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The Strange Death of Labourism: Class Realignment in Britain and New Zealand?

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Abstract

For most of the 20th century, political scientists gave social class a central importance in explaining voter behaviour. Electoral studies in Britain and New Zealand during the 1960s confirmed that a majority of people voted along class lines. In the following decade, however, electoral volatility and a decline in political participation meant the historic class-party alignment began to weaken. During the 1980s, a new consensus emerged around ‘dealignment’ theory and political scientists no longer considered social class to be the main explanatory variable for voter behaviour in Britain or New Zealand.

Greater weight was given to new cleavages based on ‘post-material’ issues, such as environmentalism, race and gender. Electoral competition was increasingly explained with reference to the ideological convergence of political parties and ‘valence’ factors. Thus, in the early 21st century, only a small rear-guard of political sociologists continues to defend the importance of class in electoral studies. Labour Party victories in Britain and New Zealand during the late 1990s and early 2000s have been attributed to middle-class support.

Yet analysis of occupational data from post-election studies in Britain and New Zealand reveals that Labour Parties consistently polled much higher with the working-class than they did the middle-class. While it is true that neither British Labour nor New Zealand Labour could have been elected without having a broad, cross-class appeal, the evidence suggests that the strategy was only successful insofar as those parties could maintain a relative majority of working-class voters. This provided them with a bedrock of electoral support and a ‘competitive advantage’ over centre-right parties.

In the 2010s, however, any lead that Labour Parties had with the working-class has withered away. The thesis argues that this represents a significant departure from established patterns of voting in Britain and New Zealand. In Britain, the evidence is stronger for a ‘secular realignment’, with Labour losing more working-class support to other parties. In New Zealand, however, it is found that Labour has suffered more from lower turnout.

Dedicated to my maternal grandparents, Bill and Chrissy Potts

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Introduction

In his iconoclastic book, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935), George Dangerfield put forth the argument that the sudden and inexorable decline of the Liberal Party in the 1920s had a sociological explanation. The origins of this decline, Dangerfield argued, were not to be found in the aftermath of World War I, but in decades of social change. The rise of working-class politics, the struggle for women's suffrage, and Home Rule in Ireland forced major political change on England. It was the failure of the Liberal Party to respond to these changes that lay behind its electoral decline. *The Strange Death of Liberal England* remains controversial because it challenges the orthodox view that the Liberals were casualties of war. But the idea that a once great political party can be lost in history, a victim of circumstance or of its own failure, is one political scientists must take seriously. The election of Donald J. Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; the decision of British electors to leave the European Union; and the rise in support for populist political movements across continental Europe remind us that political change can be climactic.

The following work is an attempt to understand and explain the recent decline in electoral strength of the British and New Zealand Labour Parties. The central hypothesis can be summed up in one sentence: the working-class puts Labour in power, and the working-class keeps Labour from power. The thesis argues that British Labour and New Zealand Labour have failed to mobilise the working-class in great enough numbers. Others have argued that 'dealignment' means people no longer vote along class lines. The following thesis argues that the Labour Parties of Britain and New Zealand continued to rely on a bedrock of working-class support through the 1990s and into the 2000s. Their relative strength with working-class voters gave them a competitive advantage over centre-right parties. In fact, the success of both parties in the last 30 years correlated with higher levels of support among working-class voters. The thesis argues that in the 2010s, however, both parties experienced a substantial decline in working-class support relative to other parties and relative to the middle-class. In the following chapters, the thesis will place the decline in broader historical context to demonstrate the extent of changes in the working-class vote. The thesis also considers the relationship between this decline, the rise in non-voting and the emergence of conservative populist parties. It shall be argued that the electoral decline of the British and New Zealand Labour Parties can be attributed in part to the secular realignment of working-class voters.

Chapter 1 will review the literature of class voting and electoral studies in Britain and New Zealand. It proposes a conceptual framework for analysing changes in the pattern of class voting across time. The terms of reference and methodology are then explained in detail. Chapter 2 makes the case for labourism as a political ideology that defined the centre-left in Britain and New Zealand during the 20th century. It argues that the British and New Zealand Labour Parties were only successful when their leaders mobilised the working-class vote. In government, however, the Labour Parties always struggled to govern on a class basis and their relationship with the working-class became increasingly strained after World War II. The core assumptions of labourism were challenged throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter 3 then discusses how the Labour Parties of Britain and New Zealand returned to electoral dominance after many years in the political wilderness. It demonstrates that, while both parties deliberately chose to pursue a broad, cross-class appeal in the 1990s, the success of this strategy had as much to do with mobilising the working-class vote as it did the middle-class. The 1997 landslide victory of British Labour, under the leadership of Tony Blair, correlated with the party's highest level of working-class support since 1979. The success of Helen Clark and New Zealand Labour in 1999 also correlated with a rise in working-class support. The Third Way had supplanted labourism as the main ideology of the centre-left, but Labour's class appeal survived in Britain and New Zealand. Finally, Chapter 4 prosecutes the case that a collapse in working-class support for the British and New Zealand Labour is behind the failure of those parties in 2014 and 2015.

The thesis contends that, while most voters no longer vote along class lines, the recent collapse in working-class support for Labour Parties in Britain and New Zealand is unprecedented. The thesis does not seek to explain causation, however. Rather, the purpose is to analyse and document the changes. In Britain, it argues that the loss of working-class voters to the Conservatives and the United Kingdom Independence Party was a significant factor in the collapse of 'New Labour'. In New Zealand, lower turnout among working-class voters correlates with a loss of working-class support for Labour, while minor parties have increased their share of the working-class vote over successive elections. Thus, the electoral decline of Labour Parties in Britain and New Zealand during the 2010s is different in nature to that which the parties have experienced before. There is substantial evidence for the secular realignment of working-class voters in Britain and New Zealand. Whether the decline in electoral support for the British and New Zealand Labour Parties can be reversed may depend on the parties' capacity to recapture the working-class vote.

Chapter 1: Concepts and Methods

The argument this thesis puts forth is that the nature of electoral decline experienced by the British and New Zealand Labour Parties in the 2010s is consistent with secular realignment. Secular realignment theory postulates that “... the rise and fall of parties may to some degree be the consequence of trends that perhaps persist over decades and elections may mark only steps in a more or less continuous creation of new loyalties and decay of old” (Key 1959, 198). Therefore, the characteristics of a secular realignment can be identified in trends that have developed gradually over many elections. For example, secular realignment would be revealed if changes to the social composition of a party’s electoral support are mirrored in that of others. The proposition motivating this study, therefore, is that the recent decline in electoral support for British and New Zealand Labour is different in nature to that which the parties have experienced before.

It is hypothesised that the long-term decline of British and New Zealand Labour correlates with a substantial loss of working-class support relative to middle-class support. While this argument is consistent with the “dilemma of electoral socialism” expounded by Adam Przeworski and John Sprague (1986), the thesis contends that electoral strategies intended to broaden support were successful only insofar as those parties could maintain relatively high levels of working-class support. First, the study will track the loss of support for British Labour and New Zealand among the working-class since the 1960s. Second, the study will compare historical and contemporary voting patterns to demonstrate that, until the 2010s, British and New Zealand Labour maintained a ‘competitive advantage’ with working-class voters relative to the Conservative and National Parties. The study will then consider evidence that the recent electoral decline of Labour Parties can be attributed to a rise in non-class voting and support for alternative parties. The research will be operationalised in terms of voting and occupational class as measured in the British Election Study (BES) and the New Zealand Election Study (NZES).

Conceptual Framework

First, it is important to clarify what the study is *not*. Specifically, it is not an attempt to establish cause and effect. Over the last 50 years, electoral studies have identified a number of different approaches to the science of voter behaviour. In particular, there is a large body of

evidence to support the claim that, for many people, voting is ‘instrumental’ rather than ‘expressive’ (Heath et al. 1985, 8-10). That is to say, people vote for a particular outcome rather than to make a statement of identity or philosophy. In a seminal article, Donald E. Stokes (1963) argued that most voters in advanced democracies broadly agree on the social and economic objectives of government. This account of voter behaviour gives much greater weight to ‘valence’ issues over ideology and social background. Paul Whiteley, Harold Clarke, David Sanders and Marianne Stewart (2013) thus explain, “voters make choices primarily on the basis of rival parties’ perceived abilities to deliver policy outcomes on salient issues involving broad consensus about what governments should do” (pp. 1-2).

But there is also evidence that the voter is responsive to other types of appeal. A strong case has been made for the continued relevance of class politics in advanced democracies (see Evans 1999; Evans and de Graaf 2013). The following thesis shall accept the multi-causal nature of voting. Most importantly, it shares the view of Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice (1985) that instrumental and expressive voting are “complementary aspects of political behaviour”. Therefore, the study is not concerned with *how* or *why* an individual voter makes the decision they do. Rather, it is concerned with the consequences of that decision for political parties. The objective is to place recent cross-national electoral developments within a conceptual framework for the purposes of description, comparison and understanding. To that end, the study will appropriate the framework developed from the ideas of V.O Key (1955, 1959). Key proposed a theory of ‘critical elections’ and ‘secular realignment’ to describe major changes in the American party system.

The process of secular alignment can alter the contours of party support over a long period, through gradual change. Alternatively, critical realignments occur when there are sudden changes in the ideological basis of party competition and the social basis of party support. Key’s ideas were developed into a typology of elections by Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller and Donald Stokes (1960). The authors proposed three basic types of election: maintaining, deviating, and realigning. A *maintaining election* is defined as one in which “the pattern of partisan attachments prevailing in the preceding period persists” (p. 531). Most elections fit into this category. A *deviating election* occurs when short-term factors – such as personalities and events – disturb the regular pattern of voting and cause a temporary shift in party support. In other words, “more people than usual will cross party lines in casting their

votes” (p. 533).¹ But this change typically lasts for one election cycle before the pattern of voting returns to ‘normal’. The third type of election is more epochal. *Realigning elections* occur when voters previously loyal to one party switch their allegiance to a rival party and remain with that party in subsequent elections. For much of the post-war period, however, electoral competition in Western democracies has largely been understood in terms of cyclical fluctuations whereby “each [major] party's vote goes up and then down with the long-run equilibrium giving each the same average share of the vote and a similar period in office” (Rose 1992). Realignments by their nature are rare and epochal.

Since the 1960s, the schema outlined above has provided a basic framework for the historical periodisation of party systems in the USA. Most of the literature has focused on the critical rather than the secular dimension. Walter Dean Burnham (1970) ventured that realignments occur at regular intervals. According to Burnham, patterns in voting behaviour are altered by changes in socioeconomic circumstances and the failure of elites to address new political demands. These pressures culminate in critical elections marked by unusually high voter turnout and a reorganisation of existing party support bases. These moments of radical change in the party system are then followed by long periods of stability. Burnham concluded that this cycle began in 1828 and recurred several times. Burnham referred to these alternating states as ‘punctuated equilibria’. The theory of realignment is contentious, however (Ladd 1990; Mack 2010, 47-49; Mayhew 2004). Much of the criticism has centred on the lack of a realignment in the second half of the 20th century. James L. Sundquist (1983) has argued that critical elections only occur when the party system is disrupted by the emergence of a new issue cleavage.

The framework of Campbell et al. (1960) has also been used to analyse electoral changes in Britain during the 20th century. David Butler and Donald Stokes (1974) found evidence to support the thesis in Britain, where they argued a realignment had occurred during the 1920s. Subsequent elections maintained the new class-party alignment. Though there were short-term shifts in party support, these were cyclical fluctuations, rather than the result of structural change. Pippa Norris and Geoffrey Evans (1999) expanded on this approach in their comparative analysis of elections post-1945. They argued that the strong surge of support for the Social Democratic-Liberal Alliance during the 1980s could be regarded as “a short-term

¹ The concept of ‘dealigning’ elections was later developed by Ronald Inglehart and Avram Hochstein (1972). Subsequently, Paul Allen Beck (1979) used a modified version of the Converse et al. typology to include this additional category.

deviation in the usual pattern of party support” and considered 1983 the classic deviating election. Norris and Evans (1999) then went on to ask if the 1997 election had been a realigning election and, if so, whether the realignment was ‘secular’ or ‘critical’. Critical realignments, as discussed above, are associated with the emergence of new issues and cleavages. As Key wrote, “Only events with widespread and powerful impact or issues touching deep emotions produce abrupt change” (p. 198). Norris and Evans (1999) speculated that the fracturing of the Conservative Party on the issue of European integration had distorted the left/right basis of British politics and represented a new cleavage.

In their final analysis, however, Norris and Evans (1999) were not persuaded that 1997 was a realigning election. The evidence, they argued, was for a continuing pattern of dealignment. This was consistent with the ideological convergence of political parties on traditional left/right issues rather than the emergence and polarisation of new issue cleavages. In New Zealand, Jack Vowles (1997) reached a similar conclusion about voting patterns during the 1980s and 1990s. Though there had been changes in the relative importance of traditional cleavages, he found no evidence of a critical election. The consensus in Britain and New Zealand at the turn of the 20th century was more or less the same: the old class-party alignment had weakened considerably, but no new pattern of stable voting had emerged to replace it. The status quo was therefore one of large swings from election to election, with increasing support for third parties. In other words, irregular deviations from election to election had become the new norm. Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice (1985) called it ‘trendless fluctuation’. Whether or not this would eventually lead to a form of realignment was uncertain. Jeremy M. Stonecash (2004) has argued that, in the American context at least, dealignment was in fact the beginning of a secular realignment. In New Zealand, Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer (1993) have made a similar argument, contending that dealignment is an “ephemeral condition which leads to realignment” (p.220).

With much of the academic discussion revolving around ‘critical elections’, the literature has devoted somewhat less attention to the alternative theory of secular realignment. Key (1959, 198-199) postulated that realignment could be a gradual, long-term process operating ‘inexorably, and almost imperceptibly, election after election, to form new party alignments and to build new party groupings’. A secular realignment, he explained, could be regarded as ‘a movement of the members of a population category’ from party to party extending over several elections (Key 1959, 199). Such movement, Key contended, would be

independent of short-term political factors. According to Stonecash (2004, 150), the study of secular realignment involves the interpretation of ‘political changes over a long period of time and creating a narrative that explains the sources of the gradual shifts’. Vowles argues that the most obvious evidence of secular realignment can be found in substantial changes to the patterns of party support among a particular group (1997, 185). Scholarship of the 1997 general election in Britain found evidence of a shift in party identification from the Conservatives to Labour among young women, suggesting a potential realignment in party support caused by generational value changes (Evans & Norris 1999, 270-271). Vowles (1997) found some evidence of a similar pattern with the distribution of urban and rural votes in New Zealand during the 1980s.

Thus far, the literature has yet to offer a comparative study of long-term changes in working-class support for the British and New Zealand Labour Parties during the 21st century. The author’s ambition is to provide a modest contribution to that end. The thesis will compare historical patterns of support for the two parties with recent developments. These changes will be analysed within the election typology originally proposed by Converse et al. (1960) and developed by a number of other authors. By subjecting the present class-party alignment to a long-term comparison, it is expected that we will gain a better understanding of recent electoral developments in Britain and New Zealand. Central to this thesis is the proposition that support for British Labour and New Zealand Labour continued to have a class basis during the late 20th century. It was this electoral foundation on which Tony Blair and Helen Clark led their parties out of the political wilderness and into government. While it is true that, by the mid-1990s, neither party could rely on a majority of working-class voters to remain loyal, as they had in the past, it would be wrong to interpret this as conclusive evidence that class voting was dead. The success of any ‘catch-all’ electoral strategy depended on relatively higher levels of working-class support for the centre-left. The thesis contends that the loss of this ‘competitive advantage’ over the centre-right poses an existential threat to Labour parties, and is fundamentally different in nature to the challenges they have encountered before.

The Operationalisation of Social Class

Traditionally, political scientists in Britain and New Zealand have preferred a two-class model that equates the ‘middle-class’ with non-manual employment and the ‘working-class’ with manual employment (Heath et al. 1985; Vowles 1992). The approach was challenged by Heath

et al. (1985) in their analysis of the 1983 BES. The authors developed an alternative five-class schema derived from the work of sociologist John Goldthorpe (Heath et al. 1985, 13-16; 25-27). The new approach treated rank and file manual employees as distinct from foremen and technicians. It further made a distinction between those in managerial or professional positions and routine non-manual employees. The self-employed were also considered to be in a class of their own (the 'petit bourgeoisie'). While BES analysis post-1983 has typically used the Goldthorpe schema to operationalise social class, the BES continued to code occupational data with reference to the manual/non-manual dichotomy until 2005. During the 1990s and 2000s, BES respondents were coded using the UK Government's 'Social Class based on Occupation' (SC).

Both the Goldthorpe schema and the manual/non-manual approach were used by Clarke et al. (2004) in their analysis of the 2001 election. However, subsequent BES analysis of social class has relied exclusively on the 'National Statistics Socioeconomic Classification' (NS-SEC) which formally replaced SC in the 2001 Census. The NS-SEC is based on the Goldthorpe schema and is thus concerned primarily with employment relations rather than type of work. Therefore, the NS-SEC does not lend itself to a manual/non-manual approach. As David Rose, David J, Pevalin and Karen O'Reilly (2005) argue, "... the manual/non-manual divide is simply not a meaningful distinction given the nature of work and occupations in 21st century market economies" (p. 6). One version of the NS-SEC proposes a three-class hierarchy of 'higher', 'intermediate' and 'lower occupations'. In this schema, manual and non-manual routine or semi-routine workers are categorised as 'lower occupations'. The NS-SEC also regards the self-employed and small business-owners as distinct, placing them in the intermediate category, along with some service and clerical occupations.

The New Zealand literature on electoral studies has relied almost entirely on the manual/non-manual dichotomy. Critically, Vowles (1992) applied the Goldthorpe schema and two alternatives to the 1987-1990 NZES. When the percentage of 'workers' voting for Labour in the Goldthorpe schema is compared to the percentage of manual workers voting Labour in a dichotomised class model, the numbers are more or less the same (pp. 98-102). In 1987, we find that the difference was a mere one percentage point (56 percent to 55 percent). In 1990, the difference was two percentage points (41 percent to 39 percent). Based on these findings, analysis of the NZES continued to use a basic manual/non-manual dichotomy (Vowles 2014a). Respondents' occupations have been coded using the International Standard Classification of

Occupations (ISCO) on which the official Australian and New Zealand Standard of Classification (ANZCO) and its predecessors are based.

As we have seen, the NS-SEC does not allow for a manual/non-manual dichotomy post-2005. This poses a significant challenge to any comparative study of class voting in Britain and New Zealand during the 2010s. However, Marxist analyses of the New Zealand class structure have long categorised routine non-manual employees as part of the working-class (Hayes 2002; Roper 2005; Stevens 1978). In some of his analyses, Vowles (2014a) has also broadened the definition of working-class to include those employed in service occupations. If low-skilled and non-skilled occupations in the ISCO are grouped together, it is possible to come up with a *faute de mieux* approximation for the NZES. Of course, such an approach has flaws. The most significant of these is that the ISCO does not allow for the identification of those in self-employment. It is likely that some who fall into a ‘lower occupations’ category may in fact belong to an intermediate category as per the NS-SEC. Nevertheless, the approach outlined here does allow for the categorisation of most routine or semi-routine manual and service workers together in a way that makes a comparison between the NZES and BES possible.

Table 1.1

Three-class model

NS-SEC classification	Occupational categories
Higher	Managerial and professional
Intermediate	Intermediate occupations, small employers, own-account workers
Lower (working-class)	Routine and manual workers

Source: Rose, Pevalin and O'Reilly (2005)

During the 1960s and 1970s, electoral studies tended to use a head of household procedure to operationalise social class. The procedure had major implications for the role of gender in politics. Political scientists and sociologists made the crude assumption that a man is the primary source of income for any given household and his occupation therefore determines the social class of other household members. The head of household procedure in the BES was first challenged by Heath et al. (1985). The authors argued that, contrary to earlier assumptions about gender, the experience of married women in the workforce was likely to have a substantial influence on their voting behaviour.² As such, each individual respondent was

² Melanie Nolan (2003) has argued that the number of married women in paid employment during the 1950s challenged the ‘male breadwinner model’ in Australia and New Zealand. Sandra Coney (1993) has also analysed long-term changes in the labour force participation of New Zealand women.

classified by their own occupation. The approach found no major differences in the voting behaviour of men and women or between married and single women within a class (Heath et al. 1985, 22-23). Vowles (1992, 105) later trialled the alternative approach in his analysis of the 1987 and 1990 NZES data. Very small differences were found and, according to Vowles, the ‘individualist’ method suggested a slightly higher level of class voting than the head of household procedure. This was at variance with Rose and McAllister’s (1986) finding that the reverse was true in Britain.

Subsequently, Vowles (2014a) has continued to use the male head of household procedure in the analysis of NZES data because it “reflects the tendency of males to have higher job status and higher pay than females” (p. 39). While this is a reasonable assumption to make, it presupposes a traditional division of labour within the family, and further assumes that household status is more important than individual employment when it comes to a person’s class consciousness. The thesis does not challenge the validity of this method. Rather, it seeks to complement existing work by offering a different perspective. Given the wider acceptance of the individualist approach in British political science, the individualist approach has been used here. That said, reference will be made to studies using the household approach prior to 1983 in Britain, and prior to 1990 in New Zealand where there is no alternative available.

