

Abstracts of Articles

Who Gets Hung in a Hung Parliament? A Game Theory Analysis of the 1987–88 British Election

JORGEN S. RASMUSSEN

Game theory is used to analyse the inter-party bargaining likely to result from a general election producing a hung parliament. The outcomes of four games – varying in the sequence of play, the number of players assumed to be involved, and the amount of information available to them – are ascertained. The analysis also takes account of the possibility of intra-party conflict over the negotiations. Labour is found to have a good chance of gaining power even when it is only the second strongest party. While the Conservatives have some chance of remaining in office as a minority government, their best hope appears to require a strategy of tacit deception, which will produce a coalition with the Alliance. The prospect of a Labour/Conservative bidding war suggests substantial concessions on electoral reform, especially if the Alliance hints that its support can be gained for less than a guarantee of PR.

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The Partisan Affinities of Independent ‘Leaners’

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ELIZABETH ORR, MARK C. WESTLYE AND
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Survey respondents who identify themselves as Independents and concede that they are closer to one or the other party usually vote for that party's candidates. Our conclusion that this meant that most professed Independents were really partisans was challenged by scholars who provided other interpretations. This article tests those alternative interpretations, finds them wanting, and adds further evidence to affirm our earlier conclusion: most leaners vote as they do because they are more partisan than independent, and are not neutral, but are nearly as committed to a party as those who explicitly identify with that party. We analyse the leaners' participation in presidential primaries, the stability over time of their voting choices and party identification, and their attitudes toward the two parties. Some use had been made of these variables by scholars trying to salvage the original view of party identification associated with the University of Michigan or the later revisionism. Thorough analysis shows that the three sorts of Independents (Democratic, Republican and Pure Independents) do not display a common pattern of behaviour and belief that sets them apart from outright partisans. This is true only of the Pure Independents; the leaners resemble weak partisans of their respective parties. These findings show that the highly publicized decline of the party system revealed by growing proportions of Independents is very much exaggerated. Finally, we evaluate the alternative measures of party identification introduced in 1980, and find them less useful than the traditional measure.

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The Development of a Party-Orientated Electorate in England, 1832–1918

GARY W. COX

It has long been the accepted view that twentieth-century British voters tend to base their vote decisions chiefly upon the partisan affiliations of the candidates, rather than upon the candidates' personal policy beliefs or characteristics; voters are 'party-orientated' rather than 'candidate-orientated'. This article focuses upon three previously unanswered questions: (1) when did English voters become party-orientated? (2) why did they do so? and (3) what were the consequences? After demonstrating statistically that English voting behaviour changed markedly during the nineteenth century (based upon an analysis of over a thousand election contests between 1832 and 1918), the causal relationships between electoral choice and Parliamentary behaviour are examined.

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Party Differences and Spatial Representation: The Irish Case

RICHARD SINNOTT

This article is an examination of party differences in the Irish case and a discussion of some general problems in the dimensional analysis and spatial representation of party differences. Multidimensional scaling and discriminant analysis are applied to data derived from interviews carried out in 1975 with a sample of seventy-five members of Dáil Éireann (the Irish parliament). Case-specific conclusions include: the existence of considerable inter-party differences at the parliamentary level; the requirement of at least two dimensions (left–right and nationalism) to account for the differences; the probable operation of a third dimension (confessionalism) in the system. Theoretical and methodological conclusions support (a) an empirical approach to the issue of unidimensionality versus multidimensionality; (b) Budge and Farlie's emphasis on close attention to the variety of spatial representations; (c) retention of the concept of policy space with party reserved areas as a distinct category; (d) generalization of the notion of party-inferred space to that of stimulus-inferred space; (e) the utility of employing more than one approach to dimensional analysis and spatial representation.

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