) which is

consistent with the slight swell in Liberal Democrat support very late in the opinion polls.

Electoral volatility

How many switched? Net volatility (the change in the distribution of votes between two elections) reached record levels. Across the whole country there was a 10.5% (Butler) swing from the Conservatives to Labour, the highest any party had experienced since 1945.⁵ Moreover, this built on a series of earlier gains in elections since 1983, when a deeply-divided and left-wing Labour Party reached its nadir of support. In a series of steps, the swing towards Labour was 1.7% in 1987, and 2.1% in 1992. In this sense, 1997 was 'one more heave'. The cumulative effect of successive elections was to ratchet the pendulum against the Conservatives. The Con-Lab swing in this election was far greater than that achieved by Harold Wilson when he came to power in 1964 (3.0%), by Edward Heath in 1970 (4.7%), or even by Margaret Thatcher in 1979 (5.2%).

Moreover, rather than being uniform, the swing varied more greatly across the whole country than in most previous elections, although this variation was partly attributable to boundary revisions. The standard deviation of the Con-Lab swing was 3.4% in this election, higher than any election since 1983. A couple of seats bucked the trend: Bradford West, and Bethnal Green and Bow, swung by five percent from Labour to the Conservatives, both contested by Asian Tory candidates with strong local appeal. In sharp contrast, at the other extreme, there were massive swings towards Labour (over 18%) in Harrow East, Crosby, Hastings and Rye, and Brent North, while another ten seats produced swings over 17%. Among Con-Lib seats, the Liberal Democrats experienced an impressive surge in support in some of their target seats, such as Sheffield Hallam, and Harrogate and Knaresborough, as well as retaining by-election gains in Eastleigh, and in Newbury.⁶ The Pederson index summarises change in the share of the vote for all British parliamentary parties.⁷ In 1992-97 this index was 12.3, the second highest recorded since the war (after 1970-74 which was notable for the surge in support for minor parties).

Yet net volatility is only loosely related to gross volatility, meaning the total amount of change that takes place between two points in time, as measured at the individual level by panel surveys or recalled vote. Net

change represents the flow of the vote which produces each party's overall level of support, while gross change measures the electoral flux or 'churning' which occurs among voters see-sawing between parties. Gross volatility can be estimated from the NOP/BBC Exit Poll, conducted for among 17,073 voters as they left polling stations after casting their ballot on 1st May. We can compare reported vote in 1997 against recalled vote in 1992, an imperfect measure given the vagaries of memory but the best now available in the absence of panel surveys. This data suggests that about two-thirds of voters remained stable, consistently voting for the same party in both elections, while in contrast about a third switched from 1992-97 (see Kellner Table 2). This degree of electoral stability is not dissimilar to estimates in previous elections as measured by BES panel surveys from 1964-92. Most importantly, if confirmed by later panel surveys, this suggests that the Labour landslide in seats was not caused by increased electoral volatility among voters.

Who switched? Almost three quarters (71%) of those who voted Conservative in 1992 continued to support the party in 1997 (see Kellner Table 2). The haemorrhage of Tory support came from the 11% who reported switching to the Liberal Democrats, and, most remarkably, from 13% (or about two million Conservatives) who reported switching directly to Labour. The centre party is usually regarded as a 'turn-around station' or 'half-way house', for temporary defectors from the major parties. To a remarkable degree, many more voters in this election moved directly between the major parties, or rather from the Conservatives to Labour, than is usual in British elections.⁸ In contrast in BES panel surveys of voters in pairs of elections from 1964 to 1992, less than five percent of voters were ever recorded as switching directly between the major parties.

The Liberal Democratic vote proved softest, as is common, with two-thirds staying loyal. One fifth of Liberal Democrats shifted to Labour, a move which was not counterbalanced by the seven percent of Labour voters who switched to the Liberal Democrats. This pattern in the exit poll is confirmed also at constituency level. The change in the Labour and Liberal Democratic vote was strongly intercorrelated ($R=0.63$). The sharp fall in the Conservative vote was most strongly related to the surge in Labour support ($R=0.40$), and more weakly correlated with the change in Liberal Democratic support ($R=0.21$).

UK turnout declined significantly, from 77.7 to 71.5%, the lowest since 1935, for reasons which remain unclear. As discussed by David Denver and Gordon Hands, explanations commonly relate to the type of seat. Some expected that Conservative voters, disillusioned with the government, would be more likely to stay home on polling day. Others predicted that Blair's shift towards the centre ground would produce disillusionment among traditional left-wing Labour voters. Denver and Hands found that turnout fell slightly more (-7.9%) in seats held in 1992 by Labour than by the Conservatives (-5.8%). Participation was not strongly related to region, although the decline in turnout was about one percent higher than average in the Midlands and North of England, and slightly lower in Scotland. Nor can this phenomenon be plausibly explained by the closeness of the local race: turnout fell almost equally across different types of marginal and safe seats. One clue is that the fall was significantly associated with the social characteristics of constituencies, since turnout declined most sharply among seats with a high concentration of manual workers and council house tenants. Nevertheless individual level survey data is needed to explore this puzzle more thoroughly.