Method

Analysis of the BES and the NZES datasets was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 and Excel 2016 for Windows. The BES data covered the period 1983-2015. The NZES data covered the period 1990-2014. However, the main focus of the study was comparing results in 2010-15 (UK) and 2011-14 (NZ) with 1997-2001 (UK) and 1999-2002 (NZ). Though the precise wording of questions has differed between the NZES and BES, as well as over time, both studies have measured voting and occupation. For the purposes of this thesis, major occupational groups were recoded into a three-class model based on the NS-SES. The respondents’ class was then cross-tabulated with their vote by party. All of these cases were weighted to ensure the samples were representative of the general population. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Further information is contained in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Changes in the frequency of working-class support for the British and New Zealand Labour Parties will be compared over time and cross-nationally. However, a direct comparison

of class voting in the 2010s and the post-war period is not feasible. We must instead rely on the manual/non-manual dichotomy to construct a picture of historical class voting in Britain and New Zealand. Chapter 2 will draw on a number of secondary sources for data on household voting in the post-war period (Heath et al. 1985; Robinson 1967; Sarlvik & Crewe 1983; Vowles 1992, 2014). Chapter 3 will use the manual/non-manual dichotomy to analyse the BES and NZES in the period 1987-1999. The comparison of working-class support for British and New Zealand Labour will demonstrate that the electoral appeal of labourism has endured under very different circumstances.

Literature Review

The rise, fall, and resurrection of class voting in electoral studies. Two seminal works published on opposite sides of the Atlantic provide the foundation of contemporary electoral studies: *The American Voter* and *Political Change in Britain*. Campbell et al. (1960, 1964) are responsible for introducing the concept of ‘party identification’ or ‘partisanship’ to the literature. Partisanship is based on the notion that most individuals develop psychological ties to a political party during their adolescence and emerging adulthood (Vowles & Aimer 1993, 16-17; Whiteley et al. 2013, 26-27). Campbell et al. (1964) were emphatic in their view that partisanship did not “reflect a formal membership or an active connection with a party apparatus” but was based on habit (p. 67). Within a family context, this sense of loyalty to a political party is transferred from one generation to the next and reinforced by social milieu. The tie is strengthened through interaction with neighbours and workmates. This led to the idea that partisans of one or another party tend to share certain social characteristics such as class, race and religion (Dalton et al. 1984, 12).

David Butler and Donald E. Stokes (1969, 1974) transposed the ‘Michigan Model’ to a Westminster context. In doing so, they found a large body of evidence to support the hypothesis that people tend to vote along class lines. Social class, in this context, is understood as a “segment of society which has a similar amount of money, status and power at its disposal” (Sarlvik & Crewe 1983, 75). Sociologists have traditionally measured class in terms of occupational grade with the main distinction that between ‘manual’ and ‘non-manual’ workers. Those in the former category are considered ‘working-class’ and the latter are grouped together as the ‘middle-class’. Butler and Stokes’ findings confirmed a truism of post-war Britain: that the working-class voted Labour, and that the middle-class voted Conservative. These class-

party allegiances were embedded in a person's psychology. Butler and Stokes concurred with Campbell et al. about the durability of partisanship, writing that "once an elector has acquired an allegiance to party he is unlikely again to be so open to political conversion" (p. 5). Butler and Stokes did not view the alignment of class and party as permanently fixed, however. They acknowledged that the bases of party alignment were vulnerable to generational change and the emergence of new social cleavages.

The pre-eminent example of a 'realignment' is that which occurred in the British party system during the 1920s when the Liberal Party was displaced by the Labour Party as the second major party. Butler and Stokes attributed this primarily to the decline of religion as the main source of partisanship in Britain (pp. 7-8). The emergence of class conflict brought about a new alignment. The politico-economic circumstances in which a younger generation of voters grow up may be distinct from those of their parents. This could have an impact on political socialisation. Voters who came of age during the Second World War and the Attlee Government were more inclined to view politics in terms of class conflict than those who reached adulthood in the late 1950s or 1960s (pp. 410-412). It was argued that economic prosperity led to class becoming less salient in the electorate. This weakened the relationship between class and voting. The natural attrition of older partisans gave way to a cohort of new voters who were less polarised by class and more inclined to vote for other reasons.

Immigration also contributed to the physical replacement of the deceased with unaligned voters. Butler and Stokes, however, acknowledged that fluctuations in party support from election to election could not be attributed to physical replacement alone. They suggested another type of change that involves voters' response to "the immediate issues and events of politics", such as "[a] hard budget, an unpopular prime minister, a severe winter, a sense that the Government has grown tired in power" (p. 5). These factors could lead to the 'transient' conversion of voters from one party to another. Thus, lasting changes in the composition of the electorate were also accompanied by short-term shifts based on voter judgements about the relative position and competence of parties. Though *Political Change in Britain* gave effect to social structural theory, Butler and Stokes prefaced their conclusion with the following statement: "We have shunned the adoption of any single model of change, trying instead to distinguish in the system we are studying some persistent processes that give partial clues to change" (p. 406).

The findings of Butler and Stokes were consistent with the pattern of voting observed

in New Zealand during the 1960s. Alan Robinson wrote in 1967, “there is a high political distinctiveness of the professionals, businessmen, and farmers who mainly vote for the National Party; and of ‘blue-collar’ workers, both skilled and unskilled, who vote mainly for the Labour Party” (p. 96). Two surveys conducted in the electorates of Wellington Central and Dunedin Central confirmed a class-party alignment (Milne 1966, 86-87). A wider survey in 1963 further reinforced the social structural nature of the New Zealand party system (Robinson 1967). The lack of further work, however, meant that a longitudinal study of voter behaviour and party support across multiple elections was absent from the literature. New Zealand psephologists relied instead on polling booth analysis and electoral geography to determine the prevalence of class voting. By correlating ballots cast with the socioeconomic characteristics of a particular neighbourhood or town, it was possible to discern trends and make inferences about voting behaviour. Robert Chapman (1948), who pioneered this approach, confirmed the existence of an urban/rural cleavage in New Zealand politics. The cleavage was thought to be a proxy for class differences: the urban working-class tended to vote Labour and the rural middle-class tended to vote National. Provincial seats with a mix of urban and rural voters tended to be marginal.

In a contemporary study of electoral support for the New Zealand Labour Party during the period 1911-1951, Miles Fairburn and Stephen Haslett (2005) used a similar methodology to Chapman. Against conventional wisdom, the authors argued that Labour victories in 1935 and 1938 were due to the mobilisation of working-class support, not the diversification of Labour’s social base as previously thought. Fairburn and Haslett (2005) suggest this is because New Zealand had an “abnormally large population of working-class Tory voters” who kept Labour from power for most of the early 20th century (p. 529). The same argument is made by historian James Belich (2001), who describes the “entrenched dislike of voting Labour in sections of the working-class” during the inter-war period (p. 259). Overcoming this barrier was crucial to victory in 1935. The New Zealand case is not exceptional, however. There is evidence to suggest that the British Labour Party was also rejected by a large number of working-class voters during the early and mid-20th century. Several authors have written about the ‘working-class Tory’ phenomenon in Britain. Eric Nordlinger (1967) argued that a third of manual workers voted for the Conservative Party and were “nearly half its electoral strength” during the 1960s (p. 13). Frank Parkin (1967) also discussed the ‘political deviance’ of these working-class voters. Parkin argued that there was a particularly high incidence of Conservative support among working-class women and retired men because they were

alienated from ‘industrial sub-culture’ or lived in predominately middle-class areas. In their landmark study, however, Butler and Stokes (1974, 168-169) found evidence that most working-class Liberal voters went to the Conservative Party during British Labour’s ascendancy.

Thus, it would appear that a large segment of the working-class in Britain and New Zealand regarded labour politics with some reservation during the early 20th century. It was this constituency, Fairburn and Haslett (2005) claim, that forced the New Zealand Labour Party to abandon its objective of nationalisation in the 1950s – making it the first democratic socialist party to do so without rupturing. While the latter may indeed be a case of New Zealand exceptionalism, the existence of a large, politically conservative working-class is not. The historical revisionism of Fairburn and Haslett, therefore, lends support to a central claim of this thesis: that remarkable similarities exist in the historical and contemporary patterns of class support for both the British and New Zealand Labour Parties. Though it is impossible to know the precise number of working-class voters for either party in the period before modern electoral studies, the evidence from Britain and New Zealand is compelling: throughout the 20th century, neither of these parties could take the working-class vote for granted.

Class dealignment and ideological convergence. The ‘social structural’ or sociological model of voting behaviour was the basis of electoral studies in Britain and New Zealand during the 1960s-1970s. From the 1970s, however, many political scientists began to question the relevance of the class-party alignment in advanced democracies. The case for dealignment was comprehensively made in the book *Decade of Dealignment* (Sarlvik & Crewe 1983) based on data from the BES pioneered by Butler and Stokes. The strength of class voting has traditionally been measured using a statistical model developed by Robert Alford, known as the ‘Alford Index of Class Voting’ or simply the ‘Alford Index’. The Index is calculated by subtracting Labour’s percentage of the middle-class vote from Labour’s percentage of the working-class vote (Denver & Garnett 2014, 67). Alford Index scores for 1964 to 1979 indicated a significant decline in class voting over that period. To test this further, Bo Sarlvik and Ivor Crewe used logistic regression to measure the correlation between class and voting. The result “followed an exactly parallel path” to that of the Alford Index (p. 86). Finally, the level of ‘absolute class voting’ was arrived at by calculating the number of non-manual workers voting Conservative and the number of manual workers voting Labour as a percentage of all votes. Absolute class voting was found to have declined from 65 percent in 1959 to 55 percent

in 1979.

Clive Bean (1988) critiqued the literature on class voting in New Zealand. As mentioned in the previous section, estimates of an Alford Index for New Zealand prior to 1987 had relied on figures from a number of small-N surveys conducted in predominately urban electorates between 1960 and 1966. Bean argued that the potential for sample bias had been overlooked by those using the data to estimate the prevalence of class voting at a national level. Bean also compared occupational class with a range of other variables (religion, education, income, sex and age). It was concluded that, while class continued to have some relevance to politics, “the influence of occupation in determining political choice was almost certainly never prodigious and has diminished considerably in the last quarter of a century” (Bean 1988). The second NZES confirmed this, with manual workers no more likely to vote Labour than other parties in 1990 (Vowles & McAllister 1996, 202). Declining turnout, electoral volatility, and the rise of new parties provided further evidence of dealignment in the 1990s. Vowles and Aimer (1993) thus wrote: “It appears that the influence of long-term social structural and attitudinal factors on people’s party preferences has been declining, while that of ephemeral elements of politics has grown” (p. 15). It was said the main catalyst for dealignment had been Labour’s ideological shift to the right, and that it would eventually lead to a realignment (Vowles & Aimer 1993, 218-220). The case for dealignment went uncontested in New Zealand political science. Nevertheless, it was widely accepted that social structural factors continued to have some influence on voting choice. As a consequence, many of the debates in British political science were avoided in New Zealand.

Sarlvik and Crewe themselves did not dismiss the social structural approach entirely. In their opinion, class remained “the only enduring division in British society of partisan consequence” (Sarlvik & Crewe 1983, 342). Despite changes in the social structure of the electorate, working-class voters remained the British Labour Party’s main source of electoral support. And yet, as Sarlvik and Crewe (1983) noted, “the proportion of working class which stays loyal to Labour” was receding (p. 332). In fact, the BES recorded a substantial loss in support for British Labour among unionised manual workers from October 1974 to May 1979. The percentage loss was greater than that among middle-class voters. Sarlvik and Crewe attributed Labour’s electoral decline to valence factors such as its perceived inability to resolve industrial conflict and high unemployment (Sarlvik & Crewe, 341). Another possible factor was the emergence of a third party challenger. The Liberals experienced a resurgence in support

at the October 1974 election that came at the expense of both Labour and the Conservatives. Subsequently, the Liberals formed an alliance with the new Social Democratic Party. Their stated purpose was 'breaking the mould' of the two-party system. In the post-script to *Decade of Dealignment*, Sarlvik and Crewe speculated about the prospects of a realignment. They suggested that the success of the SDP/Liberal Alliance would depend on cross-class appeal and the mobilisation of support around particular issues. In short, a new cleavage would have to emerge and replace that of class.

Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice (1985) challenged the dealignment thesis in a major report of the 1983 British Election Study. The authors argued that the earlier findings of Sarlvik and Crewe did not represent a steady decline in class voting, but rather 'trendless fluctuation'. The thesis was based on a new typology of class that challenged the manual/non-manual dichotomy (pp. 13-16). It was argued that the two-dimensional class model was 'highly simplistic' and ignored the differences within each class. Voters were instead distributed across five different occupational categories: the salariat, routine non-manual, the petty bourgeoisie, foremen and technicians, and the working class. The odds of voters in each category voting for a particular party were then calculated to determine 'relative' class voting as opposed to absolute class voting. They found that the level of relative class voting in 1983 was equivalent to the average for the period 1964 to 1983 (p. 35).

Thus, Heath et al. (1985) concluded that fluctuations in class voting were largely the result of political factors rather than fundamental changes in the structure of society. Social change could account for 'nearly half' the decline in support for the British Labour Party in the time period studied (p. 37). Heath et al. were emphatic that the problem was one of scale, not fragmentation or dealignment. The electoral decline of British Labour merely reflected the fact that the working-class was much smaller than it had been in 1964 relative to other classes. The voters would continue to vote according to their class interests, however; and the authors cautioned British Labour against abandoning its working-class appeal, observing that "it has nowhere better to seek votes" (p. 36). At most, British Labour could expect to receive up to 35 percent of the national vote (p. 171). Though pessimistic when compared to historical support for the party, such an assessment did not preclude a Labour victory in the future.

While both sides accepted that social structural changes had impacted party support, one side denied that this was the result of class dealignment or fragmentation, and doubted the extent of these changes. Denver and Garnett (2014, 102) have described the ensuing debate as

both ‘lively’ and ‘occasionally ill-tempered’. The debate was centred on two separate issues. First, there was the claim that the class-party alignment that had structured party competition since the 1920s was weakening. This had led to high volatility in party support between elections. That part of the debate was concerned primarily with the process of ‘embourgeoisment’ and whether or not the values and character of workers had changed. Arguably, the lifestyles of the working and middle classes had converged, thus undermining the appeal of British Labour. The working-class was no longer one homogeneous group of voters with firm party allegiances. Voting had become more individualised; or, at least, the working-class was now fragmented into a number of different subgroups with opposing interests. Fewer and fewer people associated class with politics. According to Crewe (1985), Labour only represented a “*segment* of the working-class” and could no longer claim to be the natural party of the worker. Crewe’s analysis suggested that if Labour were to survive as a major party it would need to transcend class and forge a new identity.

Heath et al. (1985) argued that despite a decline in the level of absolute class voting, relative class voting had not changed much, if at all, since 1945. To Heath et al., the focus on class dealignment was equivalent to concentrating on “minor rearrangements of the furniture while failing to notice a major change in the structure of the house” (p. 35). On the whole, the authors claimed, party support continued to have a class basis. The second part of the debate, therefore, focused on the size and shape of the working-class as opposed to its character. That the working-class had ‘shrunk’ relative to other classes was never in dispute. Academics disagreed about whether or not this reduction in size was the main sociological factor contributing to the electoral decline of British Labour. Heath et al. were certain that it was more relevant than dealignment. In any case, no one disputed that British Labour’s social base was receding. Crewe (1985) estimated the working-class to be just over a quarter of the electorate. Heath et al. (1994) arrived at a figure of 40 percent. Whichever operant definition was used, however, the working-class were a much smaller proportion of the electorate than the middle-class.

To demonstrate the explanatory strength of their model, Heath et al. (1985) simulated an election result based on changes in the relative size of the working class since 1964. They combined the 1983 class structure (as the authors defined it) with the established pattern of class voting in 1964. On this basis, British Labour’s vote would have declined by seven percent over that period. In reality, British Labour’s overall share of the vote declined by 18 percent.

The large disparity led Crewe (1986) to assert that the remaining 11 percent difference could be attributed to changes in class behaviour and, therefore, proved that class dealignment was the main cause of British Labour's decline. For their part, Heath et al. never retreated from the view that social change could not be made a 'scapegoat' for the party's own political failings: namely "weak and divided leadership" that had caused traditional British Labour votes to seek representation elsewhere (2001). In an article published after the 1987 election, Heath and Sarah K. McDonald provided further analysis of British Labour's electoral decline using the same methodology as the 1985 report. The authors emphasised that the BES findings confirmed, "more votes are won and lost through political fluctuations than through social changes". At most, social structural factors could account for a five percentage point difference in support for the British Labour Party. The reasons for British Labour's failure at the 1987 general election were, therefore, more likely to be found in 'political mistakes'.

Geoffrey Evans, Anthony Heath and Clive Payne (1999) have argued that changes in class voting are better understood in relation to parties' spatial locations on the political spectrum. Using log-linear models to estimate the class-vote relation, the authors were able to establish conclusively that there had been a decline in class voting between 1964 and 1997. Denver and Garnett (2014) have claimed this finding ended debate on class dealignment. In fact, the study found strong evidence of 'considerable short-term movement' between elections (Evans et al. 1999, 94). The implication was that class dealignment told only a part of the story. Heath et al. (1985) were justified in claiming that the evidence of 'trendless fluctuation' was stronger than that of secular decline. Such a finding was contrary to the class dealignment thesis. Furthermore, these short-term movements were found to correlate with shifting perceptions of the parties' ideological positions. The closer parties were perceived in relation to each other on the left-right spectrum, the weaker the correlation between class and voting. To test their hypothesis that party position and class voting were linked, the authors compared voter perceptions of party difference (measured in the BES) with a content analysis of party manifestos during the same period. Changes to the ideological content of party manifestos followed roughly the same pattern as changing voter perceptions.

Therefore, Evans et al. (1999) concluded that the voting behaviour of different social classes was influenced by political parties themselves. In other words, the decline in working-class support for the British Labour Party could be directly attributed to party strategy rather than changes in society. The class voting and ideological polarisation thesis was developed

further in the 2010s. Evans and James Tilley (2012) argue that increasing voter responsiveness to parties' performance and policy programmes is not inconsistent with a class-based approach to understanding electoral politics. They suggest that ideological conflict is a proxy for class interests, with the main disagreement between the left and the right that of distributive justice (the 'have-nots' versus the 'haves'). The authors refer to US research demonstrating that most people hold enduring and fundamental ideological positions (see Ansolabehere, Rodden & Snyder; 2008; Feldman 1988; Goren 2005). When political parties start to agree on questions of ideology, it follows that class differences in party support should become less pronounced. In the wake of three consecutive election losses, British Labour pursued a strategy of 'modernisation', disavowing class identity and repositioning itself in the political centre. The principal objective of this strategy was to increase British Labour's support among the middle-class and the non-unionised working-class; in particular, those who had defected to the Alliance in 1983 and 1987, but also a large number of Conservative voters.

According to the findings of Evans and Tilly (2012), the aforementioned strategy proved to be successful for British Labour in 1997. Consequently, party preference and ideology diverged. At the same time the relationship between class and ideology remained constant. Therefore, it could be argued that class politics are dormant rather than dead. One consequence of ideological harmony is the potential for political parties to alienate their traditional voters. Support for this argument does exist in the literature of electoral studies. Heath et al. (2001) have found that the working-class responded less enthusiastically to 'New Labour' than the middle-class did in 1997. They speculated that, while loss of support among the working-class in 1997 was offset by middle-class votes, the long-term effect could be a gradual rise in 'class non-voting'. The question, therefore, is whether the overall decline in class voting since the 1970s could be attributed to social mobility and the merging of different classes; or, in the words of Goldthorpe (1999), if the fluctuating levels of class voting reflected "a variety of influences of a more or less transient character that are unlikely to have much lasting effect on the underlying pattern of association between class membership and party affiliation".

Summary

The different interpretations of class voting represent a schism in electoral studies. However, neither side fundamentally disagrees that there are sociological explanations for party decline

in Britain and New Zealand. Heath et al. (1985, 1994, 2001) were simply of the view that sociological factors alone could not explain the full extent of this decline. On the one hand, class dealignment suggests that the British and New Zealand Labour Parties did not respond adequately to deep-seated changes in Western society. They had relied too much on ‘class appeal’ at a time when fewer people associated class with politics and many traditional, ‘blue-collar’ working-class industries were in decline. On the other hand, if class dealignment has been overstated, then the problem was Labour Parties’ failure to represent the working-class *effectively*. The evidence reviewed in this chapter would suggest the latter argument needs to be developed further. Recent studies lend support to the claim that ideology continues to function as a proxy for class. Findings indicate that it was the behaviour of political parties, not voters, which caused dealignment in the 1970s. While not exhaustive, the arguments and analysis undertaken in this study attempt to compare historical trends in working-class support for Labour Parties with the trends evident over the past decade or so. As such it will offer a ‘diachronic’ analysis of politics.

The objective is to place recent developments in long-term perspective and make a judgement as to whether or not a secular realignment of the working-class has occurred. The findings of Fairburn and Haslett (2005) are central to the hypothesis: it is the working-class that has put Labour into power, and the working-class that has kept Labour from power. Therefore, the thesis shall argue that the present failure of the British Labour Party and the New Zealand Labour Party cannot be understood without reference to history and sociology. To develop this argument further, it is necessary to review the origin, traditions and the contradictions of ‘labourism’ as a working-class ideology and how this was expressed in voting behaviour. That will be the subject of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will discuss the electoral success of the Third Way in Britain and New Zealand. Chapter 4 will analyse the subsequent decline of working-class support for British and New Zealand Labour in cross-national perspective.

Chapter 2: A Brief History of Labourism

This chapter makes the argument that the alienation of working-class voters has been a recurring theme in the history of labourism. During the post-war period (1945-1979), the British and New Zealand Labour Parties were most successful when their leaders mobilised the working-class vote. In government, however, Labour Parties struggled to govern on a class-basis. Thus Labour Governments faltered whenever the relationship between party and class was ruptured. These experiences led a younger generation of Labour leaders to doubt the assumptions of labourism.

