

**SUB-NATIONAL ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND MINORITY PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY**

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Applied Social Science

August 1996

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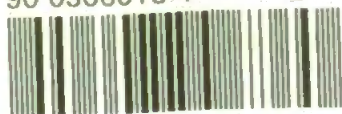
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SUB-NATIONAL ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND MINORITY PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

by LISA SHEILA HARRISON

This thesis analyses the extent to which particular electoral system features and rules affect the opportunities for, and proportionality of, the representation of certain far right and regionalist at various sub-national levels in key European Community member states.

The thesis employs data provided in a unique data base at the University of Plymouth. This data includes a wealth of information concerning shares of the votes and shares of the seats for as many identifiable parties as possible in a range of sub-national elections in the post World War Two period and measures the proportionality of elections using three indices of proportionality.

Various authors have previously attempted to identify which electoral features are primarily the cause of disproportionality at the national electoral level. Within this thesis we will test their claims at various sub-national levels in several west European states. We will also assess the impact of these electoral features upon the representation opportunities of certain far right and regionalist parties, as we have examples of these parties being both 'small' and 'large' at the sub-national level.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page Number</i>
Copyright Statement	
Title Page	
Abstract	i
List of Contents	ii
Acknowledgement	vi
Author's Declaration	vii
<i>Chapter One - Why Compare the Fortunes of Minority Parties in West European Sub-National Elections?</i>	 1
1.1 Studying Small Parties in Western Europe	
1.1.1 The Background to this Thesis	
1.1.2 Producing the Data	
1.1.3 Aims and Objectives	
1.2 Electoral Change and Volatility in Western Europe	
1.3 The Relationship Between Electoral Systems and New and Small Parties	
1.4 Why Study Second Order Elections?	
1.5 The Decline of the Central State	
1.6 Conclusions	
<i>Chapter Two - An Analysis of Electoral Systems and Rules in Western Europe</i>	 30
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 Electoral Rules and their Affect Upon Party Representation	
2.2.1 District Magnitude	
2.2.2 Supplementary Seats	
2.2.3 Thresholds	
2.2.4 Compulsory Voting and Turnout	
2.3 The Classification of Electoral Formulae	
2.3.1 Plurality	
2.3.2 Majoritarianism	
2.3.3 Proportional Representation	
2.3.3a The d'Hondt System	
2.3.3b The Modified Sainte-Lague System	
2.3.3c The Hare-Niemeyer System	
2.3.3d The Droop (Hagenbach-Bischoff) Quota	
2.4 Ballot Systems	
2.4.1 <i>Categoric Voting</i>	
2.4.2 <i>Single Transferable Voting</i>	
2.4.3 <i>List Systems</i>	

- 2.5 Defining and Measuring Proportionality
- 2.5.1 The Loosemore Hanby Index D
- 2.5.2 The Rae Index
- 2.5.3 The Least Squares Index
- 2.5.4 The Sainte-Lague Index
- 2.5.5 Rose's Index of Proportionality
- 2.6 Conclusions

***Chapter Three - Parties and Party Systems in Western Europe;
Traditions, Transformations and Small Parties***

66

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Defining Political Parties
- 3.2.1 The 'Effective' Number of Parties
- 3.3 Changing Party Systems in West Europe
- 3.4 Defining 'New' and 'Minority' Parties
- 3.4.1 Parties of the Far Right
- 3.4.1a Germany
- 3.4.1b The Netherlands
- 3.4.1c Belgium
- 3.4.1d Britain
- 3.4.2 Far Right Electoral History in Four Case Studies
- 3.4.2a Germany
- 3.4.2b The Netherlands
- 3.4.2c Belgium
- 3.4.2d Britain
- 3.4.3 Regionalist Parties
- 3.4.3a Belgium
- 3.4.3b Italy
- 3.4.3c Spain
- 3.4.3d Britain
- 3.4.4 Regionalist Party Electoral History in Four Case Studies
- 3.4.4a Belgium
- 3.4.4b Italy
- 3.4.4c Spain
- 3.4.4d Britain
- 3.5 Conclusions

***Chapter Four - Analyzing The Proportionality of Contemporary
Sub-National Electoral Systems: The Framework for Analysis***

106

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Seven European States - A Brief Electoral Profile
- 4.2.1 Belgium
- 4.2.2 Germany
- 4.2.3 Republic of Ireland
- 4.2.4 The Netherlands
- 4.2.5 Great Britain
- 4.2.6 Spain
- 4.2.7 Italy

- 4.3 Variations in Sub-National Party Systems
 - 4.3.1 The Netherlands
 - 4.3.2 Belgium
 - 4.3.3 Germany
 - 4.3.4 Republic of Ireland
 - 4.3.5 Great Britain
 - 4.3.6 Spain
 - 4.3.7 Italy
- 4.4 Variations in Turnout and Party Support in Sub-National Elections
 - 4.4.1 The Netherlands
 - 4.4.2 Germany
 - 4.4.3 Republic of Ireland
 - 4.4.4 Uncontested Elections
- 4.5 District Magnitude and Proportionality
 - 4.5.1 The Netherlands
 - 4.5.2 Germany
 - 4.5.3 Republic of Ireland
 - 4.5.4 Belgium
 - 4.5.5 Great Britain
- 4.6 The Impact of Constitutional Thresholds Upon Proportionality
 - 4.6.1 Germany
- 4.7 De Facto Thresholds and Proportionality
 - 4.7.1 The Netherlands
 - 4.7.2 Belgium
 - 4.7.3 Republic of Ireland
- 4.8 Seat Distribution Method and Proportionality
 - 4.8.1 Germany
 - 4.8.2 Great Britain
- 4.9 Conclusions

Chapter Five - The Representation of Far Right Parties in European Sub-National Elections

173

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 The Impact of District Magnitude Upon Far Right Representation
 - 5.2.1 Germany
 - 5.2.2 The Netherlands
 - 5.2.3 Belgium
 - 5.2.4 Great Britain
- 5.3 The Impact of De Jure and De Facto Thresholds Upon Far Right Representation
 - 5.3.1 Germany
 - 5.3.2 Belgium
- 5.4 The Second Order Hypothesis and Far Right Support
 - 5.4.1 Germany
 - 5.4.2 The Netherlands
 - 5.4.3 Great Britain
- 5.5 The Impact of Seat Distribution Upon Far Right Representation
 - 5.5.1 Germany
 - 5.5.2 the Netherlands
 - 5.5.3 Belgium
 - 5.5.4 Great Britain
- 5.6 Conclusions

*Chapter Six - The Representation of Regionalist parties in European
Sub-National Elections*

215

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 The Impact of District Magnitude Upon Regionalist Party Representation
 - 6.2.1 Belgium
 - 6.2.2 Spain
 - 6.2.3 Great Britain
- 6.3 The Impact of De Jure and De Facto Thresholds Upon Regionalist Party Representation
 - 6.3.1 Spain
 - 6.3.2 Belgium
 - 6.3.3 Great Britain
- 6.4 The Impact of Seat Distribution Upon Regionalist Party Representation
 - 6.4.1 Belgium
 - 6.4.2 Italy
 - 6.4.3 Great Britain
- 6.5 Conclusions

Chapter Seven - Conclusions

255

- 7.1 Sub-National Party Systems in Western Europe
- 7.2 The Second Order Hypothesis and Far Right Support
- 7.3 Compulsory Voting and Turnout
- 7.4 District Magnitude and Proportionality
- 7.5 Thresholds and Proportionality
- 7.6 Seat Distribution and Proportionality
- 7.7 Prescriptions for the Future of New and Small Parties

Appendix A	286
Appendix B	289
Appendix C	293
Bibliography	308

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis was completed as part of a Polytechnic Central Funding Council (PCFC) research initiative entitled "Local Electoral Systems in the European Community". The research programme commenced in 1992 and has three specific components. The first was to identify the differing electoral systems which have been employed at all levels of directly elected sub-national government in the twelve European Union member states. The second was to create a unique data base of the election results at the various sub-national levels in these countries. The third was to employ a selection of this data to test assumptions which have been made about electoral rules at the national election level. In order to do this we used two particular party families - the far right and regionalist parties. These parties are often overlooked in national election studies because of their 'minority' status.

This thesis could not have been completed without assistance from several areas. First, I am grateful to the PCFC for their financial support. This included a grant for three years, and also additional funds to purchase necessary resources and fund trips. Second, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Michael Thrasher (Director of Studies) and Dr. Colin Rallings of the University of Plymouth for their role as supervisors. They have consistently offered advice throughout the production of the thesis. I am also indebted to Paul Jeffery who for a whole year was instrumental in turning data into spreadsheets. A last acknowledgement goes to the many colleagues, too numerous to mention, who have listened to and read conference papers of 'work in progress' and have responded with many comments of advice and support throughout the research process.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

This study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the Polytechnic Central Funding Council.

A course of training was undertaken at the University of Essex Summer School in Data Analysis and Collection, from July - August 1993. Course were completed in the topics of: Data Analysis for Beginners with SPSS-PC, Analysis of Contingency Tables and Introduction to Ideology and Discourse Analysis: Meaning and Politics.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented, and a paper was prepared for publication.

Publications:

Harrison, "Green Parties in Europe - Evidence From Sub-National Elections", Environmental Politics, Vol.4 No.2, Summer 1995.

Conferences Attended and Paper Presented:

Harrison, Rallings & Thrasher, "Local Parties and Local Voting in England 1973-1992", European Consortium of Political Research Conference, Leiden, 1993.

Harrison, "The Significance of 'Others' - An Explanation of the Meaning of Minority Party Within Different Sub-National Systems", Conference on Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, Lancaster, 1993.

Harrison, "The Impact of Sub-National Electoral Systems on Regional Party Representation", European Consortium of Political Research Conference, Madrid, 1994.

Harrison, "German Sub-National Elections: Evidence From 1990-1994", Conference for the Association for the Study of German Politics - Graduate Research, Birmingham, 1995.

Harrison (University of Plymouth) & Tonge (University of Salford), "Life After Enrtysm? Scottish Militant Labour and the Working-Class in Central Scotland", presented in the workshop *Party Competition and Policy Goals*, PSA Annual Conference, York, 1995.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION - WHY COMPARE THE FORTUNES OF MINORITY PARTIES IN WEST EUROPEAN SUB-NATIONAL ELECTIONS?

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Background To This Thesis

A significant part of political science research has focused upon the relationship between elections, electoral systems and party representation. Books and entire journals have been dedicated to this subject (discussed in Chapters One to Three). One cannot fail to notice, however, that the focus of research is almost entirely dedicated to elections and parties at the national level. Data at this level is relatively easy to collect and such elections are viewed as being the 'most important' form of widescale democratic participation.

Occasionally, some attention has been paid to second order elections - primarily European elections, but also sub-national elections, though generally speaking this has been on a far smaller scale.

Why is this the case? Are sub-national elections unimportant? Whilst this may have been arguably the case in the past, the focus has changed in several countries in recent elections. Elections held below the national level are becoming recognised as an important and valid indicator of public opinion. General elections occur infrequently, usually every four or five years, though sometimes less. Sub-national elections are much more frequent yet are still relatively 'ignored' by political research. The reason why might not be difficult to find. Whilst a national assembly is a single representative body, sub-national government is much more complex - often operating on at least two or three levels. The number of such elected bodies stretches to thousands in some countries alone and elections are often 'ongoing' in some countries. In 1994, for example, Germany held some 16 elections on one

level or another. Although some research on sub-national elections has been carried out, it is usually limited to single country case studies.

This research began as a Polytechnic Central Funding Council (PCFC) research initiative entitled 'Local Electoral Systems in the European Community' established by Dr. Colin Rallings and Dr. Michael Thrasher at the Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre, University of Plymouth. The purpose of this study was two fold:

First, to identify key data sources and establish to what extent sub-national data bases already existed. Then to create a unique data base of sub-national election results of our own. Using the twelve European Union member states as a framework¹, we collected as much detail as was available on electoral systems, electoral timing, participating parties and each party's share of the votes/ seats. This applies to all levels of sub-national government. The ultimate aim was to collate comparable, cross-national data indicating features such as method of election and voter participation. There were several key criteria, therefore, which data had to meet to be both 'useful' and comparable (see below).

Second, to engage in research based on these data in order to produce a PhD assessing the influence of the electoral system and specific rules upon the representation of far right and regionalist parties in selected countries. The choice of these parties will be explained in later chapters when the post-war development and electoral history of certain far right and regionalist parties will be considered. In particular, a resounding surge of literature and research has attempted to account for the 'rise' of such parties in the 1980s and 1990s throughout much of western Europe. Whilst some authors have debated the imminent

¹ When this research project commenced in 1992 the European Union had 12 member states - Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom. As a result, this thesis will not use data from the three member states which joined the European Union in 1995.

demise of the liberal democratic state and the rise of the 'fascist phoenix' (Husbands 1992a, Ignazi 1992, Betz 1993 & 1994, Eatwell 1994) most research has focused upon the fate of these parties at the national electoral level. Hence we should not be surprised by complacent conclusions that they are only 'small' parties which pose little, if any, threat to traditional party systems. We wish to argue that an analysis at the sub-national electoral level is necessary because:

- 1) Small parties in national electoral terms are not necessarily 'small' at the sub-national level - this is particularly true for regionalist parties which, by their very definition, only prevail in certain geographic areas of a country.
- 2) Electoral features are very different at the sub-national level. There are more seats available, effective thresholds are lower and, in some cases, the electoral system is different to that at the national level.
- 3) Research is beginning to suggest that we should be more aware of 'contextual voting'. As the fortunes of national governing parties are not directly at stake at the sub-national level(s) voters may behave differently, opting for a variety of new, local and small parties though still retaining their preference for mainstream parties at general election time.

As we are interested in which electoral rules in particular act as the most significant hurdles to far right and regionalist party representation, there are three main reasons why our analysis focuses on the sub-national level:

- 1) Electoral rules may differ from those imposed for national elections. In Germany, we see variations of PR electoral systems operating at the L ander level. In Italy, the regions continue to use PR despite the reforms in favour of a partial plurality system for general elections since 1993. In Britain, we have examples of multi-seat divisions compared to strictly single-member constituencies at the national level. This allows voters the opportunity for 'split-ticket' voting where they choose candidates from more than one

party.

2) The 'context' of sub-national elections is different to national elections. Turnout is generally lower. Whilst we cannot accurately account for patterns of vote-switching, we can examine the extent to which small parties generally perform better in second order elections when there is 'less at stake', because they offer the opportunity for 'protest voting'.

3) If we can demonstrate that the above point is a correct analysis of small party success in sub-national elections, we can then begin to test more effectively those electoral features and constraints which appear 'irrelevant' at the national level. When our 'small' parties start to poll in excess of 15 percent shares of the vote at the sub-national level they are no longer particularly small and we can more accurately demonstrate the effect of *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds, district magnitudes and seat distribution methods. Electoral opportunities for small parties increase at the sub-national level but are nevertheless still highly dependent on the electoral system within which they operate.

It has not been feasible to study every far right and regionalist party in the European Union. In some countries they simply do not exist. In others, we have experienced problems in acquiring suitable data (see below). The case studies chosen for analysis in Chapters Three, Five and Six were, therefore, to some extent decided by the parameters of our data base. Despite this, it is felt that a suitable cross section of cases have been analyzed in order to highlight which electoral features are important to existing far right and regional parties in terms of translating votes into seats. Before introducing this analysis, however, it is first necessary to describe the process involved in the creation of such a potentially large data base and the restrictions encountered in doing so.

1.1.2 Producing the Data

The data base developed at the University of Plymouth contains two types of information:

1) Information about how many levels of sub-national government are directly elected in each European Union member state, and which electoral system is employed at each level (and indeed if changes have occurred).

2) Raw data concerning the date of elections, seats available, each party's votes and seats, and turnout. The first four are vital to our analysis of proportionality whilst the latter is a helpful addition². Our intention was to collect as much available data as possible for the post World War Two period. For the purposes of this thesis we have used data relating to, and including, 1994.

Unfortunately, both elements of the data collection proved to be a process of slow, continual acquirement throughout the research period. We were able to find extraordinarily little written about the structure of sub-national governments and the related electoral systems (Martin Harloff's The Structure of Local Government in Europe being one of the few examples). We also found that different sources often contradicted one another, and verifying facts often proved difficult. At the lowest electoral level, for example, where there are several thousand communes/ municipals in some countries, some authors produce a rounded estimate of the number of elected bodies whilst others give a more precise figure. A more serious problem concerned conflicting information about the electoral systems. This may not be surprising if we bear in mind Nohlen's comments described in Chapter Two Section 2.1, concerning problems with the use of unclear terminology in electoral system analysis. PR systems are often described as using 'highest averages' or 'largest remainders' without specifying the precise method. Others are described as 'majority'

² Proportionality refers to the extent to which a party's share of the votes/seats correlate. Exact proportionality occurs when all participating parties have an exactly equal share of the votes/seats. The probability of proportionality occurring is affected by a variety of factors discussed in Chapter Two.

systems without any specification of whether this means simple plurality or absolute majority (or of how the latter is derived if this is the case). This is not only confusing for the researcher, but supports our view that sub-national elections have been significantly under-explored.

The collation of actual data also proved a formidable challenge. In order to analyze accurately the proportionality of electoral systems we require certain information. This includes assembly size (and district magnitude when it is different), each party's share of the vote and share of the seats (preferably in raw form rather than expressed as a percentage) and preferably without the use of the 'others' category³. An added benefit (though not a necessity) was levels of turnout. Some countries proved easier to assemble data for than others. In the case of Britain, for example, the local elections database at the University of Plymouth was invaluable in terms of the detail and breadth of information it provides. I am also indebted to Johan Ackeart of the Katholieke Universitat Leuven/ Limburgs Universitar Centrum for providing a wealth of highly detailed data regarding Belgian local elections held between 1976 and 1988. Surprisingly, these two sets of local election data were the only computerized sets we could locate. The sheer amount of data involved in sub-national elections has clearly discouraged others elsewhere from collecting such information.

In relation to sub-national election data in Germany, we were unable to locate a central source. Yet by applying to each state *Statistisches Landesamt* we were quickly supplied with a large quantity of relevant data in printed form. Each state provided us with at least Land level data and often communal level data as well. Thus we have been able to compile data

³ 'Others' is a term frequently used in electoral analysis to lump together a number of small parties. These parties often win no seats or are not members of the main party system. This process actually hinders the ability to measure true disproportionality in an election and does not reflect the actual number of participating parties.

bases for every state but one (Baden-Wurrtemberg failed to reply). I am grateful for the support of these states and for the sheer detail of data which stretches far beyond that required for this thesis. Likewise, I would like to thank the Dutch *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* for supplying detailed provincial and gemeenten election data for the post-war period (and to the PCFC fund for purchasing this data). I would also like to thank the Department of Environment in Dublin for supplying a comprehensive data set of local election results for the Republic of Ireland. Further thanks are directed towards the Association of County Councils in Denmark for their assistance, the *Service Central de la Statistique et des etudes Economiques* for supplying some relevant data for Luxembourg, and the *Secretaria de Estado de Administracao Local e do Ordenamento do Territorio* for supplying Portuguese data.

Data from other countries was obtained in only partial form. We received most support from strongly regional areas in Spain. I am grateful for the cooperation of the *Xunta de Galicia*, the *Ajuntament de Barcelona* and the Basque *Director de Processos Electorales del Departamento de Interior*. Similarly, we received limited, though valuable, responses from autonomous regions in Italy, and I would like to thank the *Quademi Dell'Osservatorio Elettorale* in *Toscana*, the *Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia Consiglio Regionale* and the *Consiglio Regionale del Trentino-Alto Adige* for their assistance. Unfortunately, two countries remain 'dataless'. The obvious omission is France. Although we were able to locate an election data source, we found the information incomplete for our purposes⁴. Despite many attempts we were also unable to find any suitable information regarding sub-national elections in Greece.

⁴ Particularly because of the omission of the number of seats available, and to who they were awarded.

1.1.3 Aims and Objectives

We have outlined the general aims of the research project and highlighted some of the problems and limitations encountered in assembling the relevant information. The thesis consists of two basic objectives - Chapters One to Three will provide the justification for an analysis of sub-national electoral systems. Chapters Two and Three will also act as a literature review of the established, national based research into electoral systems and party system development and change. Our second objective, carried out in Chapters Four to Six, is to test some of these generalisations by using observations we have made about sub-national elections and party systems in various West European countries, and in relation to the electoral fortunes of far right and regionalist parties in particular.

Analysis of sub-national, as opposed to national elections, may provide interesting and unique findings. In this chapter we examine a range of political factors which support the view that sub-national elections may be a useful starting point from which to analyze the electoral development and fortunes of a variety of new and small parties. For several reasons these parties are relatively overlooked at the national electoral level in many countries. While sub-national elections have often been castigated as 'unimportant', research is now emerging which in fact suggests otherwise and argues that sub-national elections may provide important evidence of 'contextual voting'.

In Chapter Two we analyze the main elements of electoral systems which operate in European Union states. Besides discussing their actual mechanical operation we will also consider the debates which focus upon the political implications of electoral systems. Since we are primarily interested in the prospects for minority parties we should be aware of the way in which certain electoral rules work to the disadvantage of all but the largest

parties. In the same way, the issue of proportionality also has political implications and we will discuss the appropriateness of various proportionality measures which have been encountered in the research literature.

In Chapter Three we will consider some of the traditions and transformations associated with the establishment of party systems in western Europe and focus upon the established literature relating to the emergence and electoral opportunities for new and small parties. The main focus of this chapter will be to outline those far right and regionalist parties which will be used for detailed analysis in Chapters Five and Six. Thus, we need to consider in which countries such parties exist and thrive, provide a brief outline of their electoral history, and assess whether and how far they are an established party on the national electoral scene.

In Chapter Four we begin to use our data base to test some of the issues that were raised in Chapters One, Two and Three. For example, we will compare the extent to which turnout and mainstream party support has been declining at various sub-national levels within several European states. Because we are able to test data from differing sub-national electoral levels, we can also make some initial observations about the influence of district magnitude, *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds, and various seat distribution systems. As such, Chapter Four takes a broad approach to analyzing sub-national elections, whilst in Chapters Five and Six our analysis will be much more narrowly focused.

In Chapter Five we will consider the impact of district magnitude, thresholds and the seat distribution method upon far right representation in several countries at various sub-national levels. We will also consider the extent to which support for the far right demonstrates patterns of being second order protest voting. In Chapter Six we will analyze the effect of district magnitude, thresholds and the seat distribution method upon regionalist

party representation in several countries in sub-national elections. We will also consider the extent to which various regional parties are large or small parties - that is, the extent to which they are established within the sub-national party system.

In our final chapter we will draw together our findings and reiterate to what extent assessments made about the significance of electoral rules at the national level can still be applied at the sub-national level. We will make some general observations about electoral systems by suggesting which rules are most discriminatory to the representation of small parties, we can demonstrate where parties such as the far right and regionalists can and do benefit from an appreciation of electoral systems and proportionality. Sub-national elections are important for new and small parties, as barriers are not as formidable as at the national level. The actual number of votes needed to secure seats is lower, the issues may be different and the media and publicity demands associated with a general election are not as strong. Sub-national elections, therefore, offer the first rung on the ladder of political respect for small parties because organisational and systemic factors are less inhibitive, and in terms of political control there is 'less-at-stake'.

1.2 Studying Small Parties in Western Europe

The term western liberal democracy acts as a broad definition for a collection of similar, yet still individualistic, national political systems which operate within the advanced industrial democracies. Despite some recognised nation-bound particularities, liberal democracies are collectively grouped by several basic requirements. Smith labels these requirements as (i) fully-representative institutions, (ii) unrestricted party formation, (iii) freely-contested elections, and (iv) the operation of a competitive party system (Smith 1983: 2). It is possible to argue that elections are the most basic form of political expression in contemporary advanced society (Gallagher, Laver & Mair 1995, Jackman

1994). What is of interest is their impact upon party systems, with specific attention being paid to the promotion and exclusion of certain group interests. As Taagepera and Shugart claim: "electoral rules can make or break a party" (Taagepera & Shugart 1989: 2).

Individual political parties frequently emerge and disappear yet electoral systems and party systems are assumed to retain a high degree of continuity and stability at the national level (see Chapter Three section 3.2). What this thesis seeks to identify is the extent to which changes may occur initially at the sub-national level. Muller-Rommel (1991) suggests that the reluctance of academics to tackle the issue of political parties on anything lower than a national level has led to a marginalisation of the significance of small parties. In other words:

" ... because power is concentrated in the centre, the dominant concerns of political punditry and psephology are with those parties which are likely to gain that power and with the support they need in order to achieve it." (Rallings & Thrasher 1993c: 367)

In statistical analysis small parties are often reduced to the label 'others' which hinders analysis. By employing a unique electoral data base created at the University of Plymouth we can more appropriately concentrate upon the outcome of electoral support at the sub-national level. Within this chapter we will clarify the themes which are central to the development of this thesis. This necessitates (i) a literature review of existing research regarding electoral change in Western Europe, and (ii) an explanation of why an analysis of support for regionalist and far right parties at the sub-national level may provide an interesting case study from which to base future analysis of electoral and party system change.

In the past two decades, West European politics has experienced a period of change, often

transgressing and challenging many traditional assumptions regarding electoral and party politics, and the early 1980s is viewed by some academics as the beginning of a political watershed (Dalton, Flanagan & Beck 1984, Dalton & Kuechler 1990, Denver & Crewe 1985, Padgett 1993). The post Cold War détente, along with the emergence of 'post-materialist' issues have together left a mark upon many areas of political behaviour. The growth in environmental and other post-materialist concerns and a emphasis on greater political co-operation at the European Union rather than the nation state level, and the collapse of communism in the 1990s, may all have played a role in changing the nature of electoral and party system politics in many European states. Yet new and small parties are often faced with a variety of constraints, including limitations on the availability of candidates, limited finances, and limited publicity and media attention. By succeeding at the sub-national electoral level, however, minority parties are able to gain a step up the ladder of institutional representation which may or may not lead to a place in the national electoral scene. Our method of comparative analysis is necessary in order to answer important questions regarding where minority parties can expect to maximize their electoral potential. That is to say, which electoral features offer the greater opportunity for representation.

Others (Dalton & Kuechler 1990, Harmel & Robertson 1985, Kolinsky & Paterson 1976) have attempted to ask why voters choose new parties. Instead, we are asking how successful such parties can expect to be at the local level - that is, what representation do certain small parties receive. We should be clear that electoral rules form one half of the equation that determines who wins power - the other half being the actual vote polled by a party⁵. The choice of the two party families in this thesis is a strategic one. First, we may or may

⁵ A party receiving very few votes cannot realistically expect representation under any electoral system. As the share of the vote increases, however, the opportunities for representation increase though this will be controlled by electoral rules.

not expect to see regionalist parties perform particularly well in sub-national elections (see section 1.5 below). Second, parties of the far right have become the focus of considerable electoral research since the late 1980s (von Beyme 1988, Betz 1994, Hainsworth 1992, Merkl & Weinberg 1993, Stöss 1991). The conclusions we make about the impact of electoral systems and rules upon the representation of these parties at the sub-national level may be by no means unique to regionalist and far right parties, but may provide important and interesting lessons for any small party attempting to gain a foothold on the ladder of electoral representation with only limited resources.

A significant amount of research has examined the interdependent relationship existing between electoral systems and party systems (Bartolini & Mair 1990, Blais & Carty 1988, Bogdanor & Butler 1983, Lijphart 1994a, Rae 1967). The development of political parties within western European countries can be traced back to the nineteenth century when their function was to satisfy two conditions; the development of plural forces in society and the increasingly recognised importance of political representation (Daalder 1992: 270). The establishment of mass-appeal parties, however could only occur with large-scale enfranchisement (La Palombara & Weiner 1990). The very notion of a 'party system' implies that there exists a process of development which involves elements of tradition and continuity, with the electoral system being just one potential, though significant, influencing factor. A 'party system' is a feature in which at least two parties, and often more, participate, and as such 'free, democratic' elections are intrinsic to the very notion of legitimate government in a western liberal democracy (Schattschneider 1942, Pomper 1992). Yet the extent to which multi-party systems can be classified as similar is complicated by the nature of the parties within each system. The ideological positioning of each party is a primary element of classification along with their preparedness to co-operate with other parties. Such features can have dramatic effects upon the way in which governing party coalitions are formed.

A further constraint is the extent to which some political interests are excluded by legal and electoral system rules. Countries such as Germany, for example, use both electoral laws and, in some cases, legislation to impose an outright ban upon the electoral participation of particular parties. Such exclusion is primarily justified by the desire for 'stable government', yet problems can arise when those excluded parties represent particular ethnic, linguistic and regional minorities. This exclusion serves to generate feelings of perceived marginalisation and disillusionment with the political system which may be expressed in both electoral and non-electoral terms. This increasingly common experience in the post-war period can be viewed as a primary factor responsible for the fragmentation of particular party systems (Ackaert 1993, Delmartino 1988, Hueglin 1986, Mughan 1979, Rokkan & Urwin 1982, Rose & Urwin 1975) - especially the decline of 'catch all' parties. In some cases a radical reform of electoral procedure has occurred (Donovan 1995, Katz 1995). In relation to the whole concept of traditional party classification Urwin suggests that regional parties provide a challenge, since they offer very little in the way of common ideology/policy, whilst their interpretation of the structure of society itself can be challenging (1983: 227).

This thesis will be concerned with comparatively analyzing the relationship between specific electoral and party systems in key western European countries where regional/sub-state nationalist and right-wing extremist parties experience a range of electoral success. By using data from the sub-national level we can assess where far right and regionalist party support is strongest, in which areas representation occurs, and finally how proportional such representation is. In the next chapter we will review the existing literature on electoral systems and the proportionality of electoral systems. Before doing this we need to consider some of the most recent studies which debate the changing nature of electoral stability in West Europe and the reasons why second order

elections may be important.

1.3 Electoral Change and Volatility in Western Europe

This once traditional belief among psephologists in a stable process of partisan alignment (Lipset & Rokkan 1967) has been challenged over the last twenty years. The idea that certain social groups maintain a long-term identity with particular parties may no longer hold true, creating a fragmentation in established party systems. Italy, for example, is witnessing a decline in the significance of long-term religious and class cleavages which are instead being replaced by an increase in territorial-centred political activity. The actual electorate itself has also changed. Mair suggests:

"... there has been an enormous expansion of the European electorates in the past thirty years ... the size of the average European electorates has increased by more than one-third since the early 1960s ... There are, in short, a whole host of new voters out there." (1993: 126)

In Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies, Dalton *et al* argue that the period of social unrest which occurred in countries such as France, Britain and Germany in the 1960s acted as a catalyst in the demand for political change (1984: 3-4). A combination of factors have served to promote such a change. These may include; individual socio-political groups which have challenged the notion of deference to established political power, an international recession which has weakened political power in some of the strongest industrial nations, and a proliferation of interest groups focusing on individual rights. Furthermore, the growth of small parties has undoubtedly been aided by the decline of 'traditional' parties. In Italy, the decline in support for the Communist and Christian Democrat parties has created significant electoral space for other parties and groups. States such as Belgium and Germany have witnessed the growth of new parties which are encouraged to participate by the decentralised and federalised nature of the system. It is

largely within this process of change that sub-national and extremist interests have themselves become represented as new political parties.

Yet this concentration upon research of 'electoral volatility' since the 1970s has largely failed to accommodate for, or address the significance of, certain minority parties within Europe. Crewe, for example, recognises the limitations of the commonly used Pedersen Index of electoral volatility⁶, since the very criteria used to classify the existence of a 'party' does not take into account the significance of specifically regionalist parties such as the Scottish National Party (Denver & Crewe 1985: 9). Existing research suggests that party systems are relatively flexible in the fact that they change as a result of social developments. At the same time, however, a similar transformation of electoral systems has not significantly occurred since countries are "tied by local political conditions and traditions" (Taagepera & Shugart 1989: 4). Within this thesis, it is possible to consider how relatively stable electoral systems have created or limited the possibilities for fragmenting party systems to reformulate themselves and accommodate minority parties.

1.4 The Relationship Between Electoral Systems and New and Small Parties

The simple reason why the concepts of electoral and party systems have become so inextricably linked is highlighted by Blondel, when he states that electoral procedures "are powerful instruments of political engineering", which are able to "shape" the identity of party systems (Blondel 1990: 176). Establishing the extent to which this is true provides a challenge, which implies both overt and covert effects. The psychological impact that a particular balloting system has upon the choices made by voters is much harder to measure and has in fact become a political weapon employed by parties from time to time,

⁶ The Pedersen Index of electoral volatility is a measure of the net electoral change for each party's share of the vote between each election.

highlighted by the demand for proportional representation by the Liberal Democrat Party in Britain. In comparison, the effect that thresholds (see Chapter Two for an explanation and Chapter Four, Chapter Five and Chapter Six for examples) have upon the number of parties gaining effective representation is much clearer.

The concept of 'universal rights' can also have a profound effect upon party systems. This is an issue which is becoming increasingly controversial as western Europe continues to witness a process of significant demographic change. Some minority groups such as refugees and 'guest-workers', for example, suffer the disadvantage of not being able to participate in some or all elections in certain European countries. It is possible that small pockets of 'non-nationals' (whether they be defined in ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural terms) will become geographically concentrated, and hence 'localised' in particular countries. At the same time, localised pockets of 'nationalists' may develop due to resentment created by non-nationals who take up employment and make use of state-funded welfare and education services. This may have two consequences.

First, we may identify a proliferation of political parties which focus their appeal below the national level. Although they are not necessarily driven by primarily territorial concerns, they are regional to the extent that their appeal is aimed towards a geographically concentrated sector of the electorate. Second, political parties which rely on a regionally distinct set of voters are more likely to gain effective representation at the sub-national level of government, and may only succeed in gaining representation at this level. Rose and Urwin claim that in national elections smaller parties are more likely to present a full-slate of candidates in PR multi-seat elections than they are in single seat, plurality systems as the latter requires a concentration of support (Rose & Urwin 1975: 19). The concentration of support required to secure representation at the sub-national level, however, is not so great. In particular, Muller-Rommel claims that new and small parties

which have emerged in recent years have "emerged spontaneously on the local level as politically independent citizen-initiative groups" (1990: 209). It is possible, therefore, that electoral participation begins at the local level for small parties.

A particular focus of academic research into the relationship between electoral systems and party representation has focused upon the method of seat allocation. Our starting point for the analysis of minority parties will focus upon the existence of three seat allocation systems within Europe - namely plurality, proportional representation (PR) and the single transferable vote (STV). The rules and patterns associated with plurality and proportional representation systems in particular will be employed in this thesis to assess the actual and potential significance of minority parties within Europe at the sub-national level. It is certainly the case that constituencies which are both multi-member and elected via proportional representation present a far greater opportunity for the effective representation of small parties than in the single-member majoritarian systems. Our aim is to show, using quantitative data, how seat allocation is one feature of electoral systems in Europe which determines the extent to which 'popular support' for minority parties is effectively translated into 'sub-national governmental representation. Other electoral system features which are relevant to this analysis include district magnitude, the use of thresholds, and (possibly) the timing of elections.

Analysis of the relationship between electoral and party systems has generated an orthodoxy within political science, which will be considered in greater detail in proceeding chapters. Generally speaking, Rae (1967) identified the existence of three rules in relation to the impact of electoral systems at the national level. These are:

- all electoral systems tend to yield disproportionate results.

- all electoral systems tend to reduce the effective number of parliamentary parties compared to the actual number of electoral parties.

- all electoral systems can manufacture a parliamentary majority for a party that has not received a majority vote support (Lijphart 1984: 159). What a concentration upon successive elections at the sub-national level in this thesis will seek to show relates to Rae's second rule. That is, the extent to which particular electoral features act as a make-or-break variable from which far right or regionalist parties may succeed in entering the framework of representation and possibly government.

Haus and Rayside (1978) claim that there are both institutional facilitators and political facilitators which may help to explain the development of new parties in western democracies since 1945. One institutional facilitator is the electoral system, though Haus and Rayside claim that it is not necessarily the case for national elections that new parties are encouraged by proportional representation although they are hindered by majoritarianism and plurality systems. Haus and Rayside do, however, claim that regional parties benefit in decentralised federal systems, and furthermore that the development of new cleavages and strains is significant for the emergence of new parties.

In terms of the creation and success of new parties, Haus and Rayside claim that cleavages need to be politicised, and also that it is an advantage if the cleavage is geographically concentrated. Similarly, Harmel and Robertson (1985) argue that the frequency of new parties within a state should increase as the cultural and social diversity expands. Whilst they agree with Haus and Rayside that new party success is related to the electoral system they do add an extra claim that the electoral system does not relate to new party formation - which explains why we are as likely to find case studies for this thesis in plurality systems as we are in PR systems. Muller-Rommel suggests that new parties have a greater chance

of electoral support if they introduce new issues which are not already represented by existing parties (1990: 213). The literature and research on electoral volatility in western Europe since the late 1970s, therefore, is of relevance to our analysis of sub-national elections.

For the purpose of this thesis, particular attention will be focused upon the electoral significance of sub-nationalist (including linguistic) parties and parties of the far right since (i) these tend to be geographically concentrated and so significant evidence of electoral support at the regional level may not necessarily be reflected at the national election level, and (ii) such parties may benefit from a weakening of national state ties. They succeed electorally when there exists a perceived dissatisfaction with the established ruling elite and/or the established political system in general - which of course may include both the dominant party system and the effect of electoral features (Betz 1993, Dalton & Kuechler 1990, Donovan 1995, Eatwell 1994, Mair 1991, Roberts 1995, Waters 1994). (iii) New parties are more likely to prefer autonomy at the local level in order to maximize individual level interests and participation (Dalton & Kuechler 1990: 217-8).

Muller-Rommel (1991: 2) suggests that a truly comparative analysis of small parties has been hindered by several factors. First, small parties are assessed as being 'politically unimportant' though of course we are unable to predict which unimportant parties may become important *e.g.* the Greens in Germany have successfully launched themselves onto the national electoral scene and act as coalition partners in several L ander. Second, low national support makes comparative analysis difficult. This may not apply, however, to the sub-national level where the parties we intend to study can often poll in excess of a 15% share of the vote. Furthermore, electoral system rules and constraints are more effectively measured at the sub-national level as we are dealing with more concentrated areas of electoral support and smaller district magnitudes. Smith acknowledges the problems

created by assessing 'small parties' on a purely parliamentary party level, and uses the case of the Scottish National Party to suggest that, "... this kind of competition draws attention to the need to include the sub-national as well as the national level of a party system, if the relevance of small parties is to be considered in all its aspects" (1991: 30).

Mair suggests that a 'small' party is one which polls between 1% and 15% share of the vote nationally (1991: 43) but this, of course, overlooks the significance of regional variations in all levels of election but which are more likely to be proportionately rewarded at the sub-national level. In comparison, Deschouwer suggests that Mair's definition of a small party would in fact apply to almost every party in Belgium due to the fragmentation of the political and constitutional systems (1991: 135). Thus an analysis at the sub-national level allows us the opportunity to assess the effects of a number of electoral features which may not be brought into consideration nationally when the share of the vote is too 'small'. It may be the case that new, including far right and regionalist, parties become involved in local politics before launching themselves onto the national electoral scene. Indeed, electoral success at the sub-national level may form a pattern that precedes national electoral participation. Whilst much comparative electoral analysis has focused on national elections, we will employ this new data base to 'go back to the roots' of potential electoral support.

1.5 Why Study Second Order Elections?

Established methods of measuring the representative effectiveness of electoral systems have primarily been employed at the national level. Thus, disproportionality measures may fail to register the occurrence of deep-seated regional trends, which becomes most evident at the sub-national electoral level. This is supported by Irvine who observes that, "Under conditions of strong regional divergence in voting, an Index of Proportionality calculated

from national figures will understate the true disproportionality of results across the various regions." (1988: 22)

The definition of Britain as the archetypal two-party system at the national level may thus be more correctly identified as a system of several differing two-party systems at the sub-national level - e.g. the dominance of the Labour Party and the Scottish National Party (SNP) in Scotland, compared to the high level of support for the Conservative Party in the South East and the relatively strong support for the Liberal Democrats in the South West. This point is supported by Katz, who argues that the categoric-vote plurality system common to Britain in fact only favours a two-party system most accurately at the individual constituency level rather than the overall national level. As a result, Britain tends to experience the most number of different local party systems compared to countries which operate under large district PR systems - as occurred in Italy before the reforms of 1993 (Katz 1980: 115 - see Chapter Four for a more detailed explanation). Small parties which are effectively able to focus their appeal towards a geographically concentrated electorate at the sub-national level add a degree of complexity to the whole issue of electoral-party system relations.

A small though significant amount of research has assessed the significance of second order elections (Reif & Schmitt 1980, van der Eijk, Franklin & Oppenhuis 1994). Reif and Schmitt define first order elections as national parliamentary elections in parliamentary systems and national presidential elections in presidential systems. Second order elections thus become all other elections e.g. European elections, by-elections, municipal elections, regional elections and elections to second chambers (Reif & Schmitt 1980: 8). Whilst the research by Reif and Schmitt and van der Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis has generated hypotheses of second order voting behaviour based purely upon elections to the European Parliament, we will outline their findings in order to test in later chapters whether

similar patterns occur at the sub-national level.

Reif and Schmitt (1980) attempted to measure various 'dimensions' which may produce different voting patterns in second order elections to those that are observed in first order elections. First, the 'less-at-stake' dimension suggests that (i) turnout is lower in second order elections - this will be considered in several countries in Chapter Four, (ii) the prospects for new and small parties are brighter in second order elections as voters may choose parties they 'prefer' at this stage rather than voting rationally/tactically as occurs at the first order election, (iii) the percentage of spoilt and invalid ballots increases, and (iv) government parties suffer due to the voters' increased propensity to use second order elections as a 'protest' against policies and actions of the day. Second, Reif and Schmitt refer to the 'specific-arena' dimension. In this situation voters in second order elections take into account other than merely national issues. Truly 'local' issues may have greater implications in some countries, and the number of 'local' and independent candidates is likely to increase at the sub-national level. Third, Reif and Schmitt refer to the 'institutional-procedural' dimension. These are features of the electoral system such as seat distribution method and thresholds to representation which may not be the same as those used in first order elections in some countries (Reif & Schmitt 1980: 9-12). The result of Reif and Schmitt's research suggests that the 'less-at-stake' dimension may be crucial for small parties, the electoral success of various green parties in Europe reinforcing this claim. Second, they claim that regional parties perform better in second order elections, and that electoral thresholds do not discourage small parties from contesting second order elections. We can use our data base to test these latter two claims.

Van der Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis suggest that second order elections act as 'markers' of each political party's standing. A vote-switch away from the main party/ies in favour of smaller parties is an indicator of the government's popularity and as such allows parties to

adapt policies in time for the next general election to prevent a more permanent voter realignment. Second order elections also have the positive role of providing publicity for new small parties, which may not have the finances or personnel to compete nation-wide in a national election. Furthermore, the technical obstacles are reduced - for example, the number of votes needed to pass a threshold is lower (Van der Eijk, Franklin & Oppenhuis 1994: 1-3). Third, they assess the significance of election 'timing'. Second order elections are more likely to display warnings of discontent towards the governing parties if they are held in the run-up to a general election rather than just after one (Franklin, van der Eijk & Oppenhuis 1994: 8). We do not seek to prove that the above hypotheses apply to all sub-national elections in Europe or indeed all of the time. What they do demonstrate though, is that previous research and claims made about both electoral volatility and change and in particular the future prospects for far right and regionalist parties require further comparative analysis at the non national level, and in our case we will analyze the sub-national level. In the next section we will consider some explanations of why analysis at the sub national level may be increasing in importance.

1.6 The Decline of the Central State

It has been argued (Batley & Stoker 1991, Page 1991) that a more autonomous level of sub-national government is likely to be of greater interest to the electorate and thus produces higher levels of turnout in local elections. A decline in turnout may be one characteristic of an electorate which is becoming dissatisfied with government. Turnout is not a feature of the electoral system itself, unless of course, there is compulsory voting as applies in Belgium and Italy, and did in the Netherlands until 1970. Low turnout in an electoral district may influence the number of marginal seats in an election, thus increasing the probability of inter-party power exchange after each election. Furthermore, low turnout in a PR multi-party system may benefit the smaller parties,

especially in terms of creating opportunities for multi-party coalition government (in Chapter Two Section 2.2.4 we will discuss compulsory voting and declining turnout).

We have already mentioned that the generic term 'liberal democracy' applied to the twelve member states of the European Community has little analytical value since it tends to assume commonality without recognising the true depth of diversity. It is when we come to analyse local government systems that this notion of diversity is further demonstrated. This occurs not only between states but, as will be shown, within individual countries between different levels of sub-national government (See Appendix C for an outline of sub-national government in each of the 12 European Union member states). This is where the issue of autonomy may be significant - that is, the extent to which local government is independent from the constraints of central government. Local authorities in Britain and L ander in Germany can be identified as two extreme examples of autonomy in Europe. In particular, it has been argued (Page 1991, Sharpe 1993) that the establishment of regionalisation in the form of a quasi-autonomous system of government in some European countries (e.g. Spain, Italy) has acted as a replacement for, or at least an acceptable alternative vehicle to, national government control. This may then act as a stabilising force in an otherwise fragile political system which has the potential for nation state crisis.

Whilst the precise powers of each country's local government are not a particular concern of this thesis, this may influence perceptions about the significance of electoral participation at the local level. This may also go some way toward explaining why some minority parties achieve apparent success at the sub-national level, yet fail to translate this into success at the national level (see the earlier discussion of second order voting behaviour in this chapter). Stoker adopts the accountability hypothesis by arguing that the British model of local government demonstrates a lack of faith in local political control and democracy. As a result, feelings of remoteness and lack of legitimacy are reflected in low

electoral turnout (1991: 11). It does not follow, however, that PR automatically ensures high turnout or that more 'proportional' forms of PR increase its likelihood. Furthermore, elections held in compulsory voting PR countries since the 1980s have been characterized by declining turnout (Blais & Carty 1990, Jackman 1987, Jackman & Miller 1995), though data from Belgium and Italy suggest that this decline is only very small.

Despite the restraints created by the absence of a singular common central-local government structure, Blair suggests that 'local democracy and participation' in general is largely determined by three common features. First, the extent to which voters participate in the democratic process between elections. Second, the imagery and prestige that the local political executive projects. For example, the system of *cumul des mandats* in France enables political representation at the local level to act as a power base for individuals and parties at the national level. A similar system operates in the Republic of Ireland. Finally, the size of local authorities is important, as voters will not feel as 'attached' to local government which represent large populations as they will to an authority which represents smaller group interests (1991: 48-53). Related to this is the effect of district magnitude - that is the number of seats in each electoral division. Britain acts as an exception to the norm in this case since local wards exhibit a district magnitude ranging from one to three seats which is far smaller than the rest of our European examples.

Roche suggests that local government as it operates in continental Europe tends to be characterised by certain features not common to the British model - such as; a large number of small local bodies (e.g. communes in France and Italy, and Gemeinden in Germany), a highly stratified overall structure by which all local bodies have relatively the same rights/powers and which are determined by constitutional law, and state control over local administration tends to be far more decentralised (Roche 1982: 11). Yet an issue which has been largely overlooked at the sub-national level is the impact of the

electoral system. Not only does this have a psychological impact upon how the electorate uses its vote, but it is the key decision behind which party gets what degree of power in terms of seats.

The issue of centre-periphery cleavages in contemporary western Europe, where regional-issue politics may have become important for sub-national electoral politics is relevant to this thesis. The centre-periphery cleavage is one of the three central pillars central to the Lipset-Rokkan thesis on party formation which will be outlined in greater detail in Chapter Three Section 3.3. We will adopt the assumption made by Gottman that "centrality is certainly being challenged" (Gottman 1980: 17) - although the reasons why individuals choose to identify with locally based rather than nationally based parties is too broad and complex an issue to be dealt with in this thesis. What should be apparent, however, is that the sub-national electoral system may act as an accessible vehicle for minority party representation and establishment within the general party system.

Sharpe claims that the last twenty years have witnessed an increase in the significance of one particular level of sub-national government and:

"This new institutional type either takes the form of an entirely new system of regional elected government exercising executive, and sometimes legislative, powers (Italy, France, Spain, Belgium, Portugal in part and possibly Greece), or it is a strengthened and refurbished county level of local government (Norway, Sweden, the UK and some Lander in West Germany)... In a few cases, such as France (the departement) and Germany (the Regierungsbezirk), an essentially administrative meso level, has also taken on a new lease of life." (Sharpe 1993: 1)

We appear, therefore, to be witnessing a general increase in the autonomy and powers of sub-national interests in many EU member states - no better exemplified than by the constitutional creation of a Belgian federal state in 1993. Furthermore, some would argue

that the simultaneous strengthening of numerous decision-making powers for the institutions of the EU has created a challenge to the legitimacy of, and indeed a "redundancy" (Sharpe 1993: 2) of the powers once vested in the nation-state. Thus, the motivation behind an analysis of electoral systems and party representation at the sub-national level is further justified. If it is possible to argue that the nation-state is no longer the primary or only form of legitimate government in the eyes of the electorate, then it is vital that we analyse the impact of electoral systems and voting patterns upon party systems at the sub-national level since this is the basis from which minority and new parties can launch themselves into national and international political systems.

1.7 Conclusions

In this chapter we have attempted to outline some of the features and changes which have occurred in west European electoral politics since the late 1970s and which have created a situation where it may be useful comparatively to analyse the outcome of sub-national elections. Whilst there are many issues and aspects which it is not possible to assess within this thesis alone⁷, we have chosen to analyze the influence of the electoral system upon the proportionality of far right and regionalist party representation.

To summarize, in relation to electoral volatility and change in western Europe, we have shown that an increasing consensus among psephologists suggests that partisan dealignment is on the increase due to the weakening of traditional cleavages and the changing nature of the electorate. As a result, the strength of the larger 'catch-all' parties in the post-war period may be under threat from a variety of small and new parties. Second, the existing literature tends to undermine the significance of small parties, particularly by employing the category 'other parties' in many countries at the national electoral level of analysis.

⁷ For example, why is turnout declining, why voting patterns are changing.

Despite the post-materialist and post-communist atmosphere emerging in western Europe since the 1980s, there are few 'new' major parties - except, potentially, the Greens in some countries and political parties in Italy. Logically, therefore, we may expect small and new parties to perform better in sub-national elections because the demand upon resources is not as high, and voters may be more inclined to vote for them. Furthermore, electoral system variations will also have an effect.

In relation to the general impact of electoral systems, existing literature suggests that new parties are encouraged by proportional representation and that regional disproportionality is often underestimated at the national level of analysis. Furthermore, we outlined the small amount of research which considers the significance of second order elections, suggesting that the prospects for new and small parties are more beneficial compared to general election opportunities, though this is also affected by 'political' and 'timing' factors. A 'political' feature of sub-national elections may be the declining respect in the central state. As local autonomy increases, sub-national elections are likely to be taken more seriously. Furthermore, success at the sub-national level may provide small parties with the necessary base from which to launch themselves into the national electoral scene. Before moving onto sub-national electoral analysis, we will consider the established literature concerning electoral systems and proportionality in Chapter Two.

2.1 Introduction

Electoral systems have been defined as, “those rules which govern the processes by which preferences are articulated as votes and by which these votes are translated in to the election of decision makers” (Blais 1988: 100). Before being able to analyse sub-national electoral representation in terms of ‘proportionality’ and the representation of minority parties, it is first necessary to provide a literature review of existing theories and beliefs which have, to a large extent, developed as a result of analysis at the national electoral level. Within this chapter, therefore, we will focus upon numerous, potentially influential, aspects of electoral systems and rules as they operate in western Europe. In order to analyse these features in later chapters we will use our data to assess overall proportionality within Chapter Four, and the proportionality of far right and regionalist party representation in several countries (in Chapters Five and Six respectively). Analysis at the sub-national level is important because electoral features differ between levels - a common example is district magnitude. The ballot system and seat distribution system often varies at the sub-national level compared to those operating at the national level - an example being France (see Appendix C). By selecting various elections as case studies (dependent upon the existence of far right and regionalist parties and the availability of data) we can test hypotheses which have examined proportionality and representativeness based upon national election studies. These hypotheses will be referred throughout this chapter as and when appropriate.

Although we ascertained in Chapter One that comparing local government structure and status involves a significant degree of diversity, this may not necessarily be the case when comparing electoral systems and their impact upon minority party representation.

Electoral systems may be analyzed on three levels; (i) differences between national and local electoral systems, (ii) differences between localities within each country, and (iii) differences between local electoral systems between countries. It is the latter two that provide the focus for this thesis. The weakening of 'traditional cleavages' such as class and religion since the 1970s (see Chapter Three Section 3.3) has led to a reassertion of territorial cleavages exemplified by increased regionalism in Britain, Italy and Belgium and thus justifying an analysis at the sub-national level. In particular, the political significance attached to sub-national elections will have an important bearing on the results, and as such:

"... an analysis of voting patterns at an "unimportant" election may throw a good deal of light on voters' attitudes to parties and other political phenomena ... if major differences emerge between turnout and voting patterns at different levels, it may be inferred that these attachments are not so strong as to prevent voters from feeling free to depart from their traditional allegiances when this can be done without inflicting a real punishment upon the party to which they normally feel tied." (Gallagher 1989: 22)

Thus, using our data, we can test Gallagher's claim that one may witness variations in voting behaviour in sub-national elections as they are second order elections (see Chapter One section 1.5). If sub-national elections in western Europe really are second order elections we may expect to see a range of small, extreme, fringe and periphery parties benefit.

Candidate popularity and local issues may be just two factors accounting for different voting patterns at the sub-national level. Whilst we cannot account for candidate popularity or highlight important local issues, it is possible to measure the effect of particular electoral rules. As Rae suggests:

"Some electoral systems are less violently prejudiced in favour of large parties than others, but all of them seem at least slightly biased in that direction. It follows that no electoral systems positively accelerate the development of small parties, but some are weaker brakes against their development than others." (Rae 1967: 69)

It is our intention to analyze electoral systems at the sub-national level in order to ascertain which electoral systems are more 'proportional' in rewarding far right and regionalist parties in contemporary Europe¹. For example, whilst parties with a small, geographically concentrated electorate, or those with a large, thinly spread level of support have slim opportunities for participation in government at the national level, the simple plurality system is not always an obstacle. As Curtice suggests:

"The ability of the single-member-plurality system to discriminate against third parties is wholly contingent upon the electoral geography of their support. The system does discriminate against parties whose support is geographically evenly spread - but does not discriminate against those third parties whose support is geographically concentrated." (1992: 194)

If this is true for national level elections then it must be equally appropriate, if not more so, for parties which are geographically concentrated at the sub-national level.

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to outline the existing literature which focuses upon particular electoral features and rules that may be influential for minority party representation - for example, district magnitude and the use of thresholds. Second, the established literature covering the various electoral formulæ which are in operation in western Europe will be analyzed (Appendix C provides an outline of the various electoral systems operating at the sub-national level in the twelve European Union member states).

¹ Rae suggests that small parties become disadvantaged when polling a share of the vote below 20% at the national level (Rae 1967: 72). We will test in later chapters whether this is the case at the sub-national level.

Third, we will outline the different ballot systems employed within these states and demonstrate that there are often links between the ballot system and the seat distribution system. Finally, we will analyze the concept of 'proportionality' - specifically in terms of its effects upon small parties. A review of existing electoral indices of proportionality will be provided to show that since they use national election data to measure disproportionality, they may overlook or marginalise the significance of minority party representation and establishment in certain countries at the sub-national level.

Blais, following Rae (1967), identifies three key components in the classification of an electoral system - the ballot structure, the constituency structure, and the formula for seat allocation (Blais 1988: 99). In comparison, Katz (1980) identifies four significant elements of electoral laws; the electoral formula, the ballot formula, district size, and the existence of an intra-party electoral choice. We have chosen to vary our method of analysis slightly. We will initially consider general electoral rules such as district magnitude, the use of supplementary seats, thresholds and compulsory voting (see section 2.2). Second, we will consider electoral formulæ and ballot systems (sections 2.3 and 2.4) before finally considering the issue of disproportionality (section 2.5). The logic behind this ordering is that electoral rules and electoral formulæ are our basis for analyzing far right and regionalist party representation in Chapters Five and Six. A range of proportionality indices will be employed to illustrate the differing extents of proportionality and disproportionality both within and between local election levels. Three indices have been chosen, to avoid the possibility of systematic bias as any single index has potential flaws (see section 2.5).

It is generally accepted that there are three methods of election - plurality, majoritarianism and proportional representation (Rae 1967), although this does not imply that all elections strictly follow one process alone e.g. Italy since 1993 has adapted a

combination of plurality and PR for national elections. Extensive research into the political consequences of electoral systems led Lijphart to the following summary:

"The typical electoral system of majoritarian democracy is the single-member district plurality or majority system; consensus democracy typically uses proportional representation. The plurality and majority single-member district methods are a perfect reflection of majoritarian philosophy: the candidate supported by the largest number of voters wins, and all other voters remain unrepresented. Moreover, the party gaining a nation-wide majority or plurality of the votes will tend to be over represented in terms of parliamentary seats. In sharp contrast, the basic aim of proportional representation is to represent both majorities and minorities and, instead of over representing or under representing any parties, to translate votes into seats proportionally." (Lijphart 1984: 150)

Lijphart, therefore, reiterates the customary assumption regarding the relationship between electoral and party systems, and that the opportunities for minority parties at the national level are restricted to proportional representation (PR) systems. Since our aim is to compare the representation of certain minority party families at the sub-national level within various European countries, we will first provide a review of existing analyses regarding the impact of electoral systems upon effective representation. The British model of categorical voting (in single member constituencies) and plurality elections acts as an exception to the rule of proportional representation which dominates much of continental Europe. Yet it is unsatisfactory to assume (as may be derived from Lijphart's quote) that proportional representation implies conformity - rather it is a loose, generic term applied to various forms of balloting and seat distribution systems. So what exactly do we mean by proportional representation?

