

Trends in Australian Political Opinion:

Results from the
Australian Election Study,
1987-2007

Ian McAllister

Research School of Social Sciences
The Australian National University
Email: ian.mcallister@anu.edu.au

Juliet Clark

School of International and Political Studies
Deakin University
Email: julietc@deakin.edu.au

Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. The Election Campaign.....	3
2. Voting and Partisanship.....	5
3. Election Issues.....	12
4. The Economy.....	17
5. Politics and Political Parties.....	21
6. The Left-Right Dimension.....	23
7. The Political Leaders.....	24
8. Democracy and Institutions.....	25
9. Trade Unions, Business and Wealth.....	27
10. Social Issues.....	29
11. Defence and Foreign Affairs.....	35
Appendix A: Tables.....	41
Appendix B: The Australian Election Study.....	77

Introduction

Political opinion polls are an inescapable part of everyday life. Government or opposition policies rarely see the light of day without some poll evidence to gauge the public's response to them. Party leaders are constantly evaluated against their poll ratings, not least by their colleagues, and consistently low ratings can often spell a leader's demise. And not least, prime ministers call elections when they consider the polls to be most favourable to them (or, if they are trailing in the polls, least *unfavourable*).

Interpreting political opinion polls is sometimes difficult. On particular issues or with regard to particular personalities, opinions may change significantly in a short period of time as a result of an event or a changed circumstance. Small changes in question wordings or in sample design may cause what appear to be significant changes in public opinion when such changes are, in fact, an artefact of the survey's methodology. The most reliable way in which to monitor trends in public opinion is to examine responses over an extended period of time, using questions asked in the same way and included in surveys that use the same methodology.

This monograph presents trends in Australian public opinion on politics over an extended period of time. In most cases, our trends run from 1987 until 2007; in some cases, the same questions have been asked in surveys conducted in 1967, 1969 and 1979, allowing us to extend the time series back another two decades. The 1987 to 2007 trends are based on the Australian Election Study (AES) surveys, comprehensive post-election surveys of political opinion that have asked the same questions and used the same methodology. The 1967, 1969 and 1979 surveys are also comprehensive academic surveys of political opinion; all were conducted by Don Aitkin, who pioneered the use of the mass public opinion survey in the academic study of politics in Australia.

The AES provides the most sophisticated and exhaustive set of data ever collected in Australia on the dynamics of political behaviour. Each of the AES surveys contains questions relating to the role of media and media exposure; general political interest and knowledge; perceptions of the election campaign; party identification and prior voting history; parents' and partner partisanship; vote in the election and the explanations given for it; party images; perceptions of the major party leaders and the content of their public images; election issues; social policy issues; and a range of socio-demographic measures including education, occupation, religious behaviour, family circumstances, and income.

In this monograph, we draw on the main recurring themes of the AES to trace long-term changes in the political opinions of the electorate. The exact question wordings and response categories, and the complete sets of responses to the questions appear in Appendix A. Appendix B provides a detailed overview of the methodology used in each survey. For those who want to conduct their own analyses or want more information, the datafiles and full documentation are available through the Australian Social Science Data Archive, at <http://assda.anu.edu.au/>. More details about the AES can be found at <http://aes.anu.edu.au/>. The AES is also a founder member of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems project, details of which can be found at <http://aes.anu.edu.au/>.

An endeavour stretching over nearly 20 years necessarily involves many people. Ian McAllister's colleagues on the AES over the years have included Clive Bean, David Denmark, Rachel Gibson, David Gow, Roger Jones, Anthony Mughan and Elim Papadakis. The Australian Social Science Data Archive, in addition to disseminating the data to the user community, has also conducted the survey since 1993, and we are indebted to Sophie Holloway, the ASSDA manager, and Rachelle Graham for their long-term commitment to the project. Deborah Mitchell, Director of the ACSPRI Centre for Social Research, has been a consistent supporter of the AES.

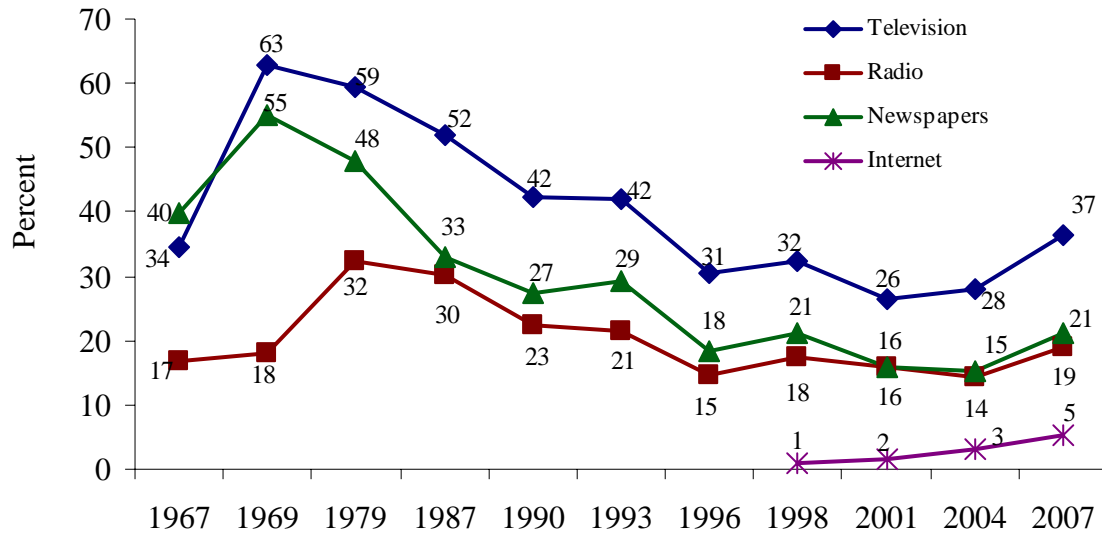
A pdf copy of this monograph is available at <http://assda.anu.edu.au/aestrends.pdf>.

Ian McAllister Juliet Clark

Canberra May 2008

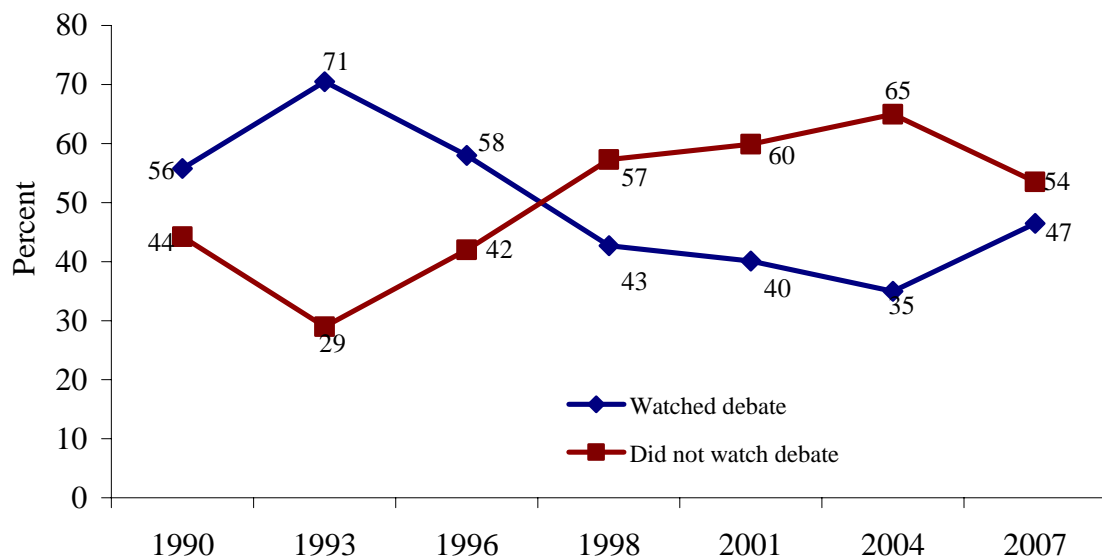
1. The Election Campaign

Followed the Election in the Mass Media



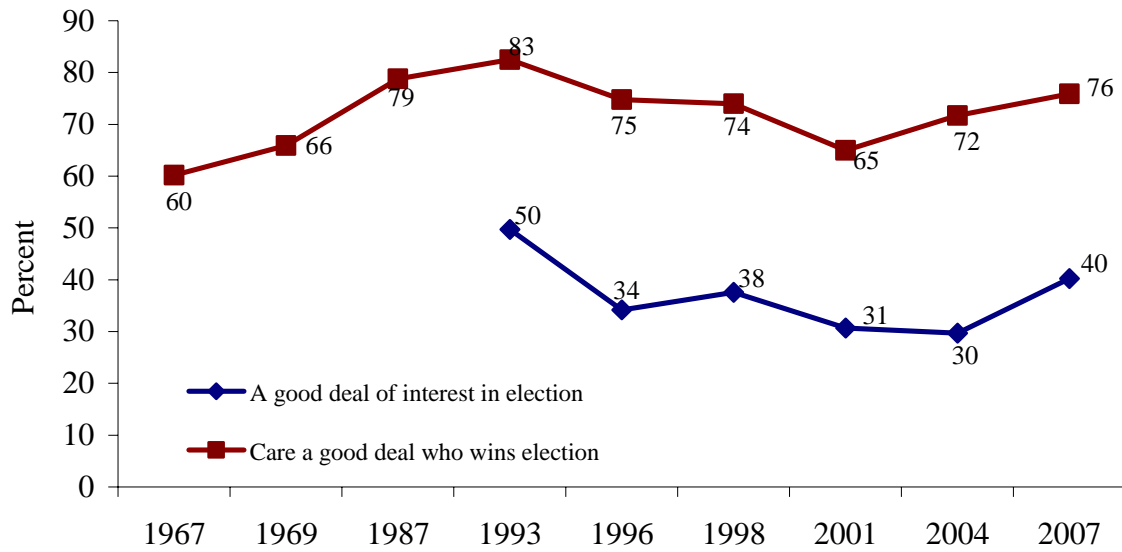
Notes. Estimates for talkback combines 'everyday' and 'most days', and internet combines 'once or twice', 'on several occasions' and 'many times.'

Watched the Leaders' Debates

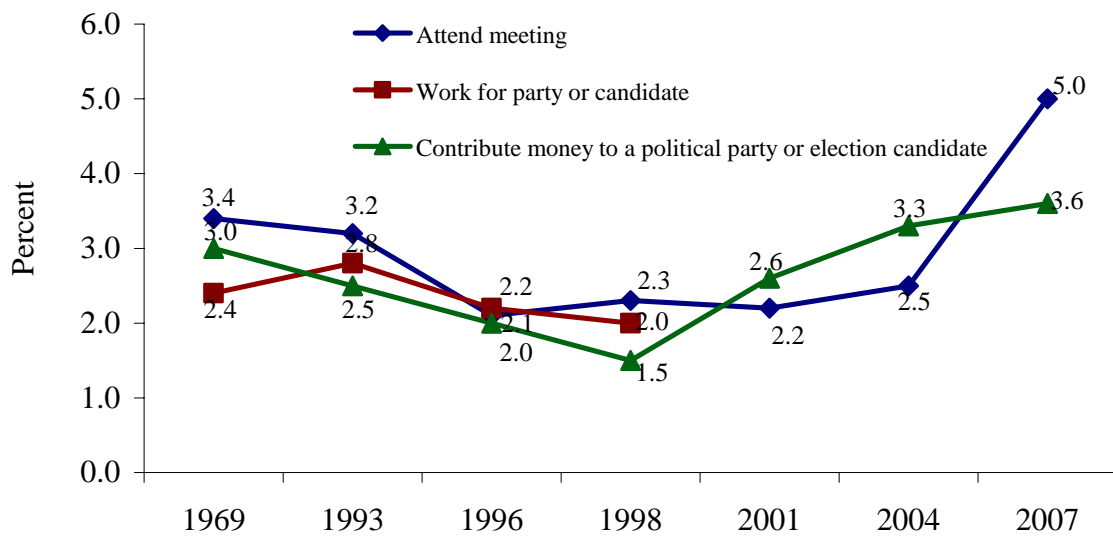


Notes. In 1993 and 1996 estimates for watched the debate combines 'watched both' and 'watched one only'.

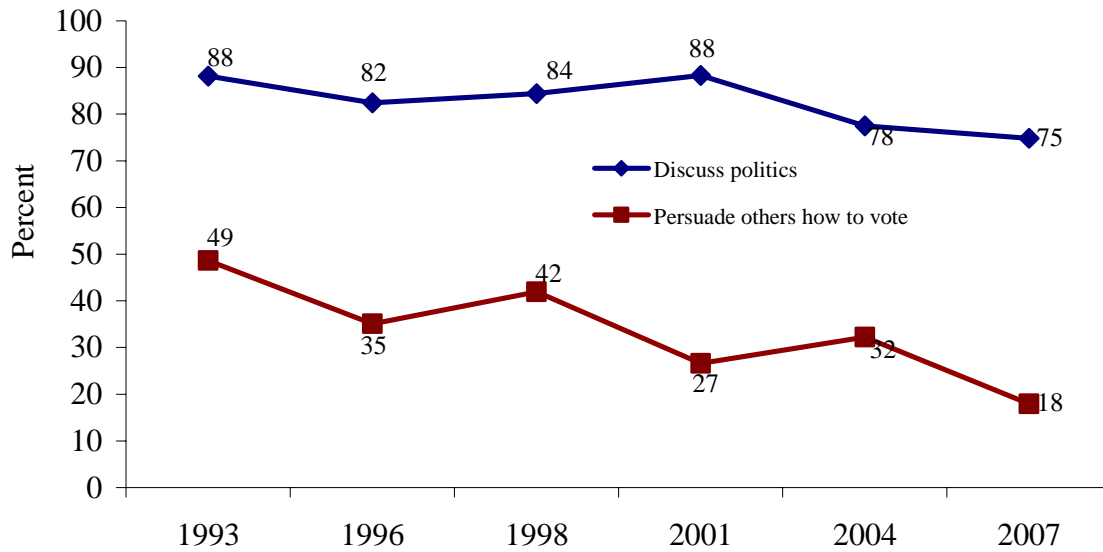
Interest in the Election



Involvement in the Election Campaign



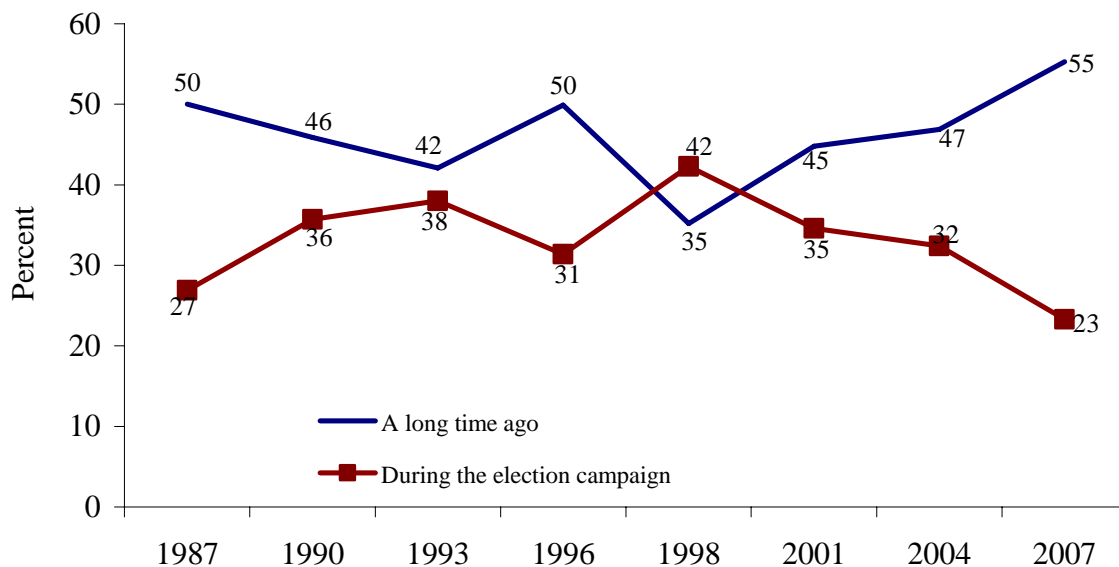
Discussing the Election Campaign with Others



Notes. Estimates combine 'frequently', 'occasionally' and 'rarely'.

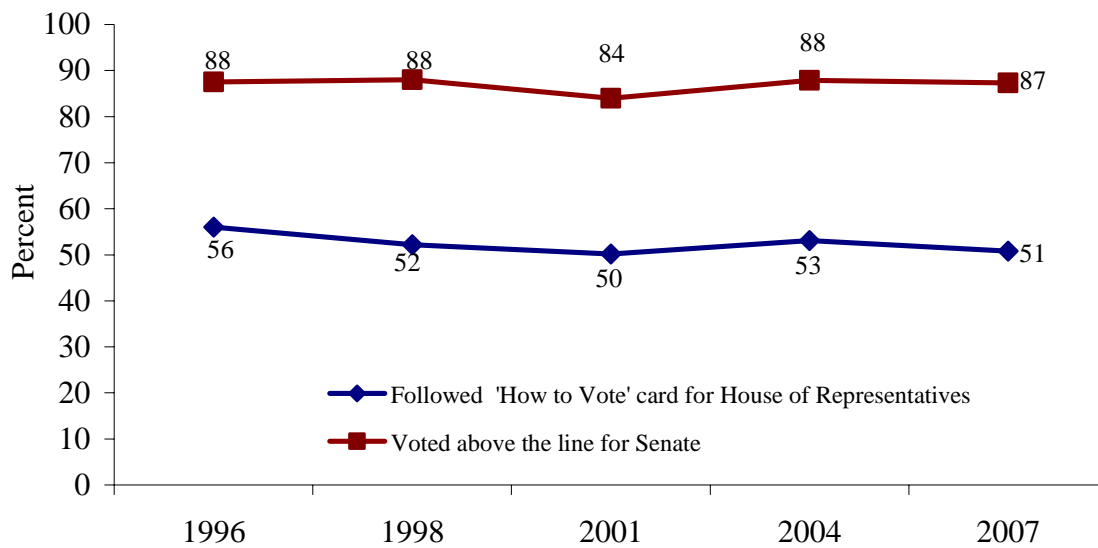
2. Voting and Partisanship

Timing of the Voting Decision

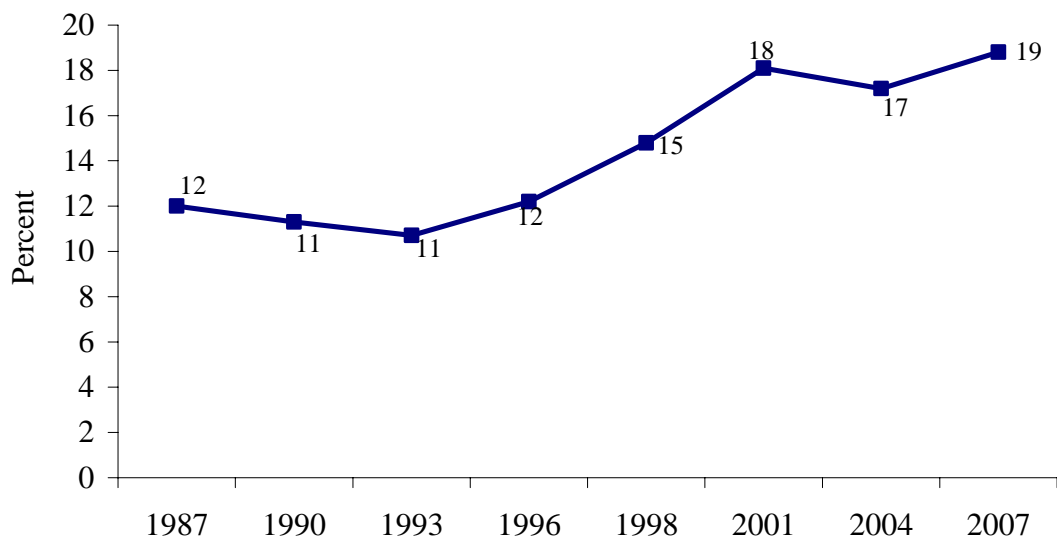


Notes. In 1990-2007 during the election campaign combines 'in the last few weeks of the campaign', 'a few days before election day' and 'on election day'.

