

Why Voters Prefer Coalitions: Rationality or Norms?

Jack Vowles
University of Auckland

ABSTRACT

This paper asks why voters might prefer coalitions or single-party governments for ideological or normative reasons. Voters might prefer coalition to single-party governments for several reasons, one set clustering around the rational preferences of partisans largely in terms of expectations of electoral success or failure, and the other the influence of norms in a mass public. In terms of 'rationality', small party supporters should want their party to have a role in government. Large party supporters should prefer single-party government, unless their loyalties are weak, or unless they expect the large party they dislike will have the best chance of forming a government, and therefore hope that its power might be diluted by having to form a coalition. Meanwhile less partisan voters in particular might be influenced by norms that favour broadly based, consensual governments that command majority as compared to plurality support, that minimise parliamentary conflict, and make it possible for successive governments to follow more consistent policies over time. Ideology might have effects independent of partisanship. Norms and government preferences might also interact as part of change in a political culture. Using data from five elections that have generated coalition governments in New Zealand, a country previously accustomed to single-party rule, this paper tests these hypotheses and explores the implications of the findings.

Prepared for delivery at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, August 30-September 2, 2007. Copyright by the American Political Science Association.

Why Voters Prefer Coalitions: Rationality or Norms?

Jack Vowles

University of Auckland

Much theory and empirical analysis in electoral behaviour has been based on a usually unstated assumption that voters simply consider choices between alternative single-party majority governments. So doing, people may cast sincere votes based on preferences or strategic votes based on calculations of consequences. Yet coalition and/or minority governments are the norm in many countries. Given this, when alternative coalitions are on offer, vote choices could be shaped by a number of other considerations: their preferences for particular combinations of parties, their expectations of what coalition arrangements might be viable or desirable, not to mention an experience of the performance of an incumbent coalition. Yet voting for coalitions is still mostly ignored in the mainstream literature (for example, in the overview by Evans 2004). The literature on party systems is a partial exception, but tends to touch on government composition only in passing, and with little attention to public preferences (for example, Mair 1996). There is increasing recognition that the literature on coalition governments needs to address these questions (Laver 1998). Recent theory about multi-party democracy is beginning to do so, although the most recent example remains centred on party strategies rather than voters' preferences (Schofield and Sened 2006).

Anthony Downs reasoned persuasively that voting for government coalitions would be too demanding for most voters, who would default to simply voting for their

preferred party (Downs 1957, 146-153) — one explanation, perhaps, why research is only just beginning to address this question. Several recent studies examine voters' coalition preferences in broad terms (Blais, Aldrich, Indridison and Levine 2006; Caprara, Schwartz, Capanna, Vecchione, and Barbaranelli 2006; Glasgow and Alvarez 2005; Dorussen and Taylor 2001) or focus on various aspects of coalition-related strategic voting (for example, Cox 1997, 194-198; Benoit, Giannettia and Laver, 2006; Kedar 2005). These findings indicate coalition preferences do influence voters. While those affected tend to be well in the minority, the effects are not trivial.

This paper takes a different but related approach, asking why voters would want coalition governments as such, and why they might prefer them to single-party majority governments. Change in electoral systems is on the agenda in many jurisdictions, and the grounds for reform are usually an aspiration for change in the type of governments formed and in the style of governing, so this objective often lies at the heart of proposals for institutional change. Recent research shows that in several countries elites are not completely influenced by partisanship and/or self-interest in their preferences for political institutions, and that their attitudes about democracy and political ideology have a role to play (Bowler, Donovan and Karp 2006). Related preferences for type of government should be similarly affected, and could also have some resonance among mass publics. Regardless of partisan preferences, defined as distinct from ideology, perhaps voters might have reasons to sincerely prefer, on one side, either coalitions and/or minority governments, or on the other, single-party majority governments. This paper therefore focuses on reasons why voters might prefer coalitions or single-party governments on ideological or normative grounds.

Voters might prefer coalitions to single-party governments for various reasons, one set clustering around the rational preferences of partisans (Cox 1997, 194-6), particularly in terms of their expectations and experiences concerning their parties' electoral failures or successes. While voters might be considered to have less concern about these matters than party elites, there is evidence that voter attitudes follow these patterns in terms of choices between electoral systems (Lamare and Vowles 1996; Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan, and Listhaug 2005, 172; Bowler and Donovan 2007; Karp 2007). Sincere small party supporters should want their party to have a role in government and thus support the idea of coalition government as the only means of giving it that opportunity. Sincere large party supporters should prefer single-party government. However, preferences of large-party supporters could also be shaped by expectations. Those expecting their party to 'win' might prefer single-party government: those expecting it to lose might tend to prefer a coalition that would weaken the ability of the large party they do not favour to govern effectively. Persistent losers might also prefer the idea of coalition governments, reasoning that they could at least do no worse, and probably better, in gaining a share in power. There is, at least, evidence that voters pay some attention to these matters, as they react negatively to coalition governments that fail or are unstable (Listhaug and Wiberg 1995, 310-311; Karp and Bowler 2001; Brockington 2004).