Etymology

The term ‘labourism’ has been used in a number of scholarly works to describe the ideology of labour parties. First, let us consider the debate in Britain, where the term originally emerged in Marxist literature. James Saville (1973) conceived labourism as a “theory and practice that accepted the possibility of social change within the existing framework” (p. 215). In Britain, the conservative nature of labourism was critiqued by Marxists such as Theodore Rothstein (1929), Ralph Miliband (1961) and other ‘New Left’ writers (see Davis 2003; Shaw 2004). The principal objective of the British Labour Party was to protect working-class interests within the capitalist system. It was based on the understanding that social change would be limited and gradual. To that end, labourism emphasised the need for ‘class collaboration’ and the resolution of industrial disputes through non-violent, legal means (Saville 1973, 216). In other words, there was a fundamental belief that the interests of labour and capital could be reconciled.

As early as 1929, Rothstein (281-297) considered the British Labour Party to be preoccupied with defending capitalism rather than seeking radical change. Trade unionism, Rothstein wrote, was ‘barring the way of revolution’. Thus, Gregory Elliott (1993) argues that the “everlasting project of restoring the Labour Party to a socialist vocation” (xi) is illusionary because labourism has never been inherently socialist. Contrary to the Marxist critique, however, James Cronin (2004) asserts that many Labour activists viewed socialism as ‘the ultimate defence’ of working class interests (p. 8). If the means were not socialist, the desired end was. Therefore, British Labour’s claim to be a ‘democratic socialist’ party was not without foundation. From 1918, the socialist impulse of the British Labour Party was given expression in ‘Clause IV’ of the party’s constitution, which committed to a programme of nationalisation. While this was a major source of disagreement and controversy within the British Labour Party, the reference to nationalisation remained until 1995. To Marxists such as Rothstein and Elliot,

however, Clause IV was mere symbolism.

From a different perspective, however, labourism is defined by a belief in the moral superiority of workers. Accordingly, David Marquand (1991) and Eric Shaw (2004) have argued that labourism placed class identity above all else. According to this ‘social democratic’ school of thought, British Labour’s emphasis on class was to its determinant because it alienated the ‘progressive’ middle-class (Fielding 2003, 33). Further, Cronin (2004) has characterised British labourism as ‘largely defensive’ in posture (pp. 7-8). It was motivated by a desire to ‘defend and protect’ the position of organised labour in society. Yet, as Steven Fielding (1992, 2003) and David Rubenstein (2000, 2006) have argued, the British Labour Party has long recognised the need for a ‘cross-class’ appeal. Without the support of middle-class voters, it is doubtful that any Labour Government could have been elected in the 20th century. In a sense, the history of labourism is that of how a working-class ideology became the rallying point for class collaboration and progressive causes. The paradoxical nature of labourism will be developed further in this chapter.

Though there is disagreement about the fundamental nature of labourism in Britain, there is broad agreement about its historical role: i) to represent working-class interests, particularly those of organised labour, within the framework of Parliamentary democracy, and ii) to advance these interests through a programme of gradual legislative reform that can be broadly described as ‘social democratic’. It is in respect of the latter point that the relationship between social democracy and labourism is crucial to any understanding of the British Labour Party. Shaw (2004, 202) holds the view that labourism is something of a political anachronism, given the decline of trade union participation and class voting. In his intellectual history of New Labour, Shaw (2007) refers to ‘British social democracy’ rather than labourism. British social democracy has two dimensions, he argues: i) ‘redistributive’, and ii) ‘ethical’. According to Shaw (2007, 19-20), British social democracy is concerned primarily with the equitable distribution of wealth and resources to ameliorate or eliminate class inequality.

Typically, Labour politicians have pursued redistributive ends through progressive taxation and policies intended to promote equality of opportunity in education and employment. They have done so within the framework of capitalism. The ethical dimension of British social democracy, by contrast, sees capitalism as dehumanising. It envisions a society in which the profit motive and competition are replaced with the values of altruism, co-operation and solidarity. Shaw (2007) identifies the “maintenance of a large and expanding

public sphere, governed by an ethic of public service” as the embodiment of ethical socialism (p. 39). This, he argues, has been a ‘defining property’ of post-war British social democracy. There is no inherent conflict between Shaw’s conception of ‘British social democracy’ and labourism, however. It is argued here that social democracy was an essential part of labourism. The main difference between social democracy and labourism is the emphasis on working-class representation and its relationship with organised labour. For the most part, labourism lacks the same ideological rigour that European social democracy has. In fact, according to Shaw (1996), the British Labour Party has been “a party of interest rather than ideas” (p. 3).

The New Zealand Labour Party, like the British Labour Party, identifies itself as ‘democratic socialist’. Its origins, too, lie in the trade union movement. But most New Zealand political scientists and historians have preferred the term ‘social democratic’. In keeping with the labourist tradition, however, Barry Gustafson (1992) has written that the New Zealand Labour Party was established with the “explicit purpose of putting more manual workers into parliament to represent and pass legislation in the interests of the class of which they were not only representatives but also members” (p. 2). Gustafson also emphasised the relationship between socialism and labourism, writing that “both stress a sense of corporate identity economically, socially and politically” and “both seek... to improve the lot of the less affluent and less powerful in society” (pp. 2-3). Franks and McAloon (2016) also describe a party of labourism, “It began as the political wing of organised labour: industrial unions were essential actors in the party’s foundation and have always had the right to affiliate. Fundamental to the party’s thinking and practice, however, have been an unqualified commitment to parliamentary democracy, a belief in equality (however that may be defined), and a belief in the possibility and desirability of political action to reform and shape economic and social institutions” (p. 13).

To these ends, the founders of the New Zealand Labour Party favoured industrial arbitration over direct action (Olssen 1987; Vowles 1982). In the Australasian context, Mark Bray and David Neilson (1996) describe the “mutually supporting but separate roles” of organised labour and political parties as defining labourism (p. 68). It was the responsibility of labourist parties to provide a ‘legislative framework within which unions advanced their industrial goals’. Francis G. Castles, Rolf Gerritsen and Jack Vowles (1996, 10-12) argue that fewer institutional linkages and, in particular, the lack of formal co-operation in policy formation between Labour Governments and trade unions gave a weaker expression of labourism in New Zealand. Nevertheless, a vast majority of the New Zealand Labour Party’s

original membership came from trade union affiliates (Miller 2005, 74). Yet, as in Britain, the need for the New Zealand Labour Party to seek middle-class support was just as relevant in the 1930s (Brown 1962; Milne 1966) as it was in the 2000s (Miller 2003, 2005). In fact, there is strong evidence that like the British Labour Party, the New Zealand Labour Party became increasingly gentrified after World War II.

Arguably, a distinctive feature of New Zealand labourism was its conservative disposition (Castles & Shirley 1996, 94; Miller 2003, 239-40). After all, the main objective of the New Zealand Labour Party in the post-war period was to preserve the welfare state that had been established by the First Labour Government. Yet, Castles (1985) has argued that New Zealand labourism was ambivalent to the principle of universalism. Though the Social Security Act of 1938 introduced a small universal pension and free medical services, other provisions were means-tested (Castles 1985, 60-61). The belief that some or most benefits should be means-tested has persisted in New Zealand. According to Castles, such a belief was closer to 'liberal-conservative' philosophy than that of democratic socialist thought, and set New Zealand labourism apart from European social democracy. In the words of James Belich (2001), it was a political philosophy based on "respect for manual work and the rights of the working man" (p. 136). In that regard, it was very much the same as the labourism described by British writers. Thus, the preoccupation of the First Labour Government was with improving the employment conditions of the 'wage-earner' while providing a minimum safety net for the unemployed. Those outside of the blue-collar manual workforce were given less attention.

Returning to Shaw's idea of 'British social democracy', one contemplates a 'New Zealand social democracy'. In fact, the 'redistributive' and 'ethical' dimensions of the British Labour Party were also evident in the New Zealand Labour Party during the 20th century. Common objectives were the alleviation of poverty and protection from unemployment. There exist close parallels, for example, between the policies of the Attlee Government and those of the First Labour Government; particularly in the establishment of welfare systems. For most of the post-war period, the British and New Zealand Labour Parties were adherents of Keynesianism and the 'mixed economy'. These policies were intended to humanise capitalism through full employment and the redistribution of wealth. Crucially, the two parties retained close relationships with organised labour, and by extension their working-class constituencies: the core of labourism. Thus, we may see the New Zealand Labour Party as almost identical to the British Labour Party. Of course, one should not understate the differences in cultural and political context. But the term 'labourism' is appropriate to describe an historical "package of

ideas, attitudes and predispositions” (Cronin 2004, 7) that both of these parties share, or did share in common.

The Paradox of Labourism

The following chapter will argue that a common theme of labourism in Britain and New Zealand throughout the late 20th century was the alienation of working-class voters by Labour Governments. As outlined in Chapter 1, the proposition motivating this study is that the working-class put Labour in power, and the working-class keep Labour from power. Previous studies have established that a large number of the working-class in Britain and New Zealand did *not* vote for Labour during the first half of the 20th century (Butler & Stokes 1974; Haslett & Fairburn 2005). Thus, the support of middle-class voters was crucial to the electoral success of both parties. Accordingly, most political science literature has been preoccupied with the decline of class voting, and the need for labourist or social democratic parties to redefine themselves in non-class terms (Prezworski 1985; Prezworski & Sprague 1986; Sainsbury 1990). However, there is compelling evidence that the rise and fall of Labour Governments in Britain and New Zealand during the late 20th century was linked to the ability of party leaders to mobilise working-class support.

To develop this argument further, the chapter provides a comparative analysis of British and New Zealand labour politics in the 1960s and 1970s. It shall be argued that Harold Wilson’s success was in his ability to mobilise working-class support for the British Labour Party in 1964 and 1966. Conversely, it was working-class voters’ reaction to the Winter of Discontent that led to the defeat of the Callaghan Government in 1979. In New Zealand, the defeat of the Second Labour Government in 1960 and the re-election of the Fourth Labour Government in 1987 can also be attributed to the class-party relationship. Subsequent chapters will defend the notion that support for Labour Parties continued to have a class basis during the 1990s and into the 2000s. However, the purpose of this chapter is to provide the historical context against which the contemporary picture of class voting in Britain and New Zealand can be judged.

British Labour: 1945-1979

The 1945 general election was held immediately after World War II. Many have argued that it represents the height of labourism in Britain (Cronin 2004; Laybourn 2000; Shaw 1996; Thorpe 1997). Though the British Labour Party had been in office before, this was the first time it won an absolute majority. Led by war-time statesman Clement Attlee, the British Labour Party

stood on a radical platform. Its ‘ultimate purpose’ was proclaimed to be the establishment of a ‘Socialist Commonwealth’ (cited in Shaw 1996, 20). The centrepiece of this programme was a National Health Service “free at the point of use”. Labour also promised full employment and an expansion of the public sector through the nationalisation of major industries. The outcome was to be a fairer, more egalitarian Britain. In the words of Cronin (2004), “Not only did Labour deliver on its promises. The Labour governments of 1945-51 also presided successfully over a difficult transition from war to peace and proved beyond doubt the party’s capacity to govern” (p. 20). Trade unions were consulted on major decisions and became full partners in government (Cronin 2004, 25; Shaw 1996, 37; Thorpe 1997, 116).

Historians Alastair J. Reid and Henry Pelling (2005) have alluded to the paradoxical nature of labourism in the 1945 general election: the party of workers was now represented by a disproportionate number of “youngish middle-class Labour MPs, many of them professional men – lawyers, journalists, teachers, doctors and dons” (p. 82). Yet, as Keith Laybourn (2000) and David Rubenstein (2006) argue, it was the consolidation of the working-class vote that made 1945 possible. Using figures based on a survey by the British Institute of Public Opinion, Heath et al. (1985, 28-31) estimate that 62 percent of voters in manual households voted for the British Labour Party in 1945 compared to only 28 percent of those in non-manual households. Evidence from further opinion polling suggests that the British Labour Party’s average share of the manual vote during the 1950s was 60 percent (Heath et al. 1985, 30). Support for the Conservative Party among manual household voters averaged only 32 percent. Despite strong electoral support, however, the Attlee Government was defeated in 1951.

The fall of the Attlee Government led to 13 years in Opposition. The British Labour Party’s share of the national vote declined from 49 percent in 1951 to 44 percent in 1959. The party’s share of the manual household vote fell to 57 percent while its share of the non-manual household vote was little changed (Heath et al. 1985). Academics Mark Abrams, Richard Rose and Rita Hinden (1960) attributed this electoral decline to working-class affluence. The authors postulated that strong trade unions, full employment, and economic prosperity had greatly improved the position of most workers in post-war Britain. They were no longer a “down-trodden section of the community” in a constant struggle to have their material needs met (p. 105). In fact, there was a large group of manual workers who earned more than sections of the middle-class. The working-class were now able to afford leisure time and other luxuries that had once been the preserve of the ‘well off’. Such mass affluence was eroding the ‘old working-class ethos’ that had been the backbone of trade unionism and the British Labour Party.

A number of studies have established a positive relationship between trade union membership and voting for the British Labour Party (Heath et al. 1985; Sarlvik & Crewe 1983; Whiteley 1986). The decline of union membership has subsequently been linked to class dealignment. However, according to economist Stephen Machin (2000), only 41 percent of the workforce belonged to a trade union in 1960. And yet, as Rubenstein (2006) has observed, the majority of British workers were employed in manual labour (p. 115). In fact, union membership in Britain did not peak until the 1970s, at a time when the British Labour Party was electorally much weaker than it had been under the leadership of Attlee. One must also consider the rise of ‘white-collar’ unions in this period (Bain 1966; Blackburn & Prandy 1965; Laybourn 2000, 96; Wrigley 1999). Given these factors, there is reason to doubt the relationship between aggregate union density and working-class support for the British Labour Party. Rather, it seems plausible that the party also depended on the support of non-unionised manual workers and unionised non-manual workers. Therefore, this thesis is concerned with changes in the overall pattern of working-class support for British Labour.

Of further import in electoral studies of Britain during the 1960s is the ‘working-class Tory’. As several authors have argued, there had long been a preponderance of working-class support for the Conservative Party (Butler & Stokes 1974; Nordlinger 1967; Parkin 1967). A small number of manual household voters also continued to support the Liberals after World War II. Yet there was no significant change in this segment of the electorate during the 1950s and early 1960s; the proportion of ‘working-class Tory’ voters remained more or less the same (Heath et al. 1985). Thus, Andrew Thorpe (1997, 148) has argued that the British Labour Party’s success in retaining a substantial majority of the working-class vote was more impressive than its failure to defeat the Conservatives at a national election. Cronin (2004) further makes the case that the Abrams et al. thesis is “hard to sustain in the face of what was a very solid social formation” (p. 59). Any changes to demography had been rather modest.

From a different perspective, Laybourn (2000, 89) argues that electoral failure in the 1950s had as much to do with ‘political divisions’ as it did other factors. Though Laybourn did not make reference to it, the literature of valence politics is replete with empirical evidence to support his claim. Valence theory predicts that political parties fail to win election when the electorate perceives them as less competent than their rivals (Clarke et al. 2004, 2009; Whiteley et al. 2013). In particular, a party’s image can be compromised by weak leadership and intra-party division (Clark 2006). During the 1950s, the British Labour Party was divided between the traditionalist faction of former health minister Aneurin Bevan, who advocated public

ownership as British Labour's main policy objective, and a 'revisionist' faction led by leader Hugh Gaitskell (Laybourn 2000, 89-97; Reid & Pelling 2005, 94-110; Thorpe 1997, 136-156). Gaitskell, who rejected class politics, argued that socialist ends could be met through a mixed economy, without the need for further nationalisation. The debate culminated in a failed attempt by Gaitskell to remove the Clause IV commitment to public ownership (Jones 1997; Reid & Pelling 2005, 104-106; Shaw 1996, 62).

There were also major ideological disagreements over nuclear disarmament and Britain's relationship with the European Common Market (Cronin 2004, 39; Laybourn 2000, 98-99; Reid & Pelling 2005, 108; Thorpe 1997, 151-152). However, these issues were mostly resolved when Gaitskell died suddenly in January 1963. The man who replaced him, Harold Wilson, had been a supporter of Bevan during the 1950s. Though Wilson was considered left-wing, he nevertheless embraced many of the revisionists' assumptions (Laybourn 2000, 99; Rubenstein 2006, 121-123; Thorpe 1997, 153). In the 1964 general election, the British Labour Party emphasised state planning and economic growth rather than public ownership. The word 'socialism' was excluded from the party's election manifesto (Rubenstein 2006, 122). Arguably, these changes had more to do with tone than content (Thorpe 1997, 154). As political marketing scholar Dominic Wring (2005, 64-65) has observed, television played a crucial role in Wilson's leadership.

Though he avoided the language of class politics, Wilson nevertheless cultivated an image of himself that would appeal to workers. The former Oxford don was an unlikely working-class hero. Yet Wilson had a 'common touch'. His iconic pipe, fondness for HP brown sauce, and a preference for beer over champagne, made Wilson into a "man of the people" (Rubenstein 2006, 125; Wring 2005, 64). After 13 years in Opposition, the British Labour Party won the 1964 general election. Though its majority was small, and its share of the national vote increased a mere 0.2 percentage points compared to 1959, there was a substantial increase in the British Labour Party's share of the manual household vote from 57 percent to 64 percent (Heath et al. 1985, 30). Then, in 1966, Wilson led the party to another victory. This time the British Labour Party received 48 percent of the national vote and a majority of 96 seats. With a greater share of the national vote, the 1966 election was a more impressive victory than 1945 had been. Labour's share of the manual household vote peaked at 69 percent.

In office, Labour followed the traditional labourist path to equality through wealth redistribution: it abolished prescription charges for the NHS and increased social welfare

provisions (Rubenstein 2006, 136; Shaw 1996, 70; Thorpe 1997, 168). A more progressive tax system was also introduced. The major policy initiative of the first Wilson Government, however, was a national economic strategy based on central planning and technological innovation. Labourism guided the plan: trade unions were to be involved in the development and implementation of a wage moderation system to ease inflationary pressures (Cronin 2004, 74; Shaw 1996, 71; Thorpe 1997, 163-164;). If the first Wilson Government demonstrated the enduring strength of labourism, however, it also exposed its contradictions. Soon after 1966, the relationship between workers and the Labour Party came under enormous strain. The goodwill dissipated amid economic crisis and a wave of industrial action. Many strikes were 'unofficial' and the government came under pressure to restrict them through legislation (Shaw 1996, 82; Thorpe 1997, 164-165). Attempts to negotiate a compromise with the Trade Union Congress on 'unofficial' strikes failed and, for a time, the Wilson Government was divided on the issue.

The system of voluntary wage moderation also broke down. In response, the Wilson Government imposed austerity measures and a temporary 'wage freeze' (Thorpe 1997, 161; Cronin 2004, 100). The national economic strategy was abandoned. As Fielding (2003) has argued, working-class voters were 'disappointed' in the Wilson Government (p. 22). The work of Heath et al. (1985, 30-31) confirms this claim. Support for the British Labour Party among manual household voters fell from 69 percent to 58 percent in the 1970 general election compared to a one percentage point decline in the non-manual household vote. The sudden decline of class-voting led some political scientists to claim there had been a 'dealignment' of the party system (Sarlvik & Crewe 1983). Others such as Heath et al. (1985) claimed dealignment was nothing more than 'trendless fluctuation'. As Thorpe (1997) has put it, the shift could be more explainable in terms of 'policy failure' than class dealignment (p. 178). According to this narrative, many working-class voters abandoned the British Labour Party because government restrictions were perceived to have hurt their standard of living. Such an argument, of course, is consistent with valence theory.

Other political scientists identified a causal link between the decline in class voting and 'gentrification' of the British Labour Party. A study by Barry Hindess (1971) discerned major changes in the social composition of party membership in Liverpool during the 1960s. As a proportion of the population, those with professional occupations were significantly over-represented, and manual workers under-represented in the local party organisation. This shift preceded a collapse in electoral support for Labour after the 1966 election (p. 50). According

to Hindess, “Changes in the Labour Party and in the urban environment have led to the differentiation of the political demands, concerns and orientations of party members and supporters in the different areas” (p. 164). This was increasingly reflected at the parliamentary level with only 30 percent of Labour MPs coming from a working-class background in 1966 compared to 37 percent in 1951 (p. 9). Paul Whiteley (1983) later concurred with these findings, arguing that the demographic changes had led to the adoption of policies that alienated the Labour Party’s more instrumental working-class supporters.

By the end of the 1980s, just over a quarter of party members or 26 percent were identified as working-class, compared to 57 percent of Labour voters (Seyd & Whiteley 1992, 39). These figures prompted Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley to write in 1992 that, “The party membership is clearly socially unrepresentative of Labour voters in some significant ways” (p. 42). Of course, changes in the social composition of the party are consistent with a shift from mass membership to an electoral professional or cartel model as identified by a number of authors (Kircheimer 1966; Epstein 1967; Katz & Mair 1995; Panebianco 1988). Yet, this thesis contends that the class-party alignment endured both party gentrification and the decline of mass membership. Here, it is worth recalling the historical paradox of labourism in its tendency to promote class collaboration. The success of the British Labour Party in 1945 depended on manual workers electing ‘professional men’ to represent them (Reid & Pelling 2005, 82). Thus, changes in membership and party organisation may not have a central importance in the decline of working-class support for the British Labour Party.

After all, labourism was not dead. The second Wilson Government, elected in 1974, promised a “fundamental and irreversible shift of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families” (cited in Crewe 1983, 7-8). Taxes were increased to fund higher pensions and other social welfare provisions. There was also a return to the Labourist principle of co-operation between the government and trade unions. The keystone of this was a new ‘Social Contract’ (Crewe 1983, 9; Reid & Pelling 2005, 139; Thorpe 1997, 182-183): restrictions on industrial action imposed by the previous government were abolished and, in return, the trade union leadership agreed to moderate wage demands. Inflation continued to rise, however, and the trade deficit widened as the value of exports declined relative to imports. In 1975, amid financial crisis, the Transport and General Workers’ Union leader Jack Jones negotiated a flat-rate wage increase that was restricted to those earning below a certain income threshold (Reid & Pelling 2005, 144-145; Thorpe 1997, 191-192). The accord proved to be successful and it was later extended.