The Use of Voter Prompts on Polling Day

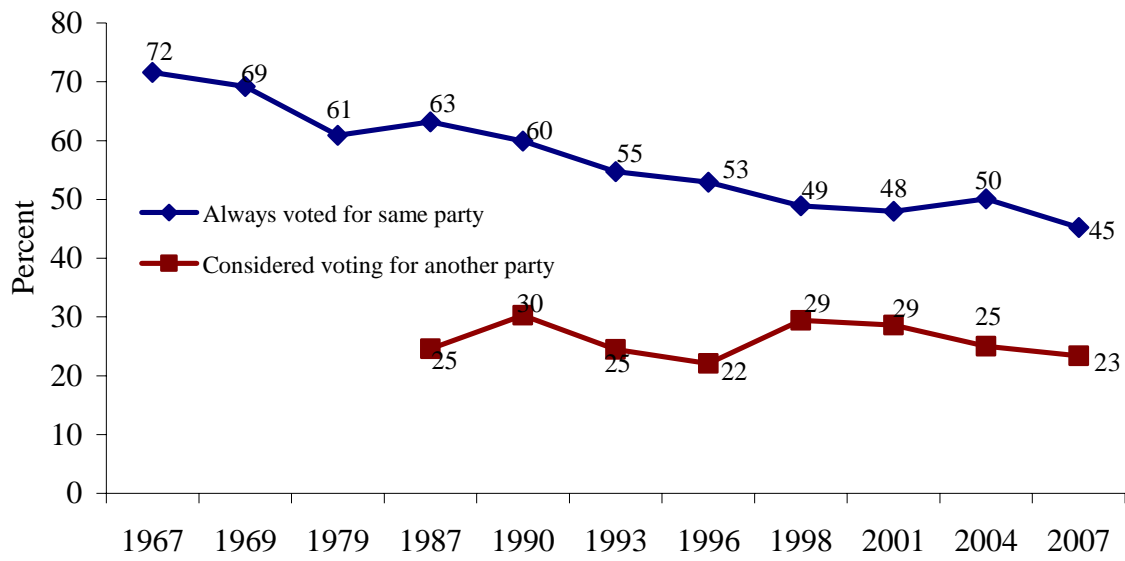


Split Ticket Voting

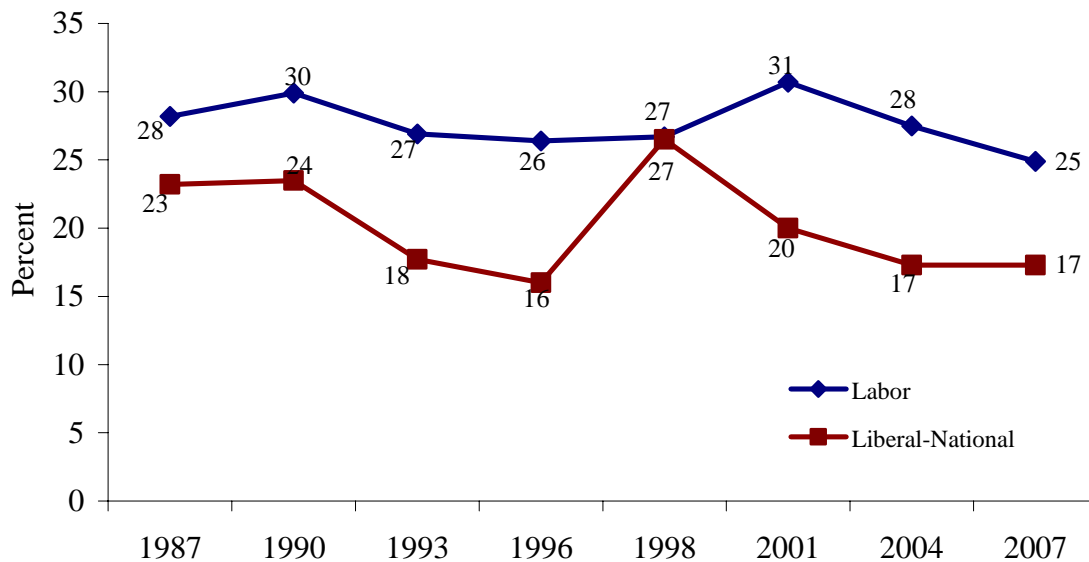


Notes. Estimates are based on voters preferring a different party in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Liberal and National parties are treated as a single group.

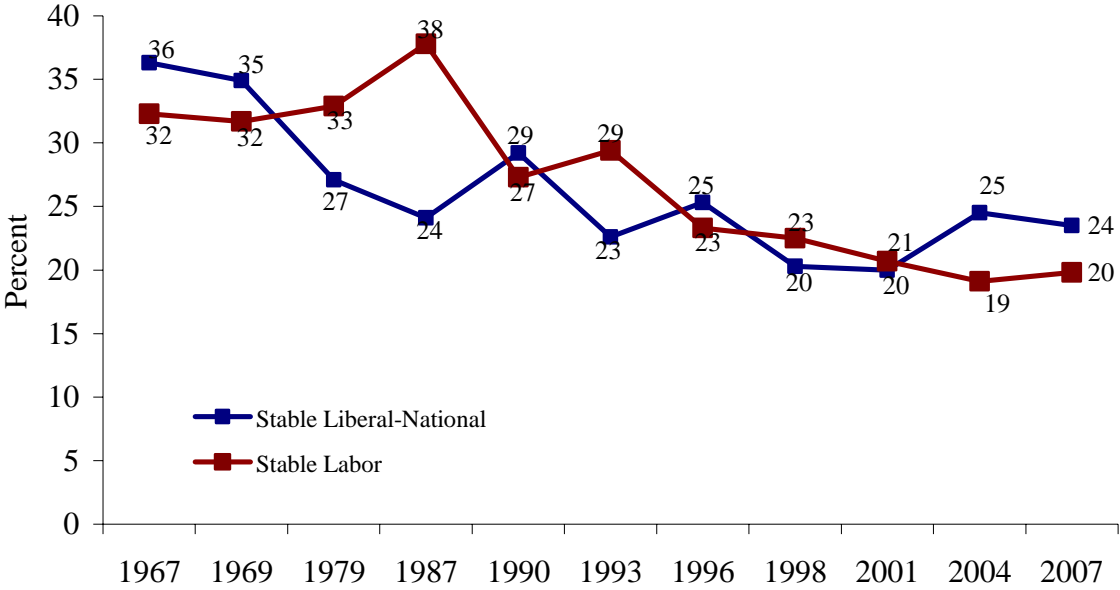
The Extent of Voting Volatility



Considered Changing Vote During Campaign

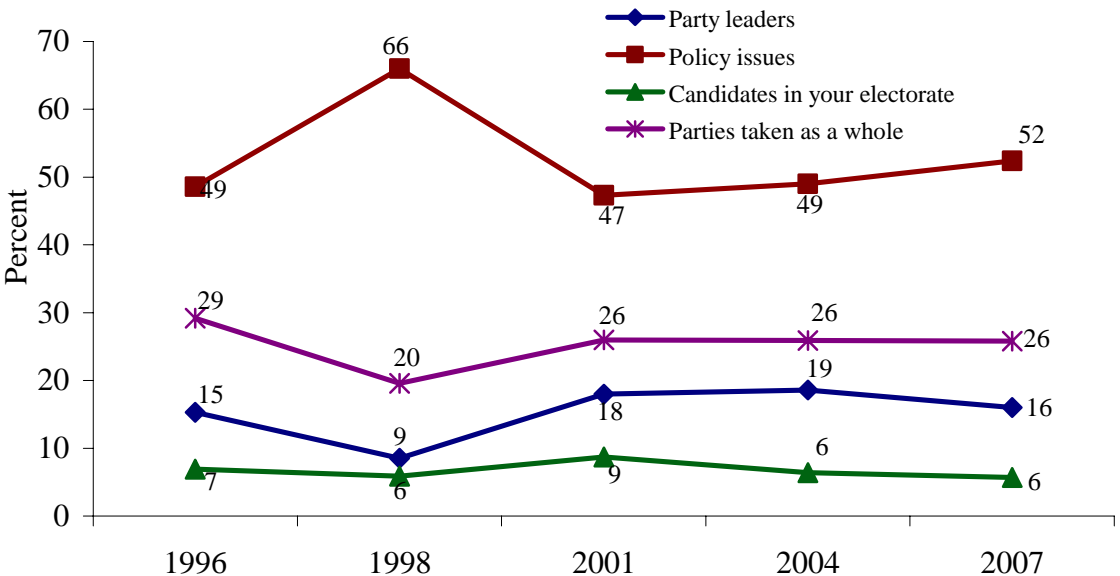


Lifetime Voting

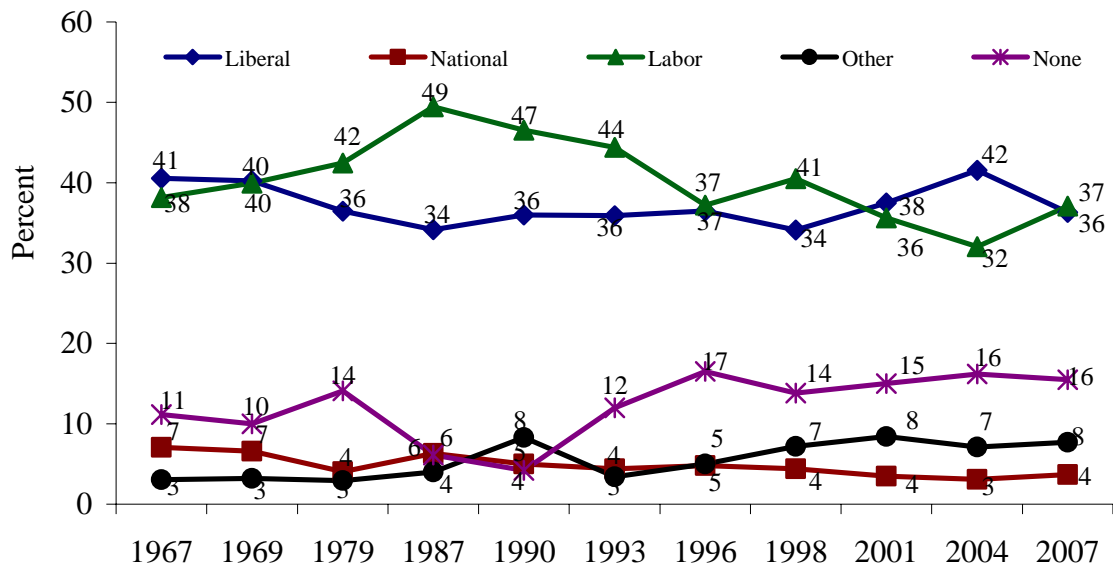


Notes. The Liberal and National parties are treated as a single group

Considerations in the Voting Decision

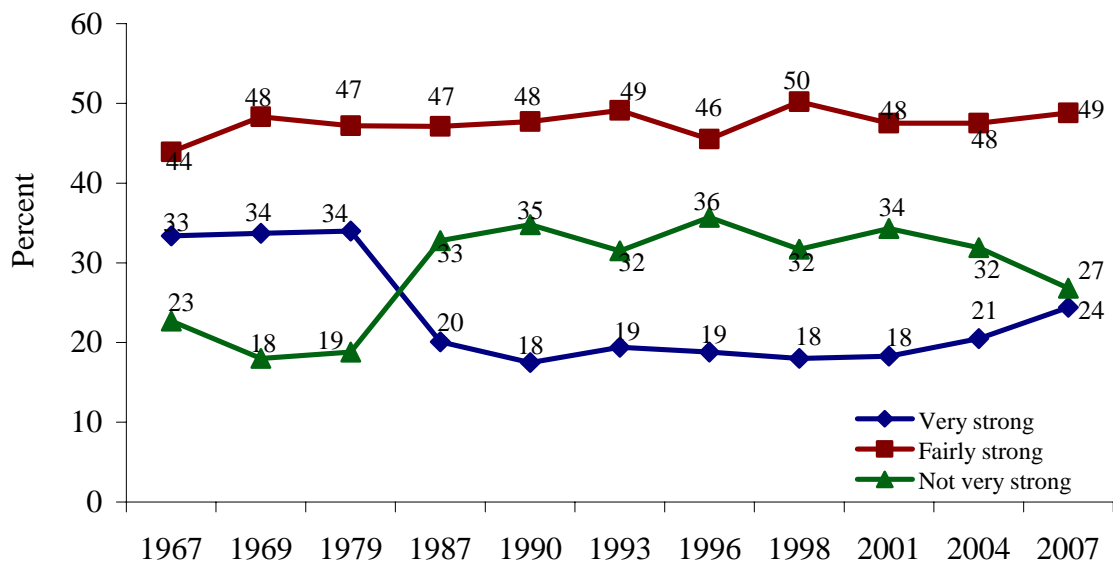


The Direction of Political Partisanship



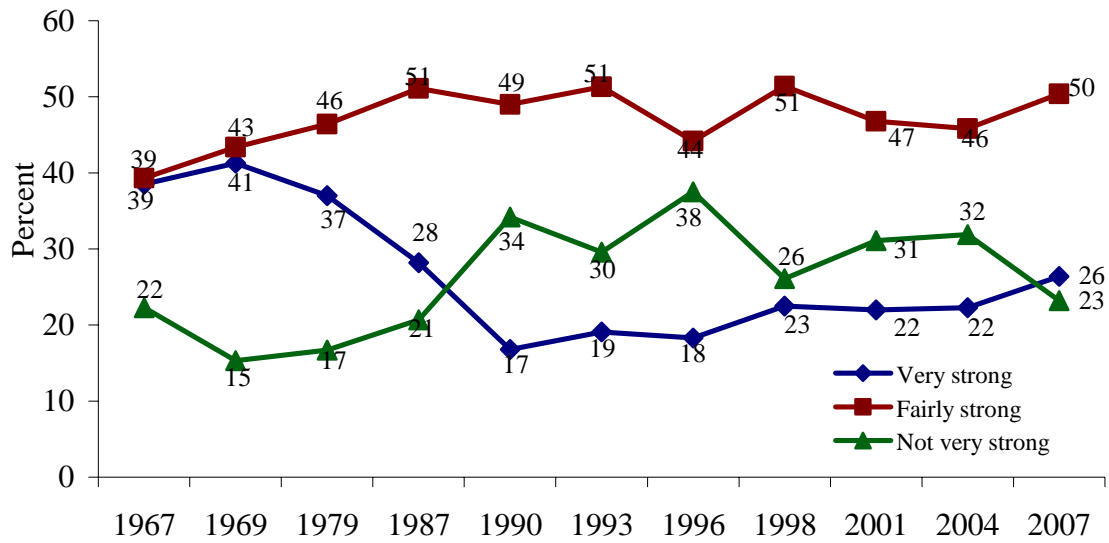
Notes. In 1993 'None' was added to the list of codes.

The Strength of Political Partisanship

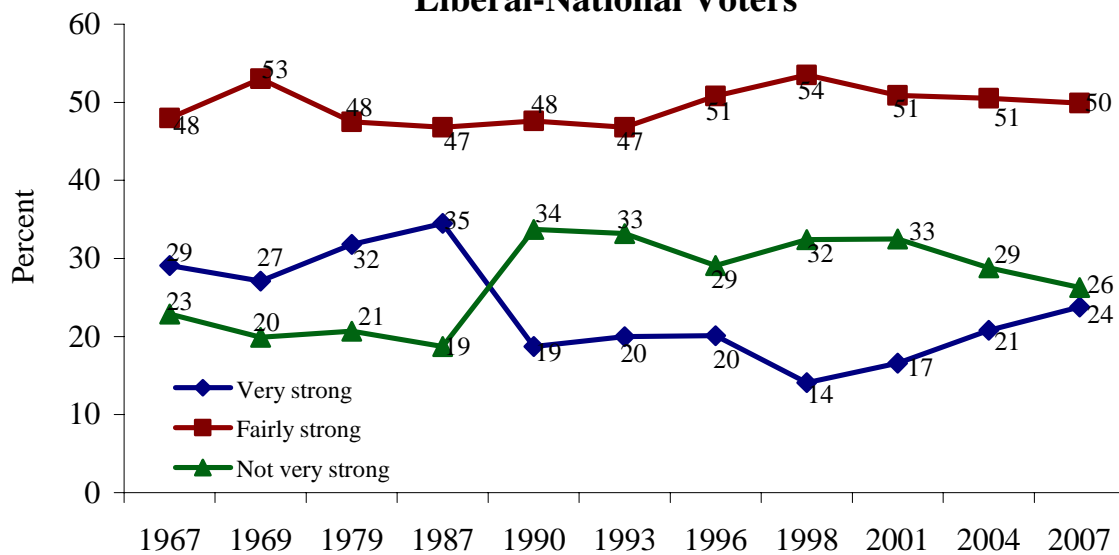


Notes. The questions asked in 1967-79 and 1987-2007 differ slightly. See Appendix A for details.