In a multi-party system voters could take other matters into consideration, and particularly those who vote for a large party without a strong psychological commitment. For example, they might have a more fundamental ideological preference for a government of the left or right, and thus be more disposed to favour coalitions that may

be necessary to generate such governments. Norms about what is ‘good and just’, appear to have shaped institutional choices in many countries (Blais and Massicote 1997).

Different ideas about democracy are clear in the writings of political theorists and the choices made by institutional designers and party elites (Katz 1997), but are also likely to be reflected, albeit in somewhat blurred form, in the norms and values of mass publics.

Such norms among mass publics might vary between a ‘proportional’ or ‘consensus’ model of government rather than majoritarianism (Lijphart 1984, 1999; Powell 2000). Those liking the idea of coalition government might prefer consensual governments that command majority as compared to plurality support, that minimise parliamentary conflict, make it possible for successive governments to follow more consistent policies over time, and perhaps reflect public opinion more closely. Such an understanding of democracy is somewhat more consistent with values such as equality, fairness, and justice to which those on the left tend to be more committed than those on the right (Karp 2007). One might therefore expect to see those on the left more supportive of coalitions, those on the right more supportive of single-party government.

Alternatively, though, if coalitions and/or minority governments are perceived to constrain the powers of governments, some on the right might also prefer those arrangements, weakening or offsetting the tendency of leftists to prefer coalitions.

As defined in the classic early studies of the subject, authoritarianism connotes a high respect for dominant figures coupled with a general disdain for those perceived as weak and ineffective (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford 1950; Janowitz and Marvick 1953). While use of the concept of authoritarianism may be less fashionable in political science research than in the past, eclipsed to a great extent by postmaterialism,

to which it is correlated, authoritarianism remains a useful concept as a number of recent studies show (for example, Ekehammer, Akrami, Gylje and Zakrisson, 2004; Van Hiel, Duriez and Kossowska 2006). Various liberalising trends in public policy and public opinion over the last twenty to thirty years indicate that authoritarianism has declined in the advanced democracies, but assuming some value stability in age cohorts it is likely to remain stronger among older people. Given their preference for strong leadership, those with authoritarian values will be more likely to favour single-party government, and those who are less authoritarian may favour coalitions.

Where a polity moves from expectations of single-party governments to expectations of coalitions, norms might shift as part of a process of reconstruction of a political culture. As younger people may be more open to learning the new 'rules of the game', we might expect cultural change to be more likely among the young, particularly if they are likely to be less authoritarian as the result of cultural changes, although such tendencies might take time to 'bed in'.

Finally, a mixture of norms and rationality may dispose people who have a high sense of political efficacy to favour coalition governments. Because coalition governments generate more veto points, and can foster a more open process of decision-making, they may feel more confident that their voices may be heard.

Empirical data to test these proposition comes from four elections that have generated coalition governments in New Zealand, and the one immediately before. New Zealand is a country previously accustomed to single-party rule until it began to elect its Parliament by proportional representation (PR) in 1996. The data employed is therefore

from five successive New Zealand Election Studies (NZES) from 1993 to 2005, with most attention to the three most recent elections: 1999, 2002, and 2005.

Since the 1996 election, New Zealand has had coalition governments and, since 1998, minority governments (Vowles 2005, 309). Those arrangements have become increasingly complex, particularly after the 2005 election, when the status of some parties became ambiguous, their leaders holding ministerial positions in government without being included in the Cabinet. What New Zealanders understand by ‘coalition’ will, in most cases, incorporate such arrangements. Indeed, it may be best seen as an arrangement that is not single-party majority government, incorporating other parties into government at varying levels of commitment and support. To specify the partisan context, after the 1993 and 1996 elections, governments were formed by the centre-right National Party: since 1999, governments have been formed by the centre-left Labour Party.

Unfortunately for continuity, the survey instrument estimating preferences for one party or coalition government has changed over the five elections in question. The two questions asked are displayed in the notes to table 1. Because not all respondents might necessarily understand the word ‘coalition’, the more recent question clarifies it by addition of the phrase ‘made up of more than one party’. As a first step in exploration of the data, and skating over its surface, table 1 displays frequencies from the two relevant questions, the first asked in 1993, 1996, and 1999, and the second in 1999 and after. The second question was intended to replace the first, with the overlap in 1999 intended for comparison. When both questions were asked in 1999 the distributions between their two main categories are very similar, indicating that the change does not entirely exclude cautious interpretation of change over time. One puts preferences equal, the other those

for coalitions just marginally ahead. As ordinal scales, they correlate at 0.65. The later question is the better of the two, as the first is slightly loaded and less direct, generating a greater number of undecided responses. However, imperfect as it is, data from question one indicates that even at the time of the electoral reform referendum in 1993, by far the majority of voters appear to have preferred single party government and, in 1996, the margin narrowed but probably remained in favour of it.

