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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTY-VOTING IN ENGLAND, 1832 - 1918(*)

Gary W. Cox(+)

1. Introduction

Modern British government is government by party leaders in Cabinet; the leaders of that party which secures a majority in the House of Commons have full power over what the government does and does not do during their term in power, and there are neither American-style institutional nor European-style coalitional checks and balances to temper that power. It is still "the Crown in Parliament" which formally takes or authorizes every legislative or administrative action, and the courts have never had a power of judicial review to void such actions as unconstitutional. Of the three major components of the Crown in Parliament - the Commons, the Lords, and the Sovereign - the first is now virtually unchecked. The House of Lords can only minimally delay acts of the Commons, and both the Lords and the Crown have long since lost their ability to veto (much less initiate) legislation. Since those in the Cabinet control the agenda of the House of Commons; since the Cabinet almost invariably consists solely of the leaders of the party with a majority of seats in the Commons - only in extraordinary circumstances does the ruling party share its power and responsibility with others; and since the influence of party on voting in Parliament is extremely strong: "Almost all of the MPs belonging to each party vote almost all of the time as their party leaders direct" (Penniman, 1981, p. 2); the Commons itself has in essence only retained a veto over the legislative proposals of the majority party's leaders who sit in the Cabinet. As a recent essay on legislation in Britain notes, "...today's conventional wisdom is that the parliamentary stages of the legislative process are, for purposes of getting policies converted into laws, the least creative one; that Parliament has relinquished any capacity for legislative initiative it may once have possessed to the executive in its midst; that Parliament 'legitimates' but does not 'legislate'" (Walkland and Ryle, 1981, p. 91).

Corresponding to this accepted view of a party-dominated legislative process is a conception of Parliamentary elections as essentially methods of choosing which party shall rule. Representation in modern Britain is conceived of as almost exclusively "national" and party-based; what might be called "local" representation, where each MP acts as a delegate or trustee of his constituents' specific policy concerns, is scarcely mentioned at all.

The topic of this paper, broadly construed, is the historical development of the system of representative democracy just sketched, although obviously this is a very large topic indeed and one which exceeds the scope of an essay. This paper shall have nothing to say about the decline of the Crown and the Lords relative to the Commons, nor shall more than passing reference be made (until Section V) to the procedural decline of the private member relative to the Cabinet in the early 19th century - what one scholar has described as "the losing of the initiative by the House of Commons" (Cromwell, 1968).

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Somewhat more notice will be taken of the development of strict party voting discipline in parliament, as this relates closely to the main topics of this essay. Since A. L. Lowell's pioneering quantitative study of the influence of party in legislative voting, it has been evident that aggregate levels of party discipline in the Commons increased markedly, from levels in the 1850's comparable to those found in American legislatures, to levels in the 1890's comparable to the high standards set by twentieth century Parliaments. A number of explanations for this trend in aggregate party discipline have been offered. Probably the most widely known and perhaps still the most widely believed explanation, associated with Mosei Ostrogorski, focuses on the development of local party organizations loyal to the party leadership after the passage of the second Reform Act (1867). In Ostrogorski's view, these organizations quickly established a monopoly of electoral organization in the newly expanded constituencies and used overt electoral threats to pressure MPs into toeing the party line (Ostrogorski, 1902).

The main focus of this paper will be on the role of elections in the British representative system, and how this role may have changed over time. A first concern is with voting behavior. By 1959, R. T. McKenzie can write that "most observers are now fairly firmly agreed that a particular candidate, whatever his merits, is not likely to add or substract more than about 500 - 1,000 votes to the total his party would win, regardless of who had been nominated"(McKenzie 1963 p. 5); and indeed a very similar judgment was given by Ivor Jennings twenty years earlier: "In general, the electors vote not for a candidate but for a party. A bad condidate may lose a few hundred votes and a good candidate may gain a few hundred" (Jennings, 1939, p. 27).

Suprisingly, however, the question of when voters began to vote for parties rather than candidates has not been the subject of much sustained quantitative research. There appear to be three different answers given in the historical literature. On the one hand, H. J. Hanham, whose Elections and Party Management is the standard work on the period of the second Reform Act (1867 - 85), emphasizes the continued importance of the personal influence exerted by candidates and constituency elites down to the third Reform Act: "The electoral history of the period between 1832 and 1885 is largely the history of electoral influence" (Hanham, 1968, p. 13). This would seem to put the development of a party-oriented electorate in the post-1885 period. Apparently agreeing with this position, Kenneth Wald in his recent study of class- and religion-based voting writes that "during the period of the third Reform Act, elections acquired their decisive modern function as the major machanism linking the actions of the rulers with the wishes of the ruled. As the concept of the popular mandate gained legitimacy, elections were treated as referenda upon current issues, and the distribution of the vote was taken as a measure of public reaction to party policy" (Wald, 1983, pp. 6 - 7).

A second perspective on the influence of party in electoral voting sees it first becoming significant after 1867. Writing of the period between the second and third Reform Acts, E. J. Feuchtwanger asserts the "members of Parliament and their leading supporters now saw public opinion swayed predominantly by national issues and by the manner in which the national leaders handled these issues" (Feuchtwanger, 1968, p. 218). Similarly, J. P. Mackintosh assumes that electors after the second Reform Act "voted for a party and a programme" (Mackintosh, 1962, p. 162).

Yet a third, and very strongly stated, opinion on the development of partisan attachments in the electorate is offerd by John Vincent. According to

Vincent, the explosive growth in the number of newspapers after the removal of the Stamp Tax in 1856, and the highly partisan propaganda to which the new press exposed their readers, caused a rapid and "massive development of party loyalities throughout the country" (Vincent, 1966, p. 82) in the 1860's.
Although these answers are clearly at variance with one another, not much progress has been made in arbitrating between them. In part, this is because all three answers are based largely on local evidence which is difficult to compare across time. Of the authors cited above, only Hanham and Wald make much reference to electoral statistics in addressing the question of party voting, and both are interested chiefly in somewhat different (although related) topics. Recent quantitative work on Victorian electoral behavior, while pointing in the direction of a more definitive answer, has not yet gone far enough.

This more recent and quantitative work can be divided into two streams based on the primary electoral document used. On the one hand, the most detailed analyses are offered by those scholars using poll books. Before the establishment of secret voting by the Ballot Act of 1872, voting at Parliamentary elections was public and viva voce. Often the vote(s) of each elector were recorded, together with his name (and sometimes occupation, religion, residence, etc.), in documents known as poll books. Recently, using techniques of nominal record linkage, scholars have begun to examine the voting behavior of individual electors over a series of elections (Mitchell, 1976; Mitchell and Cornford, 1977, Drake, 1981). While this work is extremely useful and obviously bears directly on the question of whether voters tended to vote consistently for the same party, thus far there are far too few studies to support generalizations about the country-wide level of party voting across time.

A second strand of quantitative work on Victorian electoral behavior uses documentary evidence available for the double-member districts which predominated before 1885 (see Section II). Using this evidence, T. J. Nossiter was able to calculate the rate at which Victorian voters in 25 northern double-member boroughs split their votes between the parties: casting one of their votes for the Conservatives and the other for the Liberals (see Section II for a fuller discussion of voting in double-member districts). Interestingly, Nossiter found no tendency for voters to split their votes less frequently in the 1860's, which would certainly count against Vincent's thesis (Nossiter, 1975, p. 178). However, J. C. Mitchell's similar study of 32 "frequently contested" boroughs does find a "secular trend toward firmer party voting over time," and would lend more support to Vincent's contentions (Mitchell, 1976, p. 121). Unfortunately, both Nossiter and Mitchell halt their investigations with the election of 1868, so that not only is it difficult to gauge the national trend of party voting in the 1860's, given that the evidence is in dispute, but no statement at all is possible about later years. So the question remains: When did party voting take hold in the electorate?

The first specific aim of this paper is to provide an answer to that question based on an analysis of split voting (and what we refer to as "nonpartisan plumping") in over a thousand election contests held in 198 double-member constituencies in the period 1832 - 1910. To anticipate the results somewhat, the broad outline of changes in party voting in the electorate is found to be remarkably similar to the outline of changes in party voting in the legislature. Leading into the Parliament of 1841 - 47, which Aydelotte has shown to have been highly partisan (Aydelotte, 1963), the election of 1841 registers the lowest split voting rate of all General Elections held

under the terms of the first Reform Act. After the dispute over the Corn Laws shattered the Conservative party in the Commons, a period of low party discipline both in Parliament and in the constituencies follows, lasting well into the 1850's. Party voting begins to recover in both arenas by the 1860's, reaching very high levels in the 1870's, which are maintained (with some flucuations) for the rest of the period down to 1910.
The correlation at the aggregate level between legislative and electoral party voting naturally prompts the questions of why and how such a correlation exists. Is there a constituency-by-constituency relationship between split voting and dissidence in parliament? If so, would this not indicate a system of "local" rather than "national" representation, what in the American literature is often studied under the heading of "constituency influence"?