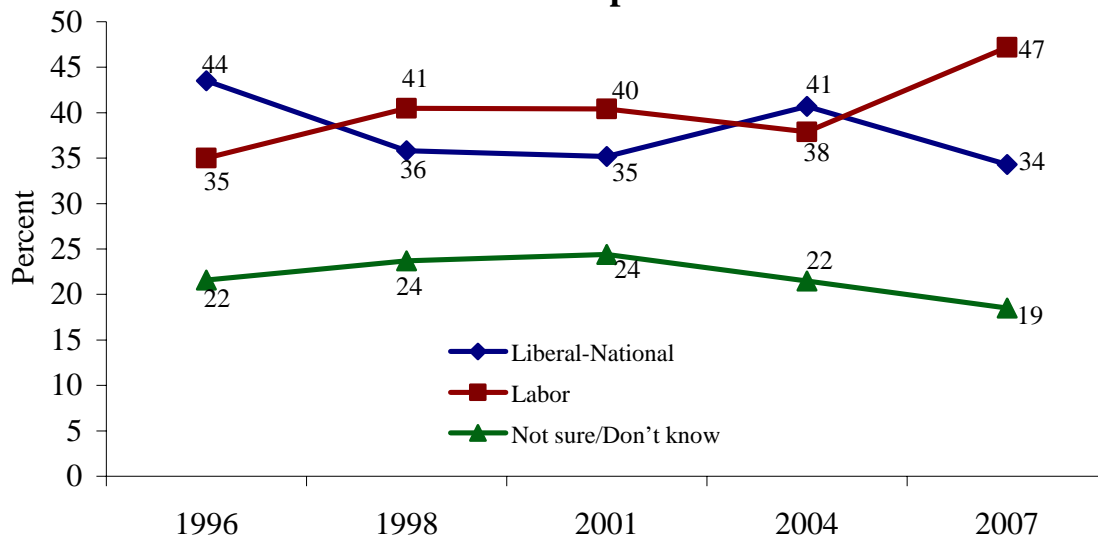
Strength of Political Partisanship Among Labor Voters



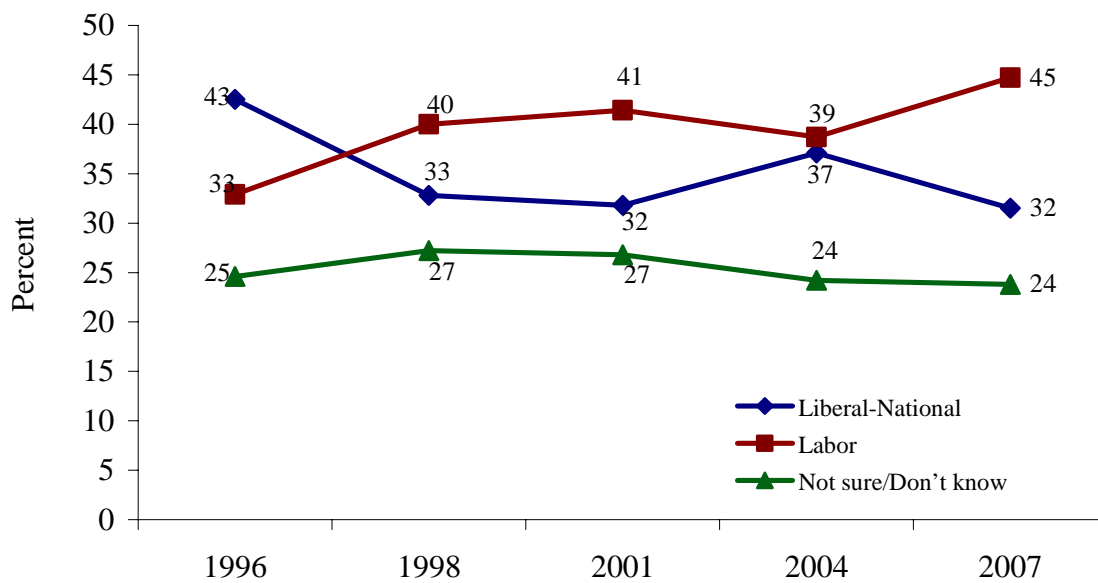
Strength of Political Partisanship Among Liberal-National Voters



Destination of Minor Party Votes in the House of Representatives

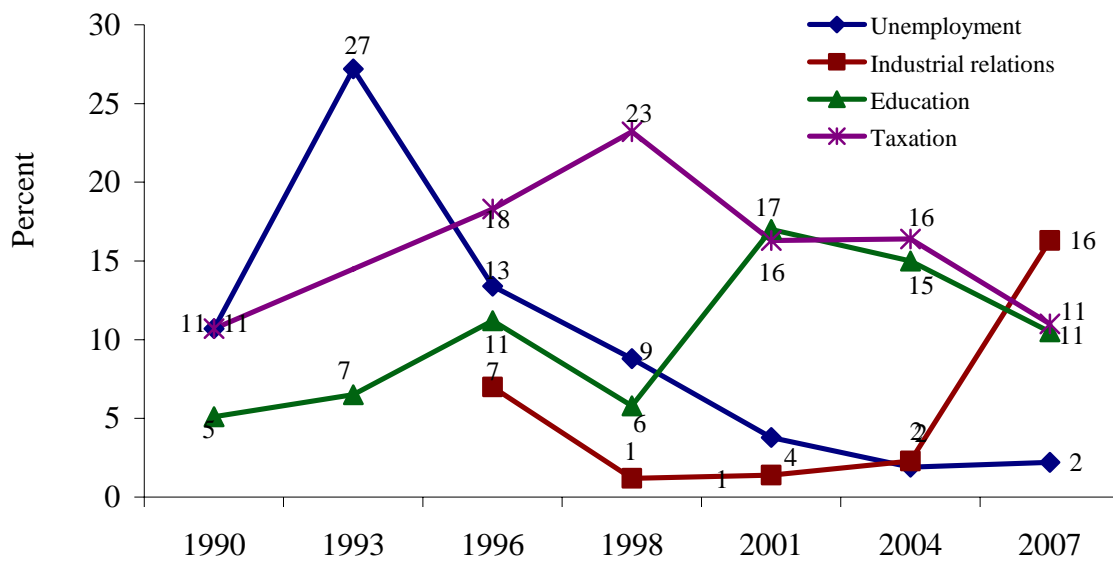


Destination of Minor Party Votes in the Senate

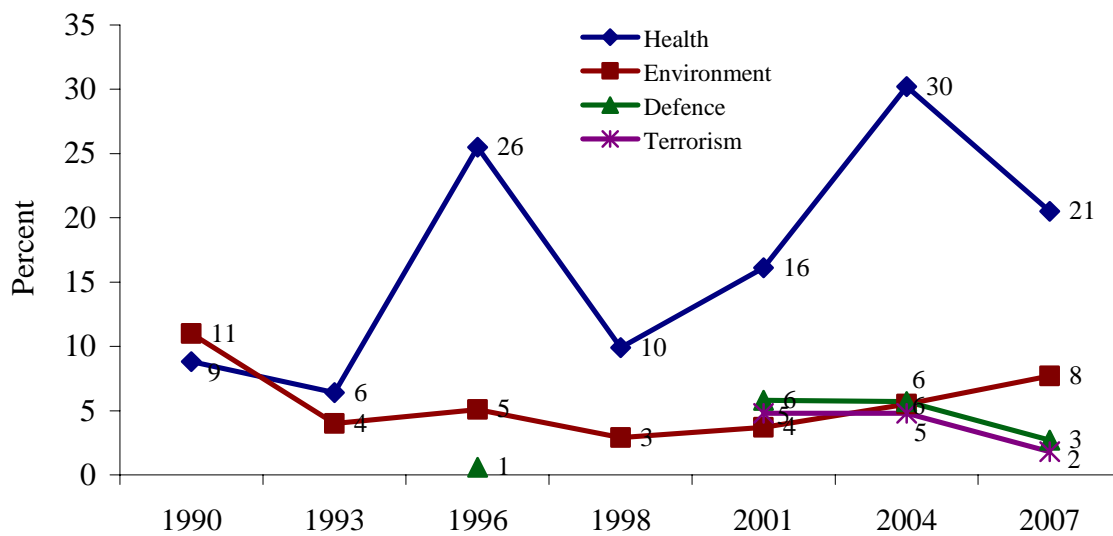


3. Election Issues

Most Important Economic Election Issues

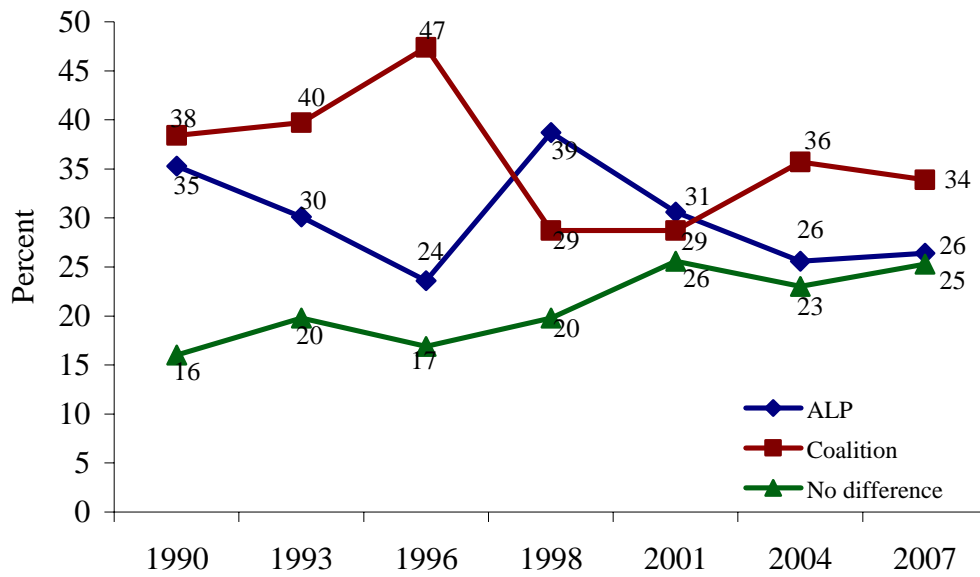


Most Important Non-Economic Election Issues

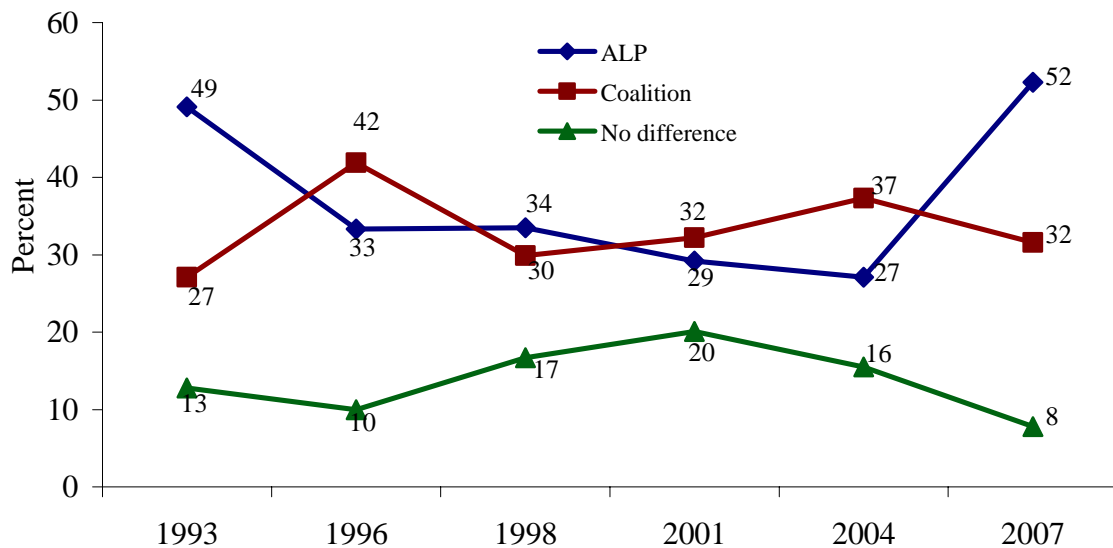


Notes. In 1996-2007 estimates for health are for 'health and Medicare'.

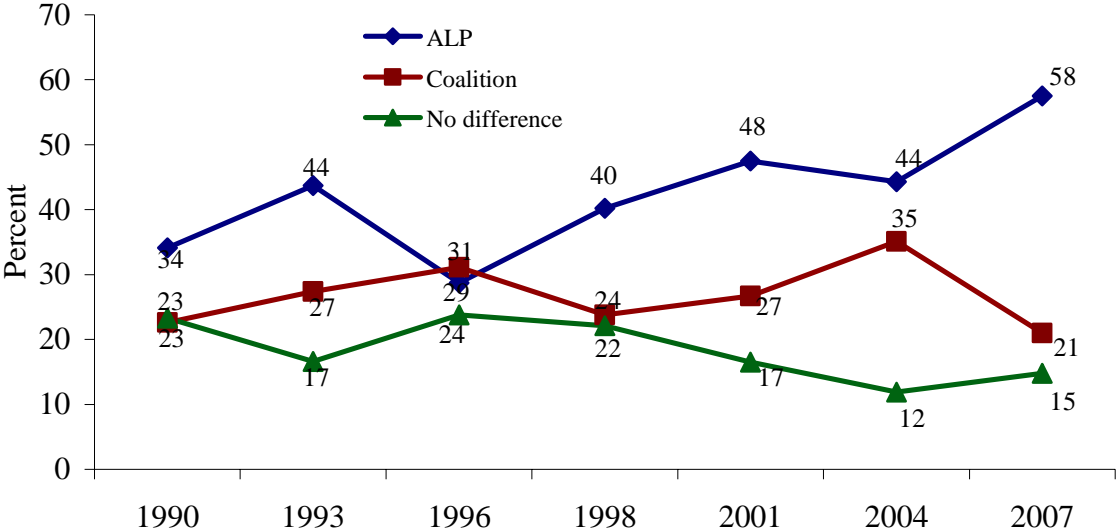
Preferred Party Policy on Unemployment



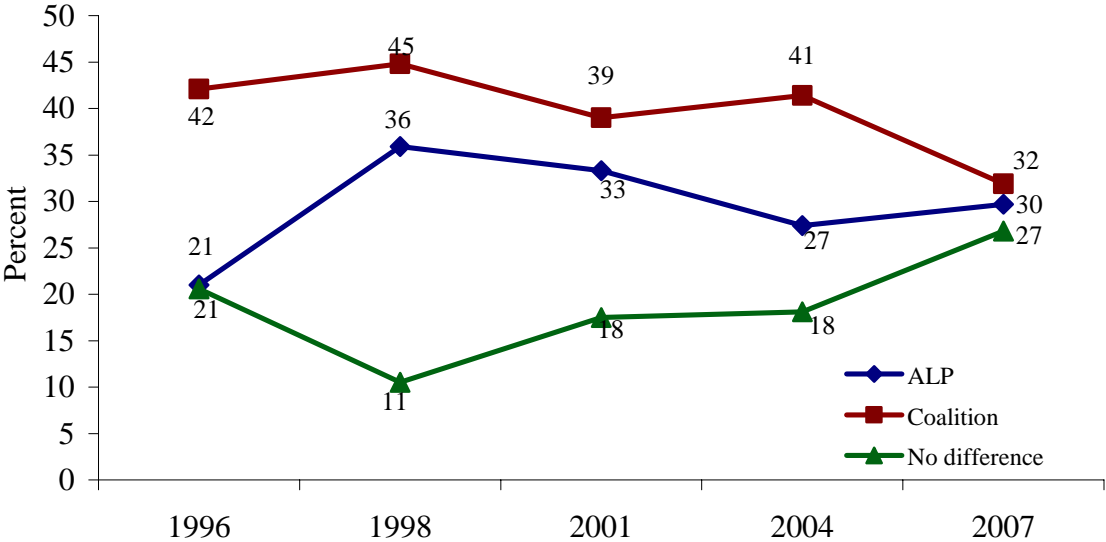
Preferred Party Policy on Industrial Relations