Regional swings

What made the result even more damaging for the Conservatives was the pattern of tactical voting and regional swings. The Conservative and Unionist Party, which campaigned as the only party to maintain the Union of the United Kingdom, was annihilated outside of England, left without a single MP in Scotland (for the first time ever), Wales (for the first time since 1906), and, of course, Northern Ireland. The North/South divide closed slightly in votes, for the second election in a row. This cleavage can be summarised most simply by comparing the proportion of Conservative support in the South minus Conservative support in the North.⁹ The Index in Table 3 shows a gradual increase in the North/South divide from 1974 to 1987, when the cleavage peaked, after which the divide slightly closed again. The pattern in 1997 has returned to the geographic division evident in 1983.

<Table 3 about here>

The reason for the closure, as discussed by Ian McAllister in this volume, is that Conservative support plummeted most sharply in areas where the

party had been remarkably strong in the Thatcher decade: in Greater London (-14.1), the South-East (-13.1), East Anglia (-12.3), and the East Midlands (-11.7) (see Figure 4, McAllister Table 2). In contrast, disguised by the pattern of seat losses, in 1997 the Tories experienced the smallest swings against them in Scotland and Wales. The Conservatives were wiped out in these areas because they were already so vulnerable that even a relatively modest swing against them (7.5%) was sufficient to eradicate their members in Scotland and Wales. The problem facing the Scottish Conservatives is not just in MPs: the grassroots base of the party has been washed away since the Conservatives no longer control any local councils, or have any MEPs, in Scotland.

<Figures 4 and 5 about here>

In contrast, Labour made their greatest recovery in southern England (see Figure 5). Labour dominated the nation's capital, winning an extra twenty-five seats in Greater London, while the Liberal Democrats picked up a swathe of five constituencies in the middle class suburbs of south London. The Conservatives were reduced to eleven London seats, mostly clustered in the stock-broker commuter belt on the Kent borders, as well as the affluent City, and Kensington and Chelsea. Winning seats across the whole country, Labour also took the majority of votes in their traditional heartland: Yorkshire and Humberside, the North West, the North, and Wales. Rather than piling up ever greater majorities in their rock-solid inner city seats of Glasgow and Merseyside, the change in Labour support was most effectively distributed: their smallest swing was in Wales and Scotland, both areas they already dominated. The Conservatives became the party, not just of England, but of Southern England: almost three-quarters of their MPs come from here. The only counties where the Conservatives enjoy a comfortable vote cushion, over 45% of the vote, are Surrey and West Sussex. The Liberal Democrats are breathing down their necks in the West Country, while in East Anglia the Conservatives are evenly balanced against Labour.

Tactical voting

What turned a substantial defeat for the Conservatives into an overwhelming rout was the closure of the ideological gap between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, and strategic campaigning by opposition parties in their target marginals, producing tactical voting against the government on an

unprecedented scale (see Figure 6). As Berrington suggests in this volume, there is absolutely nothing new about tactical voting, and indeed the 'wasted votes' argument against voting Liberal in the 1950s is a variant of this behaviour. Nevertheless the effect of tactical voting in 1997 was to concentrate the impact of the anti-Conservative tide.

<Table 4 and Figure 6 about here>

As shown in Table 4, the electorate behaved differently according to the type of local contest. The fall in Conservative support was fairly uniform across different types of marginals. But in Conservative seats where Labour were in second place in 1992 (Con-Lab seats), Labour's share of the vote went up by 13% on average, while the Liberal Democrat share declined by about three percent. In sharp contrast, in marginal Conservative seats where the Liberal Democrats were in second place in 1992 (Con-Lib seats), the Liberal Democrat vote increased by about two to three percent, while the Labour share rose by less than average. This pattern is all the more remarkable given the boundary changes introduced since the 1992 election, which meant that many voters may have been unsure which party stood the best chance against the Conservative candidate.

Yet the distribution of marginals was clustered in certain areas like Greater London and the North West, and regional voting swings showed considerable variance, so we need to control for region to measure the impact of tactical voting. Table 5 estimates the difference between the change in the Labour and Liberal Democratic vote in all seats in a region, and in Con-Lab and Con-Lib seats. Compared with the regional mean, in Con-Lab seats Labour support was stronger than average, and the Liberal Democrats did less well than average, in every region except Scotland. Conversely, in Con-Lib seats, Liberal Democratic support rose by more than average, and Labour did less well than average, in all but two regions.

<Table 5 about here>

How many seats changed hands due to new tactical voting? The Con-Lab ('Butler') swing of the vote was 10.5%. If uniform across the country this should have produced about 391 Labour MPs, 211 Conservatives, and 29

Liberal Democrats, giving Blair a parliamentary majority of 122. Put in perspective this would have been a comfortable majority but still less than Mrs Thatcher enjoyed in 1983, and below Labour's historic landslide in 1945. The most striking feature of this election was that the variations in the swing probably lost the Conservatives 46 extra seats, of which 28 went to Labour and 18 to the Liberal Democrats, turning the government's defeat into the remarkable Labour landslide. Of these extra seats, about 24 may have fallen before the scythe of anti-government tactical voting, while half were probably lost due to other reasons like constituency campaigns.¹⁰ In contrast, in 1992 an identical procedure suggests that about ten seats fell due to tactical voters.¹¹ Estimates by McAllister in this volume suggest that, after controlling for the social structure of seats, the effects of new tactical voting may have been even higher, although Berrington argues that the impact of this phenomenon has been exaggerated by some commentators.