A second concern of this paper is to investigate in a systematic and quantitative way the influence of constituents over their MPs. Several historians (e.g., Davis, 1972; Olney, 1973) have given striking local historical evidence of the pressure exerted by constituents on the roll-call voting of Victorian MPs, but the only quantitative study to date is that of Aydelotte (Aydelotte, 1977). Although Aydelotte finds a considerable correlation between the demographic characteristics of constituencies (taken to indicate their economic and political interests) and the voting behavior of their MPs, even controlling for party, he notes no explicit evidence of electoral pressure. For example, Aydelotte find that MPs who had to face a contest in 1841 were no more likely to toe the constituency line than were those who were returned unopposed. Hence, there is as yet no quantitative evidence of electorally secured constituency influence in Victorian England.

The second specific aim of this paper is to provide such evidence. Two basic studies are undertaken. First, for the Parliaments of 1841 - 47, 1852 - 57 and 1874 - 80, agreement scores (giving the percentage of times two MPs voted in the same way when both voted) are calculated for randomly selected pairs of MPs. It is found that pairs of MPs from the same double-member constituency agreed more often than pairs not from the same constituency, even controlling for party. Second, for the Parliaments of 1841 - 47 and 1852 - 57, it is shown that those MPs from double-member districts who depended the most heavily for their election to Parliament on split votes tended to cast more roll call votes dissenting from their own party's position and agreeing with that of the other party - what Berrington has called "crossbench dissents" (Berrington, 1968). The second analysis in particular shows a direct connection between electoral and legislative voting behavior.

But if there was a policy nexus between Victorian MPs and their constituents, how long did it last? Did it begin to weaken as voters became more party-oriented? A third, and more speculative, concern of this paper is to deal with these questions.

2. Double-Member Districts

The modal type of district in England from the thirteenth through most of the nineteenth century was double-member, with the next most common type being single-member. In the period between the first (1832) and second (1867) Reform Acts, 53 English constituencies (21%) returned one member, 193 (76%) returned two members, and eight (3%) returned three or four members. After the second Reform Act, the number of English double-member districts fell to 163, or 61% of all English constituencies. Only 23 double-member districts remained after the massive redistricting connected with the third Reform Act.

Electors in the double-member districts had two votes, which they could cast in any manner they wished, short of giving both votes to the same candidate. Thus, in a three candidate contest, such as that held at the General Election of 1874 in Pontefract between the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers (a Liberal), Samuel Waterhouse (a Conservative), and Viscount Pollington (also a Conservative), there were six ballots which could legally be cast: those voting for Childers and Waterhouse, for Childers and Pollington, and for Waterhouse and Pollington - these three being all the possible "double" votes, in contemporary parlance; and those voting for Childers alone, for Waterhouse alone, and for Pollington alone - these being all the "single" votes or "plumpers". As it turned out - and this was typical - the electors of Pontefract employed all six kinds of ballot in 1874, as can be seen in Figure 1, which displays the number of ballots of each kind cast in that election. Elections in Victorian Britain (even those after the secret ballot had been introduced in 1872) were often documented in essentially the format of Figure 1 in the newspapers or at the backs of poll books, and it is on these invaluable electoral records ("ballot counts") that much of the analysis in this paper is based.

Two basic statistics are easily computed from ballot counts, both pertaining directly to the degree to which voters based their electoral decisions on their attitudes toward the parties. The most obvious of these statistics is the "split voting rate", equal to the percentage of voters who cast votes for candidates of different parties. In Pontefract, 182 voters cast Childers/Waterhouse, and 53 cast Childers/Pollington ballots, these amounting to 14.2% of the total ballots (and voters, since there was one ballot per voter). Hence, the split voting rate for this contest is 14.2%.

Another simple statistic calculable from ballot counts, the "non-partisan plumping rate", is the percentage of electors who cast a plumper for a candidate when another candidate of the same party was available. For example, in Pontefract, 60 voters cast single ballots for Waterhouse and 37 did the same for Pollington. As these voters were distinguishing between members of the same party, they evidently employed criteria other than partisan preference.

Both the split voting (SV) and non-partisan plumping (NPP) rates (or similar measures) have been employed by various scholars in previous studies (e.g., Phillips, 1982; Hanham, 1978; Nossiter, 1975; Mitchell, 1976; Speck and Gray, 1975; Miller, 1971). However, for Victorian elections, the only major investigations are those of Nossiter and Mitchell mentioned in the introduction, and some limitations of these studies should be noted. First, both scholars focus on a subset of borough contests, in Nossiter's case those borough contests documented in W. W. Bean's compendium The Parliamentary Representation of the Six Notern Counties of England (which he supplements with some southern boroughs contests for comparison); and in Mitchell's case those contests held in 32 "frequently contested" boroughs. Second, both studies cover only the 1832 - 68 period. The data set collected for this paper is intended to contain all available ballot counts - whether for county or borough contests - in the period 1832 - 1918. While falling short of that ideal, the sample is large enough so that generalizations about nation-wide trends in English voting behavior can be made with some confidence.

3. The Data

In total, the data set contains 1,005 ballot bounts from the 20 General

Elections held between 1832 and 1918 (1). The yearly distribution of these is given in Table 1. Naturally, the number of ballot counts is considerably greater on average for the twelve elections held before the third Reform Act (73.5) than for the eight elections held afterwards (15.4), since, as noted above, only 23 double-member districts survived the redistricting of 1885.

The size of the yearly subsamples can be gauged relative to a number of standards. First, one can compare the number of ballot counts actually collected to the number which might possibly have been collected. This latter number is equal simply to the number of double-member constituencies which were contested; for, if a constituency was uncontested - i.e., there were no more candidates seeking office than there were seats to be had - no poll of the voters was taken at all and hence, of course, no record of their votes was possible. By this standard, the sample is fairly large; before 1885, generally over 50%, and on average over 60%, of the contested double-member constituencies in any given year are represented in the yearly subsample; after 1885, 73% of the contested constituencies are represented in the average year.

A second consideration in assessing the size of the sample is the number of voters whose behavior is summarized in the data. For each year, the total number of persons who voted in constituencies for which a ballot count exists is given in column 3 of Table 1, and this figure is expressed as a percentage of all voters, and of all registered electors, in columns 4 and 5. The average number of persons represented in the sample in any given year (1832 - 1910) is 237,725. Before 1885, the yearly subsamples constitute on average 31.9% of the total English voting population, and 20.7% of the total registered population (where both these populations refer to the whole of England, not just to English double-member districts). After 1885, the corresponding figures are much lower, 6.8% and 4.8%, respectively.

Although the sample is not random, before 1885 it is broadly representative of the target population. There is no geographic bias evident: all regions of the country have substantial representation in each yearly subsample down to 1880. The only obvious bias is a rather mild tendency for smaller constituencies to be over-represented. The borough population is more than proportionately likely to be sampled than the county population (and I suspect that the small borough population is more than proportionately likely to be sampled than the large borough population). As seen in Table 2 (which refers to a subsample to be explained presently), on average about 55% of all contested boroughs were sampled (i.e., had ballot counts) while only about 47% of contested counties were sampled. The explanation for this seems to be that ballot counts were more difficult to compile for larger constituencies. Sometimes the official counting of votes would proceed by tabulating ballots, and then of course there was no difference between large and small constituencies. But sometimes the official count was directly of votes, and then newspapers or other unofficial sources of ballot counts faced a larger task of counting from poll books in the larger constituencies.

After 1885, constituencies in the sample are no longer representative of English constituencies generally, since only 23 provincial boroughs (not the largest, but in the second tier) remained as double-member districts after the third Reform Act. These provincial broughs were geographically dispersed, however, including for example Bath, Blackburn, Derby, Ipswich, Portsmouth, and York, and they are not unrepresentative, at least before 1885: if average SV and NPP rates for these borughs are computed for each General Election down to 1880, these figures correlate at .92 with the averages based on the full sample (see appendix).

For the most part, the data will be interpreted here as a sample of voters from the entire English voting population, rather than as a sample of double-member election contests from the population of all contests, on the reasoning that what is of interest is nation-wide trends in individual voting behavior. Practically speaking, all this means is that instead of computing SV and NPP rates for each constituency, and then taking the simple average of these figures as an indication of national voting behavior, a weighted average of the constituency figures (where the weights are the total number of voters) will be used. This is equivalent to pooling all the voters in each yearly subsample and computing the statistics directly, as if the whole subsample were one constituency. None of the conclusions reached in the text depend on the choice of weighted rather than simple averages (see appendix).

For the purposes of this paper, attention needs to be paid to the types of election contests contained in the yearly subsamples. For example, a contest between a Conservative, a Liberal, and a Chartist must by definition have a zero NPP rate and will probably have a high SV rate. But is is unlikely that the split votes cast in such a contest reflect clearly "non-partisan" motivations. Hence, such three-way contests, and indeed, any contests involving more than two parties (which are rare in any event), will be excluded from analysis. Similarly, contests between three Liberals must by definition have a zero SV rate and will probably have a high NPP rate. But once again, it seems inappropriate to consider plumpers cast in such an election as indications of non-partisan motivations. Hence, any contest with more than two candidates of any party (also a rarity) will be excluded from analysis.