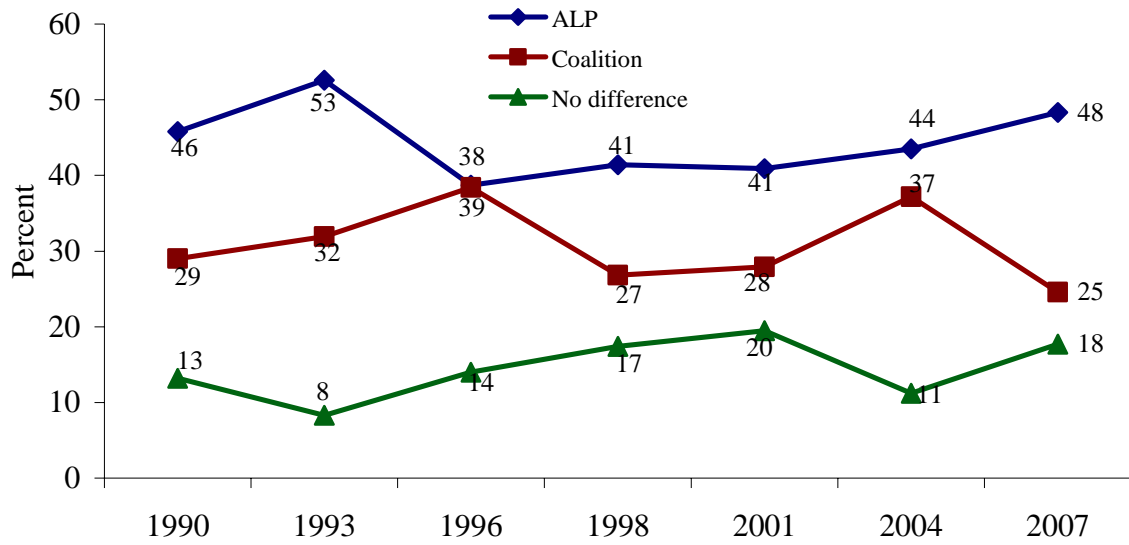
Preferred Party Policy on Education



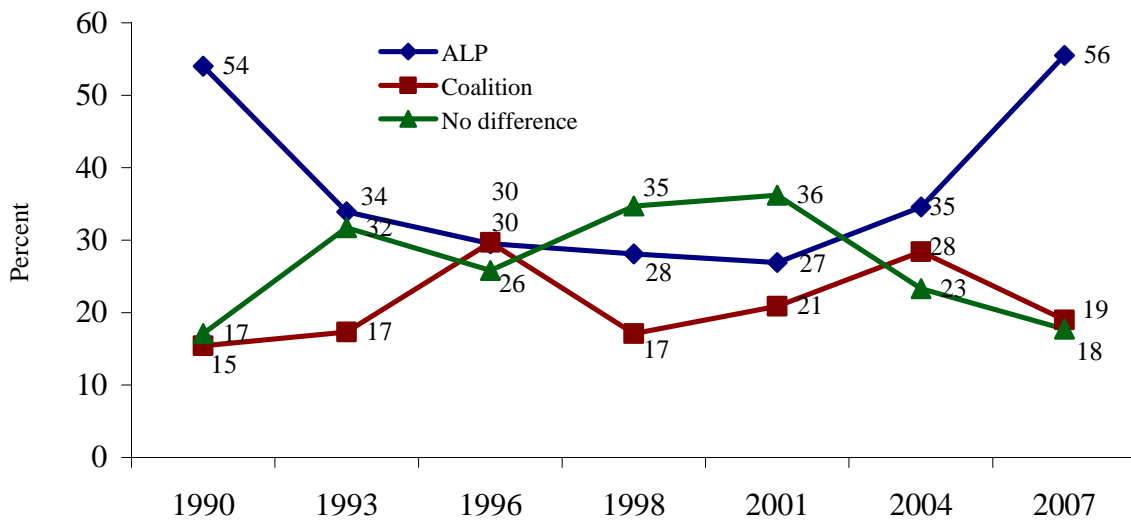
Preferred Party Policy on Taxation



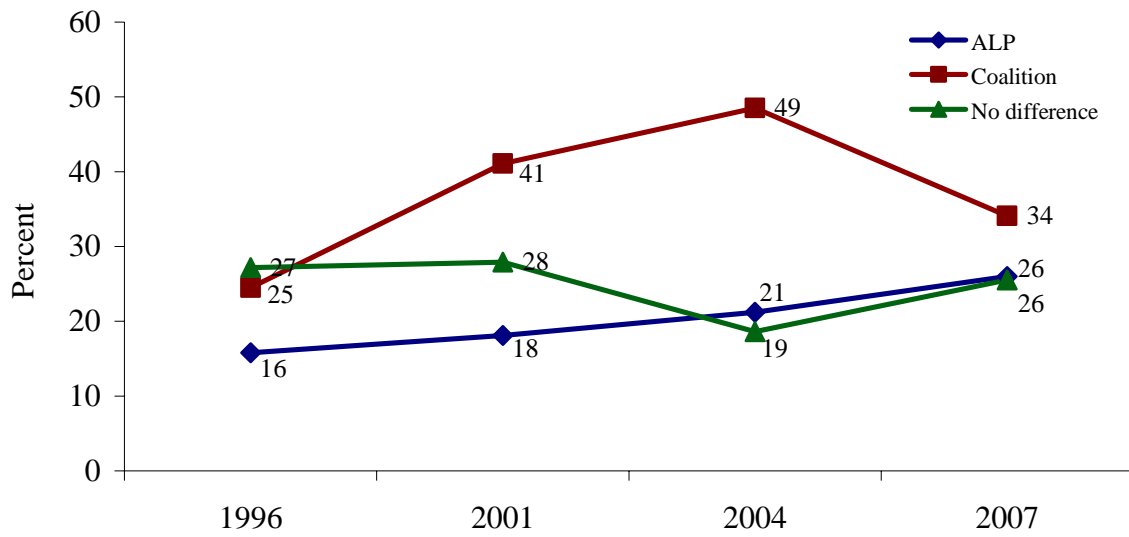
Preferred Party Policy on Health



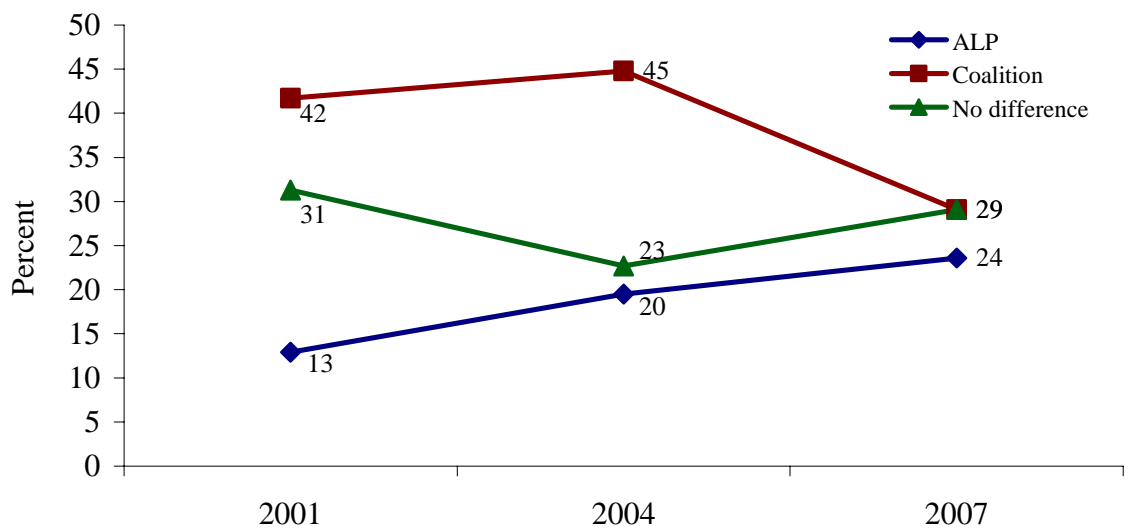
Preferred Party on the Environment



Preferred Party on Defence and National Security

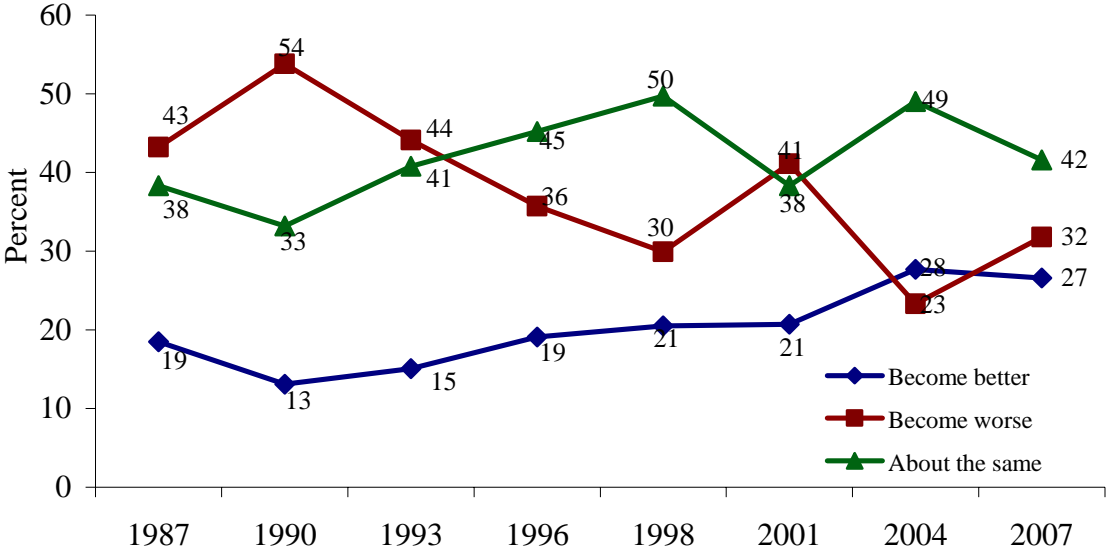


Preferred Party on Terrorism Policies



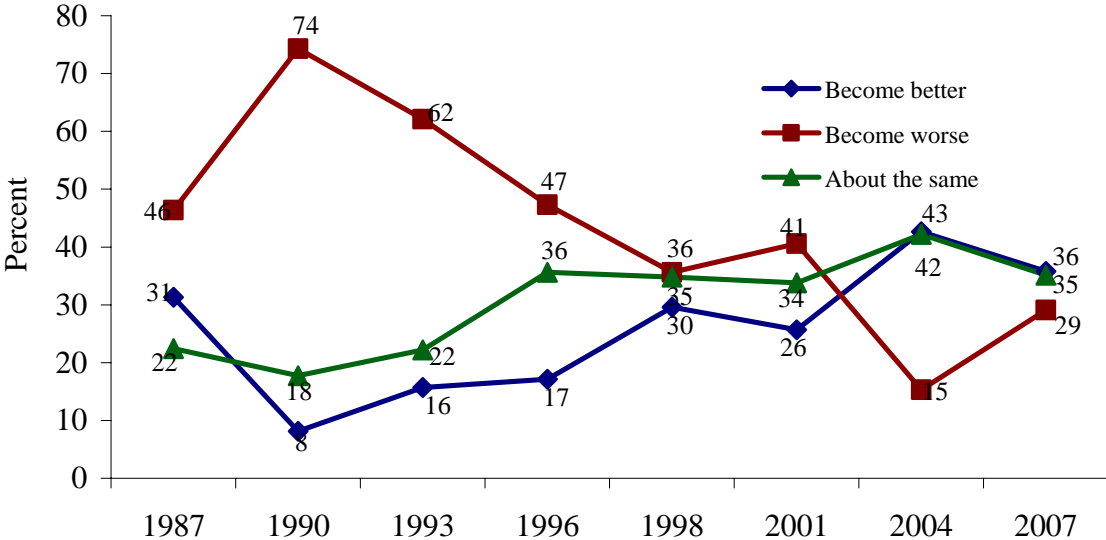
4. The Economy

Financial Situation of Household Over Past Year



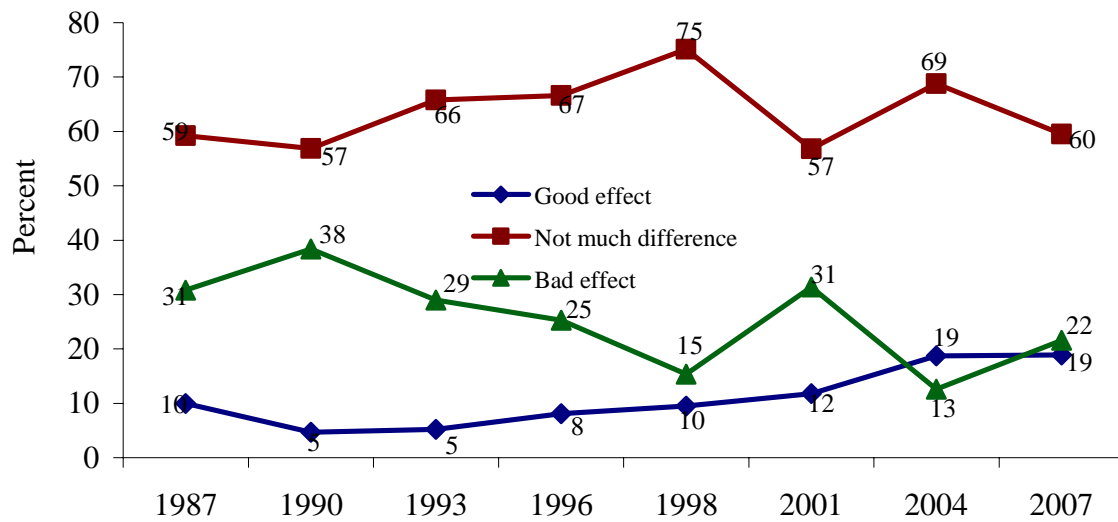
Notes. For become better, estimates combine ‘a lot better’ and ‘a little better’. For become worse, estimates combine ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’.

Financial Situation of Country Over Past Year

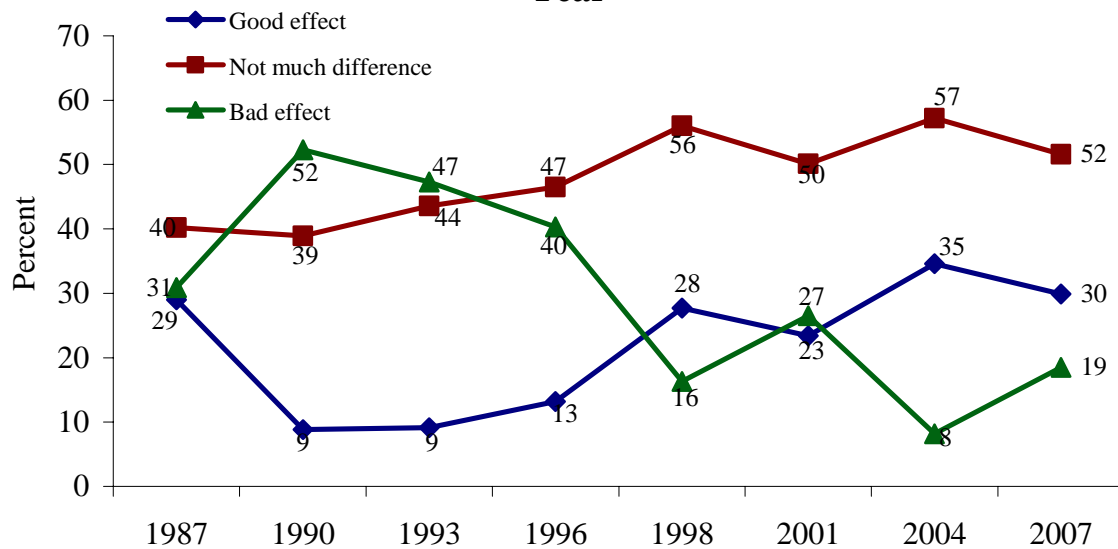


Notes. For become better, estimates combine ‘a lot better’ and ‘a little better’. For become worse, estimates combine ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’.

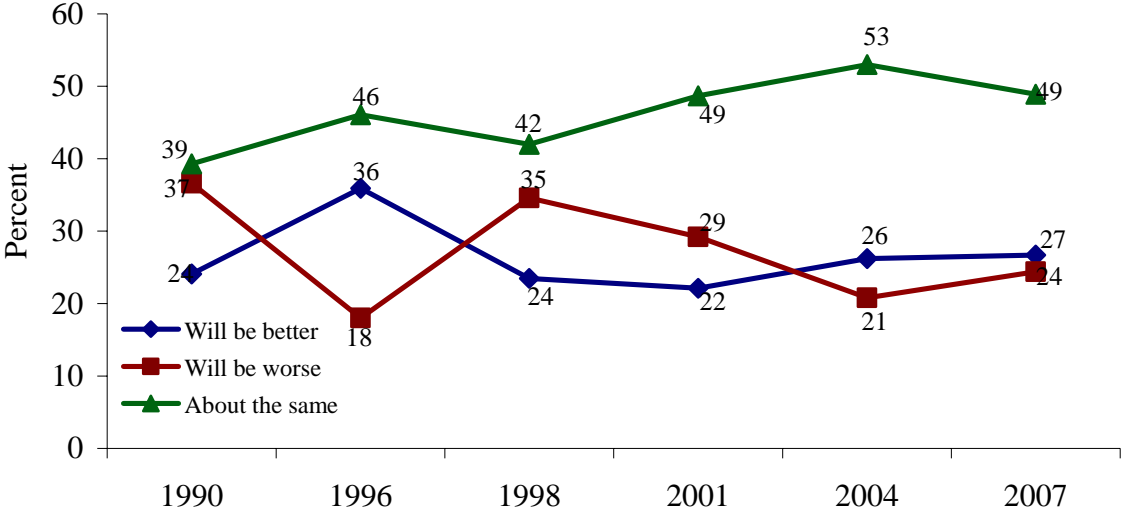
Government Effect on Household Finances Over Past Year



Government Effect on Country's Finances Over Past Year

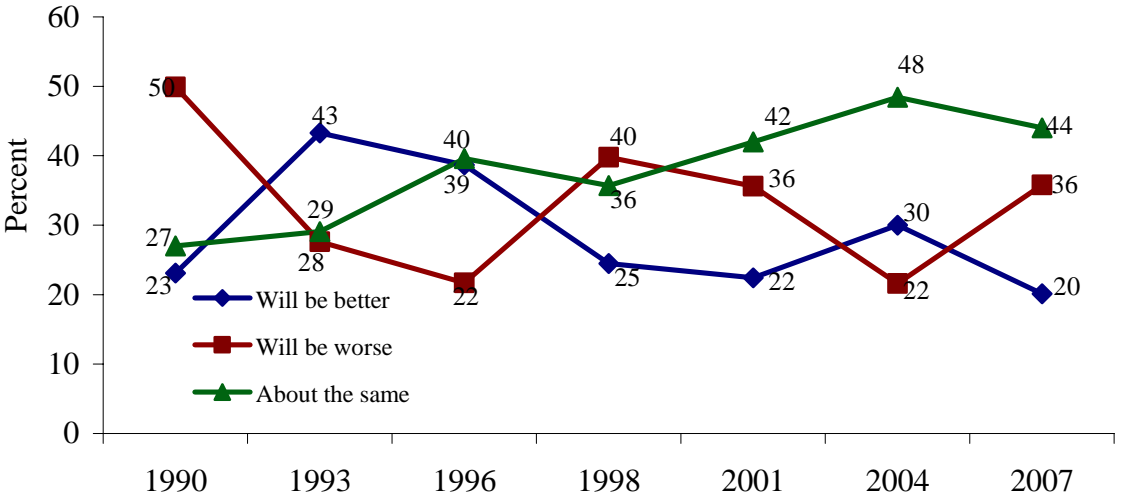


Financial Situation of Household in a Year's Time



Notes. For 'will be better', estimates combine 'a lot better' and 'a little better'. For 'will be worse', estimates combine 'a little worse' and 'a lot worse'.

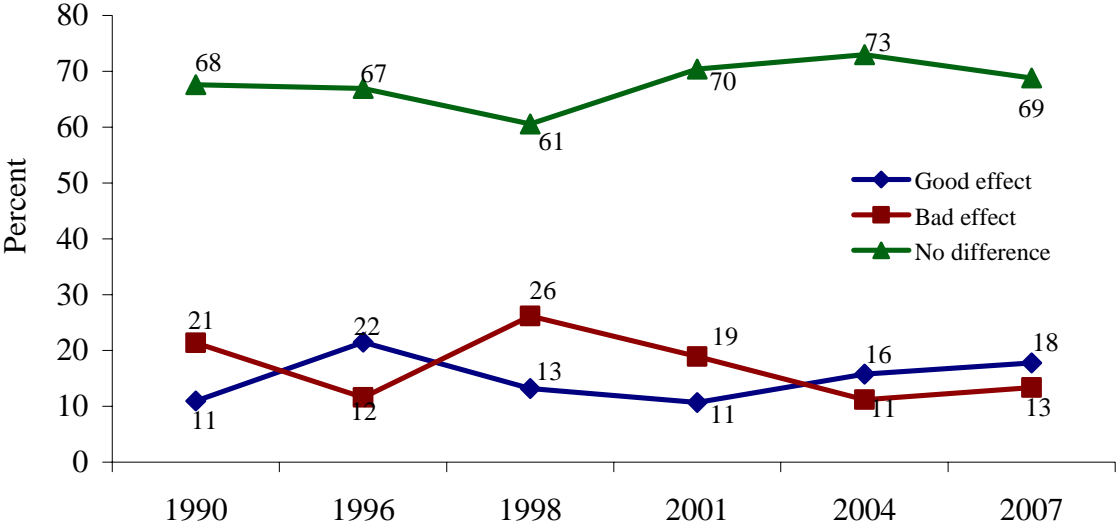
Financial Situation of Country in a Year's Time



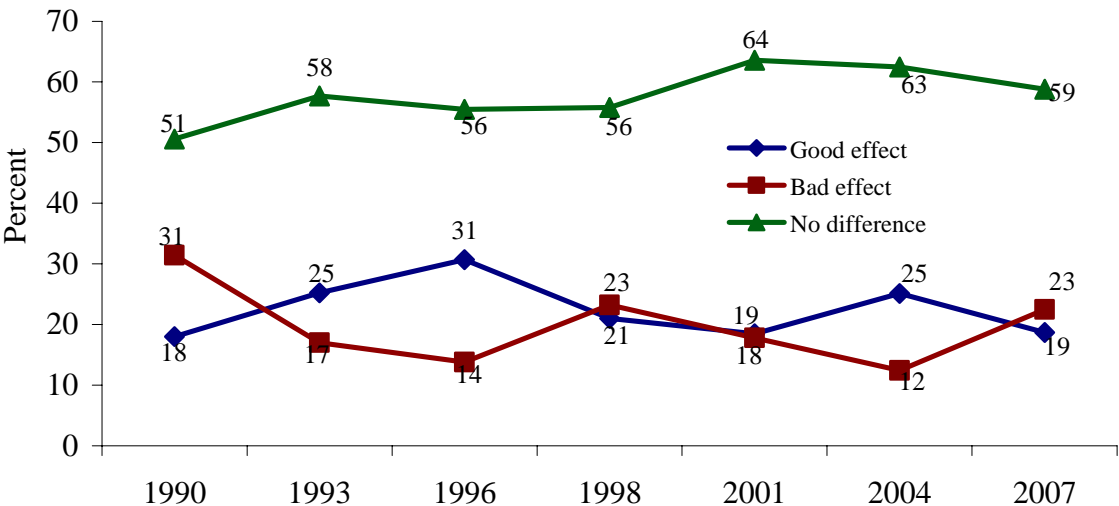
s. For 'will be better', estimates combine 'a lot better' and 'a little better'. For 'will be worse', estimates combine 'a little worse' and 'a lot worse'.