The aim of Proportional Representation (PR) is to use a list or alternative vote system to register voter choices, and to distribute seats in a way that 'proportionately' reflects the overall popularity of parties/candidates. Blais asserts:

"The main virtue of proportional representation is a broad and fair representation. Almost by definition, proportional representation is fair, since the PR formula is intended to give each party a share of the seats more or less equal to its share of the votes ... This raises four questions. First, how accurately does proportional representation reflect opinions? Second, does it really allow for a greater diversity of viewpoints to be expressed? Third, does it foster consensus politics? And finally, does fair and broad representation contribute to the political order?" (Blais 1991: 243)

As such, we cannot discuss proportional representation as a neutral requirement but must judge it in terms of its political consequences. Blais emphasises the crucial point that 'proportionality' can inherently contain various implications, e.g. to what extent may it be desirable to exclude particular, minority interests? A central criterion of proportionality, therefore, may be the extent to which small parties do, or should, receive seats. Ultimately, this has greater implications for proportionality as the number of small parties and their overall share of the vote increases (see Chapter One Sections 1.2 and 1.3 for a discussion of the decline of mainstream party electoral popularity).

A large amount of research has been produced since Rae (1967) on the mechanics of electoral systems, yet we are still faced with the problem of conflicting terminology. For example, Nohlen suggests:

"There is no clear and uniform understanding in the comparative literature on electoral systems of what is meant by the terms "majority rule," "plurality system," "PR," etc. In addition, there is the category of so-called mixed systems, used as a residual category, the meaning of which varies considerably from one author to another." (1984: 83)

In order to rectify Nohlen's observation, we need to establish which systems operate in which country. This is based upon the combined effects of various electoral rules, seat distribution formulæ and ballot systems. We will now consider the role of certain

electoral rules in contemporary European elections.

2.2 Electoral Rules and Their Effect Upon Party Representation

This section focuses upon electoral rules which may be particularly influential in affecting the representation of minority parties. District magnitude is a feature of all contested elections whilst compulsory voting, supplementary seats and *de jure* (constitutional) thresholds will only apply in certain cases. These rules are not a direct consequence of the electoral formula *per se*, but it may be the case that an identifiable relationship exists between the formula and the rules employed in each country - e.g. thresholds may form a part of a majoritarian system but not a simple plurality one. In this chapter we will outline the meaning of, and previously established generalisations about, these rules before analyzing their impact upon representation and proportionality in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

2.2.1 District Magnitude

The term district magnitude relates to the number of seats available in each electoral division² and may be one of two sorts - single-member or multi-member divisions. The relationship between district magnitude and ballot system is intrinsic. For example, the use of multiple votes in single-seat districts is of no value, although what may be significant is the distinction between categoric voting and the single transferable vote in such areas. The greater the number of seats per district, the greater the opportunity for proportional representation in multi-party elections (Taagepera & Shugart 1989: 19) -

2 The term division is used here to encompass a range of terms for electoral areas e.g. ward (England and Wales), division (Scotland), *gemeinde* and *land* (Germany), province (the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain) etc.

although again this is related to our understanding of the term "proportionality" and the number of parties campaigning, since the probability of every party attaining an exactly proportional share of votes and seats is slim. Rae (1967) and Taagepera and Shugart (1989) identified district magnitude as being the strongest determinant of proportionality, although research produced since the 1980s has focused upon the significance of the effect of the electoral formula or particular rules upon proportionality (Lijphart 1994a). Rose suggests that the wide disparity of district magnitude between countries using PR at the national level makes generalisations regarding proportionality at this level difficult (1984: 76). Such disparity, however, may not be as great at the sub-national level and thus highlights the potential value of our comparative analysis.

Taagepera claims, "As district magnitude is reduced, a PR system gradually starts penalizing the small parties, an effect reaching its strongest degree when M^3 becomes one" (1984: 91), and further evidence suggests that minority interests, for example female candidates, have greater possibilities of winning seats in multi-member districts (Blais 1991). This argument is also supported by Taagepera and Shugart (1989) who suggest that as district magnitude increases, the number of parties competing is likely to increase. A low district magnitude can have a 'psychological' effect upon voters which discourages them from voting for the smaller and more extreme parties - hence the contradictory situation occurs in which multi-member districts encourage more small parties to participate which ultimately enhances the likelihood of disproportionality occurring (Taagepera & Shugart 1989: 114-124). As such, we will test the relationship between the district magnitude and the electoral formula upon both far right and regionalist parties in several countries at the sub-national level in later chapters.

3 M = district magnitude

2.2.2 Supplementary Seats

In certain cases where proportional representation is employed, a number of seats are reserved in a 'pool', and are allocated in the final stages to the under represented parties - hence providing a greater degree of proportionality (Hermens 1984). This process has been employed in general elections held in Germany since 1945. For example, six supplementary seats (*Überhangmandate*) were applied to the outcome of the 1990 first all-German general election, and all six were awarded to the Christian Democratic Union. As a result, this party received a 45.7% share of the first ballot votes and was slightly over rewarded with 48.6% share of the total seats (Conradt 1993: 114). Supplementary seats, therefore, do not necessarily benefit the smaller parties, but attempt to reduce the greatest cases of disparity in the ratio between each party's share of votes and seats. Supplementary seats at the sub-national level are employed in the Saarland (see Chapter Four section 4.5.2) but cannot be studied in depth in this thesis due to a lack of data.

2.2.3 Thresholds

An argument frequently used against proportional representation is that it can over reward very small parties, and create a situation of coalition and blackmail potential (Lijphart & Grofman 1984). As a result some countries employ a minimum vote threshold for representation (a *de jure* threshold), which operates as a significant barrier to parties which appeal to a minority electorate, or whose vote may be diversely spread over electoral districts. Such thresholds are currently used in all French and German sub-national elections and Spanish municipal elections (see Appendix C). Taagepera and Shugart point out that a disadvantage of constitutional thresholds is the arbitrary nature of the cut-off point - for example, why is the threshold in Germany 5% and not a lower or higher figure? (Taagepera & Shugart 1989: 37)

For the purposes of this thesis, Germany will act as a case study for the impact of *de jure* thresholds upon the representation of far right parties, and Spain as a case study for the effect of *de jure* thresholds upon the representation of regionalist parties. A further aspect of thresholds, however, which can be applied to *all* elections is the concept of *de facto* thresholds - also referred to by Lijphart as a *threshold of exclusion* (Lijphart 1994a: 25). This is defined as the maximum percentage share of the vote that under particular conditions is insufficient for a party to win a seat. We will demonstrate in later chapters that the *de facto* threshold is not a standard figure but will range between systems and elections depending on a combination of factors.

Electoral features which may affect this threshold include district magnitude, the number of competing parties and the electoral formula. In many cases, the *de facto* threshold is often higher than a constitutional threshold (see Chapters Four, Five and Six). For example, the 5% threshold which applies in Germany does not guarantee representation for all parties polling a 5% share of the vote or more, and we will demonstrate that a small district magnitude can create *de facto* thresholds often in excess of 10% share of the vote. By considering, therefore, shares of the vote for the largest party not to win seats under various sub-national electoral systems, we may be able to identify which electoral formula or rules are most influential in determining which parties secure representation.

2.2.4 Compulsory Voting and Turnout

Although we do not always consider turnout as fitting into the classification 'electoral rules', it may in fact be directly related to the imposition of certain electoral formulæ and rules. It is a feature which we will pay some attention to in this thesis in order to question whether there is a relationship between levels of turnout and changes in the level of

support for particular minority parties. Research produced since the mid-1980s has moved away from the traditional cultural-historical approach to electoral participation and instead has focused upon institutional and electoral attributes. The predominant rule affecting turnout is compulsory voting (Blais & Carty 1990, Jackman & Miller 1995) - a feature which is used in Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece, and which applied in the Netherlands until 1970.

Other features may also be influential to turnout but to an extent which is much more difficult to quantify precisely. Research has previously identified a correlation between levels of turnout and unicameralism (Jackman & Miller 1995), the number of competing parties and the use of PR (Blais & Carty 1990). What is of particular interest to this piece of research is Jackman's claim (1987) that increased disproportionality discourages minor-party supporters from voting at all. As such, small parties have important lessons to learn from an understanding of which electoral systems, rules and features are most likely to affect the transformation of votes into seats.

As a balance to the above argument that disproportionality depresses minor-party support, it is also possible to argue the case that compulsory voting encourages small party support. If we refer back to Chapter One Section 1.5 we suggested that support for small, particularly extremist, parties may be explained in terms of being a protest vote against the mainstream and governing parties. Whilst the electorate may 'protest' in other countries by not voting, in compulsory voting systems they are more likely to protest by choosing small, fringe and anti-system parties. This section has focused upon specific electoral rules which may affect participation and vote-to-seat conversion. We will now consider the various advantages and disadvantages associated with the predominant electoral formulae.

2.3 The Classification of Electoral Formulæ

Nohlen suggests that we should not evaluate PR using the criterion of plurality, and likewise should not evaluate plurality using the criterion of PR (1984: 87), but what exactly are these criterion? As stated in Section 2.1, it is generally accepted that there are three basic methods of election, and we can classify them as follows:

2.3.1 - Plurality

Within western Europe the plurality system is predominantly associated with all elections held in Britain (though not in Northern Ireland)⁴. This system enables the candidate with the most votes (not necessarily an absolute majority) to be elected. It is also referred to as First Past The Post, and operates with two basic variations:-

- i) Each voter has a single vote in a division with one seat (the British model for national elections). Lijphart states that single seat, single member districts are the norm in national elections (1994a: 9).

- ii) In multi-seat districts, a semi-categoric system is operationalised. In two seat districts, for example, voters have two votes and the two candidates receiving the most votes receive seats. Alternatively, in list systems the candidate list may be 'blocked' so that the order of the candidates on each party list does not change and so the first name on the list is given priority. In other circumstances, an ordinal system operates where the voter is allowed to select particular names from their chosen list, or indeed add candidates not included in the list. In the example of list ballots, elections often occur over two

⁴ Beyond Western Europe the plurality system is used in Canada, India, New Zealand and the USA (Lijphart 1994: 18).

rounds, so that only candidates with absolute majorities win seats in the first round, whilst second round seats may be gained with a relative majority (see section on majoritarianism).

The advantages of a plurality system are seen to be that it produces strong government by encouraging a two-party (or two-and-a-half party) system and stable one-party government, thereby encouraging the development of 'people's parties' which appeal to a wide range of electors (Rae 1967, Lijphart and Grofman 1984, Blais 1991).

Furthermore, a plurality system offers a means of manufacturing a parliamentary majority. Blais suggests that its primary quality is one of "decisiveness" (Blais 1991: 242) - that is to say, the election result is clear as to who wins and who loses power. In a situation of coalition multi-party government, by comparison, the actual formulation of government and distribution of power may not directly reflect the real share of votes. Also, if we are to measure 'stability' in terms of frequent elections and frequent changes of government, it has been suggested that PR does not create more elections but the governments that are formed under such a system do exhibit a shorter life expectancy (Blais 1991).

There is an exception to the tendency that plurality systems create stable, long-term government, e.g. the British general election of February 1974 which led to the creation of a minority government and the calling of another election only eight months later. Irvine suggests that:

"Apart from being potentially unrepresentative, plurality electoral systems tend to be capricious. By *capriciousness*, I mean simply the unequal weighting of votes, and vote shifts, in different parts of the country... As a result, the economic and cultural incompatibilities of the separate regions, which we may call the *social* bases of regionalism, are exacerbated by the *political* bases of regionalism." (Irvine 1988: 17)

As such, the mechanical inequalities of a plurality system are further entrenched by strong social inequalities which vary from area to area, such as malapportionment⁵. Politically, we may question the extent to which a one-party majority stable government is appropriate/most desirable, or indeed does it imply that PR encourages weak and unstable government? We cannot answer this here, but we can assess the impact of electoral systems upon new and small party representation. Plurality systems generally favour the larger parties, though they are not necessarily a hindrance to smaller, geographically concentrated parties. Because of their disproportional tendency, they rarely operate thresholds (see exception under majoritarianism) though Lijphart (1994a) suggests that the effective threshold is approximately a 35% share of the vote.

2.3.2 - Majoritarianism

At the national level, the majority rule is employed in French elections only, with the exception of the 1986 election where PR was employed and subsequently abandoned. This differs from the above mentioned plurality system by requiring an absolute majority (*i.e.* 50% of the total valid vote plus one vote) rather than a relative majority. Since absolute majorities are a rare occurrence in multi-party elections, this system is usually used as only part of a two-round election (see above) or in single-seat constituencies using the Alternative Vote.

In relation to the use of a majoritarian electoral system, its advantages are said to be similar to that of the plurality system in that it produces a single-governing party, and hence a more effective government (Blais 1991, Lijphart 1994b). For example, research

⁵ Malapportionment refers to the situation created when voting populations are unequally sized across regions/districts or when there are unequal district magnitudes in multi-member elections which do not reflect variances in voter population size.

carried out by Blais and Carty suggests that the probability of a majority government increases by 59% in a plurality system and by 42% in a majority system compared to a PR system (Blais & Carty 1987: 214). Furthermore, Lijphart and Grofman suggest that:

"... from a practical point of view it may be a potent weapon against antisystem parties; whereas the disproportionality of the plurality rule mainly hurts the smaller parties that are not regionally concentrated, the [majoritarian] system's disproportionality discriminates against extremist parties even when they are relatively large." (Lijphart & Grofman 1984: 10)

In terms of its disadvantages, the majority system only works when the support of at least half the electorate is guaranteed to any one party (this may be aided by using the alternative vote). Otherwise, parties become involved in electoral pacts in which personality and ability to perform 'behind-the-scenes' deals can take precedence over real voter interests. The use of a two-ballot majority system, therefore, actually encourages alliances which do not include extremist or anti-system parties (Lijphart & Grofman 1984: 10, Fischella 1994: 185). Furthermore, the 'will of the majority' is not necessarily in the interests of the unrepresented minority. Again, Lijphart (1994a) suggests the effective threshold is approximately a 35% share of the vote, though of course a *de jure* threshold will already have been put into operation after the first round ballot.

2.3.3 - Proportional Representation

In terms of the advantages of the third method of election, Proportional Representation (PR) is frequently identified as producing broad and fair representation (see the lower measures of disproportionality in Table 2.2 in section 2.6). As such it engenders notions of 'legitimacy', and demands a consensus-building mechanism which fosters harmony and order that is necessary in a diverse and heterogeneous society (Blais 1991). Yet the concept of proportionality (see section 2.5) is itself contentious, and is ultimately affected

by district magnitude *i.e.* in single-seat districts, the result under a PR and plurality election would be the same. We will demonstrate later that variance in district magnitude is important in contributing towards proportional representation (Lijphart 1994a: 159).

In terms of 'fairness', PR is the system most suited to small parties. Yet this may again question the notion of proportionality, since it has been suggested that some national systems may 'over-represent' small parties - a charge directed against the Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany which has had a role as coalition partner to both major parties (the Christian Democratic Union/ Christian Social Union and the Social Democratic Party) in most of the post war period, since the potential power created via coalition may lead to greater access to power than its actual electoral popularity deserves (Lijphart & Grofman 1984: 5). Yet PR does enable more diverse representation in societies which are divided by regional cleavages (for example, Belgium, Spain and Italy), thus supporting Palombara's claim that:

"... elections by plurality would so distort the political complexion of the country as to leave the unrepresented minorities no alternative to seeking new and perhaps violent means of achieving expression." (La Palombara 1953: 245)

By analyzing the electoral fortunes of far right and regionalist parties in Europe we are considering the representation of a diversity of interests within society. As such we are able to test Powell's assertions that PR has two sets of consequences; it produces more parties, and produces some extremist parties - although the number of votes and seats won by a party may not be proportionate to their allocated power (Powell 1986). The disadvantage of PR is highlighted by Duverger's claim that PR tends to promote 'personality' over 'ability to govern', since, "by dispersing the voters among numerous independent parties, PR prevents the citizens from expressing a clear choice for a governmental team. It transfers this choice to the party leaders" (1984: 32). There

are four predominant types of PR seat distribution employed throughout Europe which are referred to as either highest average (divisor) methods or largest remainder (quota) methods. The d'Hondt and modified Sainte Lague systems belong to the highest average group whilst the Imperiali/Hare-Niemeyer and the Droop systems are referred to as largest remainder methods. Their method of calculation and general effects upon proportionality are outlined below.

2.3.3a The d'Hondt System -This system has been used in national elections in western Europe in France (in 1986 only), Germany (until 1983), and is employed in Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, Finland, the Netherlands⁶, and beyond Europe in Israel. Under this highest average method of seat distribution, the total vote for each party is divided by the number of seats won in order to give each party as proportionate a number of seats in relation to votes as possible. The d'Hondt formula attempts to minimize the over-representation of the most over-represented party (Gallagher 1991: 35), and is the least proportional variant of PR (Lijphart 1990: 484). The formula used for each party is:-

$$\frac{\text{party share of total votes}}{\text{seat (s) won} + 1}$$

(Source: Rae 1967: 31)

therefore, a new average for each party is determined before each seat is allocated and this works against the interests of the smaller parties (Gallagher 1991, Lijphart 1990). The main weakness is that the distribution of votes is highly unlikely to be

6 It was also used in Sweden, Denmark and Norway until the early 1950s when it was replaced by the modified Sainte Lague.

exactly proportional, and so the largest parties are likely to be over represented, whilst very small parties are treated severely and party fragmentation is discouraged (Gallagher 1991: 35). The minimum share of the vote required to secure a seat (the *de facto* threshold) will depend upon a combination of district magnitude, the total vote and the number of parties competing. Lijphart (1990) claims this formula is more than twice as disproportional as the largest remainder Hare and the Sainte Lague formulæ. Taagepera and Laakso (1980) classify d'Hondt systems as having an 'early rise profile' - that is to say, it is generous to parties polling 15% and more, but heavily penalizes those polling less than 5% and produces a 'break even effect' for those polling between 6 - 13%.

2.3.3b The modified Sainte Lague Formula - This formula has been used at the national level in Sweden since 1952 (with a 4% threshold since 1970), Norway since 1953 and Denmark since 1953. This is similar to the d'Hondt formula but uses differing averaging fractions. For example, the first denominator equals 1.4 rather than one, and the relative distance between denominators is larger (using odd integers e.g 3, 5, 7 etc.). This system favours middle-sized parties rather than the largest ones, but again disadvantages the smaller parties due to the increased threshold. Taagepera and Laakso (1980: 431) classify the modified Sainte Lague formula as having a 'flat profile' as it is the closest to ideal proportionality for any party size, with the 'break even point' of representation being 2- 4%.

2.3.3c The Hare-Niemeyer System - This formula has been used in national elections in Germany since 1987, and Greece (in conjunction with the d'Hondt system) since 1990. A quota is devised as such:-

$$\frac{\text{total number of votes}}{\text{total number of seats}}$$

(Source: Lijphart 1994a: 154)

For every whole quota reached a party gains a seat. Any remaining seats are given to the parties with the largest remainder - hence rewarding small parties which may have suffered under the d'Hondt procedure. A variation of the Hare-Niemeyer system is the Imperiali formula where the initial quota is devised as such:-

$$\frac{\text{total number of votes}}{\text{total number of seats} + 2}$$

(Source: Rae 1967: 34)

- again, this has the potential of rewarding small parties. The use of lower quotas means fewer seats need to be allocated via remainders. Taagepera and Laakso (1980) classify largest remainder formulæ as having an 'early rise profile' , thus engendering the same characteristics as the d'Hondt formulæ.

2.3.3d The Droop Quota System (Hagenbach-Bischoff) - The Droop Quota is determined as such:-

$$\frac{\text{Total number of valid votes} + 1}{\text{Total number of seats} + 1}$$

(Source: Sinnott 1995: 16)

This system is preferred for alternative-candidate ballots (also known as the STV system) as opposed to party lists. A cycle of seat allocation continues using lower preferences until all seats are filled. Results are identical to those under the d'Hondt formula (Lijphart 1994a:192).

In his study of electoral laws, Lijphart claims that the Hare system is the most proportional, the modified Sainte Lague and both Droop systems are less proportional, whilst the d'Hondt and Imperiali systems are the least proportional (Lijphart 1994a: 159). The outcome of selected formulæ in our study will depend upon the availability of data and will be considered at the sub-national level in the data analysis chapters.

We can see, therefore, that there are various general advantages and disadvantages associated with the different types of electoral systems currently operating in western Europe, and the choice of a particular system may be related to preferences of which parties should receive political power. Rose considers the issue from a different angle by suggesting that the effect of different systems upon the number of parties is one of degree rather than kind, since PR systems are just as likely to produce a majority party government as plurality systems are likely not to produce one (1984: 79). The central issues regarding the advantages and disadvantages surrounding electoral systems are namely (i) is a one-party style of government or coalition government preferred? and (ii) should small parties be rewarded with seats? This latter issue can be broken down into further questions (i) where should the 'cut-off' line for defining 'small parties' be drawn? and (ii) are all small parties to be treated equally - even if they promote an extremist or anti-system ideology? These two points are analyzed in Chapters Five and Six in relation to far right and regionalist parties. Next, we will consider ballot systems. Ballot systems do not hold the same importance for proportionality as district

magnitude and seat allocation formulæ, and as such they will not be a direct concern of our later analysis. They do, nevertheless, raise the issue of the representation of minority rights.

2.4 Ballot Systems

The actual mechanisms of voting - or voting procedures - are often related to the electoral system employed. For example list-ballots are most frequent in multi-seat districts, or multi-round elections. Balloting has two extreme forms; categoric ballots - where the voter is allowed to choose only one candidate/party (*i.e.* Britain and block-list systems) per seat available, and ordinal ballots - where the voter is required to list choices in order of preference with the number of choices reflecting the number of seats to be filled (as exemplified by the Single Transferable Vote). It is more common, however, for ballots to lie somewhere between these two types - for example, in party-list systems voters may vote for a limited number of candidates within a single party or 'list', whilst panachage allows for cross-party/list options (as experienced in France). It is more usual to connect categoric ballots with the plurality formula and ordinal ballots with PR, as we can see by referring to the ballot systems in contemporary western Europe outlined in Table 2.2 (section 2.6).

It can be seen, therefore, that the British electoral system at the national level offers the most straightforward ballot system - each voter may choose only one candidate in a single-seat constituency and the plurality rule to seat allocation is applied. PR systems, however, offer a variety of ballot alternatives which reflect different levels of preference and require various degrees of voter knowledge/ sophistication - the block-list system offering the least choice and systems which allow voters to 'add candidate names' being the most liberal.

2.4.1 Categorical/Plurality Voting - is also referred to as the first past the post system and often used in single-seat districts, though sometimes in multi-seat districts. Under this procedure, each voter may have a single vote, or a number of votes equal to the district magnitude, and the candidate(s) with the most number of votes are elected. Under the French two ballot system, voters choose only one candidate/party in each round, but of course may, and sometimes have to (due to withdrawal/elimination) change their preference between ballots.

2.4.2 - Single Transferable Voting (STV) - Used in multi-seat districts along with the Droop Quota method of seat allocation (see section 2.3.3.d). Votes are sorted into first preference and any candidate attaining the Droop Quota is elected with any surplus votes being redistributed proportionately among the second preference candidates. If no candidate is elected immediately the candidate with the fewest first preferences is eliminated and their second preference votes are redistributed as before. The process continues until all seats are filled. Katz (1984: 135-137) suggests that STV is difficult to classify along the lines of the usual two system model, since it is close to PR in terms of proportionality, but does not rely upon party appeal - rather on the popularity of individual candidates. As a result, STV tends to localise and personalise politics (see the analysis of Irish elections in Chapter Four), allowing minor parties and independents to stand where they only have a reasonable chance of winning. PR, on the other hand, tends to nationalise the electoral process, therefore making small parties present candidates in all constituencies, and we have already discussed the problems of presenting nation-wide lists for small and new parties in Chapter One Section 1.2.

2.4.3 *List Systems* - These allow for various degrees of freedom of choice for the voter. For example, blocked lists (or closed lists) merely present a ranked list of candidates under a party title. The voter may only choose between parties, and seats are then distributed to candidates according to the number of seats won and their rank on the list. In open list systems, voters may either vote only for a party, or express a preference for a particular candidate(s) - although this implies a greater degree of voter awareness and interest. Finally, the *panachage* system as employed in France allows voters to choose a party, but also to express a preference for candidates from other party lists (Marsh 1985: 366). How does the use of different ballot systems relate to proportionality?

Lijphart claims that there is no direct link between ballot structure and disproportionality (Lijphart, 1994a; 124), and therefore it is likely that the previous features analyzed in this chapter such as district magnitude, thresholds and electoral formulæ will more clearly demonstrate why disproportionality occurs. However, Lijphart also claims (1990: 492) that there is some relationship between the ballot system and the effective number of parties, as shown in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 - Average Effective Numbers of Elective Parties Classified by Ballot Structure, 1945 - 1985.

BALLOT STRUCTURE	EFFECTIVE PARTIES
Categorical	3.92
Ordinal	3.64

Source: Based on data in Lijphart 1990: 492.

Lijphart (1990) suggests that in single member district systems, ordinal ballots create a higher degree of multi-partism than categorical ballots - e.g. a four party

system compared to a two party system. Also, ordinal ballots create more 'sincere' voting and reduce the risk of 'wasted' votes. The link between the ballot structure and multi-member districts, however, is, according to Lijphart, much weaker. So far we have considered the various rules and formulæ which are most commonly used in Europe at both the national and sub-national electoral levels. We have also reviewed the existing literature regarding the advantages and disadvantages of these various systems which has developed from analysis at the national level - particularly in relation to the type of governing party system they produce and to what extent they encourage the participation of 'small parties'. Next we shall offer some methods for measuring how 'fair' any combination of ballot system, seat distribution method and particular electoral rules is.

2.5 Defining and Measuring Disproportionality

A primary driving force behind any comparative analysis of the effect of electoral systems and rules upon party representation is the need to ascertain how fairly votes are transformed into seats (Rose 1984: 74). Disproportionality occurs whenever a political party/candidate receives a share of seats that is not equal to its share of the votes (Lijphart 1994a, Monroe 1994). In the article "Proportionality, Disproportionality and Electoral Systems" (1991), Gallagher maintains that despite the voluminous analysis concerning the proportionality of different electoral systems, relatively little consideration has been given to the various implications derived from the term "proportionality" itself. It is inevitable in single-seat districts, and highly probable in multi-seat districts, that seat allocation will never reflect equally each party's share of the votes. We need to be aware, therefore, of how inequality is measured, and this can be done in two specific ways - the absolute difference between a party's seats and votes, or the ratio between a party's seats and votes (Gallagher 1991:

38).

Disproportionality is not affected by the method of seat distribution alone - one also needs to consider the vote distribution between parties, the availability of seats (district magnitude), the impact of electoral thresholds and the number of competing parties. In terms of district magnitude, a larger number of parties requires a larger number of seats per district if high proportionality is to occur. This has led Hermens to suggest that true proportionality can only be achieved by using supplementary seats (1984: 29) - see section 2.2.2 in this chapter. Yet the most pertinent issue regarding proportionality in this thesis is Gallagher's comment that:

"Ideally, a test for the proportionality of an electoral formula should concentrate on the average amount of disproportionality produced within each constituency rather than the outcome at the national level."
(Gallagher 1991: 44)

If we apply Gallagher's comments to the sub-national level of electoral representation, and by identifying particular regions, counties, provinces and communes in various countries we may begin to identify greater variations in proportionality and in party system formation than can otherwise be observed at the national level. This may be because (i) voting behaviour is different between general and sub-national elections, or (ii) the nature and importance of government formation at the national level renders relatively little interest in non-governing parties, which may not be the case at the sub-national level.

Yet the debate over proportionality may be taken one stage further. Cox and Shugart suggest that it is not the way in which disproportionality is measured that is significant, but rather the political character of disproportionality, that is to say, "the extent to which different methods of PR favour large parties over small. This, after all, has the more

direct impact on the party system" (Cox & Shugart 1991: 350). By concentrating our analysis at the sub-national level we can compare the effect of electoral features such as district magnitude, thresholds, low shares of the votes and increased party competition upon the proportionality opportunities for particular far right and regionalist parties. It is only when electoral systems produce different sets of party systems at the sub-national level (both from national party systems and between different electoral regions) that the question of which particular features enhance proportionality can be more substantially answered.

Gallagher (1991) identifies four possible influences upon disproportionality; the vote distribution, the district magnitude, malapportionment and the use of thresholds. He stresses the significance of district magnitude as a major determinant at the national level. This suggests that Gallagher realises the weakness incurred by generalising analysis at the nation-state level which overlooks/dismisses the possibility of strong regional deviations (see quote above). The chances of misleading generalisations occurring may be reduced by (a) concentrating on the sub-national electoral level and (b) focusing upon and comparing specific sub-national divisions. In their analysis of disproportionality, Taagepera and Laakso (1980) claim that district magnitude, the number of electoral rounds and 'adjustment rules' are more important than the seat distribution method (Taagepera & Laakso 1980: 423). In comparison, Lijphart (1993) suggests that a total of eight explanations may account for electoral disproportionality. These are: the electoral formula, district magnitude, electoral thresholds, assembly size, ballot structure, malapportionment, presidentialism and apparentement. Riedwyl & Steiner (1995) summarize Lijphart's findings as being that the combined influence of (in decreasing order) district magnitude and electoral thresholds, electoral formulas, and the assembly size are the most significant influences upon electoral proportionality. District magnitude, the implications of electoral thresholds and the seat distribution method are

three electoral features which we are able to test in relation to the representation of far right and regionalist parties in Chapters Five and Six respectively, and we will test whether it is still the case at the sub-national level that electoral formulæ and district magnitude are the strongest influences upon minority party representation.

In relation to the measurement of disproportionality, several indices have been developed in order to measure differences between electoral systems. Research, unsurprisingly, has so far focused upon national elections, although it is still important for us to assess the existing literature, as this contributes towards the debate of what 'proportionality' actually means and how it should be measured. Gallagher suggests that different PR systems embody different concepts of what proportionality actually means so that: "a key point that is often overlooked is that measures of disproportionality and allocation formulæ are inextricably bound up with each other" (Gallagher 1991: 38). Hence, it would be unwise to rely upon any single measure of disproportionality as this will inevitably favour particular seat allocation formula(e). We will now outline some established indices of proportionality before choosing three in particular to use for our purposes. Indices measuring absolute disproportionality include the Loosemore-Hanby Index, The Rae Index and the Least Squares Index, whilst the Sainte Lague Index measures the ratio of disproportionality. The most frequently used indices are outlined below.

2.5.1 Loosemore-Hanby Index D: In this model, disproportionality (D) is equal to the total percentage by which over-represented parties are over-represented (which is also the same as the total percentage by which under-represented parties are under-represented). It is calculated by adding the absolute differences between the vote (V_i) and seat shares (S_i) for all parties and then dividing by two, which can be expressed in the following way:

$$D = 1/2 \sum [V_i - S_i]$$

(Source: Lijphart 1994a: 60)

This model tends to understate the proportionality of PR because it is too sensitive to the number of parties participating in each election e.g. the greater the number of small parties receiving no seats, the higher the disproportionality measure (Lijphart 1985: 10) though of course this is affected by grouping together small, non-seat winners as 'others'. As a result of their initial analysis in 1971, Loosemore and Hanby concluded that (a) plurality systems produce the highest levels of disproportionality and (b) differences between PR systems are most likely to derive from differences in district magnitude and the variance in the number of competing parties, both of which will be considered in relation to the proportionality of far right and regionalist party representation in later chapters. This index also minimizes the disproportionality of the largest remainder method of seat distribution (Gallagher 1991: 39). Since this index was derived from the principles of the largest remainders electoral formula, it is prone to the same weaknesses and biases as these formulæ (see section 2.3.3).

2.5.2 The Rae Index: This is similar to the Loosemore-Hanby Index, but involves adding the differences between the share of the votes (V_i) and the share of the seats (S_i) for each party which wins at least 0.5% of the total share of the vote and dividing this total by the total number of parties ($1/n$). As such, this index measures disproportionality per party rather than per election. This can be expressed as the equation:

$$I = 1/n \sum [V_i - S_i]$$

(Source: Lijphart 1994a: 58)

Gallagher suggests that the Rae Index will be less useful when a proliferation of small parties occurs, as the index will overstate the proportionality of multi-party systems (Gallagher 1991: 40). Since it may be the case that small parties are more likely to exist where there are PR systems (see Chapter One section 1.4), this formula ultimately overestimates the level of proportionality produced under PR. A further problem with this index is that measurement is hindered when several small parties shares of the votes and seats are categorised under the title 'other parties' (Lijphart 1985: 10) as this effectively produces 'one party' for analysis when in fact there may be many, very small parties which is not unusual in extremely proportional systems.

2.5.3 The Least Squares Index: Developed by Gallagher, this is similar to the Rae Index in that the vote-seat difference for each party is squared ($V_i - S_i$)², all the values are added together, the sum (Σ) divided by two and finally the square-root is taken ($\sqrt{\quad}$). This formula expresses disproportionality on a scale from 0-100, and can be expressed in the following way:

$$LSq = \sqrt{[1/2 \Sigma(V_i - S_i)^2]}$$

(Source: Lijphart 1994a: p.61)

This index measures the disproportionality per election as the Loosemore-Hanby Index does, but tends to register a few large discrepancies in vote-seat shares rather than numerous very small ones. Hence, overall proportionality is not unduly influenced by extreme but peripheral results. Gallagher refers to the Least Squares Index as a 'happy medium' between the Loosemore-Hanby and Rae Indices (Gallagher 1991: 41).

2.5.4 The Sainte Lague Index: This index seeks to measure proportionality in terms of the difference between the seats and votes ratio for each party. It is calculated in the following way for each party; the percentage votes value is subtracted from the percentage seats value ($S_i - V_i$). This value is then squared $[(S_i - V_i)^2]$ and divided by the votes percentage value for that party $[(S_i - V_i)^2 / V_i]$. The sum of these values for each party is the Sainte Lague measure of disproportionality. This formula can be expressed in the following way:

$$SL = \sum [(S_i - V_i)^2 / V_i]$$

(Source: Gallagher 1991: 39)

This measurement will result in the value zero when proportionality is perfect, although the lack of an upper limit for disproportionality (infinity) does not particularly enhance comparison with other disproportionality measures. For example, is a Sainte Lague measure of 8 compared to a Sainte Lague measure of 10 a large or small difference? We can talk about 'more' or 'less' proportionality, but not in terms of degree, because there is no upper limit. It is not biased, however, towards any particular seat distribution formula which is a weakness of the Loosemore-Hanby scale.

2.5.5 Rose's Index of Proportionality: This index attempts to measure the degree of proportionality for each election by using the following formula :- the sum of the difference between each party's percentage share of votes and its percentage share of seats ($\sum_i [V_i - S_i]$) is divided by two ($1/2$) and subtracted from 100 (1984: 74). This formula can be expressed in the following way:

$$R = 100 - 1/2 \sum_j [V_i - S_i]$$

(Source: Fry & McLean 1991: 52)

The closer the measure is to 100, the greater the proportionality. However this index has also been criticised as being too insensitive to the number of parties (Bartolini & Mair 1990: 162).

Gallagher suggests that the outcomes of the Least Squares and Loosemore Hanby Indices strongly correlate (1991: 48). Of course, the results one would expect to find under any of these indices would be very different in many countries if elections at the sub-national level were analyzed (especially in those countries with strong regional parties and established societal cleavages). Indeed, as Irvine claims; "Under conditions of strong regional divergence in voting, an Index of Proportionality calculated from national figures will understate the true disproportionality of results across the various regions" (Irvine 1988: 19).

Such divergence may become more apparent with an analysis of electoral systems and proportionality at the sub-national level. Of interest to us are the implications that disproportionality has for the electoral fortunes of particular small party families, and which electoral features have the strongest impact upon the proportionality of representation.

2.6 Conclusions

Table 2.2 outlines those sub-national election systems operating within the European Union which employ various electoral formulæ and ballot systems and gives Gallagher's

(1991) average measures of disproportionality for these countries at the national level in a ten year period:

Table 2.2 - A Comparison of Electoral Formulæ and Ballot Systems in European Sub-National Elections, Compared with Three Measures of Disproportionality Derived From National Election Results Held Between 1979-1989.

Plurality Systems

COUNTRY	ELECTORAL LEVEL	BALLOT SYSTEM
England	County Council	Categoric
	District Council	Categoric*
	London Boroughs	Categoric
	Metropolitan Districts	Categoric
Wales	County Council	Categoric
	District Council	Categoric*
Scotland	Regional Council	Categoric
	District Council	Categoric

Measures of Disproportionality for UK general elections, 1979-1989:

Loosemore Hanby Index	20.0
Least Squares Index	16.6
Saint Lague Index	23.5

* Districts with multi member wards adopt a variation on categoric ballots where the number of votes per voter is equal to the number of seats available. This is not an ordinal system as preferences are not ranked at all.

Majoritarian Systems

COUNTRY	ELECTORAL LEVEL	BALLOT SYSTEM
France	Communes	2-ballot list
	Departments	2-ballot list
Italy	Communes (electorate of 15,000 +)	2-ballot list

Measures of Disproportionality for French General Elections, 1981-1988:

Loosemore Hanby Index	19.6
Least Squares Index	14.3
Saint Lague Index	20.1

continued..

Proportional Representation Systems

COUNTRY	ELECTORAL LEVEL	SEAT ALLOCATION	BALLOT SYSTEM
Belgium	Communes	Imperiali	Preferential Lists
Denmark	Communes Counties	d'Hondt n/a	Preferential Lists Lists
Germany	Gemeinde Kreise Land	d'Hondt d'Hondt varies	Party Lists Party Lists Party Lists
Greece	Communes	varies	Lists
Ireland	Towns Counties	Droop Quota Droop Quota	STV STV
Italy	Communes Provinces Regions	varies varies varies	Lists Lists Lists
Luxembourg	Communes	d'Hondt	Lists
Netherlands	Communes Provinces	d'Hondt d'Hondt	Lists Lists
Portugal	Municipios	d'Hondt	Blocked Lists
Spain	Municipios Provinces	d'Hondt d'Hondt	Blocked Lists Blocked Lists

Measures of Disproportionality for PR-type General Elections, 1979-1989:

Country	<i>Loosemore Hanby</i>	<i>Least Squares</i>	<i>Saint Laque</i>
Belgium	8.2	3.9	6.9
Denmark	3.4	1.8	3.5
Germany	1.4	1.0	1.3
Greece*	5.8	4.2	3.2
Ireland	4.7	3.3	2.9
Italy	4.8	2.7	3.0
Luxembourg	2.7	4.4	5.8
Netherlands	2.7	1.4	2.1
Portugal	6.6	4.3	5.6
Spain	15.4	9.7	14.7

* only applies to 2 elections held in 1989.

Source of disproportionality measures: Gallagher 1991.

If we compare the disproportionality measures for elections at the national level for the European Union member states, we can see that disproportionality is slightly lower in the majoritarian system (France) compared to the plurality system, but is considerably lower

in virtually all proportional representation systems. Whilst electoral systems are by and large the same at the sub-national level in those countries using proportional representation (although district magnitude does change), the electoral system in Britain is different (because there are examples of multi seat wards) and in Italy, because of recent electoral reforms. Gallagher's disproportionality measures at the national level are useful, because we can compare them in later chapters with disproportionality measures at the sub-national level.

Within this chapter we have attempted to provide a comprehensive literature review of the existing research which focuses upon the operation and political consequences of electoral systems in western Europe. There are three basic components to electoral systems; a method of ballot, a method of seat allocation, and other rules which vary significantly between countries. We have not only focused upon specific rules which may affect representation (such as district magnitude, thresholds and supplementary seats), but also upon the different electoral formulæ (including the variations in PR) and the ballot formulæ. Despite the variance in research conclusions, existing analysis has overwhelmingly focused upon electoral systems at the national level - and hence findings tend to be generalised and focus on the effects upon the main parties only. Whilst the same seat distribution formulae are frequently employed at the sub-national level our analysis may produce different results because we are focusing upon much smaller electoral divisions - often dealing with smaller 'quotas' and 'remainders'. The effects of seat availability may be revealing at the sub-national level because of the more numerous ranges of district magnitude, e.g. between one and three seats in Britain, often below fifteen seats in communes and often between sixty and one hundred plus in the regions and Lænder.

In relation to which electoral features are most likely to affect proportionality, Rae (1967), Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Gallagher (1991) stress the significance of

district magnitude, whilst Lijphart (1990) and Blais and Carty (1987) concluded that seat allocation formulae and magnitude have the strongest effect upon electoral disproportionality. Can we isolate a particular factor at the sub-national level? Research by Blais and Carty (1989) suggests extremist parties' shares of the seats are lowest in majority systems - followed by plurality and PR. Furthermore, Lijphart (1994b) reaffirmed the conventional belief that minority representation is more likely in PR systems than under plurality. We can show that all electoral rules contrive to impose *de facto* thresholds to potential representation. Terminology such as 'stability' (in relation to plurality) and 'fairness' (in relation to PR) has been used to justify electoral systems at the national level. But sub-national elections do not decide the government of the day and other outcomes may be more appealing to voters. This may explain why so many countries operate different, or variations on, the electoral system used to appoint national governments.

We have outlined the various indices used to measure disproportionality, ensuring that we are aware of the biases and limitations of each. In particular we have stressed the complexity involved in understanding proportionality and its political implications. What is the purpose of using one type of seat distribution method over another (e.g. divisors versus largest remainder), and why use thresholds? There is obviously some political motivation to 'include' some and 'exclude' others, as the electoral system has an important bearing upon the nature of the party system. There are two basic types of disproportionality - one of absolute difference between seats and votes and one of ratio between seats and votes. In Chapters Four, Five and Six we will use three indices to measure disproportionality. The Loosemore Hanby Index is particularly sensitive when we have a number of unrepresented small parties - which is most likely to occur in small communes - the lowest electoral level. The Least Squares Index enables us to identify the larger vote-seat discrepancies rather than numerous very small ones. Finally, the Sainte

Lague Index measures the ratio of disproportionality and is not biased towards particular seat distribution formulæ, unlike the Loosemore Hanby scale.

Our ultimate objective in this thesis is to demonstrate the effect of electoral systems and rules upon two particular party families - these being parties of the far right and regionalists. Generally speaking, significant comparative electoral analysis of these two families has been overlooked since they tend to be 'too small' at the national electoral level. We have assembled sufficient evidence from sub-national elections in a range of European states to embark on such a comparative analysis. Our analysis of these parties at the sub-national level seems more justified if we take into consideration the literature on second-order elections. Whilst a lack of finances and candidates may hinder small parties participating in national elections the same may not be the case at the sub-national level. Similarly, a different pattern of voting behaviour where the electorate 'punish' or reject the mainstream parties gives the far right and regionalists the opportunity to poll more than a mere handful of votes - thereby providing substance for a comparative analysis. Whatever the political opportunities, all small parties have important lessons to learn from understanding which electoral rules and features most affect proportionality. In our next chapter we will provide a review of the literature examining party systems in western Europe and attempt a working definition of what is understood by the terms far right and regionalist parties in this context.

CHAPTER THREE - PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS IN WESTERN EUROPE; TRADITIONS,
TRANSFORMATIONS AND SMALL PARTIES

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two we reviewed the various electoral systems and rules which are prevalent among European Union member states and the implications that these have for the proportionality of representation in national elections. Just as electoral systems have become a central focus for political analysis, the formulation and stabilisation of party systems in Western Europe has received a similar level of individual and comparative interest. The aim of this chapter is to review existing literature on party system formation and stability and to provide a definition of those parties within the European Union which will act as the analytical basis for Chapters Five and Six of this thesis. The electoral successes of far right and regionalist party families have created problems for the definition of party systems since the 1980s, and an analysis of these two groups is interesting as: (i) electorates appear to be changing away from mainstream parties towards the far right and regionalists in all elections, and (ii) these are the type of 'minority party' we discussed in Chapter One section 1.4 which may first appear in sub-national elections. In support of this, Lipset and Rokkan stated in 1967 that:

"The early electoral systems all set a high threshold for rising parties. It was everywhere very difficult for working-class movements to gain representation on their own, but there were significant variations in the openness of the systems to pressures from the new strata. The second ballot systems ... set the highest possible barrier, absolute majority, but at the same time made possible a variety of local alliances among the opponents of the Socialists: the system kept the new entrants underrepresented, yet did not force the old parties to merge or to ally themselves nationally." (1990: 115-6)

Can we say that electoral thresholds have provided the same hindrance for regionalist and

far right parties in the latter part of the twentieth century? Before considering this point in later chapters, we need to pay greater attention to the growth of new and small parties, and to define what exactly we mean by a small or minority party.

As with the analysis of electoral systems, research into party systems has tended to be focused at the national level. With the use of our unique data base, we are able to map out the comparative emergence and development of far right and regionalist parties onto the electoral scene at the sub-national level in various European states. The ultimate level of success for parties in this thesis should be the ability to become a part of the party system at the sub-national level, as it is the ability to affect policy at the sub-national level that enables new and small parties to move upwards onto the national electoral scene. Before we move on to electoral and representative success in later chapters, this chapter will provide an overview of some of the understandings and orthodoxy concerning the establishment of party systems in Western Europe.

3.2 Defining Political Parties

We can broadly define a political party as a feature with two specific characteristics. It is some form of 'organisation' (of people and/or interests) which is involved in the process of contesting elections (Sartori 1976, Gross & Sigelman 1984: 464, Daalder 1992: 270). To talk of a 'party system' involves more than just a loose collection of political parties which may vary from election to election. As Pomper suggests: "Particular kinds of parties also fit with particular kinds of government and different concepts of democracy" (Pomper 1992: 156). The term 'system' itself is central, since it implies some level of acceptance, co-operation and consistency. It also implies that those parties which are members of the system will have some impact upon the policy process from time to time. The basic model of electoral system and party system relations - as emphasised by

Lijphart (1984) and others - is well documented. Single-member district, plurality elections are seen as encouraging a two-party system which is associated with stable democracy, whilst proportional representation in multi-district elections engenders a multi-party system - at times associated with unstable democracy.

As was noted in Chapter One the appeal of catch-all, non-ideological parties (Kirchheimer 1990: 50-60) has gradually declined since the 1980s, and is more evident in some countries than others. Emerging literature suggests that west Europe is experiencing a party system crisis in the late twentieth century (see Chapter One section 1.3). The reasons for this change are explained by Betz in the following way:

"In the decades following the second world war, the liberal democracies of western Europe enjoyed a remarkable degree of social and political stability. Sustained economic growth, growing individual affluence, and the expansion and perfection of the welfare state each contributed to a social and political climate conducive to political stability while eroding support for extremist solutions on both the left and right. However, stability and consensus were only short-lived. The resurgence of ideological and political turbulence in the late 1960s, rising social conflicts in the early 1970s, and the spread of mass protest by new social movements in the 1980s were symptoms of a profound transformation of West European politics. Its contours are becoming visible in the early 1990s." (Betz 1993: 413)

Ignazi (1992) suggests that the implications of this for contemporary party system change are observable on two levels. First, there is increased 'intraparty volatility', and second, there is a decline in party identification influenced by changes in society and polity (Ignazi 1992: 3). By referring to party system change in France, Appleton and Ward suggest that systemic factors may act as a catalyst. Within the term 'systemic factors', we can identify features such as changes in electoral rules, the decentralisation of state power and the financing of political parties (Appleton & Ward 1993: 74-5). What is important to this thesis in general, therefore, is (i) how certain 'minority' parties have become established on the sub-national electoral scene, and (ii) to what extent they are 'proportionally

represented' in relation to their share of the votes at the sub-national level - this second point will be presented as a detailed case-study in Chapters Five and Six. Yet before doing this we need to establish the difference between which parties compete and which have power - that is, the effective number of parties.

3.2.1 The 'Effective' Number of Parties

If we are to assume that the total number of parties participating in any election is not necessarily the same as those that are counted as participating in a party system, then we must adopt Lijphart's assumption that:

"The most important problem in determining the number of parties in a party system is whether to count small parties and, if not, how large a party has to be in order to be included in the count." (Lijphart 1984: 116)

Thus effective parties are those that can govern, and elective parties are those that win representation. In relation to the effective number of parties at the *national level* Laakso and Taagepera claim that:

"The typical West European elections around 1949 involved effectively 4.2 parties ... The early 1970s saw a sudden steep rise to 4.5 effective parties... Since 1970 the trend has been upwards or stable in almost all countries considered. What may look like a purely national phenomenon in the study of each country separately becomes part of a wider trend when one uses the notion of effective number of parties for a systematic cross-national study." (Laakso & Taagepera 1979: 15-19)

If increased opportunities for new and small parties are recognised at the national electoral level, then surely the opportunities should be even rosier at the sub-national level.

Furthermore, we must bear in mind that although new parties emerge on the electoral

scene in various countries at different times, it is not usual to see the reverse - old established parties disappearing. There are examples of very small parties declining - for example, the Communist Party of Great Britain is now on the very fringes of electoral politics both nationally and locally. Unprecedented changes, however, occurred in the Italian party system in the early 1990s. Although the Christian Democrat Party (DC) fell from governing party to obscurity virtually overnight it has, on a much smaller scale, reemerged as the Popular Party. At the same time the Communist Party (PCI) did not exactly 'disappear' but quickly re-organised as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). It may be, therefore, that party systems are actually increasing in size as cultural and political diversity becomes a feature of the modern European state, and this should be initially identifiable within sub-national elections.

3.3 Changing Party Systems in West Europe

We have already outlined to some extent in Chapter One section 1.3 the issue of electoral volatility in contemporary western Europe. To what extent has this affected the traditional party systems and has it led to the formation of numerous new and minority parties? Mair (1993) suggests that three aspects are often cited as being responsible for party system change - these are; aggregate electoral volatility (the reluctance of voters to vote 'traditionally'), the mobilisation of new parties (in terms of both issues and style) and the decline of the traditional party in organisational and representational terms. Yet Mair feels that despite these so-called explanations, "the impression of persistence often remains much more striking than does that of discontinuity" (Mair 1993: 122-3).

In relation to the development of west European party systems, the Lipset-Rokkan theory, first published in 1967, attempted to provide a broad comparative framework of contemporary party system development. Briefly, this approach suggests that party

formation is a function of cleavages which derive from three historical junctures: (i) the reformation/counter-reformation experience of 1450-1650, (ii) the common experience of national revolution between 1780 and 1939, and (iii) the effects created by the industrial revolution, experienced at various times by different countries since the 1770s (Lipset & Rokkan 1967: 1-64). As a result, the three most important cleavages are; (i) centre-periphery cleavages - arising out of national revolution, (ii) state-church cleavages - resulting from the reformation and counter-reformation, and (iii) rural-urban cleavages - deriving from both industrial revolutions and centre-periphery cleavages, with particular cleavages being more prevalent in some countries than others.

Lipset-Rokkan identified a breakpoint in the 1920s, by which time party systems had become 'frozen' throughout most of western Europe, and in fact remained so until the 1980s. The main problem with the Lipset-Rokkan theory, however, derives from the very nature of the fact that it is a broad typology. By identifying three very general types of social cleavage, Lipset and Rokkan described a process which is by no means uniform - varying between countries, and even regions, over a long period of time. The attempts to define a broad framework mean that not all countries fit easily into this schema, the Republic of Ireland being such an example¹. What is important to this thesis is the centre - periphery cleavage of the Lipset-Rokkan theory which is regaining salience. Sub-state nationalist and regionalist parties are, therefore, not a new phenomena, though several have affirmed their role in the sub-national party system by consistently winning significant shares of available votes and seats throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Yet by concentrating on the Lipset-Rokkan thesis alone there exists an explanatory vacuum in

¹ A fourth cleavage, emerging after the Lipset-Rokkan thesis, has been the transition towards post-industrial society, which has been most overtly characterised by green/ecology parties.

terms of the rising trend of pan-European right-wing extremism which, like the Greens, may draw its existence from the cleavages developing in post-industrial societies (Muller-Rommel 1990). Before developing our analysis of sub-national electoral systems and proportionality, we need to consider some important new parties which have emerged in the last two decades and which have become recognised as a feature of the electoral scene.

Wolinetz claims that European party systems have displayed various signs of fragmentation from the 1970s but that the immediate causes of fragmentation vary from system to system. In Belgium, for example, fragmentation derives from the increased tensions from the 1960s surrounding the language issue. In the Netherlands, fragmentation was a reaction against perceived consociationalism and lack of serious opposition, and in Britain fragmentation derived from the problems of economic decline which has been matched with a growth in Scottish nationalism. As a result, claims Wolinetz:

"The parties which have profited from the unfreezing of party alignments are as diverse as the sources of fragmentation. The beneficiaries include Poujadist-style protest parties ... parties expressing communal claims ... and parties of the left" (Wolinetz 1990: 230-1)

Of particular relevance to this thesis is Wolinetz's claim that it is electoral laws which can be identified as being responsible for preserving the established parties' status quo and limiting the opportunities for party system change. An important factor for him is the occurrence of *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds (see Chapter Two section 2.2.3) which cushion the decline of established parties by providing a hurdle for new and small parties to overcome (Wolinetz 1988: 310-312). This will be tested in later chapters.

Furthermore, it is possible that different two-party and multi-party systems occur within each country at the sub-national level. If this is correct, then the notion of Britain as a two-party system characterised by the Labour and Conservative Parties, for example, may be accurate at the aggregated national level only. An analysis of local elections (and individual constituency results) may provide evidence of numerous two-party systems, which include most prominently the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. In cases of proportional representation, we may have situations where high levels of decentralisation and multiculturalism also encourage more than a single party system at the sub-national level. Examples of this occurring in Belgium and Germany, for example, will be analyzed in Chapter Four.

3.4 Defining 'New' and 'Minority' Parties

The social and political upheavals which have characterised political change in many European countries since the 1970s have been matched with the growth of various new parties. Wolinetz identifies small religious parties, right-wing protest parties, linguistic and green parties as just some examples (Wolinetz 1988: 3). Before outlining the electoral success of particular small parties, it is first necessary to define which west European political parties fit into our two examples for analysis, these being (i) parties of the far right and (ii) regionalist party families. In this chapter we will seek to provide a general picture of the history of their electoral participation. Is it simply the case that proportional representation systems foster more effective representation and therefore continued electoral presence, whilst a plurality system effectively discourages parties of these two families from participating in elections at the sub-national level? We must presume that the participation of far right and regionalist parties in elections in Britain and the range in their electoral representation success requires a more complex

explanation.

Our aim in this thesis is not to develop a critique of which ideological strands and policy proposals are essential if a party is to be classified as a member of the far right or regionalist family - this has been attempted in literature elsewhere (Urwin 1983, Ignazi 1992, Betz 1993 & 1994, Blondel 1994, Muller-Rommel 1994). We will, however, use some of these parties as case studies from which to analyze electoral success.

3.4.1 Parties of the Far Right

Problems often occur when using the label 'extremist' to identify parties, as parties at extreme ends of the political axis are not deemed acceptable by governing and coalition parties of the day, which conform to a mainstream pattern of policies appealing to the mass of the electorate. There is the added distinction of identifying a 'party', as opposed to a social movement. As argued earlier (section 3.2) we will assume that a party includes any organised group which enters into elections at either the national or local level of government. Some anti-system parties are excluded from electoral participation. An overt example of this is the effect of Article 21 of the German Basic Law which: "declared ineligible for election parties seeking to impair or destroy the democratic basic order or endanger the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany" (Rose 1983: 28). This law was used to outlaw the neo-Nazi Socialist Reich Party in 1953 and the Communist Party in 1956.

The terms 'far right' and 'extremism' can themselves be highly emotive, historically tied to the twentieth century experiences of National Socialism and Fascism, and this makes the categorisation of this family of parties particularly difficult. Smith classifies extremist parties as 'marginal parties' because their estrangement from central and moderate parties

limits their coalition potential (1991: 36). Voerman and Lucardie (1992) have attempted to redefine the concept of extremism in light of recent European trends, by focusing upon the concept of political system legitimacy crisis. They argue:

"Even if extremists accept the formal constitution, they reject the dominant political culture and party system. They condemn all established political parties, government as well as opposition, either because political parties as such are seen as decisive and therefore evil, or because these particular parties do not represent ordinary people. Right-wing and Left-wing extremists today agree on this point, if on nothing else." (Voerman & Lucardie 1992: 35)

Under this definition, therefore, they appear to be a party which potentially could benefit from declining party identification and widespread electoral disillusionment. Betz defines 'radical right-wing populist parties' as those 'rejecting individual and social equality, opposing the social integration of marginalized groups, and appealing to xenophobia' (Betz 1993: 413) In comparison, Ignazi claims that the generic group 'extreme right' consists of two particular strands. The 'old extreme right' is ideologically linked with fascism², whilst the 'new extreme right' does not have recognisable ties with fascism but is extremist in its anti-system attitude³ - fitting Betz's definition.