These exclusions mean that only two kinds of contests will be considered in the tables that follow: those pitting two candidates of one party against a lone member of another (two-against-one contests), and those involving a pair of candidates from each of two parties (two-against-two contests). These contest types were by far the most frequent, together accounting for 901 contests, or 89.7% of the full sample. The size of his subsample can be gauged from the figures in Table 2, which also give a breakdowns of the information on ballot counts for boroughs and counties separately. On average, the yearly subsamples before 1885 represent 28.2% of the total English voting population. After 1885, this average falls to 6.4%.

A distinction between two-against-one and two-against-two contests should also be noted. One reason suggested by contemporaries for split voting in two-against-one contests was that the partisans of the party putting up only one candidate had an incentive to use their second votes to help the lesser evil in the other party. This incentive to cross vote did not exist when there were two candidates from both parties, and it was often argued that running a single candidate was bad strategy, since the second votes of one's own partisans might be the cause of defeat (Hanham, 1978, p. 197). Whether running one candidate was bad strategy or not, contemporaries were apparently correct that the incentive to cast split votes in two-against-one contests was greater than that in two-against-two contests; the mean split voting rate in the 594 three-candidate contests from the sample was 17.1%, while that in the 307 four-candidate races was 6.2%. Hence, if the yearly averages are not to reflect simply changes in the mix of contest types (rather than changes in voting behavior), it is sensible to consider controlling for contest type.

4. Evidence on Non-partisan Voting in the Electorate, 1832 - 1910

The basic trends in non-partisan voting behavior at English elections be-

tween the first and the fourth Reform Acts can be seen in Tables 3 (for split voting) and 4 (for non-partisan plumping). Averages are presented for all constituencies, and for boroughs and counties separately, without controlling for contest type. The effect of contest type, as well as of decisions regarding the identification of partisan affiliations for candidates, will be discussed presently.

One way to summarize the findings on split voting in Table 3 is as a testimonial to the electoral significance of the Reform Acts. If one looks at the elections held under the first (1832 - 65), second (1868 - 80) and third (1885 - 1910) Reform Acts, the appearance is as of three successively more party-oriented electorates: the highest figure for the 1832 - 65 period (23%) is four times the highest figure for the second period, and five times the maximum for the third period; the lowest figures for each period exceed the highest figures for the next; and no clear trends are perceptible throughout any period expcept the second. Perhaps the expansion of the electorate in 1867 and 1884 simply introduced more and more partisan voters. Or, perhaps, the redistricting process was such that, both in 1867 and 1885, the most party-oriented double-member constituencies survived.

Neither of these ideas, as it turns out, stand up to scrutiny. First, Mitchell has found, in an extensive poll book-based study of the behavior of the newly enfranchised in 1868, no difference in the behavior of the pre- and post-1867 electorates. Although a similar study is impossible for 1885, since poll books ceased to be published after the Ballot Act of 1872, Mitchell's work effectively scotches an otherwise attractive hypothesis. As to redistricting, the average SV rate in 1865 for districts which were reduced to single-member status in 1867 does exceed the rate in districts which kept both their seats, but the NPP rate goes the other way. The total non-partisan voting rate (SV + NPP) is 19.9% for reduced, as opposed to 19.5% for unreduced constituencies. The redistricting hypothesis may hold more water in 1885. The non-partisan voting rate in 1880 for the 23 boroughs which remained double-member was 5,8 % as opposed to 9,4 % for constituencies which became single-member. Hence, it may be best to discount comparisons made between pre- and post-1885 figures.

Looked at in more detail, the figures in Table 3 can be classified into four periods. First, the numbers for 1832 - 41 seem to reflect the vicissitudes of the Conservative party under Peel's leadership, culminating in the very partisan election of 1841 which swept Peel into office (cf. Close, 1969). Second, the effect of the Conservative party's split over the Corn Laws is clearly evident in the extremely high SV rates for the 1847 - 57 period. Third, the rate declines sharply and monotonically from 19 % in 1857 to 5,5 % in 1868. Fourth, split voting continues to decline from 1868 to 1886, thereafter fluctuating, but always remaining below the 1868 level.

It is interesting to note that the figures for boroughs and counties separately can also be described in the same fashion. Indeed, although in most years the SV rate in counties was lower than that in boroughs, there is a close agreement in the temporal pattern of change, and the trends observed in the combined figures appear in both the borough and county figures.

It should also be noted that the same four-period description of trends can be applied to the NPP figures presented in Table 4. Generally, when SV rates were high, so were NPP rates, and this is true for boroughs and counties separately as well. The only significant difference in the NPP figures is in the post-1868 period. Non-partisan plumping continued to decline monotoni-

cally until 1895, thereafter increasing sharply, and exceeding the 1868 level in 1906 (indeed, one has to go back to 1857 to find a figure higher than the 7.8% registered for 1906). The reason for the recurrence of high NPP rates in the 1900s is the appearance of the Labour party and the decision made to consider Lib/Lab and Labour candidates as part of the Liberal party.

In general, the policy on party affiliations adopted here was to construe the Conservative and Liberal parties as broadly as possible. Thus, Tories, Protectionists, and Liberal Unionists have been classified as Conservatives, while Radicals, Whigs, Gladstonian Liberals, Lib/Labs, and Labourites have been classified as Liberals. Peelites, or Liberal Conservatives, have been dealt with as A. L. Lowell did for the later years of his study of party discipline in Parliament; that is, most have been labeled as Conservatives, some as Liberals, on the basis of their voting behavior and later affiliation (2).

The consequences of this policy on party affiliations are illustrated most clearly in the post-1900 NPP figures. Although the Labour party ran relatively few candidates before the first World War, the urban constituencies which remained double-member after 1885 were particularly likely venues for Labour or Lib/Lab activity, in part because they tended to have a larger working class population, and in part because the Liberal and Labour candidates could split the representations (whereas in single-member constituencies, one or the other candidate would have to step down if open conflict were to be avoided). Hence, there are proportionately more contests involving Labour or Lib/Lab candidatures in the sample than in the post-1900 polity as a whole. And these contests, say pitting two Conservatives against a Liberal and a Labourite, tended to have high NPP rates, due chiefly to the large numbers of plumpers polled for the Liberal and Labour candidates.

Naturally, this species of "non-partisan" plumpers does not seem nearly as non-partisan as plumpers cast for two mainstream Liberals, and the question is raised quite generally as to what effect a different policy on party affiliations would have on the figures - both for non-partisan plumping and split voting.

In the case of the Labour party, the question does not seem too important. If Labour is preserved as a separate party, the number of two-against-one and two-against-two contests after 1900 falls, and so does the NPP rate; the SV rate being largely unaffected. So no important conclusion is affected - indeed, the trend toward firmer party attachments is reinforced. But in the case of the Peelites, one might expect a more important modification of results, in two ways. First, the high rates of non-partisan plumping in 1847, 1852 and 1857 may be due to classifying Peelites with the two main parties. Second, since the Peelites occupied the "middle ground" between the Liberals and Conservatives, classifying them with the main parties may also have inflated the SV rates.

The best way to address this question is simply to classify all Liberal Conservatives as members of a separate party, exclude contests involving them where appropriate, and recompute the figures. While this has not yet been done for the full sample, two bits of evidence indicate strongly that no significant change in the basic pattern of evidence will occur. First, for a relatively small subsample, the above procedure has been followed and no signigicant change was observed in the subsample. Second, if the hypothesis that the high SV rates in 1847 - 57 are due to misclassification of Peelites were true, then one would expect that contests pitting two Conser-

vatives against a single Liberal should generally have higher split voting rates than contests involving two Liberals and a Conservative, since the vast majority of Liberal Conservatives are classified in the sample as Conservative. As can be seen in Table 5, however, this is not the case.

Table 5 presents yearly split voting figures for four subsets of contests: those involving two Liberals and a Conservative, those involving two Conservatives and a Liberal, all two-against-one contests (the union of the first two subsets), and all two-against-two contests. Within all categories of contest, the basic trends visible in the combined data are preserved. Thus, these trends cannot be attributed to changes in the mix of contests from one year to the next. And, since the figures for contests between two Liberals and a Conservative are largely uncontaminated by the presence of Liberal Conservatives, the increased levels of split voting in 1847 - 57 cannot be attributed solely to problems of identifying party labels correctly. In the next section, the proper interpretation of the evidence just presented is discussed.

5. The Development of a Party-oriented Electorate

The evidence in Section 4 makes it clear that there were substantial changes in the obvserved behavior of English voters from 1832 to 1918. The key transition period, marking a permanent reduction in the rate at which electors cast split votes and non-partisan plumpers, was the decade or generation commencing with the election of 1857. In this section, an attempt is made to explain the timing of this decline. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to have a more complete theoretical understanding of the causes of non-partisan voting, which takes account both of the pecularities of voting in double-member districts and of the impact of publicity on voting behavior. A full exposition of such a theory is provided by the author in a previous work (Cox, 1983). Here, an abbreviated version will be presented which takes an expected utility approach to voting behavior (3).