Note

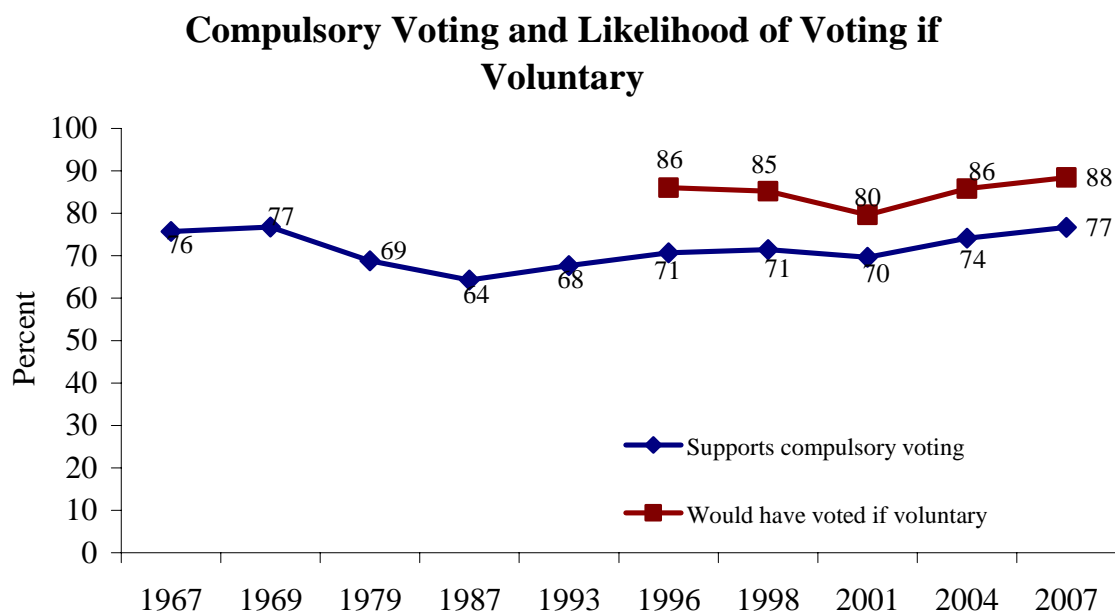
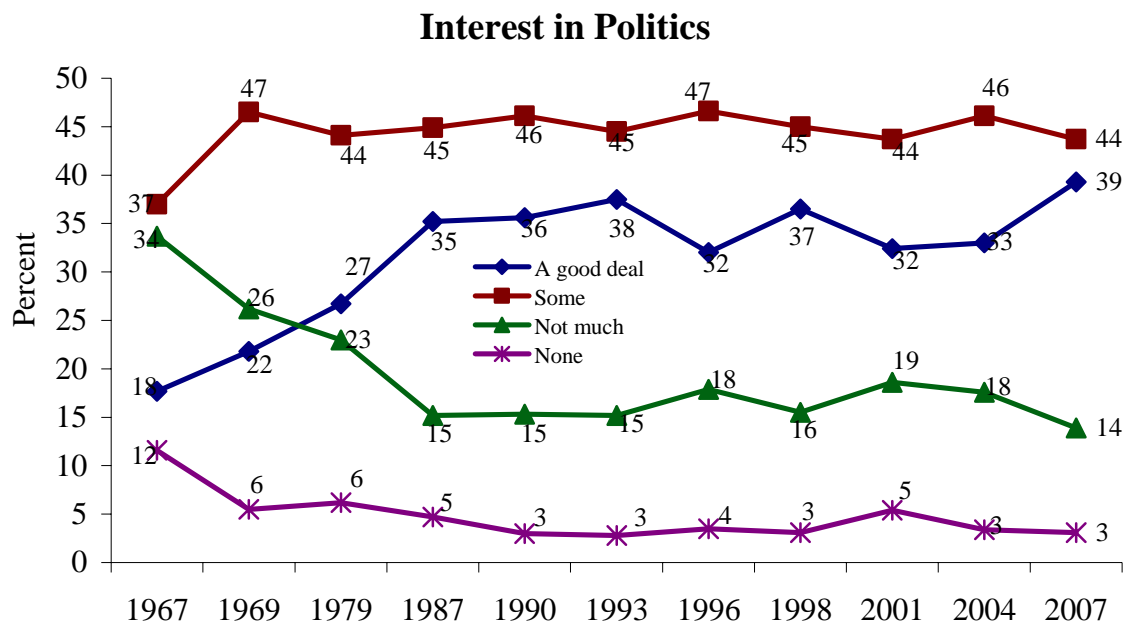
Government Effect on Household Finances in a Year's Time



Government Effect on Country's Economy in a Year's Time

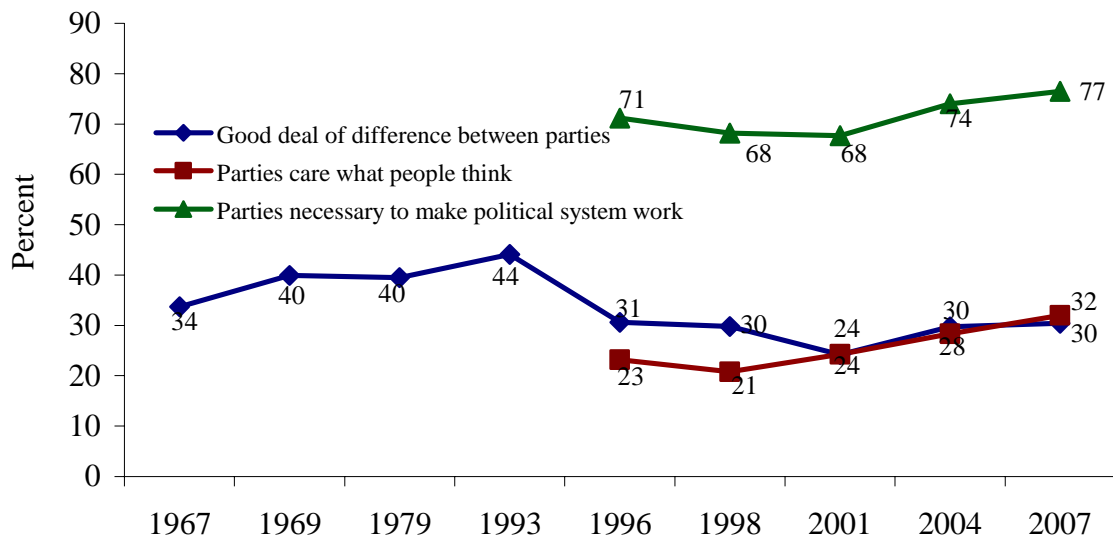


5. Politics and Political Parties



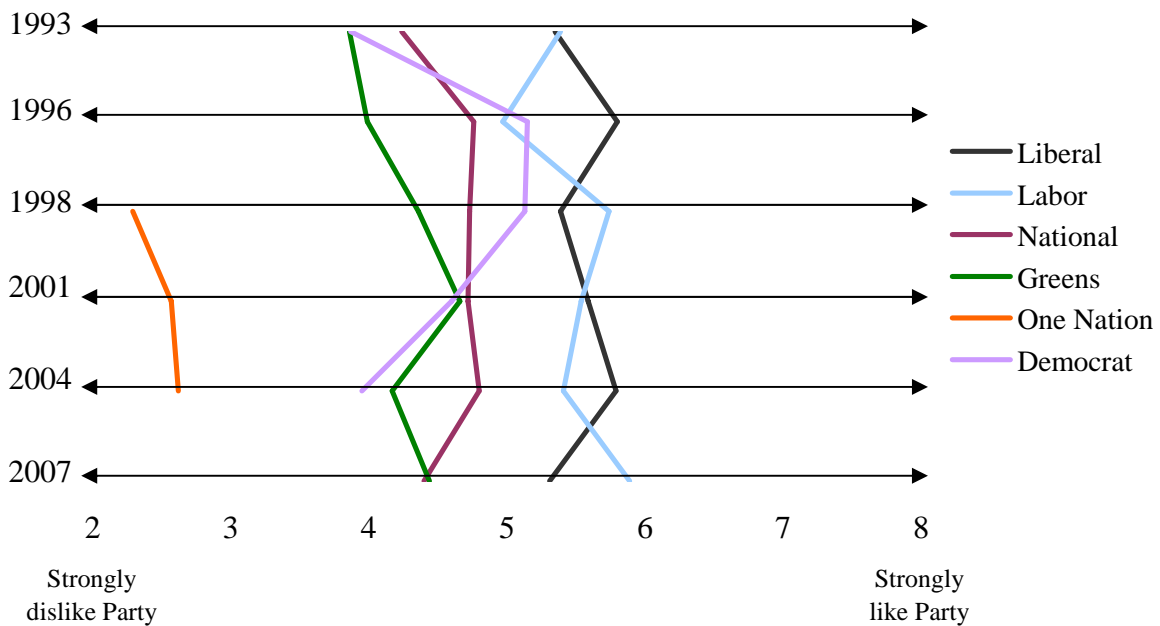
Notes. For supports compulsory voting, estimates are (1967-1979) ‘compulsory better’ (1987-2007) ‘favour compulsory voting’ and ‘strongly favour compulsory voting’. For would have voted if voluntary, estimates combine ‘definitely would have voted’ and ‘probably would have voted’.

Perceptions of the Role of Political Parties



Notes. For parties care what people think and parties necessary to make political system work, estimates combine '1' and '2' on the five point scale.

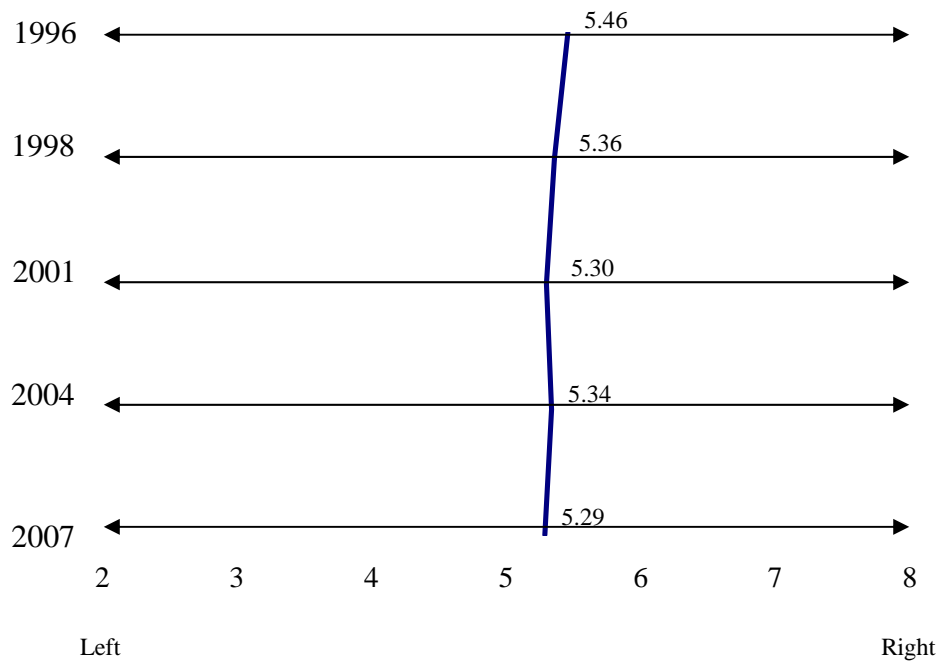
Feelings About Political Parties 1993-2007



Error! Not a valid link. Notes. Estimates are means. The scale runs from 0 (strongly dislike party) to 10 (strongly like party) with a designated midpoint 5 (neither left nor right).

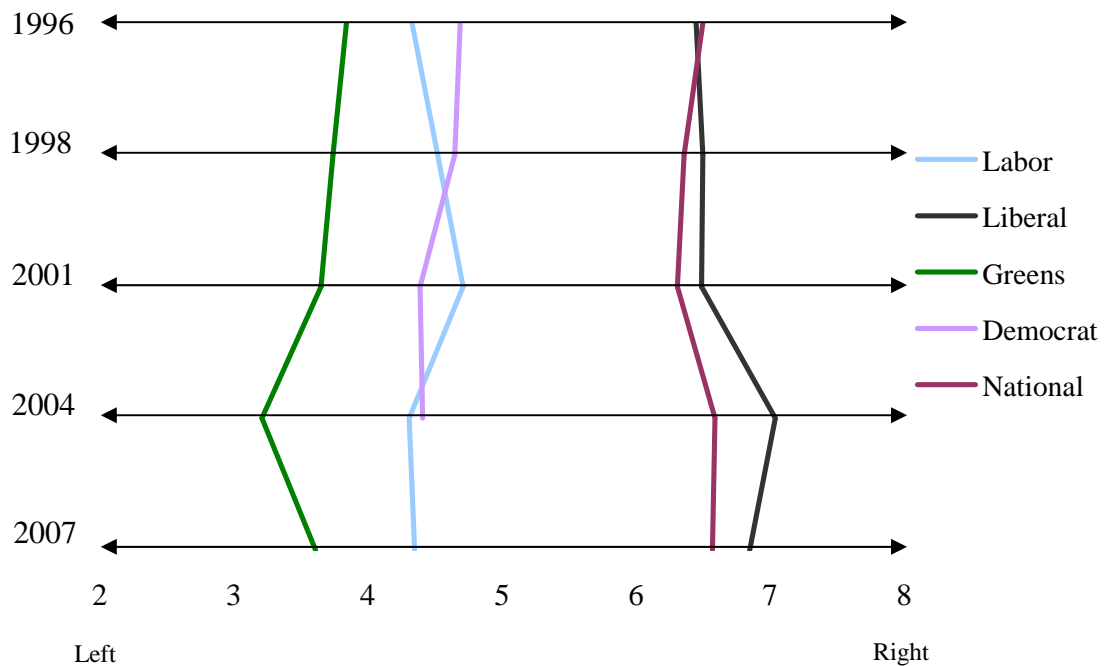
6. The Left-Right Dimension

Voters' Left-Right Position



Notes. Estimates are means. The left-right scale runs from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right) with a designated midpoint 5 (neither left nor right).

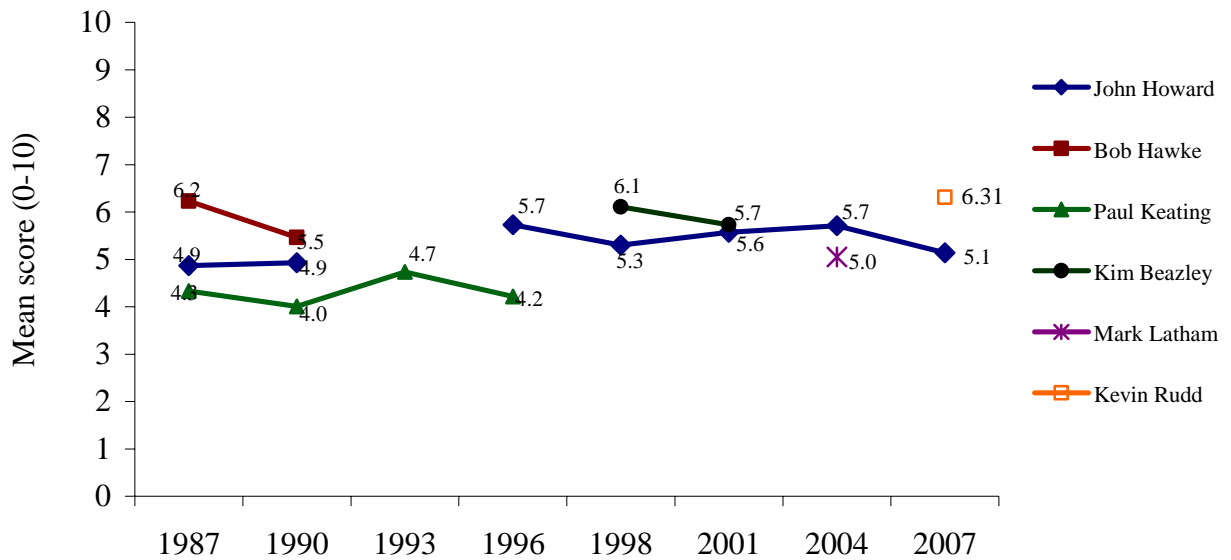
Where Voters Place the Parties 1996-2007



Notes. Estimates are means. The left-right scale runs from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right) with a designated midpoint 5 (neither left nor right).

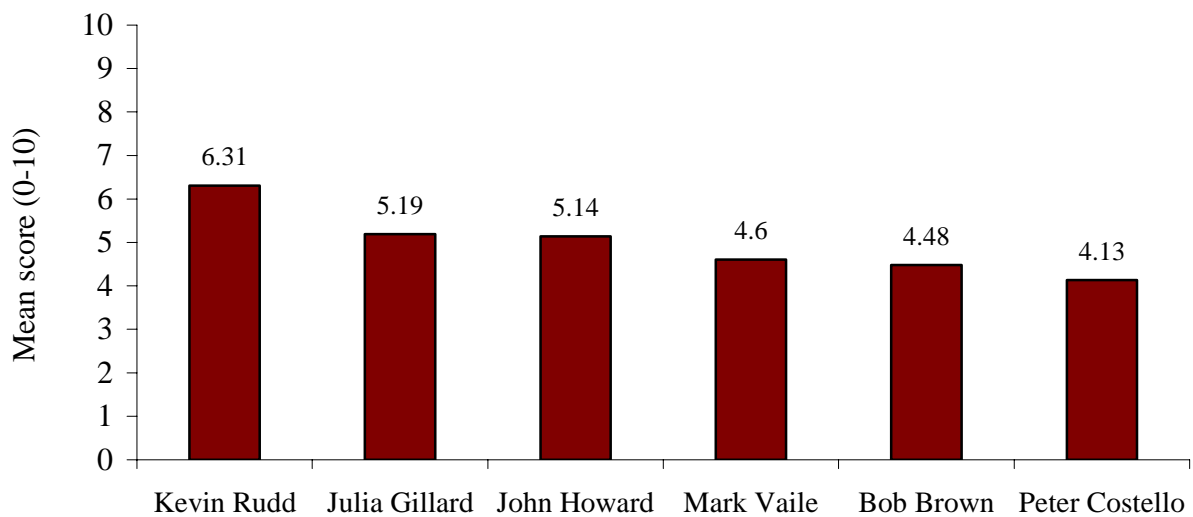
7. The Political Leaders

How the Political Leaders are Rated



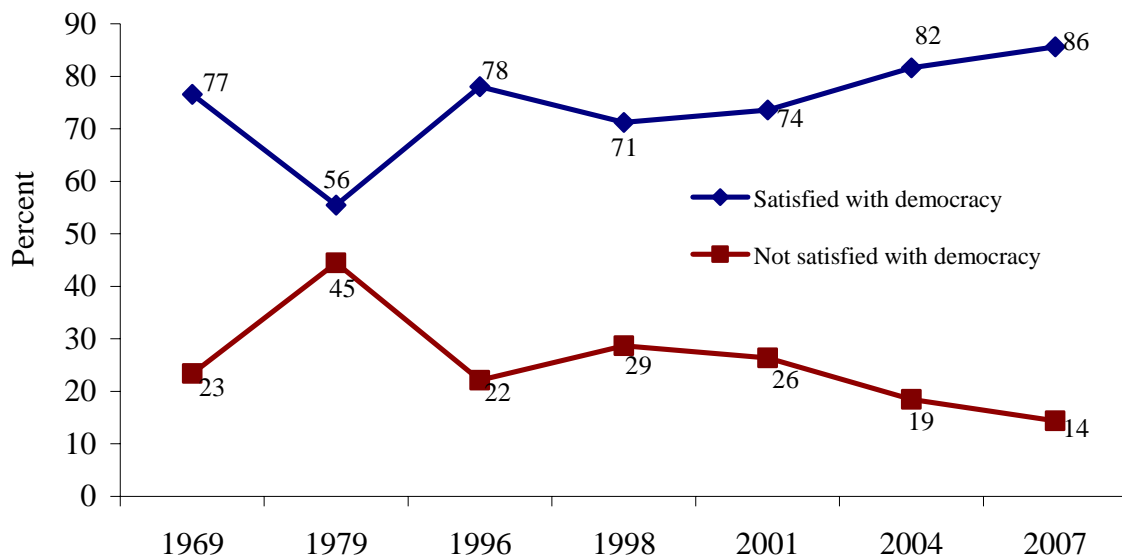
Notes. Mean scores on a zero to ten scale.