There are disputes about the extent, and also the causes, of the growth in tactical voting. At least three plausible explanations are possible. Those focussing on the electorate suggest voters may have become more sophisticated in strategically identifying the party best positioned to defeat the Tories, and more willing to vote for their second-choice party. Alternatively, from a 'top-down' perspective Labour and the Liberal Democrats may have been more effective in concentrating campaign resources more heavily in their target marginals. Lastly, the closure of the ideological gap between the opposition parties, with Blair's move to steal Liberal Democrat clothes on the centre-left, may have paid electoral dividends. If there is less distance between parties, it is easier for voters to switch. Disentangling these factors remains a complex process, and we await individual-level panel data from the BES, and contextual information about constituency campaigns, to analyse this phenomenon further.

Social base of the vote

Another feature of change in this election is the social basis of the vote. At constituency level the Labour heartland has been inner-city working-class areas, with all the multiple social problems associated with council estates, high unemployment and urban deprivation, a high concentration of Asian and black residents, and industrial decline. Irrespective of any social dealignment at the individual level, far from weakening in recent

decades, many of these correlations at constituency level have strengthened over time. The gradual shrinkage of these areas, and the expansion of the more affluent suburban areas in southern England, strengthened the argument that Labour had to adapt to survive. Unless new Labour could expand beyond their traditional social base, by becoming a catch-all party, they faced defeat.

The evidence from the 1997 election is that new Labour has managed to widen its appeal beyond its core, like the Social Democrats in Sweden, yet also hold on to its traditional working class vote. As shown in Table 6, compared with the pattern under Harold Wilson in 1966, and under Neil Kinnock in 1992, Blair did better among constituencies with a high concentration of professional and managerial workers. While seats with many skilled non-manuals (C1s) swung sharply towards Thatcher in 1979, these areas shifted most strongly towards Labour in the 1990s. From 1979-97 weakening Labour support in working class seats indicates dealignment, particularly among the skilled working class (the C2s). In a similar trend, from 1966-79 Labour support strengthened in seats with high levels of council housing, but this association subsequently weakened in the 1990s. As we would expect, as a 'catch-all' party new Labour has triumphed by maintaining its traditional base and yet simultaneously widening its appeal to middle England.

<Table 6 about here>

Further confirmation of this pattern can be found at the individual level in the NOP/BBC exit poll, which can be compared against evidence from the equivalent poll in 1992 (See Kellner Table 1). As a 'catch-all' party, Labour made gains across all social classes, although the shift was greatest among skilled non-manual workers (the 'C1s'), and also among semi-skilled manual workers (DEs). The net result is another ratchet down, and a sharp one, in class dealignment. The Alford Index, measuring Labour's share of the vote among non-manual workers minus its share among manual workers, dropped from 27 to 21 points, the lowest score since records began in 1945, and half the score of the mid-sixties. Most noticeably the decline in the Alford index over time shows a striking pattern of stepped shifts downwards: from 1966 to 1970, then from 1974 to 1979, before a further marked shift in 1992 to 1997. As argued elsewhere¹², this strongly indicates that the explanation lies in the changing pattern of party competition, notably new Labour's shift towards the ideological middle

ground with a classless appeal, rather than a steady secular slide due to long-term social trends.

Labour's support among council tenants remained solid and unchanged, but the swing to Labour was marked among owner occupiers, especially those with a mortgage. In the Thatcher years housing tenure proved one of the most significant indicators of party support but this relationship has weakened today. Perhaps the legacy of negative equity, and the end of the house price boom of the 1980s, made mortgage holders particularly bitter against the government which had so assiduously promoted the benefits of home ownership. As discussed later by Joni Lovenduski, the modest gender gap in 1992 closed in 1997, as more women (+11%) than men (+8%) shifted into the Blair camp. The familiar pattern of the gender-generation gap continued, however, with younger women more Labour than younger men, and the reversal of this pattern among the older generation. The general pattern by age group was striking: the strongest swing to Labour was monitored among the younger generation (+18%), (and first-time voters), while Labour made no gains among the over 65s.

The minor parties

Turning in more detail to the minor parties, in this election support for the Liberal Democrat fell from 17.8 to 16.8% of the UK vote. Nevertheless, like an under-fives birthday treat, all the opposition parties departed with seat prizes. As discussed by Hugh Berrington, the Liberal Democrats more than doubled their parliamentary strength from 1992-7, rising from twenty to forty-six MPs, their best result since 1929. They benefited from the fall in Conservative support while maintaining their share of the vote in Somerset and Devon, and increasing their support in Cornwall and Dorset. They captured eight seats in the West Country, often by wafer-thin margins, including Torbay, St. Ives, Somerton and Frome, Weston-Super-Mare, Devon West and Torridge, Taunton. With fourteen seats, including Paddy Ashdown's Yeovil, the South West is the Liberal Democrats area of greatest parliamentary strength.