Table 1. Voters' Preferences for One Party or Coalition Government

	One Party	Coalition	DK	N
<i>Question 1</i>				
1993	53	21	27	2123
1996	43	29	28	3854
1999	36	36	28	4807
<i>Question 2</i>				
1999	43	46	12	5879
2002	40	53	8	5665
2005	41	49	10	2804
<i>By Party Vote 2005</i>				
Green	9	88	3	117
United Future	9	85	7	59
Maori	15	71	15	48
Progressive	23	69	8	26
NZ First	24	68	8	124
Labour	37	54	9	908
Act	31	53	16	32
Did Not Vote	39	42	19	558
National	59	35	6	857

Question 1: Tell me how much you agree or disagree with: 'An election should ensure one party can form a government'.

Question 2: Do you prefer a government made up of a single party, or a coalition government made up of more than one party?

1999 marks the most important shift toward coalition preferences. Since then the balance of preferences for single party or coalition governments has firmed up for coalitions, with 2002 standing out slightly more strongly, with little sign of a trend.

Breaking the data down by 2005 party vote, the pattern is predictable but for Labour voters' greater likelihood of preferring coalition, and those not voting who had only a marginal preference for coalitions. National voters stand out as the group most in favour of single-party government. This pattern almost exactly replicates that found when similarly breaking this data down from the 2002 NZES (Miller and Karp 2004, 141), which again varies only slightly from that found in 1999 (Vowles, Karp, Banducci and Aimer 2002, 167).

Table 2. Generally speaking, do you think that a government formed by one party, or one formed by more than one party, is better at doing the following things?

	One party best	More than one best	Both the same	Don't know	N
Providing Stability					
1993	45	34	8	13	1978
1996	46	35	10	10	3999
1999	57	25	11	8	4885
2002	56	26	10	8	4609
2005	61	24	8	7	2787
Making tough decisions					
1993	36	46	8	11	1959
1996	35	47	9	9	3961
1999	42	40	11	7	4851
2002	42	42	10	7	4594
2005	46	39	8	6	2767
Keeping Promises					
1993	17	59	13	11	1969
1996	20	59	12	10	3996
1999	30	43	17	9	4861
2002	29	47	16	9	4584
2005	38	42	12	8	2760
Doing what the people want					
1993	13	64	12	12	1973
1996	10	63	15	12	3992
1999	19	51	19	11	4850
2002	18	56	17	9	4598
2005	24	53	14	9	2763

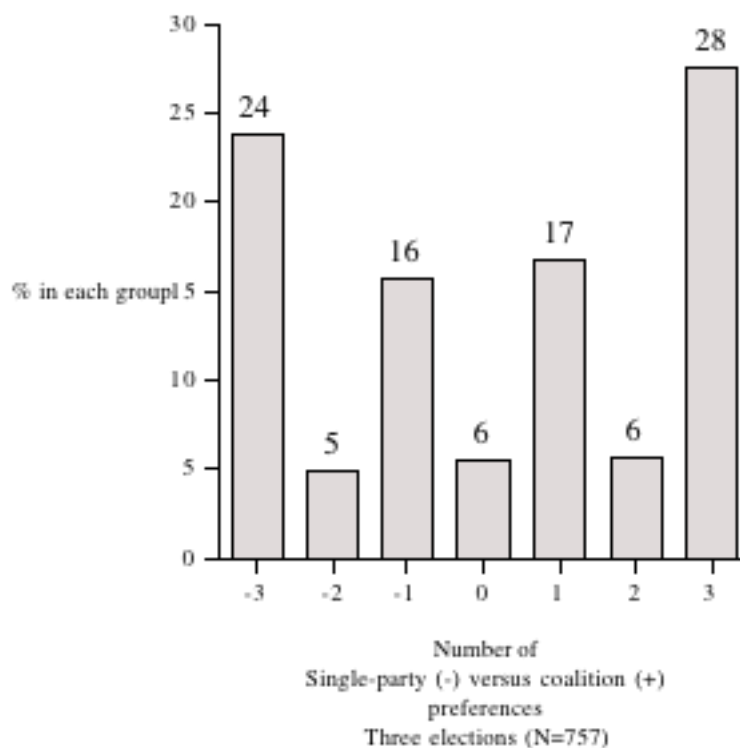
Table 2 displays data with a longer consistent time series back to the last election under simple member plurality (SMP) rules, and based on questions of more substantive content. A majority has consistently considered that one party government is best for stability, and it has grown steadily with experience under PR. A ten-point margin in favour of coalitions being better able to make tough decisions dissipated by 1999, but a majority moved decisively towards single-party governments on this matter only in 2005. A small margin in favour of coalitions being better able to keep promises remained in 2005, but a much larger majority were of that opinion in 1996. One big margin in favour of coalitions remained strong in 2005. An absolute majority of voters continued to take the position that coalitions governments are best at ‘doing what the people want’, and on this measure there has been much less attrition over time.