Despite identifiable yet limited success at the national level, an analysis of far right parties at the sub-national level may prove that their prevalence as minority parties is far more sustained. In relation to the existence of popular support for far right parties in contemporary Europe, Ignazi and Ysmal suggest that:

2 Which, in Ignazi's view, includes the NF, BNP, CP86, DVU-List D, and NPD.

3 Defined by Ignazi (1992) as the REP, VB, PFN and CD.

"The electoral success of extreme right parties seems on the face of it to be inversely related to their relationship with fascism. Where they are ideologically linked to the fascist experience they fail to grow; where they do not claim any heritage from fascism their growth displays a positive trend." (Ignazi & Ysmal 1992: 1)

Such an explanation of far right electoral success may demand numerous qualifications.

The term 'fascism' is positively value-laden. Is, for example, a party's 'ideological link to fascism' a label recognised by the party leadership and membership, or is it one designated by others outside the party? The usage of the term 'fascism', like 'terrorism', can often be identified as a propaganda tool rather than a useful party label (Griffin 1991, Hainsworth 1992). Second, what is meant by the term 'electoral success'? Does this refer to the number of votes polled or the effective exchange of votes into seats? Of course, support via the ballot box is an essential beginning to any party's electoral growth. The essential question we seek to answer is not particularly which far right parties can attract voters, but to what extent these parties are effectively and proportionately represented.

Ignazi claims that established attempts to explain party system change do not sufficiently account for the emergence of far right parties in Europe since the 1980s, particularly since there is no archetypal 'class' of far right electorate (Ignazi 1992: 5). Thus, an analysis of how electoral support for the far right is transformed into representation becomes even more important. Whilst it is difficult to ascertain what sort of voter chooses the far right and why, we can more effectively compare where far right parties poll their greatest shares of the votes at the sub-national level and to what extent they secure representation in sub-national government. For the purposes of this research, we will focus upon the electoral fortunes of far right parties in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Great Britain, which are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Examples of West European Far Right Parties, Indicating Country of Origin and Year Formed.

COUNTRY	PARTY NAME	YEAR FORMED
Germany	National Democratic Party	1964
	Republikaner Party	1983
	German People's Union List-D	1987
The Netherlands	Boerenpartij	1960
	Netherlands Volksunie	1971
	Centrumpartij	1980
	Centre Democrats	1984
Belgium	Volksunie	1954
	Parti de Forces Nouvelles	1975
	Vlaams Blok	1978
	Front National	1984
Britain	National Front	1967
	British National Party	1980

3.4.1a Germany: Under Ignazi's definition of extreme right-wing parties in Europe (1992) there are three far right parties in Germany. At present, the most prominent is the Republikaner Party (REP) which has experienced various periods of peaks and troughs in support in its relatively short existence, and support tends to be focused in certain geographic areas:

"Under the leadership of Schonhuber, a relatively broad organisational structure was set up so that, in 1989, the party had a presence in each of the German Lænder. However, it still had organisational problems at the local level as well as problems in finding adequate members for leading positions at all regional levels." (Westle & Niedermayer 1992: 89)

Republikaner Party participation (see section 3.4.2a) reinforces our earlier claim that small parties may be most electorally successful at the sub-national level, since organisational and financial constraints which may hinder nation-wide contestation may be less of a challenge.

3.4.1b The Netherlands: parties of the far right have frequently contested elections, and in recent years have tended to poll significant results in the larger cities. Voerman and Lucardie claim that there is no solid social base or ideological right-wing tradition (Voerman & Lucardie 1992: 36), which may suggest that the far right in the Netherlands is predominantly an example of protest voting, and therefore we might expect to see greater far right support in sub-national elections where there is 'less at stake'. We can relate this to the argument subscribed to by Van der Eijk et al (see Chapter One section 1.5) that an influential factor in 'anti-system' support is the timing of an election. If far right support in the Netherlands is a 'protest vote' it is more likely to occur in second order elections preceding a national election than in those held simultaneously with or shortly after a general election. Husbands identifies four waves of heightened Dutch right-wing extremist support in the post-war period; 1963-67, March 1974, 1982-84 and the current wave which began in March 1990 and is continuing to grow (1992b: 105).

3.4.1c Belgium: Fitzmaurice claims that the General Election of November 1991 marked the ringing of alarm bells in relation to the rise of the far right in Belgian electoral politics (Fitzmaurice 1992: 300). As was mentioned in the discussion of Belgian political parties in Chapter One, we must be aware that we are dealing with three separate party systems. Table 3.1 identifies four far right parties existing in Belgium under Ignazi's definition (Ignazi 1992: 8) - these being Vlaams Blok (VB), Volksunie (VU), Parti de Forces Nouvelles (PFN) and Front National (FN).

3.4.1d Britain: We can identify two far right parties participating in British elections. The National Front (NF) was officially formed in 1967 as a merger of various far right

social movements⁴, whilst the British National Party (BNP) was not formed until 1980. Earlier surveys identify far right support as being concentrated in such areas as the East End of London and parts of the West Midlands, particularly in places where the economy is struggling and traditional heavy industry is in decline, and membership of these parties is predominantly male, young and working class (Hainsworth 1988, Harrop *et al* 1980, Shipley 1978). Electoral success (see section 3.4.2d) has been isolated and sporadic.

We will now provide a general picture of far right electoral support in our four-country case-studies before analyzing the proportionality of representation in greater detail in Chapter Five.

3.4.2 Far Right Electoral History in Four Case Studies

3.4.2a Germany: In Table 3.2 we outline changing patterns of far right support across Germany for a range of elections (from the European level to the local level) over a 30 year time span.

Table 3.2 - Patterns of Far Right Electoral Support in Germany 1965-1994 (expressed as a %age of all valid votes)

ELECTION LEVEL	YEAR				
	1965	1969	1987	1990	1994
<i>Bundestag</i>					
NPD	2.0	4.3	0.6	-	-
REP	-	-	-	2.4	1.9
DVU	-	-	0.6	-	-
<i>European Parliament</i>		1989			
NPD		1.6			
REP		7.1			
DVU		1.6			

continued...

4 These movements were the Greater Britain Movement (led by John Tyndall), the British National Party (not to be confused with the present BNP) and the League of Empire Loyalists.

<i>Land</i>	1986	1987	1988	1990	1991	1992
REP	3.0	1.2	1.0	4.9	-	10.9
DVU	-	-	-	-	6.2	6.3
<i>Local</i>	1989	1992	1993			
REP	7.5	8.0	8.0			

Note: % shares of the vote are expressed as shares for the country as a whole for Bundestag and European elections and as shares for the Land as a whole for Land and local elections.

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

As we can see from Table 3.2, the National Socialist Party (NPD) is the oldest surviving far right party in Germany, providing us with a longer range of data from which to compare peaks and troughs in support. In L ander elections held between 1966 and 1968 the NPD secured representation in the states of Baden-Wurrttemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, Hesse, Lower-Saxony, Rhineland - Palatinate and Schleswig-Holstein though was not so successful in the Saarland, Hamburg and North Rhine Westphalia, therefore suggesting a pattern of regionalisation. By the time of the 1989 European Elections, the NPD overall share of the vote stood at only 1.6%, though this was overshadowed by the success of the Republikaner. The NPD also enjoyed a limited amount of success in Frankfurt in the Hessen local elections held in March 1989.

The German People's Union (DVU-List D) had existed as a socio-political movement since the early 1970s. Concentrated in the state of Bremen, the DVU-List D secured one seat in the Landtag in 1987 as the party polled a share of the vote just above 5% in the city of Bremerhaven⁵. In the following Bremen Land election held in September 1991 the DVU built upon its support, polling a 6.2% share of the vote overall and over 10% share of the vote in the city of Bremerhaven alone, entitling the DVU to six seats in the Land parliament. Electoral success continued with the 1992 Schleswig-Holstein Land elections

⁵ The state of Bremen is effectively two city states, Bremen and Bremerhaven, which act as separate electoral constituencies.

where the DVU polled 6.3% and won six seats, making it the third largest party in this election.

The Republikaner Party's (REP) first noticeable electoral success came in the 1986 Bavarian Land election where the party secured an overall share of the vote of 3% (see Table 3.2). This election result entitled the party to 1.32 million Deutchmarks of state funding, effectively used by the party in the campaign for the 1989 West Berlin City election in which it polled a 7.5% share of the vote and secured 11 seats. The 7.1% share of the vote polled by the REP in the European Elections in 1989 was enough to secure the party six seats, and entitled the party to almost 6 million in state election subsidies (Roberts 1992: 331). The issue of reunification was the focus for the first all-German federal election in December 1990, which witnessed a slowing down in the growth of the far right, partly due to the proliferation of internal divisions within the party. The REP provided candidates in eight of the nine former West German Land elections held in 1990 but failed to reach the 5% threshold in every case - its best result being 4.9% polled in the Bavarian Land election. This has led Westle and Niedermayer to claim:

"... available data on REP support indicate that the party is more a reservoir of protest articulated by different social groups than it is an organisation with a clear socio-structural base. Since the end of 1989, the results of all German opinion polls unanimously indicate that the established parties in Germany have succeeded in the reintegration of the majority of these protest voters, thereby reducing the REP to a relatively marginal political force within the German party system." (Westle & Niedermayer 1992: 98)

The REP has experienced similar peaks and troughs in support in the 1990s. The 1992 Baden-Wurrtemberg Land elections saw the party poll a 10.9% share of the vote, making the REP the third largest party in this state. Die Republikaner polled over 8% share of the vote in the Berlin local elections of that year and over 8% share of the vote in the Hessen local elections held in March 1993, yet polled below 5% in all land elections held between

September 1993 and September 1994. The October 1994 General Election left the Republikaner unrepresented in the Bundestag with only 1.9% share of the vote. The tendency for the REP to perform badly in elections held immediately prior to a national election whilst its best results occur in mid-term years when many governing parties are judged as unpopular reinforces the claims of Westle and Niedermayer as outlined above, and van der Eijk *et al* in Chapter One section 1.5 that electoral timing is significant when assessing far right success in Germany.

3.4.2b The Netherlands: Support for the main far right parties in the Netherlands in the post-war period has the following pattern:

Table 3.3 - Patterns of Far Right Electoral Support in the Netherlands 1966-1991 (expressed as a %age of the total valid vote)

ELECTION LEVEL	YEAR				
<i>General Election</i>	1977	1981	1982	1986	1989
BP	0.8	-	0.3	-	-
NVU	0.4	0.1	-	-	-
CP/CP86	-	0.1	0.8	0.4	-
CD	-	-	-	0.1	0.9
<i>European Parliament</i>		1984	1989		
CP/CP86		2.5	-		
CD		-	0.8		
<i>Provincial</i>	1966	1987	1991		
BP	6.7	-	-		
CP/CP86	-	1.2*	0.3		
CD	-	0.3	1.0		
<i>Municipal</i>	1966	1982	1990		
BP	5.7	-	-		
CP/CP86	-	0.2	-		
CD	-	-	0.5		

* in the province of Flevoland only.

Note: %ages equal the share of the vote for the country overall in general and European elections, provincial elections and municipal elections.

Source: Husbands 1992b: 104-106.

From Table 3.3 we can see that the Boerenpartij (BP) peaked in electoral support in the 1966 provincial elections with a 6.7% share of the vote. The BP actually survived in the national Parliament until 1981 (when no candidates stood). The Nederlands Volksunie (NVU) began contesting elections in the 1974 municipal elections in The Hague (polling 1.8%), and in the 1977 General Election the party polled 0.4% share of the vote nationally. Although the party faced a judicial ban for a while in 1978, by the time of the 1981 General Election the NVU was able to present lists in nine of the 18 districts, but secured only an overall share of the vote of 0.1%.

The contemporary far right in the Netherlands appears to be increasing as a challenge to the established parties in more recent elections. Although the Centrumpartij (CP) polled only a total 0.1% share of the vote in 1981, the party was slightly more successful in 1982, polling 0.8% share of the vote (see Table 3.3) and securing one seat in the Dutch parliament. Shortly after the 1986 General Election, the party reformed as the CP86, though electoral participation was weak in the 1987 provincial elections. In the 1986 elections the Centrumdemocraten Party (CD) was the weaker far right party, polling less than the CP in the General Election (0.1%) and winning no seats. In the 1989 European Elections the CD polled 0.8% share of the vote, and slightly improved this to a 0.9% share of the vote in the General Election of September that year (see Table 3.3) - enough to secure one seat. In the municipal elections held in 1994, the party provided lists in 43 municipalities and secured a total of 77 seats.

3.4.2c Belgium: Changes in far right electoral support in Belgium produce the following pattern:

Table 3.4 - Patterns of Far Right Electoral Support in Belgium 1949-1991 (expressed as a %age of the total valid vote)

ELECTION LEVEL	YEAR						
<i>General</i>	1949	1961	1971	1981	1985	1987	1991
VU	2.1	3.5	11.1	9.8	7.9	8.0	5.9
VB	-	-	-	-	-	1.9	6.6
FN	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.9	1.7*
PFN	-	-	-	-	0.7	0.5	-
<i>European Parliament</i>			1989				
VU			5.4				
VB			4.1				
<i>Regional</i>			1989				
VU			2.1				
VB			2.1				
FN			3.3				
PFN			1.0				
<i>Provincial</i>			1988				
VU			8.2				

* = of French lists only.

Note: %ages equal the share of the vote for the country overall in general elections, european elections, regional elections, and provincial elections.

Source: De Winter 1994; University of Plymouth Local Election Database.

The Vlaams Blok (VB) was unable to poll more than 2% share of the vote in General Elections held between 1978 and 1987, though the party did win one seat in the 1978, 1981 and 1985 General Elections, and increased this to two seats in 1987. Yet from the period 1987 onwards the party became an increasingly significant electoral force in and around the city of Antwerp - for example, the VB secured four seats on the Antwerp provincial council in 1987. The 4.1% share of the vote polled in the 1989 European Elections nationally (see Table 3.4) can effectively be broken down into a 6.6% share of the vote in Flanders and a 20.8% share of the vote in Antwerp. Of the 2.1% share of the vote polled in the 1989 Brussels Regional Election, this actually equals 13.4% share of the vote of the Flemish lists. The 6.6% polled in the 1991 General Election translates into

10.3% for the Flanders region. The party's strongest area of support was again in Antwerp where the party became the largest party with 25.1% share of the vote. The VB also polled well in Ghent (10%), Louvain (5.6%) and Bruges (5%). By comparison, the party polled only 3.9% share of the vote in Brussels. In local elections held in October 1994, the VB polled 28% share of the vote in Antwerpen, securing the party 18 of the 55 available seats and making it the largest party in this area.

The Volksunie (VU) is another example of a Flemish far right party, and support in elections held in the post-war period is outlined in Table 3.4. Ackeart claims that the VU performs better at the national level of election than at the local level (Ackeart 1989), which is certainly true when comparing the 1989 Brussels regional election with the 1991 general election, but not so when comparing the 1988 provincial election results with those from the 1991 general election. In terms of the far right in the Wallonian sector, the electoral data presented in Table 3.4 indicates that popular support for the Parti de Forces Nouvelles (PFN) and the Front National (FN) parties in the Wallonian sector of Belgium is much smaller than popular support for the Flemish far right.

3.4.2d Great Britain: How has electoral support for parties of the far right in Britain compared with our previous examples?

Table 3.5 - Patterns of National Front Electoral Support in Great Britain 1974-1983 (expressed as a % age of total valid vote)

YEAR OF ELECTION					
1974G(F)	1974G(O)	1976L	1977GLC	1979G	1983G
3.3	3.1	8.9	5.1	1.4	1.1

Note: all percentages are average scores for seats contested and not for overall elections. The very small number of far right candidates would render the latter too small for any substantive analysis.

G = General Election L = Local Elections GLC = Greater London Council Elections

Sources: Eatwell 1992; Harrop, England & Husbands 1980.

Support for far right parties in Great Britain has been particularly localised and sporadic (see Table 3.5). For example, the NF gained its best ever parliamentary result in the 1973 West Bromwich by-election with a 16% share of the vote, and this encouraged the party to field 54 candidates in the General Election of February 1974, at which the party could only muster an average share of the vote of 3.3%. This result were significant enough for Gable to make the claim that:

By the first of the two 1974 general elections ... their [NF] percentage of votes in both national and local elections was steadily increasing well beyond the odd-ball and fringe vote of the earlier post-war, far-right groups. (1991: 246)

The ability to mobilise the electorate in local elections (see Chapter Five for more detailed analysis) has never really occurred in General Elections since the late 1970s. Despite the NF fielding 303 candidates in the 1979 General Election, it could only muster an average share of the vote of 1.4% and this in fact marked the decline of the National Front in British electoral politics. The election of a Conservative Government under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher quickly put a halt to predicted growth in far right electoral support. Conservative policies such as a restriction on immigration and a renewed authoritarian

attitude towards law and order effectively removed what had been the basis of the extreme right's appeal and, therefore, "any sort of political appeal via the ballot box" (Gable 1991: 249). Internally the far right has suffered a severe identity crisis due to fractionalization and splintering of interests. By the time of the 1987 General Election the far right could only muster one NF and two BNP candidates - of which the highest share of the vote was a mere 0.6%.

Claims made by Whiteley (1979) that the National Front was Britain's fourth largest party in terms of electoral support have been dismissed by Eatwell who argues that, "During the 1970s the National Front held hopes of becoming England's third electoral force, but by the 1980s it had collapsed into minuscule rival factions" (1992: 175). Yet shortly after Eatwell posed the question "Why Has the Extreme Right Failed in Britain?", a BNP candidate was elected as councillor in a Tower Hamlets by-election despite the apparent hindrance of the plurality electoral system, thus reviving a wave of speculation about the regeneration of extreme right politics in 1990s Britain and begging the question 'has the far right failed in Britain?' Within Chapter Five we will consider in closer detail those electoral features in both PR and plurality electoral systems which may encourage electoral support for parties of the far right and, vice versa, which features actually hinder representation for such parties.

Our next two sections will provide an identical method of analysis to regionalist parties in contemporary Europe. We will attempt to clarify a definition of the term 'regionalist party' as well as provide a general overview of the electoral performance of several regionalist parties which will form the basis of analysis in Chapter Six.

3.4.3 Regionalist Parties

As with parties of the far right, we may also face problems in attempting to classify regionalist parties. Urwin defined regional parties as follows:

"What separates these parties out from the mass of European parties is the nature of their claim upon the state. They identify with, and make claims upon the central government on behalf of, territories and groups that are not coincident with state boundaries and national populations. In fact, territorial identity is the only thing that all have in common." (Urwin 1983: 232)

We can see, therefore, that regionalist parties do not necessarily fit the left-right orthodoxy of party classification. Smith (1991) categorises regionalist parties as 'detached parties' due to their limited competition potential by appealing to specific social and cultural cleavages - this is particularly the case for linguistically driven parties, such as those in Flanders and Wallonia, Val d'Aosta, Catalonia and the Basque Country. Terminology such as ethno-regionalist, autonomist and sub-state nationalist is often used (Rokkan & Urwin 1983, Blondel 1994, Muller-Rommel 1994) although this can create problems when developing an ideological classification for such parties. Within the realms of this thesis, however, we are not primarily concerned with the specific policy programmes of regionalist parties, but the electoral and representative success of parties which are located within quite distinct geographic areas below the national or state level, since for regionalist parties in particular we might expect electoral success to be related to the level of electoral competition. In Chapter Six, we will provide a detailed analysis of regionalist party representation in Belgium, Italy, Spain and Great Britain as the data available enables a detailed analysis. Before doing this will provide a general outline of regionalist party electoral success in those states.

Table 3.6 - Examples of West European Regionalist Parties, Indicating Country of Origin and Year Formed

COUNTRY	PARTY NAME	YEAR FORMED
Belgium	Rassablement Walloon	1965
	Front des Francophones	1965
Italy	Lombardy League	1984
	Lega Nord	1989
	Union Valdotaie	1945
Spain	Convergencia I Unio	1979
	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	1931
	Herri Batasuna	1975
	Basque Nationalist Party	1895
	Galician Nationalist Bloc	mid 1970s
Britain	Scottish National Party	1934
	Plaid Cymru	1925

3.4.3a Belgium: Numerous regionalist parties have flourished in Belgium at different points in the post-war period. In Brussels, the regional interest was first engendered in the Rassablement Walloon (RW) which has since been replaced electorally by the Front des Francophones (FDF). The FDF initially polled well in the Brussels region, although since the 1970s it has more or less acted as a single party with the RW, to the extent that only one party fields candidates in each electoral unit to prevent 'vote-splitting'.

3.4.3b Italy: The proliferation of regionalist parties in Italy in the 1980s and 1990s may not come as a surprise if we accept Woods claim that:

"Changes in Italian society ... have undermined the effectiveness of the post-war centre-periphery linkages. The economic modernisation of northern and central Italy in the post-war period has resulted in the development of a more complex and differentiated society." (Woods 1992: 58)

In terms of the electoral system, Pridham identifies two significant factors which have contributed to regional party success in Italy. First, the existence of certain cleavages (especially ethnic and ethno-linguistic) has prevented the party system from crystallising into two cohesive blocks which may disadvantage small parties. Second, the PR electoral system enables small parties to benefit from the *Imperiali* (highest remainder) system of seat distribution (1991: 80). We have stated in Chapter Two and will demonstrate in later chapters, however, that the *Imperiali* system favours larger parties (Lijphart 1994a: 24) and as such we must presume that Pridham is comparing the effect of *Imperiali* to non-PR systems rather than other methods of seat distribution within the generic PR group. Strong periphery interests and ethnic cleavages have resulted in a particular form of voting behaviour known as *voto di appartenenza*, being established in Italian electoral politics (Pridham 1991: 77).

Yet not all regional parties in Italy are ethno-linguistically driven. The Lega Nord (a coalition of several smaller regional leagues) appears to be closer in ideology, if indeed it has one, to the Wallonian and Scottish regionalists (*i.e.* it is economically driven), than some of its Italian counterparts. It is the most vociferously right-wing of the Italian regionalist parties in terms of its anti-immigration and anti-Southern stance, and its frequent attacks on the political dominance of Rome due to the proliferation of *partitocrazia*. The Lega Nord's predominant campaigning point is for the division of Italy into three self-governing regional federations (the South, the Centre and the North). Cassese and Torchia account for League Party electoral success in the following way:

"The growing weakness of the Communist Party is probably a prominent factor of the *leghe* success, because the right-wing electorate was no longer afraid of weakening the Christian Democrats in casting their vote for the *leghe* ... The *leghe* are probably more a renewed signal of the north-south cleavage than a signal of emerging regional identities." (1993: 99)

As such, we can see that regionalist party electoral success in Italy has arisen through a combination of factors. First, socio-cultural diversity has persisted and indeed has been accentuated by post-war modernisation. Second, the 'timing' of electoral success has had as much to do with the collapse of the mainstream parties than with the appeal of regional party policies themselves. Other regionalist parties in Italy include the Lombardy League, the Union Valdotaïne, the Sardinian Action Party and the South Tyrol People's Party. The latter three are all successful, but only in local and regional elections, as they have difficulty in getting the issue of autonomy onto the national political scene (see section 3.4.4b).

3.4.3c Spain: In relation to parties and party systems within Spain, Colome asks:

"The party system in Spain and Catalonia poses a series of questions in relation with its shape. Is the Spanish system a unitary one with different subsystems corresponding to nationalities and regions or, on the contrary, is there a plurality of differentiated party systems with their own characteristics?" (Fossas & Colome 1993: 39)

Within Spain, Catalan, Basque and Galician nationalism have a much longer history than other examples of regionalism cited in this chapter, as their origins can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Both Catalonia and the Basque country were the only two industrialized regions of Spain until the 1950s. Catalan nationalism is based upon the fact that despite this successful early industrialisation and modernisation, Madrid has continued to dominate as the political centre of Spain. As Pi-Sunyer suggests, "The Catalan case illustrates that capitalism is capable of developing in different ways, even directions; and it should not really surprise us to find a bourgeoisie, such as the Catalan, that is not linked to the construction and consolidation of the state" (Tiryakian & Rogowski 1985: 266). A similar pattern of industrialisation and modernisation has taken place in the

Basque region. In both regions, this economic prosperity has been matched with an independent linguistic and cultural identity, separate from the otherwise 'Castilian' Spain. The *Convergència i Unió* and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* parties have used their relative economic success as a basis for promoting recognition of their particular ethno-linguistic identities. They were preceded, however, by earlier regionalist parties which had enjoyed some measure of electoral success. For example, the *Lliga Regionalista* won 12 seats in Catalonia in 1901, whilst the *Solidaridad Catalana* won 41 Catalan seats in 1907.

The *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) has a republican and left-wing political background. The party was electorally strong in the immediate democratisation period (claiming 14 of the 135 seats in the 1980 Catalan autonomous elections), though has since seen its popular support decline and it is now much smaller than the rival regional party in Catalonia. In comparison, the *Catalonian Convergència i Unió* (CiU) is a nationalist conservative party which has been one of the two largest parties in the Catalan region since 1984 (along with the Socialist PSC).

The Basque country also has two regional parties - the largest being *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), with the *Herri Batasuna* (HB) - a left-wing radical party, founded later but being much smaller. Regionalism in Galicia has a much lower profile than in Catalonia and the Basque region. The regionalist interest in Galicia is represented by the BNG (*Galician National Bloc*), formed in the period following Franco's death. The BNG is the third largest party in the region - polling 18.7% and taking 17.3% of the seats in the 1993 regional elections. In comparison, Galicia is characterized as economically isolated and under-developed, largely relying upon its agricultural resources. Linguistic identity was revived in the late 19th century and 'galicianism' was supported from the 1960s by the church and universities.

3.4.3d Britain: Analysis of regional party success in Britain provides a useful comparison with regional parties in other European states due to the different electoral system. The simple plurality electoral system ensures that small parties are hampered when support is diluted nation-wide. Yet regionalist parties which concentrate their appeal to a limited area may overcome the obstacles created by this system. Whilst the potential for the parliamentary representation of regionalist parties has so far been limited, the possibilities for effective control in local government may appear more optimistic. As Eagles & Erfle suggest:

"One of the most widely remarked upon of all trends in British elections since 1955 is a growing regional divide, such that increasingly the national two party system is being replaced by emergent two party systems in the north and the south of the country."
(Eagles & Erfle 1993: 105)

In fact, at the sub-national level we can identify different party systems for England, Scotland and Wales. In relation to regional parties in Scotland, the mere handful of Scottish National Party (SNP) members in Parliament compares unfavourably with the party's success in Scottish sub-national elections - only three MPs were elected in 1992 out of 72 candidates. The SNP's overall share of the vote in 1992 was 1.9%, but this can be more realistically understood in terms of a 21.5% share of the Scottish vote. The party's electoral impact began to be felt in 1967 when it won a parliamentary by-election, and it has been suggested that electoral support for the SNP is based on various factors, including disillusionment with central government and the belief in the need for 'economic self-dependency' following the discovery of North Sea oil in the 1970s (Brand, Mitchell & SurrIDGE 1994, Newell 1994).

The growth of regionalist parties in Wales, involves a national identity that has both economic and ethnic elements. The success of the coal industry has played a vital role in the development of the Welsh economy and beliefs in economic self sufficiency.

Furthermore, the persistence of the Welsh language has provided a 'label' of sub-national identification and has been marked by a resurgence in use and in teaching. The Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru (PC), was able to contest 50% of the Welsh parliamentary seats by 1959, though electoral success did not occur until the 1960s (in the Carmarthen by-election held in 1966). In the 1992 General Election, Plaid Cymru polled an overall 0.5% share of the vote which can be effectively expressed as 8.8% of the total Welsh vote. The party secured four seats out of the 38 contested.

3.4.4 Regionalist Party Electoral History in Four Case Studies

This section will focus upon general patterns of regional party electoral support across national and second order elections to provide a general picture of the peaks and troughs in popular support.

3.4.4a Belgium - We can analyze regional party electoral success at a number of electoral levels. In general, we can summarize that the Rassement Walloon (RW) at the commune level had in fact declined from being a 'moderate' size party to being all but nonexistent by 1988. A similar decline of electoral support for the FDF at the commune level is evident. Since 1981, support has been as follows:

Table 3.7 - Patterns of Regionalist Party Electoral Support in Belgium, 1981-1991 (expressed as a %age of total valid vote)

ELECTION LEVEL	YEAR			
<i>General</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1991</i>
RW	5.5	0.6	0.8	1.2
FDF-PPW	-	-	1.2	1.5
<i>Local</i>	<i>1982</i>		<i>1988</i>	
RW	5.8		1.5	

Note: local election %age shares of the vote are for the Wallonian region only.

Sources: European Journal of Political Research - Political Data Yearbook 1992 Vol.22 No.4, Ackaert 1993: 18.

We can see from Table 3.7 that the FDF-PPW have maintained a stable though small share of the votes between 1987 and 1991. What is of more interest is a comparison of RW shares of the vote between local and national elections. The RW in Wallonia appears to poll a larger share of the vote when participating in local elections as opposed to general elections. This may suggest that within the region of Wallonia there exists a section of the electorate that is more likely to vote RW in sub-national elections and that, for whatever reason, is deterred from voting in this way in Belgian general elections. This may be explained by (i) the Reif and Schmitt, Franklin *et al* theories of second order voting, or (ii) our hypothesis suggested in Chapter Two section 2.2.4 that compulsory voting encourages 'protest voting'.

The second order voting hypothesis would expect the RW to perform better in sub-national elections because there is 'less-at-stake'. Voters may choose the RW because it represents sub-national interests better, or because they are protesting against mainstream national parties in between general elections - either or both may apply in the Belgian case. Our hypothesis concerns the impact of compulsory voting upon electoral outcomes. Rather than abstaining, voters in compulsory voting countries who become disillusioned with

mainstream parties may instead choose to protest by voting for small parties. We cannot prove whether one or the other hypothesis is correct, both may be to some extent, but we can see that support in local elections has been higher than in general elections throughout the 1980s.

Although the FDF contested all 19 Brussels communes in 1976 and 1982, contestation rates had declined by 1988. The RW has never been as electorally strong as the FDF in the Brussels region, and had in fact virtually disappeared as an electoral participant by the late 1980s, as Table 3.7 shows. The RW's first identifiable weakness has been its limited ability to provide lists in each of the 262 communes in the Walloon region. For example, the RW contested 49 communes in 1976, but only 9 communes in 1988. What it is important to ask however, is how well the RW performs in the communes where it has been able to provide lists. In Chapter Six we will question whether there is evidence to suggest that the RW strategically organises itself to provide lists in only those communes where it expects to secure a significant vote.

3.4.4b Italy:- Table 3.8 outlines the outcome of recent Italian elections in relation to regional party support:

Table 3.8 - Patterns of Regionalist Party Electoral Support in Italy, 1979-1994 (expressed as a %age of the vote)

ELECTION LEVEL	YEAR		
	1987	1992	1994
Chamber of Deputies			
LN	-	8.7	8.5
LL	3.2	-	-
SVP	-	-	0.6
Senate			
LL	2.5	-	
Psd'Az	-	0.3	

continued...

European Parliament									
LL				1989					
				8.1*					
Regional	1979	1983	1984	1985	1987	1988	1989	1990	1993
LL	-	-	-	0.5*	2.7*	-	-	18.9*	-
LN	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	-	8.7	-
UV**	-	27.1	-	24.7	-	34.2	-	(0.2)	37.3
Psd'Az***	3.3	13.7	-	-	-	12.3	-	(0.1)	-

Note: All %ages are shares of the vote for the country as a whole except for:

* = Lombardy League share in the region of Lombardy only

** = Share of the vote in the Val d'Aosta region only (except 1990)

*** = Share of the vote in the Sardinia region only (Except 1990)

Sources: Bull & Newell 1995: 87. Leonardi & Anderlini 1992: 181.

The Lombardy League made its electoral debut in the 1985 regional elections - polling 0.5% in Lombardy. In 1987 it polled 3.2% in the Chamber of Deputies and 2.5% in the Senate. A comparison of party performance between the Italian Chamber of Deputies elections held in 1992 and 1994 shows that the regionalist Lega Nord received a similar level of support in both elections, though it benefited from the revised electoral system by receiving 55 seats in 1992 compared to 11 seats in 1994 (with extra seats as part of the Freedom Alliance). Also in the 1994 Chamber of Deputies elections, the SVP polled 0.6% nationally and claimed 3 seats (the party's usual level of rep in these elections), whilst the PSd'Az polled 0.3% in the Senate.

Is there evidence to suggest that regionalist parties perform better electorally at the sub-national level? The Lombard League has displayed a range of popular electoral support between the various regions. In regional council elections held in 1990, the Lombard League polled 0.8% share of the vote in Tuscany, 2.9% share of the vote in Emilia-Romagna, 5.1% share of the vote in Piemonte, 6.1% share of the vote in Liguria and 18.9% share of the vote in Lombardy. Table 3.8 includes the regional election results from 1990 for those 15 Italian regions that do not enjoy special autonomous status. The 'new' Lega Nord (formed as an amalgamation of the Lombardy League and other small

groups) became the fourth largest party in the 1990 elections with a 4.8% share of the vote. We can also see from the results of general elections held since in Table 3.8, that this was in fact the beginning of the League's electoral success - hence suggesting that regional party electoral success is by no means limited to the sub-national level. The Lega Nord has only been electorally active in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region since the 1993 regional elections. Despite this the party has taken a significantly high share of the vote for a new party - ranging from 17.6% in Trieste to 33.4% in Tolmezzo. It was, in fact, the largest party in all of the five Friuli provinces following the 1993 elections.

The other regional parties in Italy have demonstrated a range of electoral success. For example, the UV has been the largest party in the Val D'Aosta region since 1983 and has actually strengthened its average share of the vote from 27.1% in the 1983 regional elections to 37.3% in the 1993 regional elections. In the 1990 regional elections the UV polled 1.9% in Veneto and 0.8% in Tuscany (0.2% nationally). The PSd'Az has shown a general increase in its share of the vote in the Sardinian region since 1974. Although the PSd'Az still remains a relatively 'small' party, this party is significant enough to stake a claim in the distribution of seats. Psd'Az success has ranged from 3.3% and one seat in 1979, to 13.7% and 11 seats in 1983 and 12.3% and 10 seats in 1989. In the 1990 regional elections, the PSd'Az polled 0.9% in Veneto and 0.1% nationally.

3.4.4c Spain:- In Spain, the electoral success of various regional parties in elections held from 1979 to 1993 is outlined in Table 3.9:

Table 3.9 - Patterns of Regionalist Party Electoral Support in Spain, 1979-1993 (expressed as a % age of the total valid vote)

ELECTION LEVEL		YEAR								
<i>General</i>		1979	1982	1986	1989	1993				
CiU		2.7	3.7	5.1	5.1	4.9				
<i>Regional</i>		1980	1981	1984	1985	1986	1988	1990	1993	1994
CiU		27.7	-	46.6	-	-	45.5	-	-	-
ERC		8.9	-	4.4	-	-	4.1	-	-	-
HB		16.0	-	14.6	-	17.5	-	18.3	-	16.3
PNV		37.0	-	41.8	-	23.6	-	28.5	-	29.8
BNG		-	6.2	-	4.2	-	-	-	18.7	-
<i>Local</i>		1987		1991						
CiU		35.2		34.0						
ERC		2.3		2.5						

Note: %age shares of the vote are national shares for general elections. In the regional elections the %age share of the vote is for the region of Catalonia only for the CiU and ERC, for the Basque region only for the HB and PNV, and for the Galician region only for the BNG. %age shares of the vote for local elections refer to results in Barcelona only.

Sources: Atlas Electoral de la Ciutat de Barcelona: 1977-1989, Ajuntament de Barcelona, Barcelona Eleccions Locals 1991, Servei d'Estadística, Ajuntament de Barcelona, Keating 1993: 418.

Although we have a limited amount of data on the autonomous regional elections for Catalonia, we are able to analyze the Catalanian Autonomous Elections held between 1980 and 1988 and the local elections held in Barcelona in 1987 and 1991. Whilst the two major parties in Catalonia (the socialist PSC and the regionalist CiU) have increased their share of the vote, this was achieved at the cost of support for the PSUC/IC and the other regionalist party, the ERC. If we consider the results from the 1988 Catalan regional elections in more detail, we find that the IC was slightly under-represented as its share of the seats was 6.7% whilst polling a 7.7% share of the vote. The ERC, however, was slightly over-rewarded with seats (receiving 4.4% of the seats with a share of the vote equal to 4.1%) despite the fact that it polled less over the whole of the region than the IC. This suggests that the Catalanian region does not act as a single electoral area and that the

ERC actually benefits from a concentrated level of support in certain districts.

The CiU has been the largest polling party in the Catalanian regional elections from 1980 (28%) to 1988 (45.5%), therefore not only remaining the largest, but also increasing its popularity. In relation to the local elections held in Barcelona, the most significant changes in party support have favoured the regionalist CiU - the second largest party in Barcelona since 1983 (when it polled a 27% share of the vote). The smaller regional party - the ERC - has always polled only a low share of the vote and as such is unlikely to be represented because (i) it falls below the 3% threshold of representation, or (ii) the use of ten electoral districts each with a district magnitude of fifteen seats acts as a threshold of exclusion for all small parties. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

The Basque electoral system at the regionalist level is similar to the one operating in Catalonia ⁶. The 75 seats in the regional assembly are elected via the three provinces - each allocated 25 seats. Although the regionalist party Herri Batasuna (HB) is not the largest party in the Basque region (this is still the Basque Nationalist Party - PNV), it has maintained its hold as either the second or third largest party since 1980 with its lowest poll being 14.6% in 1984.

Elections to the Autonomous Region of Galicia use the d'Hondt method of seat distribution. For the 75 seats in the regional assembly (this rose from 71 seats in 1989), the four provinces effectively act as individual electoral divisions. As such, there are 24 seats in the province of A Coruna, 21 seats in Pontevedra, and 15 seats in the provinces Lugo and Ourense. The largest regionalist party is the Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG), which is the

⁶ Seats are allocated via the d'Hondt system and a 3% threshold operates.

third largest party in the region.

3.4.4d Great Britain:- electoral support for the two main regionalist parties since the late 1970s is outlined in Table 3.10:

Table 3.10 - Pattern of Regionalist Party Electoral Support in Great Britain, 1978-1994 (expressed as a %age of the valid vote)

ELECTION LEVEL	YEAR			
<i>General</i>	1987		1992	
SNP	14.0		21.5	
PC	7.3		8.9	
<i>European Parliament</i>		1994		
SNP		33.0		
<i>Regional</i>	1982	1986	1990	1994
SNP	13.6	18.2	21.8	26.8
<i>County</i>	1981		1985	
PC	9.4		9.1	
<i>District</i>	1978	1982	1991	1992
SNP	24.2	15.5	-	24.3
PC	-	-	10.7	-

Note: %age shares of the vote relate to share for Scotland only for SNP and share for Wales only for PC.

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

In terms of sub-national electoral success for the Scottish National Party (SNP) we can observe a wide variation in the level of support between districts and regions. A total of 445 seats were available in the 1986 regional elections - the SNP providing candidates for a total 330 (approximately 75%). Overall, the party polled 18.2%, which is a growth in support of 4.8% compared to its share of the vote in the 1982 regional elections. The number of seats secured by the SNP in 1986, however, was by no means proportional. The SNP won 36 seats overall, this represents a mere 8.1% of the total seats available and 10.9% of the seats actually contested by the party. In the 1992 district elections, the SNP

fielded candidates in all but 2 of the 53 districts, although in terms of actual electoral success the SNP has ranged from being a minor party to shares of the vote as large as 46.1% in Moray, and 44.2% in Angus. A general analysis of Scottish regional election results in the period 1974 to 1994 led Bochel and Denver to claim:

"... Labour is clearly the dominant party in Scotland. The SNP have a fair claim to be the second party since they have out polled the Conservatives in the last three elections whilst Liberal Democrat support is rather variable." (Bochel & Denver 1994: xii)

Overall, the SNP has gradually increased its share of the vote in district elections. It is important to note, however, that the SNP increased the number of candidates it fielded in 1988 by approximately 50% compared to elections held in the early 1980s. This has been matched by a two-fold increase in the overall number of seats it has won (113 in 1988 compared to 54 in 1980). Is it the case that the SNP has become the Scottish counterpart to the Liberal Democrats in parts of England? The SNP is not helped by the fact that it is 'fishing in the same waters' as the Labour Party in Scotland (Brand, Mitchell & SurrIDGE 1994). The Labour Party's successful attempts to rework itself into a convincing and electable party of national government has hindered the progression of the SNP beyond a certain peak. In terms of the consistency of SNP support, Brand *et al* claim,

"One striking feature of Nationalist support at General Elections is that there are very few constituencies where they regularly have a strong vote. It comes and goes unpredictably. The SNP does not have a very happy record in local government, or even a very extensive one." (Brand, Mitchell & SurrIDGE 1994: 629)

Yet the regional elections of 1986 followed a new trend in electoral contestation in Scotland first identified in 1982 where by the number of parties contesting each seat was on the rise, and it will be interesting to see (in Chapter Six) if the SNP benefits in multi-party contests.

For the 1990 Scottish Regional Elections, the SNP provided candidates for 348 of the 445 available seats (78.2%), a slight increase of 18 candidates compared to the 1986 election. The SNP polled an average share of the votes of 21.8% (and increase of 3.6% on the 1986 elections). Whilst the Conservative Party polled 19.6% in 1990 compared to the SNP's 21.8%, the two parties won 52 seats and 42 seats respectively. This confirms the findings we made from the 1986 results - the SNP has successfully built upon its electoral base to become the second most popular party in several regions and many electoral divisions, though unfortunately there are no prizes for second place in a first past the post electoral system. For the 1994 Scottish Regional Elections, the SNP contested 81.9% of the available seats, polled an average share of the votes of 26.8% and secured 73 seats. The SNP actually improved its share of the votes in every region except Dumfries and Galloway.

The Welsh regionalist party, Plaid Cymru, extended its national representation to four members of parliament in the 1992 General Election, but more importantly became the second party in Wales as a result of the County Council elections held in 1993 (the Labour Party being the largest party in Wales). As Table 3.10 shows, electoral support for PC is stronger in sub-national elections than is the case for general elections. As with the SNP in Scotland, PC enjoys concentrated support in particular areas. Christiansen identifies two geographic areas of predominant PC support - Gwynedd County in the North West and Mid-Glamorgan and Gwent in the South of the country (Christiansen 1994), and we will consider the impact of the electoral system in areas where support is strongest in more detail in Chapter Six.

3.5 Conclusions

Within this chapter we have attempted to provide a broad overview of the existing literature on party systems in general and new and small parties in particular. We have

shown that a party system is more than a haphazard coalition of parties which is prone to complete change between each election. Rather, it requires some notion of consistency, centrality of ideology and willingness to cooperate - as 'marginal' and 'detached' parties, the far right and regionalists may not be easy partners for party system participation. Yet the change in electoral support towards parties such as these since the 1980s cannot be overlooked.

We have suggested that the Lipset-Rokkan thesis of party formation is in some aspects 'dated' but still has important implications for party formation in the late twentieth century - particularly in terms of the centre-periphery cleavage. We have also discussed some of the problems involved in defining 'minority parties' and categorising new parties. We have shown that the percentage of votes polled in general elections often conceals more than it tells, and says little if anything about regional enclaves of strong support. We have also outlined some of the problems associated with the terms far right and regionalist parties, although this was intended as a means of clarification to justify which parties form the core case-studies in Chapters Five and Six, and we have chosen the most accepted cases of both far right and regionalist parties in order to analyze electoral success. We are not primarily concerned with why these parties attract support but what happens in terms of representation when they do.

In later chapters we will consider the effect of specific electoral features upon the representation of far right and regionalist parties at the sub-national level in Europe. Before we do so, however, we can make some general observations about electoral features which may help or hinder small parties. In Chapter Two we suggested that the political consequences of electoral systems are often overlooked by contrasting purely aggregate national-level results. What is of particular importance is the effect of specific formulae and rules within individual electoral divisions. It is important to remind ourselves that in

Chapter One we outlined research which suggests new party formation is not a result of the electoral system, though effective representation is (Hauss & Rayside 1978).

Finally in this Chapter we presented a general overview of the electoral success of far right and regionalist parties - both nationally and sub-nationally. This helps to demonstrate just how small or large such parties are in particular countries and localities and how the level of electoral support may be determined by the order of election. It is important to remember that financial and organisational constraints make sub-national elections the most accessible forum for participation for most new and small parties. The following chapters will take the form of case studies and data analysis in two aspects:

1) Chapter Four will consider general patterns of sub-national elections in several states. We will focus upon electoral systems and rules and their general impact upon parties.

2) Chapters Five and Six will consider the impact of sub-national electoral systems and rules specifically upon far right and regionalist party representation. This detailed analysis will show which electoral features in particular affect the proportionality of representation.

CHAPTER FOUR - ANALYZING THE PROPORTIONALITY OF SUB-NATIONAL ELECTORAL
SYSTEMS: THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS.

4.1 Introduction

In previous chapters we have outlined the development of established approaches towards the academic analysis of electoral systems and party systems, in relation to western Europe. Our primary concern is that this analysis has largely concentrated upon national elections, with limited attention being paid to 'second order' elections. In this chapter we will make some general observations about the various electoral systems which operate at the sub-national level in several European states¹ to set the scene for a later evaluation of those electoral features which may affect the representation of far right and regionalist parties in sub-national elections. We can use sub-national electoral data as a further test of the assumptions made in Chapters Two and Three regarding electoral and party systems. We have shown in Chapter Three that far right and regionalist political parties succeed in winning votes in both national and sub-national elections in numerous European countries. Our later analysis involves questioning how effectively these votes at the sub-national level are transformed into seats and thus considers the relationship between electoral systems, their rules and proportionality.

The framework for each case-study will take the form of a four-pronged analysis. We will consider (i) each country's electoral system and different rules, (ii) the impact of specific electoral rules upon general representation, (iii) the level of

¹ The seven case studies chosen for the chapter were chosen because in six cases these countries are relevant for our analysis of far right and regional party success. The case study of the Republic of Ireland has also been chosen because it enables us to analyze the effects of the STV system.

disproportionality created by translating votes into seats and (iv) variations in the sub-national party system. In terms of the electoral system we will outline, where appropriate information is available to us, features such as the timing of elections, the size of electoral divisions, the use of thresholds and the levels of turnout. All of these factors may have an influence upon small party representation. Not only is it important to compare the overall effect of very different electoral systems e.g. plurality versus PR, but it is crucial to compare very similar systems where only one or two of the electoral variables differ, as this enables an understanding of which variables are most relevant when considering small party representation. Fluctuations in turnout may have a significant effect (see Chapter Two section 2.2.4). For example, it will be interesting to see if all parties experience a drop in support if turnout decreases, or if some parties perform relatively better? If the latter is true in relation to regionalist and far right support, this may suggest something about the nature strength of commitment and belief in ideology, though this is not an aspect that we can ultimately prove in this thesis.

In relation to party representation we will also consider which parties regularly participate in sub-national elections, and which parties gain effective representation, as representation for small parties is most likely to begin at the sub-national level. The ability of small parties to gain sub-national representation is vital for building upon existing levels of support and, where relevant, receiving financial support. We can test at the sub-national level how 'stable' such parties are - do they emerge and participate sporadically, or are they a more frequent and established feature of the party system?

Electoral systems do not provide an exhaustive explanation of small party representation in west Europe. Many other features may affect electoral opportunities - for example, party funding, access to the media, and the impact of particular political

and local issues. Yet these are not the concern of this thesis since not only are they difficult to quantify but they also tend to be related to the political nature of each country independently and as such do not necessarily lend themselves to successful comparative analysis. Our purpose here will be to show how different electoral systems are more or less effective in translating a particular party's share of the vote into its share of seats. In essence, it is necessary to ask which rules appear the most important for parties with a small, yet concentrated share of the vote.

In order to compare the effectiveness of electoral systems in general, and specific features in particular, we will employ three indices of proportionality. Our previous analysis in Chapter Two section 2.5 has shown that a single index is insufficient, because the different indices reflect different interpretations of proportionality. For example, some indices appear more favourable to particular forms of PR (Gallagher 1991), and any measurement which concentrates on national elections will not identify significant regional variations in proportionality which may become apparent when we conduct analysis at the sub-national level. The aim of this chapter is to measure the disproportionality of various sub-national electoral systems as a whole, whilst in Chapters Five and Six we will consider the proportionality of far right and regionalist party representation in particular.

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, any index of disproportionality may measure one of two general features - the absolute difference between a party's seats and votes, or the ratio between a party's seats and votes. In Chapter Two section 2.5 we discussed in detail the advantages and disadvantages of different indices and suggested which three we will use in this thesis. Summarizing, they are:

Loosemore-Hanby Index D - Disproportionality is equal to the total percentage by which over represented parties are over represented per election, on a scale of 0 - 100. This model is most sympathetic towards the largest remainder method of seat distribution and can understate the proportionality of a system due to its sensitivity to the number of parties participating in each election.

Least Squares Index - measures disproportionality per election within a scale of 0 - 100 in terms of absolute differences. It is more "sensitive" than the Loosemore-Hanby model in terms of identifying a few large discrepancies between vote and seat shares rather than numerous less significant ones.

Sainte Lague Index - measures disproportionality in terms of the difference between the seats and votes ratio for each party. This index will record the value zero when proportionality is perfect, although there is no upper limit for disproportionality. Whereas the other indices measure *absolute* differences between a party's vote and seat shares, the Sainte Lague Index measures the *relative* differences and is not biased towards any particular seat distribution method.

Before we analyze in detail the proportionality of various electoral systems and features we will present a brief overview of the electoral profile of seven European states - these being the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, Britain, Spain and Italy. This choice reflects a diversity of west European electoral systems and rules. The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Italy each employs some type of PR, whilst Germany and Spain employ constitutional thresholds to prohibit the representation of very small parties. Britain employs a simple plurality system in predominantly single-seat divisions, although there are also examples of multi-seat

divisions. Finally, the Republic of Ireland uses the Single Transferable Vote method (see Appendix C for greater detail and an outline of those European Union member states not included here).

4.2 - Seven European States: A Brief Electoral Profile

4.2.1 The Netherlands Local Government in the Netherlands operates on two administrative levels (see Appendix C). On the highest level, the Netherlands is organised into twelve provincial regions, and it is at this level which will be the focus of analysis in this chapter. As such, it is important to place provincial electoral politics in context, as they may be affected by current issues and timing, and by perceptions of how 'important', or effective, sub-national government is. For Toonen, the provincial level of government is an important intermediary between national and truly local (gemeenten) levels of power, since:

"The province is a constitutionally defined and legally independent, territorial general-purpose government unit. It is constitutionally entrusted with a general competence (autonomy) and among other things is charged with the general supervision of Dutch municipalities. The Dutch province is a fully fledged layer of government with its own constitutional, legal and democratic legitimation and a directly elected representative body." (Toonen 1993: 118)

This implies that at the provincial level at least, elections are recognised as having a significant political role, yet turnout for provincial elections has been lower than at both the national and municipal level since the late 1980s (see Table 4.1).

All provinces follow the same electoral timetable and use a party-list ballot system, and seat distribution is determined via the d'Hondt method of PR (Andeweg & Irwin 1993:

81-89)². There is no formal application of either thresholds or supplementary seats, but we can test whether the district magnitude acts as a *de facto* threshold. Since compulsory voting was in force in Dutch elections until 1970 we may assess the effect if any of changes in turnout upon the spread of party representation, which may have important implications for small parties. As Koole suggests:

"European and sub-national elections showed a decline in voting turnout in the Netherlands recently. In the public debate this was interpreted very often as a sign of a widening gap between voters and politicians. It is equally arguable, however, that voters act rationally in so-called 'second order' elections, because there is less at stake." (Koole 1994: 7-8)

It is the representation of right-wing extremist parties in the Netherlands at the sub-national level that is of particular interest in this thesis (see Chapter Five). In this chapter we will consider whether there exists a general pattern of party support across all the provinces, or whether party popularity has varied between provinces. We will also consider the effects of changing turnout and the influence of district magnitude at the provincial level. Do these factors influence disproportionality and how important is the relationship between the number of competing and number of elected parties? We will also consider the extent to which various electoral rules continue to create *de facto* thresholds at the provincial level which work against the interests of small parties.

4.2.2 Belgium Since 1993, Belgium has been classified as a federal state in order to accommodate the diversity of the different Walloon and Flemish cultures, and as such has been faced with a process of widespread state reform - including considerable electoral

² Direct elections have been held every four years since 1958 with the exception being Provincial elections held in 1987 rather than 1986. Another exception is the Flevoland province which was not 'created' until 1985.

reform. Sub-national government in Belgium has a three level structure: communales/gemeenten, provinces and three regions (see Appendix C). Any comprehensive analysis of local elections is only feasible from 1976³, and there have been several waves of local government reform, serving to reduce the actual number of divisions. Ackaert (1993) suggests that in Belgian local elections in general, national political parties are becoming increasingly important at the expense of local lists - primarily due to the significant reforms of 1976. The late 1960s marked the split of the three major parties along linguistic lines and, therefore, the fragmentation of the Belgian party system is far more marked than in many other European countries. For example, in the municipal elections held in 1988, approximately 40% of the lists presenting candidates could be labelled as local/minority parties. Deschouwer suggests that this exemplifies the inappropriateness of a study of Belgian election results at the national level, since parties only compete in their own particular regions (1991: 143). In relation to our later chapters of analysis, the Belgian local electoral system is valuable because it provides examples of both regional and right-wing extremist parties.

For the purpose of analysis, we can identify three consistent features in Belgian sub-national elections. Despite the fragmented nature of the Belgian system, all municipal elections are held on the same day and, therefore, subject to the same national political climate. All Belgian elections are subject to compulsory voting and, although turnout is much higher than the norm in non-compulsory sub-national elections, a declining trend has developed. Finally, candidates are presented in the form of party-lists and all seats are distributed via the Imperiali largest remainder/quota system - a method recognized as over representing the larger parties (Taagepera & Shugart 1989: 34).

3 Until 1976 the Home Department was only responsible for publishing the results from main or larger populated cities.

In relation to general patterns in local elections held in Belgium, in section 4.3.2 we will briefly discuss the main party share of the vote in order to establish whether any general patterns of change have occurred, and also whether there are any variations in party support between the regions. Second, we will compare district magnitude and consider whether this affects the overall level of disproportionality. The disparity between the number of parties participating in an election and the number of parties which win seats may be related to the district magnitude, thus the possibility for true proportional representation in a multi-party system is enhanced by making a larger number of seats available. Third, although there are no formal thresholds for representation in Belgian municipal elections, we will also be able to establish the range of *de facto* thresholds which operate at the communal level.

4.2.3 Germany Sub-national government in Germany operates on three levels (see Appendix C), and the present sub-national government system was established in the period 1945-49 after the defeat of National Socialism. The right to local self-government is guaranteed under the Basic Law, and Scarrow suggests: "Since the 1960s, local government elections have become an increasingly important arena of partisan struggle in the Federal Republic of Germany." (Scarrow 1993: 381)

The national party system has traditionally been classified as a three-party system and, since the 1980s, a four-party system. While small regional parties were initially important in the post-war period in states such as Lower Saxony, Bavaria and North-Rhine Westphalia, their significance all but disappeared (except in Bavaria) by the 1960s (Conradt 1993: 195). Conradt acknowledges that new parties benefit when initially concentrating their electoral appeal at the Land level (a point proven by the far right NPD during the 1960s and the Greens in the 1980s), as the electorate often use

Länder elections to voice opinions about national politics rather than local issues (Conradt 1993: 196). This suggests that the second order hypothesis of protest voting may be an appropriate model for voting behaviour in Germany. Despite the high number of non-party candidates and voter-groups which stand in sub-national elections, the PR list system tends to operate to the benefit of organised parties (Gunlicks 1986: 162). What may be of interest for German party politics is whether power shifts in Länder elections have consistently acted as indicators of change in national politics (Conradt 1993: 196).

In this chapter we will focus our analysis upon the Länder level of the German electoral system. Since reunification in 1990, the Federal Republic of Germany consists of sixteen states or *Länder*. The central concern of this chapter, however, will be the eleven Länder of the former West Germany since this provides us with a greater time span of 'democratic' elections from which to conduct a comparative analysis. Germany is similar in nature to the Netherlands and Belgium in that it operates a PR system, but does it display similar levels of 'proportionality' of representation? Differences often occur between the electoral systems within each Länder. The decentralised nature of German politics enables each Länder to determine its own specific form of PR and we can witness a variation in ballot systems and, more importantly, methods of seat distribution. This may have significant implications for the sub-national party system within each Länder, and particularly for the representation of small parties. It will be interesting to assess the impact of the different seat distribution formulæ used in order to test Gunlicks' claim that; "Experience in Lower Saxony and North-Rhine Westphalia ... suggests that the Hare-Niemeyer system favours the small parties, whereas the d'Hondt method favours the larger parties" (Gunlicks 1986: 179). Within this chapter we can also assess the impact upon proportionality of (i) district magnitude which ranges significantly between Länder, and (ii) the impact of the 5% threshold - the only

constant feature of German L ander elections - as this is the initial hurdle which small parties need to overcome to gain effective representation. Furthermore, we can also consider the changes in turnout and consider whether this has led to changes in party support.