Another swath of gains were made in the moderately affluent commuter belt of South West London, including Richmond Park, Kingston and Surbiton, Twickenham, Sutton and Cheam, and Carshalton and Wallington. Eight more Conservative seats were captured in the South East, notably in coastal areas including the Isle of Wight, with the largest electorate in the UK, along

with Portsmouth South, Eastleigh, and close-by Winchester. The Liberal Democrats also consolidated their hold in Scotland, picking up Edinburgh West against Lord Douglas Hamilton, and West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine. Due to the distribution of their support in the vast rural tracts of the Borders, the Highlands and Islands, and the workings of the electoral system, the Liberal Democrats won ten seats in the region, despite getting a lower share of the Scottish vote (13%) than the Conservatives, who got none.

North of the Border, as discussed by Alice Brown, the Scottish Nationalists doubled from three to six MPs, with 22.1% of the Scottish vote. To their old seats of Angus (Andrew Walsh), Banff and Buchan (Alec Salmond), and Moray (Margaret Ewing), they took Galloway and Upper Nithsdale, and Tayside North from the Conservatives, and held Perth which Roseanna Cunningham won in a byelection in 1995. SNP support was particularly strong in the regions of Dumfries and Galloway, Tayside and Central, and Grampian. Meanwhile in North Wales, Plaid Cymru held on to Ynys Mons, Caernarvon, Merionnydd Nant Conwy, and Ceridigion, with 10.6% of the Welsh vote. Unlike the SNP, Plaid Cymru's support is strongly concentrated, with 37% of the vote in Gwynedd and 22% in Dyfed, but little outside their linguistic base. The Liberal Democrats performed well in the Welsh border region, holding the sprawling rural seats of Montgomeryshire, winning Brecon and Radnorshire, as well as Hereford next door in England, while Labour predominance remained unchallenged in their heartland in South Wales.

In Northern Ireland, as O'Leary and Evans discuss, Sinn Fein achieved its most successful result in four decades with 16.1% of the vote in the region, and the capture of two seats. Gerry Adams swept to victory in West Belfast while Martin McGuinness took Mid Ulster. The Sinn Fein MPs will not sit at Westminster although their victory can be seen as highly symbolic, with potential consequences for the peace process. Sinn Fein got 39.9% of the nationalist vote against 60.1% for the SDLP, who have three MPs headed by John Hume. The Ulster Unionists, led by David Trimble, rose from nine to ten MPs, with the gain of West Tyrone, and they won 70.6% of the Unionist vote against 29.4% for the DUP, headed by the Reverend Ian Paisley.

Overall 1,678 candidates stood for the fringe parties or under an independent label, almost twice as many as in 1992. The most successful stood for the Referendum Party, funded by Sir James Goldsmith, which polled 811,829

votes overall, or three percent. The party was most successful in the South West, South East and East Anglia, notably in two constituencies which could have been expected to have benefited from the cross-channel European link, namely Harwich, and Folkstone and Hythe, where the party picked up over eight percent of the vote. The Conservatives lost 24 marginals where the Referendum vote was greater than the size of their 1992 majority, (19 to Labour and five to the Liberal Democrats). Nevertheless it is difficult to establish whether the Referendum Party actually made the difference in these seats, as some claimed, since according to the NOP/BBC exit poll, less than half the Referendum voters were ex-Tories.

The results for the new parliament

After eighteen years of Conservative predominance, the election blew a breath of fresh air into parliament, replacing the tired staleness of British political life. The combination of record retirements and record electoral upheavals meant that Westminster saw the entry of 259 new members, the highest number since the war. A younger generation transfused the Commons, with a third of the new members under forty, replacing some of the weary and divided old guard. Moreover the new cadre has exacerbated trends towards the professions, especially education: only nine of the new Labour intake (five percent) are from a working-class occupation, compared with a third of all Labour MPs in 1945.¹³

As discussed later by Joni Lovenduski, women made substantial gains, 120 swept into the House (18.2%), including 102 on the Labour benches. This doubled female representation to bring Britain into line with other EU member states, although remaining below Scandinavia. There were 362 female candidates for the three main parties, or 18.8%, a slight increase on 1992. As Lovenduski argues, what produced the breakthrough to power was less the number than the type of seats which Labour women fought, since they were well-placed in the key marginals. The shift in votes for women and men standing in each party was identical: women candidates neither gained nor lost more support than average.

The popular label of 'Blair's babes' disguised the effective shift in power: five women were appointed as Secretaries of State, four became Ministers of State, another nine became Parliamentary Under-secretaries.

Moreover women were not just appointed to 'women's ministries': Mo Mowlam was made Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Margaret Beckett became President of the Board of Trade, Dawn Primarolo entered the Treasury, Ann Taylor became Leader of the House. In total, more than a fifth of the Labour government is female.