A puzzle emerges in the major differences between the findings of tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows increased support for coalitions from 1999, table 2 indicates a decline in optimism about their consequences since 1996. Many people appear to have been optimistic about the prospects for coalition government in 1993 and 1996, even though they continued to believe that ‘elections should ensure one-party government’. Paradoxically, preference for coalitions apparently hardened after the 1999 election while expectations of the potential for better government declined, or at least became more realistic.

Figure 1 tests the stability of coalition preferences in a simple count of responses to table 1’s question 2 over the three elections, using panel data from the same respondents participating in all three of the election studies. On this estimate, somewhat over half the electorate had stable preferences, somewhat more for coalitions that for

single-party governments. Another 11 per cent only deviated from a position they took twice by moving into the ‘don’t know’ category at one of the three elections.

Figure 1. A Test of Stability: Relative Numbers of Preferences for Coalition or Single-Party Governments, 1999-2002



NOTE: Responses for coalition were coded as 1 for each election and added, creating a variable ranging between 3 and 0. Responses to single party government were added in the same way, in a separate variable, but were then subtracted from the coalition count to create a new composite variable ranging between 3 and -3.

Source: 1999-2002-2005 Panel, NZES

This means that at least two thirds did not deviate to the alternative position, quite a high level of consistency for panel data. This stability is also impressive given relatively high instability in voting choices over elections during this period (Vowles 2003). Stability in responses to this question over three elections could be taken as evidence of stronger sincere than strategic reasons to prefer coalition. However, it is

important to recall that all three elections gave the Labour party the largest share of votes and thus the ability to form government. Given this, the most important strategic parameters remained constant over the three elections.

One could explain this consistency by either or both of the sets of expectations outlined above: rational choices based on partisanship, either sincere or strategic, or a more fundamental sincere commitment to consensus norms. The change in question directly estimating preferences for coalition and single party governments makes it difficult to use either of those reported in table 1 to address the effects of partisan preferences across elections, and particularly for comparison of 1996, when National was able to form a government and 1999 and after, when governments were formed by Labour, those changing the identity of winner and loser.

Table 3. Relative Expectations of Coalition Government by Party Voters, 1993-2005

(Difference from average expectations for coalitions versus single party government, 1= Total optimism, 0=Total Pessimism)

	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005
Labour	0.06	0.05	0.03	-0.02	0.03
National	-0.18	-0.13	-0.11	-0.11	-0.10
<i>Average, Small Parties</i>					
Right		-0.11	-0.06	-0.05	-0.04
Centre	0.08	0.04	0.09	0.07	0.18
Left	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.18

NOTES

1. Cells with figures in bold indicate the major party that formed the government after the election in question.
2. Small Parties: Right: Act (1996-); Centre: New Zealand First, United Future (1996-), Maori Party (2005); Left: Alliance (1993-2002), Green (1999-)

Although they are based on expectations rather than preferences, the table 2 questions provide the only consistent data series over five elections. For purposes of clarity, in table 3 the overall change towards lower expectations of coalition governments has been removed from the data, and it has been reconstituted in the form of relative differences from the average at each election. The questions were also rescaled to put preferences for coalition at the top, and preferences for single-party government at the bottom, summed, and adjusted to run between 1 and 0. Then, for each election, the average score across the whole sample was subtracted from the average for each set of party voters, with the small party averages averaged again across right, centre, and left categories. The figures can be loosely interpreted in percentage terms: for example, a Labour voter in 1993 was 6 per cent more likely to be optimistic about coalition government than the average voter across the whole sample.

The numbers in bold remind us that National formed governments after the 1993 and 1996 elections, and Labour thereafter. The table shows that Labour voters have been slightly more optimistic about coalition government than average, except for 2002, a finding that can be explained by Labour hopes that the party might then have gained enough votes to secure a parliamentary majority on its own. National voters exhibit a consistent although marginally relative pessimism about coalitions, as do voters for the right-wing Act party. Voters for parties of the centre and left, on the other hand, show increased relative optimism.

National voters could have been expected to be more relatively optimistic about coalitions after the 1996 election, but their party's ability to form a government was not confirmed until nine weeks after the election, by which time most of the

fieldwork for the 1996 NZES was complete. Nonetheless, National voters would have known that their party had secured by far the largest number of votes and in the days after the election it was becoming increasingly clear that National had the best odds of forming a government in coalition with the centre-nationalist party, New Zealand First.

Table 3 hints at two provisional inferences: changes in the relative positions of the various sets of voters could reflect perceptions of strategic opportunities, or the lack of them, but consistency in the basic structure of perceptions, the right favouring single-party government, and the left and centre favouring coalitions, suggests a mixture of strategic and normative positions. Strategically, the centre should always favour coalitions, but it is not clear why the right and left should differ. Here, there is the potential for an ideological explanation.