Consider an election between two conservatives, C_1 and C_2, and one liberal, L. For any given voter i, let $u_i(C_1)$ be the value or utility to i of having the first conservative elected, and interpret $u_i(C_2)$ and $u_i(L)$, similarly. Assume that the utility of having any two candidates elected is simply the sum of the individual utilities; thus, the value of C_1 and C_2 winning is $u(C_1) + u(C_2)$, and so forth (subscript i's will be suppressed). The kind of decision facing a voter in double-member districts can be illustrated by considering a voter for whom $u(C_1) > u(C_2) > u(L)$. The most preferred outcome for this voter is a conservative sweep (C_1, C_2), the next most preferred outcome a (C_1, L) return, and the least preferred a (C_2, L) victory. Clearly, the voter should vote for C_1, since the only effect such a vote can have on the outcome is to defeat either L or C_2 (those two candidates receiving the most votes win, and a vote for C_1 may raise him above either L or C_2). Similarly, the voter should never vote for his least preferred candidate, L. This leaves two options: voting for the two most preferred candidates, C_1 and C_2, or voting for C_1 alone. Why would a voter vote onle for C_1? Because the vote for C_2 is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it might defeat L, a desired result. On the other hand, it might defeat C_1, thus replacing a more preferred by a less preferred candidate. Depending on how large the utility differentials between C_1, C_2 and L are, and on the probabilities that the vote for C_2 will defeat L or C_1, it makes sense for a voter with these preferences to plump. For example, if the voter intensely prefers the arch-Tory views of C_1 to the middle-of-the-road Conservatism of C_2, and does not see much difference between and L, he

is more likely to plump; and if the voter thinks it certain that L will be elected, then the only possible effect of the vote for C_2 is to defeat C_1, and again he is more likely to plump.

Similar points can be made about split voting. Consider another voter for whom $u(L) > u(C_1) > u(C_2)$. This voter is more likely to cast a split vote for L and C_1 as (1) the utility differential between C_1 and C_2 is larger relative to the utility differential between C_1 and L; and (2) the probability that a vote for C_1 will defeat C_2 is larger relative to the probability that it will defeat L.

For the purposes of this paper, the important point is that both non-partisan plumping and split voting are more likely when voters perceive significant differences in the value (to themselves) of the election of candidates of the same party. Hence, from a theoretical perspective, any trend which reduces the differences which voters perceive between candidates of the same party will tend also to depress both split voting and non-partisan plumping. Here, two possible such trends will be discussed: first, that both the Conservative and Liberal parties became more homogeneous in terms of the policy beliefs of their members; and second, that voters weighted partisan affiliations more heavily in their overall evaluations of candidates.

The first of these possibilities needs little explanation. To the extent that one of the criteria used by voters in evaluating candidates was the degree to which the candidates' personal policy commitments agreed with those of the voter, an increasing congruity in the policy stands of all Liberals or all Conservatives should have led to less non-partisan voting behavior. Although the traditional picture of events does indicate that there was a polarization of the parties after Parlmerston's death (1865) and during the struggle to pass the second Reform Act, no overt instance of homogenization occurs until the crisis over the union with Ireland in 1885 (when the Whigs depart the Liberal party). Both polarization and homogenization are too late to explain the sharp downward trend in non-partisan voting from 1857 to 1865. Also, the earliest evidence of an increase in voting cohesion in Parliament - which might be taken as an indication of encreasing homogeneity - is in 1871, after most of the action in the SV and NPP rates is over.

The second explanation for the trends in split voting and non-partisan plumping postulates an increase in the weight which voters gave to party as an evaluative cirterion, relative to other such criteria. Suppose, for example, that voters evaluated candidates chiefly on personal characteristics, partisan affiliation and policy stands. One might picture the voter abstractly as evaluating or "scoring" each candidate on these three criteria, weighting each score in accordance with importance and then simply adding the scores to arrive at an overall evaluation. Presumably, this overstates the degree to which real voters explicitly considered and measured the various qualities of candidates, but the abstraction is useful in explaining the gist of what is meant by "party-oriented". In this simple model, a voter is totally party-oriented if the only criterion to which any weight is given is partisan affiliation. Thus, two candidates of the same party will be identical as far as the voter is concerned and hence, no voting distinction will be made between them. In general, the greater the relative weight given to party (i.e., the more party-oriented the voter is), the less likely it is that the voter will perceive a sufficient overall difference between candidates of the same party to vote for one but not the other (i.e., to cast a split vote or non-partisan plumper).

Why would voters have become more party-oriented in the late 1850s and 1860s? There are two basic reasons. First, as already noted above, the Stamp Tax on newspapers was removed on 1856. Vincent has put great emphasis on the importance of the new penny press which arose quickly thereafter in contributing to the "formation of national parties as communities of sentiment" (Vincent, 1966, p. xx). Often less independent than the older papers, and more interested in politics as a method of increasing circulation, the new press tended to be consistently partisan. Verbatim reports of parliamentary debates allowed readers to follow the battle in Parliament each day, the editorials providing partisan cues. Hence, voters may have become more party-oriented in part because they were exposed for the first time to a cheap, mass, and partisan press.

A second reason that voters may have become more party-oriented, and one that probably operated with increasing strength from the 1830s on, was the loss of policy initiative by the backbench MP. This occurred in both policy arenas of Parliament - public and private legislation. Although it is far beyond the scope of this essay to fully discuss these developments, the outlines can be sketched.

First, in the arena of public legislation, the House of Commons changed radically. In the early 1800s, one finds a relatively small active membership operating largely by unanimous consent (in this respect, reminiscent of the U.S. Senate). Backbench MPs took a prominent part in the initiation and debate of major pieces of legislation. And an array of parliamentary rights, e.g., to obstruct by repeatedly moving that "the House do now adjourn", to claim a hearing at any time by motion made without previous notice, to raise debates on the presentation of petitions - ensured that the policy concerns of backbenchers would find their way onto the agenda. As chronicled by Peter Fraser, all these devices, and a number of others which rose up to take their places, had been beaten back or totally eradicated by the 1850s (Fraser, 1960; see also Cromwell, 1968; Cox, 1983). By the mid-60s, Walter Bagehot's series of articles in the Contemporary Review (later published as The English Constitution) popularized the distinction between the "dignified" and "efficient" parts of the constitution, and made it clear that the "efficient secret", the controlling power, of the English government lay in the Cabinet (Bagehot, 1963). Corroborating Bagehot's interpretation, Alpheus Todd noted in 1866 that "...the rule that all great and important measures should emanate from the executive has of late years obtained increasing acceptance. ...Sir Rober Peel, in 1844, insisted that 'individual members of Parliament had a perfect right to introduce such measures as they thought fit, without the sanction of the government'....But of late years the great increase of debates, and the annual accumulation of arrears of public business, bave combined to render it practically impossible for Bills introduced by private members to become law, unless by the active assistance of the government (Todd, 1869, Vol. II, pp. 63 - 64).

The decline of the private or backbench member's status in public legislation was by no means confined to matters of general of national policy. In general, the kinds of legislation one most readily thinks of in connection with individual legislators fall in the area of what Lowi has called distributive policy, concerned with the allocation of geographically divisible benefits, such as capital projects and grants for the establishment or support of various local services (Lowi, 1964). Indeed, one of the most widely observed behavioral regularities of geographically-based legislators is the provision of "particularistic" or divisible benefits to their constituents (Mezey, 1976). It is natural to suppose that Victorian MPs also

performed such services, and that they were valued for their ability to do so.

Yet, here also Victorian backbenchers suffered a decline. This is especially evident when contrasted with the American experience. The mainstays of the U.S. Congressman's particularistic usefulness to his constituents have been, at various times, tariff bills, Civil Service patronage, and local improvement bills. Each of these areas was largely shut off from the influence of the private member of parliament after the mid-19th century.

First, tariff bills, which, with their many separate rates for different industries proved ideal vehicles for log-rolling in the U.S. Congress down into the 1930s, simply did not exist in Britain after the definitive triumph of the policy of free trade in the 1840s. Second, the local Civil Service patronage of which the member of parliament disposed declined throughout the 19th century. Whereas positions in the Revenue, Postal and other geographically dispersed branches of the Civil Service were regularly referred to the recommendation of the local member in the early part of the century, patronage in the Revenue departments began to decline with Lord Liverpool's renunciation (1820) of the direct appointment of superior offices in the Customs Service; and the reforms initiated by the Northcote-Trevelyan Report (1853), and furthered by Gladstone's Order in Council establishing open competition (1870), cut back the patronage throughout the Civil Service. The last bits of local patronage - the provincial postmasterships - were turned over to the surveyors of the postal districts in 1896.

A third area of distributive politics largely closed to the private member was the pork barrel. Whereas local improvements bills have long been a feature of American politics, the use of national resources for the benefit of particular places was largely avoided in Victorian Britain. Expenditure on the traditional bulwarks of the American pork barrel - rivers and harbors, railways, roads, dams and canals - was almost nonexistent. Except for expenditures on Harbours of Refuge and in the half dozen boroughs where the great ship-building shops of the state were maintained, and where the solicitude of the local members for such expenditures was proverbial, the government spent no money upon harbors. Neither canals nor roads nor railroads were constructed by the crown (Lowell, 1908, Vol. II, pp. 514 - 519; vol. I, pp. 367 - 393).