How the Political Leaders were Rated in 2007



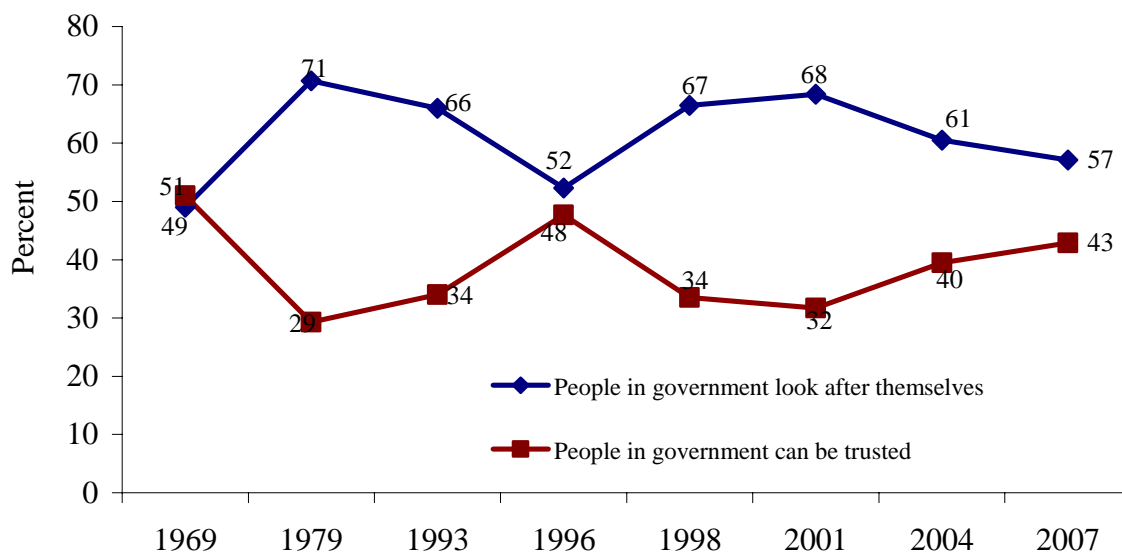
8. Democracy and Institutions

Satisfaction with Democracy



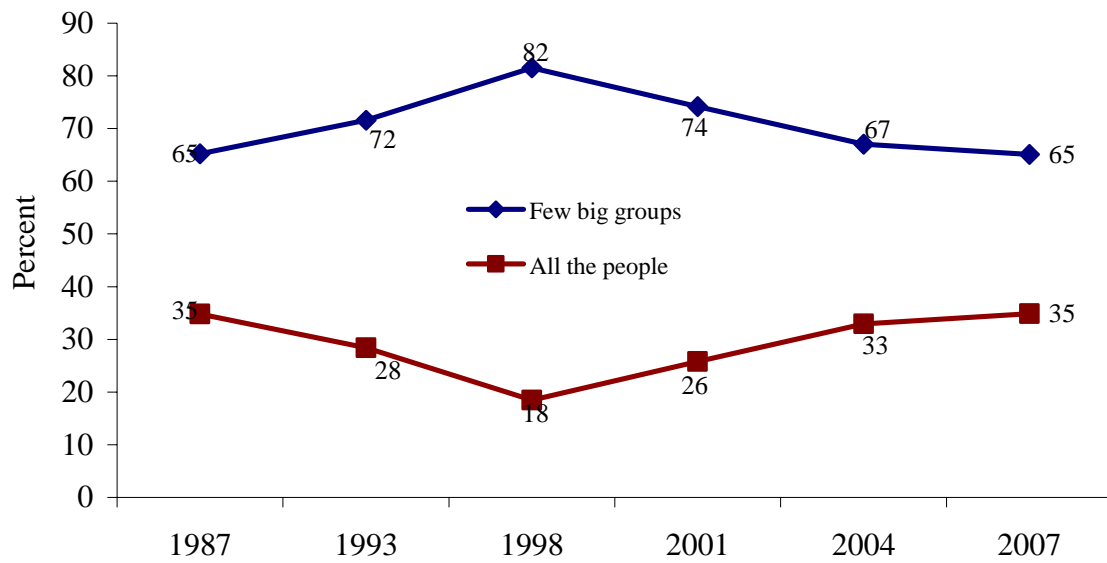
Notes. For satisfied with democracy, estimates combine (1969, 1979) 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied'; (1996) 'satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied'; (1998-2007) 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied'. For not satisfied with democracy, estimates for 1996-2007 combine 'not very satisfied' and 'not at all satisfied'.

Trust in Government



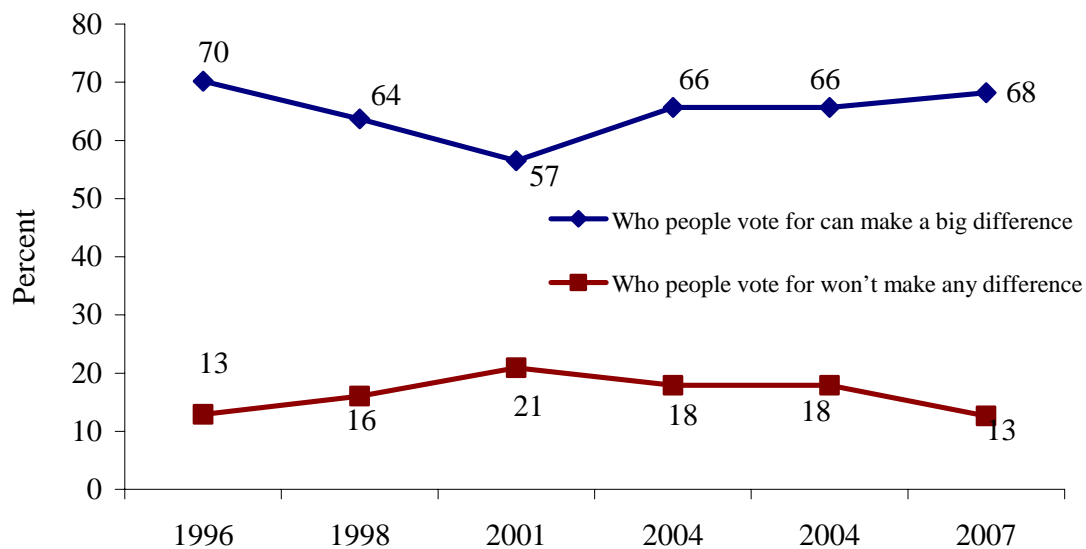
Notes. For people in government look after themselves, the response categories are (1969, 1979) 'look after self'; (1993-2007) 'usually look after themselves' and 'sometimes look after themselves'. For people in government can be trusted, the response categories are (1969, 1979) 'do the right thing'; (1993-2007) 'sometimes can be trusted to do the right thing' and 'usually can be trusted to do the right thing'.

Who the Government is Run For



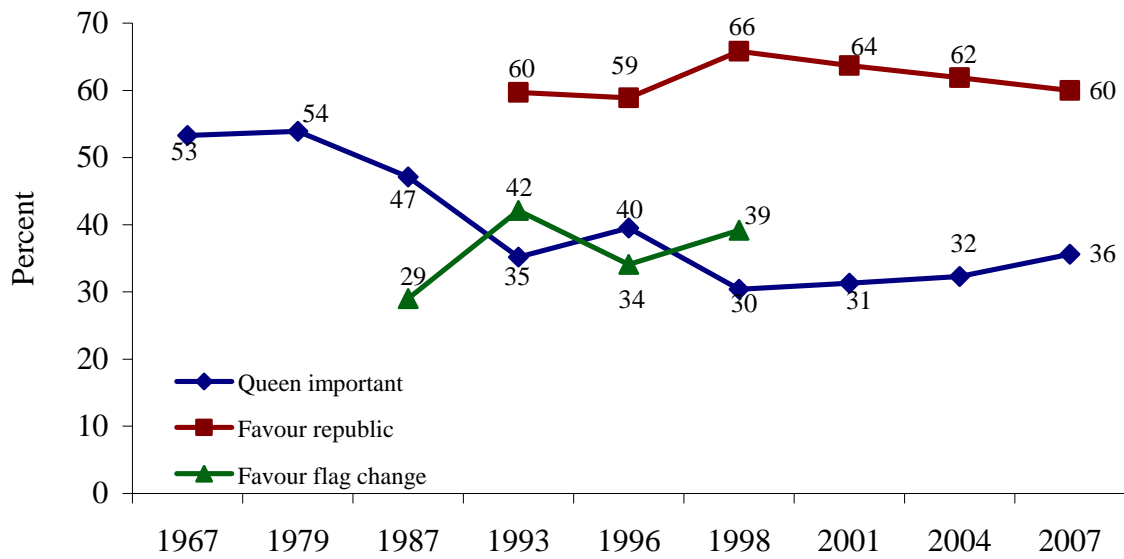
Notes. For few big groups, estimates for 1998-2007 combine 'entirely run for big interests' and 'mostly run for big interests'. For all the people, estimates for 1998-2004 combine 'mostly run for benefit of all' and 'entirely run for benefit of all'. The 1987 survey did not include a middle category and to maintain consistency for the whole trend the middle category was excluded for 1993-2007 and the percentages adjusted accordingly.

Political Efficacy and the Use of the Vote



Notes. For who people vote for can make a big difference, estimates combine codes '1' and '2'. For who people vote for won't make any difference, estimates combine codes '4' and '5'.

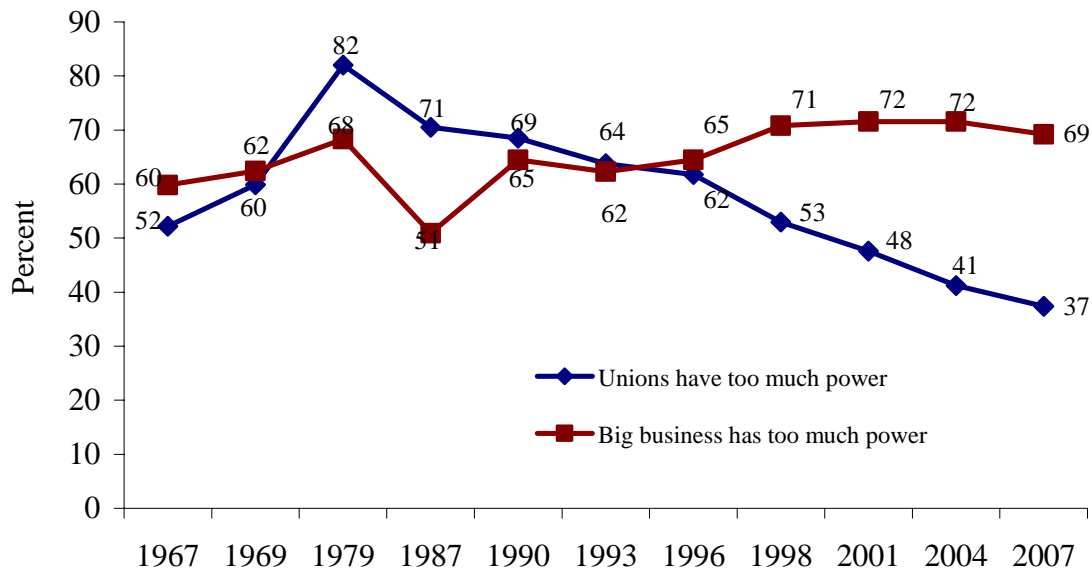
The Queen, the Flag and Republicanism



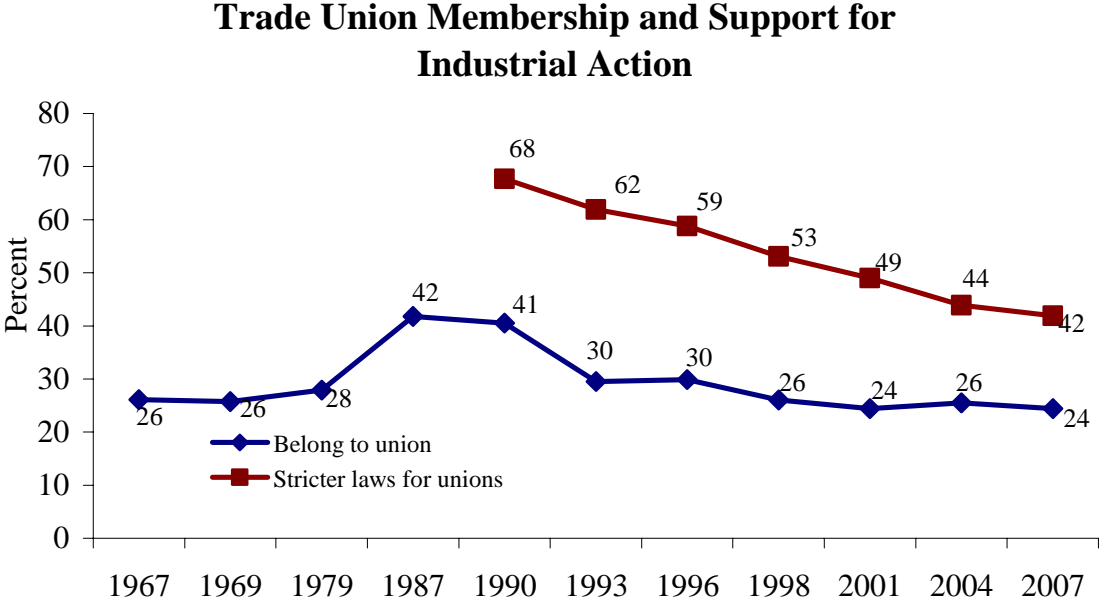
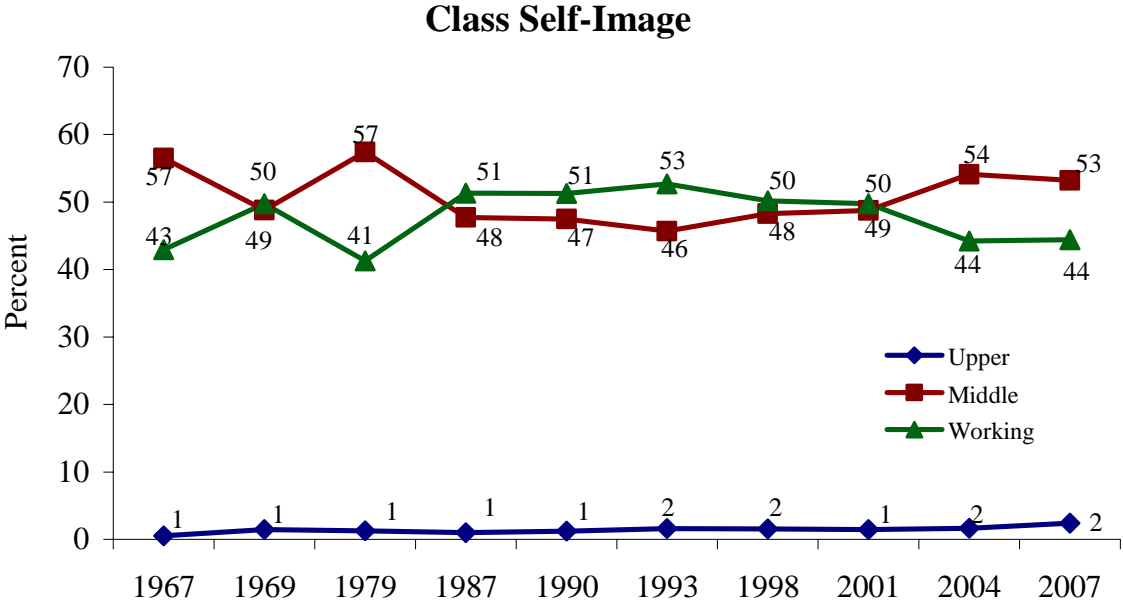
Notes. For Queen important, estimates combine (1967, 1979) 'very important' and 'fairly important'; (1987-2007) 'very important' and 'fairly important'. For favour republic, estimates combine (1993-2007) 'strongly favour republic' and 'favour republic'. For favour flag change, estimates combine 'strongly for flag change' and 'for flag change'.

9. Trade Unions, Business and Wealth

The Power of Trade Unions and Big Business

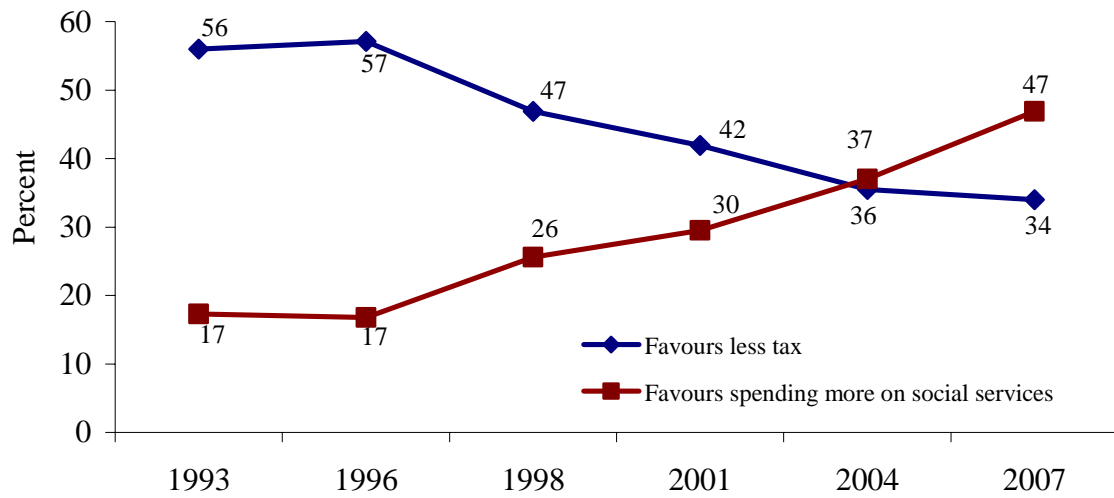


Notes: For unions have too much power, estimates for 1990-2007 combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. For big business has too much power, estimates for 1990-2007 combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.