4.2.4 The Republic of Ireland Ireland consists of sub-national government on two levels (see Appendix C). All local elections in Ireland are covered by the Local Government Act (1941) and the Electoral Act (1963), and the number of seats per constituency ranges the size being determined by the *national* legislature. Until recently, local government in the Republic of Ireland had enjoyed relatively little autonomy and as such was not held in particularly high esteem by the Irish electorate (Sinnott 1995: 255). As a result, it has been suggested that: "Local elections in the Republic of Ireland might reasonably be regarded as merely ersatz versions of general elections." (Gallagher 1989: 22). If this is the case we may witness patterns of protest voting in second order elections. Whilst the Local Government Act (1991) have since produced limited reforms in terms of autonomy, this has not affected the actual electoral system.

The nature of the STV electoral system means that members of the same party are often in competition with each other. As a result there is often a greater emphasis upon personality and local issues in Irish elections. Local elections are increasingly becoming dominated by the major national parties, especially since local elections are viewed as a 'launching pad' for potential members of the Dail. Yet this should not underestimate significant differences between national and local election results, since it is often the case at the local level that the major party(ies) do 'less well' while the smaller, and especially local-interest parties, poll a larger share of the vote than in national elections (Sinnott 1995: 256). All local elections in Ireland tend to exhibit a relatively high turnout compared to some of its European counterparts (usually around

65% of the total electorate), although as one would expect this is lower than the level of turnout witnessed in Irish national elections. Turnout tends to be higher in rural periphery areas.

For the purposes of analysis in this chapter we will analyse county and county borough elections in Ireland. What is significant for our analysis is the fact that each county and county borough is divided into smaller electoral divisions. The size of each assembly, therefore, is not the same as the district magnitude which is much smaller, and district magnitude is one of our constraints which can affect small party representation. First, we will consider variations in turnout and party support between areas in Ireland. In relation to the proportionality of sub-national elections in Ireland we will (i) consider the impact of variations in district magnitude, and (ii) measure to what extent varying factors create *de facto* thresholds which may affect the representation of small parties, particularly if support is spread thinly over the county/ county borough.

4.2.5 Great Britain The British sub-national government system is organised on two levels (see Appendix C). There are two examples of single-tier local government, the 32 London Boroughs and the 36 Metropolitan Districts, which employ the usual plurality voting procedures. In relation to the higher tier of sub-national government, England and Wales were, until recently, represented by 47 counties/local authorities⁴ and, until 1995, Scotland consisted of nine regional councils and three island councils.

Until the 1980s at least, British sub-national electoral research focused upon three general observations. First, turnout in local elections had been much lower than at

⁴ As a result of the recent Local Government Commission, 14 unitary authorities have replaced the two tier system in parts of England, and 22 new unitary authorities have been implemented in Wales.

national elections, implying that local government has generally been seen as 'ineffective' and lacking in political strength. Turnout is lower, however, at county council level elections, rather than at the district council level despite most functions being administered at the county level (Rallings & Thrasher 1992). Second, the electoral system discourages voters from supporting minor parties since this might lead to a 'wasted vote' - thus another factor which may foster a low level of turnout. Finally, it was generally assumed that local elections merely acted as a 'popularity poll' for the government of the day, rather than reflecting the electorate's interest in real, local issues. This latter point in particular is no longer valid as a sweeping statement about all local elections as recent research on 'context voting' demonstrates (Rallings & Thrasher 1993c). According to Rallings and Thrasher (1993b), several overall comments can be made about changing patterns in county council elections. First, the number of unopposed seats has gradually declined thereby increasing the number of party-competition case-studies, particularly between the three main parties. Second, the number of truly 'independent' candidates has gradually declined, although at the same time the number of "others", or minority parties (e.g. Green Party, British National Party, Plaid Cymru) has risen. As such, we may witness evidence of an increase in the number of different sub-national party systems between regions as well as a diversity in the types of parties represented in each region.

Scottish regional elections operated on a different timetable to the English and Welsh counties. Bochel and Denver (1994) identify several periodic trends in Scottish regional elections. First, the number of candidates entering each election has increased, although again the number of Independent candidates has declined. There is an identifiable trend in which turnout in regional elections tended to be lower than at the district level of elections, although this was been reversed in the 1990s. Third, the Labour Party was consistently the largest party and indeed has increased its share of the

vote since the mid-1980s. The main losers were the Conservative Party and Independents. The Scottish National Party (SNP) was a major beneficiary and became the second largest party in terms of overall share of the vote since the 1990 regional elections - the same has also been true, incidentally, for district elections (Denver in Rallings & Thrasher 1993b). We can say, therefore, that Britain generally speaking exhibits a two-party system although a variation occurs between which two parties dominate at the sub-national level.

Our analysis in this chapter will focus upon county elections in England and Wales and regional elections in Scotland occurring before 1995⁵. This, therefore, excludes analysis of the 32 London boroughs and the 36 Metropolitan boroughs, although specific reference may be made to these where deemed appropriate. We will compare the number of uncontested elections since 1989 and to identify whether there is a locational pattern to their occurrence (uncontested elections are extremely rare in PR elections). Second, we will consider the effect of district magnitude at the county level upon proportionality, and the effect of the seat distribution system upon proportionality. We can consider whether county/region wide generalisations tell the whole story of small party support and representation.

4.2.6 Spain Spanish sub-national government is organised on two levels - municipalities and regions (see Appendix C). Since the establishment of the 1978 Constitution, Spain has gradually developed a stronger decentralized system of sub-national government. The initial elements of the local government system were laid down by the 1985 Local Government Act. Martin Harloff (no date) suggests that the

5 Analysis at this level is made less complicated by the fact that county councils are elected as a whole (as opposed to in thirds as is the case in some district elections) in single-member divisions.

extent of powers at the municipal level varies depending upon the levels of financial assistance from higher levels of government.

Electoral turnout is lower in regional elections than at national elections - around 60% compared to 77% - but is slightly higher at 63% in the most autonomous regions (see Cuchillo 1993). Cuchillo suggests that the threshold rule may be one factor encouraging lower turnout. Due to the fact that democracy in Spain is fairly young, there exists a 'weak implantation' of political parties in Spain (Cuchillo 1993: 228) which may not fit well with the electoral system which demands a high degree of political consciousness.

4.2.7 Italy Italian sub-national government operates on three levels (see Appendix C). Successive elections in Italy have witnessed a gradual decline in support for the two major parties, the christian democratic DC and the communist PCI, to the point where Italy experienced a radical reformation of the party system in the early 1990s. The virtual collapse of the traditional 'catch-all' parties is just one factor which encouraged the spectacular electoral success of several regional parties, such as the Sardinian Action Party, the South Tyrol's Peoples Party, the Lega Nord and the Union Valdotaïne.

The imposition of regionalism was seen by many as an effective solution for safeguarding the democratic system against the centralization previously associated with the fascist authoritarian regime of Mussolini (Cassese & Torchia in Sharpe 1993). Keating (1993) suggests that, as a result, sub-national politics in Italy has become dominated by four questions: (i) the question of the South, (ii) the integration of culturally distinct minorities, (iii) the institution of regional government, and (iv) the performance of local government. The first point is important as Southern Italy has

remained poor and more religious compared to the modern industrialised North, and has retained predominantly christian democratic voting patterns. The second point is important as separatist and autonomist movements have appeared at various stages, e.g. in regions such as Sardinia, Val d'Aosta, South Tyrol/Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

Despite the high number of communes, local government in Italy has remained considerably centralized. Financial powers were limited in 1972. Allum (1995) suggests that the Italian sub-national government system is similar to the French system as a hierarchical relationship exists where the region is superior to the province and the province is superior to the commune, and Keating suggests that the whole system is pervaded by party politics (1993: 245).

The exposure of *Tangentopoli*, and its implications for the DC as a whole and many established political figures, has had a dramatic effect upon the Italian party system. Another feature of Italian politics of interest to this thesis is the electoral reforms of 1993. Salvati suggests that the referenda of 1991 and 1993 on changing electoral laws were successful, not because people really understood the 'pros and cons' of proportional representation versus a majoritarian system, but because voting against the previous system was seen as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction with the "old politicians" (1995: 87). Donovan argues: "Electoral reform was able to be presented as completing a process of democratization and of modernization which would put an end to deeply rooted failings" (1995: 61-2).

Electoral reform occurred because of "elite outsiders using the referendum instrument" (Donovan 1995: 47), not because of a decision initiated by parliament. The highly proportional PR system was blamed for the political fragmentation and short

lived governments, exacerbating corruption and a centre-dominated system. In March 1993 the local government electoral system was reformed, so that at the local level the lists supporting the winning mayoral candidate receive 60% of the seats. The mayor is elected by a two-round majority ballot, with only two candidates being allowed to progress to the second round. As such, there now exists a heavy focus upon the personal qualities of mayoral candidates in local elections.

We have provided a brief outline of the general observations made about sub-national elections in the six countries used for Chapter Five and Chapter Six, and one additional country. We will now make some specific observations about the effects of various electoral features upon them, beginning with an overview of variations in sub-national party systems in all seven states.

4.3 - Variations in Sub-National Party Systems

In this section we will outline examples of different sub-national party systems within countries. Since Belgium and Germany are both examples of federal states, we may expect to witness greater diversity than is witnessed in the more centralised states. So to what extent do sub-national party systems within countries differ?

4.3.1 Belgium As previously mentioned, Belgium consists of three separate party systems which include the regional equivalent of 'main' parties e.g. christian democrats, socialists and liberals, as well as purely regional parties. The French speaking parties present candidates in both the Wallonian and Brussels regions whilst Flemish parties participate in Flanders and Brussels. Although Brussels is geographically situated within Flanders, its population is predominantly French speaking, and although 60% of the Belgian population is Flemish, only 20% of Brussels is so (Temperton 1992/3:

63). A significant feature of Belgian communal elections is the strong performance of 'local lists' in many areas. Whilst countries such as Britain and the Netherlands have experienced a gradual decline in support for truly local candidates in sub-national elections, the same cannot be said for Belgium.

A notable feature of the Flemish gemeenten elections is the lack of a uniform pattern in voting behaviour, and we must therefore assume that voting is influenced by a multitude of factors which are likely to include local issues and personalities. Whilst the christian democratic CVP is the largest party in terms of overall share of the vote, its popularity is declining in many gemeenten. Nor is there evidence of a straightforward change in electoral support from the CVP to support of another party. Those parties benefiting include the liberals, the far right and the greens - suggesting that vote switching may not simply be from a single party to another but may be more complex. The most important question when identifying changing voting patterns, therefore, is to try to identify any plausible trends within the five provinces. If this cannot be significantly established, then we must assume that specifically local issues are at stake.

The CVP have lost votes in favour of the liberal PVV in the Antwerpen and West Vlaanderen provinces. In the same provinces, the CVP has also lost votes to the Flemish nationalist VU party. In terms of voter swings towards the left of the party spectrum, the CVP is losing support to the socialist SP in the Brabant province and towards AGALEV in Brabant and Antwerpen. As such, the picture painted of changing party support at the gemeenten level in Flanders is a complex one. The larger parties in 1976 have seen their support dwindle in some areas to a variety of other parties, which in many cases have included local lists. The picture is even more complex when we bear in mind that a decline in support for the main parties is by no means the rule, since the CVP has succeeded in increasing its share of the vote in numerous gemeenten.

A similar pattern emerges in the Wallonian region, in that the main parties have witnessed a decline in support, which has benefited the liberal PRL, the green ECOLO and various local lists. In comparison to events in Flanders, however, the Wallonian nationalist RW have all but disappeared from the electoral scene since the early 1980s. Again, the most important issue is the need to establish whether changing patterns in voting trends fall into provincial boundaries. At the communal level, the christian democratic PSC have lost voters to the PRL in the provinces of Liege and Brabant, whilst in the province of Hainaut the PSC has seen a swing in its support towards local lists in the late 1980s.

The picture of party success is a complex one even in the region of Brussels where there are only 19 communes. The bilingual structure means that we cannot talk about singular main parties but rather dual parties e.g. the SP/PS, CVP/PSC and the PVV/PRL with each party presenting the relevant faction according to linguistic prevalence. The exception to the main parties presented so far is the FDF (Brussels French Party) - the dominant party in the communes/gemeenten of Oudergem, Etterbeek, Vorst, Schaarbeek, St. Lambrechts-Woluwe and St. Pieters-Leeuw in the 1988 elections. Other communes/gemeenten in Brussels are a mixture of socialist, christian democratic and liberal dominated. As such, there is no particular pattern to party support at the sub-national level in Belgium which is explainable without looking at micro-level local issues and politics.

4.3.2 Germany We have already mentioned that Germany is characterised by a four-party system. Due to the existence of social cleavages parties of the left and right have their own regional strongholds. For example, the traditionally Catholic Land of Bavaria is dominated by the CSU (Bavarian sister-party to the CDU). The state of

Baden-Wurttemberg has endured a series of coalitions - initially between the christian democratic CDU and liberal FDP, and since 1992 a CDU-led coalition has held power. Since 1980, North-Rhine Westphalia has been governed by the social democratic SPD, in coalition with the Greens since 1995. Lower Saxony is predominantly Protestant and has endured a series of coalition governments in the post-war period, though the 1990s marked the establishment of a red-green coalition (the SPD and Greens). In both the Schleswig-Holstein and Rhineland Palatinate Lænder, elections have been dominated by the CDU (sometimes in coalition with the FDP), although both have witnessed a reversal in the late 1980s/early 1990s with the election of an SPD government. Hamburg, Bremen and Hesse (mainly Protestant) has been dominated by the SPD - in Hessen and Bremen the SPD is currently in coalition with the Greens. The Saarland is predominantly Catholic and was controlled by the CDU until the mid-1980s but has since witnessed a shift in favour of SPD control. Until the late 1980s, therefore, German lænder tended to be governed by parties which were most likely to appeal to the traditional religious cleavage. Not only is religion becoming a weaker cleavage, but the much debated *politikverdrossenheit* has led to the expansion of the party system and challenges to the FDP's role as primary coalition partner.

4.3.3 Ireland In terms of party support in the Republic of Ireland, Coakley and Wolohan (1979) suggest that there are identifiable regional patterns to party support. For the elections held in 1979, for example, Fianna Fail tended to receive a fairly balanced level of support except in Dublin where support was low. The Labour Party performed best in the South-East and West between Louth and Limerick. Sinn Fein The Workers Party (which became The Worker's Party in 1982) polled well in Dublin, Wicklow, Waterford and Cork, whilst Provisional Sinn Fein gained its strongest vote in the border counties. Other smaller parties were specifically regional based. Dublin, for example, was home to the supporters of the Communist and Socialist parties, the Community

group and the Socialist Labour Party. The Donegal Progressive Party gathered its support from Protestant voters in East Donegal, and independents polled strongest in border areas (Coakley & Wolohan 1979: 95).

Do Coakley and Wolohan's claims regarding the regionalisation of party support in 1979 still hold true? There has been a general decline in support for the two main parties - Fianna Fail and Fine Gael (Sinnott 1995: 255). Whilst the average share of the vote for these two parties was 74.1% in 1979⁶, this had dropped to 64.3% by 1991. The results from the 1991 County elections suggest it is still true that these two parties are weakest in and around Dublin - their collective vote in the electoral county of South Dublin, for example, being 47.6%. The Labour Party remains at its strongest in the South-Eastern counties, polling 22.9% in Limerick County Borough and 20.6% in Waterford County Borough in 1991. At the same time, Labour was absent from elections in Leitrim, Longford, Monaghan and Roscommon. The Progressive Democrats are also weak in these areas and similarly poll well in the South East. Their strongest results in 1991 were in the counties of Limerick and Galway and the county borough of Galway (polling 15.5%, 10.8% and 22.1% respectively).

The Workers Party performed most successfully in the southern counties and Dublin in 1991. Whilst its candidates polled 10.9% in the electoral county of Dun Laoghaire, the party's strongest result was 22% in the County Borough of Waterford. The Green Party remains a relatively small electoral force in Irish sub-national politics. Its strongest support lies within Dublin. In 1991 the Green Party polled 8.5% in Dublin Fingal and 11.4% in Dun Laoghaire. Sinn Fein remains strongest in the border counties. In 1991

⁶ Note - due to the unreliability of election data prior to 1985, the collective share of the vote used is the 'least best'. Some texts attribute a higher share of the vote to Fine Gael which would make the decline in support even more dramatic.

Sinn Fein polled 13.9% in Monaghan, 9.0% in Leitrim and 7.1% in Louth. Whilst Independents remain an electoral force in all county and county borough elections, their strongest performance in 1991 was in Donegal (29.1%) and Wicklow (21.1%). We can see that there are particular regional trends to party support in the Republic of Ireland, especially for smaller parties.

4.3.4 The Netherlands Generally speaking, the Netherlands is viewed as a country which has a national party system as opposed to one with distinct sub-national patterns. Can we identify changing patterns and areas of particular party support at the provincial level? In Drenthe the PvdA has always been the largest party between 1958 and 1991, with the CDA in second place. Others gain only a handful of seats. In Utrecht, the PvdA is declining in favour of support for the CDA. Various other parties have gained a couple of seats. Of particular interest have been the far right BP (four seats in 1966), the ecologists GL (four seats in 1991) and the far right CD (one seat in 1991). In Zeeland again the PvdA is losing to the CDA. In Groningen the PvdA remains the largest party, although in terms of small parties the far right BP took three seats in 1966, and the GL four seats in 1991.

In Limburg the KVP was the largest party between 1958 and 1966, the CCP in 1970 and the CDA since 1974. Small BP support has existed in Limburg (the party held four seats in 1966, one seat in 1970 and two seats in 1974), and the GL took three seats in 1991. In Overijssel the KVP was the largest party between 1958 and 1966, as was PAK in 1970, the PvdA in 1974 and the CDA since. The BP secured four seats in Overijssel in 1966, one in 1970 and two in 1974, and the GL won two seats in 1991. In Freisland the PvdA and CDA have alternated as the largest party, whilst the regionalist FNP has consistently secured between one and four seats since 1966. In Gelderland, the KVP was the largest party between 1958 and 1970, with the CDA being

the largest since 1978. In North Brabant the KVP was the largest party between 1958 and 1970, and the CDA from 1974 to 1991. The BP secured five seats in North Brabant in 1966 and 1974. In North Holland and South Holland the PvdA was the largest party until 1991 - now it is the CDA. In North Holland, the BP secured six seats in 1966 and the CD won one seat in 1991, whilst in South Holland the BP won four seats in 1966 and the CD one seat in 1991.

4.3.5 Britain Changes in local voting behaviour in Britain since the 1980s have significantly been to the detriment of the Conservative Party. In English County Council elections, Conservative support rose from 38.4% in 1985 to 42.2% in 1989, but declined to 35.6% in 1993. In the same elections Labour Party support changed from 30.0% to 31.1% to 31.2%, and Liberal Democrat support changed from 27.9% to 20.2% to 29.3% respectively.

In the Welsh county council elections also held in 1985, 1989 and 1993, Conservative Party support changed from 15.2% in 1985 to 16.5% in 1989 and 12.5% in 1993. For the Labour Party, the total share of the votes was 45.2%, 46.0% and 47.1%, and the Liberal Democrats experienced shares of the votes of 12.9%, 7.3% and 10.9% respectively. At the same time, Plaid Cymru has seen its support increase from 8.6% in 1985 to 15.6% in 1993.

In Scotland, regional elections were held in 1986, 1990 and 1994. For the Conservative Party, support swung from 16.9% in 1986, to 19.6% in 1990, to 13.7% in 1994. For the Labour Party, support changed from 43.9% to 42.7% to 41.8%, and for the Liberal Democrats from 15.1% to 8.7% to 11.9%. The regionalist Scottish National Party has seen its support at the regional level significantly increase from 18.2% in 1986 to 26.8% in 1994. Of course, what these general results do not do is

indicate geographically concentrated changes in party support, which may indicate that sub-national elections in Great Britain are really a series of numerous smaller two party systems.

4.3.6 Spain In all but those regions with special autonomy, national parties and national politics dominate at the regional level. In the autonomous communities, the party systems are more distinct. For example, in Andalusia in 1990, the socialist PSOE was the largest party, followed by the PP. The regionalist IU-AC and PA both polled between 10% - 12% shares of the votes. In the Basque Country in 1984 and 1988, the regionalist PNV was the largest party, followed by the PSOE and HB (an electorally smaller regionalist party). In the Catalonia region in 1988 and 1992, the regionalist CiU was the largest party, followed by the PSOE and IC (Communists). The smaller regionalist party, the ERC, is growing in support. Finally, in Galicia in 1985, the CP was the largest party, followed by the PSOE and the regionalist party BNG. The pattern of party support at the regional sub-national level in Spain, therefore, appears to be linked to the issue of autonomy. Highly autonomous regions have their own parties which vary in electoral size (some have more than one regionalist party - e.g. the Basque Country and Catalonia), and national mainstream parties are not always as popular as in non-autonomous regions.

4.3.7 Italy If we take 1990 as the point of reference, the Italian sub-national party system was dominated by the DC in most regions with ordinary status - ranging in popularity from 28.6% share of the vote in Lombardia to 58.8% in Molise. The communist PCI dominated in Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Toscana and Umbria - the centre 'red band'. Support for the socialist PSI was fairly evenly balanced, whilst the Lega Lombarda was the second largest party in Lombardy with a share of the vote of 18.9%. The DC was also the largest party in many regions with special status (Trieste, Friuli-

Venezi-Giulia, Sicily and Sardinia), but Val d'Aosta and Trentino Alto Adige were all dominated by 'others' (predominantly regional autonomist parties).

The DC continued to dominate at the municipal level in 1992, though the significant changes which have taken place within the party system since this date mean that we have yet to see a stable party system re-established at both the national and sub-national level. As such, Italy, at least until the 1990s, was characterised by 'regional' party systems. The traditional parties prospered in their own particular 'bands' which were a dominant feature of post-war Italian politics. However, as with Spain, there are particular regions which (i) enjoy greater autonomy from state control, and (ii) have their own political parties which vary in electoral size.

There are apparently no overall trends to sub-national party systems in the seven countries studied. An extreme case is the Netherlands where national parties dominate and regionalism (except to a small extent in Freisland) is unheard of. On the other hand Belgium has no 'national' parties, but rather linguistic variants of 'traditional' parties as well as numerous truly regional and local parties at the sub-national level. Our other cases lie somewhere in between these two extremes. Thus, sub-national party systems must be influenced by factors beyond the electoral system alone. What we will do in the remainder of this thesis is assess the extent to which electoral rules and features affect overall proportionality and the representation of certain minor parties.

Our analysis will now focus upon the specific effects of electoral features on party representation at the sub-national level. For this exercise only some of our seven case studies will be analyzed. This is for two reasons (i) complete or appropriate data sets were not always available for each characteristic in each country, (ii) the aim in this chapter is to highlight differences rather than similarities. We will first measure

whether a correlation exists between turnout and party support in the Netherlands, Germany and Ireland and assess whether this has had a significant impact upon particular parties. As was shown in Chapter Two, turnout is not necessarily an electoral rule, but may be affected by perceptions of electoral fairness. Included here will be an analysis of uncontested elections in Britain. It will be interesting to see where non-contestation is likely to occur, and whether it is a declining feature of sub-national elections.

4.4 - Variations in Turnout and Party Support in Sub-National Elections

Before analyzing the impact of specific electoral rules and formulæ upon small party representation at the sub-national level, we will make some observations about the effect of changes in turnout, with reference to elections in the Netherlands, Germany and Ireland. Our aim is to establish whether (i) turnout has declined at the sub-national level and (ii) has this affected party representation at the sub-national level? Have changes in voting patterns occurred at an overall level, or are changing electoral trends reliant upon purely 'local' factors? We will also consider the changing patterns of uncontested elections in Britain to demonstrate the way in which party contestation is increasing at the sub-national level. There is, obviously, no relationship between turnout and party support in uncontested elections. Yet the declining occurrence of uncontested elections in Britain does allow voters a greater choice and, therefore, encourages turnout, and may also encourage the smaller parties to participate.

4.4.1 The Netherlands As mentioned earlier, the Netherlands had compulsory voting until 1970. Table 4.1 presents the turnout figures for three national, provincial and gemeenten elections for the country as a whole and also includes the figures for two provinces which illustrate the range in turnout. Three sets of elections at both the

national and sub-national level were chosen to highlight a change in longitudinal patterns. Of particular interest is the change between the 1950s and 1970s, whilst elections in the 1990s were chosen to reflect the current electoral climate.

Table 4.1 - Trends in Turnout(%) in Selected Dutch National, Provincial and Gemeenten Elections, 1958-1994

TYPE OF ELECTION	YEAR OF ELECTION						
	1958	1959	1974	1977	1990	1991	1994
National Election	-	95.6	-	88.0	-	-	78.3
Provincial Elections (average turnout)	91.4	-	74.5	-	-	52.1	
North Brabant	92.9	-	69.2	-	-	46.9	
Freisland	91.7	-	80.5	-	-	63.0	
Gemeenten Elections (average turnout)	94.6	-	68.7	-	62.3		

Sources: Wolinetz 1995. Nederlands Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

The figures presented in Table 4.1 clearly demonstrate that turnout in all elections has been in significant decline since the abolition of compulsory voting in 1970. Prior to 1970, turnout was over 90% at the national, provincial and communal levels, although it was, and still is, higher at general elections than in provincial elections and has become higher in local elections than in provincial elections. Furthermore, the differences between turnout in national and provincial elections has become more pronounced since 1970. By identifying those provinces where turnout was highest and lowest in the 1991 provincial elections we can also see that a significant variation in turnout exists between the provinces which was not the case before 1970. The strong difference between turnout in North Brabant and Freisland has, however, remained and increased since 1974. For example, less than 50% of the electorate voted in North Brabant in 1991 despite the fact that the Netherlands is viewed as having a highly proportional system. Other factors must be at play. How has differential turnout been reflected in provincial variations in party support? Changing shares of the vote for

individual parties is not an issue here, as changing voting patterns between individual parties are likely to be affected by many issues other than turnout (e.g. personal circumstances, leadership imagery, political and economic climate). By assessing the vote share of the main parties *as a whole* in relation to turnout we may be able to identify sub-national changes in support for the mass-based, or national, parties.

It is first necessary to define the 'main' parties. Gallagher, Laver and Mair claim that the highly fragmented nature of Dutch politics encourages a proliferation of political parties. For the purpose of this analysis we have adopted their (1995: 162) definition that the three main parties are the Labor Party (PvdA), Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the Liberal Party (VVD), though this means we cannot assess every election in the time-scale 1958 to 1991⁷. Table 4.2 demonstrates how the major party vote has changed within each province between 1987 and 1991.

Table 4.2 - Changes in The Combined Vote-Share (%) for the Main Parties for Dutch Provincial Elections, by Province, 1987 and 1991.

PROVINCE	YEAR OF ELECTION		DIFFERENCE (%)
	1987	1991	
Freisland	83.2	77.2	-6.0
Limburg	85.2	76.6	-8.6
Overijssel	83.2	73.6	-9.6
Gelderland	81.2	70.4	-10.8
Groningen	78.4	66.5	-11.9
Utrecht	76.8	64.3	-12.5
Flevoland	76.0	62.4	-13.6
Drenthe	87.0	73.2	-13.8
North Holland	79.1	65.1	-14.0
North Brabant	87.4	73.1	-14.3
South Holland	79.4	64.9	-14.5
Zeeland	76.6	61.1	-15.5

Source: Nederlands Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

The results from Table 4.2 emphasize that the 'nationalised' nature of Dutch electoral

⁷ For example, the CDA was formed in 1980 as a merger of the AR, CHU and KVP.

politics is declining at the sub-national level. In the case of the 1991 provincial elections we can see that the main party share of the vote was lower than in the 1987 elections in all twelve provinces. Support for the three main parties declined by at least 6% between 1987 and 1991, and this decline was strongest in the large urban provinces such as North Brabant, North Holland and South Holland, but also in Zeeland. Overall, this analysis does not provide a promising picture for the traditional, major, national parties in the Netherlands. If we recall our analysis of turnout in Table 4.1 we can see that the province with the highest turnout, Freisland, is also the province where the main parties have most successfully retained support. Likewise, the province with the lowest turnout, North Brabant, also experienced one of the sharpest declines in support for the three main parties. A pattern, therefore, may be emerging in Dutch sub-national elections. As turnout is declining, the main parties are losing electoral support to the advantage of smaller parties such as the greens, the far right and other social movements such as pensioners' groups, though we would need to see this trend confirmed in later provincial elections to substantiate this theory.

4.4.2 Germany A decline in turnout in Germany at the Lænder electoral level may have significant implications for the representation of certain parties, particularly since the 5% threshold is in operation. A party of the far right, for example, which has a relatively small but strongly committed electoral base may benefit when turnout in an election is low and less committed voters abstain. In general, turnout levels have proved to be relatively consistent throughout the Lænder and have steadily remained around the 75% - 85% mark throughout the post-war period - a figure which one may expect to witness in national elections and which suggests that the German electorate identify Lænder government as being politically significant. The lowest single case for turnout prior to the 1990s was 62.2% in Lower Saxony (1947) whilst the highest was 92.9% in West Berlin (1958). For more recent elections the figures are 65.2% (Hamburg in

1991) and 82.4% (the Saarland in 1990) respectively. Table 4.3 demonstrates changing patterns of turnout for selected German L ander across a range of elections. Since elections in each L ander do not follow an identical timetable, cases have been chosen over the post-war time span when elections occurred in the same year in several L ander in order to demonstrate the general fluctuations in turnout.

Table 4.3 - Trends in Turnout (%) in General Elections and Selected L ander Elections in Germany - 1950 - 1991

	YEAR OF ELECTION							
	1950	1967	1969	1978	1980	1990	1991	1994
Bundestag	-	-	86.7	-	88.6	78.6	-	79.1
<i>Land</i>								
Bavaria	79.9	-	-	76.6	-	65.9	-	68.0
Bremen	-	76.1	-	-	-	-	71.3	-
Hamburg	-	-	-	75.8	-	-	65.2	-
Hessen	64.9	-	-	87.7	-	-	70.8	-
Lower Saxony	-	78.0	-	78.0	-	74.6	-	73.8
Saarland	-	-	-	-	-	79.9	-	83.5

Source: University of Plymouth Elections Database, Paterson & Southern, 1991: 185.

The range in turnout figures presented in Table 4.3 demonstrate that turnout varies considerably between L ander, both within the same year and across time across particular Land. We cannot offer a single simple explanation, but turnout may be related to election timing (see Chapter One, section 1.5) The apparent decline in turnout by the 1990s is reinforced by two cases of L ander elections in 1992 held in Schleswig-Holstein and Baden-Wurtemberg where turnout was 71.2% and 69.3% respectively (though this was not always the case in the 1994 Land elections). If the lower levels of turnout that appeared in the examples chosen for 1991 appear to be typical of expected turnout levels, we may be witnessing a trend of declining turnout which may be significant for the emergence and growth of small parties at the L ander level in Germany.

Is there evidence that declining turnout in German L ander elections has affected the overall representation of the main parties? As with other countries, it is first necessary to identify the 'main' parties. The main parties in Germany can be identified as the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister-party the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Social Democrat Party (SPD), the Free Democratic Party (FDP), and the Green Party (Die Gr unen) (Poguntke & B oll in Katz & Mair 1992). By comparing the main party share of the vote for various L ander over a series of elections in Table 4.4 we can see that, in general, their shares of the vote had increased and were exceptionally high - thus reinforcing Conradt's claim outlined earlier (section 4.3.2) that regional parties which were significant in the early post-war period have almost disappeared.

Table 4.4 - Combined Vote-Share (%) for the Main Parties in German L ander Elections, 1950-1990.

LAND	YEAR OF ELECTION		
	1950	1978	1990
Bavaria	55.4	96.7	92.5
Hamburg	-	93.9	-
Hessen	95.0	96.9	-
North-Rhine Westphalia	-	-	97.6
Saarland	-	-	96.1
Lower Saxony	-	-	97.2
West Berlin	-	-	82.9

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

Table 4.4 demonstrates that the main parties tend to dominate elections at the L ander level and have increasingly done so in the post-war period, though the figures would be different if we had chosen not to include the Greens as a main party. Although small compared to the CDU and SPD, the Greens had become a significant coalition partner by the early 1990s and now frequently outpoll the FDP. The most significant example of

main party decline in electoral support is West Berlin, where the main parties secured only 82.9% of the vote in 1990 - far lower than in previous elections in West Berlin and indeed other L ander. The explanation for the decline in this Land is related to the success of parties more generally associated with the former East German states - particularly the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and the B undnis 90/Gr une coalition. In other L ander, the much smaller rate of decline in the combined main party vote is more frequently linked to a growth in support for the far right (see Chapters Three and Five). This may be little more than a temporary electoral blip which can be accounted for as a 'protest vote' (see Chapter One section 1.5), although it may also be the case that we are witnessing a genuine process of electoral decline for the main German parties at the sub-national level which is not yet as strong as in the Netherlands.

4.4.3 Ireland Sinnott (1995: 88) suggests that turnout in local elections is relatively high because these elections are an important launch pad for progression into Dail and Senate elections. Local election turnout in the Irish Republic is on average lower than that for national elections - peaking in 1967 at 69%, and turnout in both has declined since the late 1970s. The average turnout in national elections had fallen from 75.7% in 1977 to 68.5% in 1989. Similarly, average turnout at the county council elections fell from 62.5% in 1979 to 55.1% in 1991, though of course this is still considerably higher than average turnout figures for county council elections in Great Britain. What is of interest, however, is the range in turnout between counties. Table 4.5 identifies two counties/county boroughs with the two highest and lowest turnouts respectively for the County Council Elections held in 1985 and 1991.

Table 4.5 - Trends in Turnout (%) for Irish General and County Council Elections, 1985 and 1991, and Related Councillor and Electorate Ratios for 1991.

TYPE OF ELECTION	YEAR		COUNCILLOR-ELECTOR RATIO 1991
	1987	1989	
General Election	72.7	68.5	
County Council	1985	1991	
Leitrim	81.9	75.2	1:936
Roscommon	75.4	72.5	1:1475
Dun Laoghaire	44.7	41.7	1:5036
Dublin County Borough	42.1	42.2	1:6893

Source: Department of Environment, Dublin. Chubb 1992: 79. University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

The figures represented in Table 4.5 suggest a rural-urban difference exists in turnout with electoral participation higher in rural areas - especially if we add that five of the six cases of lowest turnout are in and around Dublin itself. What is of most interest is the range in turnout. In 1985, for example, the county with the largest turnout, Leitrim, is almost twice that in the County Borough of Dublin. What may also be of relevance to an analysis of turnout is not only the rural-urban divide but also electoral area size. Chubb suggests that; "It is probably the sense of community, together with easier canvassing and a perceived obligation for social reasons in small communities to be seen to vote, that explains the higher turnout" (Chubb 1992: 281). If we compare the ratio of councillors to the size of the electorate in the counties listed for 1991 in Table 4.5, the figures endorse the view that turnout in county elections is related to a sense of locality and community. Councillors in the County and County Borough of Dublin effectively represent at least five to six times more voters than councillors in the county of Leitrim.

Is there evidence to suggest that declining turnout has affected party support? Since the 1920s, party politics in the Republic of Ireland has been dominated by three main

parties - Fianna Fail (FF), Fine Gael (FG) and the Labour Party (LAB) (Chubb 1992: 95). If we compare changing electoral support for these parties within the county of Leitrim and the county borough of Dublin between the 1974 and 1991 elections and with their support in general elections held between 1973 and 1989, we find the following patterns:

Table 4.6 - Changes in the Combined Party Vote-Share (%) for the Main Parties in Selected General Elections and in Leitrim County and Dublin County Borough Elections, 1973 - 1991.

	YEAR		
	1973	1987	1989
General Election	95.0	78.0	83.0
	1974	1985	1991
Leitrim	85.8	79.9	78.8
Dublin	77.7	80.8	61.8

Source: Department of Environment, Dublin. Chubb 1992: 95.

We can see from Table 4.6 that there have been significant shifts in main party support in both Leitrim and Dublin, though this obviously has little to do with the turnout in county and county borough elections. In Leitrim, Fine Gael has lost considerable support since the mid 1970s which has benefitted both Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein. In Dublin, the main parties share of the vote declined by almost 16% between 1974 and 1991. The primary explanation for this relates to the increase in the number of participating parties. Support for Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour Party has declined to the benefit of the smaller parties - namely Sinn Fein, the Workers Party, the Progressive Democrats and the Green Party.

4.4.4 - Uncontested Elections

An analysis of turnout will usually compare the difference between elections where

turnout is compulsory and voluntary. Some elections require no turnout at all - these being uncontested elections. While uncontested elections are extremely rare under PR, this is not necessarily the case in British sub-national elections. In the previous section we discussed main party support and turnout. In this section we will determine where uncontested elections are likely to occur. It is not unusual in British elections to see reference to 'uncontested elections', though these are far more likely to occur in Wales than elsewhere. This section of analysis will briefly outline the pattern of uncontested elections in county council elections in 1989 and 1993 for England and Wales, and regional elections in 1990 and 1994 for Scotland to demonstrate how the likelihood of uncontested elections is decreasing.

Table 4.7 - The Frequency of Uncontested Seats in County Council and Regional Council Elections in Britain, 1989 - 1994.

COUNTRY	YEAR	UNCONTESTED SEATS	%AGE OF SEATS UNCONTESTED
England	1989	64	2.1
	1993	60	2.0
Wales	1989	145	28.8
	1993	111	22.1
Scotland	1990	38	8.5
	1994	29	6.4

Sources: Rallings & Thrasher 1993b. Bochel & Denver 1994.

From the figures in Table 4.7, we can deduce that uncontested elections are least likely to occur in English County Council elections, with only 2.1% and 2.0% of seats uncontested in the 1989 and 1993 elections respectively. Although uncontested elections appear to cover much of the geographic spread of England, there is a higher concentration in a few counties. In 1989, for example, there were 12 uncontested seats in Durham, 9 in Cornwall, and 9 in Northumberland. These counties still accounted for the majority of uncontested seats in the 1993 election - 9 in Durham, 10 in Cornwall

and 12 in Northumberland.

The picture of uncontested seats in Wales is much more widespread. Only the county of South Glamorgan had fully contested elections in 1989 and 1993. The largest case of non-contestation in both elections occurred in Powys, where 67.4% and 56.5% of seats remained uncontested in 1989 and 1993 respectively. Non-contestation is also a limited feature of Scottish regional elections. Only 8.5% and 6.4% of seats were uncontested in the 1990 and 1994 elections respectively. Furthermore, we can identify a specifically geographic trend to uncontested seats. In 1990, for example, a total of 48% of seats in the Highland region were unchallenged, as were 31.4% of the seats in Dumfries and Galloway. Two regions had only a single uncontested seat - these being Fife and the Borders. Every seat was contested in the remaining five regions. In 1993, the number of regions experiencing non-contestation had been reduced to three. The Highlands was again the region with the highest level of non-contestation (31.5% of seats). In Dumfries and Galloway 20% of seats were uncontested and in the Borders 18.5% of seats (5 seats) remained uncontested. Hence we can see that whilst the frequency of uncontested seats is gradually declining we are still able to identify regional concentrations where they are more likely to occur. We will now focus our analysis upon specific electoral rules and features which may affect small party representation - beginning with district magnitude.

4.5 - District Magnitude and Proportionality

In Chapter Two we concluded that research at the national electoral level had stressed the significance of district magnitude in relation to general representation and overall proportionality. It appeared that the smaller the district magnitude and the greater the number of competing parties, the more likely disproportionality was to occur. We will

now examine whether this is also the case at the sub-national level using data from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Ireland and Great Britain to reflect diversity in district magnitude at different electoral levels and differences in electoral systems in order to assess which parties are likely to be most affected by variations in district magnitude.

4.5.1 The Netherlands As was mentioned in Section 4.2.1, the most notable change in district magnitude in the Netherlands occurred with the creation of a new directly elected province - Flevoland in 1985. The overall pattern of change in relation to the number of seats available in each province is reflected in Table 4.8:

Table 4.8 - Changes in District Magnitude in Dutch Provincial Elections, 1958 - 1991.

<i>PROVINCE</i>	<i>1958</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>1991</i>
Drenthe	35	47	51
Utrecht	41	59	63
Zeeland	42	47	47
Groningen	45	55	55
Limburg	45	63	63
Overijssel	47	59	63
Freisland	50	55	55
Gelderland	62	71	75
North Brabant	64	75	79
North Holland	77	79	79
South Holland	82	83	83
Flevoland	-	-	43
<i>Total</i>	<i>590</i>	<i>693</i>	<i>756</i>

Source: Nederlands Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

We can see from Table 4.8 that all provinces have increased in district magnitude, although the small provinces appear to have increased at a greater rate than larger provinces. To what extent has this been reflected by differences in the proportionality of elections held in the smallest and largest provinces? By applying our measures of proportionality (outlined in Section 4.1) to examples of both small and large provinces

over three sets of elections we find the following:

Table 4.9 - Measures of Disproportionality for Three Sets of Provincial Elections Held in Zeeland and South Holland, 1958-1991.

Proportionality Indices	Zeeland			South Holland		
	1958	1974	1991	1958	1974	1991
Loosemore Hanby	2.1	5.1	2.3	1.9	3.1	3.8
Least Squares	1.3	2.5	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.8
Sainte Lague	1.5	4.0	1.0	0.8	0.9	3.3

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

The measures of disproportionality shown in Table 4.9 tend to suggest that (i) the electoral system adopted at the provincial level in the Netherlands is in general highly proportional, and (ii) that proportionality has slightly decreased in most cases since 1958 (the main exception being Zeeland where disproportionality rose considerably in 1974 then declined again by 1991). Since the Loosemore Hanby figure is the highest in every case in both provinces we can also claim that disproportionality tends to derive from numerous cases of small vote-seat differences rather than a few larger discrepancies, and this is related to the actual number of parties participating in each election. A consideration of similar data from the other provinces follows a similar pattern, as all the indices measurements tend to be low. We have evidence to suggest, therefore, that district magnitude alone in Dutch provincial elections has little direct effect upon disproportionality generally, as even the lowest case of district magnitude (e.g. Zeeland in 1991) is large enough to produce low levels of disproportionality. We must bear in mind, however, that the 47 seats in the province of Zeeland is high compared to the district magnitude of Dutch gemeenten which we will consider later.

If we reconsider Table 4.9, we can identify an important exception in the disproportionality measures in the 1991 provincial elections. As all three measures of

disproportionality are lower in Zeeland than in South Holland we must assume that disproportionality is not a result of district magnitude alone. The explanation behind disproportionality lies with the number of elected parties in each province. In Zeeland, for example, all eight competing parties won seats. In South Holland, however, only eight of the thirteen competing parties won seats. Five parties polled a share of the vote of 1% or less - hence the Loosemore Hanby measure is 3.8 and higher than usual for South Holland in 1991. This result of higher disproportionality in a province with much higher district magnitude is significant for our analysis of which electoral features are most salient to disproportionality. Whilst a very small district magnitude may be a particular impediment to proportionality (see the analysis in this section of Belgium and Ireland), in large district magnitudes a combination of the number of parties and the seat distribution method becomes increasingly significant, particularly when there are numerous parties polling a very small share of the vote. Since large district magnitude may encourage small parties to participate, district magnitude alone may not be a sufficient guarantee of proportionality.

4.5.2 Germany As with provinces in the Netherlands, there is a significant variation in Landtag size across the West German Länder, and it will be interesting to witness whether there is a variation in proportionality between the smallest and largest Länder. We have applied our indices of proportionality to various land elections held since the 1980s to reflect the diversity in district magnitude.

Table 4.10 - Measures of Disproportionality for Selected Land Elections Held in Germany, 1981-1992.

<i>LAND</i>	<i>SEATS</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>	<i>YEAR</i>
Saarland	51	6.6	4.6	7.0	1990
Schleswig-Holstein	89	7.0	5.0	7.1	1992
Bremen	100	4.1	2.6	3.7	1991
Hessen	110	2.9	2.4	2.8	1991
Hamburg	121	4.3	2.3	4.5	1991
Berlin	133	1.7	1.1	1.1	1981
Bavaria	204	9.3	7.0	10.3	1986
North-Rhine Westphalia	237	2.5	1.8	2.6	1990

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

As with our analysis of provincial elections in the Netherlands, Table 4.10 provides little evidence to suggest that proportionality is directly linked to assembly size alone in the German L ander. In the large Land, the disproportionality measures are generally low, though we can see in the smaller states that Schleswig-Holstein displays a higher level of disproportionality than the Saarland despite its larger assembly size. The most extreme case of disproportionality occurred in Bavaria in 1986 which, despite the high assembly size, displays a much higher level of disproportionality for all three measures than elections elsewhere. Assembly size alone, therefore, is not a sufficient explanation of disproportionality in Germany at the regional level. In relation to disproportionality itself, the Loosemore Hanby figure in every case is higher than the Least Squares measure. We can assume from this that disproportionality tends to derive from numerous cases of small vote-seat differences (which would be partly created by the use of the 5% threshold) rather than a few larger discrepancies. Also notable is the higher level of disproportionality registered by the Sainte Lague Index compared to the Least Squares measures. The latter measures absolute differences between vote-seat shares, whereas Sainte Lague identifies differences in ratio. Hence the relative differences in representation between parties is greater than the initially observed absolute

difference. Gallagher claims that:

"... the largest single contributor to disproportionality as measured by the Sainte Lague index comes from the small parties and 'Others' who win no seats. If every group for which a vote total is reported wins a seat, the result looks much more proportional." (Gallagher 1991: 47)

As our analysis of the Bavarian Landtag election of 1986 represented in Table 4.11 shows, 'Others' gained a total share of the vote of 5.4% but no seats. This should not be a surprising outcome even for a PR system, especially one that operates a 5% threshold for representation. It does mean, however, that the Least Squares measure for 'others' of 29.2 is significant enough to provide a high overall disproportionality measure, as is the obvious over representation of the CSU in this case (receiving a 7% greater share of the seats than its share of the votes).

Table 4.11 - The Bavarian Land Election 1986 - Comparing Vote Shares, Seat Shares and Measurements of Disproportionality

MEASURES	PARTY					TOTAL
	CSU	SPD	Grüne	FDP	Others	
Votes %	55.8	27.5	7.5	3.8	5.4	100
Seats %	62.8	29.9	7.3	-	-	100
Loosemore Hanby	6.9	2.4	0.1	3.8	5.4	9.3
Least Square	48.2	5.8	0.0	14.4	29.2	7.0
Sainte Lague	0.9	0.2	0.0	3.8	5.4	10.3

Source: Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik und Datenverarbeitung. University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

A further factor which affects assembly size and disproportionality occurs when Länder are broken down into smaller electoral districts. Lijphart acknowledges the fact that:

In PR systems, proportionality - and the chances for small parties to gain representation - are necessarily very limited when there are only two or three representatives per district. (Lijphart 1994a: 11)

A valid analysis of proportionality should, therefore, include assembly size, number of districts and average district magnitude (assuming assembly size and district magnitude are not the same). In relation to those Land outlined in Table 4.10, North-Rhine Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg are all treated as one electoral district, thereby providing district magnitudes of 237, 89 and 121 respectively. Yet in the City state of Bremen, there are 2 electoral districts - Bremen has 80 seats and Bremenhaven 20, a division which may have a small effect upon proportionality. Finally, the Saarland has 41 of its 51 seats divided between 3 districts. Overall proportionality, however, should not be affected by this since the remaining 10 seats are supplementary seats (see Chapter Two section 2.2.2) used as a proportionality safety-net for the Land as a whole. We can see from Table 4.10 that disproportionality for the Loosemore Hanby and Sainte Lague indices were especially high in the Saarland and must assume that without the use of supplementary seats it would be higher, as only three parties passed the 5% threshold (the CDU, the SPD and the FDP). As such, we are still no closer to proving a positive correlation between assembly size, district magnitude and proportionality in German Lænder elections and in later sections we will consider other electoral features operating in Germany which may affect proportionality.

4.5.3 Ireland In the Republic of Ireland, counties and county boroughs do not operate as single electoral districts - therefore assembly size is not equal to district magnitude. We will first analyze the overall proportionality of the smallest and largest counties and county borough councils before considering the impact of smaller district magnitudes.

Table 4.12 - Council Size and Proportionality in Irish County and County Borough Councils, 1991.

<i>COUNTIES</i>	<i>SEATS</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>
Monaghan	20	5.0	3.8	2.9
Cork	48	11.5	6.6	9.2
<i>COUNTY BOROUGHES</i>				
Galway	15	11.2	7.2	10.7
Dublin	52	13.9	8.4	10.5

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: Local Elections 1991, Dublin. University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

Table 4.12 shows that there is no correlation between overall council size and proportionality. In fact, the very reverse has occurred as almost all disproportionality measures are greater where more seats are available. This could be for two reasons; (i) the STV system itself is prone to create situations of disproportionality and (ii) the allocation of seats via smaller electoral areas effectively limits the possibility of true proportionality occurring. This second point is crucial for our analysis of district magnitude and proportionality. The county of Monaghan, for example, consists of four 'local areas', ranging in size from four to six members. In Cork, there are eight local areas with between four and seven seats. For the respective county boroughs, there are three local areas in Galway ranging between three and seven seats, whilst in Dublin there are a total of twelve areas with a range of three to five seats. This, therefore, shows that district magnitude remains relatively small despite the overall size of the county or county borough, and at least partly explains why disproportionality does not correlate with the total number of seats available. It is more appropriate to conclude that where the distribution of seats is determined within smaller electoral divisions, only the larger parties within each electoral area are likely to receive the majority of the seats. If we compare overall party shares of the votes and seats for the counties of

Monaghan and Cork, for example we can identify the effect that seat distribution has within several small areas.

Table 4.13 - Party Vote and Seat Shares (%) and Measures of Disproportionality for County Council Elections in Monaghan and Cork, 1991.

	PARTY									
<i>Monaghan</i>	<i>FF</i>	<i>FG</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>WP</i>	<i>Total</i>				
Votes%	40.1	32.8	13.9	12.2	1.0	100				
Seats%	40.0	35.0	10.0	15.0	-	100				
Loosemore Hanby	0.1	2.2	3.9	2.8	1.0	5.0				
Least Squares	0.0	4.8	15.2	7.8	1.0	3.8				
Sainte Lague	0.0	0.2	1.1	0.6	1.0	2.9				
<i>Cork</i>	<i>FF</i>	<i>FG</i>	<i>LAB</i>	<i>PD</i>	<i>WP</i>	<i>Gr.</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Votes%	36.6	35.4	6.1	5.5	4.3	2.2	0.4	9.6	100.1	
Seats%	39.6	41.7	8.3	2.1	2.1	-	-	6.3	100	
Loosemore Hanby	3.0	6.3	2.2	3.4	2.2	2.2	0.4	3.4	11.5	
Least Squares	8.9	39.3	5.0	11.7	4.9	4.8	0.2	11.2	6.6	
Sainte Lague	0.2	1.1	0.8	2.1	1.1	2.2	0.4	1.2	9.2	

Source: Local Elections 1991, Dublin. University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

Table 4.13 demonstrates that disproportionality was more likely to occur in Cork for two reasons. First, whilst the vote and seat shares for each party in Monaghan were relatively close, disparity was greater in Cork - the most significant of which was Fine Gael which received a 6.3% larger share of the seats than its share of the votes. Second, there were more parties in the Cork elections, thereby increasing the number of occasions in which disproportionality could occur. A total of five parties were under-represented in the Cork election - their collective share of the vote of 22% resulting in a total 10.5% share of the seats (two being totally unrepresented). As such, district magnitude is significant in Ireland as we are presented with electoral divisions which are closer to a multi-seat plurality situation than the PR elections operating at the Dutch Provincial and German Land levels. From our evidence produced when studying Ireland, we can claim that district magnitude does appear to increase in significance as a feature affecting disproportionality when the number of seats available

is below 10.

4.5.4 Belgium: Our analysis of district magnitude in Belgium will focus upon the lowest sub-national level where district magnitude is much smaller than in Dutch provinces and German Lænder, but larger than for county council elections in Ireland. Due to the sheer number of communes and gemeenten, we will compare only a handful of the smallest and largest municipalities. For the Wallonian and Flanders region the proportionality for district magnitudes of 9 seats has been compared with district magnitudes of 47 seats or more.

Table 4.14 - Proportionality Measures for the Smallest and Largest Municipalities by Region in Belgium, 1976 and 1988.

FLANDERS

<i>SEATS</i>	<i>MUNICIPAL</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>Loosemore Hanby</i>	<i>Least Squares</i>	<i>Sainte Laque</i>
9	Mesen	1976	13.6	12.4	16.4
9	Horbeke	1976	10.2	10.2	4.7
47	Brugge	1976	6.3	3.9	5.6
55	Antwerpen	1976	7.5	4.4	7.3
9	Mesen	1988	3.8	3.6	1.2
9	Horbeke	1988	12.4	8.3	11.2
47	Brugge	1988	8.3	4.8	5.1
47	Antwerpen	1988	4.8	2.7	4.1

WALLONIA

<i>SEATS</i>	<i>MUNICIPAL</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>Loosemore Hanby</i>	<i>Least Squares</i>	<i>Sainte Laque</i>
9	Tellin	1976	6.0	5.9	2.1
9	Tinlot	1976	11.7	10.3	13.6
51	Liege	1976	6.5	4.1	5.0
51	Charleroi	1976	4.6	3.4	2.9
9	Tellin	1988	4.4	1.2	4.0
9	Tinlot	1988	15.6	13.5	14.7
51	Liege	1988	8.1	4.8	6.6
51	Charleroi	1988	8.8	6.8	6.5

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum, University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

The data presented for two regions in Table 4.14 again suggests that electoral proportionality is determined by far more complex factors than district magnitude alone. There appears to be little consistency in proportionality measurements, both between communes and gemeenten with similar district magnitude or indeed within each municipality between elections. In Flanders, the proportionality measures for the two largest gemeenten remain relatively consistent, although in the 1988 election disproportionality is still higher in Brugge than in the much smaller gemeenten of Mesen. The same observations apply to communes in Wallonia, and the much higher disproportionality measures for the municipalities of Liege and Charleroi than in Tellin in 1988 again reinforce the claim that district magnitude alone is not a primary cause of disproportionality in Belgian local elections. Since there is no institutional thresholds constraining representation, we must presume that other factors such as the number of competing parties and the seat distribution system are responsible for these variations in disproportionality.

4.5.5 Great Britain In relation to assembly size and proportionality in Great Britain, Table 4.15 compares the overall proportionality of counties and regions with small and large numbers of seats, using our three measures of proportionality. For the purpose of comparative analysis, two English counties, Welsh counties and Scottish regions have been selected for comparison. Proportionality has been measured at the county/region level as an aggregate for two sets of elections held in 1985 and 1993 in the counties and 1986 and 1994 in the regions.

Table 4.15 - A Comparison of Assembly Size and Proportionality in Selected Counties and Regions 1985-1994.

<i>County/Region</i>	<i>Assembly Size</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>
Fife	46	1986	18.8	16.8	19.6
	46	1994	24.4	17.4	67.7
Powys	53	1985	19.1	15.7	16.5
	46	1993	19.8	15.4	15.8
West Sussex	71	1985	17.8	15.4	14.0
	71	1993	5.4	4.5	2.3
Dyfed	80	1985	17.1	13.4	22.3
	72	1993	15.5	13.3	19.6
Hampshire	102	1985	7.9	6.8	2.3
	102	1993	9.9	8.2	4.7
Strathclyde	103	1986	32.2	26.5	43.5
	104	1994	31.2	26.7	41.4

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

The results presented in Table 4.15 confirm no relationship between assembly size at the county/region level and proportionality in a plurality system. The most proportional county in England is West Sussex in 1993, yet this is an example of a medium sized assembly in our analysis. This result is particularly surprising when we consider the much higher disproportionality measures produced by an overall analysis of West Sussex in 1985 - disproportionality was at least 10 points lower for each measure in 1993 than in 1985. Similarly, the highly disproportional scores in Strathclyde in both elections despite the large number of seats available tends to suggest that the electoral system distorts the representation of parties. We can see in Table 4.16 why this occurred.

Table 4.16 - Party Vote and Seat Shares (%) in the Strathclyde Region - 1986 and 1994.

Year		Lab	SNP	Con	Lib	SDP/LD	Ind	Green	Other
1986	Votes%	52.6	17.5	13.1	7.5	6.7	1.8	0.2	0.5*
	Seats%	84.5	1.9	5.8	4.9	-	2.9	-	-
1994	Votes%	51.5	26.3	10.7	-	8.0	1.8	0.3	1.3*
	Seats%	82.7	6.7	2.9	-	5.8	1.9	-	-

* Others in 1986 = Comm, RCP, RAG, TCRM. In 1994 = SML, Comm, RLP, PPP.

Sources: Bochel & Denver, 1986. Bochel & Denver, 1994.