All told, it would seem that public legislation held out increasingly little for the backbench MP in the elctoral arena. He could not claim to initiate or even significantly affect either general or distributive policy. Increasingly, one suspects, voters and MPs recognized this, and the policy role constituents expected their MPs to fulfill became essentially that of a lobbyist - to change the party line from within rather than to oppose it from without. This, at any rate, was the strategy adopted by a number of Liberal pressure groups in the 1860s and 1870s (Vincent, 1966).

Roughly concomitant with the decline of the individual MP in the arena of public legislation came a significant and electorally important change in procedure on private legislation. The distinction between private and public bills was not always exact, especially as regarded the affairs of London, but generally "every bill for the paricular interest or benefit of any person or persons" (here included local governments) was regarded as a private bill (May, 1851, p. 486). Such bills had first been widely used in promoting turnpike roads and the enclosure of commons in the second half of the 18th century. In the 19th century, they were used to authorize construction of canals and railroads, to regulate local police and sanitation, and to grant private or municipal bodies the authority to undertake the provi-

sion of water, gas electric light, tramway services, etc. The procedure on such bills was distinctly different from that governing matters of general public policy; although they were regarded as legislation, and had to proceed through the same formal stages as any other bill, they were also viewed as controversies between the promoters and opponents of the measure, and the committee stage of the bill was patterned after a trial in a court of law. For most of the first half of the century, the private bill committees consisted chiefly of members directly interested in the measure referred to them. In 1844, however, the Commons began to staff their railway bill committees exclusively with impartial members, and this practice was extended to all other private bills in 1855. Each member chosen for private bill comittee service was thereafter required to sign a declaration "that his constituents have no local interest, and that he has no personal interest" in the bill to be considered (May, 1851, p. 529).

These changes reinforced the judicial character of private bill procedure and limited the services which an MP could render to local interests. Earlier in the 19th,and in the 18th century, a significant part of the job of many MPs was to steer through parliament private bills in their constituents' or patron's (or indeed, their own) interest. The MP generally prepared and introduced the bill, and often reported it from committee (Beer, 1966, pp. 25 - 28). After the removal of interested members from the crucial committee stage, however, and the previous introduction of paid agents to prepare the bills, there was not nearly so much that the member could do to defeat or promote such bills. In committee, the proceeding was judicial; out of committee, it was handled mostly by a registered agent retained for the purpose by the party promoting the bill (and MPs could not be agents); only at stages occurring in the House could the member be useful, and then he was but one voice in a large assembly.

The general picture that emerges is quite clear. By the 1850s and 1860s, the individual member of Parliament was a relatively unimportant cog in the legislative machinery. Constituency elites were presumably the first to recognize this, but even the ordinary voter was steered toward this recognition by the new partisan press which focused so heavily on the actions of party leaders. Elections earlier in the century may well have turned on the ability of candidates to affect general policy and to provide distributive benefits (and of course on the question of to whom in the constituency these benfits were allocated). But, we may suppose that the important changes in private and public bill procedure did not go unnoticed, which would imply that the foundation of this kind of an electoral orientation toward candidates was eroding, its place to be taken by an increased attention and focus on parties, now the dominant policy actors.

While the declining significance of individual MPs in the policy process and the development of a cheap partisan press are both plausible reasons to believe that voters became more party-oriented, there are others as well. For example, contemporaries thought voters were more party-oriented. Feuchtwanger and Mackintosh emphasize this, discussing for example the precedent-setting decisions of Disraeli (in 1868) and Gladstone (in 1874) to resign office before Parliament met, thereby acknowledging beforehand that their parties had been defeated and implicitly viewing the function of elections as the choice of a governing party (Feuchtwanger, 1968; Mackintosh, 1962). Gladstone in making his decision had interpreted a series of by-elections as turning chiefly on the performance of his Ministry, rather than on the particular actions of the candidates involved. And, indeed, candidates themselves seem to have recognized the increased electoral importance of affiliation with one of the parties. Norman Gash notes that "Politicians in

the age of Peel still preferred to talk of supporting or giving a fair trial to Her Majesty's Ministers, occasionally, though less often, of opposing them; they spoke of 'the gentlemen with whom I usually act' or more informally of 'our friends'. But they did not as a rule talk of being members of a party; and they strove to give the appearance of being independent and unfettered in their parliamentary conduct" (Gash, 1982).
By the 1860s, declarations of independence are far less common, and most candidates in their addresses make a frank avowal of partisan affiliation.

Perhaps the most compelling reason to accept the hypothesis that voters became significantly more party-oriented in the late 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s, however, is the variety of political phenomena which seem to follow from such an assumption. First, of course, is the decline in SV and NPP rates documented in the preceding section. Second, if one accepts Donald Stokes' reasoning in his study of the nationalization of electoral forces in the U.S., one ought to expect the standard deviation of electoral swing in England to decline as voters became more party-oriented (Stokes, 1965). Two scholars, using different techniques to handle the peculiarities of the double-member district, have performed Stokesian analyses of swing, and both find a nationalization of electoral forces by the election of 1880 (Nossiter, 1975; Fraser, 1976).

Third, on the basis of the assumption that voters become more party-oriented, one can more satisfactorily explain the increase in voting descipline in Parliament. As mentioned earlier, the most widely-known explanation asserts that local party organizations loyal to the party leadership developed rapidly after the second Reform Act and enforced discipline by electoral pressure. This view has, however, come under serious attack. Berrington has argued that the Liberal organizations, far from supporting the Parliamentary leadership, were "more likely to applaud those Members who defied the Whips and stood firmly for their radical principles. The Liberal Caucus, at least in the early stages, made for more, not less indiscipline" (Berrington, 1968, p. 363). And, in a study based on a Conservative Central Office document describing the state of organization in all English and Welsh constituencies in 1874, Cox found no tendency for MPs from highly organized constituencies to be more loyal than those from less organized constituencies, nor any tendency for discipline to increase with the founding of an organization (Cox, 1983, ch. 6).

But if party organization is not the explanation for increased party voting in Parliament, what is? Berrington offers an important part of the answer, but his focus is exclusively on developments in the 1880s and 1890s, since it is in these decades that the permanent and important increases in party discipline appeared to him to occur. Yet, new evidence shows that the levels of loyalty enjoyed by the Conservative Government of 1874 - 80 were comparable to the highest levels of the century (Table 6). Indeed, the figures in Table 6 indicate a sharp increase in party discipline in the early 1870s, after most of the decline in non-partisan voting in the electorate.

I believe there was a direct connection between the two trends. If one assume that voters became increasingly more party-oriented, that MPs were aware of this, and that MPs sought reelection, the materials for an explanation are at hand. For, when voters began to base their decisions relatively more on what the parties did, perforce their decisions depended relatively less on what MPs did as individuals. In general, this freed MPs from local electoral pressures - at least relative to what had been true before. Consequently, it ensured that pressures from the party leadership, even if they did not increase in strength due to organizational advances, bulked rela-

tively larger in the voting decisions of MPs, since pressures from the constituency decreased. A number of students of party voting loyalty among U.S. Congressmen emphasize above all else the importance of pressures from constituents in causing indiscipline in Congress (Mayhew, 1966; Brady, et al., 1979; Turner, 1951). What is suggested here is that the early Victorian polity was more American than its 20th century successor in one important aspect: pressures from constituents were a significant consideration in the roll call voting decisions of reelection-seeking MPs, and a prime cause of dissent from the party line. When these pressures diminished as voters focused their policy demands increasingly on the parties, a significant and permanent increase in the levels of party cohesion followed.

In the next section, an attempt is made to bolster several points. First, statistical evidence that constituents did exert an electoral influence on the roll call behavior of their MPs is offered. Second, statistical evidence that this influence declined is presented.

6. The Influence of constituents in Victorian England

There is considerable difference of opinion among historians on the role of the electorate and elections in shaping Parliamentary opinion. At least two strands of opinion tend to discount the importance of elections in affecting policy decisions. First, there is the view that elections were largely controlled by the influence of local elites. This view would at least confine the meaningful expression of electoral opinion to differences among the elite, and may be pushed to the point of viewing elections as secondary, with nominations and informal agreements more important. Second, there is the not incompatible view that Parliamentary elections "were much more a drama enacted about the life of the town ... than a means of expressing individual opinions about the matters of the day ... the real issue was not the Parliamentary representation of the borough; but the relative positions of the electors within the town" (Vincent, 1966, p. 15). Clearly, to the extent that elections did turn chiefly on local rivalries, their use in communicating the policy preferences of voters - even elite voters - was lessened.

In contrast both to the emphasis on influence and to that on localism, there is a strand of opinion which affirms the importance of elections in the policy process. R. W. Davis in particular has emphasized the grilling of MPs by their constituents, especially on certain vital issues such as religious and agricultural policy, and he clearly believes that considerable and effective electoral pressure was brought to bear on MPs on certain issues (Davis, 1972; Davis, 1976). The activity of electorally-oriented pressure groups, beginning with the Anti-corn Law League, would seem to fit with this picture as well (cf. Hamer, 1971).