Ethnic minorities made slower progress, with the election of five Asian and four black Labour MPs, including Britain's first Muslim MP, Mohammad Sarwar, in Glasgow Govan¹⁴ and the first Asian woman, Marsha Singh, in Bradford West. The only Asian Conservative MP, Nirj Deva, lost his seat in Brentford and Isleworth, swept out on the general anti-Conservative London tide. As a result the number of minority MPs rose from five to nine, or 1.3% of the Commons. As discussed by Shamit Saggar in this volume, there were more Asian and black candidates than ever before - the number for the major parties rose from 24 to **, but many faced hopeless seats. Whether minority candidates faced any electoral penalty because of their background is difficult to establish. Black and Asian Conservative candidates experienced a smaller than average fall in their vote (down -9.3%). As mentioned earlier, where two minority candidate fought each other the results were sometimes unexpected. Conservative Kabir Choudhury fighting Labour's Oona King in Bethnal Green and Bow, and Mohammed Riaz fighting Marsha Singh in Bradford West, even managed to gain positive swings against Labour. But on the other hand, Labour Asian and Black candidates generally saw a smaller than average rise in their share of the vote (5.1 instead of 9.7%) although Labour's candidates fighting seats in inner London experienced substantial swings in their favour (from 8 to 15%), in line with Labour's performance in the capital, including Paul Boateng in Brent South, Piara Khambra in Ealing Southall, Diane Abbott in Hackney North and Stoke Newington, and Bernie Grant in Tottenham. In general, Saggar concludes, racial politics played a limited role in the British campaign. This is in marked contrast to the politicisation of racial conflict evident in recent elections in countries like France and the United States. As Saggar suggests, whether this is because racial concerns were frozen out of the campaign as too divisive by the major parties, or because the concerns of minority voters were largely absorbed and integrated into the mainstream agenda, remains a matter of interpretation.

Turning to the government, the cabinet lost seven members, as well as dozens of junior ministers. Frontbench spokespersons suffered slightly above average Con-Lab swings against them (11.5%). The most notable head to roll was the Conservative leadership contender of the right and Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, defeated in Enfield Southgate by a 16.8 swing to the young Labour challenger, Stephen Twigg. Others who lost included Treasury Chief Secretary William Waldegrave (Bristol West), Leader of the House Tony Newton (Braintree), Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth (Stirling), Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind (Edinburgh Pentlands), and President of the Board of Trade Ian Lang (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale). Other familiar faces leaving the Commons included the Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party, Angela Rumbold (Mitcham and Morden), the flamboyant Eurosceptic Tony Marlow (Northampton North), leader of the 1922 Committee Sir Marcus Fox (Shipley) and former ex-ministers Edwina Currie, Norman Lamont, David Mellor, Jonathan Aitken, Sir Rhodes Boyson, and David Hunt.

Many Conservative members who had been involved in problems of sleaze, and who entered the election with a cloud hanging over their name, suffered above-average swings against them (11.9%), and 16 of the 23 who stood again lost. Piers Merchant clung on in Beckenham, despite being set up in a sexual scandal by The Sun at the start of the campaign, and Alan Clark survived despite (or because of?) his memoirs. But both MPs most heavily involved in the 'cash-for-questions' row, Michael Brown in Cleethorpes and Neil Hamilton in Tatton, lost heavily. Following a remarkable anti-sleaze campaign in the constituency, the BBC correspondent Martin Bell was returned from Tatton to Westminster as the first independent MP (without any party affiliation) since A.P. Herbert represented Oxford University almost half a century earlier.

Europe, an old wound dividing the Conservative Party, reopened dramatically in the third week of the campaign. The issue of membership of a single European currency had split the party throughout Major's term in office, and only the opt out clause negotiated at Maastricht kept the two wings together. The official line in the Tory manifesto was to 'wait and see' about the conditions of membership. If the government concluded that it would be in Britain's interest to join then there would be a referendum before becoming a member. Many in the Conservative party had tried to distance themselves from official party policy by taking a Eurosceptic line against the EMU in their

candidate leaflets. The press made much of this, with The Daily Mail and The Times publishing long lists of Eurosceptic MPs and advising voters to support them. In the end this came to naught: the known euro-skeptics suffered identical swings against them as the rest of the party. The image of disunity which this reinforced in the eyes of the voters, however, probably deeply hurt the party. In the NOP/BBC exit poll, when asked whether each party was united or divided, two thirds saw the Conservatives as divided, while only a third thought the same of the Labour Party.

What will the new House of Commons be like? With such a large turnover we will have to wait to see how the House reacts when debating some of the key issues before Parliament, including devolution, constitutional reform, and Britain's membership of the EMU. Nevertheless to analyse the composition of the House we can look at political attitudes among new and old MPs drawing on the British Representation Study, 1997, a survey of almost 1,000 parliamentary candidates and MPs from all the major parties conducted well before the official campaign opened. The survey, which achieved a response rate of 61%, includes replies from 261 Members elected to the new House of Commons from all the major parties, including 100 new Labour MPs. The survey includes a series of 11-point ideological scales, and candidates were asked to place themselves on a general left v. right scale, privatisation v. nationalisation, taxes v. spending, jobs v. prices, EU membership, and women's equality.¹⁵

<Table 7 about here>

As shown in Table 7, the results show three clear patterns. First, on most of these scales there is remarkably little difference between the Labour and Liberal Democrat Members, but the Conservatives are far to the right. This is clearest on the classic economic issues of privatisation versus nationalisation, and taxes versus spending, but the party cleavage is also evident on non-economic issues such as Europe and gender equality. On many of scales Labour and the Liberal Democrat MPs share a broadly similar consensus.