Notes. Estimates for stricter laws for unions combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.

Government Spending: Less Tax or More Social Services



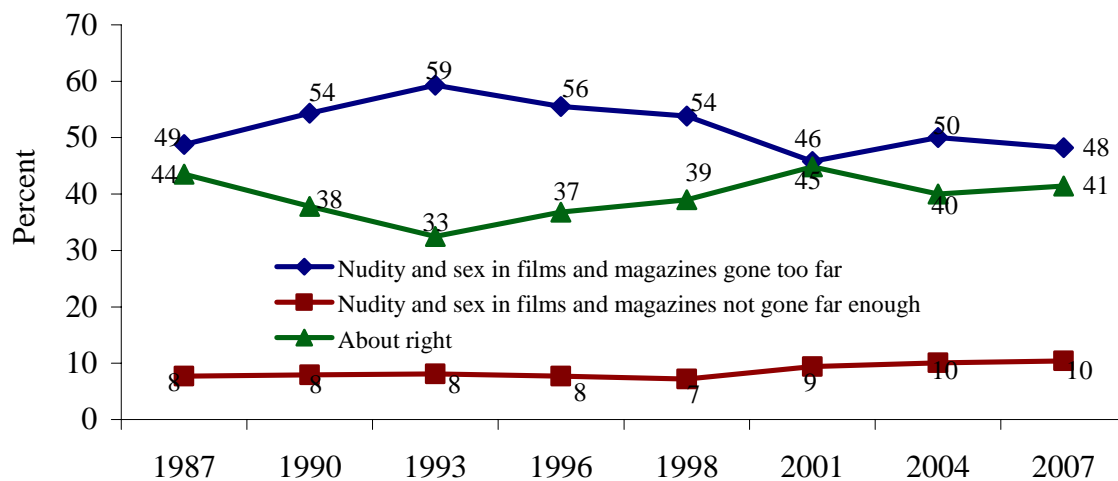
Notes. For favours less tax, the response categories are (1987-2007) 'strongly favour less tax' and 'mildly favour less tax'. For favours spending more on social services, the response categories are (1987-2007) 'mildly favour spending more on social services' and 'strongly favour spending more on social services'.

Error! Not a valid link.

Notes. For income and wealth should be redistributed, estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. For income and wealth should not be redistributed, estimates combine 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

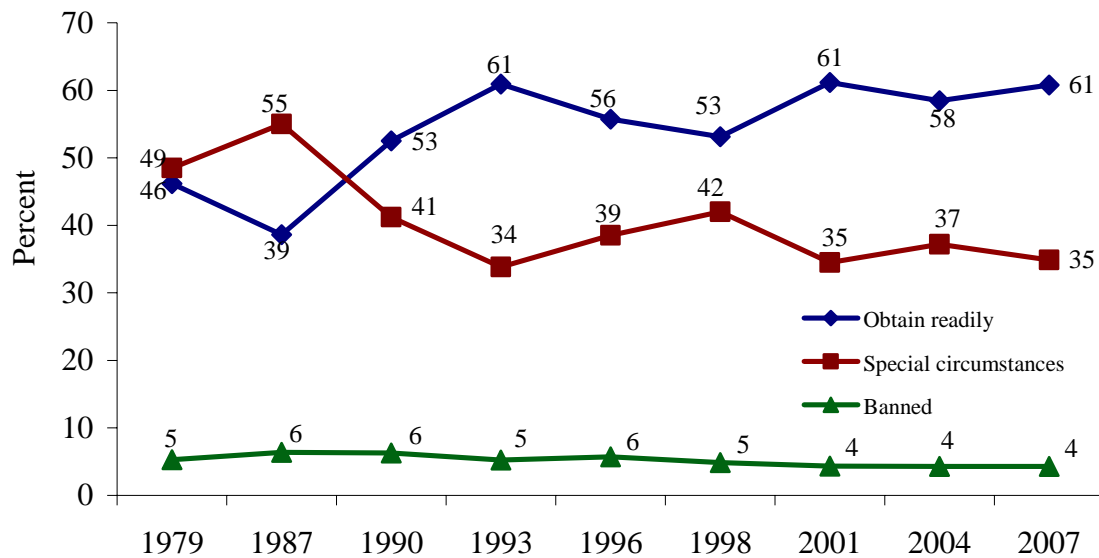
10. Social Issues

Attitudes Towards Sex and Nudity in Films and Magazines

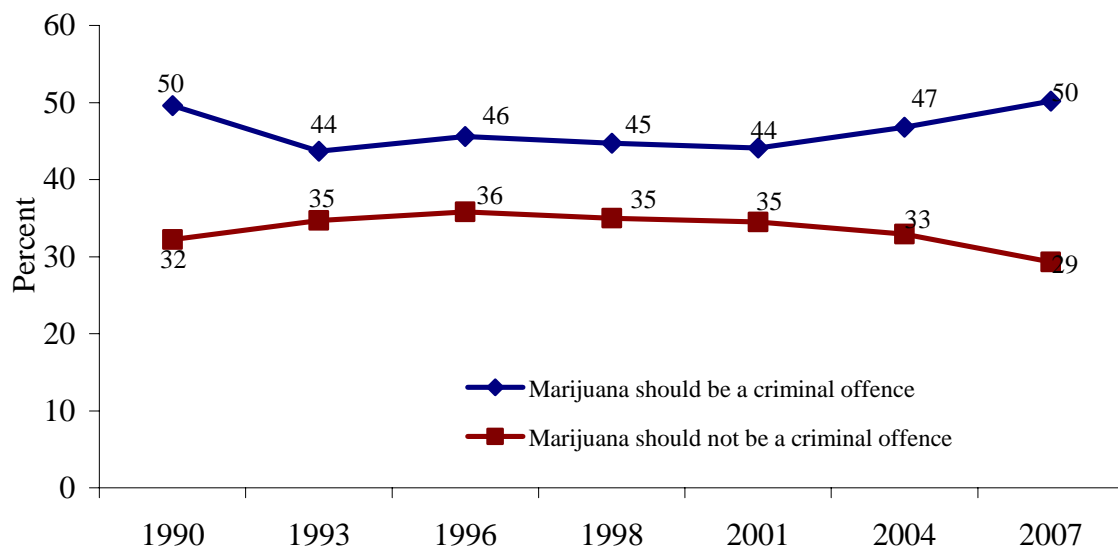


Notes. For nudity and sex in films and magazines gone too far, estimates for 1990-2007 combine 'gone much too far' and 'gone too far'. For nudity and sex in films and magazines not gone far enough, estimates for 1990-2007 combine 'not gone far enough' and 'not nearly far enough'.

Attitudes Towards Abortion

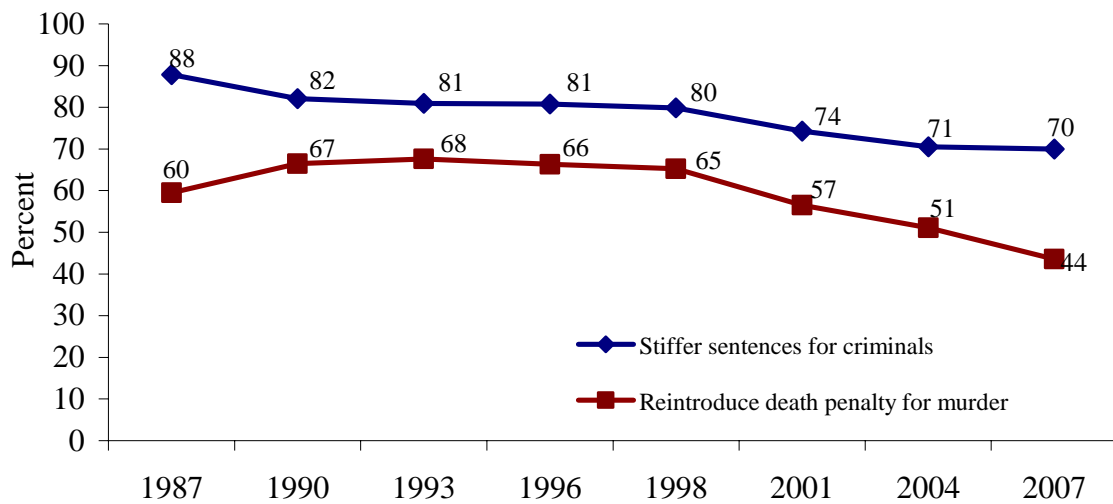


Attitudes Towards the Legal Status of Marijuana



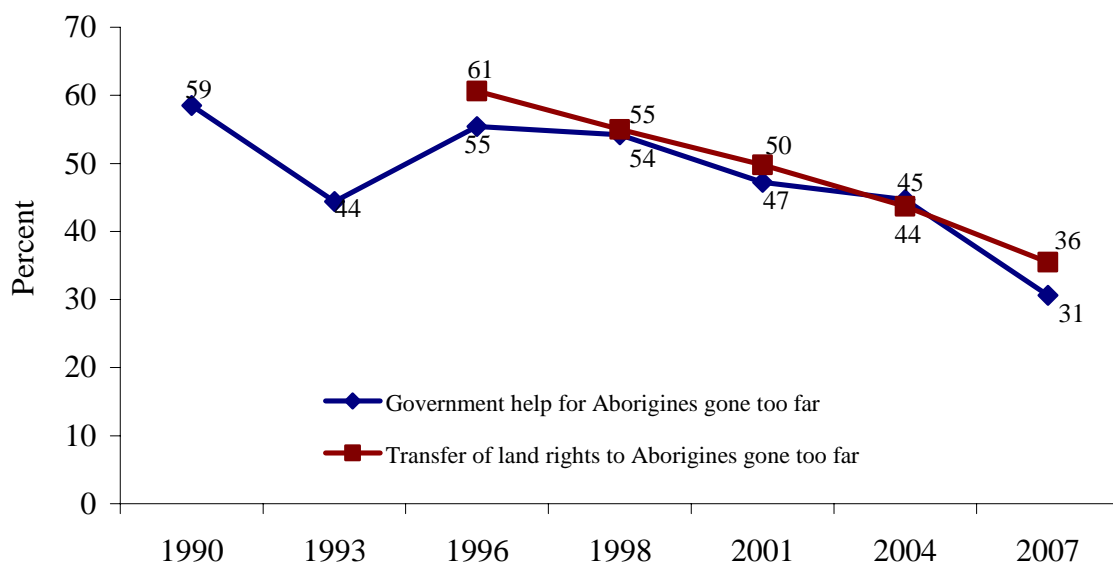
Notes. For marijuana should be a criminal offence, estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. For marijuana should not be a criminal offence, estimates combine 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

Attitudes Towards Jail Sentences and Capital Punishment



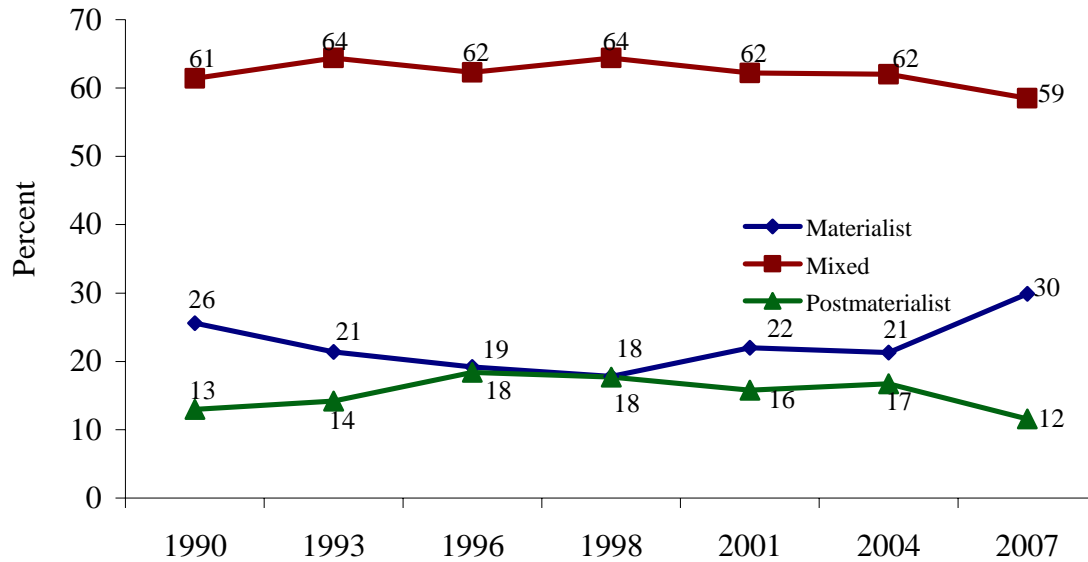
Notes. For stiffer sentences for criminals, estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. For reintroduce death penalty for murder, estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.

Attitudes Towards Policies on Aborigines



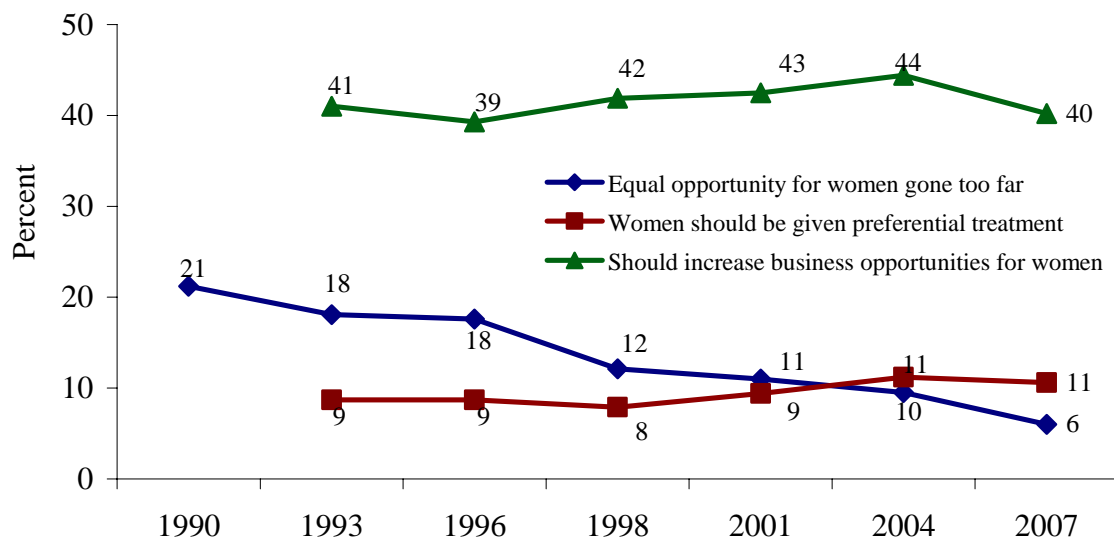
Notes. For government help for Aborigines gone too far, the estimates for 1993-2007 combine 'much too far' and 'too far'. For transfer of land rights to Aborigines gone too far, the estimates for 1993-2007 combine 'much too far' and 'too far'.

Materialist and Postmaterialist Values



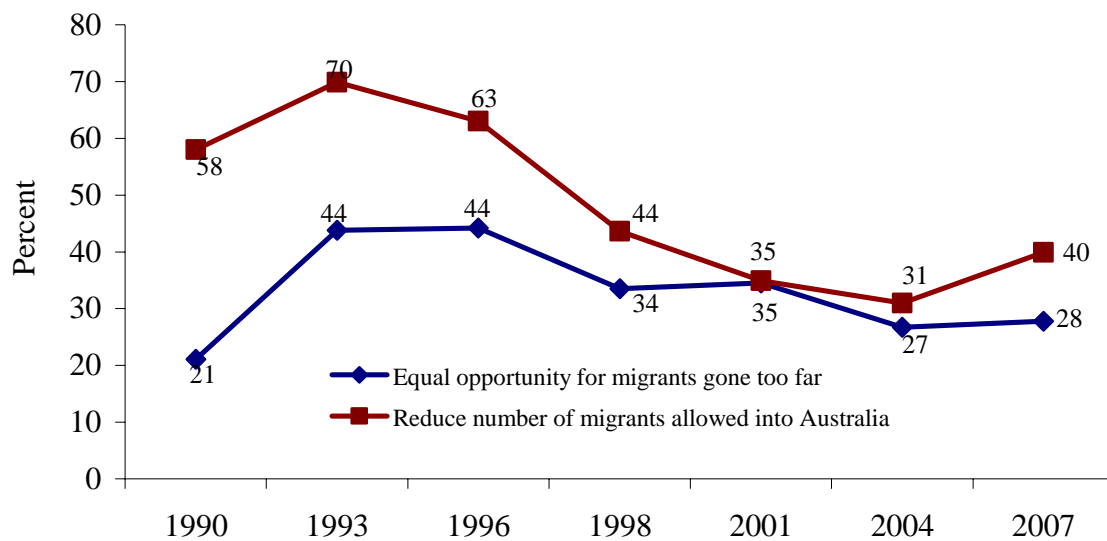
Notes. Materialists are defined as those who choose as their first or second choices both ‘Maintain order in the nation’ and ‘Fight rising prices’, and postmaterialists as those choosing both ‘Give people more say in important government decisions’ and ‘Protect freedom of speech’. All others are classified as mixed.

Attitudes Towards Gender Equality



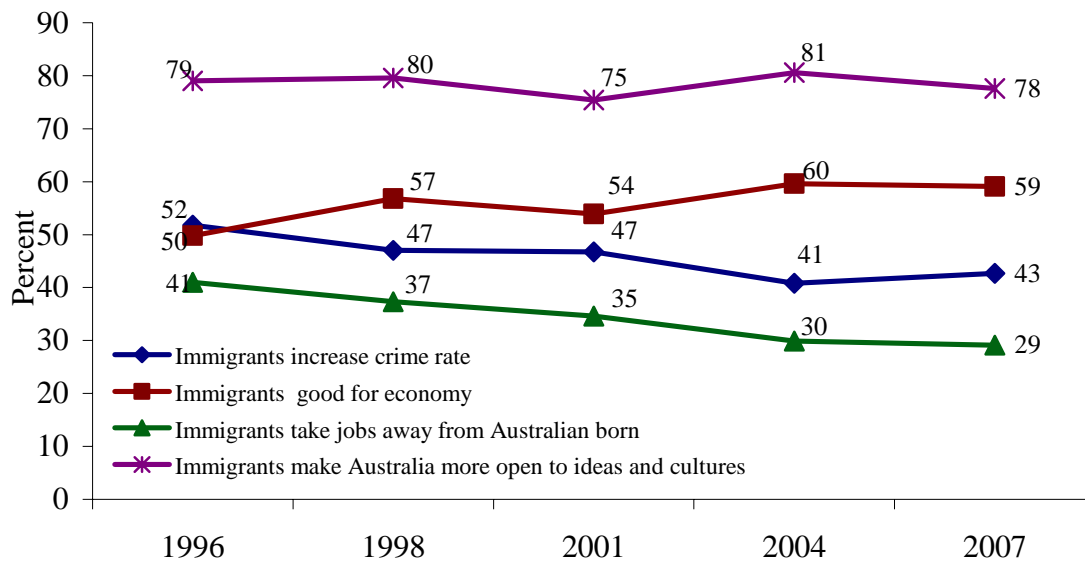
Notes. For equal opportunity for women gone too far, estimates combine 'much too far' and 'too far'. For women should be given preferential treatment, estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. For should increase business opportunities for women, estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.