Surprisingly, there has been only one quantitative effort to address the question of the influence of constituents over their MPs' behavior: W. O. Aydelotte's study published in 1977. Aydelotte asks whether any correlation can be discerned between the interests of the constituencies, on the one hand, and the voting positions taken by the MPs representing them, on the other. The interests are determined by a rough demographic classification intended to catch the relative rural or urban proclivities of the constituencies. In England, for example, counties and small boroughs are presumed to have been predominantly urban. Aydelotte finds that the more rural constituencies were more likely to have been represented by MPs whose voting records (as summarized by a five point scale) were conservative, and that

this held both between and within the two major parties (Aydelotte, 1977).

Aydelotte's demonstration of a correlation between the interests of constituencies and the political positions of their MPs is consistent with the supposition that Victorian elections did serve to insure agreement on policy between representatives and represented. But when Aydelotte seeks an explanation for his correlation in the electoral process, he does not find it. MPs who faced contests in 1841 appeared no more likely to "vote their constituencies" than those returned unopposed; and all shades of political opinion enjoyed about the same reelection success in the various categories of constituency. Aydelotte concludes that, however the correlation between local interests and the policy positions of MPs arose, it was not obviously via the electoral process.

This conclusion has been questioned by R. W. Davis on the grounds that Aydelotte's methodology does not allow him to capture the importance of certain key issues which, according to Davis, attracted the bulk of electoral pressure (Davis, 1976). Here it will be argued that even if one continues to focus on the "run-of-the-mill" as well as the "important" issues, Aydelotte's result can and should be interpreted as evidence of the importance of local electoral pressures.

It is best first to define what is meant by "electoral pressure", since this term refers to more than overt electoral threats. As used here, electoral pressure on the voting decisions of MPs exists when three conditions are met: (1) constituents base their votes to some extent on the previous and anicipated voting behavior of the candidates; (2) MPs value reelection; and (3) MPs are aware that their constituents satisfy condition (1). When these three conditions are met for a given issue or set of issues, the MP will face electoral pressure: that is, he will recognize that his decision on a roll call vote may affect his chances for reelection. Since, by assumption, the MP values reelection, electoral pressure may influence his decision. It is important to note that MPs need not be subject to overt forms of electoral brow beating in order to feel pressure. An MP from a homogeneous constituency, even without any communication whatsoever from his district, will undoubtedly know what its central interests are, and will recognize without anyone pointing it out to him that if he votes against those interests he risks electoral defeat. Similarly, even on less salient issues, the MP may well recognize without being specifically notified that certain groups in his constituency have preferences on an issue which may affect their voting decisions.

When the three conditions listed above are met with sufficient frequency and force, a significant correlation between local interests and the votes of local representatives can be expected. It is important to note, though, that this correlation will not come about simply because local pressures continually overbear the conscience of the MP (or other, competing pressures put upon him). Rather, to a large degree, the correlation arises because (1) candidates choose to contest constituencies in which they think they have a chance; (2) this entails anticipation of the kinds of policy demands the constituency is likely to make; and hence (3) successful candidates tend to agree with their constituents' consensual preferences fairly often. In other words, electoral pressure does not just operate at the time of an important division, with watchful constituents making clear the dire consequences of an incorrect vote. It also affects the decisions of candidates whether to contest a given constituency in the first place. Furthermore, electoral pressure should operate in this way regardless of whether an actual contest occurs. It is the possibility of a contest that counts. Thus, one does not

find candidates like Charles Bradlaugh even approaching Oxford University, because they had not a skeptic's chance in paradise of succeeding. Aydelotte's finding that MPs who faced contests were no more likely than those who did not to toe the constituency line is largely irrelevant to the question of how potent local pressures were.

Given this conception of electoral pressure, Aydelotte's work can be interpreted as follows. He has identified (albeit crudely) the intersts of constituencies along a rural/urban dimension, and found a consistent correlation with the behavior of MPs. This correlation arises partly because candidates select constutencies in which they can win (with or without a contest) while constituencies select candidates (with or without a contest) in part on the basis of their policy stands. The correlation also arises because, once in office, the MP is reinforced in his own opinions when his constituents happen to agree, and may defer to his constituents' opinions on matters over which they disagree. That the correlation remains after controlling for party implies an explanation for dissidence in Parliament.

In the remainder of this section, two other approaches to demonstrating the importance of local electoral pressures, both in their own right and as a cause of dissidence, are examined.

One approach attempts to demonstrate a direct connection between the kinds of votes an MP received when elected and the kinds of votes he cast in the ensuing Parliament. The basic intuition can be explained by considering an election between two Liberals and a Conservative at which both Liberals are returned. Presumably one of the Liberals benefitted to a greater degree from the support of Conservative partisans, who, rather than plumping for their party's candidate as a completely party-oriented voter might have done, split their votes instead. (Indeed, with a ballot count the percentage of each Liberal's final vote total which came in the form of a split vote can actually be calculated. This will be the chief independent variable.) The split votes each Liberal received, if they were cast for political reasons, represent a potential source of electoral pressure which would presumably act to pull the Liberal over to the Conservative position on certain issues. In other words, if voters split their votes because they perceived a similarity in stands between one of the Liberals and the Conservative, then the Liberal beneficiary of the split votes will feel electoral pressure on those issues once in Parliament, and it may have been in anticipation of receiving such votes that he entered the contest to begin with. If the policy cleavages dividing Liberals and Conservatives in Parliament are congruent with those in the constituencies, one ought to find Liberal beneficiaries of split votes voting with the Conservative party more often than Liberals receiving few split votes. That is, split votes in the constituencies should induce crossbench dissidence in Parliament. Do they?

In Table 7, multiple regressions estimated for the Parliaments of 1841 - 47 and 1852 - 57 are presented which provide an answer to this question. In both Parliaments the population under study consisted of all MPs elected at two-against-one contests. The dependent variable was the rate of crossbench dissent - the percentage of times the MP voted with a majority of the other party and against a majority of his own party. The independent variables were the percentage of the MP's total votes which came in the form of split votes (SV*), a dummy variable indicating the party of the MP, and an interaction term between party and SV*. It was found that, in 1841 - 47, a one percentage point increase in the split vote support of a Liberal MP led on average to a .72 percentage point increase in crossbench dissidence, the coefficient being significant ($t = 3.37$). Similarly, in the 1852 - 1857

Parliament, Liberal MPs' rates of crossbench dissent rose .41 percentage points for every one percentage point increase in split vote support (t = 2.69). The estimated behavioral relations for the Conservatives were of the right sign in both Parliaments but were insignificant.

Given the fact that no controls were possible for other electoral pressures (only one possible source of pressure has been identified, and hence other pressures enter the error term), the results reported in Table 7 are about what might be expected on the assumption that electoral pressure was an important phenomenon. Although only 11 - 18% of the variance in crossbench dissent has been explained by these regressions, probably only about that percentage of the operative electoral pressures have been identified.

The most straightforward interpretation of these results is that a good many split votes were cast for political reasons - that is, voters were anticipating certain behavior on the part of candidates and voting to support or induce that behavior. It might be noted that if the temporal sequence of things is reversed, a regression predicting split vote support on the basis of previous crossbench dissents works about as well (Cox, 1983). Presumably, this shows voters reacting retrospectively to their MPs' actions. Condition (1), in other words, is supported.

Condition (2) appears tenable as well. Even considering only those incumbents who faced a contest in prospect, 75.6% sought reelection in the period 1832 - 65. The increased courting of the press by MPs after 1832 would also seem to reflect a desire for reelection (cf. Cox, 1983, pp. 35 - 50, for a fuller discussion).

If it is accepted that MPs knew the voting criteria of their constituents, then electoral pressure as here defined existed. The results in Table 7 are consistent with MPs responding to this pressure.

Further evidence demonstrating that local electoral pressure was important and supporting the hypotheses that voters became more party-oriented, is presented in Table 8. Because of the existence of double- and triple-member constituencies, one can find pairs of MPs who share (and who do not share) the same constituency. A simple comparison of the percentage of times two MPs agreed when both voted (their agreement score) as a function of whether they did or did not serve the same constituency should provide a rough measure of the impact of local pressures. In Table 8, these comparisons are conducted, controlling for party, for the Parliaments or 1841 - 47, 1852 - 57 and 1874 - 80.

The results are quite interesting. When comparing pairs of MPs not sharing party, there is a significant tendency for colleagues to agree more frequently than non-colleagues in the early Parliaments, but virtually no such tendency in the Parliament of 1874 - 80. Similarly, the tendency for colleagues of the same party to agree more often than non-colleagues of the same party is least in the Parliament of 1874 - 80, although still significant.

The figures in Table 8 serve a double purpose. First, they reinforce Aydelotte's finding of a correlation between the interests of constituencies and the politics of their MPs. Second, they indicate that such a correlation may have been declining, when party is controlled for.