In the meantime, however, Harold Wilson resigned from office and James Callaghan succeeded him. The first major decision of the Callaghan Government was to seek a loan from the International Monetary Fund needed to strengthen the pound sterling. To meet the conditions of the loan, public expenditure was cut by £1 billion and a National Insurance surcharge on employers was introduced (Rubenstein 2006, 144; Shaw 1996, 134-135; Thorpe 1997, 192-193). Despite an economic recovery and strong public support for the government, further austerity measures divided the British Labour Party. In late 1978, relations with the trade union movement again deteriorated, and a wave of strikes followed. Industrial action by local council workers caused major disruption to the public (Reid & Pelling 2005, 150; Thorpe 1997, 198). A resurgent Conservative Party, led by Margaret Thatcher, capitalised on this ‘winter of discontent’ (Thorpe 1997, 199). British Labour was defeated in a landslide at the 1979 general election.

As per Table 2.1, only 50 percent of voters in manual households turned out for the British Labour Party in 1979, a decline of seven percentage points compared to 1974. The working-class Tory vote reached 35 percent, the highest of the post-war period (see Heath et al. 1985, 30). At least part of the explanation can be found in labourism. The Social Contract was broken and the party’s relationship with organised labour had been severely damaged. Yet, there is evidence that it was the failure of the Callaghan Government to take a stand against militant trade unions that caused many working-class voters to abandon it. As Ivor Crewe (1983) documented, the overwhelming majority of manual workers, including those identified as Labour voters and union members, supported changes to the legislation governing trade unions. These included outlawing closed shops and secondary picketing. Thus, the paradox of labourism again found expression at the ballot box. Middle-class voters remained more loyal to the British Labour Party than the working-class did.

Table 2.1
Household voting in Britain

Election	% manual household vote Labour	% non-manual household vote Labour
1964	64	22
1966	69	26
1970	58	25
Feb 1974	57	22
Oct 1974	57	25
1979	50	23
1983	42	17

Source: Heath et al. (1985)

In 1983, Crewe (1985) noted that “social class continued to be the primary shaper of party choice” (p. 169). By then, however, the British Labour Party’s claim to be the natural party of the whole working-class ‘looked threadbare’ (Crewe 1985, 173). Only 42 percent of manual household voters supported the British Labour Party compared to the 35 percent who supported the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher. Heath et al. (1985) suggested that the dramatic decline in relative class voting was to some extent “an artefact of the inadequate manual/non-manual dichotomy” (p. 34). This theoretical debate has already been discussed in Chapter 1. Regardless of how class is operationalised, we must conclude that it was the workers who toppled the Callaghan Government in 1979. And it was the workers who denied the British Labour Party a return to power in 1983.

New Zealand Labour: 1951-1987

R.S. Milne (1966) argued that evidence of class voting in New Zealand was more ‘suggestive’ than ‘quantitative’ (p. 84). That was certainly the case in the 1950s and 1960s when political science relied on electoral geography and booth analysis to correlate social characteristics with voting. Nevertheless, it is a reasonable claim that ‘most manual workers’ in New Zealand voted for Labour in the two decades after World War II. The lack of empirical data makes it impossible to estimate the proportion of Labour voters who were working-class. But it has been reported that “four out of five Labour Party members were manual workers” in 1957 (Gustafson 2001, 19). Of course, this is not to say that other groups did not vote for the New Zealand Labour Party in large numbers. It is widely held that Labour’s 1935 and 1938 victories depended on a broad electoral coalition that included small farmers and Maori (Bennett 2004, 139-152; Brown, 1962; Milne 1966). Nevertheless, working-class voters were the bedrock of that coalition. Without them it is unlikely Labour could have won the 1946 and 1957 elections (Milne 1966, 88). Thus, Labour became the worker’s party.

As discussed in Chapter 1, however, the New Zealand Labour Party struggled for working-class support before 1935. Many working-class voters, particularly those who owned real property, had supported the centre-right Reform Government of William Massey (Belich 2001; Fairburn & Haslett 2005). However, the Great Depression changed that. The old Liberal Party was briefly resurrected under the leadership of former Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward and stole the 1928 general election (Chapman 1948). The forward march of New Zealand Labour was temporarily halted. A coalition between the Liberals and Reform got re-elected in 1932. It was not until 1935 that New Zealand voters finally elected the First Labour

Government. Thereafter, social class became the main cleavage in New Zealand politics. As the first electoral surveys during the 1960s confirmed, most manual households in New Zealand now voted for Labour and the majority of those in non-manual households voted for National. Yet the relationship between Labour and the working-class was fragile. The paradox of labourism meant that all post-war Labour Governments struggled to reconcile class interests with a broader electoral mandate.

The first major break between the New Zealand Labour Party and the working-class electorate appears to have occurred during the 1951 waterfront dispute. On the Opposition benches, the party was in the precarious position of having to choose between the established Federation of Labour and a dissident Trade Union Congress. The latter was formed in protest of the FOL's decision to expel the militant Waterside Workers' Union (Belich 2001, 229-307; Milne 1966, 102-103). However, the conflict had its origin in the final days of the First Labour Government. According to Anna Green (2001), the depth of antagonism between Labour and the Waterside Workers' Union was such that Prime Minister Peter Fraser described the Union as 'enemies' of the government (p. 142). FOL President, Fintan Patrick Walsh, was a supporter of Fraser. Walsh wanted to preserve the system of industrial conciliation and arbitration that had been in place since 1894 (Bassett 1972, 113-135). He opposed strike action and sided with the National Government against the militants. Support for the FOL's was not forthcoming from the Labour Party, however. The declaration of Walter Nash that "we are not for the watersiders, nor are we against them" frustrated both sides of the conflict (cited in Franks & McAloon 2016, 136). As a result, the FOL became increasingly critical of Labour.

The rift had not entirely healed by the time New Zealand Labour was returned to office in 1957. As Douglas C. Webber (1976) wrote, "Very little consultation took place between the trade unions and the second Labour government" (p. 184). The main issue that divided them was fiscal policy. Amid a balance of payments crisis, the Nash Government made the fateful decision to increase taxation rather than decrease public spending. Consumers were charged higher taxes on 'luxury goods' such as alcohol, tobacco and petrol. Despite the introduction of low-interest housing loans, and other measures to expand home ownership, the 'Black Budget' proved deeply unpopular with New Zealanders. The most scathing attacks on the government came from the FOL and affiliated unions. According to Franks and McAloon (2016), Walsh argued that workers would carry a disproportionate weight of the fiscal burden (p. 152). Fred Young, the national secretary of the Hotel Workers' Union, accused the Nash Government of betraying its supporters. Indeed, branch membership of the New Zealand

Labour Party halved (Gustafson 2001, 18). In 1960, the Labour Party's share of the vote declined five percentage points to 43 percent and it lost seven seats.

Chapman (1999a) estimated that "half the rejecters moved to non-voting (3.08 per cent) where they now hang ready to rally to an attractive Labour programme as in the past". These voters would be waiting more than a decade for such a programme. The National Party, led by Keith Holyoake, won a comfortable majority and held power until 1972. In 1962, former finance minister Arnold Nordmeyer replaced Nash as leader. Under Nordmeyer's leadership, the party presented a 'New Look' to the electorate. According to Gustafson (2001), the change involved "moving away from the rhetoric of class" and emphasising "Labour's Christian rather than Marxist ideological motivation" (p. 19). Nordmeyer was a champion of social justice who wanted a more equitable distribution of wealth. But his mission was not to improve the lot of workers in particular. Rather, it was to serve the nation as a whole. Nordmeyer's re-statement of democratic socialism in the rhetoric of national interest was a rejection of labourism. But the 'New Look' did not represent a radical break from the Nash era. From 1916 the party had as its stated objective "the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange". With Nash as leader, the socialisation objective was abandoned in 1951. It was replaced by the sentence, "to promote and protect the freedom of the people and their political, social, economic and cultural welfare" (Milburn 1960; Nolan 2010). Despite vocal opposition, the 1951 conference voted overwhelmingly for change. Crucial support came from the FOL – that organisation having, itself, rejected 'socialisation' as an objective.

The party would nevertheless remain a 'democratic socialist' party; its purpose now to 'educate' the public in the "principles of Co-operation and Socialism" (cited in Milburn 1960). What that meant in practice was never made entirely clear. But it seemed Nordmeyer was on safe ground when, speaking at the FOL's 1963 conference, he stated: "... anybody going on to a platform and advocating a class struggle would be sounding the death knell of the Labour Party" (cited in Milne 1966, 110). The speech prompted yet another dispute with the FOL leadership. In retaliation, the FOL reaffirmed the existence of a 'class struggle', and in what might be described as retroactive continuity, admonished the Labour Party for abandoning its commitment to 'socialisation' in 1951 (Milne 1966, 111-112). Subsequently, Nordmeyer was forced to defend his socialist credentials. One may speculate about the extent to which this 'New Look' and internal division contributed to Labour's loss in the 1963 general election. But as Stephen Levine and Nigel Roberts (1992) have argued, "the albatross of the 1958 'Black Budget' was draped around [Nordmeyer's] neck" in 1963 (p. 217).

The lack of survey-based electoral studies in this period makes it difficult to judge the level of class voting. We must, however, be content with what national data is available. According to Vowles' (2014a) analysis of the 1963 Victoria University of Wellington Election Study, 52 percent of individuals from 'manual and service' households voted for the 'New Look' Labour (p. 40). The figure was arrived at using the 'head of household' approach with non-voting included in the base of the calculation. If service occupations are excluded, we find that the Labour share of the manual household vote was 60 percent (Vowles 1992, 98). The latter is consistent with the rate of support for the British Labour Party among manual household voters during the 1950s and early 1960s. In 1963, New Zealand Labour was yet to recover from the collapse of the Nash Government. Therefore, it is plausible that working-class support for Labour had been higher in the 1950s, though we cannot be certain of this. As was the case in Britain, some political scientists inferred a collapse in working-class support for New Zealand Labour through changes in the social composition of the party during the 1960s and 1970s.

Webber (1976) discerned a pattern of change in the demography of the New Zealand Labour Party similar to that identified by Hindess (1971) in Britain. He observed a substantial decline in the proportion of trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party after World War II (Webber 1976, 10-22). By 1975, only 42 percent of trade unionists registered under the Industrial Relations Act were members of the New Zealand Labour Party, compared to 75 percent in 1941 (Webber 1976, 12). Furthermore, party membership across "twenty-five predominately working-class electorates" had declined by 72 percent over the same period (Webber 1976, 174). Gustafson (1976) concurred with Webber. In his survey of the party membership in Auckland, he found that the proportion of those with semi-skilled or manual occupations fell from 34.6 percent in 1949 to 21.1 percent in 1969 (Gustafson 1976, 33-34). In later work, Gustafson (2001, 18) suggested that the New Zealand Labour Party 'never recovered' from its fallout with organised labour in the 1950s.

The decline in working-class membership was also reflected in the composition of the Parliamentary caucus. Former manual workers represented less than a third of Labour MPs in 1975, compared to 50 percent in 1946 (Webber 1976, 53). Webber has attributed these changes to four factors: i) full employment, ii) the growing independence of the FOL, iii) changes to the composition of trade unions, and iv) the dominance of middle-class interests in the New Zealand Labour Party. As was the case in Britain (Hindess 1971), the 'bourgeoisification' of the New Zealand Labour Party membership and caucus was reflected in the decline of class

voting and changes to the social composition of unions. As a result, rejuvenation of the party relied on “young, educated white-collar activists” in the 1960s (Gustafson 2001, 18). Many of these individuals were motivated by the rise of ‘new social movements’. But the changes were arguably more complex than that. As Franks and McAloon (2016) state, the influence of women and Maori also increased during the 1960s and 1970s (p. 170).

Thus, the New Zealand Labour Party was a much more diverse organisation, not just in class terms, but in terms of gender and ethnicity as well. It is important to note that feminists such as Margaret Wilson, who would later become president of the party, were not necessarily opposed to class politics. Rather, they sought to broaden representation by advocating policies to support the equal participation of women in the workforce (Clark 1992, 35-49). However, it was moral issues and foreign policy that divided Labour in the early 1970s. According to Franks and McAloon (2016) again, there was “an uneasy balance between progressive urban youth and provincial conservatism” (p. 175). Peter Aimer (2010) has described this coalition of social liberals and social conservatives as “not naturally cohesive” (pp. 474-485). Yet these divergent interests found common purpose in upholding the basic principles of labourism.

After all, it was a socially conservative former manual worker who led New Zealand Labour to what Levine and Roberts (1992) have declared its post-war ‘highpoint’ (p. 219). The 1972 victory corresponded to 48 percent of the vote and a majority of 23 seats. With the exception of Mike Moore in 1990-1993, ‘Big Norm’ was the last non-professional to lead the Labour Party. Upon his election to the leadership, Kirk had set out to rebuild the party’s relationship with organised labour. He was helped by the party president, Norman Douglas, an old trade unionist. The partnership proved successful. Between 1965 and 1970, a number of unions that had been alienated by Nash and Nordmeyer re-affiliated to the Labour Party; among these, the Hotel Workers’ Union (Webber 1976, 185). Unfortunately, the lack of survey research makes it nearly impossible to judge the level of class voting or the class composition of the Labour Party’s electoral base in 1972. Yet we can infer that the class-party alignment was very much intact despite social changes.

However, the Third Labour Government soon faltered. In power, Labour was conflicted between working-class demands, and the need to maintain a market-based economy (McRobie 1992, 386; Roper 2005, 145-149). As Jason Schulman (2015) writes, “The government did not even seek the advice of affiliated unions on any of its industrial relations policy. Nor did it consult with the party’s national council, the industrial relations subcommittee of the executive,

or the policy committee” (p. 24). In fact, the Joint Council of Labour, a consultative body established by the Labour Party and the FOL in 1952, met only twice between 1970 and 1975. The relationship broke down further in July 1974 when industrial action by the Northern Drivers’ Union led to the arrest of its secretary, Bill Andersen. In support of Andersen some 20,000 workers participated in stoppages across Auckland. The protest lasted two days before Andersen was finally released.

The Third Labour Government was unsympathetic. Prime Minister Kirk declared “the public have had a gutsful, and so have we” (Bodman 2013). Whereas Nash chose to be “neither for nor against” the watersiders, Kirk was firmly against the drivers. Indeed, Ryan Bodman (2013) argues that Kirk’s rhetoric helped to cultivate a public image of unionists as “selfish, belligerent, strike-obsessed and vehemently opposed to the national interest” (p. 86). This image would gradually erode public support for trade unions over the next two decades. Rather than seeking to ‘defend and protect’ (Cronin 2004) the position of organised labour in society, the New Zealand Labour Party had all but washed its hands of the movement. The abandonment of labourism must, however, be viewed in the context of political and economic crisis. The 1973 oil shock and Britain’s entry into the European Economic Community had exposed New Zealand to international forces. In the wake of these developments, the Third Labour Government struggled to maintain its policy of full employment. Demand for exports fell, and inflation soared. The nation could not afford industrial conflict.

Of course, we will never know if Kirk could have led Labour to a second term. On 31 August 1974, ‘Big Norm’ passed into national myth. His successor, Rowling, led the party to a major defeat in the 1975 general election. With a swing of almost nine percent, Labour lost 23 seats. The party would spend the next nine years in opposition and ever more distant from organised labour. According to the 1975 Victoria University Election Study, 53 percent of ‘unskilled workers’ voted Labour in that year (Levine & Robinson 1976). Vowles’ (2014a) analysis of household voting indicates that, in total, only 42 percent of service and manual household voters supported Labour in 1975. Further evidence from a poll conducted by the Heylen Research Centre alludes to a collapse in Labour support among a segment of the working-class. Chapman (1999c) reported that 9.2 percent of those who voted for Labour in 1969 and 1972 changed their vote in 1975. Chapman wrote of a “definite emphasis on skilled trades, trade and technical training” among these vote changers (p. 185). In fact, National Party leader Robert Muldoon was more popular among manual workers than Rowling and 28 percent of 1972 Labour voters switched to National.

Thus we may conclude that the relationship between the New Zealand Labour Party, trade unions and working-class voters proved difficult to maintain in government. After the collapse of the Third Labour Government, the relationship continued to deteriorate. By 1982, according to Bodman (2013), “the historic connection between the two wings of the labour movement hung on by a thread” (pp. 86-87). However, rapprochement between the Labour Party and the FOL in 1984 played a crucial a role in that year’s election (Franks & McAloon 2016, 203). There was no national survey in 1984. However, a postal survey of electors in three ‘marginal’ Auckland electorates was conducted immediately after the general election. Vowles (1987a) reported that manual workers and trade union members were “mildly more disposed to Labour”. Overall, 57 percent of ‘manual wage earners’ turned out for Labour compared to 33 percent for National. Furthermore, it appeared that trade unionists switching from National to Labour played an important role in the election result. Though not conclusive, the evidence suggests that the mobilisation of working-class voters and organised labour was crucial to a Labour victory in 1984.

Table 2.2
Household voting in New Zealand

Election	% manual household vote Labour	% non-manual household vote Labour
1963	60	31
1987	55	44
1990	39	33

Source: Vowles (1992)

Despite unease with the Fourth Labour Government’s economic policies, the relationship between the party and trade unions held together in the 1987 general election. According to Vowles (2014a), 45 percent of electors in ‘manual and service’ households voted for Labour. The figure is based on analysis of the first New Zealand Election Study and includes the non-vote. If a strict manual/non-manual dichotomy is applied, then the figure is 55 percent (Vowles 1992). Working-class support for Labour was at least as strong as it had been in 1984, and certainly stronger than it was in 1975. Therefore, it can be argued that the electoral success of the Fourth Labour Government lay in its ability to appeal to a broad cross-section of the electorate while also maintaining strong support among Labour’s traditional base.

Summary

During the early 20th century, the British and New Zealand Labour Parties struggled to

consolidate the working-class vote. It was not until 1945 in Britain, and 1935 in New Zealand, that the class-party alignment was solidified. After the 1960s, this alignment began to weaken. British and New Zealand Labour both experienced a substantial decline in working-class support during the 1970s. As documented in Table 2.1, the percentage of manual household voters who voted for British Labour declined from 64 percent in 1966 to 50 percent in 1979 (Crewe & Sarlvik 1983; Heath et al. 1985). The lack of national surveys in New Zealand during the 1960s and 1970s makes a direct comparison with Britain difficult. However, past research has established that New Zealand Labour received up to 60 percent of the manual household vote in 1963 (see Table 2.2). Evidence from a range of different sources indicates that the figure was much lower in 1975 (Chapman 1999c; Levine & Robinson 1976; Vowles 2014a).

This chapter has argued that the alienation of working-class voters by Labour Governments in Britain and New Zealand was a recurring theme in 20th century history. As a number of studies have found, the British and New Zealand Labour Parties became increasingly gentrified after World War II (Gustafson 1976; Hindess 1971; Whiteley 1983; Seyd & Whiteley 1992; Webber 1976). But a causal link between the gentrification of Labour Parties and the decline in class voting does not hold up to further scrutiny. The success of labourism was in promoting class collaboration. Working-class voters rallied to support the predominately middle-class but labourist Government of Harold Wilson in 1964 and 1966. In 1972, Norman Kirk led a coalition of working-class conservatives and middle-class liberals to victory on a platform of labourism.

During the post-war period, however, Labour Governments in Britain and New Zealand failed to maintain the confidence of working-class voters. Consequently, working-class voters abandoned labourism. It was working-class voters who toppled the First Wilson Government in 1970, and it was working-class voters who punished the Callaghan Government most severely for the Winter of Discontent in 1979 (Fielding 2003; Heath et al. 1985; Sarlvik & Crewe 1983; Thorpe 1997). From the New Zealand case study, there is evidence that working-class hostility to the Black Budget led to the fall of the Nash Government in 1960 (Chapman 1999a; Gustafson 1976, 2001). Furthermore, it appears that the defection of working-class voters from Labour to National resulted in the election and re-election of the Muldoon Government during the 1970s (Chapman 1999c; Vowles 2014a). Both Labour Parties experienced a period of electoral malaise.

After following more or less the same historical trajectory during the post-war period,

the British and New Zealand Labour Parties diverged in the 1980s. The British Labour Party was defeated in four successive elections from 1979 to 1992. Its share of the manual household vote fell to 42 percent in 1983. The following year, David Lange led the New Zealand Labour Party to victory. Three years later, the Fourth Labour Government was re-elected with a larger share of the vote. Evidence suggests that the mobilisation of organised labour and working-class voters was crucial to electoral success in New Zealand, with up to 55 percent of people in manual households voting for Labour (Bodman 2013; Franks & McAloon 2016; Vowles 1987a, 1992). The paradox of labourism now found expression in two different forms. While working-class voters in Britain rejected traditional social democracy, working-class voters in New Zealand rallied behind market liberalism.

Chapter 3: The Third Way

The narrative that centre-left parties have had to abandon traditional social democracy to make themselves electable has been widely accepted in the literature (Crewe 1991; Denver & Garnett 2014; McKenzie 2002; Miller 2003, 2005; Prezworski & Sprague 1986; Vowles 2014a). It is typically argued that the diminishing size of the working-class, mass affluence and other social changes in post-industrial society have led to the rejection of left-wing politics by the majority of voters. In response, social democratic and labourist parties have repositioned themselves in the ‘centre’ of the political spectrum. This has allowed them to appeal to the ‘median voter’; who, it is thought, represents the main body of public opinion. The median voter concept is based on a rational choice model of voting behaviour (Downs 1957). It is claimed that all voters can be placed on a one dimensional left/right spectrum, with most converging near the centre. Parties that deviate too far from the median voter will soon find themselves unelectable. The end of the post-war economic expansion, and the perceived failure of Keynesian policies in the 1970s, shifted the political centre to the right (Lavelle 2008; Roper 2005). For British and New Zealand Labour, this meant giving up the core assumptions of labourism.