Secondly, if we turn to compare differences within parties, many commentators claim that the New Labour MPs, who swept to power with the Blairite centre-left, have very different values to Old Labour. The survey does confirm that new Labour Members see themselves as slightly more rightwing than

old Labour, and indeed they are slightly more rightwing on privatisation, taxation, and inflation. But on the non-economic agenda they are slightly more in favour of Britain's membership of the EU, and more egalitarian towards gender equality. In general, however, the difference in attitudes between Old and New Labour MPs are modest. As the party has moved centre-left, this tide seems to have swept most Labour politicians in the same direction.

Lastly, if we compare the Conservatives on the same basis, the most striking finding is that across all scales the new Conservatives are consistently more rightwing than the old Tories, and the gap is particularly marked on Europe. The survey includes only 18 new Conservatives, but these are sharply more Eurosceptic. What this suggests is that some of the divisions within the party over the EU, far from being resolved by the election, may be exacerbated. The Conservative party is also particularly out of touch with the rest of the House on the issue of women's rights, perhaps reflecting the fact that the party contains so few women Members. The scales only tap into certain values but a broader comparison of MPs on a wide range of issues in the survey confirms this general picture: on many issues Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs share a common political agenda, while the Tories have established clear blue water between them and other parties.

The electoral system

Lastly, as Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts demonstrate, the electoral system was critically important for the outcome. In this election the winner's bonus, and the penalties against the party in second place, operated with particular vengeance. With 43.3% of the (UK) vote, Labour won 63.6% of seats, producing a votes:seats ratio of 1.46. In contrast, with 30.7% of the vote, the Conservatives gained only 25.0% of all seats, producing a votes:seats ratio of 0.81. The size of the winner's bonus for Labour, and the penalty for the main party in second place, were larger than any since the war. In 1987, with a similar share of the vote to the Conservatives under Major, Labour won sixty more seats. What this meant in practice was that it took, on average, 113,987 votes to elect every Liberal Democrat MP, 58,127 votes to elect every Conservative MP, but 32,318 votes to elect every Labour one. This disproportionality was produced by certain factors: the size of the winner's bonus under the British system of first-past-the-post; the geographic distribution of party support; the effects of the anti-government tactical

squeeze; and the disparities in the size of constituency electorates, which continue to benefit Labour despite the redistribution introduced by the Boundary Commission. In 1997 Conservative seats included on average about 5,000 more electors than Labour constituencies.

<Table 8 about here>

The result is that the Conservatives are confronting an Everest every bit as daunting as that facing Labour in 1983. If the Conservatives and Labour get exactly the same share of the vote (37%) in the next election, a uniform swing would produce 341 Labour MPs and 254 Conservative MPs, that is, an 87 seat winner's bonus for Blair. As Table 8 indicates, if we assume a uniform swing from Labour to the Conservatives, it would take a minimal swing of eight percent to produce a hung parliament which would deprive Labour of their majority, and a vast swing of 11.6% for the Conservatives to regain an overall parliamentary majority. This size of swing has only ever been achieved this century by Labour in 1945 (11.8%), and by the National coalition government in 1931 (14.4%). Yet, although massive, a similar scepticism was always voiced about the size of the swing required for Labour to recover power, and the 1997 election demonstrates that nothing can be taken for granted. What the electorate giveth with one hand, they can always taketh away. But the Conservatives need to undertake a critical reevaluation and reorganisation as fundamental as that experienced by the Labour Party in the last decade before they can hope to recover from this nadir.

Conclusions

Many elections are described as historic watersheds in British politics, often with exaggeration as the familiar pattern restores itself in subsequent contests. Nevertheless this election, more than most, seems to deserve the epithet. The result for the Labour Party is an outstanding testimony to the resilient ability of a social democratic party fundamentally to regenerate or reinvent itself, although it took fourteen years to recover from the ashes of 1983. In the concluding article Rose outlines many reasons why the Labour honeymoon may not last, but nevertheless in the immediate aftermath of the election Blair was setting new records (82% approval) as the most popular Prime Minister since opinion polling began in Britain fifty years ago. The result for the Conservatives is an opportunity to rethink their strategy, to reorganise

their party from the grassroots up, and to reenergise themselves in opposition, under new leadership. The result for British democracy is a sense of a fresh wind blowing through government, with a renewed sense of the capacity of the system to change, which can only be healthy for the body politic.

1. The share of the vote, 1992-97 (percent)

	Percentage UK				

	1992	1997	Change	1997	St. Dev
	UK	UK	UK	GB	of GB Mean
Con	41.9	30.7	-11.2	31.4	12.2
Lab	34.4	43.3	8.9	44.4	17.9
Lib Dem	17.8	16.8	-1.0	17.2	10.9
SNP	1.8	2.0	.2	2.0	7.6
PC	.5	.5	.0	.5	4.2
Other	3.5	6.8	3.3	4.4	3.7
Turnout	77.7	71.5	-6.2	71.6	5.56
Butler Swing				-10.5	