Table 4.16 demonstrates that the high measures of disproportionality in Strathclyde derive from the significant over representation of the Labour Party in both elections. Nearly all other parties were under represented, although the parties suffering to the greatest degree were the Conservative Party and the Scottish National Party. The slight over representation of Independent candidates in both elections suggests that these candidates were successful in targeting small areas of expected support effectively (or stood for unopposed seats). Thus it is of relatively little use to discuss proportionality and overall sub-national results in plurality systems because the assembly size by no means relates to district magnitude. What is important of course is that what we have been discussing is assembly size and not district magnitude which is usually one seat in Britain. As such, cumulative disparity at the county and regional level is likely to be lower than at the individual electoral division level. Where the district magnitude equals one seat and the number of parties rises, disproportionality will always increase.

We can agree with Taagepera that district magnitude does significantly penalize small parties as it becomes closer to one. The claims made by Rose that the disparity between district magnitude at the national level renders conclusions about proportionality difficult are not true here. We have a sufficient range of district magnitude at various

electoral levels to demonstrate their significance. We can support Lijphart's (1994a) claim that district magnitude is not the strongest determinant of proportionality at the highest sub-national levels e.g. regions, Lænder and provinces. This is not true for counties and regions in Great Britain though, where district magnitude is equal to one seat and not the overall number of seats in the authority.

We could, however, also support claims made by Rae (1967) and Taagepera and Shugart (1989) that district magnitude is a strong determinant of proportionality for elections held at the communal level in the smallest communes (e.g. 10 seats and below), in Irish county and county borough elections, and in British local elections. What we have demonstrated in this section is that (i) district magnitude becomes a more apparent cause of disproportionality when it is low (i.e. below 10 seats), and (ii) at the land and provincial level where district magnitude is significantly higher other factors become more important to proportionality. District magnitude does not, therefore, operate in an electoral vacuum. As the number of available seats increase, the number of participating parties may also increase - a factor which will also influence disproportionality. In order to understand disproportionality more clearly, it is necessary to analyze other electoral features such as electoral thresholds and the effects of specific electoral formulæ.

4.6 - The Impact of *De Jure* Thresholds upon Proportionality

We demonstrated in Chapter Two that *de jure* thresholds are employed in a handful of European states as a measure to 'block' the excessive representation of very small parties. These are often identified in Germany, for example, as being parties of the far right. There also operates (in all countries) a higher *de facto* threshold which varies in relation to a number of factors. The important factor to bear in mind about any *de jure*

threshold is that it is an exclusion clause, rather than guaranteeing inclusion, and as such we may identify cases where parties that exceed the threshold still remain unrepresented. In this section we will focus upon Germany only.

4.6.1 Germany In order to analyse the impact of *de jure* thresholds upon proportionality, Lænder elections which produce an overall high level of disproportionality have been chosen for analysis, and the focus will be upon the highest share of the vote for a party not winning a seat. A significant level of disproportionality will be assumed to occur when at least two of the measures have a disproportionality score of 10 or more. Table 4.17 outlines elections in which we can identify high measures of disproportionality. Columns 3-5 refer to the measures of disproportionality, whilst columns 2 and 6 register the share of the vote and the parties which were the largest to be unrepresented.

Table 4.17 - A Comparison of Measures of Disproportionality and the Highest Vote for a Non-Seat Winning Party, Germany Land Elections 1947-1988.

<i>Lænder</i>	<i>Vote %</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Year</i>
Bremen	5.3	10.4	7.3	11.2	Others	1983
Hamburg	4.8	10.9	7.0	12.3	FDP	1978
Hessen	5.0	14.4	11.8	11.4	Others	1950
Saarland	4.4	11.4	7.2	12.8	FDP/DPS	1970
Schleswig Holstein	7.9	17.6	14.4	20.5	Others	1947
	4.4	10.6	6.9	11.7	FDP	1988
West Berlin	4.9	12.2	7.0	13.9	DP	1954

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

Table 4.17 demonstrates that for all those cases where a specific party is named (as opposed to the group 'others'), that party's share of the vote is below the 5% threshold and as such we can tentatively suggest at this stage that this legislative constraint has had an impact upon the proportionality of the Lænder elections. For the three cases in

which the share of the vote is 5% or more we face a problem in that this share represents 'others' and as such we do not know the number of parties/candidates this includes or their actual individual shares of the vote. Yet a closer examination of the Hamburg elections in Table 4.18 highlights the strict effect that the 5% rule can have upon proportionality, especially for parties which are very close to but below the threshold.

Table 4.18 - A Comparison of the Main Party Vote & Seat Shares and Measures of Proportionality - Hamburg Land Elections, 1978 and 1991.

YEAR		PARTIES			
1978	Votes %	<i>CDU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>FDP</i>	
	Seats %	37.6	51.5	4.8	
		42.5	57.5	-	
Total Disproportionality:		Least Squares = 7.0		Sainte Lague = 12.3	
Loosemore Hanby = 10.9					
1991	Votes %	<i>CDU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>GRUNE</i>	<i>FDP</i>
	Seats %	35.1	48.0	7.2	5.4
		36.4	50.4	7.4	5.8
Total Disproportionality:		Least Squares = 2.3		Sainte Lague = 4.5	
Loosemore Hanby = 4.3					

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

Table 4.18 emphasises the significance that a 0.6% share of the vote increase between 1978 and 1991 made for the FDP and proportionality in general. A 4.8% share of the vote in 1978 left the FDP unrewarded, but in 1991 a share of the vote of 5.4% not only secured seven seats in the Hamburg Landtag for the FDP, but also left it slightly over-represented. As such, the 5% threshold in this instance can be seen to have had a significant effect upon the overall proportionality of Hamburg Landtag elections.

Furthermore, by comparing three elections held in Bavaria we can demonstrate that the

5% threshold is one of exclusion rather than one of inclusion. Table 4.19 compares each party's share of the vote and seats with the overall proportionality for each election.

Table 4.19 - A Comparison of the Main Party Share of the Votes and Seats and Measures of Proportionality - Bavarian Land Elections, 1946 (December), 1962 & 1966.

YEAR		PARTIES				
1946	Votes %	CSU	SPD	WAV	KPD	FDP
	Seats %	52.3	28.6	7.4	6.1	5.7
		57.8	30.0	7.2	-	5.0
Total Disproportionality:						
Loosemore Hanby = 6.9		Least Squares = 5.9	Sainte Lague = 6.8			
1962	Votes %	CSU	SPD	FDP	GDP	Others
	Seats %	47.5	35.3	5.9	5.1	6.2
		52.9	38.7	4.4	-	3.9
Total Disproportionality:						
Loosemore Hanby = 8.9		Least Squares = 6.1	Sainte Lague = 7.3			
1966	Votes %	CSU	SPD	NPD	FDP	Others
	Seats %	48.1	35.8	7.4	5.1	3.6
		53.9	38.7	7.4	-	-
Total Disproportionality:						
Loosemore Hanby = 8.7		Least Squares = 6.4	Sainte Lague = 9.6			

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

The elections of 1962 and 1966 demonstrate that when parties with 5.1% share of the vote are unrepresented this does not necessarily succeed in raising the disproportionality measures to a level that we can judge as being particularly significant for Germany (e.g. above 10). The example of the 1946 election, where the KPD secured 6.1% votes but no seats in fact produces the lowest measure of disproportionality (because the proportionality between every other party's vote and seat shares is much less than in subsequent elections). By considering the extent to which the largest parties are over represented in all three elections, we can conclude

that an increasing gap in the vote to seat ratios is likely to have a stronger effect on the measurement of disproportionality than the 5% threshold rule. The elections held in 1946 and 1962 show that disproportionality is lower when the vote-seat ratio is close despite the impact of the threshold rule. Whilst the use of a (5%) threshold may have important implications for small parties (see Chapter Five) it does not appear significantly to affect overall proportionality within Lænder elections, possibly because large district magnitude creates an opportunity for disproportionality in small areas to be balanced out by other factors. Small parties at the higher electoral levels, therefore, tend to be primarily hindered by the 5% threshold rather than the availability of seats in the first instance. We will now consider the more frequent occurrence of *de facto* thresholds.

4.7 - De Facto Thresholds and Proportionality

We suggested in Chapter Two that it is often more appropriate to analyze small party representation in terms of the restrictions created by *de facto* thresholds. *De facto* thresholds do not operate at a constant share of the vote level as is the case with *de jure* thresholds, but vary depending upon (i) the number of seats available, (ii) the number of parties competing, and (iii) the distribution of the votes. In order to assess the general impact of *de facto* thresholds upon representation in sub-national elections we will consider a cross section of examples taken from the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland.

4.7.1 The Netherlands If we consider the share of the vote for the largest party not to win a seat in each province in the 1991 Dutch provincial elections, we find the range as follows:

Table 4.20 - Comparing the Highest Share Of The Vote (%) For A Party Not Winning A Seat, 1991 Dutch Provincial Elections by Province.

<i>PROVINCE</i>	<i>VOTES %</i>	<i>PARTY</i>	<i>PROVINCE</i>	<i>VOTES %</i>	<i>PARTY</i>
Flevoland	1.9	CD	Gelderland	0.6	CD & SP & LPG
Drenthe	1.7	SGP/RPF	North Brabant	0.6	DG
Groningen	1.2	SP	Freisland	0.5	CD
Limburg	1.2	SP	North Holland	0.4	CP86
South Holland	1.0	SP	Overijssel	0.4	SP
Utrecht	0.8	SP			

Source: Nederlands Centraal Bureauvoor de Statistiek.

We can see from Table 4.20 that the percentages in general are extremely low - below 2% in every case - the highest case is in the Flevoland province. These results are in fact consistent with earlier provincial elections, and also our findings expressed earlier, that only very small parties are excluded from representation. Not only does this suggest that the Dutch system of PR in provincial elections is one of extreme proportionality, but it also suggests that parties will only be dissuaded from standing at the provincial level if they realize that their support-base is potentially very low. As was shown in section 4.5, however, as other electoral features become more significant, large district magnitudes generally have little significant impact upon proportionality, and therefore it may be more useful to compare this *de facto* threshold with those for other countries using PR systems, but operating at lower electoral levels and employing smaller district magnitudes.

4.7.2 Belgium Belgium is also a country that does not apply a formal threshold to its PR electoral system. We have already stated in Chapter Two (section 2.3.3c) that the Imperiali method of seat distribution tends to benefit the larger parties. We can thus expect to identify *de facto* thresholds operating in municipal elections, and it is probable that such thresholds will be higher than those in the Netherlands at the provincial level

due to the influence of lower district magnitudes. Other data relevant to this analysis is the number of competing parties. In any election, the number of votes required for a party to secure a seat increases as the district magnitude decreases. Similarly, as the number of parties participating in each election increases the probability of every party gaining representation decreases. In cases where there are numerous non represented parties and the *de facto* threshold is particularly low, this will only have an adverse affect upon certain proportionality measures (primarily Loosemore Hanby). We are, therefore, more interested in one party not being represented when its share of the vote is higher than, say, the 2% threshold that we established exists in Dutch provincial elections to establish differences in the *de facto* thresholds.

By comparing the district magnitude (DM) with the number of competing and number of elected parties for the 1988 elections in three gemeenten in the province of North Brabant we can observe the effects upon proportionality. The findings are outlined in Table 4.21:

Table 4.21 - A Comparison of District Magnitude, Competing Parties, Elected Parties and Proportionality Measures for Three North Brabant Gemeenten, 1988.

<i>Gemeenten</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>No. Parties</i>	<i>No. Elected</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>
Bever	9	3	2	15.0	13.4	12.5
Haacht	21	5	4	10.0	7.3	8.5
Dilbeek	33	7	5	9.3	5.6	7.8

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum, University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

We can see from Table 4.21 that (i) disproportionality increases as some parties are unelected, but (ii) there is not a direct relationship between the number of unelected parties and disproportionality. Hence, other factors must also be important - such as

the district magnitude and the distribution of votes. In the gemeenten of Bever where district magnitude is low, the unsuccessful party in 1988 was AGALEV which polled a 4.1% share of the vote. The largest non-seat winning party in Haacht (with medium district magnitude) was AGALEV with a 6.1% share of the vote, and the *de facto* threshold thus appears to be larger in Haacht than in Bever. The lower measures of disproportionality in Haacht, however, suggest that the seat distribution method is actually a more important influence on proportionality, and it is probable that the largest party in Bever was considerably over-rewarded with seats due to the effects of the Imperiali system. We can see from Table 4.21 that in the gemeenten of Dilbeek which has a large district magnitude two parties were unrepresented, yet the largest non represented party was AGALEV which polled only a 3.9% share of the vote. In larger gemeenten, therefore, the *de facto* threshold does decrease.

These examples demonstrate that the *de facto* threshold decreases as district magnitude increases, but also that a combination of the Imperiali method of seat distribution and the number of elective parties have a notable impact upon the level of disproportionality that occurs in each municipality. The number of elective parties in Bever is in fact low, and it may be the case that AGALEV would have remained unrepresented with a considerably higher vote share than 4.1%. This is confirmed by a comparison with the gemeenten of Zuienkerke in the West Vlaanderen province. In the 1982 gemeenten elections in this municipality the district magnitude was eleven seats and two of the three competing parties were rewarded with seats. The absolute measures of disproportionality were slightly lower than in Bever - the Loosemore-Hanby measure was 12.8 and the Least Squares measure registered 11.3, though the Sainte Lague measure of 14.8 was slightly higher (suggesting that the ratio between the vote and seat shares for the two represented parties was larger in Zuienkerke than in Bever). In Zuienkerke, however, the unrewarded party was the Socialist Party (SP) - polling a

12.8% share of the vote. This suggests that the Imperiali system in a division with low district magnitude has the potential to create a high *de facto* threshold (at least 10% share of the vote) compared to the much lower thresholds in Dutch provincial elections.

We have applied a similar analysis in Table 4.22 to communes in the Belgian provinces of Liege and Namur for the 1988 elections:

Table 4.22 - A Comparison of District Magnitude (DM), Competing Parties, Elected Parties and Proportionality Measures for Communes in Liege and Namur, 1988.

LIEGE						
<i>Communes</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>No Parties</i>	<i>No. Elected</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>
Stoumont	11	3	2	13.0	11.5	15.1
Liege	51	9	5	8.1	4.8	6.6
NAMUR						
<i>Communes</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>No Parties</i>	<i>No. Elected</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>LS</i>	<i>SL</i>
Somme Leuze	11	3	2	10.3	9.0	11.5
Namur	45	6	4	3.7	2.6	2.0

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Ligue

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum. University of Plymouth Elections Database.

A similar pattern emerges as was demonstrated by the previous analysis of Brabant. Disproportionality appears to be significantly larger in the smaller communes despite the fact that fewer parties remain un-represented than in the larger communes. As such, we again have evidence to suggest that the *de facto* threshold is related to the district magnitude. In the Liege commune of Stoumont, for example, the ecology party (ECOLO) remained unrewarded despite polling a 13% share of the vote. By comparison, although four parties were unrepresented in the commune of Liege in 1988, the largest of these were the communists (PCB) which polled only 3% share of the vote. The total 'wasted vote' in Liege in 1988 was a mere 4.7%. Similarly, the unrewarded party in

1988 in the Namur commune of Somme Leuze was the Local List 1 which secured a 10.3% share of the vote, whilst in the commune of Namur the two unrewarded parties each polled below 1% of the vote (*i.e.* the Local List 1 polled 0.8% and the PCB polled a 0.6% share of the vote). By comparing district magnitude, the number of competing and seat winning parties, and the measures of disproportionality for a range of communes and gemeenten in Belgium using the 1988 local elections as a case-study, we can see that there is not always a direct correlation between district magnitude and disproportionality alone. There is, however, a direct correlation between the district magnitude and the *de facto* threshold which affects small party representation. Whilst debates about *de jure* thresholds focus on the arbitrary nature of cut off points, the significance of *de facto* thresholds has to a large extent been overlooked in the literature. We agree with Lijphart (1994a) that they are a significant threshold of exclusion. Small parties must, therefore, learn about how thresholds of exclusion operate if they wish to maximize their electoral opportunities.

4.7.3 Ireland In our PR case studies, we have demonstrated that there exist either *de jure* electoral thresholds to restrict the representation of very small parties, or *de facto* thresholds which derive from the district magnitude and the number of competing parties. We have shown in section 4.5.3 that the use of relatively small electoral areas throughout the Republic of Ireland limits the extent to which proportionality occurs and indeed the smallest electoral areas are probably closer in outcome to the plurality system in multi-member wards than to any PR system. The following examples demonstrate how the use of numerous small electoral districts within each county have created *de facto* thresholds which hinder small party representation.

In the Dublin-Belgard 1985 county elections, for example, one of the 26 available seats was secured by an independent candidate with a 1.4% share of the vote, whilst in the

same elections Sinn Fein received a total share of the vote of 4.6% and remained unrepresented. Since Dublin-Belgard consists of seven electoral areas in all, we can assume that electoral support for the four Sinn Fein candidates was split across the electoral county and no single candidate received high enough support to win a seat. A similar situation has been experienced by the Labour Party in the county of Tipperary N.R, where the 21 council seats are divided into four electoral areas. Two of these seats were secured by non-party candidates with a collective vote of 5.5%. Yet the eight Labour Party candidates secured only one seat despite polling a collective share of the vote of 12.6%. Similar experiences were repeated in the county council elections of 1991. The 26 seats in the electoral county of South Dublin were allocated via no less than seven electoral areas. As a result, an independent candidate with 2.5% of the overall share of the vote secured one seat, whilst the four Sinn Fein candidates who secured an overall share of the vote of 3.7% remained unrepresented.

The use of small electoral divisions (e.g. between three and seven seats) within Irish county council elections therefore weakens the level of proportionality. The use of STV may encourage greater voter participation but the use of electoral areas with a small district magnitude does not necessarily make these elections any more 'proportional' than those for multi-seat wards under a plurality system. The real district magnitude is effectively the size of each electoral area and as such the *de facto* threshold will vary depending on the number of seats available and the number of candidates. As a result, a party fielding several candidates in numerous electoral areas with a scattered level of support is just as susceptible to the 'wasted vote' syndrome as small parties participating in plurality elections. We will next consider the relationship between the seat distribution method and proportionality.

4.8 - The Seat Distribution Method And Proportionality

In this section we will consider the impact upon proportionality of some of the different seat distribution methods within PR and plurality systems. It is well established that plurality works in the interest of the one or two larger parties, and it was suggested in Chapter Two section 2.3.3 that some PR systems operate to the benefit of larger parties. We will consider the implications of the seat distribution method at the sub-national level in Germany and Britain.

4.8.1 Germany: German L ander elections provide a suitable example of different PR methods of seat distribution - namely the d'Hondt and Hare-Niemeyer quota methods. As such we can test the claim made by Gunlicks, as outlined in section 4.2.3, that small parties will perform better under the Hare-Niemeyer method of seat distribution. Taking into consideration the impact of the threshold constraint, it will be of interest to test whether parties gaining at least 5% or more of the vote would receive a different share of the vote when a different method of seat distribution is used. Due to the limitations of the availability of suitable data we will only analyze three elections held in Bavaria (each party's share of the vote is presented in Table 4.19), where the d'Hondt method of seat distribution was used. If Gunlicks' claim is correct, we may see an alteration in the allocation of seats using the Hare-Niemeyer quota method. Table 4.23 compares the number of seats won by each party in 1946, 1962 and 1966 respectively when the d'Hondt seat distribution method was used, and compares these figures with the distribution of seats, should the Hare-Niemeyer method had been employed.

Table 4.23 - Comparing Methods of Seat Distribution for the Bavarian Landtag Elections 1946 (December), 1962 & 1966.

1946					
<i>SEAT METHOD</i>	<i>CSU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>WAV</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>KPD</i>
D'Hondt	104	54	13	9	-
Hare Niemeyer	94	52	13	10	11
1962					
<i>SEAT METHOD</i>	<i>CSU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>GDP</i>	<i>Others</i>
D'Hondt	108	79	9	-	8
Hare Niemeyer	97	72	12	10	13
1966					
<i>SEAT METHOD</i>	<i>CSU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NDP</i>	
D'Hondt	110	79	-	15	
Hare Niemeyer	102	76	11	15	

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

As Table 4.23 demonstrates, a change from the d'Hondt to the Hare-Niemeyer method of seat distribution has a considerable effect for proportionality in general and for small parties in particular - especially those which only just pass the 5% threshold and as such are still too 'small' to qualify for seats under the highest average d'Hondt method. It is clear from the results presented above that the d'Hondt method substantially over-rewards the largest party and that small parties can be severely penalised as a result. It may be the case, however, that there is a political motive for over-rewarding the largest parties in Bavaria - *i.e.* the potential number of coalition possibilities is reduced by using a d'Hondt seat distribution system.

4.8.2 Britain: The cumulative effects at the country level of a plurality electoral system on representation in Great Britain are outlined in table 4.24.

Table 4.24 - Electoral Trends in English and Welsh County and Scottish Regional Elections, 1985 - 1994.

<i>England</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Con</i>	<i>Lab</i>	<i>L/A</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Other</i>
Votes%	1985	38.4	30.0	27.9	2.5		1.2
Seats%		43.6	32.2	20.2	3.3		0.7
Votes%	1993	35.6	31.2	29.3	3.0*	1.0	
Seats%		31.2	37.3	27.8	3.8*	-	

<i>Wales</i>		<i>Con</i>	<i>Lab</i>	<i>L/A</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>PC</i>	<i>Other</i>
Votes%	1985	15.2	45.2	12.9	12.5		8.6	5.6
Seats%		9.1	53.3	6.5	25.7		3.6	1.8
Votes%	1993	12.5	47.1	10.9	13.3*	0.6	15.6	
Seats%		6.4	54.2	6.8	24.3	0.2	8.2	

<i>Scotland</i>		<i>Con</i>	<i>Lab</i>	<i>L/A</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>SNP</i>	<i>Other</i>
Votes%	1986	16.9	43.9	15.1	4.8	18.2	1.1
Seats%		14.6	50.1	9.0	17.8	8.9	0.4
Votes%	1994	13.7	41.8	11.9	4.2	26.8	1.5
Seats%		6.8	48.6	13.7	14.3	16.1	0.4

* Independent and Others classified together.

Sources: Rallings & Thrasher, 1993b. Bochel & Denver, 1994.

Table 4.24 emphasises the markedly disproportionate nature of the seat distribution system of representation in Britain, and we can also see that some parties (e.g. Independents compared to the Conservatives in Wales in 1993, Independents compared to the SNP, and the Liberal/Alliance compared to the Conservatives in Scotland in 1986, and the Independents compared to the Conservatives and Liberal/Alliance in Scotland in 1994) win more seats than parties which appear to have a greater share of the votes - a feature one would not expect to occur under PR. Under plurality systems, a party which is able successfully to concentrate support in targeted seats will gain more effective representation than a party with more votes spread over a larger number of divisions. Yet when the overall results for county and regional elections are viewed in terms of the 'national average' we can see that extreme cases of under and over representation begin to balance each other out. What is the effect of this upon overall proportionality?

Table 4.25 - Disproportionality Measures for the Overall County Council and Regional Council Elections in Britain, 1985-1994.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Loosemore Hanby</i>	<i>Least Squares</i>	<i>Sainte Laque</i>	<i>Total Seats</i>
England				
1985	8.2	6.8	3.5	3005
1993	6.9	5.5	3.0	2998
Wales				
1985	21.3	13.4	26.5	552
1993	18.1	11.8	18.5	502
Scotland				
1986	18.8	13.0	44.1	445
1994	18.7	12.6	34.2	453

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

The disproportionality measures outlined in Table 4.25 are hardly surprising when we compare the results produced by a plurality system as compared to those one would expect under any PR system. The much lower level of disproportionality found in the English counties compared to disproportionality in Wales and Scotland is related to the number of seats available, and also to the number of unopposed seats claimed by Independent candidates in Wales and Scotland - see section 4.4.4. The number of available seats in England in 1993, for example, was almost six-fold that of the whole of Wales, and over six and a half times larger than the number of seats in the Scottish regions in 1994. This reinforces our claim that the more electoral divisions that are included in an 'average' analysis, the weaker the impact that individual extreme cases of proportionality have. We can see that disproportionality, therefore, is distinctly larger in plurality elections than in PR elections, although the nationwide pattern of disproportionality is diluted as the number of contested seats significantly increases.

4.9 - Conclusions

This preliminary analysis of five separate electoral systems using our data of sub-national election results provides some interesting findings. For example, we concluded that Dutch provincial elections tend to reinforce the claim that the Netherlands operates a highly proportional electoral system. Since it would not be practically possible for every elective party that participated in each election to be represented, we have nevertheless demonstrated that it is the case that only parties with an extremely low vote share fail to win seats at the provincial level. The combination of the PR method of seat distribution and the size of district magnitude in these elections produces high levels of proportionality, and the use of the d'Hondt formula creates a *de facto* threshold of around 2%. Furthermore, the indices used demonstrate that any disproportionality that does occur tends to result from numerous small discrepancies in vote and seat shares for each party. This is indicated by the consistently lower measure of the Least Squares Index compared to disproportionality as measured by the Loosemore-Hanby Index. Yet despite high proportionality, we can identify a pattern of significant decline in turnout since 1970, and since 1987 a decline in electoral support for the main, or national, parties.

Comparative analysis of German Lænder elections is more complex since the only truly consistent feature is the 5% representation threshold. Variations in turnout and results may be affected by the timing of elections as few Lænder hold elections on the same day. We have demonstrated that the proportionality of each Land system is affected by varying factors, assembly size alone cannot be identified as the primary source of disproportionality. The hypothesis that German elections have been more or less dominated by the main national parties since the 1960s appears to hold true at the

Länder level. The four main parties (since the arrival of the Greens in the early 1980s) have continued to succeed in dominating both the vote and seat shares. Recent elections, however, have also shown that small parties can gain a foothold. Recent Land elections have also demonstrated that turnout appears to be on the decline from the usual level of 75%-85%. If turnout levels and main party vote shares continue to decline, then we may begin to witness a growth in the electoral success of new and small parties.

We have shown that disproportionality in the German Länder electoral system is influenced to various extents by two specific features. Although the 5% threshold is a barrier to the representation of very small parties, its impact upon overall disproportionality is not conclusive. For the two Länder analyzed, the 5% threshold appeared to affect proportionality in Hamburg, but not in Bavaria. In the latter we identified that disproportionality was more likely to result from large discrepancies in share of the votes and share of the seats ratios for all parties rather than because of the non representation of small parties. Furthermore, there is evidence to support Gunlicks' claim that seat distribution methods can penalize smaller parties. By applying the Hare-Niemeyer system to three Bavarian elections we were able to demonstrate that several parties which attained the 5% qualification in terms of their share of the votes, but which were nevertheless excluded from seats under the d'Hondt system would have performed much better. Whilst the d'Hondt seat distribution system does not hinder proportionality in the Netherlands, there is evidence that it is a hindrance in Germany. Of course, there may be 'political' reasons for applying a less proportional form of seat distribution, e.g. desire to exclude small parties from coalition formation. Far from generalising about electoral trends in German Länder elections, the above analysis shows, if anything, that we are in fact dealing with individual electoral systems which produce a wealth of information suitable for interesting comparative analysis.

In relation to the sub-national electoral system which operates at the municipal level in Belgium we were able to demonstrate that parties can only really be 'large' at the sub-national level because of regional fragmentation. District magnitude alone does not account for disproportionality even in small communes and gemeenten. The district magnitude does, however, affect the *de facto* threshold. In the smallest communes and gemeenten parties which poll as much as 12% and 13% shares of the vote (which is considered as large at the national level of elections in Belgium) are left unrepresented as they are hindered by the Imperiali system which only rewards the very largest parties. The combination of the Imperiali system and small district magnitudes creates high *de facto* thresholds and is the greatest hindrance to small parties.

The analysis of county and county borough elections in the Irish Republic demonstrates that the STV system engenders characteristics and patterns associated with both PR and plurality. Although counties and county boroughs vary significantly in overall seat size, this has relatively little impact upon proportionality. The central feature of sub-national elections in Ireland is that all counties and county boroughs are broken down into much smaller electoral areas, each ranging in size from three to seven seats. The use of STV may foster greater participation because there is not the same perception of a 'wasted vote' as occurs in a simple plurality system. We have seen, however, that turnout is likely to be higher in rural periphery locations where there is, perhaps, a greater feeling of community, thus emphasising the importance of a perceived connection between local elections and local issues to participation. The absence of the 'wasted vote' syndrome does not mean that STV is more proportional. The use of relatively small district magnitudes ensures that the Irish electoral system still penalises small parties which have a geographic spread of electoral support. Non-party affiliated candidates which can capitalize on local issues and personality appeal are beneficiaries from the STV system.

A feature of Irish sub-national elections which tends to distinguish them from the other cases in this chapter is the overall low number of parties for the country as a whole. There are a far greater number of parties in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Britain than in the Irish Republic. Conversely, Ireland has the greatest occurrence of independent and 'non-party' candidates. Though Fianna Fail and Fine Gael remain the two larger parties in sub-national elections their levels of support are on the decline, and they are consistently 'punished' in local elections to the benefit of other candidates. It is still possible, however, to identify strong regional variations in particular party support.

Our analysis of plurality elections as held in English and Welsh counties and Scottish regions provides an interesting comparison with the earlier analyses of the different forms of PR. We have identified much higher measures of disproportionality for all three indices used. This suggests that not only is absolute disproportionality in representation between parties likely to occur, but also that the ratio by which larger parties are over-represented is likely to be strong. The evidence presented confirms the hypothesis that disproportionality appears to be reduced as we aggregate vote and seat shares to their highest possible level (in this case a country level). Since the electoral system remains the same for all elections we must conclude that the impact of extreme cases of disproportional representation are balanced out as the accumulated number of seats increases. Only by considering elections provisionally at the district/divisional, and then at the ward level, can we be more precise about the effects of a plurality system upon disproportionality.

Our various analyses of elections at the county/district and region/division level in Britain demonstrate that if we assess proportionality in terms of aggregate

representation at the county/regional level, the number of seats available is likely to affect proportionality. What is also important is (i) the number of participating parties and (ii) the overall percentage of parties winning seats. Since only one party can win in single-seat wards, disproportionality will be affected as the number of parties not winning seats increases. As our analysis at the aggregate level has shown, the largest party is frequently over-represented with seats, and it is not unusual to witness parties with a small average vote securing seats while parties with an average in excess of 20% of the vote are apparently unrewarded. The first past the post system does not necessarily penalize small parties, but the most successful parties are those which are able effectively to mobilise support in targeted wards (and this may be affected by many factors ranging from financial resources, local grass roots support, and an available candidate). A party with a moderate level of widespread support, on the other hand (as is often the case for the Liberal Democrats and SNP), will often be penalised by the plurality system. The next two chapters of this thesis will focus upon those electoral rules analyzed in chapters Two and Four and their effect upon the representation of those far right and regionalist parties outlined in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FIVE - THE REPRESENTATION OF FAR RIGHT PARTIES IN EUROPEAN SUB-NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

5.1 Introduction

In order to be able to analyze the electoral success of those far right parties outlined in Chapter Three sections 3.4.1 & 2 in European sub-national elections we will test the effects of various electoral rules and features which we have previously outlined in Chapter Two and which we measured for their effect upon general representation at the sub-national level in various countries in Chapter Four. By employing previously identified indices of proportionality we can identify particular cases in which far right parties are over or under represented and seek to explain which features of the electoral system are most likely to generate disproportionality. We have previously shown that the potentially influential factors are; district magnitude (DM), the effect of *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds and the method of seat distribution. Furthermore, fluctuations in general voting behaviour may also affect support for the far right. For example, the timing of an election may be significant as a result of on going events or be judged in relation to the closeness to the previous or next general election (see Chapter One section 1.5). In addition, it may be interesting to measure the electoral performance of the far right in compulsory voting elections e.g. Belgium, although any conclusions regarding this aspect should be treated cautiously as we lack a truly comparative study. Hence, we are considering what effect changing popular support has had upon the far right and to what extent different electoral rules have reflected changes in relation to representation.

It may be the case that some far right parties can be labelled as a 'significant' member of the party system. This is affected by the number of candidates contesting each election, the level (importance) of the election, the geographic location of where far right candidates stand and the appearance of 'populist' candidates. As such, we are looking for sub-national 'hotbeds' of far right support which are not always identifiable at the

national level. Obviously, it may be inappropriate to make conclusions about electoral system effects in general without also acknowledging the contextual implications which may be important in assessing rises and falls in far right support. If we recall our definition of contemporary far right parties in Europe (Chapter Three Section 3.4.1), we are presented with a convergence of research which suggests that far right electoral support is a 'protest' against mainstream parties and governments (Betz 1993, Taggart 1995). In Chapter One we suggested that 'protest' voting is most likely to appear in second order elections and as such we would expect the optimal level of far right electoral support to be voiced in sub-national elections in all countries (Hainsworth 1992).

We will examine the impact of district magnitude on far right party representation in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Britain. Our analysis of *de jure* thresholds will focus upon Germany, and that of *de facto* thresholds on Belgium. We will consider the salience of the second order hypothesis in relation to patterns of far right support in Germany, the Netherlands and Britain. Finally, we will assess the impact of the seat distribution method upon far right representation in Germany the Netherlands and Britain. Our first section relates to the influence of district magnitude.

5.2 The Impact of District Magnitude Upon Far right Representation

Our analysis of district magnitude in Chapter Four showed that its effect upon disproportionality varies depending on electoral level and the range of district magnitude. We will develop this analysis by comparing far right electoral performance in areas with a range of district magnitudes, assessing the opportunities for representation, and the effect of district magnitude in relation to other electoral features, such as thresholds and the seat distribution formula. We concluded in Chapter Two that district magnitude has been cited as the most significant factor affecting the proportionality of elections at the

national level by Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Gallagher (1991). In Chapter Four, however, our findings were not as conclusive. We concluded that as the average size of electoral divisions decreases (e.g. we move from the national to the sub-national level of analysis) features such as the number of competing parties and the seat distribution method may have a more evident impact upon proportionality. We will consider far right support in a variety of sub-national elections in order to measure the significance of district magnitude for this family of parties.

5.2.1 Germany We demonstrated in Chapter Three sections 3.4.2a, that electoral support for far right parties in Germany varies both over time and between the states. As such, there is little evidence suggesting any long term consistency to far right support in Germany. We concluded that the most obvious hindrance to support for the far right at the Lænder level of elections has been the 5% threshold. In Table 5.1 we outline the handful of elections in which parties of the far right successfully overcame this threshold hurdle, allowing us to analyse the effects of district magnitude:

Table 5.1 - A Comparison of Far Right Representation and District Magnitude at the Land Level in Germany, 1966-1992.

STATE	DM	YEAR	PARTY	VOTES %	SEATS %
Schleswig Holstein	89	1992	DVU	6.3	6.7
Hessen	96	1966	NPD	7.9	8.3
Bremen	100	1967	NPD	8.8	8.0
Bremen	100	1991	DVU	6.2	6.0
Bavaria	204	1966	NPD	7.4	7.4

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

From the results presented in Table 5.1 there is little evidence at the Land level in Germany to support the hypothesis that district magnitude affects the representation of far right parties which have surpassed the 5% threshold. There is very little

discrepancy between the share of the vote and the share of the seats won by far right parties within this range of elections. The weakness with this level of analysis, however, is that we are comparing Land where the district magnitude (DM) is significantly large in every case. If we relate back to Chapter Four, we demonstrated that district magnitude at the Land level is not the primary determinant of disproportionality. Whilst the 5% thresholds appears to be the primary hurdle for far right parties at the Lænder election level, a more comprehensive analysis of district magnitude may benefit from a consideration of gemeinden elections, as (i) the number of votes needed to exceed the 5% threshold is lower, and (ii) the district magnitude is significantly lower.

If we focus upon the German Saarland gemeinden elections held in June 1989, for example, we can see that the far right National Democratic Party (NPD) stood in only five of the 317 districts, and in four the party polled a share of the vote ranging from 3.3% to 4.7% and hence failed to reach the 5% threshold. In Wadgasen, however, the party polled a 6.2% share of the vote yet was still left unrepresented (as were the Liberal FDP).

Table 5.2 shows the overall results for this Land in general and for the gemeinde of Wadgasen.

Table 5.2 - District Election Results for Saarland as a whole and the Gemeinde of Wadgasen, 1989.

ELECTION	PARTY				
	CDU	SPD	FDP	NPD	Green
<i>Saarland</i>					
Votes %	36.8	46.3	5.7	0.4	4.5
Seats	735	885	52	-	40
<i>Wadgasen</i>					
Votes %	39.0	38.6	6.2	6.2	10.0
Seats	5	5	0	0	1
Seats %	45.4	45.4	-	-	9.1

Source: Saarland Statistisches Landesamt.

Our analysis at the Land level demonstrated that far right parties often remain unrepresented because of their inability to break through the 5% threshold. We can see from Table 5.2 that support for the SPD in Wadgasen was below the average for Saarland and this, along with the absence of the greens, may have benefited the far right share of the vote. Although the NPD polled a significant enough share of the vote to pass the 5% threshold in 1989, the party was hindered by the fact that the district magnitude was only 11 seats. Since the *d'Hondt formula* used for seat distribution favours the larger parties the 159 votes for the NPD was not significant enough to secure representation. Under the d'Hondt rules, all other things remaining equal, the district magnitude would need to be at least 15 seats for the NPD to have been represented. This analysis of a lower level of election demonstrates that far right parties are not unrepresented purely because of the 5% threshold. Whilst a far right party may attract a higher share of the vote in local elections, it may also be faced with other electoral constraints - in this case district magnitude (in combination with a PR system which favours the larger parties). In this situation, we would support the claims made by Lijphart (1990) and Blais and Carty (1987) that a combination of the seat allocation method and district magnitude have the strongest impact upon electoral disproportionality.

5.2.2. The Netherlands The potential impact of district magnitude on the representation of far right parties is also illustrated by reference to elections held in the Netherlands. In Table 5.3 we outline far right electoral performance over four decades in several provinces with a range of district magnitudes (DM):

Table 5.3 - A Comparison of Far Right Representation and District Magnitude in Selected Dutch Provincial Elections, 1966-1991.

PROVINCE	DM	YEAR	PARTY	VOTES %	SEATS %
Flevoland	43	1991	CD	1.9	-
Utrecht	63	1991	CD	1.6	1.6
Gelderland	67	1966	BP	9.0	9.0
North Brabant	71	1966	BP	7.2	7.0
Gelderland	71	1970	BP	2.7	2.8
North Holland	79	1966	BP	8.0	8.9
North Holland	79	1970	BP	1.5	1.3
South Holland	83	1991	CD	2.1	1.2

Source: Nederlands Central Bureau voor de Statistiek.

We can see from Table 5.3 that even with very low shares of the vote (e.g. 1.5% in North Holland in 1970) the parties of the far right secured representation in nearly every provincial election listed, and by presenting the share of the seats figures we can see that representation is highly proportionate - as we have shown to be the general case in Dutch provincial elections in our analysis in Chapter Four section 4.5.1. In Flevoland in 1991, however, the CD remained unrepresented. Whilst this province has a much lower district magnitude than the other provinces in our Table, the far right share of the vote was also extremely low and as such we cannot make any conclusive judgements about the impact of district magnitude, other than it does not generally appear to be a hindrance for the far right at the provincial level. We will now consider whether district magnitude affects far right representation at the gemeenten level in the Netherlands.

The 1978 provincial elections were followed two months later by gemeenten elections in which the far right Boerenpartij (BP) polled particularly badly. It may not be surprising to see that in the municipal elections the BP polled only 0.08% share of the votes nation-wide (compared to 0.5% in the provincial elections) and secured itself only 3 of the available 12037 seats (0.02%). But a nation-wide generalisation of support

actually under estimates the real level of support for the BP in the handful of gemeenten which the party contested. The party provided lists in only 24 gemeenten, though support fell well below 10% share of the vote in every case. Table 5.4 lists those municipalities where the BP polled at least 5% share of the vote and/or won seats.

Table 5.4 - The Dutch Gemeenten Elections of 1978 - A Comparison of the BP's most successful results and District Magnitude.

PROVINCE	GEMEENTEN	DM	VOTES %	SEATS WON
South Holland	Hei-en Boeicop	7	7.8	-
North Holland	Andijk	11	5.4	-
Zeeland	Kortgene	11	5.0	-
Groningen	Marum	13	5.4	-
Overijssel	Staphorst	15	5.6	1
Gelderland	Heerde	17	7.0	1
Gelderland	Ede	37	2.6	1

Source: Statistiek der Verkiezingen, 1978.

We can see from the data in Table 5.4 that even in the 'highly proportional' Dutch electoral system district magnitude at the gemeenten level has affected the opportunities for far right representation. The seat secured in Ede was one of 37 available and as such a smaller share of the vote was enough to ensure representation compared to gemeenten such as Heerde and Staphorst where larger shares of the vote also succeeded in securing only one seat. Generalisations which have been made about the proportionality of the Dutch electoral system at the national level, and the findings we made at the provincial level in Chapter Four which support this claim, may not be as appropriate when analyzing proportionality at the lowest level of representation. In Chapter Four section 4.7.1 we stated that a combination of the district magnitude and the seat distribution method at the provincial level creates a *de facto* threshold of below 2% share of the vote for each party. This rule does not apply for gemeenten elections. Whilst the same seat distribution is used, the far smaller number of seats available hinders the representation opportunities for minor parties. We can also see from Table 5.4 that the *de facto*

threshold for representation decreases as the district magnitude increases - hence a 5.6% share of the vote was sufficient to secure one seat in Staphorst whilst a 7.8% share of the vote was unrepresented in Hei-en-Boeicop in 1978. Thus, claims made by Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Gallagher (1991) about the significance of district magnitude do apply at the lowest electoral level.

A similar pattern emerges if we analyse far right success in the 1990 gemeenten elections. Table 5.5 outlines the results in all contested gemeenten:

Table 5.5 - The Dutch Gemeenten Elections of 1990 - A Comparison of CD Representation and District Magnitude.

PROVINCE	GEMEENTEN	DM	VOTES %	SEATS WON
North Holland	Purmerend	31	3.6	1
South Holland	Schiedam	33	6.3	2
North Brabant	Tilburg	39	1.2	-
North Holland	Haarlem	39	3.1	1
South Holland	Dordrecht	39	3.1	1
South Holland	Rotterdam	45	3.8	1
South Holland	's-Gravenhage	45	4.3	2
North Holland	Amsterdam	45	4.4	2
Utrecht	Utrecht	45	6.6	1

Source: Statistiek der Verkiezingen, 1990.

As was the case with the BP in 1978, the far right CD appeared to be extremely small in national terms. The CD polled only 0.5% nationwide in the 1990 gemeenten elections and secured 11 of the 11071 available seats (0.1%). What is important, however, as we can see from Table 5.5, is that the party effectively concentrated electoral participation to only nine municipalities. As such, the far right was far better organised in 1991 than it had been in 1978 and presented lists in only the largest gemeenten where district magnitude did not pose a potential hindrance. As a result, the CD only failed to win representation in a single gemeenten - this being Tilburg where the CD's share of the vote was very low at 1.2%. From this analysis of district magnitude in the Netherlands we can

see that small parties have important lessons to learn about the opportunities for representation. When district magnitude is at its smallest (e.g. seven seats in Hei-en Boeicop in 1978) we are dealing with *de facto* thresholds which are approximately a 10% share of the vote in municipal elections. Hence, the likelihood of high levels of proportionality occurring begin to decrease.

5.2.3 Belgium Do we find a similar pattern emerging in Belgium where all small parties are expected to be penalised by the Imperiali seat distribution system? If we consider the performance of far right parties in the 1982 Brussels Communal Elections in Belgium, we can see that Volksunie (VU) participation was restricted to the party presenting lists in five of the nineteen communes. Table 5.6 outlines the VU shares of the votes and seats won in each of these communes, and the number of seats available (DM) in each case.

Table 5.6 - A Comparison of District Magnitude and VU Representation in the 1982 Belgian Communal Elections.

COMMUNE	DM	VOTES %	SEATS WON	SEATS %
Jette	35	5.3	1	2.9
Vorst	37	1.7	-	-
St. Jan Molenbeek	41	2.7	-	-
Anderlecht	45	4.2	1	2.2
Brussels	47	5.3	2	4.3

Source: Ackeart, Katholieke Universiteit and Limburgs Universitair.

We can see from Table 5.6 that VU participation in 1982 was restricted to the larger communes where we would expect traditional far right support in Belgium to be located (see Chapter Three section 3.4.2c), and this was also shown to be the case for far right participation in the 1990 Dutch gemeenten elections (see previous section). Second, we can see that the VU was affected by district magnitude. Despite polling a 5.3% share of the vote in both the communes of Brussels and Jette, the VU was more fairly rewarded in

Brussels, where district magnitude is higher. Since the VU polled a 2.7% share of the vote in St. Jan Molenbeek which has a district magnitude of 41 seats and was unrewarded, but polled a 5.3% share of the vote in Jette and secured one seat when the district magnitude was equal to 35 seats, this suggests that a combination of electoral factors at the municipal level create a *de facto* threshold of approximately between 3% and 4%. As a small party, the VU was disadvantaged by the Imperiali PR system and as such, we can demonstrate that the far right is likely to achieve electoral representation only in the largest of communes when its share of the vote is well below the 10% level.

By comparing Belgian sub-national election results in the Flemish gemeenten of Grobbendonk we can see that the *de facto* threshold increases as the district magnitude is reduced. In both the 1976 and 1982 elections 19 council seats were available, and in both elections the VU remained unrepresented despite polling respectable shares of the vote. For example, the VU polled a 7.2% share of the vote in 1976 and a 5.0% share of the vote in 1982. In both elections, the VU was the smallest and only unelected party, therefore emphasising that the use of the Imperiali PR system in a gemeenten with a small district magnitude works to the disadvantage of the smallest parties. By comparing our findings to gemeenten elections in Brabant we can reinforce the importance of district magnitude to far right representation. For example, in the 1976 gemeenten election in Bertem the VU won none of the 17 available seats despite polling a 7.9% share of the vote. In the case studies in Table 5.6 we suggested that a 3% to 4% *de facto* threshold does exist in communes with 35 or more seats. The value of this *de facto* threshold increases as the number of seats decreases. Furthermore, the disproportionality between each party's share of the votes and share of the seats also increases when district magnitude is low. For example, in Haacht where the district magnitude was 21 seats, the VU polled 10.4% share of the vote in 1982 but secured only 1 seat (4.8%).

5.2.4 Britain By way of a contrast the British electoral system disadvantages small parties due to the fact that the majority of council seats at both the county and district level are decided in electoral areas with between one and three seats. In the 1970s the National Front (NF) polled significant share of the votes in several areas, including 16.6% in Leicester in the 1976 district council elections, and 19%, 19.2% and 16.4% in Hackney South, Bethnal Green and Stepney respectively in the 1977 Greater London Council Elections. Whilst such shares of the vote would almost certainly have ensured representation in sub-national elections in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium this has generally speaking not occurred in Britain. The exceptions are two seats won in district elections in Blackburn in 1976 and one seat won by the British National Party (BNP) in Tower Hamlets in the September 1993 by-election. The first past the post seat distribution system means that the finishing order is as important for any party as the share of the votes its polls. Far right electoral participation in Britain has been low-key and sporadic since the late 1980s and we have a limited amount of data to analyze. For example, there were only four far right candidates in the 1991 district elections, and only three candidates in the 1992 Metropolitan Council elections. By comparison, a new wave of far right participation emerged for the council elections held in May 1994 when 43 candidates from far right parties stood. Table 5.7 compares some of the strongest shares of the votes polled by far right candidates in the May 1994 local elections:

Table 5.7 - Examples of Far Right Electoral Performance in Britain, 1994 - A comparison of single and three seat divisions.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGHES - Single Seat

<i>Borough</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Vote %</i>	<i>Position</i>
Birmingham	Kingstanding	NF	6.1	4th
	Oscott	BNP	5.8	4th
Dudley	Lye & Wollescote	NF	10.3	4th
Rochdale	Newbold	BNP	5.6	4th
	Smallbridge & Wardleworth	BNP	5.1	3rd
Sandwell	Princes End	NF	9.0	3rd
	Tipton Green	NF	9.1	3rd

LONDON - Three Seats

<i>Borough</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Vote %</i>	<i>Combined Vote %</i>
Newham	Custom House	BNP	8.4	21.0
		BNP	8.2	
		BNP	7.5	
Tower Hamlets	Millwall	BNP	13.1	28.5
		BNP	11.4	
		BNP	11.0	

Note: In multi-seat wards in London, BNP vote shares are expressed in terms of each candidate's share of all the votes polled. Usually, the aggregate share for all candidates of the same party is used in local election analysis (see column 5). For the purposes of our analysis, it is more appropriate to show each individual share to highlight cases of split ticket voting.

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

Table 5.7 demonstrates that the BNP's most promising results in 1994 occurred in London, particularly Millwall. In addition to these results, two BNP candidates in the ward of Beckton in Newham polled a total share of the vote of 32.9%, though both seats went to Labour, who polled a combined vote share of the vote of 42%. What is of even more interest is that the two Conservative candidates in Beckton were pushed back into third place by the BNP - gaining a collective share of the vote of only 20%. Similarly, the

Conservatives were pushed into fourth place in Millwall. The BNP also polled well in St. James' in Tower Hamlets, despite only providing one candidate in a two-seat ward - the BNP came third with a 21.5% share of the vote. Table 5.7 also shows that the far right also polled well outside of London. In Lye and Wollescote in Dudley the NF polled a 10.3% share of the vote and in Rosedale in Broxbourne the BNP polled a 10.1% share of the vote - both single seat wards. We can see, therefore, that the main hindrance to far right representation in Britain is not necessarily the share of the vote *per se* but the fact that it is competing in a first past the post system of seat distribution. The strongest examples of vote shares in 1994 compare favourably with equivalent levels of far right support in sub-national elections in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, but the disproportionality of the electoral system serves to undermine the far right's electoral significance in Britain.

To summarize, the outcome of our analysis of the impact of district magnitude upon the representation of the far right in Europe depends upon the level of election which we are analyzing. For example, at the *l ander* and provincial levels in Germany and the Netherlands respectively district magnitude has no significant impact - but all district magnitudes at these levels tend to be high and therefore we would expect proportionality (all other factors being equal) to be high for all but the very smallest parties. At lower election levels (e.g. municipal elections in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium) we find that district magnitude does prohibit far right representation, though seat distribution (see section 5.5) is also important when far right parties poll a low share of the vote (*i.e.* below approximately 10%). The claims made by various authors outlined in Chapter Two about district magnitude can all be seen to be appropriate depending upon the level of analysis. Whilst district magnitude may not be a hindrance in higher electoral levels, it is a potential problem at the lowest levels in various countries, which is precisely where many far right parties poll their best results. In Britain, we have shown

that the use of multi-seat wards may encourage an increase in the level of far right electoral support due to 'split-ticket voting' although support is rarely high enough to overcome the high *de facto* threshold created by a first past the post system. We will now consider the impact of electoral thresholds in more detail.

5.3 The Impact of *De Jure* and *De Facto* Thresholds Upon Far Right Representation

For our analysis of the effect of thresholds upon the representation of far right parties in Europe, Germany provides the only example of the use of a *de jure* threshold. In this section will also outline the *de facto* thresholds created in Belgium by the combined effect of various electoral factors, thus identifying levels of support below which the far right and other small parties cannot expect to receive seats. As outlined previously in Chapter Two section 2.2.3, *de facto* thresholds derive primarily from a combination of the seat distribution method, district magnitude, and the number of parties participating within each electoral district in each election.

5.3.1. Germany In Germany the use of the 5% threshold has frequently achieved the desired effect of excluding extremist and anti-system parties from representation. For example, the NPD contested four consecutive Hamburg Land elections from 1966 to 1978, achieving its most successful share of the vote of 3.9% in 1966 and gradually declining to only 0.3% share of the vote in 1978. Under the d'Hondt seats allocation rules without a threshold the NPD's actual poll support of 36654 votes in 1966 would have given the party 4 out of the 120 available seats. The 5% threshold, therefore, was the determinant factor in the non-representation of the NPD. The NPD also participated in the Saarland Land elections held in 1970, 1975, 1985 and 1990 and again failed to secure representation in any of these elections, the party's strongest share of the vote was 3.4% in 1970. Of the six contesting parties in this election only two (the CDU and SPD)

secured any of the 50 available seats since the FDP, DKP, NPD and SVP all polled below 5% share of the vote, as shown in Table 5.8:

Table 5.8 - A Comparison of Each Party's Share of the Vote and Seats, and Measures of Proportionality for the Saarland Land Election, 1970.

	PARTIES					
	CDU	SPD	FDP	DKP	NPD	SVP
Votes %	47.9	40.8	4.4	2.7	3.4	0.9
Seats %	54.0	46.0	-	-	-	-
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:						
LH = 11.4	LS = 12.8	SL = 7.1				

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

The particularly high disproportionality figures registered in Table 5.8 are not surprising when we consider that the total 'wasted vote' in 1970 (*i.e.* the total share of the vote polled by parties who were left unrepresented) was 11.4%. Although a 5% threshold is not a hurdle exclusively to far right parties, we have produced evidence to suggest that it has been a significant hindrance for the NPD in several Land over a number of elections. As a member of the general group 'minority parties', the far right in Germany is continuously hindered by the German *de jure* threshold.

We can demonstrate that the 5% threshold is also an obstacle to far right representation below the L ander electoral level. Data available for the 1989 North Rhine Westphalia gemeinden elections demonstrates that the Republikaner Party provided lists in 39 gemeinden in total (out of 373), though in many of these it was unable to reach the 5% threshold. The party's three best results were in Iserlohn (8.9% share of the votes and 7.5% share of the seats), Alsdorf (7.6% share of the votes and 6.7% share of the seats) and in Marl (7.5% share of the votes and 8.7% share of the seats). In Table 5.9 we

compare results in Iserlohn to gemeinden where the Republikaner Party polled 5% but was left unrewarded. We have also included the district magnitude (DM) to emphasize the relative similarity in gemeinde size:

Table 5.9 - Comparing Representation for Republikaner Candidates in the North Rhine Westphalia Local Elections, 1989 with Far Right Support in the Bremen Land Election, 1987.

GEMEINDE	PARTIES						
<i>Iserlohn</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>Local list</i>	<i>DM</i>	
Votes %	39.5	36.8	5.7	8.9	9.0	51	
Seats %	39.6	39.2	5.7	7.5	5.7		
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:							
LH = 4.2	LS = 3.1		SL = 1.5				
<i>Frenchen</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>DM</i>	
Votes %	49.4	34.3	6.0	5.3	5.0	45	
Seats %	53.3	37.8	4.4	4.4	-		
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:							
LH = 7.4	LS = 5.3		SL = 6.2				
<i>Konigswinter</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>DM</i>	
Votes %	30.1	45.4	10.1	9.4	5.0	45	
Seats %	31.1	48.9	11.1	8.9	-		
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:							
LH = 5.5	LS = 4.4		SL = 5.4				
<i>Bremen Land</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>DVU</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>Others</i>
Votes %	50.5	23.4	10.2	10.0	3.4	1.2	1.2
Seats %	54.0	25.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	-	-
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:							
LH = 5.1	LS = 3.4		SL = 4.5				

LH = Loosemore Hanby

LS = Least Squares

SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

We can see that the non-representation of the Republikaner in Frenchen and Konigswinter created higher measures of disproportionality for all three indices in these gemeinden. In Frenchen and Konigswinter, the Republikaner was excluded from representation because

it did not surpass the 5% threshold. As the example of Frenchen shows, a share of the vote of only 0.3% more allowed the FDP two seats on the local council. Even in Iserlohn, however, the Republikaner party was slightly under represented with seats due to the seats distribution system (see section 5.5). By comparison, in Bremen the DVU has benefited from the division of the Land into two separate electoral areas. In 1987 the DVU secured a 1% share of the seats with 3.4% share of the votes overall. Despite being under represented the party was able to overcome the 5% threshold due to the particular geographic concentration of its support in the sub-division of Bremerhaven (see Chapter Four section 4.5.2 for an explanation). We will now assess the influence of *de facto* thresholds.

5.3.2 Belgium If we turn our analysis towards municipal elections in Belgium we can identify the existence of *de facto* thresholds. Table 5.10 demonstrates electoral support for the VU in the gemeenten of Kalmouth, where district magnitude was 23 seats, over three sets of elections.

Table 5.10 - A Comparison of VU Representation in the Kalmouth Council Elections, 1976-1988.

YEAR	PARTIES							
1976	CVP	LG1	SP	VU	PVV	LG3	LG2	DM
Votes %	43.2	20.0	13.6	10.9	6.8	4.5	1.0	23
Seats %	52.2	21.7	13.0	8.7	4.4	-	-	
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:								
LH = 10.8	LS = 7.7		SL = 8.9					
1982	CVP	LG2	LG1	SP	VU	Agalev	PVV	DM
Votes %	28.4	18.5	16.5	13.4	9.6	7.9	5.7	23
Seats %	34.8	21.7	17.4	13.0	8.7	4.4	-	
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:								
LH = 10.5	LS = 7.0		SL = 9.4					

continued...