The Third Way and Labourism

Bevan McKenzie (2002) has argued that by the 1990s, the British Labour Party and New Zealand Labour Party were “left without a choice” (pp. 172-177). To continue to promote policies of state intervention and welfare expansion would have been political suicide. Historian Eric Hobsbawm recognised the arrival at this critical juncture in “The Forward March of Labour Halted?” (1978). Hobsbawm’s appeal for a realistic approach to Marxism foreshadowed the ‘Third Way’ (Giddens, 1998). The strong evidence of class dealignment in the 1980s led Crewe (1991) to the same conclusion. According to Crewe, Labour had been reduced to a “sectional party of protest” with its electoral support concentrated mostly among “the economically marginal and dispossessed” who constituted an electoral minority (pp. 36-46). Crewe argued that a “catch-all leader focused” approach was more likely to engender success at the polls (pp. 42-45). Such a strategy would, however, depend on Labour capturing the centre *and* maintaining its traditional constituency. The strategy worked in Britain and New Zealand during the late 1990s. Both parties were successful, not just in attaining power, but in maintaining it over three electoral cycles.

The subsequent decline of British and New Zealand Labour could be explained using

the median voter theorem. A broader interpretation of the median voter theorem takes into consideration not just spatial location, but valence judgements as well (see Chapter 1). When analysed through this model, the electoral failings of a party can be attributed to both ideological dissonance *and* perceived incompetence or lack of credibility. Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders and Stewart (2013) comprehensively applied this model to British Labour in the 1990s and 2000s. They concluded that leadership factors and economic conditions strongly influenced the electoral decline of ‘New Labour’ post-1997. The defeat of the Major Government, and the rise of New Labour were attributed to more or less the same factors. In New Zealand, Vowles (2010) has argued that the defeat of the Clark Government in 2008 can also be explained using the valence model. In both cases, spatial considerations and social-structural factors were found to have a much weaker relationship with voting than the literature had previously allowed for.

However, the following chapter argues that political science has overlooked the contemporary relevance of the working-class vote to British and New Zealand Labour. Both parties ended the 20th century with their working-class support much higher than their middle-class support. In the 1997 BES, a majority of manual occupation voters supported British Labour (see Table 3.1). According to analysis of the NZES, New Zealand Labour’s electoral success in 1999 coincided with its highest level of support from manual occupation voters since 1987 (see Table 3.2). That is not to minimise the importance of a broad-based, cross-class appeal. Rather, the thesis makes the case that the electoral success of British and New Zealand Labour continued to rely on the legacy of labourism, a working-class ideology. By the 1990s, the Third Way had replaced labourism as the dominant ideology of the centre-left in Britain and New Zealand. The parties’ increased their appeal with the middle-class. However, working-class voters also rallied to support the Third Way. Blair and Clark had resolved the “dilemma of electoral socialism” (Przeworski & Sprague 1986, 29).

Social Democracy vs. Neoliberalism

The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on the period post-1987. That year general elections were held in Britain and New Zealand. For New Zealand Labour, 1987 represents a high-tide mark. The Fourth Labour Government was re-elected with an increased majority. For British Labour, however, the tide remained low. Having recovered from its worst electoral result since the 1920s, the party was no closer to victory. But the two parties were about to converge in a different way. In New Zealand, the Fourth Labour Government had repudiated

Keynesian social democracy in favour of market liberalism. Over time, this decision proved controversial and divisive. The electoral consequences were dire: in 1990, the party suffered its worst defeat in 60 years.

At the same time, the ‘modernisation’ of British Labour was underway. The term was euphemistic for a more market liberal orientation. Gradually, and in much less dramatic fashion, British Labour came to occupy the same ideological ground as New Zealand Labour. By the end of the 20th century, both were adherents of a ‘Third Way’ between social democracy and ‘neoliberalism’. What follows is a comparative analysis of the relationship between these developments and changes in class voting as measured in electoral studies using the manual/non-manual dichotomy. The thesis argues that the median voter theorem was put into practice in Britain and New Zealand. The formula proved successful in the late 1990s. But the median voter was no substitute for Labour’s traditional base. Electoral success depended on Labour maintaining higher levels of support among working-class voters.

First, it is necessary to define some terms. Anthony Giddens (1998) described the Third Way as a “framework of thinking and policy-making that seeks to adapt social democracy to a world which has changed fundamentally” (p. 26). It was an attempt to transcend social democracy and ‘neoliberalism’. The term ‘neoliberal’ is used here to refer, not just to a set of policies, but an ideology of the state. David Harvey (2005) describes it as a “central guiding principle of economic thought and management’ based on the belief that “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills” should be the main purpose of government (pp. 1-2). The fundamental tenets of neoliberalism can be summarised here briefly: i) a strict adherence to monetarism and price stability, ii) the deregulation of capital and labour markets, iii) the practice of supply-side economics, iv) welfare policies structured around personal responsibility (Harvey 2005, 24; Hickson 2004, 131).

According to Ashley Lavelle (2008), these objectives conflict with social democracy because social democrats have traditionally “stressed the need for government to protect workers and the disadvantaged, redistribute wealth, and ‘civilize’ capitalism” (p. 12). While not strictly-speaking *laissez-faire*, neoliberalism relegates most social objectives to the profit-motive. Examples of this include the privatisation of public utilities and the introduction of market forces to the provision of social welfare, health and education. Contemporary social democracy “does not believe in intervening in the market beyond the existence of basic social programmes that few parties oppose” (Lavelle 2008, 14). Phrased another way, social

democrats have largely accepted the fundamental tenets of neoliberalism. In turn, neoliberals have maintained social spending at a level necessary to meet basic demand, if only for reasons of political expediency.

Stephen Driver and Luke Martell (2006) would concur with Lavelle that the Third Way politics of 'New Labour' represent a clear break from 'Old Labour'. The argument has also been developed by Cronin (2004) and David Rubenstein (2006). However, Steven Fielding (2003) finds ideological continuity between past Labour Governments and the Blair Government. Fielding claims that, "Blair remained remarkably faithful to Labour's past" (p. 217). On the contrary, Labour's central purpose has remained the same: to strengthen capitalism by addressing market failure. Shaw (1996) has also been critical of attempts to portray 'Old Labour' as ideologically ridged. There has been considerably less debate about the meaning of the Third Way and its relationship with labourism in the New Zealand context. Recently, Melanie Nolan (2010) has argued that differences between the First Labour Government and the Clark Government are overstated in the literature. According to Nolan, the New Zealand Labour Party of the 1930s and 1940s was also pragmatic in its relationship with the private sector.

As outlined in Chapter 2, historical labourism had less to do with state control of the economy, and more to do with the parliamentary representation of working-class interests. Social democratic reform was crucial but only insofar as it could improve the material conditions of those in work. That said, Labour leaders recognised the need for middle-class support and labourism also became a rallying point for other progressive causes during the mid-20th century. However, this inevitably meant that the Labour Parties of Britain and New Zealand became socially and ideologically diverse. The success of Labour leaders was in uniting their parties around a common cause. During the 1990s, that cause became the Third Way. However, this chapter shall argue that electoral support for the Third Way relied on the legacy of labourism.

British Labour: 1987-1997

British Labour's recovery in the late 1980s has been widely attributed to the leadership of Neil Kinnock (Cronin 2004; Laybourn 2000; Reid & Pelling 2005; Rubenstein 2006; Sasson 2013; Shaw 1989, 1994, 1996; Thorpe 1997). After a third consecutive defeat in 1987, Kinnock and his supporters set out to 'modernise' the Labour Party. Kinnock had already disavowed the radical left and expelled members of the militant Trotskyist faction. But this was not enough

to change the widely-held perception of Labour as a party of radicals. As Heath et al. (2001) have established, the areas where Labour was most out of touch with the electorate were those of defence and nationalisation. Kinnock's discernment of this problem led him to establish a comprehensive 'Policy Review' in 1988. Thus began the process of modernisation through 'programmatic renewal' (Shaw 1996, 181).

Labour abandoned its controversial policy of 'unilateral disarmament'. Other radical positions were also removed from the manifesto. It would no longer nationalise the banks, abolish the House of Lords, withdraw from the European Economic Community or close down American military bases (Reid & Pelling 2005, 167-168). The purpose of programmatic renewal was to "reassure frightened electors by refurbishing Labour's image as a respectable and pragmatic party" that could be trusted with power (Shaw 1989, 189). By the time of the 1992 general election, according to historian Donald Sassoon (2013), Labour had become "a relatively united force with a coherent ideology, a much improved public image, and a campaigning style far superior to that of the Conservatives" (p. 698). While this was not enough to defeat the Major Government, it nevertheless meant that Labour was a government-in-waiting, and not a party of mere opposition. But modernisation did not end with the abandonment of radical policies and a professionalised approach to campaigning. The intellectual foundations of labourism were challenged to the core.

Modernisation was, in some ways, a delayed response to the fallout caused by the 1978-79 'Winter of Discontent'. Industrial unrest had forced many schools and hospitals to close, provoking public outrage. In protest the Callaghan Government was severely punished at the polls (see Chapter 2). Subsequently, the Thatcher Government introduced legislation to remove power from trade unions by outlawing closed shops and secondary picketing. The legislation also made it compulsory for unions to hold postal ballots of their membership to sanction work stoppages. These measures were supported by the public at large, including a majority of Labour voters and trade unionists. Kinnock, himself of working-class stock, discerned the public antipathy for militant unionism when he chose to take a moderate stance on the National Union of Mineworkers' strike of 1984-1985. Nevertheless, it was Labour policy to repeal the Thatcher legislation. That position changed after the 1988-1991 Policy Review, however. The appointment of Tony Blair to the Employment portfolio in 1989 flagged a major shift in Labour's industrial relations policy; the party's 1992 manifesto reassured the electorate "there will be no return to the trade union legislation of the 1970s" (cited in Shaw 1996, 187). To modernisers, such as Blair, the historical baggage of labourism was epitomised by the Winter

of Discontent.

The Policy Review was as much an inquest into labourism, as it was an inquest into the radical left. Labour emerged from the Policy Review with a more market-oriented approach to government that, arguably, conflicted with the social democratic objectives of labourism. Those objectives primarily centred on full employment and the equitable distribution of wealth. The Attlee Government (1945-1951) had established a comprehensive welfare state and nationalised part of the economy. It also established, for the first time, that Keynesian macroeconomic policies could be used to stimulate economic growth and maintain full employment. Keynesian policies, along with the welfare state, were continued by successive Labour and Conservative governments. Within Labour there was disagreement between the Bevanites and Gaitskellites about the importance of public ownership, but they agreed on principal objectives (see Chapter 2). By the late 1980s, however, many of these earlier assumptions about labourism were being questioned. A new generation of Labour MPs were less collectivist in their outlook and more pro-market (Norris 1999, 26-27). During the 1990s party members became increasingly less committed to traditional Labour policies (Seyd & Whiteley 2002, 49-59). The Policy Review, therefore, began a drift to the right.

Of course, it was not a total repudiation of labourism; but the two main strands of labourism, working-class representation and social democratic reform, were starting to unravel. Increasingly, Labour began to accept the fundamental tenets of neoliberalism as a precondition to government. The principles of labourism were no longer sacrosanct. While Blair led the modernisation of industrial relations, Shadow Chancellor John Smith, and his protégé Gordon Brown, authored a new economic plan. Their first major step was committing the party to Europe. Britain's membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) would pave the way for a monetary union with the European Economic Community. The issue was divisive on both sides of politics and opposition was largely based on economic nationalism. For Labour traditionalists, however, the ERM conflicted with the basic objectives of social democracy. Fiscal discipline would be needed in order to achieve price stability (Shaw 1996, 185). This meant Labour could no longer pursue a strategy of central economic planning and fiscal expansion. Traditionalists, such as Bryan Gould, argued that a strict monetarist approach to inflation would cause low growth and high unemployment (Cronin 2004, 310; Shaw 1996, 185).

The modernisers prevailed, however, and Labour committed itself to the ERM. In preparation for the change, Smith refined Labour's proposed expenditure to a modest adjustment of the pension and child benefit, announcing that these would be funded by higher taxes (Shaw 1996, 185-186). As Kinnock put it, "[Labour] will not spend, nor will we promise to spend, more than the country can afford" (cited in Cronin 2004, 295). Finally, Labour's promise to nationalise public utilities was withdrawn. As the National Institute of Economic and Social Research wrote, "the economic policy differences between the two major parties are narrower now than they have been for about twenty years" (cited in Shaw 1996, 185). The post-war consensus, built around the Keynesian welfare state, had given way to a new paradigm. Referring back to the fundamental tenets of neoliberalism, outlined in the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that the 1988-1992 Policy Review at least accepted the first of these assumptions.

There is much evidence to support the claim that modernisation was motivated by a belief in the median voter theorem. Shaw (1994) and Dominic Wring (2005) have documented the professionalisation of Labour under Kinnock's leadership. A key feature of this was the use of quantitative research, such as public opinion polls, to inform electoral strategy. In doing so, the leadership was able to determine the proximity of Labour policy to the views of the average voter, and where necessary, bring the party's manifesto into line with those views (Shaw 1994, 60; Wring 2005, pp. 101-117). In practice this meant moving to the right on many issues. Though there was opposition from the left, most Labour members accepted the policy changes as pragmatic and necessary after a decade in opposition (Seyd & Whiteley 2002). Thus, the final report of the Policy Review was overwhelmingly approved at the 1989 conference (Cronin 2004, 298). The pivot towards the median voter was not enough to secure Labour victory in the 1992 general election, however.

Andrew Hindmoor (2004) argues that leadership image was a decisive factor in the loss. Having been a prominent advocate of unilateral disarmament and trade unionism in his earlier career, Kinnock was vulnerable to the perception of insincerity. In short, he lacked the trust of voters. Furthermore, Smith's proposal to introduce a new top income rate of 50 percent and increase National Insurance contributions to fund higher welfare provisions reinforced the image of Labour as a "high tax-high spend party" (Cronin 2004, 320; Shaw 1996, 185-186). Kinnock was ineffective at countering such attacks and the controversy was believed to have cost Labour the election. Consequently, the modernisers resolved to do away with Labour's tax and spend policies (Fielding 2003, 104-105; Rubinstein 2006, 174-175). However, Smith

– now leader – was unwilling to move any further to the right. His approach was intended to consolidate party support around the new policy agenda while defending the fundamental principles of labourism.

That approach ended with Smith's untimely death in 1994. The subsequent election of Blair to the leadership completed the modernisation process. New Labour was born. As discussed above, one of the key assumptions of New Labour was that 'tax and spend' policies had lost the 1992 election. A second was that Labour's historic commitment to the nationalisation of industry was a major reservation for most voters. The party's relationship with trade unions was also considered a handicap. These three core assumptions informed New Labour's electoral strategy in 1997. First, Clause IV was amended to remove any reference to nationalisation or public ownership. Having won this major concession from the party rank and file, Blair then set out to convince voters that New Labour was not beholden to the trade union movement, and could be trusted on matters of public finance. He told financiers that Keynesianism was 'buried' and that Labour now believed "economic activity is best left to the private sector" (cited in Cronin 2004, 404). The most important development, however, came when Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown announced that Labour would adhere to the Conservative Government's spending limits, and furthermore, there would be no direct tax increases (Cronin 2004, 406-407; Fielding 2003, 154-155; Rubinstein 2006, 178-179).

Evidence from the BES, however, casts doubt on many of the New Labour assumptions. First, there was the claim that despite moving to the centre in 1992, Labour needed to move further rightward. The Policy Review was successful in moderating Labour's image, with most BES respondents discerning a shift towards the centre, but the electoral consequences of the shift were small (Heath et al. 1994). This suggested that the image of Labour as 'extreme' was not, primarily, responsible for the party's defeat in 1987; though perceived extremism was a factor. It is doubtful, therefore, that Labour would have won the 1992 election had the Policy Review gone further right. According to Heath et al. (1994), the British electorate of 1992 seemed to have gone in the opposite direction of Labour, with the BES recording higher levels of support for left-wing positions. Of particular relevance was the increase in support for giving workers "more say in running places where they work" from 55 percent in 1979 to 79 percent in 1992 (pp. 284-285). Larger numbers also supported increases to public spending on health and welfare. Furthermore, it was established that more voters identified closer to Labour than they did the Conservatives (36 percent compared to 31 percent).

A further assumption of New Labour was that the party's natural constituency, the working-class, was in permanent decline and no longer voted along class lines. As a result, politics had become increasingly middle-class (Fielding 2003, 102-103; Rubinstein 2006, p. 174). Party strategists emphasised the need to appeal to 'Middle England' over traditional Labour voters. In other words, the architects of New Labour had accepted the class dealignment thesis, and a deterministic reading of social trends. To survive, they argued, Labour would have to reject the notion it was a working-class party. Again, these assumptions were challenged by Heath et al. (1994). The authors argued that the level of relative class voting in 1987 and 1992 was roughly the same as it had been during the early 1970s; though this claim was contentious (see Chapter 1). The working-class vote was estimated to be 40 percent of the electorate; a greater share of the vote than Labour had received (Heath et al. 1994, 281). In fact, Labour's problem was that middle-class voters, as a majority of the electorate, continued to vote along class lines. When Labour lost support among the working-class, it lost support among the middle-class in almost equal measure.

Yet, according to the BES results, Labour recovered support among the working-class at a higher rate in 1992. Heath et al. (1994) concluded that social changes had indeed hurt the Labour Party but the authors reached a very different conclusion to that of the modernisers. Labour could win with a broader appeal, but only so long as it retained the loyalty of traditional supporters. In the aftermath of Labour's 1997 victory, however, the architects of New Labour had good reason to believe that their assumptions were correct. According to Heath et al. (2001), the number of middle-class voters who identified with Labour increased in the BES between 1992 and 1997. Blair's pitch to the voters of 'Middle England' had certainly worked. Hidden in the BES data, though, was an early indication that the New Labour strategy might have some negative consequences. Heath et al. (2001) found a "definite weakening, both absolutely and relatively, of enthusiasm for New Labour" among the working-class compared to the middle-class. Analysis of turnout also suggested a higher level of class non-voting. Council tenants, trade unionists and the unemployed, for example, were found to have a lower turnout rate than the 1979-1992 average.

Table 3.1
1983-1997

Election	% manual occupation voters who voted for Labour	% non-manual occupation voters who voted for Labour
1983	41	16
1987	43	18
1992	48	22
1997	60	44

Source: BES (1983, 1987, 1992, 1997)

As discussed in Chapter 1, BES analysis during this period overlooked the traditional manual/non-manual dichotomy in favour of a more complicated model. Using the 1990 Standard Occupational Classification to classify BES respondents, however, we can get a basic picture of class voting. In 1992, 43 percent of voters with manual occupations voted for Labour (see Table 3.1). Labour's share of the non-manual vote was considerably smaller at 22 percent. Then, in 1997, we see a dramatic increase in middle-class support for Labour. The party's share of the non-manual vote doubled. While the percentage of manual workers who voted for Labour in 1997 increased by a lot less, working-class support for Labour reached its highest level since 1966. Though it must be said that turnout in the 1997 general election was the lowest since World War II, 60 percent of the manual workers who *did* turnout cast their vote for Labour. Thus, the mobilisation of working-class support played a critical role in the election of the Blair Government. Viewed in isolation, these changes seem dramatic. But when placed in a broader historical and political context, they lend themselves to explanation. The change in composition of Labour support was the result of a deliberate strategy. Nevertheless, the working-class vote provided a bedrock of support on which a Labour victory rested in 1997.

New Zealand Labour: 1987-1999

In New Zealand, the process of modernisation began earlier, and with less deliberation. After the 1984 general election, New Zealand Labour's shift to the right was framed in terms of the national interest. Deregulation of financial markets, the removal of restrictions on international trade, and the corporatisation of government departments were a pragmatic response to economic crisis. The farming and manufacturing sectors were affected the most by these radical changes, but as R.J. Johnston (1989) has noted, unemployment did not increase significantly during the first term of the Fourth Labour Government. Nevertheless, Labour strategists discerned a need to retain the party's traditional base. Thus, Labour campaigned in 1987 on strengthening the welfare system. Furthermore, it promised a closer relationship with the trade union movement. The new Council of Trade Unions, formed by a merger of the FOL and the

Combined State Unions, endorsed Labour for a second term. Following the election, a compact was negotiated between the government and trade unions, culminating in a Growth Agreement that linked wage rises with productivity (Grant 2010, 280-287).

But three years later, many of Labour's campaign promises had been broken, and the social consequences of economic restructuring were felt more deeply as unemployment reached unprecedented levels (Kelsey 1995, 259-261). Despite this, the CTU endorsed Labour a second time, and promoted the Growth Agreement to the electorate (Grant 2010, 288-289). In September 1990, seven weeks before the general election, Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer resigned and was replaced by Mike Moore. The decision to change leader so close to an election was born out of 'moral panic' according to Helen Clark (cited in Welch 2009, 123). Many of Moore's Parliamentary colleagues questioned his suitability for the leadership. But a majority were convinced that Moore, at least, had the personality and campaign skills to make defeat *less* certain. In the end, Moore's personal support was not enough to overcome the deficit of trust in Labour. Manual household voters abandoned Labour in large numbers (Vowles 1992, 98). According to the NZES, only 58 percent of 1987 Labour voters remained with Labour in 1990. Turnout was the lowest in 50 years and it is estimated that 14 percent of former Labour voters abstained (Vowles & Aimer 1993, 11). The NewLabour Party, led by former Labour MP Jim Anderton, and the Greens competed with National for the disaffected vote. Moore remained leader and soon announced his intention to 'modernise' the party organisation.