2. The change in seats, 1992-97 (UK)

	Actual Seats 1992	Notional Seats 1992	Gains	Losses	Seats 1st May 1997	Seats %
Lab (*)	271	273	146	0	419	63.6
Con	336	343	0	178	165	25.0
Lib Dem	20	18	30	2	46	7.0
SNP	3	3	3	0	6	.9
PC	4	4	0	0	4	.6
N.Ireland	17	18	4	4	18	2.7
Independent	0	0	1	0	1	.2
Total	651	659	184	184	659	100.0
Overall Maj	Con 21	Con 27			Lab 179	

Note: (*) including the Speaker. Notional results based on the new constituency boundaries are derived from Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher Media Guide to the New Parliamentary Constituencies (BBC/ITN/PA News/Sky 1995)

3. The North-South divide

	Con	Lab
1974F	8.5	9.3
1974O	11.9	8.4
1979	11.7	15.1
1983	14.0	13.5
1987	17.3	17.9
1992	15.8	15.8
1997	13.6	13.6

Note: The Conservative index measures the proportion of Conservative votes from the South minus Conservative support in the North. The Labour index follows the same pattern with North minus South. The South equals London, the South East, South West, East Anglia and Midlands. The North equals the remainder of Britain.

Source: Calculated by William Field

4. Tactical voting by marginality

	Change in the Vote, 1992-97		

	Con	Lab	LibDem
<hr/>			
CON-LAB SEATS			
Very Marginal	-12.7	12.2	-2.3
Fairly Marginal	-11.5	12.2	-2.4
Semi-Marginal	-12.3	13.2	-2.5
Fairly Safe	-12.8	13.8	-3.9
Very Safe	-13.2	13.3	-3.4
ALL CON-LAB	-12.7	13.0	-3.1
CON-LIBDEM SEATS			
Very Marginal	-11.9	5.5	2.3
Fairly Marginal	-9.5	3.6	2.8
Semi-Marginal	-11.1	6.2	1.9
Fairly Safe	-11.8	7.9	1.0
Very Safe	-13.0	9.3	-.3
ALL CON-LIBDEM	-12.4	8.3	.4

Note: Seats are defined by the party in first and second place in the 1992 election, and the percentage majority, using the notional 1992 results under the new constituency boundaries. Very marginal=maj 0.0-4.9; Fairly marginal=maj 5.0-9.9; Semi-marginal=maj 10.0-14.99; Fairly safe=maj 15.0-19.9; Very safe=maj 20.0+.

Source: British Parliamentary Constituencies, 1992-97

5.Tactical Voting by Region

Region	Type of Seat	Change in the Vote, 1992-97 -----	
		Lab	LibDem
South East	Con-Lab	2.6	-2.0
	Con-Lib	-1.6	1.1
East Anglia	Con-Lab	.9	-.5
	Con-Lib	-.5	-.2
London	Con-Lab	2.3	-.7
	Con-Lib	-7.1	8.1
South West	Con-Lab	5.9	-4.0
	Con-Lib	-1.1	.9
West Midlands	Con-Lab	1.5	-.9
	Con-Lib	-3.0	2.8
East Midlands	Con-Lab	.8	-.9
	Con-Lib	1.2	-1.6
York. & Humber	Con-Lab	4.1	-2.8
	Con-Lib	.0	3.2
North West	Con-Lab	3.4	-2.1
	Con-Lib	-3.3	3.5
North	Con-Lab	3.9	-1.8
	Con-Lib	-2.6	4.3
Wales	Con-Lab	4.1	-1.3
	Con-Lib	-.8	2.7
Scotland	Con-Lab	6.8	2.4

Con-Lib	-2.1	9.3
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Note: Change in the vote (1992-7) in Con-Lab and Con-Lib seats compared with the average change in the vote for all seats in the region.

Source: British Parliamentary Constituencies, 1992-97

6. The social basis of Labour constituency support, 1966-97

	1966	1979	1992	1997
Professional	-.60		-.47	-.44
Managerial (a)	-.85	-.79	-.71	-.68
Skilled Non-Manual	-.39	-.57	.01	.03
Skilled Manual	.57	.58	.44	.44
Semi-skilled Manual	.49	.72	.57	.52
Unskilled Manual	.60	.71	.57	.50
Owner occupied	-.51	-.60	-.47	-.49
Council house	.52	.71	.64	.58
Unemployed	.38	.71	.72	.73
Hsehold no car	.65	.73	.76	.73
Retired	-.45	-.33	-.31	-.35
All Non-white	.08	.28	.28	.30

Note: Correlation between constituency characteristics in the Census and percentage Labour vote. (a) 1979 Professional and Managerial

Source: P.Norris, Electoral Change Since 1945 (Blackwell, 1997)

7. Attitudes in the new House of Commons

Scales	Labour MPs			LibDem MPs			Conservative		
	Old	New	Diff	Old	New	Diff	Old	New	Diff
Left-Right	3.27	3.71	-.44	3.75	3.60	.15	4.64	4.78	-.14
Privatisation	4.79	5.06	-.27	6.00	5.72	.28	10.00	10.05	-.05
Taxes & Spending	3.64	4.04	-.67	-.4	4.11	3.22	.89	8.11	8.78
Jobs/Prices	2.07	2.67	-.6	3.66	3.81	-.15	7.07	7.86	-.79
European Union	4.08	3.95	-1.13	.13	2.77	3.77	-1.00	8.50	9.63
Women's Equality	1.60	1.19	-.17	.41	1.66	1.22	.44	4.60	4.77
N.		81	100		9	22		31	18

Note: These scales range from 1 (most leftwing) to 11 (most rightwing). A positive difference means a shifts to the left, a negative difference indicates a shift to the right.