This latter conclusion should be approached cautiously. There is a logical relationship between aggregate party cohesion and the kind of figures given

in Table 8. In the extreme - perfect cohesion - no constituency effect would be visible when party was controlled, since no two members of the same party would ever disagree and members of opposite parties would agree only on unanimous divisions. As it is known that party cohesion was very high in 1874 - 80, the suspicion is very strong that any examination of roll-call behavior which controls for party will not find much left to explain. Hence, the figures in Table 8 do not tell us much more than was to be expected. But they do tell us something more since, first, it is mathematically possible that the figures for 1874 - 80 might have been as high as those in 1852 - 57, and second, the insignificant result in Panel I was certainly not guaranteed.

In any event, the pattern of evidence in Table 8 is consistent with the hypothesis that voters were becoming more party-oriented. Such an orientation by voters reduces the electoral pressure put on individual MPs by diverting it to the party leadership. Consequently, MPs are both more dependent for reelection on the leadership's decisions and less dependent on pleasing constituents with specific votes. To the extent that local pressures had caused dissent, the developing party orientation of the electorate should concomitantly have reduced the impact of local pressures and also reduced indiscipline in Parliament.

7. Conclusion

It has long been known that a substantial change in English legislative voting behavior took place in the second half of the nineteenth century: with increasing frequency, MPs voted with their parties. In this paper, it has been demonstrated that an equally substantial change in English electoral voting behavior took place, also in the direction of increasing partisanship. It has also been suggested that the correlation between the interests of constituencies and the votes of their MPs declined over time, when party was controlled.

A single hypothesis - that voters became more party-oriented - has been offered as capable of explaining all three trends. In the earlier parts of the century, when individual MPs still bulked larger in the policy process of Parliament, voters based their votes to a considerable extent on what the individual candidate said and did about policy issues. Consequently, candidates had an incentive (if they sought election) to seek out a compatible constituency; and once elected they were aware that their actions potentially had electoral consequences. The result of this was that MPs would support the local interests of their constituency even against their party. Hence, studies such as Aydelotte's and those in Section 6 find a correlation between how a Victorian MP voted and the type of constituency he served, even controlling for party. Hence, also, levels of party discipline in Parliament were relatively low and fluctuating. And finally, the willingness of electors to vote for candidates rather than parties meant that split voting and non-partisan plumping were more frequently used electoral options.
As a variety of factors caused voters to weight the actions of the parties more heavily in their decisions, the previous system of "local representation" began to unravel. Since voters based their votes on the behavior of parties, split voting and non-partisan plumping declined. Further, individual MPs were to some extent freed of local pressures: there was less need to ensure a compatible constituency and less need also to make sure that one's votes gibed with the views of constituents. Consequently, pressures toward party conformity (from whatever source) bulked relatively larger in the voting decisions of MPs, and party discipline in Parliament increased. At the same time, the policy nexus between MPs and their constituents began to loosen.

APPENDIX

Candidate	Party	Plumpers	Total Votes
Rt. Hon. H. C. E. Childers	Lib.	699	934
Major Samuel Waterhouse	Cons.	60	861
Viscount Pollington	Cons.	37	709
		796	

Candidate Pair	Double Ballots
Childers/Waterhouse	182
Childers/Pollington	53
Waterhouse/Pollington	619
	854

Total ballots cast = 1,650

Figure 1. A ballot count for the election of 1874 in Pontefract.

Table 1

Year	No. of Contests with Ballot Counts	All Double-Member Contests	Number of Electors Involved	As a % of All Voters	As a % of All Registered Electors
1832	102	68	231,768	51	38
1835	90	73	140,585	37	22
1837	89	64	189,291	37	26
1841	84	77	155,778	37	20
1847	80	79	140,029	36	17
1852	68	55	129,702	24	15
1857	52	49	112,880	25	13
1859	53	54	96,762	22	11
1865	63	52	150,402	26	16
			-149,689		
1868	60	47	313,824	22	17
1874	55	47	439,687 } 498,350	29	21
1880	86	61	741,540	37	32
	-73.5	-60.5	-236,854	-31.9	
1885	17		214,491	6	5
1886	15		177,566	8	4
1892	14		205,780	6	5
1895	15		218,817	7	5
1900	14		218,559	8	4
1906	15		270,992	6	5
1910(J)	16		299,377	6	5
1910(D)	17		306,675	7	5
	-15.4		-237,725	-6.8	-

Notes: (1) Column 2 gives the figures in Column 1 as a percentage of the number of double-member constituencies which were contested.

Notes, Table 1, continued:

(2) Column 4 gives the figures in Column 3 as a percentage of the estimated number of voters in all English constituencies (both single- and multi-member). Before 1885, the estimated number of voters is arrived at by taking

$$\frac{\text{\#contested constituencies}}{\text{\#constituencies}} \times [\text{\#registered electors}]$$

Since county constituencies (which were larger) tended to be more often uncontested, and since we do not take account of turnout (essentially assuming that it was 100%), the estimated number of voters for years before 1885 should be an overestimate, and hence the size of the sample relative to the population of voters is probably understated. After 1885 exact figures are available for the number of voters.

(3) Column 5 gives the figures in Column 3 as percentages of the total registered electorate in England (not confined to the electorate in double-member districts).

Table 2

Year	Number of Ballot Counts in Boroughs	%	Counties	%	All Constituencies	%	Total No. of Voters	As a % of All English Voters
1832	48	42	28	74	76	50	179,228	40
1835	71	67	9	50	80	65	124,812	33
1837	74	68	14	47	88	63	188,199	37
1841	74	80	8	44	82	74	153,173	36
1847	59	67	6	46	65	64	105,453	27
1852	50	49	5	24	55	44	93,697	17
1857	38	43	6	33	44	42	100,587	22
1859	43	51	4	30	47	48	83,183	19
1865	50	51	11	50	61	50	149,985	26
1868	29	36	22	48	51	40	282,532	20
1874	34	40	18	56	52	44	404,038	26
1880	52	60	32	59	84	60	704,890	35
1885	15	75	0	-	15	75	179,486	5
1886	15	79	0	-	15	79	177,566	8
1892	14	74	0	-	14	74	205,780	6
1895	12	60	0	-	12	60	171,034	6
1900	12	71	0	-	12	71	184,864	7
1906	15	68	0	-	15	68	270,992	6
1910(J)	16	73	0	-	16	73	299,377	6
1910(D)	17	81	0	-	17	81	306,675	7

Table 3. Trends in Split Voting, 19832-1910.

Year	All Constituencies		Boroughs		Counties	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1832	15.6	179,228	18.8	49,569	14.4	129,659
1835	18.7	124,812	20.6	81,307	15.0	43,505
1837	10.6	188,199	12.2	102,387	8.6	85,812
1841	7.3	153,173	8.1	100,068	5.9	53,105
1847	23.0	105,453	25.4	77,138	16.3	28,315
1852	16.3	93,697	16.2	66,329	16.5	27,368
1857	19.0	100,587	17.8	67,300	21.5	33,287
1859	11.7	83,183	13.6	60,996	6.2	22,187
1865	8.5	149,985	10.3	81,129	6.3	68,856
1868	5.5	282,532	5.5	124,181	5.4	158,351
1874	4.8	404,038	5.1	255,091	4.2	148,947
1880	4.5	704,890	4.7	407,546	4.3	297,344
1885	3.5	179,486	3.5	179,486	-	-
1886	2.3	177,566	2.3	177,566	-	-
1892	2.7	205,780	2.7	205,780	-	-
1895	3.0	171,034	3.0	171,034	-	-
1900	4.4	184,804	4.4	184,864	-	-
1906	2.7	270,992	2.7	270,992	-	-
1910(J)	1.8	299,377	1.8	299,377	-	-
1910(D)	2.0	306,675	2.0	306,675	-	-

Table 4. Trends in Non-partisan Plumping, 1832-1910.

Year	All Constituencies %	Boroughs %	Counties %
1832	6.4	8.1	5.8
1835	8.7	10.1	6.2
1837	5.0	4.2	6.1
1841	3.1	3.2	2.7
1847	15.5	17.4	10.1
1852	9.0	10.4	5.7
1857	13.8	10.0	21.4
1859	5.3	6.3	2.4
1865	4.8	6.5	2.7
1868	4.2	4.7	3.8
1874	4.0	5.0	2.2
1880	2.4	2.8	1.8
1885	3.2	3.2	
1886	2.3	2.3	
1892	2.3	2.3	
1895	1.8	1.8	
1900	3.4	3.4	
1906	7.8	7.8	
1910(J)	3.4	3.4	
1910(D)	3.8	3.8	

Note: N's are the same as those in Table 3.

Table 5. Split Voting by Contest Type.