1988	CVP	LG2	SP	Agalev	PVV	VU	LG1	LG3	DM
Votes %	38.2	24.6	10.8	8.7	5.9	5.0	4.4	2.5	23
Seats %	52.2	30.4	8.7	4.4	4.4	-	-	-	

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:

LH = 19.9 LS = 12.4 SL = 21.4

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections database

By referring to these three sets of elections we can see that the combination of the Imperiali seat distribution system in a gemeenten with a district magnitude of 23 seats creates a *de facto* threshold of approximately 5.5% share of the vote. The number of competing parties is fairly constant, increasing from seven parties in 1976 and 1982 to eight parties by the time of the 1988 election and as such we would only expect this to have a minimal effect if any upon the *de facto* threshold. Overall disproportionality was significantly higher in the 1988 election than for the 1976 and 1982 elections due to the fact that three parties polled shares of the votes below *de facto* threshold, and this allowed the CVP to become significantly over represented (receiving a 14% greater share of the seats than it received in shares of the votes). Since the far right VU polled a share of the vote below the 5.5% *de facto* threshold in 1988 the party was not represented, as it had been in 1976 and 1982.

By turning to the province of East Vlaanderen, we can also use the Gavere gemeenten elections held in 1982 and 1988 to again demonstrate the *de facto* threshold created by a low district magnitude, which in this case was 21 seats for both elections:

Table 5.11 - A Comparison of VU Representation in the Gavere Council Elections, 1982 & 1988.

YEAR	PARTIES							
1982	LG2	CVP	SP	VU				
Votes %	46.8	38.6	11.1	3.6				
Seats %	52.4	42.9	4.8	-				
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:								
LH = 9.9	LS = 7.2	LS = 7.2						
1988	LG2	CVP	SP	VU	LG4	Agalev	LG3	
Votes %	48.1	21.3	13.1	6.5	4.1	3.5	3.3	
Seats %	61.9	23.8	14.3	-	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Disproportionality:								
LH = 17.5	LS = 11.9	LS = 21.9						

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Ligue

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

By comparing the disproportionality figures for the two sets of elections in Gavere we can see that the 1988 elections produced a much higher level of disproportionality. Whilst seven parties participated in the 1988 election only three were successful in winning seats as Table 5.11 shows, and the VU was the largest of these parties not to win a seat. Since the VU polled a 6.5% share of the vote in 1988 we can claim that the combination of the Imperiali seat distribution system and a district magnitude of 21 seats creates a *de facto* threshold of at least 6.5%. We have demonstrated, therefore, that district magnitude is particularly important in creating *de facto* thresholds at the lowest electoral level, and we can agree with Lijphart (1994a) that *de jure* thresholds are by no means a guarantee of representation. By assessing local elections in Belgium, we can see that municipals with a medium district magnitude (e.g. 21 - 23 seats) creates a *de facto* threshold of between 5.5 - 6.5% - a particular hindrance for small far right parties. We will now assess whether those features earlier identified as relevant to second order elections (see Chapter One section 1.5) help to explain far right electoral support on the sub-national

level.

5.4 The Second Order Hypothesis and Far Right Support

In Chapter One section 1.5 we suggested that small, and particularly anti-system, parties may enjoy a greater level of support in second order elections because there is 'less-at-stake'. Furthermore, we presented research which suggests that the timing of the election in relation to the general election timetable is also important. If this is the case, we may expect to see long term patterns of peaks and troughs in far right support across countries. We will assess whether there is any evidence of this by looking at patterns of far right support in Germany, the Netherlands and Britain.

5.4.1. Germany We have already shown in section 5.3.1 that the far right in Germany have been constrained by the 5% threshold in the Hamburg Land elections - for example, the NPD's strongest result was a 3.9% share of the vote in 1966. Also interesting in this election was the low turnout which was 68.9%, as shown in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 - Variations in Turnout and Far Right Support in German General and Land Elections, 1965-1994.

TYPE OF ELECTION	YEAR						
	1965	1969	1972	1980	1987	1990	1994
<i>Bundestag</i>							
Turnout %	86.8	86.7	91.1	88.6	84.4	77.8	79.1
NPD %	2.0	4.3	0.6	0.2	0.6	3.0	-
REP %	-	-	-	-	-	2.1	1.9
DVU %	-	-	-	-	0.6	-	-
<i>Bavaria Land</i>							
Turnout %	80.6	79.5	77.7	70.1	65.9	68.0	
NPD %	7.4	2.9	2.2	0.5	-	-	
REP %	-	-	-	-	4.9	3.9	

continued...

<i>Bremen Land</i>	1967	1971	1975	1979	1987	1991
Turnout %	76.1	79.4	81.6	78.0	75.1	71.3
NPD %	8.8	2.8	1.1	0.4	-	-
REP %	-	-	-	-	1.2	1.5
DVU %	-	-	-	-	3.4	6.2
<i>Hamburg Land</i>	1966	1970	1974	1978	1991	1993
Turnout %	68.9	72.6	79.5	75.8	65.3	69.6
NPD %	3.9	2.7	0.8	0.3	-	-
REP &	-	-	-	-	1.2	4.8
DVU %	-	-	-	-	-	2.4
<i>Saarland</i>	1970	1975	1985	1990		
Turnout %	81.8	87.9	83.5	82.4		
NPD %	3.4	0.7	0.7	0.2		
REP %	-	-	-	3.4		
<i>Schleswig-Holstein</i>		1979	1988	1992		
Turnout %		82.9	76.8	71.2		
NPD %		0.2	1.2	-		
REP %		-	0.6	1.2		
DVU %		-	-	6.3		

Sources: Keesings Contemporary Archives. Paterson & Southern 1991: 185. University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

We can see from Table 5.12 that the turnout in the 1966 Hamburg Land election was the lowest until 1991. The turnout in Hamburg in 1966 is also low compared to that in general elections and other Land in the same period. The turnout was also lower than usual in the Hamburg and Bremen Lænder elections held in 1991 where the Republikaner Party made a small electoral breakthrough (though not enough to secure any seats). The DVU was far more successful in Bremen in 1991. These low turnout figures are not so surprising, however, if we relate to the fact that a General Election was held in Germany in the previous year. It may be the case that small anti-system parties appear to poll well when in fact support for the mainstream catch-all parties (*i.e.* the CDU and SPD in Germany) is at an ebb. The timing of both elections one year after the general election may fit the Van der Eijk hypothesis (1994) that a rise in far right support in Germany is effectively a 'protest vote'.

In Bremen the NPD contested all four Land elections in the period 1967 to 1979, with its share of the vote slowly declining from 8.8% to 0.4%. The 8.8% share of the vote in 1967 entitled the party to eight of the 100 Landtag seats and as such the NPD enjoyed closely proportional representation. Again, turnout was fairly low for a Land election (76.1% - as compared to 86.2% in West Berlin in the same year) and remained the lowest until the 1987 Land election (75.1%). The 1967 election was held mid-term between the national elections of 1965 and 1969 and as such the argument that this was a protest vote is more justified. Furthermore, in Schleswig-Holstein, the far right DVU secured a 6.7% share of the seats with a 6.3% share of the vote in the 1992 Land election. The party performed better than the Greens (which polled a 4.9% share of the vote) in an election where turnout was particularly low - only 71.2%. Both the low turnouts and level of far right support in Schleswig-Holstein strengthen the hypothesis that the 1992 Land election was perceived by the electorate as an opportunity to express a mid-term protest against the main parties. Yet we can see from other results produced in Table 5.12 that far right support does not improve in all Land in mid-parliamentary election terms, As such, far right support cannot be explained purely in relation to electoral timing, and as such relies on more complex political and local issues.

Does a relationship exist between turnout and far right support at the lower electoral levels in Germany? The October 1989 North Rhine Westphalia Kreise Elections provide another example of the far right's attempts to participate in sub-national government, and electoral participation was largely by the Republikaner Party. Far right candidates contested 28 out of 54 districts in total, and in most cases only one far right candidate stood in order to prevent a splitting of potential far right support. In the handful of cases where two far right parties participated the Republikaner was the stronger party whilst the NPD and DVU were very much the poor relations, as the data presented in Table 5.13 demonstrates:

Table 5.13 - Comparing Support for the Far Right (share of the votes and share of the seats) in North Rhine Westphalia Kreise Elections, 1989, using examples of large and small district magnitude (DM).

1) LARGE DISTRICTS

ELECTORAL AREA	PARTIES							
<i>All Land</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Turnout</i>	
Votes %	43.0	37.5	8.3	6.5	2.3	2.4	65.6	
<i>Köln</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes %	42.1	30.5	11.7	7.0	7.4	0.2	1.1	95
Seats %	43.2	31.5	11.6	6.3	7.4	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 2.1	LS = 1.3		SL = 1.4					
<i>Düsseldorf</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>DKP</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes %	39.7	37.5	9.9	6.0	6.0	0.8	0.1	83
Seats %	39.8	38.6	9.6	6.0	6.0	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 1.2	LS = 1.0		SL = 1.0					
<i>Dortmund</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes %	52.9	25.7	9.8	6.3	3.0	0.1	1.4	83
Seats %	56.6	27.7	9.6	6.0	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 5.8	LS = 4.2		SL = 5.8					

2) SMALL DISTRICTS

ELECTORAL AREA	PARTIES							
<i>Gelsenkirchen</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>DKP</i>	<i>MLPD</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes %	53.1	26.0	9.6	7.4	2.5	0.8	0.6	67
Seats %	56.7	26.9	9.0	7.5	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 4.6	LS = 3.3		SL = 4.3					
<i>Monchengladbach</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>DVU</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes %	42.6	36.5	8.0	7.1	4.4	0.5	0.9	67
Seats %	46.3	38.8	7.5	7.5	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 6.4	LS = 4.5		SL = 6.3					continued...

ELECTORAL AREA	PARTIES							
<i>Wuppertal</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>DKP</i>	<i>Wah 1</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes %	44.3	32.8	9.5	9.5	3.3	0.5	0.3	63
Seats %	47.8	34.3	9.0	9.0	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 4.5	LS = 3.6	SL = 4.4						
<i>Stanfurt</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>DM</i>		
Votes %	42.6	40.9	8.2	7.5	0.9	61		
Seats %	44.3	41.0	8.2	6.6	-			
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 1.8	LS = 1.5	SL = 1.1						
<i>Hamm</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>DVU</i>	<i>DKP</i>	<i>DM</i>
Votes%	45.2	35.8	7.1	7.1	3.5	1.1	0.1	59
Seats %	49.2	37.3	6.8	6.8	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
LH = 5.4	LS = 4.0	SL = 5.2						

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Sources: Der Innenminister des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

We can see from Table 5.13 that the Republikaner polled well in the larger districts, though representation was more disproportional in Dortmund, Gelsenkirchen and Monchengladbach than in Dusseldorf. As such, there is not a truly positive correlation between district magnitude and proportionality, though disproportionality is generally lower in the larger districts (e.g. Köln and Dusseldorf). Furthermore, the 'wasted vote' in Dusseldorf was small compared to Gelsenkirchen and Hamm - hence the low disproportionality measures. We can see from Table 5.13 that there are in fact no cases of a *de facto* threshold higher than the constitutional threshold of 5% being in operation. In Gelsenkirchen, Wuppertal, Dortmund and Hamm the disproportionality measures are created by the number of parties that are unrewarded whilst high proportionality in Dusseldorf and Stanfurt resulted from the way in which the shares of the votes were

spread. As these elections were held a year before the first all-German General Election and strong far right support compared to support for the other small parties (e.g. DKP, HP and MLPD) may have resulted from the North Rhine Westphalian electorate using this opportunity to protest against mainstream politics.

We will now consider electoral behaviour in the state of Hessen, which has been one of the most fervent areas of far right contemporary support since the late 1980s for both the REP and NPD, and where it is not unusual to see the far right polling around 10% share of the vote in Kreise elections. In the 1989 and 1993 Kreise Elections far right support in selected Kreise was as follows:

Table 5.14 - Comparing Far Right Electoral Success in the Hessen Kreise Elections, 1989 and 1993.

ALL LAND		PARTY						TURNOUT (%)
		SPD	CDU	Green	FDP	REP	NPD	
1989	Votes %	45.1	34.5	8.6	4.6	0.8	0.9	79.2
1993	Votes %	37.5	31.9	10.2	4.9	8.2	0.8	72.4

HERSFELD-ROTENBURG		PARTY					TURNOUT (%)	DM
		SPD	CDU	Green	NPD	FDP		
1989	Votes %	51.9	32.8	6.8	4.9	3.5	81.9	61
	Seats %	57.4	36.1	6.6	-	-		

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:

LH = 8.8 LS = 6.3 SL = 9.4

	SPD	CDU	Green	REP	FDP	NPD	TURNOUT (%)	DM
1993	Votes %	46.6	27.5	8.0	6.3	3.6	73.7	61
	Seats %	49.2	29.5	8.2	6.6	-		

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:

LH = 6.5 LS = 4.1 SL = 7.1

continued...

RHEINGAU-TAUNUS		PARTY						TURNOUT (%)	DM
1989	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>Other</i>		
Votes %	37.8	32.3	10.5	8.9	5.4	1.6	3.5	77.3	71
Seats %	39.4	33.8	11.3	9.9	5.6	-	-		

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:
 LH = 5.2 LS = 3.0 SL = 5.5

1993	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>Other</i>		
Votes %	34.5	31.7	13.2	11.4	7.6	1.6	69.2	71
Seats %	35.2	32.4	14.1	11.3	7.0	-		

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:
 LH = 2.3 LS = 1.5 SL = 1.7

WETTERAUKREIS		PARTY						TURNOUT (%)	DM
1989	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>ODP</i>		
Votes %	40.5	30.8	7.3	7.0	4.8	4.2	0.8	77.8	79
Seats %	48.1	36.7	8.9	6.3	-	-	-		

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:
 LH = 15.1 LS = 8.9 SL = 17.3

1993	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NPD</i>		
Votes %	35.8	32.2	8.7	8.6	4.3	3.4	69.2	81
Seats %	39.5	34.6	9.9	8.6	-	-		

Overall Measures of Disproportionality:
 LH = 8.3 LS = 5.1 SL = 9.2

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database.

Both the 1989 and 1993 elections were held mid-term in relation to German national elections (held in 1987, 1990 and 1994) and as such it is not surprising to see what may potentially be described as mid-term protest voting. Kreise elections held in 1993 marked the growth in success of the Republikaner in particular, and the far right as a whole contested elections in a total of 22 out of 26 districts. The importance of the 1993 elections in establishing the Republikaner as a serious electoral contender cannot be underestimated. In some districts the party built upon a nonexistent or very small base of support to the extent that the Republikaner became the third largest party in Offenbach au

Main, Wiesbaden, Main-Kinzig-Kreis and Rheingau-Taunus. Table 5.14 demonstrates that a notable decline in turnout occurred in 1993 compared to the 1989 election, and the Republikaner appears to have performed best when turnout was lowest. We can see that in the two cases of Rheingau-Taunus (1989 and 1993) and Hersfeld-Rotenburg (1993) far right parties were slightly over-rewarded with seats. As such, the 1993 Hessen Kreise elections may be a classic example of mid-term protest voting, and the far right may have capitalized on the electorate's apparent disillusionment with the mainstream centre parties since these elections were held some 18 months before the General Election and were therefore a key opportunity for the electorate to express its disenchantment. Has the same pattern of far right electoral success followed the second order hypothesis in the Netherlands?

5.4.2. The Netherlands In provincial elections held in the Netherlands in 1966 the BP was the only far right party. The BP provided lists in each of the eleven provinces, and secured an overall share of the vote of 6.7% and 44 seats. The party's performance was strongest in Gelderland (9.0% overall share of the vote and six seats) and weakest in Friesland (4.2% share of the vote), though this was still enough support to secure the party two seats. What is perhaps most interesting about this election is that the BP not only contested each province, but also provided lists in every one of the 73 electoral districts. As such, far right participation in 1966 did not have a 'localised' element as our previous examples of the far right in Germany have demonstrated. In the province of Gelderland, the party polled an impressive 12.3% share of the vote in Apeldoorn, 10.5% share of the vote in Harderwijk and 10.3% share of the vote in Ede. Overall turnout in this set of elections was 94.6% due to compulsory voting. It could be argued, therefore, that the 1966 provincial elections acted as a warning to the governing parties, since they were held only 11 months before the 1967 General Election, and according to our hypothesis in Chapter One section 1.5 the electorate is more likely to voice a dissenting

voice against the political mainstream if voting is compulsory rather than optional. It is not surprising to see that the support for the BP had dropped to 4.7% for the Netherlands as a whole in the 1967 General Election (2% lower than in the 1966 provincial elections), though of course this is still a strong national result for a far right party compared to Germany. Table 5.15 outlines variations in far right support in Dutch elections over 28 years:

Table 5.15 - Variations in Far Right Electoral Support at Various Levels in the Netherlands, 1966-1994.

TYPE OF ELECTION	YEAR	VOTES %		SEATS WON	
General Election	1967	4.7		7	
General Election	1994	2.5		3	
TYPE OF ELECTION	YEAR	AREA			
<i>Provincial Elections</i>	1966	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Gelderland</i>	<i>Freisland</i>	
Votes %		6.7	9.0	4.2	
Seats Won		44	6	2	
<i>Provincial Elections</i>	1987	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Utrecht</i>	<i>North Holland</i>	<i>South Holland</i>
Votes %		0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7
<i>Provisional Elections</i>	1991	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Utrecht</i>	<i>North Holland</i>	<i>South Holland</i>
Votes %		1.0	1.6	2.1	2.1
Seats Won		3	1	1	1

1966 & 1967; far right = BP

1987, 1991 & 1994; far right = CD

Sources: Nederlands Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

By the time of the Netherlands provincial elections held in 1987, the competing parties from the far right had changed to the CD and the smaller Centruumpartij '86 (CP86).

Whilst the CD polled 0.3% share of the vote nationally, the CP86 polled a tiny share of the vote - receiving only 1,032 votes out of over 7 million polled. The CP86 provided lists in Flevoland only in 1987, whilst the CD stood in three provinces in total - polling 0.4% share of the vote in Utrecht, 0.5% share of the vote in North Holland and 0.7% share of

the vote in South Holland (see Table 5.15). As a result of abolishing compulsory voting in 1970 the overall turnout in these elections was only 66%, but even this is a sharp decrease of 13% compared to provincial elections held in 1978. This was not matched in 1987, however, by a sharp rise in far right support. This set of provincial elections was held only 10 months after a General Election and we would expect protest voting to be less likely to occur. In the case of the Netherlands provincial elections, therefore, we do not have convincing evidence that voters are using provincial elections as a means of 'punishing' major parties. Though far right support is concentrated and relatively effective, it is by no means widespread or dramatically different between first and second order elections.

In comparison to 1987, the provincial elections held in March 1991 saw both the CD and CP86 increase their shares of the votes - the CD polling 1.0% share of the votes nation-wide, and the CP86 polling 0.3% share of the votes. The 1% share achieved by the CD was enough to secure the party three seats. The CD provided lists in seven provinces in total - its lowest level of support being a 0.4% share of the vote in North Brabant and polling strongest in North Holland and South Holland (2.1% share of the vote in both) - winning one seat in each and a third in Utrecht (with a 1.6% share of the vote). CD lists were also present in Freisland, Flevoland, Gelderland and North Brabant. If we break support for the CD down further to the gemeenten electoral area we can see that the CD polled 3.7% share of the vote in the gemeenten of Utrecht. In the North Holland province, the CD polled strongest in Amsterdam (4.1% share of the vote) and Purmerend (3.5% share of the vote). In South Holland the CD polled 4.5% share of the vote in 's-Gravenhage, 4.1% share of the vote in Rotterdam and 4.0% share of the vote in Scheidam. As such, we can claim that the far right enjoyed its strongest support in the larger urban areas (as it did in the 1990 gemeenten elections - see Table 5.5). Furthermore, the 1991 elections occurred mid-term between general elections and as

such may provide evidence of a recent move towards second order protest voting in Dutch elections.

If we now focus our analysis on the lower level of gemeenten elections in the Netherlands we have interesting evidence from those elections held in 1974, two months after the provincial elections of that year. In the March 1974 provincial elections, the BP polled a 3.1% share of the vote overall and secured 2.5% of the available seats. The strength of its support varied from a 6.4% share of the vote in North Brabant to a low of 1.4% share of the vote in Friesland. Can we identify correlations between the different elections in the levels of support for the far right? Support for the far right in local elections was lower than in the provincial elections, the BP polled 0.7% share of the vote nationally and secured 36 of the 11887 available seats (0.3%). As in the 1966 municipal elections, the party polled strongest in Gelderland (1.4% share of the vote compared to 4.5% in the provincial elections in March) and weakest in Limburg (0.2% share of the vote compared to 3.2% in the provincial elections in March). Yet the BP polled only 0.8% share of the vote in North Brabant, in comparison to what was the party's best result in the 1974 provincial elections (6.4% share of the vote). The BP's potential was weakened by its inability to provide lists in many gemeenten, and it could be suggested that weak BP support was linked to the lack of availability of candidates. Table 5.16 outlines election results in those municipalities in which the BP received over 10% of the vote.

Table 5.16 - Cases of Strongest BP Support in Dutch Gemeenten Elections, 1974.

GEMEENTEN	PARTIES							TURNOUT (%)	DM
<i>Marum</i>	<i>PVDA</i>	<i>VVD</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>PSP</i>	<i>GVP</i>	<i>PCG</i>			
Votes %	34.2	13.8	12.4	5.6	3.4	0.7	74.5	13	
Seats won	5	2	2	-	-	4			
<i>Nieuwleusen</i>	<i>CHU</i>	<i>PVDA</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>AR</i>	<i>VVD</i>	<i>GVP</i>	<i>SGP</i>	<i>Other</i>	
Votes %	31.7	16.3	14.7	13.0	6.9	4.6	3.9	8.9	79.3
No. Seats	4	1	2	2	-	2	-	2	13
<i>Andijk</i>	<i>CDA</i>	<i>PVDA</i>	<i>CPN</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>Other</i>				
Votes %	52.6	21.3	13.1	13.0	2.8	73.3	11		
No. Seats	6	2	2	1	-				
<i>Hoogkarspel</i>	<i>KVP</i>	<i>PVDA</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>CPN</i>	<i>Other</i>				
Votes %	46.8	15.1	10.6	0.7	26.8	69.0	11		
No. Seats	5	2	1	-	3				
<i>Limmen</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>CPN</i>	<i>Other</i>						
Votes %	15.1	9.7	75.2	69.9	11				
No. Seats	2	1	8						
<i>Hei-en-Boeicop</i>	<i>AR</i>	<i>PC</i>	<i>CHU</i>	<i>SGP</i>	<i>PVDA</i>	<i>BP</i>			
Votes %	26.1	21.5	15.2	13.5	12.9	10.8	94.8	7	
No. Seats	2	1	1	1	1	1			
<i>Ophermert</i>	<i>PVDA</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>Other</i>						
Votes %	33.2	17.9	48.9	81.2	7				
No. Seats	2	1	4						

Source: Statistiek der Verkiezingen, 1974.

What is interesting about these results is that the BP polled best in small municipalities, in which the electorate was often well below 10,000. Yet as well as belonging to the far right, the BP was also known as the 'farmers' party and, as such, would be more attractive to rural voters than the contemporary far right parties which are most successful in the larger, urban areas of the Netherlands. In the gemeenten listed in Table

5.16, turnout ranged from 69% to 94.8%, whilst the average turnout nation-wide for these elections was only 69.1%. Hence, although the far right polled less well than in the provincial elections earlier that year, the BP in fact appeared to do best in smaller gemeenten where turnout was higher than the national average. Furthermore, there is little correlation between levels of support in the provincial elections in March 1974 and the gemeenten elections held only two months later. The evidence from Dutch gemeenten elections held in the 1970s, does not support the hypothesis that less is at stake (Reif and Schmitt 1980), or the hypothesis that far right support derives from apathy (van der Eijk 1994), though we may have some evidence to suggest that this is changing in the 1990s.

5.4.3. Britain The far right in Britain is disadvantaged by the electoral system since a much higher share of the vote is needed to secure seats than in PR countries and thus representation is a rare event. This does not mean, however, that we should overlook variations in support, especially in relation to election timing and turnout. It has been suggested (Betz 1993) that the recent revival in support for parties of the far right is in fact a 'protest' vote reflecting a general distrust in the mainstream political parties. This may explain why sub-national electoral success in Tower Hamlets was short-lived (the seat won in the September 1993 by-election was reclaimed by the Labour Party in the May 1994 local elections). Support for the five NF candidates who stood in the June 1994 European Elections was much weaker than results witnessed at the local level a month earlier (the highest share of the vote was 2.6% in Birmingham West) and, therefore, does not support generalisations made about voting behaviour in all second order elections. As such, support for the far right appears to be a particular localised feature of British electoral politics, with such parties polling most successfully in inner London, the West Midlands and Staffordshire areas.

By comparing far right shares of the vote, the number of contested seats and turnout in recent local elections we may also be able to judge if electoral success is a result of 'split ticket voting' - that is, do voters choose candidates from different parties if they have more than one vote? For example, in the Custom House and Silvertown ward in 1994 the three BNP candidates polled 21% share of the vote in total, and turnout was 39.3%. Table 5.17 compares share of the votes and turnout for BNP candidates in Tower Hamlets.

Table 5.17. - Overall BNP Share of the Vote and Turnout (%) in Tower Hamlets wards, Local Elections May 1994.

WARD	VOTES %	TURNOUT	POSITION
St. Peters (one candidate)	19.1	53.1	3rd
St. James (one candidate)	21.5	60.9	3rd
Holy Trinity*	19.3	58.2	3rd
Millwall*	28.3	66.5	2nd

* in both wards there were 3 BNP candidates due to 3 vacancies. Column 2 represents the average votes for all BNP candidates per ward.

Source: University of Plymouth Local Elections Database

We can see from these results that whilst far right support was greater than a 15% share of the vote in each case (thereby challenging the notion that it is a 'small' party), the turnout figures were also particularly high for local elections. This could have two implications; (i) a disillusioned electorate made the effort to vote and in doing so opted for the far right as a protest, or (ii) the high profile of the BNP in Tower Hamlets (especially cultivated with the help of the media after the September 1993 by-election) prompted the electorate to mobilise in favour of other parties. In either case, support for the BNP was high, but not enough to win seats. If we refer back to Table 5.7 which shows each candidate's share of the vote in Millwall we can see that the figures are not the same and the BNP obviously benefited from split ticket voting. In contrast, away from London, the far right may have benefited from low turnout. In the Sandwell ward of Tipton Green, the NF polled 9.1% share of the vote whilst the turnout was only 35.7% and in the ward of

Princes End the NF polled 9% share of the vote, with turnout being only 23.6% - both single seat wards. As such, it is difficult to establish hard and fast rules about support for the far right in Britain when assessing sub-national elections in terms of timing and turnout, but we can suggest that such parties are likely to perform better in Britain in multi-seat wards. Whilst the far right in Germany appear to poll well in mid-term elections, the pattern that emerges in the Netherlands is a little more complex.

5.5 - The Impact of Seat Distribution Upon Far Right Representation

In this section we will consider the impact of the seat distribution system upon far right representation. We stated in Chapter Two that the term proportional representation may be misleading since there are different seat allocation systems, many of which work to the advantage of larger parties. In this section we will consider which parties of the far right have been either (i) small enough to expect under-representation, or (ii) are a large enough party to be over rewarded by different seat distribution systems. We will look at far right parties in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Britain.

5.5.1. Germany We have demonstrated in earlier sections that parties of the far right often poll shares of the votes so small that even representation at the Land level is not possible. For example, NPD participation in Schleswig-Holstein Land elections has been sporadic. In 1979 the NPD achieved only a 0.2% share of the vote making it one of four small unrepresented parties (eight parties in total contested this election). In 1988 the party performed equally as poorly - polling a 0.14% share of the vote. Yet in this election only three of the twelve participating parties were represented. The combined 'wasted vote' for the nine other parties (none of which reached the 5% threshold) was almost 12% of the vote. Similarly, the NPD has had little noticeable effect in the 1990 North Rhine Westphalia Land elections, polling a mere 0.04% share of the vote. In

Saxony, the NPD provided candidates for the 1990 Land election and polled only 0.7% share of the vote. This election was contested by 12 parties in total, though only five were rewarded with seats.

If we move away from the Land level, however, and consider elections held at lower sub-national levels (in both Germany and other countries) we may see parties of the far right playing a more significant role. In section 5.2.1 we demonstrated that the far right had been disadvantaged in the 1989 Saarland gemeinden elections in Wadgasen by the seat distribution system, and that under the d'Hondt rules the district magnitude would need to be *at least* 15 seats for the NPD to have been represented. Table 5.18 demonstrates how this is the case. The second row indicates the raw votes polled by each party in Wadgasen and each row below indicates the divisor left after a seat is allocated. The order of seat distribution is indicated by the figure in brackets:

Table 5.18 - Seats Required under the d'Hondt rules for the NPD to be represented in Wadgasen, Saarland, 1989.

PARTIES					
	<i>SPD</i>	<i>CDU</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>WGR1</i>
	997 (2)	1009 (1)	161 (14)	159 (15)	259 (7)
<i>Votes After Each</i>	499 (4)	505 (3)			
<i>Divisor</i>	333(6)	337 (5)			
	250 (9)	253 (8)			
	200 (11)	202 (10)			
	167 (13)	169 (12)			
	167 (13)				

Source: Author's own calculations.

In the following Saarland Gemeinden Elections held in 1991 parties of the far right provided candidates for a total of four gemeinden. As has been shown in earlier chapters, to be the norm in Germany, the NPD was the poorer relative of the far right. The NPD achieved shares of the vote of 4.4% in Volkingen, 4.5% in Wadgasen and 1.2% in

Saarbrücken thereby failing to break through the 5% threshold. The Republikaner stood in two gemeinden and was successful in both, polling 5.7% share of the vote in Saarbrücken and claiming three of the 63 seats (4.8%). In Saarlouis the Republikaner polled a spectacular 10.4% share of the vote, entitling it to 9% of the seats. We demonstrated earlier that the REP does achieve some representation in German sub-national elections, but is primarily hindered by the 5% threshold. Here we can see that where representation does occur the party is often under represented and therefore must really be considered as a small party in Germany. This is reinforced by the largely sporadic nature of far right electoral participation. We rarely see the same gemeinden, kreise and even Lænder contested in consecutive elections, primarily due to organisational difficulties which have plagued far right parties in Germany.

5.5.2. The Netherlands We have provided a variety of electoral evidence from the Netherlands in earlier sections, and we have shown that the far right performed well in particular regions in the 1966 provincial and gemeenten elections. The frequency of BP lists being presented in gemeenten varied between the provinces. Contestation in the 1966 gemeenten elections was low in Limburg, North Brabant and Zeeland, but much higher in Overijssel, Gelderland and Utrecht. The party polled a 5.7% share of the vote over the whole of the Netherlands and won 333 of the 11961 available seats (2.8%). Table 5.19 displays the results in gemeenten where the BP polled strongest (e.g. 10% or more).

Table 5.19 - A Comparison of Seat Distribution and District Magnitude (DM) - Examples using BP shares of the vote (10% and more) for Dutch Gemeenten elections, 1966.

PROVINCE	GEMEENTEN	DM	VOTES %	SEATS %
Gelderland	Apeldoorn	39	17.2	17.9
Gelderland	Nijmegen	39	14.4	15.4
North Holland	Haarlem	39	13.2	12.8
North Brabant	Breda	39	13.0	10.3
North Brabant	Tilburg	39	11.8	10.3
North Brabant	Eindhoven	39	10.7	10.3
Overijssel	Enschede	39	10.3	10.3
Gelderland	Epe	21	16.5	14.3
Gelderland	Ede	19	18.2	18.2
Gelderland	Harderwijk	19	13.9	10.5
Gelderland	Groesbeek	17	13.2	11.8
North Holland	Castricum	17	11.7	11.8
Gelderland	Putten	15	15.2	13.3
North Holland	Blaricum	13	17.0	15.4
Gelderland	Vorden	13	15.5	15.4
Overijssel	Nieuwleusen	11	14.2	18.2
Utrecht	Polsbroek	7	15.7	14.3

Source: Statistiek der Verkiezingen, 1966.

We can see from Table 5.19 that at the gemeenten level in 1966 the BP was successful in polling the support of a significant sector of the electorate in a handful of municipalities, to the extent that it was the second largest party in Ede where it secured almost 20% share of the vote. The relationship between shares of the vote and shares of the seats is fairly closely, though not totally proportional. Support for the BP was strongest in the provinces of Gelderland and North Holland, and the party also polled well in the larger gemeenten in North Brabant. Electoral success was by no means restricted to the largest gemeenten though, and we can see that there is no direct correlation between the district magnitude and the share of the votes polled by the BP. These results along with those

presented from Germany, demonstrate that parties of the far right are able to poll significant shares of the vote and receive proportional, under and over representation (see Enschede, Harderwijk and Nijmegen respectively). This will depend upon the number of competing parties and the way in which votes are distributed between them, as seats are allocated as 'wholes' - a party cannot win a percentage of a seat. This is only evident, however, when we focus upon the lowest sub-national level and such results are particularly localised and are inevitably 'lost' by a general analysis of support at higher electoral levels.

5.5.3. Belgium If we recall Table 5.11 where we considered the proportionality of two sets of elections held in the Belgian gemeenten of Gavere we can see that the Imperiali electoral system allowed for the effective over-representation of the largest three parties in 1988, and a combination of features created a *de facto* threshold of at least 6.5% which therefore excluded four parties from winning seats (see section 5.3.2). We can also see from this Table that overall disproportionality was lower in the 1982 election as only one party (again the far right VU) was unrepresented, although the SP was also considerably under-represented with seats. This can only be ascribed to the effects of the Imperiali seat distribution system. Whilst the number of competing and elected parties is low for a PR system, the Imperiali system penalises the two smaller parties (one of which belongs to the far right) to the benefit of the two larger parties.

Yet the far right have at times also enjoyed similar high levels of support at the municipal level in Belgium as has occurred in Germany and the Netherlands. We have evidence that concurs with Taagepera and Laakso (1980) - just as the Imperiali system penalises the far right when the vote share is low, it is also the case that far right parties can be over-represented when they are one of the largest parties. Table 5.20 outlines examples of gemeenten elections in which either the VU or VB have been over represented.

Table 5.20 - A Comparison of Far Right Over Representation and District Magnitude (DM) in Belgian gemeenten elections, 1976 - 1988.

GEMEENTEN	YEAR	DM	PARTY	VOTES %	SEATS WON	SEATS %
Antwerpen	1988	55	VB	17.7	10	18.2
Herent	1982	25	VU	27.0	7	28.0
Herent	1988	25	VU	27.7	8	32.0
Schilde	1982	25	VU	16.9	5	20.0
Wommelgen	1988	21	VU	28.3	7	33.3
Lint	1976	15	VU	42.5	8	53.3

Source: Ackeart, Katholieke Universiteit and Limburgs Universitair.

We can see from Table 5.20 that parties of the far right are equally as likely to be over-rewarded with seats under the Imperiali system when the vote is high (e.g. 15% and more) and that this appears to occur when district magnitude ranges from 15 to 55 seats (e.g. low to high). In the gemeenten of Herent in Brabant the VU won seven of the 25 available seats in 1982 with 27% share of the votes and in 1988 eight out of 25 seats with 27.7% share of the votes. The 27%+ share of the vote made this party the second largest in Herent and thus the VU was over-rewarded by the Imperiali system. Also, in Brabant the VU secured 36.8% of the seats with a share of the vote of 32.7% in the gemeenten of Kapelle Op Den Bos in 1976, and received 26.2% share of the votes and 28% seats in the gemeenten of Maise in 1988, making the VU the second largest party in both gemeenten. The far right also polled well in East Vlaanderen and as a result have been over rewarded by the Imperiali system, as Table 5.21 demonstrates:

Table 5.21 - A Comparison of VU Over Representation and District Magnitude in East Vlaanderen Gemeenten Elections, 1982-1988.

GEMEENTEN	YEAR	DM	VOTES %	SEATS WON	SEATS %
Aalter	1982	25	21.9	6	24.0
Destelbergen	1982	25	19.2	5	20.0
Kruikeke	1982	23	28.3	7	30.4
Kruikeke	1988	23	52.1	14	60.9

Source: Ackeart, Katholieke Universiteit and Limburgs Universitair.

As we can see, the VU actually became the largest party in Kruike in 1988. The effects of the Imperiali seat distribution system are, therefore, double-edged for far right parties, depending upon the level of popular support.

5.5.4. Britain The re-emergence of the far right at the sub-national level in Britain is, in comparison to our studies of other countries, still a recent event. Since the NF and BNP only contest a handful of seats at the local, national and European level we must see them generally as small parties, though support at the ward level in recent elections may suggest otherwise (see section 5.4.3). What may be interesting in the case of local elections in Britain therefore, is far right support in relation to the other mainstream parties - namely the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. The following analysis is based upon the elections held in May 1994. In the Thames ward (in Barking and Dagenham) the BNP provided one candidate though two seats were available. This candidate's 6.9% share of the vote was enough to outstrip both Liberal Democrat candidates. In the Beckton ward (in Newham) the two BNP candidates polled a total 32.9% share of the vote, enough to push the Conservatives into third place (their two candidates polling 20% share of the vote). In the much discussed elections in Millwall, the three BNP candidates combined share of the vote was 28.3%, putting them in second place to Labour. Perhaps most surprisingly, however, the Conservatives received only the fourth largest share of the vote. Outside London, the far right performed credibly in Sandwell with the NF polling higher shares of the vote than the Liberal Democrats in both Princes End and Tipton Green (NF shares of the votes were 9.0% and 9.1% and Liberal Democrats shares of the votes were 7.5% and 8.4% respectively). What is important in Britain is the party's placing rather than its share of the votes. We cannot, therefore, judge party size by share of the vote alone. Parties of the far right frequently poll in excess of 10% and 15% shares of the vote in sub-national elections in Europe, but whether we judge

them as small or significant depends upon the effect of the seat distribution system and the size of other parties. As such, the first past the post system tends to exclude many smaller parties from government whilst the various forms of PR usually allow at least some reward in terms of seats.

5.6 Conclusions

The results of analysis in this chapter are by no means straightforward. In general, we can conclude that parties of the far right in Europe fit the classification of 'small parties', though some exceptions occur in the Netherlands and Belgium at the municipal level, and a mere handful of examples are evident in recent elections in Britain. Any evidence of significant electoral support and representation tends to be at the lowest sub-national level and subject to regional concentrations and variations. Also, evidence shows that until the early 1990s at least, far right parties were only likely to experience success under PR electoral systems. Representation under first past the post has been rare, though evidence of far right support from the 1994 British local elections suggests that such parties may benefit in wards where two or three seats are available.

We have demonstrated the importance of district magnitude in PR electoral systems. Again, far right parties have been hindered by electoral areas with a low district magnitude - especially when the share of the vote is below 10%. Similarly, far right representation is hindered by both *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds when the share of the vote is low. The 5% threshold in Germany has often penalised the far right, especially at the Lænder level despite district magnitude being high. In Germany and Belgium thresholds of exclusion are created for the far right parties when the district magnitude is low.

We can find little conclusive evidence to suggest that far right electoral support is related to turnout or electoral timing. Far right parties have received high levels of support when turnout is both higher and lower than the national and even regional average. Far right shares of the votes in second order elections in recent years in all countries tend to support van der Eijk's hypothesis that such patterns are a result of mid-term protest voting between first order elections, and support for all far right parties in Europe since the 1980s strengthens the argument (see Chapter One) that there is a wider general malaise in belief in the mainstream political parties. However, we can by no means prove that the second order hypothesis applies to all sub-national elections all of the time. Finally, we have demonstrated that as a 'small' party the far right can only be represented under PR, and even then there are often constraints such as district magnitude and thresholds which hinder representation. At the same time, we have examples where the far right may be judged as 'large' at the sub-national level (when polling a share of the vote of 15% and more), as demonstrated by gemeenten elections in the Netherlands and Belgium. In these situations PR - especially the Imperiali system - over represents the far right. We can now adopt a similar framework of analysis for comparing the electoral success and proportionality of representation of regionalist parties in Europe.

CHAPTER SIX - THE REPRESENTATION OF REGIONALIST PARTIES IN EUROPEAN
SUB-NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five we analyzed the proportionality of the representation of various far right parties in Europe by considering the impact of the electoral system in general and by paying particular attention to the impact of specific electoral features such as seat distribution method, thresholds and district magnitude as outlined in Chapter Two. In this chapter we will follow a similar pattern of analysis in order to analyze the representation of several regionalist parties in various European countries at the sub-national level and the degree to which proportional representation occurs. For the purposes of analysis, this chapter will focus upon the electoral success and representation of those regional parties defined in Chapter Three which are located in Belgium, Italy, Spain and Britain and whose electoral history is outlined in Chapter Three sections 4.3 and 4.4.

In relation to the effect of particular electoral systems upon regional party representation, Smith claims that:

"In fact, strong regional parties, with concentrated local support, are not penalized at all by a majoritarian electoral system, this being a significant qualification to Duverger's 'law' relating the majority vote to a two-party system." (Smith 1991: 29-30)

We can 'test' this particular view by considering the electoral performance of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru (PC) in Scotland and Wales respectively. Can we expect regional parties to elicit a more concentrated level of regional support than far right or other small parties? As explained in Chapter One section 1.4, the

electoral success of regional parties may be accounted for by the competitive approach as outlined by Hauss and Rayside (1978: 31-57). That is, the electoral success of regional parties is primarily determined by political and institutional factors such as the lack of existing parties prepared to promote the regional autonomy issue, the structural nature of the electoral system which includes features such as the ballot system and district magnitude, and - when in operation - a federalist system (1978: 37). In Chapter Three section 4.4 we outlined the electoral history of various regionalist parties in Europe, we will now consider the impact of specific electoral rules and features following the procedure adopted for analyzing far right parties in Chapter Five.

As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, Belgium has experienced two distinct types of regionalism - one type associated with Flanders and the other with Wallonia. In relation to regionalism in Italy, we have already established in Chapter Three Section 4.3b that the virtual collapse of the traditional 'catch-all' parties is just one factor which has encouraged the spectacular electoral success of several regional parties, such as the Sardinian Action Party (PSd'Az), the South Tyrol People's Party (STVP), the Lega Nord (LN) and the Union Valdotaïne (UV), and regional parties have continued to flourish despite the recent electoral reforms (see Appendix C). Indeed, Donovan claims that:

"... local election results in late 1992, including the capture of the party's first mayorships, indicated that a plurality system could benefit, rather than bury, the *Lega's* challenge." (Donovan 1995: 52)

In relation to regional party success in Spain, the Catalanian autonomous elections provide a useful case study. We can initially analyse results at the overall regional level and secondly we can break our electoral analysis down to districts. Catalonia consists of four districts; Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona. Whilst the regional parliament consists of 135 seats in total, 85 of these seats are in Barcelona, 18 seats are in

Tarragona, 17 seats in Girona and the remaining 15 seats in Lleida. Our analysis in Chapter Three outlined voting patterns for Barcelona as a whole, where a total of 150 seats are available. Yet Barcelona is further divided into 10 electoral districts for the purpose of seat distribution, and each district is allocated 15 seats. In this chapter we will focus upon changes at the district level based upon each party's representation for the two sets of elections held in 1987 and 1991. What is of interest to us here is the effect upon regionalist party representation of (i) the 3% and 5% threshold of representation, and (ii) the use of electoral districts which range in district magnitude. We can also analyze regional party success in elections held in the Spanish region of Galicia. The Galician regional parliament consists of 75 seats in total, though again these are broken down into four electoral areas. The largest is the province of A Coruna with 24 seats, followed by the province of Pontevedra with 21 seats and the provinces of Lugo and Orense which both have 15 seats.

We have already demonstrated in Chapter Four section 4.2.5 that several general claims can be made about sub-national elections in Britain. For example, the number of unopposed seats has declined, thereby increasing party competition. The number of truly 'independent' candidates has declined, whilst the number of small parties has increased. In terms of Scottish regional elections, we have shown in Chapter Three section 3.4.4d that the regionalist SNP is now the second largest party at the sub-national level in Scotland, as is the PC in Welsh sub-national elections. What is important when analyzing regional party representation in British elections is the impact of the electoral system, as first past the post does not work in the interests of second place parties. In this chapter we will assess the effects of district magnitude upon regional party representation in Belgium, Spain and Britain. Our analysis of *de jure* thresholds will focus upon Spain, whilst we will look at the significance of *de facto* thresholds in Belgium and Britain. Finally we will assess the implications of the seat distribution method for

proportionality in Belgium, Italy and Britain. We will begin with an analysis of district magnitude.

6.2 The Impact of District Magnitude Upon Regionalist Party Representation

In Chapter Five we analyzed the effective representation of parties belonging to the far right, and concluded that a low district magnitude in both PR and non-PR electoral systems can effectively create a *de facto* threshold to representation which disadvantages the electorally smaller parties. As the number of seats available in each electoral area declines and the number of competing parties increases a higher share of the vote is required by each party if it is to secure representation. We will now consider some examples of the possible impact of varying district magnitudes upon regional party representation in a variety of sub-national elections in Belgium, Spain and Britain.

6.2.1 Belgium: In our earlier general analysis of district magnitude in Belgian communes and gemeenten in 1976 (see Chapter Four section 4.5.4), we suggested that proportionality is not determined by district magnitude alone but that the seat distribution system also has an effect. In the 1976 communal elections the regionalist party Front des Francophones (FDF) was the largest party in a total of ten of the nineteen Brussels municipalities. A comparison of these municipalities established that the FDF polled greater shares of the votes in the larger municipalities, particularly in municipalities with a district magnitude of 31 seats or more. The exception to this rule in 1976 was the gemeenten of Watermaal Bosvoorde which had a district magnitude of 29 seats. However, since the FDF took a considerable share of the vote in all municipalities in the Brussels region in 1976 we cannot sufficiently conclude that district magnitude had a significant impact upon this party's representation in these elections (the FDF's lowest share of the vote was 18.1% in Anderlecht), and we cannot therefore conclude that

regionalist party performance in this region in 1976 was directly related to the district magnitude alone. Again there is little evidence from the 1988 elections to suggest that regionalist party support is related to district magnitude. For example, the FDF was able to secure a share of the vote of 18.7% and 24.0% of the seats in St. Agatha Berchem where the district magnitude is 25 seats. Hence, evidence suggests that the Imperiali system actually over rewarded this regionalist party and district magnitude did not prove to be a hindrance for the FDF.

Whilst regional parties with a significantly large share of the vote may benefit from a combination of the Imperiali method of seat distribution and large district magnitude in Belgian local elections, there have also been examples of regional party under representation in Belgium. Table 6.1 compares the size of municipals (DM) with examples of Rassemblement Wallon (RW) under representation in the Belgian communal elections held in the Wallonian region in 1976:

Table 6.1 - A Comparison of Rassemblement Wallon Representation and District Magnitudes in the 1976 Communal Elections, Wallonian Region.

COMMUNE	DM	VOTES %	SEATS WON	SEATS %
Gerpennes	19	14.3	2	10.5
Ottignes	21	9.1	1	4.8
Aiseau-Presles	21	13.4	2	9.5
Nivelles	25	8.6	1	4.0
Ath	27	8.2	1	3.7
Chatelet	33	9.7	2	6.1

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum

Regionalist parties appear to benefit from over rewarding in larger communes, and a combination of the Imperiali seat distribution system and a decreasing district magnitude reduces the likelihood of proportional representation even when the regional party share of the vote is significant *i.e.* between 10% and 15% share of the vote. Table 6.1

illustrates that significant shares of the vote can be under rewarded with seats as the district magnitude diminishes. For example, although the RW polled a 14.3% share of the vote in Gerpinnes in 1976, this was enough to secure only two seats - thus producing a 10.5% share of the seats. Whilst the district magnitude was equivalent to 27 seats in the commune of Ath in 1976, the RW was under rewarded as the party polled a share of the vote of 8.2. This reinforces what we have already shown in Chapter Five, that parties polling less than a 15% share of the vote in 'small' Belgian municipals will be treated as 'small' parties by the Imperiali system, and as such are penalized. As the share of the vote declines the opportunity for winning seats also declines, though this is due to the nature of the Imperiali system rather than the restrictions of district magnitude alone in these examples (see section 6.4.1 for a more detailed analysis of the effects of the Imperiali electoral system upon regional parties).

6.2.2 Spain: As we discussed in section 6.1 of this chapter, the Spanish region of Galicia does not act as a single 'constituency' for the distribution of seats in the Galician regional elections. We are effectively dealing with a situation in which the region is divided into four provinces in order to allocate seats, thus producing four smaller district magnitudes. As such it is more appropriate to consider party competition and electoral results by province for the regional elections. Table 6.2 compares district magnitude with the election results for the provinces of A Coruna and Ourense in order to represent the diversity of district magnitude in this region:

Table 6.2 - A Comparison of District Magnitude and Regionalist Party Representation For Two Galician Provinces, 1989 - 1993

Province of A Coruna - 24 seats

YEAR	PARTY							
1989	PP	PSG/PSOE	BNG	EU/UG	CG	Verdes	Others	
Votes%	40.9	35.2	9.4	6.1	1.6	0.3	6.5	
Seats%	45.8	41.7	8.3	4.2	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 11.4			Least Squares = 7.62			Sainte Lague = 10.91		
1993	PP	PSG/PSOE	BNG	EU/UG	AG	CG	Verdes	Others
Votes%	49.0	24.6	19.6	3.7	0.4	0.4	0.3	2.0
Seats%	54.2	25.0	20.8	-	-	-	-	-
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 6.8			Least Squares = 4.83			Sainte Lague = 7.43		

Province of Ourense - 15 seats

YEAR	PARTY							
1989	PP	PSG/PSOE	CG	BNG	EU/UG	ARM	Others	
Votes%	44.3	32.5	6.5	5.4	3.0	0.8	7.5	
Seats%	53.3	40.0	6.7	-	-	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 16.7			Least Squares = 10.78			Sainte Lague = 20.27		
1993	PP	PSG/PSOE	BNG	EU/UG	CG	ARM	Verdes	Others
Votes%	54.5	25.4	17.0	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.2	1.0
Seats%	60.0	26.7	13.3	-	-	-	-	-
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 6.8			Least Squares = 4.9			Sainte Lague = 4.53		

Source: Análise da organización e execución das Eleccións o Parlamento Galego 1993, Xunta de Galicia

Table 6.2 demonstrates that the regional elections in Galicia were dominated by two parties in 1989, these being the Popular Party (PP) and the Socialist coalition (PSG/PSOE). We may not be surprised, therefore, to see relatively high measures of disproportionality. For example, in the province of Ourense in 1989 the lowest measure of disproportionality was the Least Squares at 10.78 and the highest was the Sainte Lague with a measure of 20.27. Disproportionality in A Coruna in 1989 was not as strong -

again, lowest was the Least Squares measure of 7.62 and highest was the Sainte Lague measure of 10.91. The number of dominant parties in Galicia increased to three in 1993 with the rise in popularity of the regionalist Galician National Bloc (BNG), and in both provinces we can see that this had a dramatic effect upon levels of disproportionality. Whilst the largest parties have, therefore, tended to be over rewarded by the d'Hondt seat distribution system which increases disproportionality, the use of the 5% *de jure* threshold has excluded the majority of the very small parties from representation and so only three or four parties are effectively entitled to seats, thus perhaps hindering the opportunity of greater proportionality being achieved. In relation to district magnitude, we are comparing provinces with 15 and 24 seats. The lower district magnitude in combination with the use of the d'Hondt seat allocation method is more favourable towards the largest parties as the province of Orense demonstrates. The most frequent obstacle to representation, however, appears not to be district magnitude but, as suggested by Lijphart (1994a) the implementation of the 5% *de jure* threshold. Several of the competing parties, such as the Alliance for a Democratic Europe (ARM), the Galician Coalition (CG) and the Greens (Verdes), poll only a very small share of the popular vote and, therefore, would need to participate in electoral areas with high district magnitude (e.g. at least 50 seats) in order to secure any seats.

We can also see from Table 6.2 that district magnitude did affect regional party representation by considering the outcome of the 1989 election in the province of Ourense. If we exclude the 'others' category which is made up of numerous very small parties all polling well below the 5% threshold, we can see that four parties actually polled more than 5% - the Popular Party, the Socialist coalition, the Galician Coalition and the Galician National Bloc. Under the d'Hondt seat distribution system, the 6.5% share of the votes polled by the Galician Coalition was strong enough to secure the party one of the 15 available seats. The 5.4% share of the vote for the BNG, however, was too

low for the party to win any seats. Under the d'Hondt system, the BNG would only have begun to secure seats if the district magnitude was at least 17 seats or more. In this example, a regionalist party is treated in the same way as any other 'small' party due to the effects of using the d'Hondt system in an electoral area with a small district magnitude, fitting with the claims made by Lijphart (1990) and Blais and Carty (1987) about proportionality.

By turning our attention to the Girona district in the Catalan region of Spain we can demonstrate that the district magnitude (in this case 15 seats) also affected the proportionality of the ratio between the vote and seat shares for those parties which were represented. This is measured by the Sainte Lague (SL) index as presented in Table 6.3:

Table 6.3 - A Comparison of Shares of the Vote and Shares of the Seats For the Main Parties, Girona District of Catalonia, 1984 - 1988.

YEAR	PARTY					
1984	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>AP/PP</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	
Votes %	59.3	21.4	6.1	5.6	3.1	
Seats %	64.7	23.5	5.9	5.9	-	
Overall Measures of disproportionality:						
LH= 7.3	LS= 5.2	SL= 7.3				
1988	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	<i>AP/PP</i>	<i>CDS</i>
Votes %	55.8	23.5	5.4	3.9	3.7	3.2
Seats %	64.7	29.4	5.9	-	-	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:						
LH= 14.7	LS= 9.0	SL= 17.0				
<hr/> LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague						

Source: Atlas Electoral de la Ciutat de Barcelona: 1977-1989, Ajuntament de Barcelona.

We can see from Table 6.3 that the regionalist Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) was slightly under represented in the 1984 election to the benefit of the large parties. In the 1988 elections, however, the ERC gained a share of the seats which was slightly above its share of the votes despite polling less than in 1984. This is not surprising

though if we take into consideration the fact that only three parties secured seats in 1988 (the other two parties being the CiU and PSC). As such, 100% of the seats were awarded to parties which polled a combined share of the vote of only 85% - hence the particularly high Sainte Lague measure of 17.0 in comparison the proportionality of the results in the Barcelona district (see Table 6.7) of Catalonia where the district magnitude is much higher.

In the next section of this chapter we will discuss the impact of certain thresholds upon regionalist party representation in sub-national elections. We will show that in the case of local elections in Barcelona, the regionalist ERC is in some cases hindered by its inability to break through the 3% threshold of popular support. There are other cases in these elections, however, where the district magnitude becomes a more important constraint, as shown by an analysis of the Gracia district within Barcelona in Table 6.4, where district magnitude is 15 seats:

Table 6.4 - A Comparison of Regionalist Representation and District Magnitude in the Gracia District, 1987 & 1991.

YEAR	PARTY				
1987	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>AP/PP</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>ERC</i>
Votes %	44.2	34.5	6.6	5.6	3.3
Seats %	46.7	40.0	6.7	6.7	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:					
LH= 6.2	LS= 4.9	SL= 4.5			
1991	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>AP/PP</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>ERC</i>
Votes %	43.3	33.8	8.1	6.7	3.8
Seats %	46.7	40.0	6.7	6.7	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:					
LH= 7.4	LS= 5.7	SL= 5.4			

LH = Loosemore Hanby LS = Least Squares SL = Sainte Lague
 Source: Barcelona Eleccions Locals 1991, Servei d'Estadística, Ajuntament de Barcelona.

We can see from Table 6.4 that the 3% threshold was overcome by the regionalist ERC in both the 1987 and 1991 local elections in the Gracia district, and as such the party has

enjoyed a slightly greater level of support than was the case in the districts of Ciutat Vella and Eixample (see Tables 6.9 and 6.10). By comparing each party's share of the votes with its share of the seats we can see that in the 1987 and 1991 elections four of the parties were relatively proportionately rewarded with seats. The combination of the d'Hondt divisor method of seat distribution along with a district magnitude of 15 seats, however, works to the disadvantage of the smallest party which - in this example - is the regionalist ERC. As will be demonstrated in the later examples from Barcelona's local elections, the district magnitude of 15 seats effectively creates a *de facto* threshold which is approximately equivalent to 5% share of the popular vote. If the ERC were to secure a seat in the 1991 elections under the d'Hondt seat distribution method and each party's share of the votes remained the same, then a district magnitude of 23 seats would be required. District magnitude becomes significant in Spanish sub-national elections, and as such fits the claims made by Rae (1967), Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Gallagher (1991). When regions and cities are divided into smaller electoral divisions, this disadvantages regionalist parties when they have a low share of the votes (e.g. below 5%).

6.2.3 Britain: Even when elections operate in a single seat electoral area and thus become a case of first past the post, or simple plurality, the district magnitude may not be a particular hindrance if a party is able to organize itself effectively and concentrate participation in to divisions where it expects to poll a significant share of support. This is demonstrated by Plaid Cymru (PC) in particular districts in county council elections.