Source: The British Representation Study 1997

8. Projections of Seat Change with a Uniform Swing

Swg	% Lab	% Con	% LD	LabWin	ConWin	LDWin	NatWin	OthWin	Par	Maj
1.0	44.3	29.7	16.8	428	153	48	10	20	Lab	197
.0	43.3	30.7	16.8	419	165	46	10	20	Lab	179
1.0	42.3	31.7	16.8	412	175	42	10	20	Lab	165
2.0	41.3	32.7	16.8	402	186	41	10	20	Lab	145
3.0	40.3	33.7	16.8	392	198	39	10	20	Lab	125
4.0	39.3	34.7	16.8	373	219	37	10	20	Lab	87
5.0	38.3	35.7	16.8	358	236	34	11	20	Lab	57
6.0	37.3	36.7	16.8	344	251	33	11	20	Lab	30
6.3	37.0	37.0	16.8	341	254	33	11	20	Lab	23
7.0	36.3	37.7	16.8	334	262	32	11	20	Lab	9
8.0	35.3	38.7	16.8	320	278	31	11	20	None	
9.0	34.3	39.7	16.8	309	290	29	11	20	None	
10.0	33.3	40.7	16.8	294	305	29	11	20	None	
11.0	32.3	41.7	16.8	279	320	28	11	20	None	
11.6	31.7	42.3	16.8	270	331	27	11	20	Con	1
12.0	31.3	42.7	16.8	262	340	26	11	20	Con	21

Note: This assumes a uniform Con-Lab swing with no change in the vote for the other parties. Source: British Parliamentary Constituencies, 1992-97.

* I would like to thank William Field for generating the maps, Nick Moon at National Opinion Polls and Peter Horrocks at the BBC for early release of the NOP/BBC Exit Poll, Nick Bent for helping to enter the data for the British Parliamentary Constituency, 1992-7 database, and David Denver for helping to check the results data.

¹ For an analysis of the impact of the currency crisis see H.C. Clarke, M.C. Stewart and P. Whiteley, 'Tory Trends: Party Identification and the Dynamics of Conservative Support Since 1992', British Journal of Political Science 27 (1997).

² D. Sanders, 'Economic Performance, Management Competence and the Outcome of the Next Election', Political Studies 44 (1996).

³ 'Media Content Analysis of National Press', CARMA, May 1997.

⁴ Similar changes from the earlier polls to election day have been estimated by Ivor Crewe for elections from 1959-92. These estimates suggest that the usual effect of the campaign is to produce a swing between 0.2 to 4.2 percent.

⁵ The Con-Lab (Butler) swing, used throughout this paper, is conventionally measured as the average of the percentage point Conservative increase minus the Labour decrease divided by two.

⁶ It is worth noting that the government normally recovers its byelection losses, but not this time as only Christchurch reverted home to the Tories.

⁷ The Pederson Index is measured by summing the change in the percentage vote for all parties and dividing by two.

⁸ Obviously the differences between recalled votes and panel surveys with voting choice recoded at each election means this provides an imprecise comparison over time, although if anything, recalled measures are more likely to under-estimate the degree of electoral change.

⁹ I am grateful to William Field for suggesting and calculating this measure.

¹⁰ There were eight seats which Labour gained from the Conservatives where the percentage point fall in the Liberal Democrat vote exceeded the regional average, and also exceeded the percentage size of the 1997 Labour majority: Harwich, Castle Point, Braintree, Milton Keynes North East, Harrow West, Romford, Kettering, and Wellingborough.

There were 16 seats which the Liberal Democrats gained from the Conservatives where the percentage point fall in the Labour vote exceeded the regional average, and also

exceeded the percentage size of the 1997 Liberal Democrat majority: Colchester, Lewes, Winchester, Eastleigh, Twickenham, Richmond Park, Carshalton and Wallington, Sutton and Cheam, Kingston and Surbiton, Somerton and Frome, Torbay, Devon West and Torridge, Weston-Super-Mare, Taunton, Northavon, and Aberdeen West and Kincardine.

¹¹ I. Crewe, P. Norris and R. Waller, 'The 1992 General Election', in P. Norris et al. (eds), British Elections and Parties Yearbook, 1992 (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992).

¹² See P. Norris, Electoral Change Since 1945 (Blackwell, 1997).

¹³ See P. Norris and J. Lovenduski, Political Recruitment (Cambridge University Press, 1995); C. Mellors and D. Darcy, 'Enter the Comprehensive Game', The Times Educational Supplement, 9.5.97.

¹⁴ At the time of writing, Mohammad Sarwar's election remains under a cloud due to alleged irregularities in campaign financing.

¹⁵ The BRS 1997 was directed by Pippa Norris in collaboration with Joni Lovenduski, Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice. The BRS received replies from 999 candidates. The scales in the survey were used also in the British Election Study, 1997.