The next step is a more searching multivariate analysis of the reasons why some people prefer a coalition and others single-party government. On the basis of a single cross-sectional analysis, the only data from 2005, the impact of perceptions of winners and losers will be hidden in the variables estimating the effects of partisan preferences. For this reason, data from the 1999 and 2002 elections that report pre-election information will be used to test one aspect of this hypothesis, the effects of expectations on large-party voters coalition preferences. In cross-sectional analysis, such effects, if significant, would admittedly mute the strength of those partisan variables, those voting or identifying with National being more likely to favour coalition and Labour voters more likely to favour single-party government. However, the main purpose here is to identify the extent to which normative beliefs influence coalition preferences, and, in particular, the effects of majoritarian-consensus norms, a

question on which is only available in the 2005 study. In the case of right to left ideology, this possible bias will also have muting effects, making estimates of this variable's effects as conservative as those of partisanship.

The main hypotheses can be summarised as follows:

Rationality

1. Small party voters will prefer coalitions.
2. Strategic voters will prefer coalitions.
3. Large party voters will prefer single-party government but —
 - i) Large party supporters will be more likely to support single-party government if they strongly identify with their party, and less likely if their identification is weak or absent.
 - ii) Large party supporters may favour coalition if they expect that their party will be unable to form a government.

Norms

4. Right-Left ideology may affect preferences for coalitions and single-party governments, the left favouring coalitions, the right single-party government.
5. Those favouring decisions by majority will favour single-party government, those favouring decisions to be more broadly-based will favour coalitions.
6. Authoritarians will favour single-party government, and oppose coalitions.

7. Recent experience of coalition governments may dispose younger voters to favour them because they are more open to political learning, and authoritarianism may have interactive effects with age.

Efficacy

8. Persons with higher levels of political efficacy will favour coalitions because they perceive them to foster a more open policy process that will enhance engaged citizen's ability to influence politics.

Table 4: Majority versus Consensus, Efficacy, Authoritarianism, and Right-Left Ideology

	1999		2002		2005	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Majoritarianism					0.61	0.21
Authoritarianism	0.63	0.19	0.61	0.18	0.64	0.20
Efficacy	0.41	0.19	0.40	0.19	0.43	0.20
Right-Left Ideology	0.51	0.19	0.51	0.16	0.53	0.21

Questions:

Majoritarianism

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? *Making majority decisions is better than trying to get the widest agreement possible.*

Authoritarianism: additive scale based on —

How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

A few strong leaders could make this country better than all the laws and talk.

What young people need most is strict discipline by their parents.

Efficacy: reversed additive scale based on —

And how much do you agree or disagree with these opinions?

People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Most members of Parliament are out of touch with the rest of the country.

I don't think politicians and public servants care much about what people like me think.

Right-Left Ideology

'In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. If you can, where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and 10 means the most right?

Table 4 displays means and standard deviations of the remaining independent variables for the two elections in question. A mean of 0.5 would indicate an electorate finely balanced between two positions. The figures reveal a New Zealand electorate that leans strongly towards majoritarianism and authoritarianism. Although somewhat fragmentary and impressionistic, several studies suggest a strong presence of authoritarianism in New Zealand culture in the past (Chapman 1953; Pearson 1974; Ausubel 1960; Bedggood 1975). The data also indicates a relatively low level of efficacy, and more marginally, a slight bias towards the right.

Table 5 reports maximum-minimum probability estimates of the net effects of the various independent variables on coalition/single party government preferences, derived from a multinomial logit model. For a full analysis, it includes the 'don't know' category. The base category against which statistical significance has been assessed is single party government. The base category against which voting groups are assessed in 2005 is a National party voter, expected to be the least favourable towards coalitions. Interpretation is best aided by an example: net of the effects of all other variables in the model (including the strength and locus of party identification), and compared to a National party voter, a person voting for a small party is 25 per cent less likely to favour single-party government. In reference to preferences for single-party government, this estimate is significant both for those who have no preference about type of government, and those who favour coalitions. In comparison to a National party voter, a voter for a small party is 23 per cent more likely to favour coalition government, and 2 per cent less likely not to have an opinion on the matter.

The 1999 and 2002 models take the base category for voting as small party voters, allowing National voters to appear up front in the model as a direct control for expectations and winning and losing. Both of these models indicate that National voters expecting Labour to win are less likely to prefer coalition government, contrary to expectations. This is only significant at the 2002 election.

Table 5 about here

The effects of party identification are estimated by a main effect variable for strength of party identification and two interactions with National and Labour identifications. The main effect therefore estimates the effects of small party identifications. These are not significant in 2005 although they are in the expected direction, and are significant in 1999. The strength of partisan commitment to the two main parties has the expected effects, but they are stronger for National than for Labour, and much more so in 2005. The effect in 1999 may be smaller because of the addition of National expectations of Labour-led government to this model. A strategic party vote variable identifying those who did not vote for the party they ‘most liked’ completes the list of ‘rationality’ variables, but it is only available in the post-election sample from 2005: as expected, strategic party voters are 4 per cent more likely to favour coalitions than sincere voters, and 8 per cent less likely to favour single-party government.