PC provided candidates for two of the 14 electoral divisions in Aberconwy in the 1989 county council elections, and was successful in both cases. The party was unopposed in Bro Machno, and in Llanrwst PC polled 54% beating the SDP into second place. This pattern was repeated in other districts in the 1989 county council elections. In Dwyfor,

for example, only one PC candidate stood despite there being eight electoral divisions, though this candidate was unopposed. In the district of Ynys Mon, PC provided candidates in only two of the eighteen electoral divisions but achieved significant shares of the vote in both divisions - 59.2% in the Valley division and 58.7% in the Dulas division. What is important is that the districts of Aberconwy, Dwyfor and Ynys Mon are all in the county of Gwynedd, where we would expect PC support to be strongest (see Chapter Three section 3.4.3d). These data from the 1989 county council elections, therefore, raise the question of whether the PC intentionally provided its limited number of candidates strategically in electoral divisions where the party held high expectations of winning. Furthermore, was the party disadvantaged by a lack of candidates, and would it have benefitted from similar levels of support in other electoral divisions? We will now compare results from 1989 to levels of PC support in the following county council elections held in 1993.

As was the case in the 1989 elections, the PC provided candidates for a handful of the Aberconwy electoral divisions in the 1993 county council elections, this time increasing contestation to three divisions. The results are outlined in Tables 6.5:

Table 6.5 - A Comparison of PC Support and Turnout in the 1993 Welsh County Council Elections, Aberconwy District

DIVISION	VOTES %	TURNOUT %
Bro Machno	Unopposed	-
Llanrwst	63.0	51.3
Conwy	22.0	43.5

Source: Rallings & Thrasher, 1993.

We can see that the PC was again successfully elected in two divisions. In Bro Machno the party remained unopposed and in Llanrwst the party increased its share of the vote to

63.0% - an increase of 9% from 1989. In Conwy, however, PC only secured enough votes to take third place. Thus, whilst regional parties are not necessarily disadvantaged by single seat district magnitudes it is also the case that limited support for the PC may not simply be accounted for by a lack of candidates able to contest a majority of the available areas. It is interesting that PC support appears to decrease with turnout though this handful of results alone is not significant enough to prove anything substantial. Instead more in depth analysis may need to take into account increasingly qualitative explanations such as the importance of truly 'local' issues and the impact of popular candidates which are areas that we cannot cover in this thesis.

We have demonstrated in this section that district magnitude may be significant in Belgian communes, but in the past regionalist parties have polled their strongest shares of the votes in the larger municipalities where district magnitude is not the primary hindrance. In Spain district magnitude is significant because regions and large cities are divided into smaller electoral districts. This is not a problem as such for regionalist parties which secure large shares of the votes such as the CiU, but it is a hindrance for the smaller regional parties such as the ERC. Lastly, the first past the post electoral system is not a problem for regionalist parties if they can target electoral areas where potential support is strong, as the PC is able to do in some areas. It is not necessarily the case, however, that an increase in available candidates automatically leads to greater representation. We will now consider in more detail the effect of *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds upon regionalist party representation.

6.3 The Impact of *De Jure* and *De Facto* Thresholds Upon Regionalist Party Representation

We have shown in Chapters Two, Four and Five that we can effectively discuss the impact of two types of threshold, these being *de jure* thresholds and *de facto* thresholds. In

Chapter Four we concluded that as district magnitude decreases, and the number of competing parties increases, so the *de facto* threshold increases. In Chapter Five we demonstrated that the 5% threshold is a hindrance to far right parties in various parts of Germany and that *de facto* thresholds hinder far right representation in Belgium. We will now consider the impact of thresholds upon regional party representation, and will initially concentrate upon *de jure* thresholds.

6.3.1 Spain: An initial overview of regional elections held in the Spanish region of Galicia since 1985, produces the results as outlined in Table 6.6:

Table 6.6 - The Results and Proportionality Measures for Regional Elections held in Galicia, 1985-1993

YEAR	PARTY							
1985	<i>PP</i>	<i>PSG/PSOE</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>PSG/PG</i>	<i>BNG</i>	<i>CDS</i>	<i>PNG/PG</i>	<i>Others</i>
Votes%	41.1	28.7	13.0	5.6	4.2	3.2	0.8	3.4
Seats%	47.9	31.0	15.5	4.2	1.4	-	-	-
Total Seats = 71 seats								
Overall Measures of disproportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 11.6			Least Square = 6.7		Sainte Lague = 11.4			
1989	<i>PP</i>	<i>PSG/PSOE</i>	<i>BNG</i>	<i>PSG/PG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>CDS</i>	<i>PNG/PG</i>	<i>Others</i>
Votes%	44.4	32.7	8.1	3.9	3.7	2.9	1.5	2.8
Seats%	50.7	36.0	8.0	2.7	2.7	-	-	-
Total Seats = 75 seats								
Overall Measures of disproportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 9.6			Least Square = 6.0		Sainte Lague = 9.1			
1993	<i>PP</i>	<i>PSOE</i>	<i>BNG</i>	<i>Others</i>				
Votes%	52.2	23.5	18.7	5.6				
Seats%	57.3	25.3	17.3	-				
Total seats = 75 seats								
Overall Measures of disproportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby = 7.0			Least Square = 5.6		Sainte Lague = 6.4			

Source: Análise da organización e execución das Eleccións o Parlamento Galego 1993, Xunta de Galicia. Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth.

In section 6.1 of this chapter we stated that regional elections held in Galicia can effectively be analyzed in terms of four distinct provinces which have district

magnitudes ranging from 15 to 24 seats. By considering the data provided in Table 6.6 we can see that (i) overall proportionality has increased since 1985. This is because the number of very small parties (polling less than 3.5% share of the vote) has decreased. At a regional level, therefore, Galicia has a *de facto* threshold of at least 3.2%. (ii) the 5% *de jure* threshold must apply at the provincial as opposed to overall regional level. This is because some parties (e.g. the BNG in 1985 and the CG and PSG/PG in 1989) received seats despite polling less than 5% across the whole of the Galician region. In 1989, the CG actually polled 7.3% in Lugo and 6.5% in Ourense which entitled the party to one seat from each of those provinces. Hence, a 5% threshold may be a hindrance for very small regional parties which have support that is thinly spread over the region, but not for those who enjoy partial but concentrated support.

In a similar fashion, the region of Catalonia effectively operates as four electoral districts (see section 6.1). Barcelona is by far the largest of these four districts, with a district magnitude of 85 seats and Table 6.7 outlines the share of the votes and share of the seats for each party from 1980 to 1988:

Table 6.7 - The Results and Proportionality Measures for the Barcelona District of the Catalanian Autonomous Elections, 1980-1988.

YEAR	PARTY						
1980	<i>CIU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>CC/UCD</i>	<i>PSA</i>	<i>Others</i>
Votes%	27.1	23.1	20.7	8.3	8.1	3.0	8.7
Seats%	30.6	25.9	23.5	9.4	8.2	2.4	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:							
Loosemore Hanby = 9.8		Least Square = 7.2		Sainte Lague = 10.1			
1984	<i>CIU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>AP/PDP/UL</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>Others</i>	
Votes%	44.1	32.1	7.5	6.1	4.1	6.1	
Seats%	48.2	34.1	8.2	5.9	3.5	-	
Overall Measures of disproportionality:							
Loosemore Hanby = 7.0		Least Square = 4.3		Sainte Lague = 6.9			

continued...

1988	CiU	PSC	PSUC/IC	AP/PDP/UL	CDS	ERC	Others
Votes%	43.4	31.2	8.8	5.2	3.8	3.7	2.7
Seats%	45.9	32.9	9.4	4.7	3.5	3.5	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:							
Loosemore Hanby = 4.2		Least Square = 2.9		Sainte Lague = 3.0			

Source: Atlas Electoral de la Ciutat de Barcelona: 1977-1989, Ajuntament de Barcelona. Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth.

We can see from Table 6.7 that overall disproportionality has declined since 1980, and that the CiU and the PSC are the main beneficiaries in elections at the cost of the very small parties (*i.e* the PSA, CDS and those so small that they are grouped together under the category of 'others'). Seats were only awarded to those parties polling a share of the vote of 3% and above, although the nature of the d'Hondt seat distribution system (as described by Lijphart 1990 and Gallagher 1991) ensures that the larger parties are over rewarded whilst the smaller parties are under rewarded. The 'wasted vote' in these elections accounted for by the 'others' category, represented 10 parties in 1980, 11 parties in 1984 and 16 parties in 1988. The higher measures of disproportionality for the 1980 and 1984 elections were artificially affected by the grouping together of numerous very small parties into this single category which created a share of the vote higher than 5%. Since the collective share of the vote for the 16 parties classed as 'others' in 1988 is only 2.7% this did not have an excessive impact upon the proportionality measures. As such, we can see that the 'others' category share of the vote decreased over time whilst the number of parties falling into the others category increased. The average share of the vote for parties polling below the 3% threshold has actually decreased, and in many cases these parties have polled less than 1%. Since the district magnitude for Barcelona is 85 seats we would not expect this to act as a further threshold of exclusion upon representation, particularly as the number of parties actually able to poll at least 3% of the share of the votes is reasonably small (five or six parties). We can conclude that under the d'Hondt system of seat allocation a high district

magnitude of 85 seats actually enhances the possibilities for true proportionality despite the operation of a 3% threshold.

Does the same rule apply when considering the proportionality of smaller districts in Catalonia? The Girona district of Catalonia has a district magnitude of only 17 seats. The share of the votes and share of the seats for each party from 1980 to 1988 are outlined in Table 6.8:

Table 6.8 - The Results and Proportionality Measures for the Girona District of the Catalanian Autonomous Elections, 1980-1988.

YEAR	PARTY						
1980	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>CC/UCD</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	<i>Others</i>	
Votes%	36.9	19.5	15.1	10.6	9.3	7.5	
Seats%	41.2	23.5	17.6	11.8	5.9	-	
Overall Measures of disproportionality:							
Loosemore Hanby = 11.4		Least Square = 7.4		Sainte Lague = 10.6			
1984	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>AP/PDP/UL</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	<i>Others</i>	
Votes%	59.3	21.4	6.1	5.6	3.9	3.5	
Seats%	64.7	23.5	5.9	5.9	-	-	
Overall Measures of disproportionality:							
Loosemore Hanby = 7.3		Least Square = 5.2		Sainte Lague = 7.3			
1988	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>ERC</i>	<i>PSUC/IC</i>	<i>AP/PDP/UL</i>	<i>CDS</i>	<i>Others</i>
Votes%	55.8	23.5	5.4	3.9	3.7	3.2	3.3
Seats%	64.7	29.4	5.9	-	-	-	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:							
Loosemore Hanby = 14.7		Least Square = 9.0		Sainte Lague = 17.0			

Source: Atlas Electoral de la Ciutat de Barcelona: 1977-1989, Ajuntament de Barcelona. Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth.

We can see from the elections held in the district of Girona that district magnitude does begin to have an impact upon the proportionality of representation when we are provided with districts with less than 20 seats. We have several examples of parties polling a share of the vote greater than 3% (the PSUC/IC in 1984 and 1988, the AP/PDP/UL in 1988 and the CDS in 1988) but nevertheless not being rewarded with seats.

Furthermore, we can see that the non representation of these three party lists in 1988 has had a significant impact upon all three disproportionality measures. Whilst the least squares measure is the lowest, we have extremely high measures for the Loosemore Hanby and Sainte Lague indices, therefore suggesting that the ratio of disproportionality between votes and seats is also strong. As a result, we can identify a *de facto* threshold that is higher than a constitutional threshold (approximately 4.5% to 5.5% share of the vote).

Continuing with an analysis of thresholds upon regional party representation in Spain, we have already stated that for the purpose of local elections in Barcelona, 10 electoral districts are employed each with a district magnitude of 15 seats. Does this create a threshold of exclusion for regionalist parties? We can analyze this point in more detail by looking at the share of the votes and share of the seats for the five largest parties/coalitions in several electoral districts for the local elections held in 1987 and 1991.

Table 6.9 - Comparing Vote Shares, Seat Shares and Proportionality for the Main Parties in the Ciutat Vella District of Barcelona, 1987 & 1991.

YEAR	PARTY				
1987	PSC	CiU	AP/PP	IC	ERC
Votes %	47.6	30.7	6.9	4.9	2.3
Seats %	60.0	33.3	6.7	-	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:					
Loosemore Hanby = 11.2		Least Squares = 9.7		Sainte Lague = 10.6	
1991	PSC	CiU	AP/PP	IC	ERC
Votes %	49.2	29.3	8.0	5.7	2.8
Seats %	53.3	33.3	6.7	6.7	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:					
Loosemore Hanby = 6.6		Least Squares = 4.6		Sainte Lague = 4.0	

Source: Barcelona Eleccions Locals 1991, Servei d'Estadística, Ajuntament de Barcelona. Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth.

From Table 6.9 we can see that in the Barcelona district of Ciutat Vella only one of the two regionalist parties (CiU) surpassed the 3% representation threshold in recent local elections. Though close, the ERC has received a share of the popular vote that was just below 3% and as such was excluded from representation. By comparing the indices of proportionality measures for the elections held in the Ciutat Vella district in 1987 and 1991 we can see that true proportionality is not only hindered by the constitutional threshold but also by the district magnitude of 15 seats which creates an added *de facto* threshold (approximately 5% - 5.5% share of the vote). As we can see from Table 6.9, the IC also remained unrewarded in 1987 despite polling a 4.9% share of the vote, due to the fact that the d'Hondt divisor method of seat allocation works to the advantage of parties as their share of the vote increases. Hence the regionalist CiU did benefit from this system, and as a 'large' party, was actually over rewarded with seats. We can see that same occurred in other districts, as Table 6.10 shows:

Table 6.10 - Comparing Vote Shares, Seat Shares and Proportionality for the Main Parties in the Eixample District of Barcelona, 1987 & 1991.

YEAR	PARTY				
1987	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>AP/PP</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>ERC</i>
Votes %	47.0	31.1	8.9	4.5	2.8
Seats %	60.0	33.3	6.7	-	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:					
	Loosemore Hanby = 12.3	Least Squares = 10.1		Sainte Lague = 11.5	
1991	<i>CiU</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>AP/PP</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>ERC</i>
Votes %	45.0	31.0	11.2	5.8	2.9
Seats %	53.3	33.3	6.7	6.7	-
Overall Measures of disproportionality:					
	Loosemore Hanby = 9.4	Least Squares = 7.1		Sainte Lague = 6.5	

Source: Barcelona Eleccions Locals 1991, Servei d'Estadística, Ajuntament de Barcelona. Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth.

We can see from Table 6.10 that a similar situation to that occurring in the district of Ciutat Vella also occurred in the district of Eixample. The regionalist party ERC polled a

share of the vote which was marginally below the 3% threshold in both 1987 and 1991. The IC, however, did receive enough popular support to break through the 3% threshold in 1987, although the party did not secure seats because of the *de facto* threshold created by the district magnitude of 15 seats. We can see that the share of the votes for the IC party in the 1987 elections for the districts of Ciutat Vella and Eixample were 4.9% and 4.5% respectively and in both cases the party did not receive seats. In comparison, the share of the votes for the IC in the 1991 elections in these two districts were 5.7% and 5.8% respectively and in both cases this secured the party one of the 15 seats available in each district. We can conclude, therefore, that in Barcelona local elections where there are five parties in each electoral area, the *de jure* threshold of 3% is in fact not the primary obstacle to small parties gaining representation. It is actually the district magnitude of 15 seats which inflates the effective, or *de facto*, threshold to approximately 5% to 5.5% of the popular vote. We can also see that, as the largest party in Eixample, the regionalist CiU was significantly over rewarded with seats - securing a 13% greater share of the seats than its share of the votes in 1987.

6.3.2 Belgium: In contrast to the cases outlined in section 6.2 in which the regionalist RW was under rewarded with seats in relation to the share of the vote polled, we can also identify Belgian communes in which regional parties were left totally unrepresented. Table 6.11 compares district magnitude (DM) with share of the vote in those communes where the RW failed to secure any seats despite polling at least 5% of the vote in the 1976 local elections:

Table 6.11 - The 1976 Belgian communal elections - examples of the RW Polling Above 5% Share of the Votes But Winning No Seats.

COMMUNE	DM	VOTES%
Moralwelz	25	5.5
Walcourt	23	6.0
Stavelot	17	7.2
Verlaine	11	5.2

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum

We can see from the first three rows listed in Table 6.11 that a positive correlation appears to exist between the district magnitude and the threshold of exclusion. As district magnitude decreases, the RW requires a higher share of the vote to ensure representation which it has not been able to achieve. The example of Verlaine tells us that the threshold of exclusion in this commune was at least 5.2%, though it is likely that the RW would have required a considerably higher share of the vote in order to secure seats. What actually did occur in the 1976 communal election in Verlaine was that the eleven seats were secured by only two parties (the PSC-PRL which polled 67.1% share of the vote and the PS which polled 7.7% share of the vote), and all seats were allocated without having to employ the largest remainders method of PR.

The 1982 communal elections demonstrated similar cases of the RW being totally unrewarded, though often this was due to a very low share of the vote. Examples of the RW polling a 5% or greater share of the vote but winning no seats occurred in the following communes:

Table 6.12 - The 1982 Belgian communal election - examples of the RW Polling a 5% Share of the Vote and Above But Winning No Seats.

COMMUNE	DM	VOTES%
Oupeye	27	5.0
Fleron	25	5.6
Spa	21	5.6

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum

As we can see from Table 6.12, cases of the RW receiving 5% share of the vote and being unrewarded again occurred in communes where district magnitude (DM) was less than 30 seats (as was the case in 1976). We can strengthen our claim that a smaller district magnitude can act as a *de facto* threshold by comparing the above communes in Table 6.12 with support for the RW in Charleroi in 1982. In this commune the district magnitude was 51 seats, enabling the RW to secure one of the available seats with a 4.5% share of the vote. The most significant hindrance to small regionalist parties in Belgium, therefore, is not purely the Imperiali seat distribution system which certainly under rewards small parties, but a combination of the Imperiali system and a low district magnitude which effectively raises the *de facto* threshold for representation and penalizes small regional parties, thus supporting the theories of Blais and Carty (1987) and Lijphart (1990) (remember, a party only needs to poll 15% or more to be 'large' within the Belgian party system). We will now consider effective thresholds which operate in British sub-national elections and their implications for regionalist parties.

6.3.3 Britain: Is it the case that regionalist party representation in a plurality, particularly first past the post, electoral system is particularly sensitive to the impact of variations in party competition? As the number of parties/candidates increases in a single seat electoral area we may expect the *de facto* threshold to decrease. For example,

a party could expect to secure the seat with a lower share of the vote when it is competing with three or four candidates as opposed to just one, though this also depends upon the distribution of votes. Regional parties in Britain are often the second largest party in particular geographic areas (see Chapter Three Section 3.4.4d), although the prospects for representation may increase as party competition also increases in each electoral division. We will test if this is the case by analyzing the electoral fortunes of the Scottish National Party in certain regions in 1986, 1990 and 1994 and Plaid Cymru in county council elections held in 1989 and 1993.

In the 1990 regional elections held in Tayside, for example, the SNP secured ten seats out of the 39 contested, six of which were retained from the 1986 regional elections. In those seats retained or won in 1990, the SNP share of the vote was on average stronger than in 1986 therefore suggesting that the party had consolidated and strengthen support in key areas. Table 6.13 compares SNP share of the vote with the number of competing parties in five of the ten seats won:

Table 6.13 - The 1990 Regional Elections - examples of Electoral Divisions won by the SNP in Tayside.

ELECTORAL DIVISION	SNP VOTES%	COMPETING PARTIES
Forfar West/Strathmore	59.5	3
Forfar East/Dunnichen	55.6	3
Brechin	52.3	4
Arbroath St. Vigeans	46.2	5
Montrose Lunan	46.0	5

Source: Bochel and Denver 1990.

We can see from Table 6.13 that the SNP requires a lower overall share of the vote to secure the seat as the number of competing parties in each division increased beyond three parties. For example, the seat won by the SNP in Montrose Lunan where five

parties competed was secured with a 13.5% lower share of the vote than the seat won in Forfar West/ Strathmore where only three parties competed. Yet, the SNP share of the vote in all these divisions was high despite the number of parties competing. We will now compare these results with the following regional election.

For the 1994 regional elections in Tayside the SNP provided candidates in 45 of the 46 electoral divisions, and the overall SNP share of the vote was 39.6%, therefore improving on the 1990 figure by 8.7%. Whilst the SNP claimed the seat in 22 divisions, Table 6.14 outlines a selection of these results:

Table 6.14 - The 1994 Regional Elections - examples of Electoral Divisions won by the SNP in Tayside

ELECTORAL DIVISION	SNP VOTES%	COMPETING PARTIES
Kinross	76.8	2
Forfar West	67.5	3
Forfar East	63.1	4
Brechin/Eastern Glens	56.6	4
Scone & St. Martins	38.0	4
Glenfarg/Methven	36.4	4
Carnoustie E/Arbroath W	31.2	4

Source: Bochel and Denver 1994.

We can see from Table 6.14 more clearly than in Table 6.13 that the share of the popular vote required by the SNP to secure itself the seat in the single seat division declines as the number of participating candidates increases. The seat won in the Carnoustie East/Arbroath West division where four parties competed was secured with a 45.6% lower share of the vote than in Kinross where only two parties competed. A similar pattern also emerges in other Scottish regions. For example the SNP contested all 34 of the electoral divisions in the Central region in 1986, where it polled an average 34.3%, and secured five seats, therefore polling better than in Tayside (where the party polled

27.9% share of the vote in 1986) but winning less seats. Why was this the case?

Table 6.15 - The 1986 Regional Elections - Electoral Divisions won by the SNP in the Central Region.

ELECTORAL DIVISION	SNP VOTES%	COMPETING PARTIES
Carriden	69.1	2
Ochil	60.0	2
Tryst	56.4	3
Devonvale	42.2	3
Glenfuir	41.3	3

Source: Bochel and Denver 1986.

We can see from Table 6.15 that in those divisions where the SNP secured seats its' share of the vote was particularly high, with the party polling an absolute majority in Carriden, Ochil and Tryst. The SNP share of the vote does become lower however when party competition increases to three parties, though we must be wary of making conclusive assessments since the number of cases in this section of analysis is small. In nine divisions the SNP was outpolled into second place by the Labour Party. In all nine of these divisions in the 1986 regional elections the SNP polled over 32% of the vote but because these divisions were fought as a straight two-party contest between the Labour Party and SNP, the SNP was penalized by the electoral system on every occasion. Hence, the high overall share of the vote polled by the SNP for the Central region as a whole which was shown earlier to be 34.3% may be misleading. In terms of the general proportionality of regional party representation, we have shown that the SNP polled well in divisions fought as a straight two party contest, although the first past the post electoral system in single seat divisions does not reward second place and as such the high SNP shares of the vote in these cases are 'wasted' votes¹.

¹ Taagepera claims that regional parties benefit when the district magnitude is equal to two seats (1984).

Similarly, for the 1990 elections to the Central Region, the SNP polled an average 29.7% - a decline of 4.6% compared to 1986. Of the 34 divisions contested, the SNP won six seats, as outlined in Table 6.16:

Table 6.16 - The 1990 Regional Elections - Electoral Divisions won by the SNP in Central

ELECTORAL DIVISION	SNP VOTES%	COMPETING PARTIES
Carriden	63.1	2
Tryst	56.0	3
Sealock	54.2	3
Ochil	52.6	4
Kinnaird	45.8	3
Devonvale	35.4	4

Source: Bochel and Denver 1990.

In 1990, the SNP was able to retain four seats won in 1986 and capture two more besides, yet despite this its share of the votes in three divisions actually declined due to the increase in party competition in each division. We can again see that the strength of support, and hence threshold, declines as party competition increases. For example, the seat was won with 63.1% share of the vote in Carriden which was a straight two party contest, compared to the seat won in Devondale with a 35.4% share of the vote which was in fact a four party contest. While 'real' support in terms of 'share of the vote' may be declining, therefore, this is not necessarily detrimental to the regionalist party in Scotland, and increasing party competition may actually benefit the SNP. The examples drawn from the Central region in 1986 show that the SNP does not necessarily prosper in straight two party contests. In cases where the SNP has a solid basis of support, the party benefits when it is in competition with more parties than merely the Labour Party.

Does a similar picture emerge in relation to regional party representation in Wales?

Table 6.17 outlines examples of PC support in the Cynon Valley district:

Table 6.17 - The 1989 Welsh County Council Elections - Support and Placing for PC Candidates in the Cynon Valley District.

DIVISION	VOTES%	POSITION	COMPETING PARTIES
Mountain Ash	67.7	1st	2
Ynysybwl	43.3	2nd	2
Aberman South	41.4	2nd	3
Abercynon	40.2	2nd	2
Cwmbach	38.7	2nd	2
Penrhiwceiber	38.2	2nd	2
Aberdare West	30.9	2nd	3

Source: Rallings & Thrasher 1989.

We can see from the election results in Table 6.17 that in the district of Cynon Valley PC provided candidates for seven of the ten electoral divisions in the 1989 county council elections. Since Cynon Valley is in the county of Mid Glamorgan, we would expect to see the PC polling significant shares of the vote in this area (see Chapter Three section 3.4.3d). While this indeed occurs, the PC only secured one seat in 1989. For example, whilst a 43.3% share of the vote left PC in only second place in the division of Ynysybwl in 1989, a share of the vote equal to 41.7% was enough to secure representation in the Aberdare West division in 1993 as Table 6.18 shows:

Table 6.18 - The 1993 Welsh County Council Elections - Support and Placing for PC Candidates in the Cynon Valley District.

DIVISION	VOTES%	POSITION	COMPETING PARTIES
Aberman South	64.7	1st	2
Mountain Ash	62.8	1st	2
Penrhiwceiber	51.5	1st	2
Ynysybwl	43.8	2nd	2
Aberdare West	41.7	1st	4
Aberdare East	33.4	2nd	3
Abercynon	30.1	3rd	3
Hirwaun	26.1	2nd	2
Aberman North	25.1	2nd	2
Cwmbach	23.7	2nd	2

Source: Rallings & Thrasher 1993a.

We can see from the election results in the district of Cynon Valley in 1993 that PC provided candidates for all ten of the electoral divisions thereby improving on the party's 1989 participation ratio. Furthermore, PC increased representation from one to four seats in 1993. As mentioned above, most interesting about the election results in this district is the differentiation between the outcome in Ynysybwl in 1989 and in Aberdare West in 1993. We can explain this result as being affected by the number of competing parties in each division. Whilst the election in Ynysybwl was a straight two-way contest between the Labour Party and PC, the division of Aberdare West was contested by four candidates. We have already shown with reference to Scottish Regional elections that the more candidates in a single seat division there are, the lower the *de facto* threshold becomes for the SNP to win a seat. This can also be seen to be the case for PC in Wales.

We have used examples of both the SNP and PC to show that a regionalist party can poll over 40% share of the vote in single seat divisions yet still take second place when the election is a two-party contest. What is important is that as long as regionalist parties are able to sustain and build upon existing levels of electoral support between elections, their opportunities for being successfully elected increase as more parties compete in each electoral area and thus the *de facto* threshold for representation decreases. In PR elections in Spain and Belgium we were able to estimate the *de facto* thresholds operating in elections, however, we cannot effectively do the same in the British case. We can ascertain that in a four party contest, for example, the effective *de facto* threshold is equal to 25% of the valid vote plus one vote, but rarely are shares of the votes between parties so closely balanced. The use of PR in multi seat electoral areas allows a more predictable indicator of *de facto* thresholds than the first past the post system - hence reinforcing that placing is more crucial for SNP and PC candidates than share of the vote. Our last section of this chapter will analyze the relationship between seat distribution

systems and regional party representation.

6.4 The Impact of Seat Distribution Upon Regionalist Party Representation

This section of analysis will consider the effect of the seat distribution formula upon regionalist party representation for parties in both PR systems and the plurality system. As was discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two section 2.3.3, the seat distribution formulæ vary in proportionality in relation to their treatment of small parties, but this raises the added complexity of defining 'small' parties. For the purposes of analysis in this section we will focus upon regional parties and the seat distribution effect in Belgium, Italy and Britain.

6.4.1 Belgium If we recall our analysis of the 1976 communal elections in Belgium (see section 6.2.1) we can see that the FDF benefitted from the Imperiali method of seat distribution, and in fact there were no examples of the FDF being under represented in the 1976 elections. In the commune of Anderlecht, for example, the FDF was slightly over represented (19.1% share of the seats with an 18.1% share of the votes). In those municipalities where the FDF polled highest, the party was more significantly over represented. In the commune of Oudergem in 1976, the FDF won 51.6% of the seats with a share of the vote of 42.2%, in Etterbeek the party secured 67.6% seats with a 55.7% share of the votes, and in St. Lamb Woluwe the FDF won 51.4% of the seats with a 42.5% share of the vote. As such, the FDF was over rewarded in the 1976 communal elections though we can also clarify that it was not a small party and, therefore, we should not be surprised by the fact that this regional party was significantly over represented due to the effects of the Imperiali method of seat distribution.

Again, the 1988 communal elections in Belgium demonstrated the effect of the use of the Imperiali system upon regionalist party representation. Whilst the FDF was over rewarded with seats when the share of the vote was large it was also under rewarded when the vote was not so strong. Table 6.19 compares district magnitude (DM) with the difference in the FDF's shares of the vote and shares of the seats in six Brussels communes in 1988:

Table 6.19 - The Impact of the Imperiali Seat Distribution Method Upon FDF Representation, 1988 communal elections.

MUNICIPALITY	D M	VOTES%	SEATS%
St. Agatha Berchem	25	18.7	24.0
Watermoal Bosvoorde	27	35.8	44.4
Oudergem	31	48.6	58.1
Evere	31	11.8	9.7
St. Gillis	35	7.0	5.7
Scharbeek	47	9.5	8.5

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum

We can see from Table 6.19 that electoral success and representation for the FDF is at the mercy of the seat distribution system rather than purely the number of seats available. The FDF is at an advantage when it is one of the largest parties and as a result is over rewarded with seats (e.g. in St. Agatha Berchem, Watermoal Bosvoorde and Oudergem). It is, however, penalised when its share of the vote is close to or below the 10% mark (e.g. in Evere, St. Gillis and Scharbeek). This occurs regardless of low or high district magnitude though we must be wary of the validity of discussing low district magnitude when the lowest example is 25 seats, as was the case in the commune of St. Agatha Berchem. As was demonstrated in Chapter Four section 4.5, although the constraints of district magnitude are related to the number of competing parties, there is a level at which the number of seats refrains from being the primary hindrance to party,

particularly small party, representation. From the data that is available for Belgian communal elections our analysis suggests that a regionalist party can only be classified as 'small' when it polls below 10% of the popular vote, but at or below this point it is likely to be under rewarded or completely unrewarded.

Of course, the FDF is not the only regionalist party in Belgium. Support for the regionalist RW in the 1976 communal elections in the region of Wallonia ranged from the party polling less than 1% to it actually being the largest party in other communes, although the RW was over rewarded with seats in only a handful of cases. In the commune of Trois Ponts for example, the RW won 63.6% of the seats with a 58% share of the vote in 1976. In Charleroi the RW received a smaller though still significant share of the votes of 19.2%, for which it received an almost equally proportional share of the seats of 19.6%. It is important to bear in mind that whilst the district magnitude in Trois Ponts was 11 seats, the district magnitude in Charleroi is 51 seats, and we should not be surprised to see a far more proportional vote-seat ratio in the larger commune. Table 6.20 compares district magnitude (DM) with each party's share of the votes and seats and the indices of proportionality for the 1976 elections in these two communes:

Table 6.20 - A Comparison of District Magnitude and Each Party's Share of the Vote and Share of the Seats and Overall Measures of Disproportionality in the 1976 Belgian Communal Elections - Communes of Charleroi and Trois Ponts.

COMMUNE	PARTY							DM
<i>Charleroi</i>	<i>PS</i>	<i>RW</i>	<i>PSC</i>	<i>PRL</i>	<i>PCB</i>	<i>NR1</i>	<i>PTB</i>	51 seats
Votes%	49.1	19.2	15.4	10.9	4.4	0.8	0.3	
Seats %	52.9	19.6	15.7	9.8	2.0	-	-	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:								
Loosemore Hanby= 4.6			Least Squares= 3.4			Sainte Lague= 2.9		

continued...

COMMUNE	PARTY		DM
Trois Ponts	RW	PS	
Votes%	58.0	42.0	11 seats
Seats %	63.6	36.4	
Overall Measures of Proportionality:			
Loosemore Hanby=	5.7	Least Squares=	5.7
		Sainte Lague=	1.3

Source: J. Ackaert, Katholieke Universiteit & Limburgs Universitair Centrum, University of Plymouth Database.

Table 6.20 provides some interesting information. We can see that, generally speaking, the absolute difference between the share of the votes and share of the seats for each individual party is lower for the election held in Charleroi than the election held in Trois Ponts. This is reflected in the lower Loosemore Hanby and Least Squares measures of disproportionality in Charleroi. Since both indices are measuring the absolute differences between each party's share of the votes and share of the seats we would expect the measures in Charleroi to be lower, since the much higher district magnitude allows for the seats to be more proportionally allocated among parties. We would expect the Sainte Lague measure to be lower in Trois Pont, however, since this index is measuring the relative differences in a party's share of the votes and share of the seats, and relative differences increase as the number of cases of disparity (*i.e* the number of parties competing) increases. This evidence from communal elections held in Belgium in 1976 supports the claim made by Taagepera and Laakso (1980: 443) that one of the major determinants of proportionality is district magnitude, although in a commune with a small district magnitude which employs PR (but no other electoral constraints) the fewer the number of parties the greater the opportunity is for true proportionality to occur. We have already ascertained, however, that the Imperiali system over rewards the largest parties and since the district magnitude in Trois Ponts is only 11 seats, we have an example of much stronger disproportionality than if the district magnitude matched that of Charleroi but all other factors (*e.g* the number of competing parties and

their shares of the votes) remained the same.

6.4.2 Italy: We can assess the impact of the seat distribution method upon regional party performance in the Italian region of Val D'Aosta by employing data available for the regional assembly elections held in 1983, 1988 and 1993. In all three elections the district magnitude was 35 seats and the Hare quota method of seat allocation was applied.² Despite the high number of parties participating in each election (12 in 1983, 14 in 1988 and 12 in 1993) the seat distribution system in fact produced substantial opportunities for representation as the *de facto* threshold was less than a 2% share of the vote. Representation for the two regionalist parties - the Union Valdotaïne (UV) and Lega Nord (LN) - is outlined in Table 6.21:

Table 6.21 - Examples of Regionalist Party Shares of the Vote (%) and Shares of the Seats (%) in the Val d'Aosta Regional Elections, 1983 - 1993.

YEAR	PARTY	VOTES%	SEATS%
1983	UV	27.1	25.7
1988	UV	34.2	34.3
1993	UV	37.3	37.1
1993	LN	7.6	8.6

Source: Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta, 1993.

We can see from Table 6.21 that both regionalist parties received a highly proportional seat reward in relation to their share of the votes. In the case of the UV, this was in fact the party with the highest share of the vote in all three elections and as such the close correlation between share of the votes and share of the seats is not surprising. We can also see, however, that over representation is not necessarily derived from greater

² To determine the Hare quota, votes for each list are added together. This total is divided by the number of seats to determine the quota. If a list polls less votes than the quota its votes are subtracted from the original total. This new total is divided by the number of seats to give a new quota.

shares of the vote as occurs with the Imperiali system employed in Belgium. The Lega Nord was one of ten parties to secure representation in 1993, with twelve political parties competing in total. Since the overall measures of disproportionality for the 1993 election in Val d'Aosta are only 5.5 for the Loosemore Hanby measure and 2.6 for the Least Squares measure we can state that the seat distribution method used in this region is in fact highly proportional, particularly when we take into account the district magnitude (35 seats), the high number of participating and represented parties, and the fact that the *de facto* threshold is low. The seat distribution method in the Val d'Aosta region is highly proportional despite other variables, rather than because of them.

6.4.3 Britain: An analysis of the impact of seat distribution upon regional party representation under the first past the post electoral system in single seat divisions provides an interesting contrast to the discoveries we have made concerning PR systems in Belgium and Italy. In Scotland, district magnitude always equals one seat, whilst in Wales we have cases of multi-seat wards. In the 1986 regional elections in Scotland the SNP provided candidates in 41 of the 46 electoral divisions in the Tayside region. The average turnout in contested divisions in Tayside in 1986 was 47.2%. The overall SNP share of the vote was 27.9%, and the party won nine seats in total (22% of those contested). Using other cases of Scottish regional elections in section 6.3.3 we demonstrated that there was a correlation between SNP share of the vote and party competition, and this is reinforced in this section. In Forfar East in 1986, for example, the SNP polled almost 60% of the popular vote in a two-party contest between itself and the Conservative Party. In comparison, the 36% of the vote polled by the SNP in West Ferry in 1986 was also enough to win the seat, due to the fact that there were five competing candidates - thus reducing the *de facto* threshold needed to win in that division (though effectively the *de facto* threshold may be as low as 20% of the valid vote plus one vote in a single seat division with five competing parties). In this section we will focus

upon electoral divisions in which the SNP came second:

Table 6.22 - A Comparison of Party Shares of the Vote in Electoral Divisions in which the SNP Took Second Place - 1986 Regional Elections in the Tayside Region.

ELECTORAL DIVISION	SNP VOTES %	1st PARTY	1st PARTY VOTES %
Letham	38.0	LAB	48.6
Craigiebank	30.9	LAB	32.1
Ardler/Blackshade	14.5	LAB	84.9
Kinross	40.4	CON	48.3
Strathtay	34.0	CON	37.6
Longforgan/Sidlaw	32.6	CON	35.9
St. Martins	26.1	CON	44.3

Source: Bochel and Denver 1986.

The SNP took second place in 25 electoral divisions within Tayside in the 1986 regional elections and these divisions were fairly evenly divided between those won by the Labour Party and those won by the Conservative Party. If we look at the range in shares of the votes in divisions in Table 6.22 in which the SNP took second place to Labour, we can see that in Craigiebank the SNP come close to beating the party (Labour polled only 1.2% more). In other cases, however, the SNP share of the vote was at least 10% behind that of the Labour Party. The same is not true though where the SNP came second to the Conservative Party. The largest differential between the Conservative Party and SNP was 18.2% share of the vote in the division of St. Martins. In comparison, the largest differential between the Labour Party and SNP was 70.4% in the division of Ardler/Blackshade. As such, the SNP was a much closer second party to the Conservatives in Tayside in 1986 than it was to the Labour Party. There are no prizes, however, for polling second place in a first past the post seat distribution system and we can see that significant levels of electoral support for the SNP in some divisions became effectively 'wasted' votes. We stated earlier that Taagepera claims that regional parties perform best when district magnitude equals two seats (see section 6.3.3). Is it the case that

regional parties in Britain benefit from elections in multi-seat wards? In order to test this we will consider variations in PC support and representation in multi seat divisions in the 1987 and 1991 district elections to demonstrate the impact of split ticket voting in a plurality system.

For analytical purposes we have chosen six wards in which split ticket voting occurred in both the 1987 and 1991 district elections, and in which the PC successfully secured a proportion of the available seats. Table 6.23 outlines the information by listing the ward name and district within which it lies, the year of election, the district magnitude (DM), the share of the vote to each PC candidate standing, and the number of PC candidates elected:

Table 6.23 - A Comparison of PC Support in Selected Multi-Seat Wards - 1987 and 1991 District Elections.

Islwyn District

Crumlin Ward

YEAR	DM	PC VOTES%			CANDIDATES ELECTED
		<i>1st cand</i>	<i>2nd cand</i>	<i>3rd cand</i>	
1987	3	21.6	18.3	14.3	2
1991	3	18.7	16.1	12.7	1

Pontllafraith Ward

YEAR	DM	PC VOTES%				CANDIDATES ELECTED
		<i>1st cand</i>	<i>2nd cand</i>	<i>3rd cand</i>	<i>4th cand</i>	
1987	4	16.3	14.2	10.5	10.4	2
1991	4	14.3	12.7	8.9	8.7	2

Rhymney Valley District

Aber Valley Ward

YEAR	DM	PC VOTES%			CANDIDATES ELECTED
		<i>1st cand</i>	<i>2nd cand</i>	<i>3rd cand</i>	
1987	3	18.0	12.6	8.6	1
1991	3	14.2	11.6	8.8	2

continued...

Rhymney Valley District
Hengoed Ward

YEAR	DM	PC VOTES%		CANDIDATES ELECTED
		1st cand	2nd cand	
1987	2	26.0	24.2	1
1991	2	30.6	23.3	1

Penrheol Ward

YEAR	DM	PC VOTES%				CANDIDATES ELECTED
		1st cand	2nd cand	3rd cand	4th cand	
1987	4	13.8	11.1	10.8	10.8	1
1991	4	15.4	12.3	12.1	11.6	2

Taff Ely District

Llantwit Fadre

YEAR	DM	PC VOTES%		CANDIDATES ELECTED
		1st cand	2nd cand	
1987	2	22.8	18.8	1
1991	2	24.5	17.1	1

Source: Rallings & Thrasher, Local Elections Database.

Each PC's share of the vote percentage was calculated as a share of the number of votes as a whole and, therefore, may appear much lower than share of the vote figures discussed in relation to county council election results in single seat divisions in Wales. We can see from Table 6.23 that in the six wards chosen, considerable vote-splitting occurred which benefitted some PC candidates and not others. Some significant differences between highest and lowest PC shares of the vote occurred - particularly in Aber Valley in 1987 and Crumlin in 1987. What is obvious from the different shares of the votes is that the electorate used split-ticket voting to elect candidates from more than one party. We have shown in section 6.3.3 that both major regionalist parties in Britain have successfully established a significant level of support at the county and regional election level but are often hindered in straight two-party contests in single seat divisions. Multi-seat wards at the district election level do not provide the same problems and the PC appears to benefit as a 2nd, 3rd and 4th choice from split ticket voting at the sub national level.

We can see, therefore, that there are several aspects important to the analysis of the seat distribution method upon the representation of regional parties in sub-national elections. The most obvious difference is the contrast between proportional representation systems and plurality systems. The observations we have made in this section are by no means unique to regionalist parties or the sub-national level of election. What is of more importance, however, is the effect of the different forms of PR seat distribution. The Imperiali method does not operate in favour of the smaller parties and as such regionalist parties in Europe may be at a disadvantage if they are unable to poll over 10% of the popular support in sub-national elections. Whilst regionalist parties under the British plurality system are increasing in electoral popularity, they are still very much hindered by the single seat system, though opportunities do increase, as the PC experience shows, in multi-seat ward when voters choose to split voting preferences between parties.

6.5 Conclusions

From the diversity of analysis presented in this chapter, we can make various claims and assumptions about electoral support and representation of regionalist parties at the sub-national level in Europe. In relation to district magnitude, regional parties which poll a small level of electoral support are threatened in electoral divisions with a low district magnitude - thus supporting those claims made by Rae (1967), Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Gallagher (1991). Whilst low district magnitude is the norm in plurality systems, we have also shown it to be a hindrance to regional parties operating within proportional representation systems at the lowest, municipal, level of elections. In Belgium, large regional parties such as the FDF do not appear to be affected by district magnitude, though smaller examples such as the RW have been affected. From the

examples used to represent regional party electoral success in Spain, we are able to show that the district magnitude is not allocated at the regional level in Galicia, but at the provincial level, and that smaller provinces do hinder the opportunities for proportionality (though this is not necessarily the primary hindrance to representation). In local elections held in Barcelona, however, district magnitude does become an observable constraint. We can further clarify that low district magnitude can effectively create *de facto* thresholds to small party representation which have an impact both instead of and as well as *de jure* thresholds.

In relation to the two types of electoral thresholds, we can see that they help to restrict the diversity of multi-party councils and assemblies at the sub-national level. As suggested by Lijphart (1994a), they effectively exclude many very small parties which are often encouraged to participate by the very presence of proportional representation. In the case of Galician elections, regional parties can overcome *de jure* thresholds if support is concentrated in specific provinces. Yet it is more common to see representation restricted by a *de facto* threshold, as this increases as the district magnitude decreases. This has also affected the regionalist RW party in Belgian communal elections. We have shown that in some cases of proportional representation systems, the *de facto* threshold is actually higher than the *de jure* threshold. This occurred in the smaller districts for the Catalanian autonomous elections and local elections held in Barcelona. Furthermore, in first past the post systems, the *de facto* threshold decreases as we move away from straight two-party contests towards multi party contests, demonstrated by our study of the SNP in selected regional elections in Scotland and the PC in certain counties in Wales.

The seat distribution system is of crucial importance. By analyzing communal elections in Belgium we were able to show that a large regionalist party such as the FDF, has

benefitted from the use of the Imperiali seat distribution method. Similarly, the Imperiali system will penalize regional parties if they are electorally small, which also applies to the FDF in municipalities such as Scharbeek and Evere. The Hare quota distribution system as used in the Val d'Aosta region of Italy tends to be more proportional towards all but the very smallest of parties. Both regionalist parties (the UV and LN - large and small parties) are relatively proportionally represented in regional elections because of the seat distribution system. The first past the post electoral, or simple plurality, system is not necessarily a problem for regional parties provided they are able to consolidate support in targeted electoral divisions. Our analysis finds, however, that in many divisions both the SNP and PC take second place despite significant levels of support. The use of single seat divisions results in a large amount of 'wasted' regional support, and actual seats won often under estimates real levels of electoral support. The prospects are not so gloomy if plurality operates in multi-seat areas, because regionalist parties appear to benefit from split-ticket voting where the opportunity arises. Furthermore, in the case of the SNP, the party apparently benefits as party competition increases. If the party has a hard core consistent level of support across sub-national elections, then the party may prosper as the number of parties increases and the *de facto* threshold declines. In our final chapter we will draw together the findings made from our quantitative analysis of sub-national electoral systems and their effect upon party representation and attempt to clarify some of the questions raised in the earlier chapters.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSIONS

The main body of this thesis consists of two distinct sections. In Chapters One to Three we presented a critical analysis of established research into electoral systems, party systems and two party families which has primarily drawn conclusions from analysis at the national electoral level. Whilst others have chosen to ask why the electorate in various European states are less likely to vote for the traditional 'catch-all' parties, we have instead focused upon the mechanical operation of elections at the sub-national level in order to establish a clearer understanding of the circumstances which facilitate greater changes in party representation, and eventually, party systems. We will now attempt to answer some of those questions posed in earlier chapters, and justify statements made about far right and regionalist parties in particular, by referring to the data used and observations made in Chapters Four to Six.

In Chapter One we raised several issues regarding the status of contemporary electoral and party system research. Despite the growing volume of literature raising issues about electoral change in western Europe which has proliferated since the 1980s, we demonstrated that it could also be argued that the notion of radical change is a 'myth' (Mair 1993). Yet electoral and party system analysis has, until now, remained largely concerned with national elections. There may be good reasons for this - after all, governments are chosen via national elections and thus may be deemed more important and likely to exhibit the highest rates of turnout. This should not, however, render sub-national elections 'unimportant', and it has been our intention to outline the effects of electoral systems, and to a lesser extent, the stability of party systems, as they exist in various west European sub-national systems. In doing so we have considered some general patterns of stability and change (within Chapter Four), and more precisely looked at the relationship between far right and regionalist party representation and

proportionality in a number of sub-national case studies.

Precisely because sub-national elections do not choose the government of the day, they are interesting for several reasons. First, features such as turnout may tell us something about the 'legitimacy' of sub-national government - *i.e.* the extent to which it is seen as important in terms of being politically effective. If local government is seen as being politically 'toothless' (as some would argue is the case in Britain and the Republic of Ireland), then the electorate may be less inclined to vote in the first place. Second, if sub-national government is weak in terms of its political impact, sub-national elections may also be used as effective 'opinion polls' indicating in between general elections the popularity of the major political parties (see Reif and Schmitt 1980, van der Eijk *et al* 1994).

In comparison, it may not be at all appropriate to judge sub-national elections by the criteria used for national elections. If particular minority groups (be they ethnic, linguistic, economic *etc.*) are not to be left to feel marginalised or excluded, they must have some political say and in one form this may be achieved with political party formation. This has created a fragmentation of the traditional party systems in some states (e.g. Belgium, Spain, Italy and Britain) and allowed parties such as regionalists and the far right to develop and build upon support. In federalized countries and states with areas of regional autonomy, sub-national elections may be taken very seriously by the electorate and for some (especially those belonging to minority populations) may even be more important than general elections (e.g. in Belgium, Germany and parts of Spain and Italy). Thus, not only is a comparative analysis of sub-national elections in western Europe long overdue, but it allows us to test some important observations made about electoral rules and the role of small parties which have developed from national electoral analysis.

In Chapter One we identified several political changes which have been labelled by others as primary facilitators of electoral volatility and change. These include the 'decline of the central state', and the weakening salience of support for anti-ideological, catch-all parties which have dominated the electoral scene in many countries through much of the post-war period. Paradoxically, as the central state has weakened in some countries, the simultaneous emergence and resurgence of peripheral demands for autonomy has brought about a surge of new and small parties onto the electoral scene, and it is the success of two party families seeking representation that is of particular interest to our research - those of the far right and regionalists.

Within Chapter One we considered a variety of explanations regarding how and why small parties may be an important topic to research. Muller-Rommel (1991) claims that the significance of small parties is marginalised by the reluctance of academics to look beyond the outcome of general elections. As a result, the frequency and tendency to categorize small parties as 'others' is an annoying hindrance to those whose interests lie beyond the handful of established large and coalition partner parties. Analysis at the national level can be hindered by low national support making comparative analysis difficult - though this is not necessarily the case at the sub-national level. There are both organisational and systemic reasons why new and small parties are most likely to succeed, at least to begin with, at the sub-national level (*i.e.* financial resources, availability of candidates, media attention *etc.* as well as electoral system effects and the significance of a decentralized political system). Indeed, few parties literally 'burst onto' the national electoral scene without having successfully built upon established support at the sub-national level. We do not seek to answer who votes for small parties, but what happens to such parties when voters do. What effect do electoral rules have and how does proportionality change?

Sub-national electoral success has, until now, been a neglected area of research as little comparative electoral analysis has ventured beyond general elections. The diversity of sub-national government systems does not make comparative analysis a simple task. Nor, on the surface do sub-national electoral systems appear uniform. Small parties, therefore, have important lessons to learn about where and when they can expect to maximize various levels of electoral support (Taagepera & Shugart 1989). For example, less votes are needed to win seats at the sub-national level than in general elections and multi-seat elections hold greater opportunities for small parties, whilst the electoral system may have more indirect influences upon new and small party opportunities - particular ballot systems and thresholds may deter voters from 'wasting' their vote on less-established, fringe groups.

Small parties may, therefore, only be small in national and not sub-national elections. Technical obstacles such as thresholds are effectively lower and publicity opportunities are better. But there are other reasons for studying sub-national elections. Deep-seated regional trends and variations are often clouded over by generalisations made about national results - suggesting conformity rather than diversity. Also, the small though significant research conducted on 'second order' elections provides important observations which we can further test with our data. For example, is turnout lower - and does this have particular implications for certain parties? Reif and Schmitt claim the prospects for new and smaller parties should be brighter as control of national government is not at stake. This is supported by Gallagher (1989) who suggests that 'unimportant' elections enable us to identify weakening party attachments before wholesale realignment actually occurs. Small parties may also prosper in sub-national elections because they can tune in to truly local issues, and the 'institutional-procedural' dimension (the electoral system itself) may work to their advantage. Hence, the 'sub-

national electoral system may act as an accessible vehicle for minority party representation and establishment within the general party system' (Chapter One page 27).

Within Chapter Two we have identified particular electoral rules and features which have been deemed as significant in determining the proportionality of representation. Some of these rules are constitutional *e.g. de jure* thresholds and supplementary seats, whilst others are arbitrary - such as district magnitude, and *de facto* thresholds. This is not to imply, however, that they do not have as important an influence upon proportionality. We agree with Rae's comments (1967) that all electoral systems tend to yield disproportionate results and that some electoral systems are particularly prejudiced towards the larger parties. Rae also claims that no electoral system positively accelerates small party success, but rather some are 'weaker brakes' to their development. We have sought to identify these brakes. All elections must have a district magnitude, all contested elections must have a potential *de facto* threshold for representation and all elections adopt an established method of seat distribution. It is these core elements and some secondary factors which provide the focus for the majority of our analysis in later chapters. Whilst many countries operate similar national and sub-national electoral systems there are often variations to a lesser or greater degree (*e.g.* Italy and Germany).

One factor which does vary significantly in many cases is district magnitude. Hence, assumptions made about the impact of electoral systems in each country at the national electoral level will not necessarily apply when analyzing sub-national elections in those same countries. We stated that the general assumption at the national electoral level is that small parties only realistic opportunities lie within PR systems. This may also be the case sub-nationally, but our assumption of which parties are small at this level may

change. If Jackman's (1987) claim that increased disproportionality discourages voters from supporting minor parties is correct, then again we can reinforce our claim that small parties have important lessons to learn about which electoral systems and rules will maximize the opportunities for representation.

Powell (1986) cited in Chapter Two, asserts that PR has two sets of consequences - it produces more parties and produces some extremist parties. We can accept neither as entirely applicable to sub-national elections. First, we have cases of PR where many parties participate (e.g. 10 or more parties in Spain and Italy), but we have also shown that we have as little as three parties in PR systems (e.g. at the municipal level in Belgium). At the same time, party competition is increasing in British sub-national elections. PR does not, therefore, necessarily encourage more parties at the sub-national level. Does it produce extremist parties? If we use the far right as an example then yet again we cannot prove this is the case. PR certainly enhances representational chances, but the far right have persisted in British electoral politics for a significant part of the post-war period, albeit with few candidates and extremely small levels of support. Ultimately, we must suggest that other factors produce extremist parties, but certain electoral features at the sub-national level work to their benefit.

In Chapter Two we also discussed the notion of 'proportional representation' and the political implications this often creates. Gallagher (1991) firstly states that the issue of proportionality has by and large been overlooked. For example, different electoral systems and particularly different PR systems, create different types of proportionality because they embody different principles regarding representation - *i.e.* who should be included/excluded and to what extent? If certain parties are to be excluded, an electoral system has to be manufactured to enable this to occur *i.e.* with thresholds for very small parties and with a majoritarian system for extremist parties. We have demonstrated

throughout this research that disproportionality is not affected by the method of seat distribution alone - one also needs to consider the distribution of votes between parties, the district magnitude, the number of competing parties and the influence of both *de jure* and *de facto* thresholds. The political 'character of disproportionality' (Cox & Shugart 1991) should be the central concern of those parties focused upon in this research. The extent to which electoral systems and rules favour the larger parties at the cost of the small parties is our main focus. Just as the others have disputed which electoral rules are most significant in determining proportionality we too have shown that different rules become more significant at different sub-national levels - district magnitude becoming more important at the lowest electoral level.

Since we are particularly interested in the representation of small parties we are concerned with disproportionality indices that demonstrate (i) cases of large seat-vote discrepancy (the Least Squares Index) - particularly if this affects far right and regionalist parties, and (ii) numerous cases of small parties being unrepresented - a small party alone may be 'politically uninteresting' but a certain level of support for a collective of small parties will affect proportionality (measured by the Loosemore Hanby Index). The Saint Lague Index is suitable because it is not biased towards any particular seat distribution formula. In relation to the electoral features most likely to affect proportionality, district magnitude is favoured by Rae(1967), Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Gallagher (1991), and the seat allocation formula by Lijphart (1990) and Blais and Carty (1987).

Can we simply say that PR is the most effective means of representation for far right and regionalist parties in West Europe? Apparently not. Both types of party benefit from increased support in multi-seat elections in Britain, and although representation is not guaranteed, there is evidence of split-ticket voting which does benefit smaller parties

when 'less-is-at-stake' compared to single seat general elections. Even in PR systems, far right and regionalist parties must be able to gauge potential support. If the parties are large e.g. polling a share of the vote of 20% or more, representation is not a problem and over-representation can often occur. Yet if the share of the vote is likely to be below 10% various electoral features have to be taken into consideration - namely the district magnitude, the seat distribution system and the number of competing parties. The combination of these three factors creates important *de facto* thresholds which may be difficult to surpass. The strategic contestation of sub-national elections, therefore, can provide the make or break factor for new and small parties in Europe - providing an invaluable base from which to build up a platform for contesting national elections. PR is not an 'ideal' system - proportionality is a value laden measure depending upon whose interests we prefer to see represented. As such, multi-districts in a plurality system may be a fitting compromise for smaller parties in Britain.

In Chapter Three we discussed the established literature regarding west European party systems and the opportunities available for party system change. As was observed in relation to electoral systems, research of west European party systems has tended to focus upon the national electoral level. If Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) claim that the effective number of parties at the national level has gradually increased since 1970, then opportunities for new parties should be even rosier at the sub-national level. If the notion that traditional parties and party systems are under challenge is correct, support for new and small alternative parties will first become apparent at the sub-national level - as the opportunities for representation are less stringent. Wolinetz (1988) claims that certain electoral laws serve to maintain party system stability by providing a hurdle for new and small parties. Our aim has been to establish the significance of this hurdle at the sub-national level.