According to Vowles (1992), only 39 percent of manual household voters turned out for Labour. If we use the individualist approach and exclude the non-vote, as per Table 3.2, then we find that 46 percent of manual workers who did turn out voted for Labour in 1990. This was still 15 percentage points higher than the non-manual Labour vote. Thus, it was with some justification that Moore set out to broaden Labour's appeal. The new approach involved the use of pollsters and business consultants to develop a marketing strategy for the 1993 campaign (Rudd 2005, 83-85). Moore's rhetoric was not dissimilar to that of the New Labour modernisers in Britain. Moore spoke of reclaiming the 'middle ground' in politics and appealing to "the middle income earner" (cited in Gomibuchi 2000, 113-114). The strategy also appeared to be based on a deterministic reading of social trends. Moore argued, for example, that Labour's traditional base was now too small for it to win key marginal seats. The voters who Moore had in mind were epitomised as 'Ken' and 'Marion' in the party's 1993 television campaign (Gomibuchi 2000, 114). For a time, the opinion polls seemed to vindicate Moore, but as the election grew closer, serious doubts were cast on his leadership.

According to Seishi Gomibuchi (2000), party officials such as Ruth Dyson and Maryan Street were critical of the Moore strategy. They were supported by a number of MPs, including deputy leader Helen Clark, and former Prime Minister David Lange. The faction wanted a return to old Labour values of collectivism and equality. In other words, Labour needed to re-establish itself as a 'centre-left' party (p. 113). Therefore, the traditionalists argued for a policy programme that could be more clearly identified as social democratic. Thus, the major area of disagreement between modernisers and traditionalists was fiscal policy. Moore wanted to avoid any perception that Labour would 'tax and spend'. The leader ruled out any tax increases despite opposition from some MPs (p. 112). Another major area of disagreement was industrial relations. Labour formally opposed the National Government's Employment Contracts Act 1992. The ECA abolished collective bargaining and removed legal protections for organised labour. Clark, as spokesperson for industrial relations, put considerable effort into reassuring the CTU that a Labour government would restore the legal status of trade unions. But some Labour MPs were hostile to the old system of compulsory unionism and industrial arbitration (pp. 65-67). These public disagreements represented a philosophical conflict between those who wanted to abandon the last vestiges of labourism, and those seeking to preserve them.

The motif of Labour's 1993 campaign was the middle-class voter. Moore's preoccupation with 'middle New Zealand' was the subject of much criticism from the left of the party. Paradoxically, analysis of the NZES has suggested that Moore had greater success in recovering Labour's support among its traditional voter base. From one perspective, there was certainly a higher degree of class voting in 1993 compared to 1990. On a household basis, the Alford Index rose for the first time in 30 years (Vowles et al. 1995, 20). The proportion of trade unionists who voted for Labour in 1993 went up three percentage points to 39 percent, though it was still a long way from the 1987 figure of 50 percent (p. 24). These changes were modest but politically significant, as Labour's total share of the vote declined by half-a-percentage point. Its greatest loss, according to the NZES, was among highly educated voters (pp. 24-25). These numbers suggest, therefore, that Labour increased its working-class support while losing a disproportionate number of middle-class voters. If we use the individualist approach in Table 3.2, however, we find that Labour's share of the manual vote actually decreased one percentage point.

In the aftermath of the 1993 defeat, much was made about Moore's leadership style. He was criticised for running a leader-centric campaign that failed to articulate policy differences with National and deliberately obscured Labour's position on the political spectrum "out of

fear of upsetting business”, thus giving the Alliance an electoral advantage (Gomibuchi 2000, 84-85). It is impossible to know how a different campaign strategy might have played out, or the precise reason why Moore’s strategy of appealing to the middle-class might have had the opposite effect. But the experience of 1990-1993 convinced most Labour MPs that a more traditional approach was needed. The philosophical conflict over labourism culminated in a bitterly fought leadership contest between Moore and Clark. In the end, Clark was elected by a majority of the caucus. The new leader disavowed any claim to middle New Zealand, and unlike her predecessor, was forthright in expressing the values of labourism. Clark placed particular emphasis on social justice issues. Her keynote speech to the 1995 Labour conference outlined a ‘personal agenda’ that included the elimination of poverty through wealth redistribution, and abolition of the Employment Contracts Act (Gomibuchi 2000, 236-237).

A major policy development came in October 1994, when the party announced it would increase personal tax on income over \$60,000 by 6 cents in the dollar. Though modest, it was a departure from Moore’s fiscal conservatism, and reaffirmed Labour’s commitment to some form of social democracy. These statements were meant to herald a return to the politics of labourism. But there is conflicting evidence as to whether or not this was the case. Content analysis of party manifestos by Matthew Gibbons (2011) suggests a pivot to the left under Clark’s leadership. On the other hand, Fiona Barker (cited in Edwards 2003, 67) has argued that most of the changes were not substantive, and in fact, much of Labour’s economic policy under Clark resembled the programme of the Fourth Labour Government. Edwards (2003) sums up the evidence thus, “Labour’s proposed changes to labour laws, increased spending, and reversing National’s welfare reforms was only ever about making relatively minor variations to the National Party model” (p. 172). The difference between National and Labour in the mid-1990s was, therefore, one of image and rhetoric.

While Labour under Clark sought to rebuild its relationship with trade unions and the working class, it was not prepared to challenge the post-1984 consensus around macroeconomic policy. Returning to the fundamental tenets of neoliberalism outlined earlier in this chapter, it was the strict adherence to monetarist principles that placed Labour closer to neoliberalism than social democracy. The decision by Labour in 1994 to uphold the Reserve Bank Act, and continue to prioritise low inflation over economic growth as a policy objective, constrained the possibility for greater wealth redistribution under a Labour Government (Edwards 2003, 187; Gomibuchi 2000, 235). Though Labour proposed a higher top income tax rate, the increase would not offset the loss in revenue from tax changes made under the National

Government. In practice, Labour remained fiscally conservative. Another dimension was Labour's internationalism. Under Clark, Labour continued to promote the open market economy (Aimer 2010, 476). Therefore, the Labour Party that Clark led into the 1996 general election was one which placed much greater emphasis on social policy, but was very much captive to the economic and philosophical assumptions of the Fourth Labour Government.

The 1996 general election was the first New Zealand election held under the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system of representation. It also stands out as the most closely fought between Labour and minor parties in the post-war era. As well as a challenge from the Alliance, Labour was also vulnerable to the populist conservative party New Zealand First, led by former National cabinet minister Winston Peters. Opinion polls suggested the Labour vote might collapse to 15 percent. For a time, the country's oldest political movement came perilously close to losing its status as a major party. Clark's leadership almost came to an end in May 1996 when a faction of dissident MPs attempted to force her resignation. But Clark prevailed, and in the words of Aimer (1997), "stole the first MMP campaign" (p. 134). After a television debate performance that impressed voters, Clark's personal support and that of Labour surged. Although the party finished with its lowest share of the vote since 1928, Labour remained the second largest party, and Clark was widely expected to lead a coalition government.

In the end, however, NZ First negotiated a coalition agreement with National and deprived Labour of a majority. Labour would spend a further three years in Opposition. During that time, the party continued to fashion itself as a 'Third Way' alternative to National. Speaking as Prime Minister at the London School of Economics in 2002, Clark described a social democratic renewal that relied on the maintenance of business confidence and participation in the international economy. Labour, she explained was determined to be seen as "good managers of the economy" (Clark 2002). Any commitment to social justice would have to be balanced with the need for price stability and globalisation. Steve Maharey, another senior figure in Labour, also promoted the Third Way in Opposition (Nolan 2010). Thus, Labour developed an electoral strategy of talking up social justice while maintaining the post-1984 consensus around macroeconomic policy.

Table 3.2
1990-1999

Election	% manual occupation voters who voted for Labour	% non-manual occupation voters who voted for Labour
1990	46	31
1993	45	30
1996	34	26
1999	47	35

Source: NZES (1990, 1993, 1996, 1999)

In 1996, Labour's share of the manual vote declined 11 percentage points to 34 percent (see Table 3.2). Even so, this figure remained higher than Labour's share of the non-manual vote, which at 26 percent was only four percentage points lower than it had been in 1993. The most obvious explanation for the sudden and precipitous decline is the epochal nature of the 1996 election. For the first time since the 1930s, New Zealanders were faced with the prospect of multi-party government. The choice was no longer National or Labour but a host of different parties, each laying claim to a particular set of issues and attempting to find its own niche. There is substantial evidence that a large number of working-class Labour voters were susceptible to the appeals of the Alliance and NZ First. Both parties opposed monetarism and campaigned to the left of Labour on issues of economic sovereignty. Colin James (1997) has argued that this 'anti-internationalism' was a strong contrast to both Labour and National.

On these grounds, NZ First had the most electoral advantage. In his analysis of the 1996 NZES, Alan McRobie (1997) noted, "NZ First's strongest support came from skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and those in rural occupations, while the Alliance's strongest supporters were to be found amongst the sales, service, clerical sector and unskilled workers" (p. 171). It could therefore be argued that NZ First made the most inroads among the manual vote. Indeed, of 1993 Labour voters, 15 percent went to NZ First and ten percent to the Alliance in 1996. While the socioeconomic characteristics of these voters is unknown, the fact that NZ First's share of the vote among manual workers doubled from eight percent in 1993 to 16 percent in 1996 is highly suggestive. As Marcus Ganley (1998) stated in his study of the NZES, "The most important variable in differentiating between Labour and NZ First was whether the voter liked Winston Peters" (p. 97). The subsequent decision by NZ First to form a coalition with National disappointed many of its supporters, however.

The new government proved deeply unpopular and support for Labour increased. When Peters was dismissed from Cabinet by Prime Minister Jenny Shipley in August 1998, the coalition fractured, and the government's position became evermore precarious. In the 1999

election, a ten percentage point swing to Labour gave it a plurality of seats in the Parliament and a coalition was formed with the Alliance. Labour's share of the manual vote reached 47 percent, an increase of 13 percentage points, and its highest level since 1987 (see Table 3.2). But it was only one percentage higher than it had been in 1990. Comparatively, support among non-manual voters increased nine percentage points on 1996 and four percentage points on 1990. Yet the National Party received an equal share of the non-manual vote as Labour in 1999 (34 percent). It was the working-class vote that gave Labour the electoral advantage it needed to clinch victory.

Labour returned to office committed to restoring aspects of the welfare state that had been lost during a decade of reform, while remaining faithful to the post-1984 consensus. In that regard, very little had changed in Labour's strategy between 1993 and 1999. By the end of the 1990s, however, the political centre had shifted to the left. As Levine and Roberts (1999) found: "Almost every issue that featured on the personal agenda of electors favoured the Labour party" (p. 170). Unemployment was ranked the most important issue facing the country, while the most important issues of personal concern were health and education. These were the very issues that Clark had staked her leadership on. In 1999, a substantial number of working-class voters returned to Labour, and a centre-left government was elected. Despite electoral reform and the rise of new parties, the class-party alignment remained strong in New Zealand.

Summary

The Third Way displaced labourism as the main ideology of the centre-left in Britain and New Zealand. However, this chapter has argued that the British and New Zealand Labour Parties continued to rely on the legacy of labourism to mobilise core working-class support. The success of leaders Tony Blair and Helen Clark was to broaden their parties' appeal while also capturing a relative majority of the working-class vote. Of course, there are major differences in how British and New Zealand Labour found the Third Way. Arguably, the Fourth Labour Government in New Zealand was an early intimation of the Third Way model (Nolan 2010). As argued in Chapter 2, working-class voters rallied to support the Fourth Labour Government in 1987, with up to 55 percent of people in manual households voting for Labour (Vowles 1992). Three years later, however, this figure declined to 39 percent. The collapse in working-class support for New Zealand Labour coincided with a recovery in working-class support for British Labour under the leadership of Neil Kinnock (Heath et al. 1994), who began the process of modernisation that culminated in New Labour.

Evidence from the BES analysed in this chapter suggests that the working-class vote continued to provide a considerable bedrock of electoral support for British Labour during the 1990s. We find that 60 percent of voters with manual occupations voted for Labour in 1997 compared to 48 percent in 1992. The figure is the highest since 1979. Comparatively, the NZES indicates that New Zealand Labour also experienced a substantial increase in support among voters with manual occupations in 1999. However, New Zealand Labour was recovering from its worst election result since 1928. Only 34 percent of voters with manual occupations voted for Labour in 1996. Three years' later, New Zealand Labour increased its share of the manual vote to 47 percent. The figure was 13 percentage points higher than the 1996 result but it was almost equal to the level of support that New Zealand Labour had received from manual occupation voters in 1990.

In absolute terms, it is clear that British Labour received substantially more working-class support during the 1990s than New Zealand Labour. However, the relative importance of the working-class vote to the 1999 result should not be overlooked. The New Zealand class-party alignment was considerably weakened during the transition from FPP to MMP. The fact that New Zealand Labour preserved its status as a major party, despite the emergence of popular new parties, is a testament to the enduring strength of its class appeal. Thus, we conclude that the working-class vote continued to matter in Britain and New Zealand during the 1990s. Without a relative majority of working-class voters, it is doubtful that Labour Governments would have been elected in 1997 and 1999. The class-party alignment survived into the 21st century.

Chapter 4: The End?

The previous chapter argued that manual workers continued to provide a bedrock of electoral support for the British and New Zealand Labour Parties during the 1990s. While a ‘core vote’ strategy (Crewe 1985, 1986, 1991; Heath et al. 2001; Miller 2003, 2005; Vowles 1992, 2014) would have been inimical to victory, neither party could have been returned to power without strong working-class support. In 1997, British Labour won a larger proportion of manual workers than it had at any election since 1979. New Zealand Labour failed to restore its working-class vote to the height of 1987, but it won a larger proportion of manual workers in 1999 than it did in any of the three previous elections. This competitive advantage over the centre-right was crucial to victory. The 2000s were a decade of unprecedented electoral dominance for both Labour Parties. Blair and Clark led their respective parties to three consecutive terms of government. In the 2010s, however, both parties experienced a major collapse in electoral support.

The Rise and Fall of Labour Governments

The electoral success of Labour Parties in the late 1990s and early 2000s has been attributed, in part, to the use of commercial techniques to ‘market’ their leaders and policies (Lees-Marshment and Lilleker 2005, 18-20; Rudd 2005, 79-96). In this account, political parties are successful when they regard voters as ‘consumers’, and themselves as ‘products’ to be sold in the electoral marketplace. The ‘market-oriented party’ (Lees-Marshment 2008, 1-16) is consistent with the valence model of voter behaviour. But a more deterministic reading of electoral trends by Whiteley (1997) contends that “exogenous economic and political shocks” can decide the fate of a government long before an election is held (p. 45). Therefore, Norris (1997) attributes the 1997 result to a long-term Conservative decline, triggered by the events of ‘Black Wednesday’ (pp. 1-24). Vowles (2002) has argued that the New Zealand Labour victory in 1999 had more to do with the “degenerative effect on a government’s support of an extended period in office” rather than a single cataclysmic event (p. 98). In both cases, however, the Labour victories of 1997 and 1999 were long anticipated.

For a time, it was claimed that British Labour and New Zealand Labour could establish themselves as natural parties of government (Krieger 2007, 422; Levine & Roberts 2010, 13). If the Labour ascendancy of the late 1990s was inevitable, however, then so too was a subsequent decline. As discussed in Chapter 3, research from Britain and New Zealand supports the claim that voters judge political parties according to their perceived competence

in government. The voters' perception is largely shaped by events and personalities. Robert Worcester, Roger Mortimore, Paul Baines and Mark Gill (2011) therefore attribute the defeat of the Brown Government in 2010 to "an uncharismatic Prime Minister" and unpopular government struggling in the aftermath of 2007-08 financial crisis (p. 5). Theresa Arseneau (2010) argues that the public image of leader and party was a critical factor in the defeat of the Clark Government also. While these are important considerations, the purpose of this study is not to review or critique the literature of valence politics. The main question the thesis has attempted to answer is whether or not the collapse in electoral support for Labour Parties during the 2010s is different in nature to that experienced in the 1980s-90s.

Chapter 3 established that Labour victories in the 1990s correlated with higher levels of support among the working-class. In 1997, 60 percent of British voters with manual occupations voted for Tony Blair's New Labour Working-class support for the British Labour Party had reached its highest level since 1979. While less than 40 percent of those with manual occupations turned out to vote for the New Zealand Labour Party in 1999, Helen Clark presided over a substantial increase in Labour's share of the manual vote from 34 percent to 47 percent. While the latter figure was historically low, working-class support for New Zealand Labour was relatively high compared to other parties, and relative to the support of middle-class voters. But even at their electoral nadir in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Labour Parties of Britain and New Zealand maintained their competitive advantage with working-class voters. The same cannot be said in 2017.

Uncharted Waters: British Labour post-Blair

The British general election held on 6 May 2010 ended 13 years of Labour rule. Gordon Brown led the party to a historic defeat. The Labour vote collapsed to 29 percent, its second worst result in 90 years (Shaw 2012, 42). Five years earlier, Labour had won 35 percent of the vote, and secured a third substantial majority. Patrick Dunleavy (2012) calculates that the party lost one in six of its 2005 voters (p. 15). But from another perspective, Labour won the 2005 general election with a mere three percent margin of victory (Wring 2011, 1). It was, as Labour strategist Greg Cook (2011) remarked, "the lowest ever to produce an overall majority" (p. 157). Thus, Cook considers the 2010 election result 'inevitable' (pp. 157-168). In fact, Labour had lost seats at every general election since 1997. When Tony Blair departed office in 2007, the chances of a fourth term were slim.

Brown's failure to secure the party a fourth term has been attributed to a number of

valence issues: the legacy of the Iraq war, a parliamentary expenses scandal, immigration and the financial crisis of 2007-08 (Kavanagh and Cowley 2010, 19-44; Johnston and Pattie 2011; Worcester et al. 2011, 28-97; Shaw 2012, 42-59; Whiteley et al. 2013). Of these it was the economic dimension that appears to have had the strongest effect on voting intention (Johnston and Pattie 2011). As Dunleavy (2012, 21) has reported, the issue of immigration was particularly damaging for the Brown Government. There was a widely held perception in the electorate that British workers were competing with migrant labour for low-paid jobs at a time of economic hardship. Robert Ford and Matthew J. Goodwin (2014) argue that this perception compelled a large number of “disaffected working-class Britons” to abandon Labour for the United Kingdom Independence Party or ‘UKIP’ (p. 270). While it has been speculated that Labour could have won with a different leader, Worcester et al. (2011) contend that Brown’s standing with voters was not ‘impossibly poor’ and it is doubtful whether any leader could have reversed Labour’s electoral decline, let alone won a fourth term (p. 88).

The defeat of Labour was expected after 13 years in government, an unpopular war, and economic recession. Post-election literature has, therefore, placed more emphasis on the ‘hung parliament’ and subsequent formation of a Conservative-Liberal Democratic Government. It was, after all, the first coalition to govern Britain since World War II. The strong performance of Liberal Democratic leader Nick Clegg in Britain’s first televised leader’s debate had caused a brief surge in Lib Dem support, and for a time public opinion polls gave the perception of a three-way contest (Dunleavy 2012, 22). In the end, however, Labour’s status as a major party was secure, in part because the electoral system was biased against third parties (Curtice 2010; Dunleavy 2012). But the Liberal Democrats were now a party of government. Gianfranco Baldini (2012) considers the disruption of two party politics evidence of a ‘critical election’. Furthermore, Dennis Kavanagh and Philip Cowley (2010) describe 2010 as a ‘landmark election’ that will have “a significant place in the history books” (p. 330). Dunleavy (2012) sees 2010 as the culmination of a trend towards multi-party politics that began in 1974 (p. 23). Simon Atkinson and Roger Mortimore (2011) suggest that 2010 could be a ‘stepping stone’ to a more decisive change (p. 325).

One major study of the 2010 election has analysed polling data published by Ipsos MORI, a leading market research company. According to Worcester et al. (2011), “When the votes fell away under Gordon Brown, it was Labour’s middle class support that proved more resilient, while its working class votes dropped sharply” (p. 282). For the first time in history, Labour had more middle-class support than it had working-class support. Worcester et al.

(2011) operationalise social class in terms of the Market Research Society's Social Grade system of classification (i.e. 'the ABC1 system') discussed in Chapter 1. Dunleavy (2012, 19-20) uses the same data to construct a manual/non-manual dichotomy and calculate odds ratios. More or less the same conclusion is reached. Worcester et al. claim, "there are just not enough working class voters any more" for a workers' party to succeed (p. 282). The argument is somewhat misleading, however. According to Worcester et al.'s own estimate, the working-class represent 40 percent of voters and 44 percent of the electorate. The fact that manual workers supposedly abandoned Labour in greater numbers than non-manual workers, can be read as evidence that Labour's failure to retain the loyalty of working-class voters lay behind its second worst defeat in 90 years.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are a number of different approaches to the operationalisation of social class. The manual/non-manual dichotomy used by Worcester et al. (2011) and Dunleavy (2012) has been the subject of criticism (Denver & Garnett 2014; Heath et al. 1985; Vowles 1992). After 1983, the directors of the BES developed a seven-class schema based on a Weberian class analysis. Heath et al. (1985) classified manual occupations as 'working-class' but made a distinction between 'rank and file employees' on one hand, and 'foremen and supervisors' on the other hand. Furthermore, Heath et al. (1985) put self-employed manual workers alongside small business owners in the *petit bourgeoisie*. Johnston and Charles Pettie (2011) use a version of the Heath et al. (1985) schema in their analysis of results from the 2005 and 2010 BES. Johnston and Pettie (2011) conclude that the decline of support for Labour was "no larger among manual than among routine non-manual and professional workers" (pp. 287-288).