The 2002 campaign survey did not include a question measuring the strength of party identification, so only identifications as such can be included in the model. This may explain the strength and direction of the expectations estimate in this election: it

may be an artefact associated with less partisan National voters, variation not captured by a simple categorical variable for identification.

Among the normative variables, those whose politics are to the left are significantly more likely to favour coalition for all three elections. As vote, partisanship and its strength are already taken into account, this remaining effect provides strong evidence for norms and ideology. However, the attempt to directly assess the effects of majoritarian versus consensual norms failed to reach significance in 2005 except for the don't knows, who were significantly less likely to be majoritarian when asked about their preferred mode of decision-making. Asked to choose between the types of government put before them, this group by definition could not immediately decide, so perhaps one can understand their disposition toward the consensus model.

In an initial 2005 model, authoritarianism also had quite strong effects in the expected direction, but it was found to correlate with age. Age also had a strong effect, younger people being more disposed to coalitions. An interaction reduces the main effects of both variables to insignificance in 2005, but indicates that authoritarianism and age work together in their influence on preferences for type of government. Young people are less authoritarian, and tend to prefer coalitions. Older people are more authoritarian, and tend to prefer single party government. An authoritarian age interaction was non-significant in the 1999 model, and was dropped. Authoritarians consistently tend to prefer single-party government in all models, but the tendency for younger people to favour coalitions only appears in 2002, and is significant in the absence of the interaction. With the interaction between age and authoritarianism in

the model, it goes in the other direction, young authoritarians being particularly in favour of single-party government, older non-authoritarians being particularly in favour of coalitions, against the overall tendency of other members of their age cohorts. Age effects indicate that young people, more opposed to coalitions in 1999, shift toward support in 2002 and 2005. One could hypothesise this as a learning effect, not necessarily expected to take effect after only one experience of coalition. In fact, the experience of the first post-PR coalition was very negative (Karp and Bowler 2001). It is reasonable to expect young people to be more sensitive to this experience than others, and to infer that they may have responded to the experience of more successful coalition and minority governments since 1999 but moving to a more favourable position.

Finally, political efficacy has the expected effects but only in 2005. This may be because the perceptions associated with these effects are likely to become more salient after the result of the election is known. Addition of some social controls indicates that women and the university educated are consistently more prone to favour coalition government.

The findings have various implications. Party preferences and their strength have major effects on what type of government voters may favour. This paper has not sought to deny such effects, but instead has made the case that, after they are accounted for, norms and values have additional and quite powerful effects. Right to left ideology stands out, and authoritarianism when interacted with age, although this is a more recent phenomenon. More precise analysis of the effects of ideology would be a good focus for further research, particularly as ideology effects appear to remain independent of

majoritarian-consensus values that have little or no impact. The data does indicate that majoritarianism remains strongly entrenched in New Zealand political culture despite a consistent preference for coalition governments that retains a small but substantive majority status. Majoritarianism correlates weakly with authoritarianism and with age, and is thus somewhat in decline among younger New Zealanders. Declining authoritarianism could be perhaps the most sensitive harbinger of the possibility of cultural change, although there is no indication of such a decline over the period of the three elections in question. With evidence of authoritarianism in longer-term decline, one could infer with caution that however understood, coalition governments could become even more acceptable in New Zealand in the future. However, as younger voters appear more sensitive to coalition performance than others, this longer-term prognosis would require the continuation of coalition and minority governments like those since 1999: governments perceived to be successful and relatively stable.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D. J. and Sanford, R. N., 1950, *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Anderson, Christopher J., Andre Blais, Shaun Bowler, and Todd Donovan, 2005. *Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Ausubel, D. 1960, *The Fern and the Tiki*. Sydney, Angus & Robertson.
- Bedggood, D. 1975, 'Conflict and Consensus: Political Ideology in New Zealand' , in S. Levine (ed.), *New Zealand Politics, A Reader*. Melbourne, Cheshire.
- Benoit K, D., Giannetti D, and M. Laver, 2006. 'Voter strategies with restricted choice menus' *British Journal of Political Science* 36: 459-485.
- Blais, Andre, John H. Aldrich, Indridi H Indridason, and Renan Levine, 'Do voters vote for government coalitions? Testing downs' pessimistic conclusion' *Party Politics* 12 (6): 691-705.
- Blais, Andre and Louis Massicote. 1997. 'Electoral Formulas: A Macroscopic Perspective' *European Journal of Political Research* 32, 1, 107-29.
- Bowler, S., and Donovan, T., 2007. 'Reasoning about Institutional Change: Winners, Losers and Support for Electoral Reform.' *British Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming.
- Bowler, S., and Donovan, T., and Karp, J., 2006. 'Why Politicians Like Electoral Institutions: Self-interest, Values, or Ideology?' *Journal of Politics*. 2006. 68(2): 434-446.
- Brockington, David, 2004, 'The Paradox of Proportional Representation: The Effect of Party Systems and Coalitions on Individuals' Electoral Participation' *Political Studies*, 52, 3, 469-490.
- Caprara G.V., Schwartz S, Capanna C, Vecchione M, Barbaranelli C., 2006. 'Personality and politics: Values, traits, and political choice' *Political Psychology* 27 (1): 1-28.
- Chapman, R. M. 1953, 'Fiction and the Social Pattern', *Landfall*, 25, 33-47.
- Cox, Gary, 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Downs, Anthony, 1957, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, Harper and Row.
- Dorussen H, and Taylor M., 2001. 'The political context of issue-priority voting: coalitions and economic voting in the Netherlands, 1970-1999' *Electoral Studies* 20 (3): 399-426.
- Ekehammer B, N., Akrami, M. Gylje, I Zakrisson, 2004. 'What matters most to prejudice: Big five personality, social dominance orientation, or right-wing authoritarianism?' *European Journal of Personality* 18, 6, 463-482.
- Evans, Jocelyn A., 2004. *Voters and Voting*. London, Sage.