Year	2L/1C		2C/1L		2/1		2/2	
1832	15.2	152,001	19.1	19,969	15.7	171,970	13.1	7,258
1835	21.0	73,807	17.4	36,173	19.8	109,980	9.9	14,832
1837	11.8	80,733	12.5	59,306	12.1	140,039	6.2	48,160
1841	7.8	35,412	12.3	51,793	10.5	87,205	3.1	65,968
1847	27.9	48,703	19.2	29,760	24.6	78,463	18.4	26,990
1852	18.3	41,555	18.6	34,352	18.5	75,907	7.2	17,790
857	22.3	59,086	14.3	27,507	19.7	86,593	14.5	13,994
1859	13.9	46,789	13.4	14,617	13.8	61,406	5.7	21,777
1865	10.9	66,336	9.7	35,810	10.5	102,146	4.2	47,839
1868	8.4	100,424	6.7	48,748	7.9	149,172	2.8	133,360
1874	5.3	151,718	7.0	71,109	5.8	222,827	3.5	181,211
1880	5.5	195,063	6.1	148,433	5.7	343,496	3.4	361,394
1885					3.9	64,797	3.4	114,689
1886					2.4	56,709	2.3	120,857
1892					2.9	73,003	2.7	132,777
1895					4.3	69,844	2.1	101,190
1900					10.2	41,190	2.7	143,674
1906					4.6	73,928	4.0	197,064
1910(J)					2.1	14,381	1.8	284,996
1910(D)					2.6	76,126	1.8	230,549

Table 6. Government Party Cohesion on Whipped Votes.

Year	Simple Average	Weighted Average	Government Party
1836	.659	.642	L
1850	.594	.627	L
1860	.587	.618	L
1869	.612	.699	L
1871	.741	.771	L
1875	.957	.965	C
1881	.832	-	L
1894	.898	-	L
1899	.977	-	C
1906	.968	-	L
1908	.949	-	L

Source: cox, 1983, pp. 14-16.

Note: Rice's coefficient of cohesion was used. Column 1 gives simple averages and column 2 , weighted averages, where the weights are the number of MPs participating in the division. Trivial divisions (nearly unanimous) are excluded.

Table 7. Crossbench Dissent and Split Voting. Dependent Variable: % Crossbench Dissent.

Independent Variables	1841-47 Estimated Coefficient	t-ratio	1852-57 Estimated Coefficient	t-ratio
Constant	6.91	3.77	8.96	2.27
SV*	.72	3.37	.41	2.69
party	- .35	.15	6.17	.94
SV*xparty	- .69	3.04	- .27	.93
	#obs = 87		#obs = 63	
	R^2 = .18		R^2 = .11	

Table 8. Agreement of MPs Who Do and Do Not Share Constituency.

Panel I. MPs Who Do Not Share Party:

	1841-47	(N)	1852-57	(N)	1874-80	(N)
Do Not Share	29.6	(214)	32.7	(241)	27.1	(200)
Do Share	37.2	(70)	42.4	(104)	27.2	(81)
	7.6		9.7		.1	
	t = 3.12		t' = 3.98		t = .04	

Panel II. MPs Who Do Share Party:

	1841-47	(N)	1852-57	(N)	1874-80	(N)
Do Not Share	81.4	(216)	72.5	(250)	90.7	(168)
Do Share	86.2	(231)	82.0	(226)	94.0	(155)
	4.8		9.5		3.3	
	t = 3.79		t = 5.71		t = 2.32	

Source: Cox, 1983, p. 277.

Note: Entries are the average percentage of times the relevant kinds of pairs of MPs agreed when both voted. for example, of all pairs of MPs sharing neither party nor constituency in the Parliament of 1841-47, the average agreement score was 29.6%.

Table A-1. Simple Averages for Split Voting.

Year	All Constituencies %	All Constituencies N	Boroughs %	Boroughs N	Counties %	Counties N
1832	18.5	76	20.9	48	14.5	28
1835	23.9	80	25.3	71	13.2	9
1837	15.5	88	16.4	74	10.8	14
1841	10.9	82	11.1	74	8.98	8
1847	24.6	65	25.5	59	15.2	6
1852	18.5	55	18.7	50	15.9	5
1857	22.5	44	23.2	38	18.6	6
1859	14.4	47	15.2	43	6.6	4
1865	11.8	61	12.7	50	7.7	11
1868	7.1	51	7.6	29	6.4	22
1874	5.5	52	5.7	34	5.1	18
1880	5.5	84	5.9	52	4.9	32
1885	3.5	15	3.5	15		
1886	2.2	15	2.2	15		
1892	2.9	14	2.9	14		
1895	3.1	12	3.1	12		
1900	4.8	13	4.8	12		
1906	3.9	15	3.9	15		
1910(J)	1.7	16	1.7	16		
1910(D)	2.0	17	2.0	17		

Table A-2. Weighted Averages for Split Voting, All Contest Types.

Year	All Constituencies %	N	%*	Boroughs %	N	Counties %	N
1832	15.4	231,768	38	17.6	81.188	14.2	150,580
1835	18.6	140,585	22	20.3	97.080	15.0	43,505
1837	10.6	189,291	26	12.3	103,479	8.6	85,812
1841	7.6	155,778	20	8.5	102,673	5.9	53,105
1847	23.3	140,029	17	25.0	111,714	16.3	28,315
1852	20.4	129,702	15	21.4	102,334	16.5	27,368
1857	17.2	112,880	13	15.4	79,593	21.5	33,287
1859	11.3	96,762	11	12.8	74,575	6.2	22,187
1865	9.2	150,402	16	11.7	84,718	5.9	65,684
1868	6.6	313,824	17	7.7	155,473	5.4	158,351
1874	8.0	439,687	21	9.9	290,740	4.2	148,947
1880	6.6	741,540	32	8.2	444,196	4.3	297,344
1885	7.4	214,491	5	7.4			
1886	2.3	177,566	4	2.3			
1892	2.7	205,780	5	2.7			
1895	6.3	218,817	5	6.3			
1900	5.1	218,559	4	5.1			
1906	4.2	270,992	5	4.2			
1910(J)	1.8	299,377	5	1.8			
1910(D)	2.0	306,675	5	2.0			

* Percentage of the total electorate.

FOOTNOTES

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1) Five major sources were used to collect these ballot counts: (1) Smith, 1844 - 50 (reprinted, 1973) for the period 1832 -47; (2) Bean, 1890 for the six northern counties 1832 - 80; (3) the collections of poll books in the Institute of Historical Research (University of London), the Guildhall Library (City of London), and the British Library for the period 1832 - 68; (4) the collection of newspapers at the Colindale Annex of the British Library for the period 1868 - 80; (5) Craig, 1974 for the period 1885 - 1910. Approximately 15% of the ballot counts in the data set have been "reconstructed". That is, the original source document gave only the plumpers (or some other partial information) from which it was possible to infer the rest of the information based on certain mathematical relationships holding between the aggregate totals and ballot count information. The method used has been described in Mitchell, 1976, p. 112. All ballot counts have been checked for internal consistency. That is, each candidate's total number of votes has been calculated by adding up his plumpers and double votes, and this figure has been compared to the totals given in the source document (if available) or to the official returns. In roughly 80% of the cases, the two figures agree exactly. In only 13 ballot counts do the figures disagree by more than 3% and these have been excluded from analysis.

2) The final authority used here on party affiliations before 1885 is F. W. S. Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832 - 1885. Indeed, since Craig's policy is identical to that described in the text, all party affiliations before 1885 agree with his. After 1885, party affiliations are as given in Appendix 1, F. W. S. Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885 - 1918, except that Liberal Unionists have been classed with the Conservatives, and Lib-Labs and Labourites with the Liberals.

3) An interesting suggestion about the causes of split voting in general is made in an 1866 article from the Fortnightly Review: "At present we see the larger proportion of the electors in the boroughs and county constituencies, where two members are to be chosen, give one vote to a Liberal and another to a Conservative. Thus they secure the grand object of giving offence to neither party" (Wilson, 1866). It would appear that the author is referring to competing or cross-pressuring electoral influences. A shopkeeper, for example, faced with a Tory landlord and an important Whig customer, may have split his vote in order to offend neither. Electoral influence is believed by some (e.g., D. C. Moore) to have been declining in the 1860s and 1870s, and if it was generally cross-pressuring, then this provides a possible explanation of the decline in split voting. We have, however, no firm basis for considering cross-pressuring influence to be significant. Most historians do not mention it at all. Nossiter is the only historian to address the existence of cross-pressuring influence explicitly in regard to split voting, and he considers it unimportant, at least in the boroughs (Nossiter, 1975, p. 179). Further, the typical evidence given that electoral influence was widespread presupposes that it controlled both votes, as when Olney show that those Lincolnshire parishes wholly owned by Tory

(Whig) Lords voted wholly Tory (Whig) - or nearly so (Olney, 1973, ch. 2).

If influence was complete rather than cross-pressuring, then its importance for a study of split voting is chiefly that it magnifies the decisions of influential men in the statistics. We can consider a hypothetical county constituency in which the electorate is dominated by a relatively few landed magnates together with their numerous tenants, and suppose that tenants always vote exactly as their landlords do: no hint or breath of policy or party considerations crosses their minds. The split voting rates in this county for the most part reflect the decisions of the landlords, each being weighted by the number of his tenants. We can hold the amount of influence constant, and produce virtually any rates of split voting by stipulating the decisions of the landed magnates. A decline in influence in such a constituency would produce declines in split voting only if the formerly dependent voters tended to cast fewer split votes than the landlords.

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