However, the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) has replaced the Heath et al. (1985) schema in more recent analysis of the BES (Mellon & Evans, 2016). The main distinction in the NS-SEC is between that of 'routine' and 'non-routine' employment rather than the physical nature of work. Both routine manual and routine non-manual occupations are considered to be 'working-class' in this model. The NS-SEC can be divided into three categories: higher occupations, intermediate occupations, and lower occupations (i.e. working-class). The main focus will, of course, be on the third category but reference shall be made to the other two for comparison. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 compare the two different approaches outlined above. The data comes from two separate sources. First, polling results from Ipsos MORI (2010) are used to construct the traditional manual/non-manual dichotomy where manual occupations are 'C2', 'D' and 'E' in the MRS Social Grade system.

Second, the NS-SEC is used to construct a three-class schema from the BES.

Table 4.1
Class voting in 2010

MRS Social Grade	% voters with manual occupations	NS-SEC	% voters with lower occupations
Manual occupations (Labour)	35	Lower occupations (Labour)	36
Manual occupations (Conservative)	34	Lower occupations (Conservative)	30
MRS Social Grade	% voters with non-manual occupations	NS-SEC	% voters with higher/intermediate occupations
Non-manual occupations (Labour)	27	Other occupations (Labour)	22
Non-manual occupations (Conservative)	39	Other occupations (Conservative)	44

Source: BES (2010), Ipsos MORI (2010)

If we define working-class voters as those with manual occupations, then we find that 35 percent voted Labour in 2010. An almost equal number voted Conservative. If we use the NS-SEC to define working-class voters as those in routine manual and non-manual employment, we find that a slightly higher number voted Labour in the BES (2010). The absolute level of working-class support for Labour does not differ much between the two approaches. But there is a substantial difference in the relative strength of working-class support for Labour. On one hand, the margin between Labour and the Conservatives is threadbare among manual workers. On the other hand, Labour held a six percentage point lead among lower occupation workers. In both cases, though, we find that Labour support among the working-class was relatively stronger than it was among other classes. Manual occupation voters preferred Labour by a margin of eight percentage points over non-manual occupation voters. We find Labour led by a much wider margin of 14 percentage points among lower occupation voters compared to other occupation voters.

Table 4.2
The swing in 2010

MRS Social Grade	%pt change '05-10	NS-SEC	%pt change '05-10
Manual occupations (Labour)	-9	Lower occupations (Labour)	-10
Non-manual occupations (Labour)	-3	Higher/intermediate occupations (Labour)	-4

Source: BES (2010), Ipsos MORI (2010)

Table 4.2 shows there was a much larger swing against Labour among manual workers compared to non-manual workers. The swing against Labour was also greater among lower occupation workers than it was in other classes. In both cases, the swing of working-class voters against Labour was around ten percentage points. To some extent, whether or not the 2010 general election represents a significant break in the established pattern of class voting depends on the operant definition used. If the traditional manual/non-manual dichotomy is followed, then we must conclude that Labour's relative strength with working-class voters all but disappeared in 2010. However, if a different method of social classification is used, we find that Labour maintained its competitive advantage with working-class voters. But the evidence is unequivocal that working-class voters abandoned Labour in greater numbers than the middle-class did. In fact, fewer manual workers voted Labour in 2010 than did in 1983, the party's worst election year since 1918 (see Table 3.1). Thus, 2010 was a historic low for Labour. The party went into opposition severely beaten and demoralised.

Brown resigned immediately after the election and, over the following six months, a leadership contest was fought between two brothers: David and Ed Miliband. The contest was portrayed in the media as ideological: David was said to represent the centre and Ed the left (Johnston & Pattie 2011; Bale 2015, 16-20). While the majority of Labour MPs supported David, his younger brother was backed by organised labour (Cowley & Kavanagh 2016, 69). The support of trade unions proved to be crucial and Ed won by a narrow margin on the final ballot. The new leader declared that a new generation was in charge and promised a decisive break from the politics of New Labour. Over the next five years, however, Miliband was often criticised for weak and indecisive leadership. On one hand, Labour tapped into popular sentiment about inequality and challenged the prevailing wisdom of austerity. On the other hand, Miliband was never able to explain to a cynical public how the next Labour government could reduce the deficit and also meet its social objectives (Bale 2015, 83-95; Shaw 2015).

Despite persistent weaknesses, however, Labour was ahead in the polls, and many expected a change of government. On 7 May 2015, the British electorate voted in what Denver (2015) has described as “the most unpredictable [election] in living memory” (p. 5). Against expectations, the Conservative Party won an outright majority. And while Labour increased its share of the national vote by one percentage point, it lost a further 26 MPs. In historically ‘red’ Scotland, Labour got just a quarter of the vote and was defeated in all but one seat. James Mitchell (2015) calculates a swing from Labour to the Scottish National Party (SNP) of 26 percent across the country. Jane Green and Chris Prosser (2015) argue that the catalyst for this ‘seismic change’ in party support was the Scottish independence referendum held on 18 September 2014. According to Green and Prosser (2015), the referendum became a “rallying point for those who were already dissatisfied with Labour”. Mitchell (2015) attributes the surge in support for the SNP to a constellation of factors. Expectations there would be another hung parliament, the SNP’s willingness to work with Labour, and its anti-austerity message gave the party a major advantage with centre-left Scottish voters.

Whatever the causation, it is tempting for one to argue that the result in Scotland was a ‘critical realignment’ in the sense that V.O. Key (1955) meant when he described a “sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate” (p. 4). Of course, such a position can only be held confidently in hindsight. Realignment would depend on support for the SNP persisting over a number of electoral cycles. Future elections may prove that 2015 was merely a deviation in the sense that more voters than usual crossed party lines but without a long-term allegiance (Campbell et al. 1960). If 2015 was a deviation, then we can expect a return to the normal pattern of voting in the next general election. Against this, one could argue that the victory of the SNP in the 2007 Scottish Parliament elections, and the long-term decline of the Scottish Labour Party would suggest that a realignment has already occurred. Three years before the 2015 general election, Gerry Hassan and Eric Shaw (2012) proclaimed *The Strange Death of Labour Scotland*. “These are uncharted waters for Labour,” Hassan and Shaw concluded (p. 332). The experience of British Labour in 2015 would tend to confirm Hassan and Shaw’s claim.

The rise of the SNP is mostly understood in terms of nationalism. Social class has, therefore, featured little in analysis of the 2015 election. Yet the largest swing against Labour was 39 percent in the predominately working-class seat of Glasgow North East (Mitchell

2015).³ The swing was not only the largest of the 2015 election but historical analysis suggests it is the largest ever recorded against any party in Britain. Furthermore, analysis of the BES reveals that in terms of class composition, the SNP can be said to be ‘more’ working-class than Labour in 2015. Whereas 45 percent of SNP voters had lower occupations, only 32 percent of Labour voters did. At a national level, however, the SNP captured only six percent of the lower occupation vote.

As discussed earlier, the 2010 election could have been a historic turning point for the two major parties, with nearly equal numbers of manual workers voting for Labour and the Conservatives. From one perspective, however, Labour recaptured the lead with ‘blue-collar’ voters in 2015. According to Ipsos MORI (2015), 36 percent of manual workers voted for Labour compared to 30 percent for the Conservatives. In fact, it was the Conservatives who suffered a loss of support. Whereas 34 percent of manual workers had voted Conservative in 2010, only 30 percent did so in 2015. But these voters, by and large, did not return to Labour. Instead, we find that 18 percent of manual workers voted for UKIP in 2015 compared to 12 percent for the omnibus ‘Other’ category five years’ previous (Ipsos MORI, 2010). Though it won just one seat, UKIP’s percentage of the national vote surged from a mere three percent to almost 13 percent. To many, UKIP represents a working-class revolt against the ‘liberal’ establishment of Westminster. Ford and Goodwin (2014) were certain that Labour’s failure to respond to working-class anxieties about social and economic changes lay behind the rise of UKIP.

Immigration has long been the *cause célèbre* of populist conservative movements in continental Europe and the same was true of UKIP in the 2010s. The issue resonated with many traditional Labour voters. Ford and Goodwin (2014) characterised these voters as “older, blue-collar workers, with little education and few skills” whose livelihoods were threatened by change (p. 284). According to Geoffrey Evans and Jon Mellon (2015), however, the “damage to Labour’s core working-class support had already been done” in previous elections (p. 4). Before 2010, many disaffected working-class voters turned from Labour to the Conservatives. Studies of the 1997-2001 and 2005-2010 electoral cycles confirm that EU-scepticism and immigration were the main predictors of vote switching from Labour to Conservative in the Blair/Brown years (Evans, 2002; Evans and Chzhen, 2013). Therefore, it followed that “UKIP overwhelmingly hits the Conservatives, not Labour” (Evans & Mellon 2015, 5). Though Evans

³ According to the Scotland Census (2011), 61 percent of workers in Glasgow North East were employed in manual or service occupations.

and Mellon argued for the need to classify self-employed manual workers separately, a basic manual/non-manual dichotomy constructed from the Ipsos MORI data provides some support for their proposition that UKIP was more of a threat to the Conservatives than it was to Labour.

Table 4.3
Class voting in 2015

MRS Social Grade	% voters with manual occupations	NS-SEC	% voters with lower occupations
Manual occupations (Labour)	36	Lower occupations (Labour)	32
Manual occupations (Conservative)	30	Lower occupations (Conservative)	32

Source: Ipsos MORI (2015), BES (2015)

Table 4.3 contrasts the two different pictures of class voting. Labour support among lower occupation voters declined four percentage points to 32 percent and was no stronger than its support from those in higher occupations. An equal number voted for the Conservatives. Interestingly, this was the very same picture the Ipsos MORI data provided in 2010. Five years later, the BES and Ipsos MORI again mirrored each other. Labour's recovery among manual workers can be attributed to an upswing of support in the 'C2' category (Ipsos MORI, 2015). As Evans and Mellon (2015) contend, a large proportion of these 'skilled manual workers' are self-employed and would be classified under the intermediate category of the NS-SEC. Consistent with this line of argument, Labour support among the intermediate occupations increased from 20 percent to 27 percent in 2015. Evans and Mellon (2015, 5) suggest this group has always been more inclined to vote Conservative. Thus, the whole picture is more complicated than a basic manual/non-manual dichotomy allows for.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of 'working-class Tories' is not new. However, the collapse of Labour support among routine manual and service workers is unprecedented. Support for Labour among lower occupation voters peaked at 54 percent in 1997. In 2005, nearly half of lower occupation voters gave their support to Tony Blair's Labour. Ten years' later, less than a third voted for Ed Miliband's Labour. The decline occurred despite a higher turnout in 2015. It is often claimed that non-voters are predominately from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and, therefore, more likely to vote for centre-left parties. Previous research has established a covariance between the share of the centre-left vote and turnout in several advanced democracies, though its effects in Britain are debated (Fisher 2005; Heath et

al., 2001; Pacek & Radcliff 1995, 2003). In fact, Table 4.4 demonstrates that more than 42 percent of non-vote switchers in 2015 preferred the Conservatives and UKIP to Labour. These patterns coincided with an increase in turnout among lower occupations from 58 percent in 2005 to 71 percent in 2015.

Table 4.4

Switching from the non-vote 2015

Party voted for in 2015	% did not vote in 2010
Labour	38
Conservative	28
UK Independence Party	14

Source: BES (2015)

Table 4.5

Switching to UKIP

Party voted for in 2010	% UKIP vote in 2015
Labour	22
Conservative	28
UK Independence Party	13

Source: BES (2015)

In 2015, the number of lower occupation workers who voted for UKIP soared from two percent to 17 percent. If we consider the flow of the vote from 2010 (see Table 4.5), we find that 22 percent of ‘UKIPers’ voted for Labour five years’ earlier, compared to 28 percent for the Conservatives. Thus, we find further evidence that more UKIP votes came from the Conservatives than did Labour. But in Table 4.5 we also find that 14 percent of UKIP voters did not vote at all in 2005. The evidence therefore suggests a secular realignment of working-class Conservative voters and non-voters to UKIP. This hypothesis could explain why, despite a higher turnout, Labour’s working-class vote has continued to decline. Thus, while Mellon and Evans (2015) might be correct in arguing that the “damage... had already been done” to Labour’s core working-class support between 2001 and 2010, it was the failure of Labour to ‘reclaim’ this support in 2015 that contributed to a further decline in its support among lower occupation voters. From this perspective, Labour not only lost Scotland in 2015, it lost the working-class vote. To paraphrase Hassan and Shaw (2012, 332), Labour was marooned in uncharted waters.

Benign Dismissal: New Zealand Labour post-Clark

On 8 November 2008, New Zealand voters elected the country’s 49th Parliament. The National Party, led by John Key, won 44 percent of the vote and thus a plurality of seats. National formed a minority government with the support of ACT, the Maori Party and United Future. After

nine years in office, Labour and Helen Clark were defeated. Labour's share of the vote fell seven percentage points to 34 percent. The result was long anticipated, however. Since the 2005 general election, National had maintained a steady lead over Labour in public opinion polls (Levine & Roberts 2010, 225). But in the immediate aftermath of the election, there was reason for Labour to be optimistic. As the newly elected Member for Wellington Central Grant Robertson (2010) opined, the result was a 'benign dismissal' that reflected the public's mood for a 'change of scene' rather than a repudiation of Labour values (p. 76). Deputy leader Michael Cullen (2008) likened the election to a change of underwear, "it was not won on the basis that one wanted different underwear, it was simply a time for a change of underwear".

In fact, responses to a pre-election survey conducted by Victoria University of Wellington suggest that few voters had an overly negative opinion of the Clark Government (Levine & Roberts 2010). The majority of respondents, however, considered the election a foregone conclusion. Levine and Roberts (2010) report a "virtually unbroken pre-election consensus that only a political miracle could give the Clark-led government a further three years in power" (p. 229). Arseanau (2010) contends that the decisive factor was the voters' perception of Key and National. It might have been 'time for a change' but the precondition for change is that the alternative is more attractive than the status quo. According to the narratives of Robertson (2008) and Cullen (2008), power alternates between the major parties at regular intervals. The swing of the 'pendulum' (Milne 1966, 95-97) favoured National in 2008 but, sooner or later, the pendulum would swing back to Labour; and so forth. While such analysis obscures the complexities of electoral competition and voter behaviour, this pendulum theory was the leading explanation of government change under First Past the Post in New Zealand (Johansson 2009, 28; Roberts and McRobie, 1978).

Milne (1966) explained the pendulum theory hence: "... after a Government has been in office for some time enough electors believe it is 'time for a change' for the Government to be turned out" (p. 96). But for this claim to hold true under MMP, we would expect the basis and contours of party support to remain the same. Electoral volatility in the late 1990s and early 2000s provides a challenge to this argument. In the first MMP election (1996), three new parties –ACT, the Alliance, and NZ First – received almost 30 percent of the vote at the expense of National (34 percent) and Labour (28 percent). This share fell to 24 percent in 1999, but three years later it surged to 31 percent.⁴ Such volatility of party support in the 1990s was understood

⁴ The 1999-2008 figures include the Greens. The Alliance is substituted with Jim Anderton's Progressive Coalition post-2002.

as evidence of dealignment and considered a precursor to realignment (Vowles & Aimer 1993, 220). Then in 2005, with the addition of the Maori Party, the successful minor parties received just 16 percent of the vote. These parties got the same proportion of the vote in 2008 but NZ First failed to meet the threshold for parliamentary representation. Subsequent elections in 2011 and 2014 have seen the minor parties' share of the vote approach that of 1999 but it has not returned to the highs of 1996 and 2002.

If we place these elections in the conceptual framework developed by Campbell et al. (1960), then it makes sense to view 1996 and 2002 as 'dealigning' or 'deviating' elections, while 1999, 2005, and 2008 were 'maintaining' elections. To borrow the Heath et al. (1985) description of dealignment, volatility in party support can be interpreted as 'trendless fluctuation'. While support for minor parties changed from election to election, support for the major parties continued to have a socioeconomic basis. Vowles (2002) found that social class had a 'small effect' on voting for Labour and National in 1999 (p. 96). As expected, manual households were more likely to vote for Labour than non-manual households (pp. 92-93). Susan Banducci and Jeffrey Karp (2004) also found that social cleavage factors were "fairly consistent and relatively strong" in New Zealand compared to other advanced democracies during the 2000s (p. 152). In particular, Banducci and Karp identified "a significant relationship between working-class membership and voting for a left party".⁵ Thus, empirical evidence supports the claim that the class-party alignment was extant in New Zealand during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Table 4.6 shows the percentage of those voters with 'lower occupations' who voted for Labour was 42 percent compared to 38 percent for National. When the non-vote is included in the base of the calculation, these figures become 29 and 27 percent respectively. The proportion of lower occupation workers who did not vote was equal to those who voted Labour. In 1999, Labour's share of the lower occupation vote was 47 percent. If we include non-voters as well then the figure is only 37 percent. This still gave Labour a 14 percentage point lead over National in the working-class vote. Thus, in 2008, we find that Labour's relative majority in the working-class had withered away. Just as many working-class voters chose not to vote as turned out for Labour. In 2008, 28 percent of voters with higher and intermediate ('other') occupations voted for Labour. There was a 14 percentage point difference between lower occupation voters and those in higher and intermediate voters who voted Labour. Of further

⁵ The other countries Banducci and Karp studied were Germany, Ireland, Portugal and France.

significance is the composition of Labour support. Thus, while Labour maintained its relative strength in support among the working-class, there was a decline under the Clark Government. Nevertheless, it must be said that Labour continued to receive much stronger support from the working-class than it did the middle-class.

Table 4.6
Class voting in 2008

Occupational class by party vote	% voters with lower occupations	Occupational class by party vote	% voters with higher/intermediate occupations
Lower occupations (Labour)	42	Other occupations (Labour)	28
Lower occupations (National)	38	Other occupations (National)	50

Source: NZES (2008)

Table 4.7
Class voting in 2011

Occupational class by party vote	% voters with lower occupations	Occupational class by party vote	% voters with higher/intermediate occupations
Lower occupations (Labour)	39	Other occupations (Labour)	20
Lower occupations (National)	36	Other occupations (National)	54

Source NZES (2011)

After the 2008 defeat, Labour set out to redefine itself in Opposition. Phil Goff, a former minister in the Fourth Labour Government, was elected leader. Though a prominent supporter of economic liberalisation during the 1980s, Goff became the first Labour leader to critique the neoliberal orthodoxy. In 2009, Labour broke the bi-partisan consensus on monetarism by declaring that it would prioritise a ‘competitive and stable’ exchange rate over price stability (Watkins 2009). Further, Goff argued for fresh produce to be exempt from the Goods and Service Tax and for the introduction of a broader capital gains tax to deter speculation in the housing market (James 2012, 44). Labour also campaigned vigorously against the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the foreign ownership of strategic assets (Lees-Marshment, 2012). Though these issues galvanised public opinion, Labour’s share of the vote declined a further seven percentage points to 27 percent in the 2011 general election. The failure has been attributed to political marketing. Jennifer Lees-Marshment (2012) argues that Labour failed to re-brand itself as an alternative government, while Grant Robertson (2012) admits that a

negative message and the perception of disunity undermined Labour's campaign.

Evidence from the NZES in Table 4.7 suggests that Labour failed to improve its standing with lower occupation voters in 2011. The proportion of lower occupation voters who supported Labour fell another three percentage points. Of the lower occupation workers who turned out to vote, 39 percent of them voted for Labour compared to 42 percent in 2008. However, Labour support among voters with higher and intermediate ('other') occupations declined seven percentage points from 2008. In other words, the Labour working-class vote proved much more resilient than the Labour middle-class vote. Thus, the picture is more complicated. On one hand, almost an equal number of working-class voters supported National as did Labour. On the other hand, Labour continued to hold much stronger appeal with working-class voters than it did with middle-class voters. For historical perspective, it is instructive to compare 2011 with 1996. There was, after all, a mere percentage point difference between the two results (see Chapter 3).

Table 4.8
1996 & 2011

Occupational class by party vote 1996	% voters within occupational class	Occupational class by party vote 2011	% voters within occupational class
Lower occupations (Labour)	32	Lower occupations (Labour)	39
Other occupations (Labour)	26	Other occupations (Labour)	20
Lower occupations (National)	29	Lower occupations (National)	36
Other occupations (National)	37	Other occupations (National)	54

Source: NZES (1996, 2011)

As per Table 4.8, we find that only 32 percent of lower occupation voters supported Labour in 1996 compared to 39 percent in 2011. However, Labour's relative strength with lower occupation voters was the same in 1996 as it was in 2011. A margin of three percentage points separated the two major parties among lower occupation voters in each election. The most substantial difference between 1996 and 2011 is to be found in the pattern of support among those voters with higher and intermediate occupations. In 1996, Labour's share of the higher and intermediate occupations vote was 26 percent compared to 37 percent for National. But in 2011 we find that only 20 percent of higher and intermediate ('other') occupation voters supported Labour. A majority, or 54 percent, voted for National. We must conclude, then, that

Labour's vote in 2011 was disproportionately working-class, despite the apparent decline in support for it among lower class occupation voters.

Table 4.9
Class voting in 2014

Occupational class by party vote	% voters with lower occupations	Occupational class by party vote	% voters with higher/ intermediate occupations
Lower occupations (Labour)	35	Other occupations (Labour)	20
Lower occupations (National)	38	Other occupations (National)	52

Source: NZES (2014)

Three years' later, David Cunliffe led Labour to its worst electoral defeat in 86 years – surpassing 1996 and 2011.⁶ Evidence from Vote Compass suggests that a negative perception of Cunliffe outweighed popular support for Labour policies in 2014 (Lees-Marshment, Dufrense, Eady, Osborne, van der Linden & Vowles).⁷ The NZES reveals that working-class voters reacted most strongly. Labour support among the higher and intermediate occupations remained static, but there was a four percentage point decline in Labour's share of the lower occupation vote (Table 4.9). For the first time in history, a greater number of lower occupation voters voted for National than did Labour. However, the collapse in working-class support for Labour has not been mirrored by an increase in working-class support for National. The proportion of those with lower occupations who voted for National in 2014 was the same as it had been in 2008. Instead there was a modest but significant rise in working-class support for minor parties.