Within Chapter Three, we defined the two party families which we have used as case studies for analyzing electoral system effects. Whilst acknowledging that there exists some debate about which parties fit into the categories far right and regionalist, we have nevertheless chosen case studies which attract the greatest degree of consensus. For various reasons, far right and regionalist parties have attracted a significant amount of political research attention in the last decade. In relation to far right electoral success, we noted that Ignazi and Ysmal suggest the 'new' far right is most successful whilst parties with stronger ties to the legacy of fascism are electorally weak. This is certainly true when comparing the electoral fortunes of the new far right in Germany and the Netherlands with the old far right of Britain and Belgium. We must re-assert, however, that a weakness with Ignazi and Ysmal's claim is that they do not define 'electoral success'. Many associate success with votes polled. Since we are concerned with proportionality we would choose to define electoral success with at least proportionate, and even over, representation.

For the purposes of research, we have analyzed both old far right parties (established before 1980) and new far right parties (established since 1980). In Germany, the NPD was electorally successful in a handful of states in the late 1960s, but has since been overshadowed by the success of Die Republikaner. The DVU-List D is electorally concentrated in the states of Bremen and Schleswig-Holstein. Thus, Die Republikaner is the largest and most diversely spread far right party in Germany. Since its formation in 1983, the party has experienced various peaks and troughs in sub-national support, possibly suggesting that the party is a recipient of 'protest' votes.

In the Netherlands, the 'old' far right have been replaced by the 'new' far right (CD and CP86). Whilst these parties have enjoyed some very small success at the national level, they are more rapidly growing in effective support and representation at the sub-national

level. In Belgium, various far right parties have existed in the post war period though by far the most successful is the Vlaams Blok. Since 1987, this party has significantly increased its profile at the national and sub-national level, and as a result is hardly small in sub-national terms, and is actually one of the larger parties in the province of Antwerpen. By comparison, far right support in Britain is extremely weak. Both far right parties have enjoyed only small and sporadic bursts of support, which tend to be concentrated in specific, working class areas. Apart from a handful of council seats in the 1970s and a by-election victory in 1993, the far right in Britain has remained on the electoral fringes.

In relation to regionalist parties in western Europe, we suggested that such parties form for a variety of reasons with a range of demands - often based on notions of ethnic, linguistic and cultural difference and with a belief that their interests are exploited or ignored by an 'alien' central state. We should not be surprised to find numerous, successful regionalist parties in Belgium, and such parties have existed since the 1950s. We have shown that the RW has apparently benefitted from second order voting - performing better in sub-national elections than in general elections, whilst the Flemish VU has been losing support since the late 1980s (though this is probably due to the success of the regionalist and far right nature of the VB). In Italy, regionalist parties have experienced a dramatic rise in support since the collapse of the mainstream parties in the late 1980s and early 1990s - provoking claims that Italy is truly fragmenting into at least two and possibly three identifiable cultural regions. Linguistic-ethnic regional parties such as those in Sardinia and Val d'Aosta have received a constantly significant and increasing share of the vote at the sub-national level since the 1970s and 1980s. The most significant regionalist party in Italy is now the Northern League which has used cultural-economic motives to attract a phenomenal level of support both locally and nationally since the early 1990s, to the extent that it is the third largest party in

national terms in Italy.

In Spain, the most prominent examples of regionalist parties lie in Catalonia and the Basque Country, and to a lesser extent in Galicia, with the former two having more than one regionalist party. In Catalonia, the CiU has been the largest party since 1980, as has been the PNV in the Basque Country. In Britain regionalist parties have developed in Scotland and Wales for both economic and cultural reasons. Both parties have been significantly disadvantaged at the national electoral level, but have performed increasingly well in sub-national elections since the 1980s. Both are now the second largest party in terms of shares of the votes in their respective countries. In order to analyse successful representation of far right and regionalists more accurately at the sub-national level we have considered particular case studies of electoral support and representation.

As a result of a general overview of sub-national electoral and party systems in seven European countries in Chapter Four, we were able to make the following general comments: First, federal states in particular demonstrate strong variations in sub-national party systems. Second, the Dutch electoral system appears to be highly proportional at (a) the overall national level, and (b) the overall provincial level. Declining turnout since the 1970s as a result of the ending of compulsory voting has similarly been matched by a decline in support for the mainstream political parties which have dominated much of post-war Dutch politics. Third, the 5% threshold is a significant constraint for small parties in Germany. Yet parties polling below a 10% share of the vote are also vulnerable to under-representation because of the predominant use of the d'Hondt seat distribution system. Suggestions have been made elsewhere (Conradt 1993) that German Land elections may reflect an element of second order protest voting. Conradt also suggests that L ander elections have acted as indicators of

change in national politics. Our analysis of the second order hypothesis, however, suggests otherwise. Fourth, the constitutional federalization of Belgium has had a significant effect upon the Belgian party system - effectively meaning that there are no truly 'national' parties. The relatively high occurrence of 'local' parties ensures that small parties are in fact the norm in Belgian sub-national elections. The imposition of compulsory voting in Belgian elections ensures that turnout is high, though slightly on the decrease. The seat distribution system is the predominant hindrance to small parties in Belgium, and it is particularly disproportional if a small district magnitude is also in operation.

Fifth, the Republic of Ireland is generally viewed as a system of local government with relatively little autonomy, where local elections act as a form of national government popularity test. The possibilities for true PR are hindered by the use of several small electoral areas within counties and county boroughs. As a result, the Irish sub-national system is similar in outcome to multi-seat plurality - small parties perform better if they effectively concentrate appeal in one or two electoral areas rather than generating a thinly spread-county wide level of support. Sixth, compared to sub-national government in other west European states, British local government is probably viewed by its electorate as being the least autonomous, thus questioning the extent to which sub-national elections are merely an opportunity for the electorate to voice its opinions about the national political climate. This has since been challenged, however, (Rallings & Thrasher) with the suggestion that what we can actually see in sub-national elections is 'context voting'. Certainly, intra-party competition has increased. In relation to sub-national elections, disproportionality is under-stated by aggregate levels of analysis. Yet the first past the post system does not necessarily penalize small parties as long as their support is concentrated in specific areas.

Finally, sub-national government in Spain is a relatively 'new' phenomenon compared to our other case studies - with the autonomous regions demonstrating higher turnout as they are seen as having greater power. Regionalism has had a similar effect in Italy. Regions with 'special autonomy' are also characterised by prominent regionalist parties. What is distinguishable about Italian electoral politics compared to our other case studies is the recent far reaching electoral reforms - demanded by the public as a signal of defiance against the old corrupt political system. In relation to sub-national elections in particular, the reformed system places emphasis upon the role of mayoral candidates at the communal level.

In Chapters Five and Six we focused our attention upon specific electoral rules which were to the advantage or disadvantage of far right and regionalist parties. Generally speaking, far right parties are small *i.e.* polling below 10% share of the vote, though some exceptions do occur for the far right at the municipal level in Belgium and the Netherlands in specific areas. We considered a variety of regionalist parties which ranged from being very small to being considerably large parties at the sub-national level, though by the very nature of their political concern we should not be surprised by their large electoral appeal in some countries. We will now summarize the comparative outcomes of our research.

7.1 - Sub-National Party Systems in Western Europe

Although our research has focused upon the impact of specific electoral rules upon certain parties of the far right and regionalist families, a secondary interest concerns the 'importance' of these parties at the sub-national level. Whilst these, and others, may be classified as small or minor in national election terms, we have attempted to demonstrate that many countries do not operate a single sub-national party system, but a whole series

of party systems, which far right and regionalist parties may have some opportunity to break into. In relation to sub-national party systems in general, in Belgium we should not be surprised to see a proliferation in, and the strong performance of, local 'lists'. Our comparison of dominant parties at the municipal level in Belgium demonstrated strong variations between provinces. The christian democrats in both communities have lost support throughout the 1980s to numerous parties including the far right, the liberals, the greens and local lists. As such, we cannot sufficiently explain variances in sub-national party systems within Belgium without looking at particular micro-level features of local politics.

In relation to sub-national party systems in Germany we can identify patterns of left and right strongholds at the Land level, although as yet we have been unable to study sub-national party systems below this level. Although some states have seen a move away from a dominant party of the right to the left since the late 1980s, e.g. Schleswig Holstein and Rhineland Palatinate; this was not marked by an ousting of the CDU-led government in the 1994 general election. We cannot conclude, therefore, that changes in support in Land elections signal changes in forthcoming general elections, at least not in the short term. Within the Republic of Ireland, sub-national party systems are also subject to identifiable regional variations. Both mainstream national parties are consistently weaker in support at the sub-national level. The Labour Party is strong in south-eastern counties but often totally absent in northern counties. The Green Party, though very small is most prominent in and around Dublin, whilst Sinn Fein retains its popularity in the border counties. As a result, Ireland really does experience several sub-national party systems.

In relation to the Netherlands, we can see provincial allegiances towards either the PvdA (in Groningen and Drenthe), and the CDA (Utrecht, Limburg, Overijssel, Gelderland,

North Brabant, North Holland and South Holland). There is no evidence of any particularly strong regionalisms existing, though far right support does have a particular regional profile. The far right in the Netherlands in the 1990s has demonstrated the effectiveness of focusing limited candidates and other resources to just a handful of large gemeenten which are most likely to ensure representation. In Britain, we suggested that there are distinct sub-national party systems. The most notable distinctions are in Scotland and Wales where the party system is dominated by the Labour Party and the SNP, and the Labour Party and PC respectively. In Spain, the national party system is translated to the sub-national level in many regions except those with special autonomies. In both Catalonia and the Basque Country the party system is dominated by at least one specifically regional party, whilst in Galicia regionalist parties are smaller but still influential (third parties). In Italy, a similar pattern emerges. National parties dominate in sub-national elections in regions with ordinary status, whilst regions with special autonomy are dominated by predominantly autonomist parties.

Hence, we could find no singular trend to sub-national party systems. Generally, the rule appears to be that sub-national party systems are more likely to vary where a sense of regional autonomy is strongest. Second, evidence from our analysis suggests that when parties which are 'small' at the national level become important parties in the sub-national party system, they are more likely to belong to the regional party family rather than the far right.

7.2 - The Second Order Hypothesis And Far Right Support

In earlier chapters we considered the thesis which suggests that we may be witnessing a process of second order voting, in which voters are more aware of context of an election and are willing to stray from their traditional party alignment when less is at stake. We

suggested that parties of the far right may be particular beneficiaries of second order voting as (i) when compulsory voting applies, voters may choose to 'protest' by supporting anti-system parties rather than abstaining, and (ii) when voting is not compulsory, the electorate may choose to 'punish' the mainstream governing parties - particularly in the period labelled as 'mid-term blues'. Minor parties may also benefit from low turnout because their natural supporters are more dedicated. If our theory were correct, therefore, we would expect to see distinct peaks and troughs in far right support at the sub-national level.

We considered far right support at the Land election level in Germany in the period 1945 to 1994 and found that in some areas, there was indeed evidence in the mid 1960s and early 1990s that the far right begins to show signs of growth in state elections held not long after a general election, when turnout is particularly low. An analysis of the lowest election level in North Rhine Westphalia and Hesse for example, provided evidence to suggest that the far right prosper in the 18 months to a year preceding a general election, and there was also evidence to suggest that far right support was linked to levels of turnout - performing strongest where turnout was low.

In relation to far right support in the Netherlands, we suggested that the strong support for the BP in the 1966 provincial elections could possibly be seen as a warning to the mainstream parties as they were held only 11 months before a general election, particularly as support for the BP in 1967 was considerably lower. By comparing far right support in the 1974 gemeenten elections to the outcome of provincial elections held two months later, we found no correlation between BP support for these two closely held elections and, in contradiction to our theory, BP support was higher where turnout was higher. For comparative elections held in the late 1980s and early 1990s we were unable to find significant differences between levels of far right support between general

and provincial level elections. Patterns of far right support in the Netherlands therefore, do not support our ideas that these parties benefit when there is less at stake or from mainstream voter apathy.

Lastly, our analysis of far right support in Britain suggests that the limited support these parties do receive is more likely to be related to local political factors than timing. We did show that significant levels of BNP support in Tower Hamlets in May 1994 were also matched by particularly high turnout, but this could be disillusioned voters turning towards the far right or because other parties mobilized otherwise apathetic voters in the wake of events eight months earlier. In contrast, outside of London, the far right appeared to poll best where turnout was low in 1994. We cannot, therefore, identify any convincing patterns to far right support in British sub-national elections in the 1990s. The second order hypothesis appears to fit well to far right support at the sub-national level in Germany, but not elsewhere.

In relation to the second-order hypothesis regarding electoral timing and small party support, our evidence is far from conclusive. We cannot claim that far right electoral support is merely a process of mid-term protest voting, though irregular peaks and troughs in support since the 1980s does lend itself towards the general understanding that a wider disillusionment with mainstream political parties is affecting the electoral scene in many west European countries. The far right can only really expect representation under PR, and proportionality is only likely to derive from cases of high district magnitude. We have demonstrated two extreme cases under PR. First, the generally 'highly proportional' Dutch PR system is not replicated at the gemeenten level, where the far right are frequently under-rewarded with seats. Second, the Imperiali system in Belgium actually benefits the far right when their share of the vote makes them one of the three largest parties in communes and gemeenten.

7.3 - Compulsory Voting And Turnout

An electoral rule which does apply in a handful of west European countries is compulsory voting and, although not an electoral rule as such, turnout is a factor which may be influenced by the electoral system and may likewise have implications for small party representation, particularly bearing in mind our discussions concerning electoral change and growing disenchantment with the mainstream catch-all parties in many west European states. Unsurprisingly, the predominant rule affecting turnout is compulsory voting. Within our analysis of turnout in Chapter Two we suggested that compulsory voting may encourage small party support as voters see 'protest' voting as a more viable alternative to not voting at all. We have reiterated within this thesis that a pronounced decline in turnout is occurring at the national election level in many west European states and that this is, to some extent, mirrored in sub-national elections - particularly when compulsory voting is not enforced. An issue we were particularly interested in observing was whether there is a recognisable correlation between declining turnout and changes in support for particular parties.

In relation to the Netherlands, we suggested that the abolition of compulsory voting in 1970 has had a significant impact upon turnout both nationally and sub-nationally, and we also noted that at the same time support for the main parties at the provincial level has declined since the 1980s. Furthermore, the ratio of main party decline between 1987 and 1991 correlates with the ratio of decline in turnout. It would be useful to see if this short term trend continues as it may have important implications for the belief in mainstream political legitimacy in the Netherlands. What we were not able to do was indicate exactly who benefits from electoral volatility at the provincial level. This appears to be a combination of various smaller parties e.g. the greens, the far right and

other issue related movements.

In relation to turnout in the German L ander, we can see that turnout has gradually declined since the 1970s, but that there is no particular consistent pattern - probably because Land elections follow different electoral cycles - hence turnout varies considerably between states and across time. There is little evidence to suggest, however, that if turnout does decline, it will have a significant effect upon mainstream party support. We can identify particular cases when the 'other' parties prosper, but there as yet is no consistency across time. It is more appropriate, therefore, to account for changes in turnout and sub-national party support as electoral blips rather than long term patterns for the time being at least.

In the Republic of Ireland we demonstrated that turnout is also declining at both the sub-national and national electoral levels. We suggested that variations in sub-national turnout are better explained in terms of sense of community and locality rather than wholesale political disillusionment. Whilst there has been a decline in support at the sub-national level for the mainstream national parties this cannot be connected in any way to patterns of turnout, but is more understandable if we look at the rise in the number of participating parties/ candidates.

7.4 - District Magnitude And Proportionality

In our analysis of the impact of district magnitude upon overall electoral proportionality at various sub-national levels in western Europe we made some interesting findings. Our general analysis of the Netherlands was conducted at the provincial electoral level, and our findings tend to reinforce the established observations that the electoral system is highly proportional. We concluded that there is not a direct correlation between

provincial district magnitude and proportionality alone - other factors must play their part. For example, the number of competing parties is a significant variable - particularly when numerous very small parties participate (see the comments on *de facto* thresholds for an explanation of 'very small'). Since a large district magnitude may in fact encourage very small parties to participate, we must therefore conclude that district magnitude at the Dutch provincial level is not a sufficient guarantee of proportionality.

We were able to show, however, that the far right has been hindered in the smaller provinces in the Dutch provincial elections. The 1.9% share of the vote polled by the CD in Flevoland in 1991 was too small to secure representation, yet 1.6% secured representation in Utrecht in 1991 and 1.5% secured representation in North Holland for the BP in 1970, both of which operate higher district magnitudes than Flevoland. An analysis of district magnitude at the gemeenten level in Holland and its impact upon the far right showed that it is an important variable. For example, in the 1978 gemeenten elections the BP was only successful in gemeenten with a district magnitude of 15 seats or more. Despite polling greater shares of the vote in smaller municipals, the district magnitude created a *de facto* threshold blocking representation. Hence, the argument that the Dutch electoral system is highly proportional begins to weaken as we analyze far right support at the lowest electoral level. What is of interest is that in our analysis of far right electoral fortunes in the 1990 gemeenten elections, the CD only participated in large, urban gemeenten and as a result secured 0.1% of the seats with a 0.5% total share of the vote. This leads us to question whether the new far right has actually learnt to exploit the electoral system, realising that its best opportunities lie in avoiding smaller municipals.

Our analysis of German Land elections produced similar results. As with Dutch provinces, Landtag district magnitude is significantly varied but also quite large, and we

found no correlation between district magnitude and proportionality at this level. Again, we found that the participation of numerous small parties was more likely to increase disproportionality - the occurrence of which is increased in likelihood by the implementation of the 5% *de jure* threshold (see below). In relation to the impact of district magnitude upon the proportionality of far right representation, we were able to show that district magnitude has not been an obstacle to the far right at the Land level in Germany for those able to surpass the 5% threshold. We have already said, however, that district magnitude in Land elections is sufficiently large enough to not be the major cause for concern when analyzing disproportionality. By further analyzing the far right at the *gemeinde* level of election we demonstrated that a district magnitude of 11, for example, in combination with the d'Hondt seat distribution system, was significant enough to inhibit the NPD when it polled a 6.2% share of the vote. As such, district magnitude does begin to become important in small electoral districts because it serves to create (in combination with other features) increasingly high *de facto* thresholds.

Dutch provinces and German states provide examples of large district magnitude. Within an analysis of counties and county boroughs in the Republic of Ireland we found that the allocation of seats via small electoral districts (*i.e.* seven seats or less) has a significant effect upon proportionality. The effect of small electoral areas is so significant that parties with a thinly spread share of the vote will be penalized at the cost of candidates which are able to focus their appeal in key areas. Thus the effect of district magnitude at the sub-national level tends to produce results closer to those found in multi seat plurality systems than under our examples of PR.

We also analyzed the effect of district magnitude in Belgian communal elections - comparing very small communes (*i.e.* ten seats and below) with large ones (*i.e.* 30 seats plus). Again, we found that the cause of disproportionality lies beyond a pure district

magnitude explanation - in Belgium's case we also need to consider the number of competing parties and the seat distribution system. In relation to far right success in Belgian local elections, we discovered that the VU benefitted from contesting elections in only the largest municipals in the region of Brussels. Because the party was only small (polling less than 5.5% in any commune) and thus was likely to be punished by the Imperiali system, it needed at least 4% shares of the vote (the *de facto* threshold) in the largest municipals. The significance of a low district magnitude increasing the *de facto* threshold at the local level in Belgium was reinforced by the VU's electoral performance in the Flanders region. In relation to district magnitude and regionalist party representation in Belgium, we found at the municipal level that the regionalist FDF apparently polled its best shares of the vote in the larger municipalities in Brussels (e.g. with 30 seats or more) where in fact it was the largest party in 1976. Yet another regionalist party, the RW, did not fare so well in Wallonian communal elections in 1976 and the likelihood of representation was threatened in communes with low district magnitudes, particularly when the party could not poll more than 15%.

In relation to Spain, our analysis of regional elections in Galicia demonstrated that assembly size and district magnitude are not necessarily equal in PR systems. As a result of using the provinces as electoral districts, we find that the regionalist BNG was frequently under rewarded with seats in 1989 and 1993 even with vote shares as high as 17%. The combination of district magnitude ranging from 15 to 24 seats and the d'Hondt systems can still penalize relatively large regional parties. In Catalonia the main regionalist party (CiU) is able to overcome problems of district magnitude as it is the largest party. The smaller ERC, however, struggles to achieve proportional representation because it only polled around 5-6% in the 1980s. Where the party polled less than 4% at the local level in Barcelona, this led to non-representation, whilst the CiU as the largest party continued to be over represented.

Finally, our analysis of the general effect of district magnitude looked at proportionality in Britain. We were able to show that, unsurprisingly, there is no relationship between assembly size and proportionality. The single seat plurality system which operates in the majority of sub-national elections can create high levels of disproportionality, particularly when the number of parties increases. In relation to the effect of district magnitude upon far right representation in Britain we do not have enough case studies of success from which to deduct any conclusive observations. The far right has, however, recently (1994) appeared to poll well in 'traditional' areas of support where there are a multiple of seats available and there are clues that split ticket voting may be occurring. The main hindrance to the small number of far right candidates in British sub-national elections is not necessarily the share of the vote they can attract, but the first past the post systems in which they operate. For sub-national elections in Britain we demonstrated that the use of single seat divisions is not necessarily a hindrance for either regionalist party if they can effectively mobilize voters in certain targeted areas.

Our detailed comparative analysis demonstrates, therefore, that *district magnitude alone is not the primary determinant of disproportionality* (contrary to Rae 1967, Taagepera and Shugart 1989 and Gallagher 1991) and we can substantiate this by comparing the outcome of both small communes and large Land and provinces. District magnitude does appear to become of more relevance when it is below 10 seats in size, and when it is assessed in combination with the number of competing and elected parties, and it has been a particular problem for far right parties at the lowest electoral level in several countries when their share of the vote is below 15%.

7.5 - Thresholds And Proportionality

In relation to the impact of thresholds we have shown that some elections use *de jure* thresholds but all elections with more than one competing party must have *de facto* thresholds. Whilst the former is a set figure and is only a threshold of exclusion, the latter will vary quite dramatically depending on the district magnitude, the number of parties and the seat distribution system. In Chapter Two we outlined the argument provided by Rae that small parties polling below 20% at the national level are disadvantaged. This may be the case in all plurality elections in single-seat electoral divisions. Within PR systems however, parties polling 20% are not noticeably disadvantaged at the sub-national level, though those polling less than 10% in the Netherlands at the gemeenten level are, and those polling below 15% in small municipals in Belgium are. In relation to Wolinetz's claim that thresholds are a hurdle for new and small parties which actually serve to maintain the party system status quo, we have shown that the constitutional threshold is still a particular stumbling block for far right parties at the land level in Germany, and also for the smaller regionalist party in Catalonia. Yet *de jure* thresholds do not guarantee representation for all parties surpassing the mark and it is often the case that higher *de facto* thresholds apply and, they apply in all countries - increasingly so as the district magnitude decreases and the number of competing parties increases.

Our preliminary analysis of *de jure* thresholds was restricted to a consideration of Land elections in Germany. We need to reiterate that this sort of threshold is only one of exclusion and therefore does not guarantee representation. We had very little evidence (only from Bavaria in the 1940s and 1960s) that parties polling over 5% were excluded from representation. We were able to show, however, that the 5% threshold has a notable

effect upon proportionality when there are one or more parties polling between 4-4.99%. As a result, many small parties - including the liberal FDP and Greens - are often excluded from representation at the Land level by the 5% threshold - hence the debate surrounding the arbitrary nature of thresholds.

Our analysis of Bavarian elections demonstrated that even when parties polling slightly more than 5% are excluded from representation, this is of lesser significance to overall disproportionality than the differences between vote and seat ratios created by the seat distribution system. At the Land level in Germany, therefore, the *de jure* threshold is a concern for small parties seeking representation, but is balanced out as a major cause of disproportionality by other factors e.g. the district magnitude and the seat distribution method.

The initial drive behind the imposition of a 5% threshold in Germany was precisely to exclude extremist and anti-system parties from the political system and we demonstrated that the 5% threshold has been the primary obstacle for the NPD in the Hamburg state from 1966 to 1978, and in the state of Saarland from 1970 to 1990, though of course the 5% threshold is a hurdle to numerous small parties and not just those from the far right. By analyzing below the land level of elections in Germany, we were able to show that there are numerous cases in which the far right are "too small" at the *gemeinde* level (e.g. the Republikaner in North Rhine Westphalia in 1989), and due to the combined effects of district magnitude and the seat distribution system, even a vote share of 5% is not necessarily a guarantee of representation.

We analyzed the effect of *de jure* thresholds upon regionalist parties in Spain and found that in regional elections in Galicia the BNG benefits because the 5% threshold operates at the provincial rather than the overall regional level. This is an advantage because BNG

support is concentrated in certain provinces. In relation to local elections in Barcelona, the smaller regionalist party (ERC) is affected by the 3% threshold, though in fact a higher *de facto* threshold operates (approximately 5-5.5% share of the vote) which affects other small parties.

We have shown that although constitutional thresholds are only occasionally employed in western Europe sub-national elections, *de facto* thresholds are in fact a feature of all contested elections. In our preliminary analysis of overall sub-national outcomes in Chapter Four, we found that due to the highly proportional nature of Dutch provincial elections the *de facto* threshold is extremely low - *i.e.* below a 2% share of the vote. This reinforces claims made about proportionality at the national level in the Netherlands.

As a comparison, we sought to identify the level of *de facto* thresholds as they operate in Belgian municipal elections because district magnitude is much lower. By comparing *gemeenten* we found that a district magnitude of 33 seats creates a *de facto* threshold of around 4%, though this increased to over 6% in a *gemeenten* with only 21 seats. By comparing these findings to a *gemeenten* with only 11 seats, we found that the *de facto* threshold increased to around 13% share of the vote. As such, the largest municipals in Belgium produce low *de facto* thresholds in line with those observed in Dutch provincial elections. The combination of a low district magnitude, the Imperiali seat distribution system, and the number of competing parties does have the potential to create high thresholds even within a PR system.

In our analysis of the impact of *de facto* thresholds upon far right representation, our analysis of municipal elections in Belgium showed the restrictions for the far right are created by a combination of the seat distribution system, the number of competing parties and the district magnitude. For example, a *gemeenten* with 23 seats effectively excludes

the far right when it polls below 6%, and even under represents those polling less than 11-12%. As such, parties of the far right cannot afford to be 'too small' at the local level in Belgium. In relation to regional party representation at the local level in Belgium we demonstrated that the combination of the Imperiali system and district magnitude was effective in creating *de facto* thresholds to RW representation. The *de facto* threshold is between 5-6% for communes with 25 seats and increases in direct correlation to district magnitude.

An analysis of the impact of *de facto* thresholds operating in the Republic of Ireland showed that in the 1985 elections, parties such as the Labour Party in Tipperary N.R. and Sinn Fein in Dublin Belgard and South Dublin were penalized because numerous candidates received a moderate share of the votes whilst independent candidates capitalized on concentrated levels of support in individual electoral districts. We could not observe a *de facto* threshold as such, but suggested that since county council elections to some extent resemble multi-seat plurality elections, then a thinly spread level of support for numerous candidates from one party creates an effective *de facto* threshold inhibiting representation. In Britain, the *de facto* threshold in single seat divisions relates to the number of competing parties and the distribution of votes between them. If it is the case that regional parties enjoy a relatively large (e.g. 30% plus) and consistent share of the vote in certain areas then they will usually benefit from an increase in the number of parties, as remaining votes become more diffusely split.

7.6 - Seat Distribution And Proportionality

In relation to seat allocation under PR, we can support the claims made by Lijphart (1994a) that the Hare-Niemeyer system is more proportional than both the Imperiali and d'Hondt systems. In our initial analysis of seat distribution at the sub-national level

in Chapter Four we made two observations. First, we were able to demonstrate that the Hare-Niemeyer method in Germany is certainly more proportional than the more frequently employed d'Hondt method when considering elections at the Land level. The d'Hondt method is particularly a hindrance for small parties which have been able to surpass the 5% threshold. In our analysis of the effect of the seat distribution method upon far right representation, we found that in Germany at the *gemeinde* level the far right had been disadvantaged by the d'Hondt seat distribution system.

Our analysis of disproportionality at the county level in British sub-national elections demonstrated that an aggregation of results under the plurality system in fact serves to hide true disproportionality by aggregating out the effects of the most extreme results. As the total number of seats at the county or district level increases, so the apparent level of disproportionality decreases. Yet by considering the impact of seat distribution in each electoral division we can see that disproportionality is incredibly strong, and indeed increases as party competition increases. In Britain, parties of the far right obviously are disadvantaged by the plurality system. Vote shares such as those polled in areas of London in 1994 would almost certainly have been rewarded under PR systems. We have shown, therefore, that far right parties frequently poll in excess of 15% and 20% of the vote in European sub-national elections but whether we judge them as small depends upon the seat distribution system and the size of other parties. The highly disproportional system operating in Britain becomes more disproportional as the number of competing parties increases, though we have shown that this may not be to the detriment of regional parties. By considering multi seat wards in Welsh district elections in the late 1980s and early 1990s we demonstrated that the regionalist PC appeared to benefit from 'split ticket' voting - securing some, but not all seats.

In Belgium, we would expect the Imperiali seat distribution system to create some level of disproportionality. By comparing far right success in a variety of communes we showed that small far right vote shares created under representation, whilst in municipals where the far right received large votes shares (e.g. 15% plus) these parties were significantly over represented - regardless of district magnitude size. We considered the impact of the seat distribution formula upon regional representation in Belgian local elections and found that the FDF benefitted in 1976 when it was a 'large' party. By 1988, however, the FDF's popularity was waning and it was just as likely to be under rewarded as a small party (12% and below) and over rewarded as a large party (18% and above). This is due to the nature of the Imperiali system, regardless of district magnitude. From our analysis we concluded that a regional party can be classified as 'small' at the local level in Belgium when it polls approximately 10% and less.

By analyzing regional parties in Italy (pre-electoral reform) we found that in regional elections in Val d'Aosta the Hare electoral system was strongly proportional for both large (the UV) and small (LN) regional parties. Hence, it is still the case that simple plurality, the d'Hondt and the Imperiali (but not Hare) systems discriminate against far right and regionalist parties when their shares of the vote are small (the definition of which varies between countries and between levels). The plurality and Imperiali systems, however, are equally as generous to these parties when they are sufficiently 'large'.

7.7 - Prescriptions For The Future Of New And Small Parties

Our analysis of sub-national electoral systems in general and the proportionality of far right and regionalist party representation in particular have produced some interesting

results. First, it would be unwise to suggest that one particular electoral feature is more responsible for disproportionality than others. This will ultimately depend upon the sub-national level. For example, district magnitude is not particularly important in large provinces/ regions because it is so large. Small parties in these elections face greater challenges from the imposition of thresholds and the bias of the seat distribution system. Paradoxically, whilst 'highly proportional' systems may encourage the participation of very small parties, the number of competing parties is an influential factor upon the size of the *de facto* threshold, which can then have negative implications for the smaller parties.

We have shown, however, that district magnitude does become influential at the lower sub-national electoral levels, particularly in areas with less than ten seats. Again, the *de facto* threshold has significant implications for small parties. 'Clever' small parties should, therefore, look at electoral opportunities logically. With limited funds and candidates, small parties in PR systems do well to participate in large district magnitudes where *de jure* thresholds are not used. Seat distribution using the Hare system is a particular benefit. Yet small parties can also benefit in areas of low district magnitude if they can effectively target concentrated electoral districts. Thus we must turn to the question, what is a 'small' party? We have demonstrated that parties judged as 'small' at the national level can in fact be significant participants in the sub-national party system. This is particularly the case for some regionalist parties, but also applies to the far right in the Belgian province of Antwerpen. What we have shown is that the definition of 'small' - *i.e.* the level below which a party will consistently be disadvantaged - varies between 10% and 18% - varying between countries and between electoral levels.

It is quite probable that regional parties will continue to prosper as long as the notion of 'the crisis of the state' still exists. If the legitimacy of national governments continues to

be challenged as it has been in Italy in recent years, then the electoral prospects for small parties are certainly brighter. Sub-national elections may be developing as an important measure of 'context voting'. Although not all national government parties/coalitions are under immediate electoral threat, alternative voting patterns in sub-national elections now may be indicators of longer voting realignments in the future. In relation to the electoral opportunities for far right parties in particular, they do not appear to be yet strong enough to be a serious national challenge in those countries analyzed. Support is slightly stronger at the sub-national level however, particularly in certain areas using PR and in certain multi-seat wards in Britain. We have yet to see if the new far right are merely an electoral blip deriving from widespread feelings of political malaise and alienation, or whether they will be a longer term feature of sub-national elections in order to reflect a move towards more complex patterns of voting behaviour.

APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Alternative Voting - Voters are asked to list candidates in order of preference.

Categoric Voting - The voter can give their vote to one party only.

Cumul des Mandats - A term applying to local elections in France. Politicians use success at the sub-national level as a launch pad from which to enter the national political scene. A similar system operates in the Republic of Ireland.

De Facto Thresholds - Operate in all contested elections, and are referred to by Lijphart (1994a) as 'thresholds of exclusion'. They do not consist of a 'fixed' share of the vote (see de jure thresholds) but will be derived from a number of electoral features (including the number of seats available, the number of competing parties and the distribution of votes). A de facto threshold can be expressed as 'the share of the vote below which any party cannot expect to gain representation'.

De Jure Thresholds - A formal, or constitutional, threshold set by electoral legislation to effectively exclude very small parties from receiving representation.

District Magnitude (DM) - The number of representatives elected per electoral area. This is not necessarily the same as the assembly size.

Effective Number of Parties - This is the number of parties which form the party system - that is, those which have access to political power.

First Past The Post - A term used to refer to the British simple plurality system. In a single seat electoral area, the candidate with the most votes will win the seat, regardless of whether or not they have obtained an absolute majority of the support.

Indices of Proportionality - Methods used to measure the extent to which each party receives a share of the seats proportionate to its share of the votes. Different indices will embody different notions of proportionality.

Ordinal Voting - The voter can divide their vote between two or more parties.

Proportionality - 'True' proportionality occurs when each participating party receives a share of the seats equal to its share of the votes. For various reasons, this rarely occurs in any election.

Proportional Representation (PR) - A loose, generic term used to denote a type of electoral system which attempts to reward all parties with a share of the seats equal to its share of the votes. Realistically, the smallest parties are usually unrewarded and proportionality is rarely exact.

Single Transferable Vote (STV) - A method of seat allocation. Voters are required to list candidates in order of preference. As a candidate is elected, or becomes the least popular, the vote is then allocated to the voters' second choice. This process continues until all seats are distributed and aims to overcome the possibility of 'wasted votes'.

Split Ticket Voting - May occur in multi seat elections. It occurs when voters (for various reasons) choose candidates from more than one party. As a result, all available seats may not be secured by just one party.

'Wasted Votes' - Refers to votes cast for an unelected party. The single transferable voting system is employed to avoid the wasted vote syndrome.

APPENDIX B - PARTY INDEX

BELGIUM

AGALEV	Anders Gaan Leven
CVP	Christlijke Volkspartij
ECOLO	Ecologists
FDF	Front des Francophones
FN	Front National
NR	Local GroupsPRLParti pour Reform et Liberté
PCB	Parti Communiste de Belgique
PFN	Parti de Forces Nouvelles
PS	Parti Socialiste
PSC	Parti Social Chrétien
PTB	Parti Traveille Belgique
PVV	Partij voor Vrijheid and Vooruitgang
RW	Rassemblement Wallon
VB	Vlaams Blok
VU	Volksunie

GREAT BRITAIN

BNP	British National Party
COMM	Communist Party
CON	Conservative Party
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
GREEN	Green Party
IND	Independent Candidate
LAB	Labour Party
L/A	Liberal Alliance
LD	Liberal Democrats
LIB	Liberal Party
MRL	Monster Raving Loony Party
NF	National Front
PC	Plaid Cymru
PPP	People Pension Power
RAG	Ratepayers Action Group
RATE	Ratepayer (Assoc)
RCP	Revolutionary Communist Party
RLP	Raving Loony Party
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SLD	Social and Liberal Democrats
SML	Scottish Militant Labour
SNP	Scottish National Party
TCRM	Twentieth Century Reformation Movement

THE NETHERLANDS

AR	Anti-Revolutionaire Partij
BP	Boerenpartij
CCP	Combinatie van Christelijke Partijen
CD	Centrumdemocraten
CDA	Christen Democratisch Appel
CHU	Christelijk Historische Unie
CP86	Centrumpartij '86
CPN	Communistische Partij Nederland
DG	De Groenen
FNP	Fryske Nasjonale Partij
GL	Groen Links
GVP	Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond
KVP	Katholieke Volkspartij
LPG	Lokale Partijen Gelderland
NVU	Nederlands Volksunie
PAK	Progressief Akkoord
PC	Protestants-Christelijke Lijst
PCG	Protestants Christelijke Groep
PSP	Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid
RPF	Reformatorische Politieke Federatie
SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij
SP	Socialistische Partij
VD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie

GERMANY

CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union
DKP	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
DVU-List D	Deutsche Volksunion
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
GDP	Gesamtdeutsche Partei
Grüne	Greens
HP	Humanistische Partei
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
MLPD	Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Deutschlands
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei
ÖDP	Ökologisch-Demokratische Partei
PDS	Partei Demokratisches Sozialismus
REP	Die Republikaner
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland
SVP	Saarland People's Party
WAV	German Centre Party Economic Construction Union (Bavaria)
WGR1	Local Group (Saarland)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

FF	Fianna Fail
FG	Fine Gael
Gr	Green Party
IND	Independent Candidate
LAB	Labour Party
PD	Progressive Democratic Party
SF	Sinn Fein
WP	Workers Party

SPAIN

AG	Alternatista Galega
AP	Alianza Popular
ARM	Agrupacion Ruiz Mateos
BNG	Bloque Nacionalista Galeco
CC/UCD	Centristes de Catalunya-UCD
CiU	Convergencia i Unio
CDS	Centro Democratico y Social
CG	Coalicion Galega
CP/PP	Coalicion Popular
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
EU/UG	Coalition Esquerda Unida - Unidade Galega
HB	Herri Batasuna
IC	Izquierda Comunista
IU-AC	Izquierda Unida-Coministasde Andalucia
PA	Patido Andalucista
PDP	Partido Democrata Popular
PNG	Partido Nacionalista Gallego
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
PP	Partido Popular
PSA	Partido Socialista de Andalucia
PSC	Parti dels Socialistes de Catalunya
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol
PSUC	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya
Verdes	Verdes de Galega

ITALY

DC	Democrazia Cristiana
LL	Lega Lombarda
LN	Lega Nord
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
PDS	Partito della Sinistra Democratica
PSd'Az	Partito Sardo d'Azione
STVP	Sudtiroler Volkspartei
UV	Union Valdotaïne

APPENDIX C

An Outline of Local Government Structure in the Twelve European Union Democracies

In order to be able to assess the significance of any electoral system upon parties at the sub-national level it is first necessary to outline the structure and hierarchy of local government within each country. The main issue this raises concerns the "comparability" of sub-national government between nations. As this outline shows, each country within the European Union operates on a variety of local government levels (ranging from one to three). What is important to this thesis is examples within countries where each level of sub-national government operates a different electoral system since this may determine the realistic opportunities for minority party representation. Since not all countries were used as case studies in Chapter Four and not all have parties belonging to the far right or regionalist families, we have outlined below the sub-national government structure in those twelve states which formed the membership of the European Union prior to 1995.

BELGIUM

Since 1993, Belgium has been classified as a federal state in order to accommodate the emergence and establishment of the different Wallonian and Flemish cultures, and as such has been faced with a process of widespread state reform - including considerable electoral reform. Belgium has elections for three levels of sub-national government; the gemeenten, the provinces and the Brussels region.

Communes/Gemeenten - At this most local level of government, each of the 589 municipal councils (308 in the Flanders region, 262 in the Walloon region and 19 in the Brussels region) is elected every six years, the date being fixed as the second Sunday in October. Ballot papers are presented as party lists and both national parties and

independent candidates stand. The number of seats per municipality is determined by its population size and ranges from 7 - 55 members. Elections are held using a single round of voting and seat allocation follows the Imperiali PR system of seat distribution.

Electoral turnout tends to be high (*i.e.* 90% and more) due to the imposition of compulsory voting, although absenteeism has increased slightly since the 1980s. Any comprehensive analysis of local elections is only feasible from 1976, since until that year the Home Department was only responsible for publishing the results from main or larger populated cities. Furthermore, there has been several waves of local government reform, meaning that the actual number of Gemeenten has been greatly reduced. The present number of municipals was set in 1983. Our research focuses upon municipal elections held between 1976 and 1988.

Provinces - For the nine provinces, elections are held every four years using a Proportional Representation list-ballot system. Since the recent state reforms, elections will be held on a six year cycle to coincide with Municipal elections. Each Provincial Council has between 50-90 members, depending upon population size.

Regions - Belgium consists of three electoral regions at the sub-national level; Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia, each of which is elected for a four year term, although only the Brussels region is directly elected. The Brussels Regional Council has 75 members.

DENMARK

Local Government is provided for under Section 82 of the 1849 Constitution. Denmark holds elections for two levels of sub-national government, these being the Kommuner and the Amter levels - both of which were reduced in numbers by the Local Government

Reform Act of 1st April 1970. Turnout is usually around 70% of the electorate, although participation is higher in rural rather than urban areas.

Kommuner - Denmark consists of 275 Kommuner (reduced from 277 in 1974) at the lowest local level, two of which (Copenhagen and Frederiksberg) are metropolitan municipalities. Electoral procedure is determined by the same electoral law for all Kommuner, thus ensuring that each election takes place on the same day (the 3rd Tuesday in November every 4th year), under the same electoral rules in multi-member constituencies.

Prior to 1985, ballot papers took the form of a fixed party list, thereby ensuring that candidates towards the top of the list were favoured. Since 1985, a 'parallel' running list has been adopted, enabling candidates to indicate preferential votes for specific candidates, although evidence tends to suggest that names at the top of the list still receive more votes. Seat allocation is determined via the d'Hondt rules. Under the terms and conditions of the Local Government Act, the number of seats per Kommuner must be odd and may vary between 13 and 31 for the city Kommuner of Odense, Aalborg and Arhus (although the capital, Copenhagen, is an exception with 55 councillors), and between 5 and 25 for all other Kommuner. The number of seats is determined by the population size. There are a total of twelve Danish parties, although it is rare for more than eight to run in any one Kommuner. However, the five major parties (the Social Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals, Progress Party and the Socialist People's Party) run in most Kommuner.

Amter - Denmark consists of 14 Amter (counties), which operate under the same electoral rules as the Kommuner. Elections are every four years. Each council has between 13 and 31 members.

FRANCE

The French sub-national government system operates on three levels; Communes, Departements and Regions, although these distinctions do not imply a hierarchy of power as in some other countries, and many powers are exercised on all three levels. Between 1965 and 1975 all French elections (except in Paris) operated under a two ballot majority system, though various reforms have been implemented at the different levels since then.

Communes - Each Commune, of which there are approximately 363941, holds an election on the same day of every sixth year. Council size ranges from 9 - 89 seats. In communes with a population less than 3500, councillors are elected by a two-ballot blocked list system, with the option for small parties to merge before the second ballot is held. A different system operates in communes with an electorate in excess of 3500. Prior to 1982, all council seats were given to the party winning the majority vote. Since then, the 1982 Decentralisation Laws have combined the majoritarian and PR rules so that opposition parties do win some seats. The two-ballot system means that if no list wins an absolute majority and 25% of the electorate vote at the first election, then any list which gained at least 10% in the first round may stand in the second election. For either case, the lowest even number of seats over 50% of the total go to the list with the largest number of votes and the remaining seats are split between the other lists which achieve at least 5% of the votes, using the highest average formula - thus benefiting those smaller parties which refuse to enter into coalitions. The 5% threshold is used to prevent the minority candidates from gaining any seats. The exceptions to these rules are the cities of Paris, Marseille and Lyon which are each divided into districts

1 figure provided by S. Mazey, "Developments at the French Meso Level: Modernizing the French State", in Sharpe (ed) 1993: 61.

with their own election lists.

Departements - France consists of 96 metropolitan and 4 overseas Departements. Departmental councils are composed of general councillors, who each represent one canton (there were 3694 mainland and 155 overseas cantons in 1982). Each member is elected for a 6 year term, although elections are held for each half of the members every 3 years. Elections take the form of a two-ballot majoritarian system in single member constituencies - that is to say, to be elected by first ballot a candidate requires an absolute majority and a number of votes equal to a quarter the size of the electorate. The second ballot requires a relative majority but only includes those who acquired a share of the vote of at least 10% of the total electorate in the first round.

Regions - France consists of 22 metropolitan and four overseas regions created over the last twenty years, which have only held direct elections since the 1982-3 Decentralisation reforms. Thus, the first direct regional elections did not take place until 16th March 1986 (although Corsica held its first regional election in August 1984), using a single-ballot, blocked party list electoral system in multi-member departments.

Regional elections are held every six years for Regional Councils consisting of 31-197 members depending upon population size. Only lists with 5% or more of the total votes can claim seats. The Socialist Government of 1989 reformed the electoral system to reflect the one operating in the Communes.

GERMANY

Unlike most European countries (with the exception of Belgium which is still in a process of change), Germany is a federal state characterised by truly fragmented and

decentralised political power. The German system of sub-national government operates on three levels; the Gemeinden, the Kreis and Kreisfreie Städte and the Länder.

Gemeinden - The 8,500 Gemeinden form the lower tier (the actual figure in 1987 was 8,503). Due to the relatively autonomous nature of sub-national government in Germany (guaranteed under Article 28 (2) of the Basic Law), there is no singular identifiable constitutional system. As a result, elections are held variably between four and six years, with county councils composing of 20-80 members, and municipalities of 5 - 87 members. Voting follows a system of PR (usually closed lists), and seat allocation is determined via the d'Hondt rules. Panachage and preferential voting are allowed in Baden-Württemberg, Lower Saxony and Bavaria. This highly localised system of sub-national government means that federal/national policy does not necessarily have the same significant impact on election results as is experienced within other European countries - leaving more room for local interest groups and voter associations to create an impact, and marginalising the tendency for unified trends to occur at the local level.

Kreis and Kreisfreie Städte - In 1987 (and, therefore, prior to reunification) there were some 237 Kreise and 87 Kreisfreie-Städte (counties and County Free Cities) in Germany. Elections are usually held every five years for county councils composing of 20 - 80 members. Again, a form of PR electoral system is used.

Länder - Germany consists of sixteen Länder (including West Berlin), which hold elections every four years - except North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland Palatinate, Thuringia and the Saarland which hold elections on a five year cycle. All use some form of PR. In most cases this is the d'Hondt system, although some use the Hare-Niemeyer method of seat distribution. The smallest Land in terms of seats is the Saarland (with 51 seats) and the largest is West Berlin (with 241 seats).

GREAT BRITAIN

For much of Britain there are two levels of sub-national government system. At the lowest level there are district councils with a total of 386 districts (296 in England, 37 in Wales and 53 in Scotland). Each authority is elected for a four year term, although the process of elections does vary. Most districts hold elections for the whole body every four years. Some districts in England and Wales, however, have chosen to hold annual elections with only a fraction of the council seats being contested. District councils in England and Wales have between 20 - 68 members, whilst for Scotland the figure is 10 - 66. The balloting system follows the categoric rules, and seat allocation is on a plurality basis.

There are important exceptions to this pattern of two-tier local government. In the more densely populated metropolitan areas there is just one level of sub-national government following reforms in 1986. Thus London is now governed by a total of 32 separate Boroughs whilst cities such as Birmingham and Manchester are covered by 36 Metropolitan boroughs. For London Boroughs there are between 48 - 70 council seats, whilst for the Metropolitan Districts the figure is 48 - 117. They employ the same voting procedures as the districts.

The next level of local government varies between the countries. England and Wales are represented by 47 counties/local authorities which are elected every four years. Each council has between 43 - 102 members. Until 1995 in Scotland, there were nine regional councils and three island councils - again elected every four years - with half elections taking place every two years. These councils had between 27 and 104 members. The final Scottish regional elections were held in 1994 and since 1995 Scotland operates as a single-tier of local government with 29 unitary authorities.

GREECE

The Greek sub-national level of government is determined by Article 102 of the Constitution which was adopted in 1975. There are 5,999 local authorities in Greece which take the form of 304 Demes (larger towns) and 5695 Koinotites (small towns/villages), both of which hold elections every four years. The number of councillors ranges from 7 - 11 in the koinotites and 11 - 41 in the demes. Voting is compulsory.

The method of voting varies - for example, in municipalities with a population of 5,000+, candidates are grouped into lists which do not bear party names, but which bear a close resemblance to national parties or party coalitions. The leaders of a list must receive at least 50% of the vote to be elected mayor. If this does not occur, a second ballot is held a week later between the two leading candidates. In 1982, neighbourhood councils were introduced in the larger municipalities - and Athens, Pireaus and Thessaloniki are divided into diamerismata (districts) which elect their own councils.

On a higher level, Greece consists of 55 Nomoi (4 of which are administrative sub-divisions in Attica) which are appointed by central government, although a programme is currently being produced to change this into an elected council.

IRELAND

Ireland consists of sub-national government on two levels; the larger authorities are Counties and County Boroughs, with Boroughs, Urban Districts and Towns forming the smaller bodies. All local elections in Ireland are covered by the Local Government Act (1941) and the Electoral Act (1963). Elections are based upon a system of Proportional Representation, using the Single Transferable Vote. Until recently, local government in

the Republic of Ireland has enjoyed relatively little autonomy and as such is not held in particularly high esteem by the general public. However, the Local Government Act 1991 has produced limited reforms in terms of autonomy - although this has not affected the actual electoral system. The operation of the STV system means that members of the same party are often in competition with each other.

Boroughs, Urban Districts and Towns - There are a total of six non-county boroughs, 49 urban districts and 30 towns. Each council sits for a period of five years. Elections take the form of Single Transferable Voting, and seat allocation is via the Droop quota. Borough councils usually have 12 members, and urban district and town councils usually have 9 members. There are a total of 758 councillors for these 85 authorities.

Counties and County Boroughs - Elected for a six year term, Ireland has 29 counties (3 in Dublin) and 5 county boroughs within Ireland. The domination of national government interests in the Republic means local elections can be postponed and be held at a 'convenient time' providing a sporadic election cycle. Elections again take the form of Single Transferable Voting, and seat allocation is determined by the Droop quota. County councils usually have between 20 and 48 members, and for county boroughs the figure is 15 - 31. The exception to this is Dublin County Council which has 78 seats and Dublin county Borough which has 52 seats.

ITALY

Italy operates sub-national government on three levels; the Communes, Provinces and Regions. Longitudinal analysis is complicated by the widespread process of institutional and electoral reforms which have been a prominent feature of Italian politics since the late 1980s.

Communes - Italy consists of 8,100 Communes which range in size from large cities (such as Rome and Milan) to small communities of only several thousand inhabitants. The election date is not fixed by the constitution, although Communal elections are required at least once in every four years. Councils range in composition from 15 - 80 members with a grand total of over 100,000 councillors.

The electoral system differs in relation to population size with the laws most recently reformed in March 1993 and applied to elections held the following June. Where the population is less than 5,000 the single-ballot majority system is used to elect the mayor and the council, enabling the strongest party to claim four-fifths of the seats. For communes with a population not exceeding 15,000, a single-round, PR list system with preferential voting is used. For cities with populations of more than 15,000 a two-ballot system is used. Since June 1993 the mayor in these cities has been directly elected. The mayor may be elected by the first ballot alone with a absolute majority, or in the second ballot when only two candidates may stand - again using the rule of simple majority. For councillors, a party gaining 50% of the vote takes 60% of the seats in both rounds and the remaining seats are distributed via quota. The situation in Italian communes is made increasingly complex by the fact that there is an ongoing series of reforms which are moving towards the majoritarian system in order to prevent the systematic occurrence of power crises and frequent elections.

Provinces - Italy has 95 territorial provinces, each of which has a directly elected council which serves for a four year term. Elections take the form of a single-round using a PR system.

Regions - Since the regionalisation programme of 1970, Italy consists of 20 Regions at the sub-national level - 15 of which hold elections at the same time. The other five

regions - Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d'Aosta were established earlier (1948-1963), have strong regional and cultural identities, and varying special powers. Each is elected for a term of five years using PR, and has between 30 and 80 members.

LUXEMBOURG

The grand Duchy of Luxembourg is the smallest country to be a member of the European Union with a total population of approximately 389,000. Luxembourg has a single level of local government.

Communes - Luxembourg consists of 118 communes and voting is compulsory. Elections are held every six years and the process of seat allocation varies. For example, in communes with a population of 3,000 or less, a simple plurality system is employed. For those communes with 3,000+ inhabitants, the d'Hondt system of proportional representation using preferential voting is used. The size of the communal council varies between 7 and 29 members, depending upon population size and is always an odd number.

THE NETHERLANDS

Local government in the Netherlands operates on two administrative levels, these being gemeenten and provincial states. Compulsory voting was enforced in Dutch local elections until 1970 and since that date turnout has gradually declined. Dutch sub-national government acts as an 'agent' of central government since its behaviour is ultimately limited by constitutional constraints and is dependent to a large extent on central government grants.

Gemeenten - There are 677 gemeenten in The Netherlands, with the number of members on each council ranging from 7 to 45 depending on the population size. Elections are held every four years in a single round using party lists, with the possibility of preferential voting for individual candidates. Seat distribution follows the d'Hondt highest average system of proportional representation.

Provincien - The Netherlands is divided into twelve provincial regions, and again the number of members sitting on these councils varies with the size of the population from 43 members in Flevoland up to 83 in South Holland. Elections take place every four years with party lists and use the d'Hondt system of proportional representation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Local government in Northern Ireland follows a completely different pattern to that on the mainland of Britain. In Northern Ireland there are 26 councils covering the province. Unlike the rest of the United Kingdom these councils, which range in size from between 15 and 51 members, are elected using the Single Transferable Vote as opposed to simple plurality. The STV system allows voters to number the candidates on a ballot paper according to preference. Seat allocation is determined at the ward level using a slight variation on the Droop quota. The quota is calculated by dividing the number of valid votes + 1 by the number of seats + 1.

Prior to the local elections held in 1985, there were a total of 526 council seats. This was increased to 566 for the 1985 election. The number of elected councillors since the 1993 election stands at 582. Most of these new seats are in the greater Belfast area. This election was also significant in terms of new electoral legislation. Voters must now

produce some form of identification in order to prevent personation which until then had created a situation referred to as 'vote early vote often'. Turnout is much higher than in British local elections - approximately two thirds of the electorate. This reflects the significance of local politics in Northern Ireland, whilst the electoral system itself encourages the religious minorities within each ward to vote. There is a significant range in overall council size in Northern Ireland. Since the 1993 elections, three councils have only 15 seats (Larne, Limavady and Moyle) whilst the largest council is Belfast with 51 seats. These differences do not however produce a balanced councillor: electorate ratio across the councils. The council of Moyle may have only 15 seats but this represented one councillor for every 703 members of the electorate. Belfast may have 51 seats but this represents only one councillor for every 4090 members of the electorate.

PORTUGAL

Since the establishment of the current democratic constitution in 1976, local government in Portugal (under Chapter VII) operates on three levels; the freguesias, the municipios and regiones administrativas.

Freguesias - Portugal is divided into 4208 freguesias (4138 for the 1985 local elections), each of which is elected for a four year term, using blocked lists (although individual independent candidates may stand) and the d'Hondt rules of seat allocation.

Municipios (Counselhos) - There are 305 municipios in Portugal (275 on the mainland and 30 in the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira). Each municipio has two elected governing bodies, both of which serves for a four year term. Members are elected simultaneously on the basis of party lists with no individual candidates permitted and seat allocation follows the d'Hondt rules as stated in Article 116 of the

Constitution. The elected members sit in the Assembleia Municipal (a deliberative body) alongside the presidentes of the freguesias. The executive body is called the Camara Municipal and is made up entirely of elected members. Elections for the Freguesias and the Municipios occur on the same day.

Regioes - The reformulation of this level of local government in Portugal is yet to be completed. It is in operation in the Regiao Autonomas of Madeira and the Azores, with authorities being elected for a four year term using a system of proportional representation. There are a further 18 districts.

SPAIN

Democratic sub-national government in Spain was established along with the Constitutional Monarchy in 1978 and defined by the 2 April 1985 Law, operates on two levels; the municipalities and the regions.

Municipios - Election laws in Spain ensure that the 8069 Municipal governments are elected every four years as stated in Article 141 of the Constitution. Each municipality of up to 100,000 residents has between 5 - 25 councillors with an additional councillor awarded for every additional 100,000 residents. Balloting follows the PR system using closed and blocked lists, and seats are allocated using the d'Hondt rules to parties which obtain at least 5% of the votes cast. The first elections were held in 1979.

Comunidades Autonomas - Spain consists of seventeen Comunidades Autonomas (regions), each of which has its own parliament. Within these regions there are a total of 52 provinces. Provincial councils vary in size from 25 - 51 deputies. Elections take place every four years using blocked lists and following the d'Hondt system of proportional representation. This higher level is comprised of 41 Diputaciones

Provinciales, 7 Cabildos Insulares (Island councils in the Canary Islands), and 3 Consejos Insulares (Islands Councils in the Balearic Islands). Seven regions - Catalonia, the Basque country, Galicia, Andalusia, Navarra, Valencia and the Canary Islands - operate on a different level of autonomy to the other 10 regions, and have their elections at different times. The other 10 hold their elections together, and at the same time as their municipalities.

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