- Glasgow G., Alvarez R.M. 2005. 'Voting behavior and the electoral context of government formation' *Electoral Studies* 24 (2): 245-264.
- Janowitz, M., and Marvick, D. 1953, 'Authoritarianism and Political Behaviour' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 17, 185-201.
- Karp, Jeffrey A. and Shaun Bowler. 2001. 'Coalition Politics and Satisfaction with Democracy: Explaining New Zealand's Reaction to Proportional Representation' *European Journal of Political Research* 40, 1, 57-79.
- Karp, J., 2007. 'Reforming the Electoral College and Support for Proportional Outcomes', *Representation*, forthcoming.
- Katz, Richard, 1997. *Democracy and Elections*. New York: Oxford University Press,
- Kedar, O., 2005. 'When moderate voters prefer extreme parties: Policy balancing in parliamentary elections' *American Political Science Review* 99 (2): 185-199.
- Lamare, J. and Vowles, J., 'Party Interests, Public Opinion, and Institutional Preferences: Electoral System Change in New Zealand', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 31, 3 1996, 321-346.
- Laver M., 1998. 'Models of government formation' *Annual Review of Political Science* 1: 1-25.
- Lijphart, A. 1984. *Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, A., 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Listhaug, Ola and M. Wiberg, 1995 'Confidence in Political and Private Institutions' in Hans-Dieter Klingeman and Dieter Fuchs, eds, *Citizens and the State*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Mair, P., 1996. 'Party Systems and Structures of Competition', in LeDuc, L, and Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris, *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Miller, Raymond and Jeffrey Karp, 2004. 'A Vote for Coalition Government?' in Vowles, J., Aimer, P., Karp, J, Banducci, S., Miller, R, ed.. *Voters' Veto: The 2002 Election in New Zealand and the Consolidation of Minority Government*. Auckland, Auckland University Press.
- Pearson, B. 1974. *Fretful Sleepers and Other Essays*. Auckland, Heinemann.
- Powell, G.B., 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Schofeld, Norman and Itai Sened, 2006. *Multi-Party Democracy: Elections and Legislative Politics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Van Hiel, Alain, Bart Duriez, Malgorzata Kossowska, 2006. 'The presence of left-wing authoritarianism in Western Europe and its relationship with conservative ideology' *Political Psychology* 27, 5, 769-793.
- Vowles, J., 2003. 'Voting Behaviour' in Miller, R., ed., *New Zealand Government and Politics*, 3rd ed. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Vowles, J., 'New Zealand: Consolidation of Reform?' in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell, ed., *The Politics of Electoral Systems* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, 295-312.

Vowles, Jack, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci and Peter Aimer, 2002. 'Public Opinion, Political Knowledge, and the Electoral System', in Vowles, J., Aimer, P., Karp, J, Banducci, S., Miller, R, and Sullivan, A., *Proportional Representation on Trial: The 1999 Election in New Zealand and the Fate of MMP*. Auckland, Auckland University Press

Table 5: Coalition versus Single Party Government — Probability estimates from MNL Model