Such a change in the pattern of working-class support provides evidence of a secular realignment. Table 5.1 provides a breakdown of class voting for the third and fourth largest parties. The Greens and NZ First each got five percent of the lower occupations vote in 2008 and nine percent in 2014. In other words, the Greens and NZ First have together captured 18 percent of the working-class vote. Of further note, the margin between Labour and the Greens within the 'other occupations' category has narrowed considerably from 19 percentage points in 2008 to only eight percentage points in 2014. While the main objective of this thesis has

⁶ In the 1928 general election, the New Zealand Labour Party received 26 percent of the vote and gave up its status as the Opposition to provide confidence and supply to the United Party (Bassett 1982).

⁷ Vote Compass is an online voter education tool that was used for the first time in New Zealand during 2014 general election campaign. See Jennifer Lees-Marshment, Yannick Dufresne, Gregory Eady, Danny Osborne, Cliff van der Linden, Jack Vowles (2015).

been to identify and analyse changes in the working-class vote, the latter finding is important because it suggests that Labour is also vulnerable to a realignment of middle-class voters on the centre-left.

Table 5.1

Minor parties

Occupational class by party vote 2008	% voters with lower occupations	Occupational class by party vote	% voters with other occupations
Lower occupations (Green)	5	Other occupations (Green)	8
Lower occupations (NZ First)	5	Other occupations (NZ First)	3
Occupational class by party vote 2014	% voters with lower occupations	Occupational class by party vote	% voters with other occupations
Lower occupations (Green)	9	Other occupations (Green)	12
Lower occupations (NZ First)	9	Other occupations (NZ First)	7

Source NZES (2008, 2014)

Table 5.2

Switching from the non-vote 2014

Party voted for in 2014	% did not vote in 2011
Labour	14
National	26
Greens	10
NZ First	5

Source: NZES (2014)

The fact that turnout increased in 2014 is also significant. Previous research has found a correlation between non-voting and a preference for Labour (Arseneau 2010; Roberts & Arseneau 2015). Such a claim is supported by international research as well (Fisher 2005; Heath et al., 2001; Pacek & Radcliff 1995, 2003). Accordingly, Labour structured its 2014 campaign strategy around mobilising those who did not vote in the previous election (Barnett & Talbot 2015). Higher turnout did strengthen the Labour vote in Māori electorates but the strategy failed overall. The failure was most evident in Labour's 'heartland' of South Auckland, where its share of the party vote declined four percentage points and turnout was lower than the national average (Roberts & Arseneau 2015, 306-307). Of the NZES respondents who did not vote in 2011, 26 percent voted for National in 2014, while ten percent voted for the Greens and five percent for NZ First. This compared with 14 percent for Labour (see Table 5.2).

In the period 1984-1999, turnout averaged 88 percent (Electoral Commission New Zealand 2016). This compares to an average turnout rate of 80 percent in the period 2002-14.

Turnout in the 2011 general election was the lowest since 1893.⁸ Three years' later, there was a slightly higher turnout, but it remained lower than the average. Analysis of the NZES from 1999 to 2011 in Table 5.3 reveals that the non-vote among lower occupation workers has increased from 21 percent to 29 percent. Thus, it might be argued that low turnout has also contributed to Labour's electoral decline. Conversely, the evidence suggests that higher turnout among working-class voters was due to the appeal of non-Labour parties. Of course, it is too soon to judge whether this is 'trendless fluctuation' or realignment. If alternative parties continue to increase their working-class support, while Labour's share of the vote declines further, then the case for realignment will be strengthened.

Table 5.3
Class non-voting 1999-2014

Election	% Lower occupation workers did not vote
1999	21
2008	29
2011	29
2014	27

Source: NZES (1999, 2008, 2011, 2014)

While electoral volatility persisted during the 1990s and 2000s, the social basis of major party support remained consistent for most of that time. It was not until the 2010s that Labour can be said to have lost its competitive advantage with the working-class. For the first time in history, equal numbers of the working-class voted for Labour and National. The evidence outlined in this chapter supports the central claim of the thesis: that the nature of the New Zealand Labour Party's electoral decline in the 2010s is fundamentally different to that which it experienced in the 1990s. It is true that the majority of working-class voters ceased to vote for Labour in 1990. However, Labour consistently won a plurality of working-class voters. As the 1999 result demonstrated, the working-class vote provided Labour with a formidable base that, when mobilised, could install a centre-left government. The 2014 election was a deviation from the normal pattern of party support, however. Labour's competitive advantage over National had started to wither away in 2008 but by 2014 it was gone entirely.

Whether Labour can recover as a major political force may depend on whether or not the deviation is confirmed to be a realignment. Since 1935, power has alternated between Labour and National without exception. As Jon Johansson (2009) observes, the only 'effective variation' in the New Zealand political cycle has been the length of time between each change

⁸ The 1893 general election was the first in which women voted and, thus, the first New Zealand election held with universal suffrage. In that election, turnout was 75 percent (Electoral Commission, 2016).

of government (p. 28). Following the 2008 election, Labour strategists, commentators and journalists understood the result as yet another swing of the electoral pendulum. It was anticipated that, over the next two electoral cycles, Labour would recover the support it lost in 2008 and be primed to form a government when voters tired of National. The 2011 and 2014 elections confounded this expectation. While journalists Tracy Watkins (2016) and Patrick Gower (2016) expected Key's sudden resignation from office in December 2016 to change the course of electoral politics, early opinion polling for the 2017 election leads one to confidently predict that National will remain the largest party by a wide margin (Robinson 2016).⁹

Though a minority Labour/Greens coalition is plausible, such an outcome would be a radical departure from the pattern of electoral competition that has structured New Zealand politics for a century. In fact, it would be the first time since the 1911 general election that the largest party did not form a government in the first instance.¹⁰ Johansson (2015) considers the proposition a challenge to the "deeply conditioned winner-takes-all mentality" of New Zealand political culture (p. 326). The 2016 memorandum of understanding between Labour and the Greens could, nevertheless, provide a basis for the next centre-left government. But it will be a pyrrhic victory for the New Zealand Labour Party. Not only would Labour have fewer MPs than National, the circumstances would demand a power-sharing arrangement with the Greens (if not other parties) that has little precedent in contemporary New Zealand. Some journalists and commentators have even questioned whether or not the Labour leader would be the Prime Minister of this hypothetical government (Watkins 2016; Farrar 2016). Hence, when the pendulum does swing from National, it is by no means certain that it should swing to Labour as opposed to a new configuration of centre-left parties.

In comparative perspective

Hitherto, the electoral strength of the British and New Zealand Labour Parties has depended upon them maintaining a competitive advantage with working-class voters. That statement has remained true despite the different political contexts of Britain and New Zealand. In fact, as Chapter 3 argued, the British and New Zealand Labour Parties diverged in the 1980s after following more or less the same path. The paradoxical nature of labourism, a working-class

⁹ According to Professor Claire Robinson of Massey University (2016), the party leading the opinion polls in July of the year preceding an election has consistently won the highest proportion of votes since 1998. Public opinion polling from August 2016 had National leading Labour by a margin of 12 to 18 percentage points.

¹⁰ In 1911, Reform won a plurality of seats (37) but the Liberal Party initially formed a minority government with the support of independents. The Liberal minority government collapsed in July 1912, however, and Reform leader William Massey formed a new government (Bassett 1982).

ideology that promoted class collaboration, was mirrored on opposite sides of the world. In 1987, working-class New Zealanders re-elected a market liberal government at the same time working-class Britons rejected traditional social democracy. Ten years' later, working-class voters rallied behind New Labour despite a strategy of appealing to Middle England. Then, in 1999, a Third Way Labour Government was also elected in New Zealand. The two parties converged once more.

It is evident that the class-party alignment was extant in Britain and New Zealand during the 1990s. The alignment had been considerably weakened during the 1970-80s. In Britain, it appeared that class voting was dead by 1983, when only 41 percent of voters with manual occupations voted for Labour (see Table 3.1). However, as this thesis has argued, the rise of New Labour coincided with a strong recovery in the working-class vote. In fact, Tony Blair led British Labour to its highest level of support among manual occupation voters since the 1970s. According to the BES, 60 percent of manual occupation workers who turned out in 1997 voted for Labour. While the figure must be placed in the context of low turnout, the significance of this increase should not be overlooked given Tony Blair's emphasis on Middle England. If we use the broader definition of class proposed by the NS-SEC and recode occupational categories according to a three-class model in the BES, we find much the same: 54 percent of voters with lower occupations voted for Labour in 1997.

Table 5.4
1997 & 1999

Occupational class by party vote 1997	% voters within occupational class	Occupational class by party vote 1999	% voters within occupational class
Lower occupations (Brit. Labour)	54	Lower occupations (NZ Labour)	47
Other occupations (Brit. Labour)	39	Other occupations (NZ Labour)	32
Lower occupations (Conservative)	19	Lower occupations (National)	22
Other occupations (Conservative)	35	Other occupations (National)	37

Source: BES (1997), NZES (1999)

The New Zealand case differs substantially from that of Britain in Table 5.4. We find that New Zealand Labour never recovered a majority of the working-class vote. However, it was successful in retaining a *relative* majority of working-class voters throughout the 1990s. Though its share of manual occupation voters in 1999 was only one percentage point higher than it had been in 1990, this represented a significant increase in the working-class vote from

1996 (see Table 3.2). According to the NZES, 47 percent of voters with lower occupations voted for Labour in 1999 compared to only 32 percent in 1996. Of course, there is a major contextual variable in the New Zealand case that is not present in the British one. New Zealand general elections have operated under MMP since 1996, whereas Britain continues to use FPP. It is axiomatic in political science that proportional representation tends to favour multi-partism while plurality voting favours a two-party system (Duverger 1969). That New Zealand Labour has failed to win a majority of working-class voters since 1987 could, therefore, be considered a function of the electoral system.

Arguably, it is the measurement of relative class appeal that is most analytically useful when judging the importance of class voting to an individual party. Here we find a close comparison between the British and New Zealand cases. In 1997, British Labour enjoyed a substantial lead over the Conservatives among lower occupation voters. As Table 5.4 demonstrates, only 19 percent voted for the Conservatives compared to 54 percent for British Labour. The margin between New Zealand Labour and National in the lower occupation vote was also considerable. In 1999, 47 percent of voters with lower occupations voted for New Zealand Labour whereas 22 percent voted for National. But the more significant finding is that New Zealand Labour got a smaller proportion of higher and intermediate occupation voters than did National. Thus, New Zealand Labour won the 1999 election with a plurality of working-class voters and a minority of middle-class voters. It must be said that the working-class indeed put Labour in power.

The strength of British Labour's electoral appeal in 1997 was considerably stronger than that of New Zealand Labour in 1999. With an absolute majority of lower occupation voters and 39 percent of higher and intermediate occupation voters, Blair was more successful than Helen Clark in constructing a broad electoral coalition of voters that remained at its core solidly working-class. New Zealand Labour, under Clark, was arguably more dependent on its traditional base than British Labour. What the parties had in common, however, was the ability to hold a substantial lead over the centre-right with working-class voters. The parties maintained this competitive advantage through the 1990s and into the 21st century. During the 2010s, however, there was a major collapse in working-class support for British and New Zealand Labour. The aggregation of votes belies such a development. Rather, we must look at changes in the class composition of party support to reveal the nature and extent of this electoral decline.

Table 5.5
2015 & 2014

Occupational class by party vote	% voters within occupational class	Occupational class by party vote	% voters within occupational class
Lower occupations (Brit. Labour)	32	Lower occupations (NZ Labour	35
Lower occupations (Conservative)	32	Lower occupations (National)	38

Source: BES (2015), NZES (2014)

Table 5.4 provides such a picture. In 2015, British Labour's share of the working-class vote was only 32 percent, the same proportion that voted for the Conservatives. In 2014, New Zealand Labour received 35 percent of the lower occupations vote compared to 38 percent for National. Thus, we find that both parties have lost their electoral appeal with rank-and-file workers. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is evidence of a long-term trend in working-class voters switching to the Conservatives and UKIP (Evans & Mellon 2015). This would tend to confirm a secular realignment. While British Labour has lost considerably more support in absolute terms, it is New Zealand Labour that appears to be relatively worse off. Lower turnout in New Zealand has arguably been more detrimental to the Labour vote than the rise of minor parties. However, the gradual increase in working-class support for the Greens and NZ First is suggestive of an emerging trend that could lead to realignment.

The legacy of labourism continued to have a strong influence on the working-class vote in Britain and New Zealand during the 1990s. As such, the class-party alignment survived periods of dealignment. Working-class voters remained crucial to the electoral success of the British and New Zealand Labour Parties. But the substantial decline in working-class support for British and New Zealand Labour during the 2010s would suggest that labourism has ceased to be relevant. Of course, it may not be until the late 2020s that a clear pattern is discerned in either case. As Campbell et al. (1966) wrote of American presidential elections, "the fuller meaning of the vote may not become clear until the succeeding elections have given a perspective within which it may be judged" (p. 76). For now, we can but conclude that the recent collapse of electoral support for the British and New Zealand Labour Parties is unprecedented. Despite differences in political context, both face an existential crisis that is of the same making.

Conclusion

The majority of working-class voters in Britain and New Zealand ceased to vote for Labour in the 1980s and early 1990s. While most academics have seen fit to pronounce the death of class voting, a small number have continued to argue that class matters. In challenging the orthodox view, this thesis has posited that, “the working-class puts Labour in power, and the working-class keeps Labour from power”. After a long, and tortuous decline, the ideology of labourism gave way to the concept that the middle-class were needed to win power in Britain and New Zealand during the mid-20th century. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1980s that the two Labour Parties ‘modernised’ and repudiated class politics altogether. Instead, they structured their policy programmes and election campaigns around the median voter. Political marketing was a crucial part in this strategy. The two parties successfully changed their public image and appealed to a much broader cross-section of the electorate. Victories in 1997 and 1999 were attributed to the increase of middle-class support. When data from electoral studies is analysed, however, we find that both Labour Parties continued to find greater support among the working-class.

Whereas 60 percent of the voters employed in manual occupations voted for Labour in 1997, only 36 percent did so in 2015. However, it is often claimed that the manual/non-manual dichotomy is too narrow for the contemporary workforce. If we broaden the definition of ‘working-class’ to include those in routine non-manual occupations, and exclude self-employed workers, we find a similar shift in voting among Labour’s core demographic. In 1997, 54 percent of voters with lower occupations voted for Labour. That figure declined to 49 percent in 2005, but Tony Blair led the party to a third term in government amid an unpopular war and concerns about immigration. Ten years’ later, the proportion of those voters in lower occupations who voted Labour was 32 percent. Though precipitous, the fall had taken place across several elections. It coincided with the rise of UKIP and increased support for the Conservatives. For the first time in history, equal numbers of the working-class voted for Labour and the Conservatives. Any competitive advantage that British Labour had over the centre-right was gone. A small increase in British Labour’s share of the national vote belied these more deep-seated changes in 2015.

Following the collapse of 2010-15, Jeremy Corbyn was elected to the leadership in an upset victory. The Member for Islington North has overturned more than 50 years’ of British Labour history (Crines 2015; Stafford 2016). In fact, Corbyn is the first leader since Attlee to

reject the notion that elections are won in the political centre. But any shift to the left should not be equated with a return to labourism. As James Stafford (2016) has argued, Corbyn is not a ‘traditional Labour figure’ and his ‘secular cosmopolitanism’ could lead the party “further away from remaining English Labour voters, let alone potential Tory or UKIP switchers” (pp. 74-75). The evidence of a disconnect between Corbyn and the working-class has been borne out in focus groups and opinion polls (McCann 2017; Morris 2016; Watts 2016). Notwithstanding a substantial increase in party membership, there is no evidence of an electoral recovery. Indeed, Andrew Harrop of the Fabian Society (2017) has pronounced the party “too weak to win, too strong to die”.

A comparable picture has emerged in New Zealand. The electoral system is, of course, quite different to that in Britain. New Zealand voters have become accustomed to multiparty politics and coalition governments over the past 30 years. The collapse of the Fourth Labour Government in 1990 gave way to a period of electoral volatility that threatened the major parties’ hold on power and altered the contours of party competition. In the three years leading up to the country’s first MMP election, some predicted a realignment would occur on the centre-left, with Labour’s base now vulnerable to the Alliance and New Zealand First (Vowles & Aimer 1993). In fact, the 1996 NZES reveals that New Zealand Labour did worse with manual workers than it did in 1990. Yet the restoration of its working-class base was crucial to victory three years’ later. Though only 37 percent of lower occupation workers voted Labour in that election, this was ten percentage points higher than the New Zealand Labour vote among those in higher and intermediate occupations. In the working-class vote, New Zealand Labour held a 14 percentage point lead over National. And if the non-vote is excluded, we find that New Zealand Labour captured 47 percent of lower occupation voters. The working-class vote may have been historically low, but it was relatively strong.

In 2014, fewer lower occupation workers voted for New Zealand Labour than did National and more chose not to vote for any political party. It was the first time in history that New Zealand Labour had lost its competitive advantage with the working-class. National, the party of farmers and business, held a relative majority among rank and file workers. The old pattern of voting that had survived the introduction of MMP, and was extant in the 2000s, finally looks to have disappeared from New Zealand. Whether or not the post-2008 decline will be reversed cannot, yet, be known. But it is remarkable that, after the sudden resignation of Prime Minister John Key, and three terms of government, National continues to lead in opinion polls. The only plausible scenario in which a change of government will occur in 2017 is one

in which the New Zealand Labour Party can form a minority government with the support of the Greens and New Zealand First. Such a proposition would be radical in 21st century New Zealand.

Many have argued that the working-class vote is no longer critical to the electoral success of Labour Parties (Crewe 1986, 1991; Miller 2005; Vowles 2014a). In recent times, the estimated size of the working-class vote has ranged from 34 to 44 percent of the British electorate (Heath et al. 2001; Worcester et al. 2011). In the 2015 BES, 33 percent of respondents had a lower occupation. In New Zealand, those with lower occupations made up 43 percent of the electorate, and 39 percent of voters in the 2014 NZES. While these numbers are a long way from a majority, the working-class nevertheless represent a substantial bloc of voters in both Britain and New Zealand. The fact that many do not vote Labour is not in itself significant. As Chapter 2 argued, historical labourism relied on cross-class appeal as the British Labour and New Zealand Labour struggled to maintain the loyalty of working-class voters in the past. From the 1940s until the 2010s, however, both parties maintained a relative majority of working-class support compared to centre-right parties. There is now no difference in the level of support for Labour Parties and the major centre-right parties in Britain and New Zealand. Thus, we may conclude that both the British Labour Party and the New Zealand Labour Party have drifted into uncharted waters.

Whether or not they become permanently marooned will not be known for some time. But we can be certain that neither party has the moral authority it once commanded among rank and file workers. As the British pollster James Morris (2016) wrote recently, “If the Labour Party doesn’t stand for cleaners, care workers, joiners and warehouse pickers, it’s hard to know what the point of the Labour Party is.” Such a statement, once upon a time, would have been considered axiomatic in Britain or New Zealand. At the time of writing, however, one questions if the British and New Zealand Labour Parties must not find some new purpose. As Chapter 2 argued, the relationship between Labour Parties and working-class voters was never secure and has been under continuous pressure since World War II in both Britain and New Zealand. With their bedrock of support among the working-class completely eroded, however, the British and New Zealand Labour Parties look to be dead in the water.

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Appendix A – Sample Sizes and Weighting for BES

Table A1
1997 BES

Occupational class (ISCO)	Party vote N	Non-vote N
Lower occupations	1038	260
Intermediate occupations	549	114
Higher occupations	587	79
Weight: electors only: Britain (wtergb)		

Table A2
2005 BES

Occupational class (NS-SEC)	Party vote N	Non-vote N
Lower occupations	912	673
Intermediate occupations	576	228
Higher occupations	1166	306
Post-wave weight for Britain (postwtbr)		

Table A3
2010 BES

Occupational class (NS-SEC)	Party vote N (without non-vote)
Lower occupations	457
Intermediate occupations	215
Higher occupations	462
Weight for Post cross section (postwgt)	

Table A4
2015 BES

Occupational class (NS-SEC)	Party vote N (without non-vote)
Lower occupations	337
Intermediate occupations	280
Higher occupations	562
Combined CSES weight (wt_combined_main_capped)	

Appendix B – Sample Sizes and Weighting for NZES

Table B1

1999 NZES

Occupational class (ISCO)	Validated party vote N	Non-vote N
Lower occupations	1936	520
Intermediate occupations	1346	247
Higher occupations	1339	201
Validated party vote weight (nnpvwt)		

Table B2

2008 NZES

Occupational class (ISCO)	Validated party vote N	Non-vote N
Lower occupations	744	307
Intermediate occupations	531	120
Higher occupations	628	120
Absolutely best weight (ZZWT6)		

Table B3

2011 NZES

Occupational class (ISCO)	Validated party vote N	Non-vote N
Lower occupations	578	236
Intermediate occupations	461	152
Higher occupations	698	155
Absolutely best weight (jfinwt)		

Table B4

2014 NZES

Occupational class (ISCO)	Validated party vote N	Non-vote N
Lower occupations	792	109
Intermediate occupations	640	196
Higher occupations	587	289
Weight for all previous plus votes and nonvotes (dwtfin)		

Appendix C – ISCO

Table C
*Three-class model using the International Standard
 of Classification of Occupations (ISCO)*

NS-SEC	Major Occupation Groups in ISCO
Higher	Managers and professionals
Intermediate	Technicians and associate professionals; Clerical support workers; Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (including farmers)
Lower (working-class)	Services and sales workers; Craft and trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers; Elementary occupations