Base category: One Party Probabilities at -	2005				1999 panel				2002 panel						
	One Party	DK	Coalition		One Party	DK	Coalition		One Party	DK	Coalition				
Rationality															
Vote Small Party	-0.25	0.02	**	0.23	**										
Vote National					0.26	-0.01	*	-0.25	0.15	-0.01		-0.14	**		
Vote Labour	-0.09	0.04	**	0.05	*	0.16	-0.01	*	-0.16	0.27	-0.01	**	-0.26	**	
No Vote	-0.08	0.10	**	-0.02		0.07	0.09	**	-0.16	0.05	0.09	**	-0.14	*	
Strength of Party ID ²	-0.10	-0.02		0.12		-0.17	0.01		0.16	*					
Labour ID * PI strength ²	0.24	-0.03		-0.21	**	0.19	-0.01	*	-0.18	**					
National ID * PI strength ²	0.40	-0.04	**	-0.36	**	0.21	0.00		-0.20	**					
Strategic Party Vote ¹	-0.08	0.04	**	0.04	*										
Small Party ID									-0.16	0.01			0.15	**	
Labour ID									-0.01	0.02	*		-0.01		
National ID									0.18	-0.01			-0.17	**	
Norms															
Ideology (Right)	0.10	0.11	**	-0.21	*	0.32	-0.01		-0.31	**	0.27	-0.01		-0.26	**
Majority not consensus	0.14	-0.14	**	-0.01											
Authoritarianism	0.08	-0.21	**	0.13		0.20	-0.01		-0.19	**	0.65	-0.08	*	-0.57	**
Other															
Efficacy	-0.15	-0.04		0.19	**	-0.01	0.00		0.02		-0.01	-0.02		0.03	
University Degree	-0.08	-0.03		0.11	**	-0.11	0.01		0.10	**	-0.07	0.01	*	0.06	*
Female	-0.11	0.03	**	0.08	**	-0.07	0.01	*	0.06	**	-0.07	0.01		0.06	**
Age	-0.02	-0.27	**	0.30		-0.10	0.03	*	0.07		0.46	-0.06		-0.40	**
Authoritarianism * Age	0.19	0.35		-0.55	**						-0.69	0.15		0.54	*
National vote Labour to win					0.13	-0.03		-0.10	0.30	0.01			-0.30	*	
Labour vote National to win					-0.03	-0.01		0.03	0.05	-0.01			-0.04		

¹ Strategic Party Vote is estimated as those whose party vote was inconsistent with their response to 'On election day, which party did you like the most?'

² Party identification scale: 1=very strong, 0.75= fairly strong, 0.5= not very strong, 0.25=close to a party, 0=no identification.

** significant at below .01

* significant below .05

APPENDIX: MNL Model, Table 5, Coefficients and Standard Errors

Base category: One Party	2005					1999 pre-election					2002 pre-election				
	DK		Coalition			DK		Coalition			DK		Coalition		
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE		Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE.	Coef.	SE		
Vote Small Party	1.08 **	0.29	1.21 **	0.18											
Vote National					-0.85 *	0.43	-1.06 **	0.16		-0.72	0.62	-0.60 **	0.19		
Vote Labour	0.82 **	0.26	0.32 *	0.15	-0.84 *	0.42	-0.66 **	0.15		-0.94 **	0.34	-1.11 **	0.13		
No Vote	1.24 **	0.23	0.18	0.15	1.68 **	0.46	-0.52	0.34		1.37 **	0.37	-0.44 *	0.21		
Strength Party ID	-0.11	0.40	0.49	0.26	0.80	0.73	0.67 *	0.32							
Strength Labour ID	-1.10	0.43	-0.97 **	0.27	-1.46 *	0.73	-0.76 **	0.29							
Strength National ID	-1.53 **	0.47	-1.71 **	0.29	-0.66	0.64	-0.84 **	0.26							
Small Party ID										0.70	0.47	0.64 **	0.20		
Labour ID										0.63 *	0.32	-0.02	0.12		
National ID										-0.67	0.45	-0.75 **	0.14		
Strategic Party Vote	0.70 **	0.19	0.30 *	0.13											
Ideology (Right)	1.29 **	0.46	-0.67 *	0.26	-0.13	0.08	-0.13 **	0.03		-0.08	0.08	-0.11 **	0.03		
Authoritarianism	-2.28 **	0.73	0.02	0.47	-0.84	0.77	-0.81 **	0.30		-4.18 *	1.94	-3.12 **	0.82		
Majority	-1.99 **	0.37	-0.42	0.22											
Efficacy	-0.17	0.42	0.75 **	0.25	-0.12	0.79	0.07	0.31		-0.63	0.66	0.07	0.25		
University Degree	-0.28	0.20	0.40 **	0.11	0.70	0.36	0.43 **	0.15		0.56 *	0.26	0.28 *	0.11		
Female	0.70 **	0.15	0.42 **	0.09	0.63 *	0.28	0.28 **	0.11		0.37	0.23	0.27 **	0.09		
Age	-3.39 **	1.15	0.56	0.67	0.97 *	0.44	0.26	0.17		-0.05	0.02	-0.03 **	0.01		
Authoritarianism *															
Age	2.08	1.67	-1.96 **	0.95						0.06	0.04	0.04 *	0.02		
National vote Labour win					-30.33	>30	-0.46	0.37		-0.26	1.22	-1.50 *	0.71		
Labour vote National win					-0.42	0.77	0.12 **	0.23		-0.44	0.71	-0.17	0.19		
constant	0.70	0.63	0.42	0.40	-1.89 *	0.85	1.42	0.33		0.94	1.27	3.07 **	0.56		
Number of obs	2718				1681					2510					
Pseudo R2	0.129				0.076					0.087					
Log likelihood	-2228				-1282					-1885					