Attitudes Towards Immigrants and Immigration



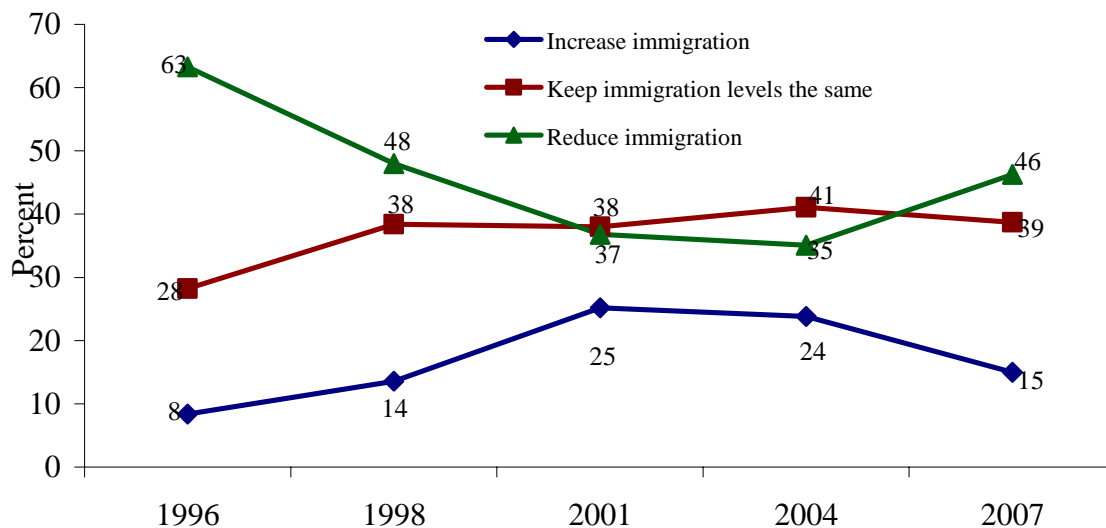
Notes. For equal opportunity for migrants gone too far, the response categories are (1990-2007) 'much too far' and 'too far'. For reduce number of migrants allowed into Australia, the response categories are (1990-2007) 'much too far' and 'too far'.

The Consequences of Immigration



Notes. For immigrants increase crime rate, immigrants good for economy, immigrants take jobs away from Australian born, immigrants make Australia more open to ideas and cultures, the response categories are (1996-2007) 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.

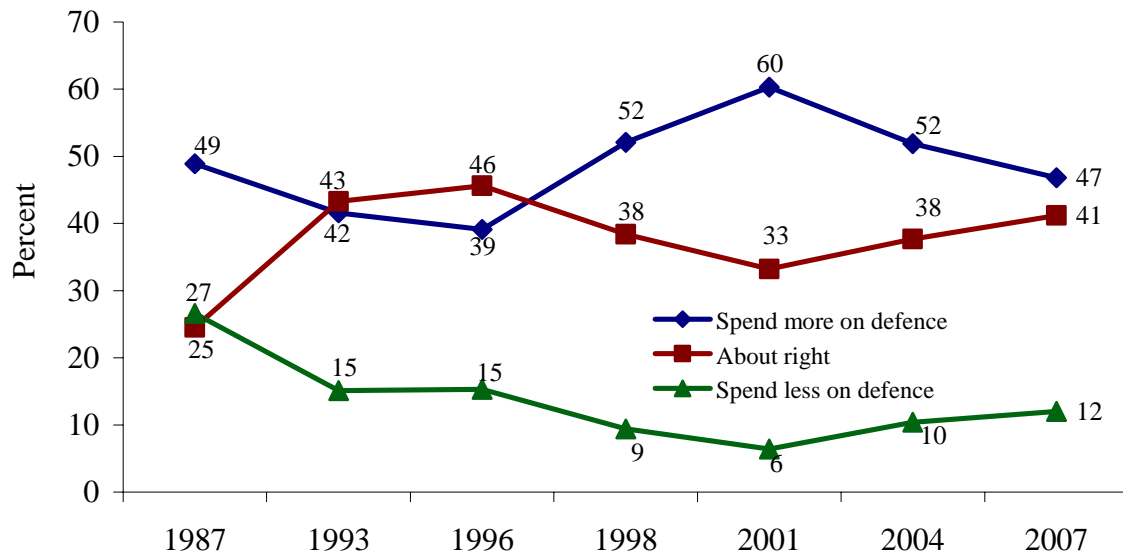
Attitudes Towards the Level of Immigration into Australia



Notes. For increase immigration, estimates combine 'increased a lot' and 'increased a little'. For keep immigration levels the same, estimates combine 'remain about the same'. For reduce immigration, estimates combine 'reduced a little' and 'reduced a lot'.

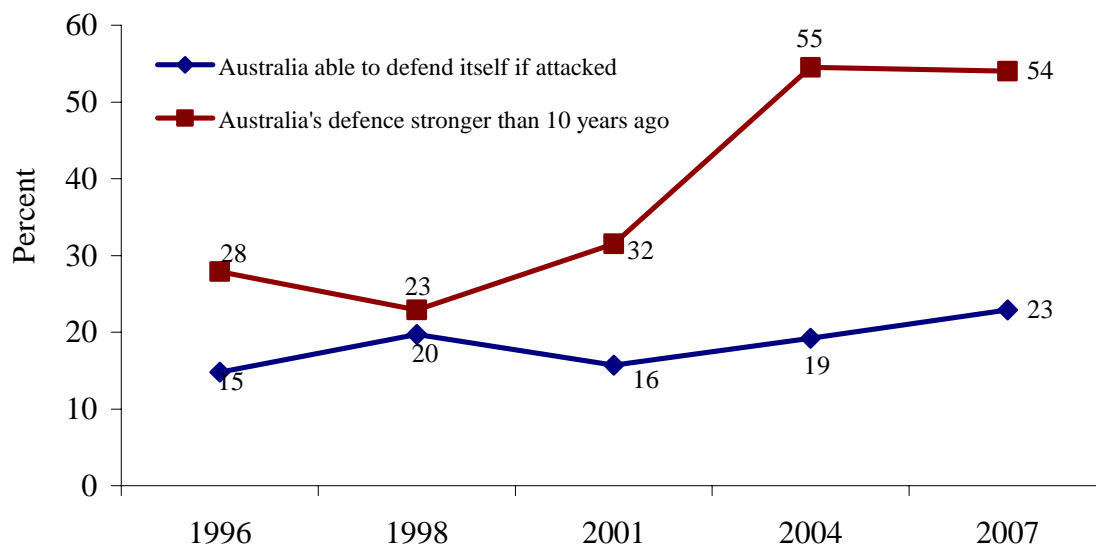
11. Defence and Foreign Affairs

Attitudes Towards Defence Spending



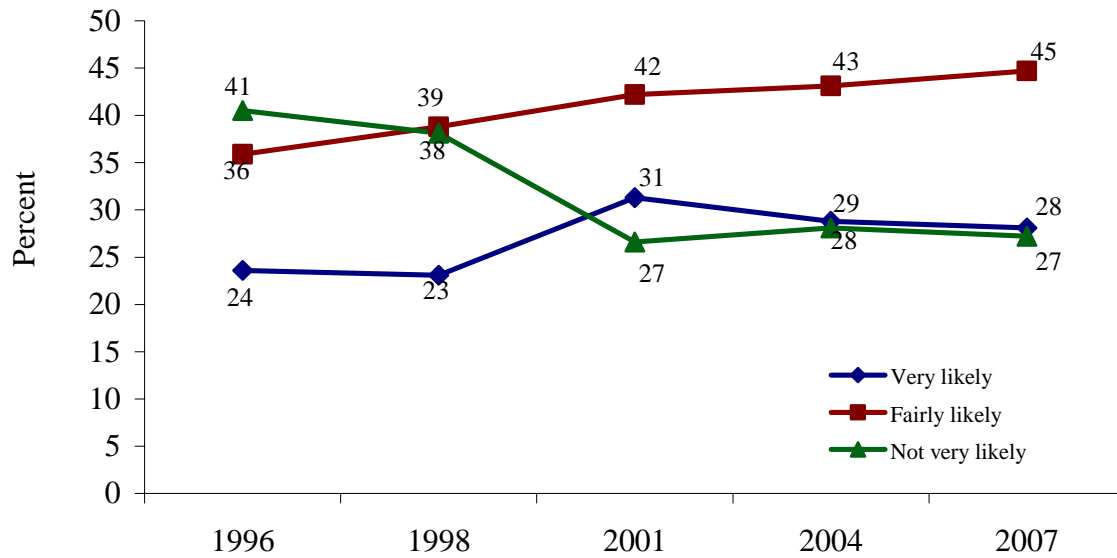
Notes. For spend more on defence, estimates combine 'spend much more on defence' and 'spend some more on defence'. For spend less on defence, estimates combine 'spend less on defence' and 'spend a lot less on defence'.

Attitudes Towards Australia's Defence Capability



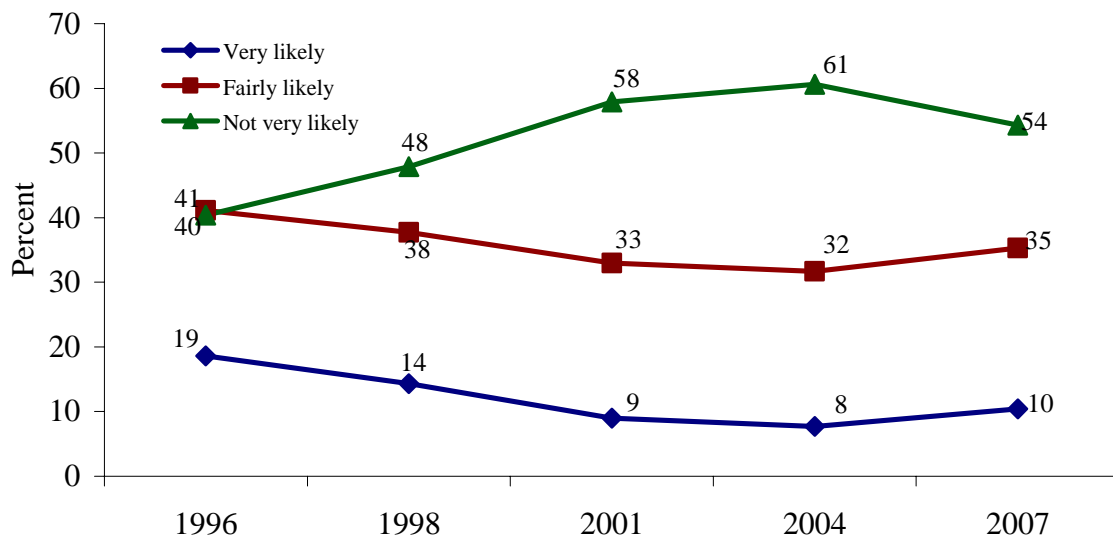
Notes. Estimates combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.

Indonesia as a Security Threat to Australia



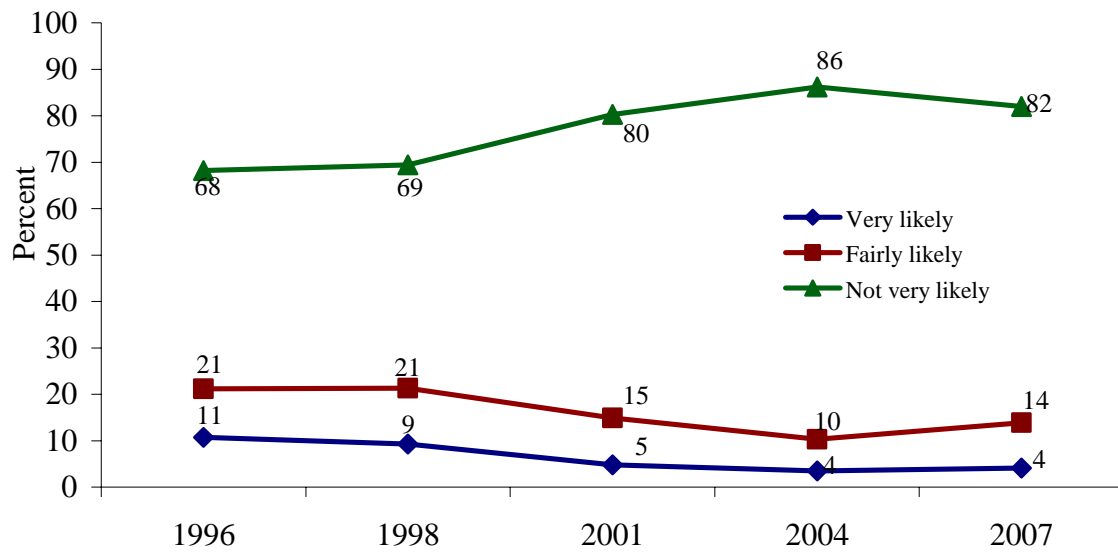
Notes. Estimates combine 'very likely', 'fairly likely' and 'not very likely'.

China as a Security Threat to Australia



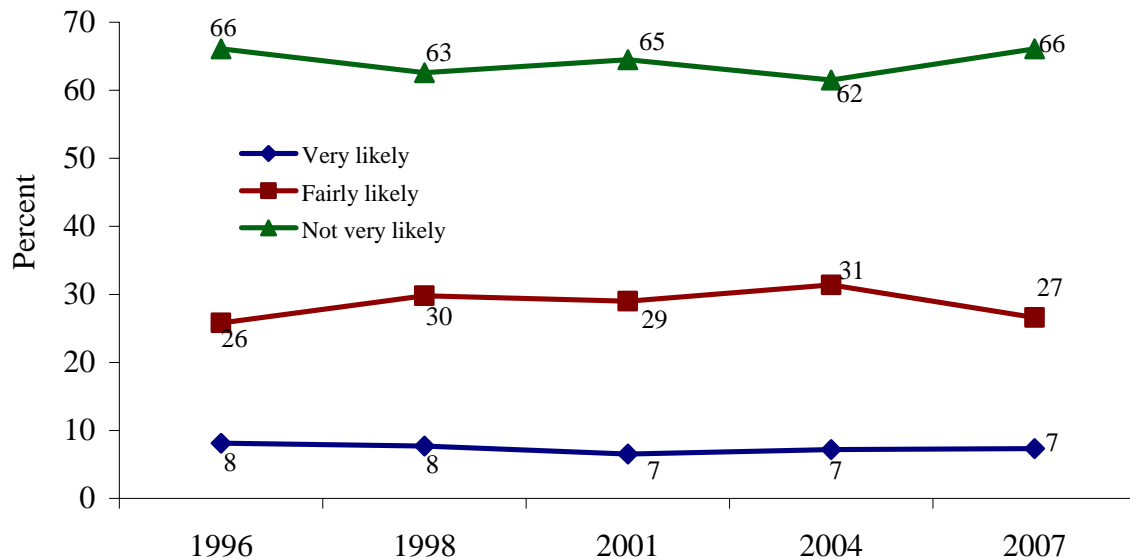
Notes. Estimates combine 'very likely', 'fairly likely' and 'not very likely'.

Japan as a Security Threat to Australia



Notes. Estimates combine 'very likely', 'fairly likely' and 'not very likely'.

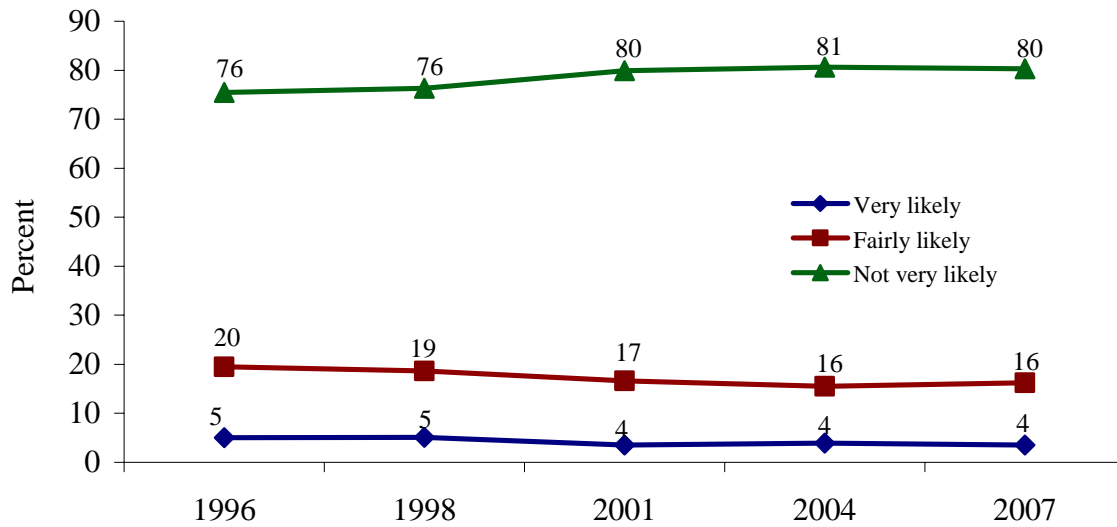
Malaysia as a Security Threat to Australia



es. Estimates combine 'very likely', 'fairly likely' and 'not very likely'.

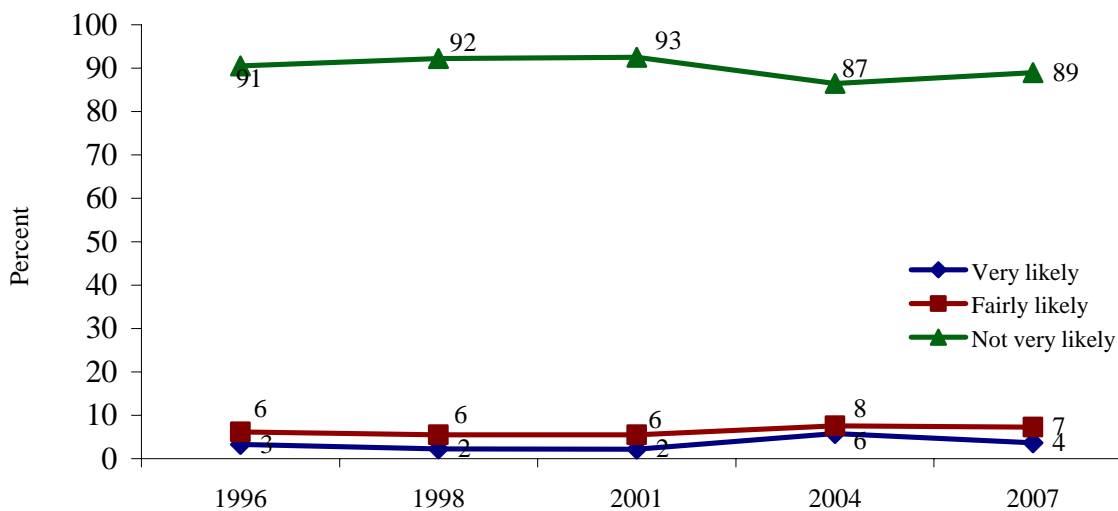
Not

Vietnam as a Security Threat to Australia



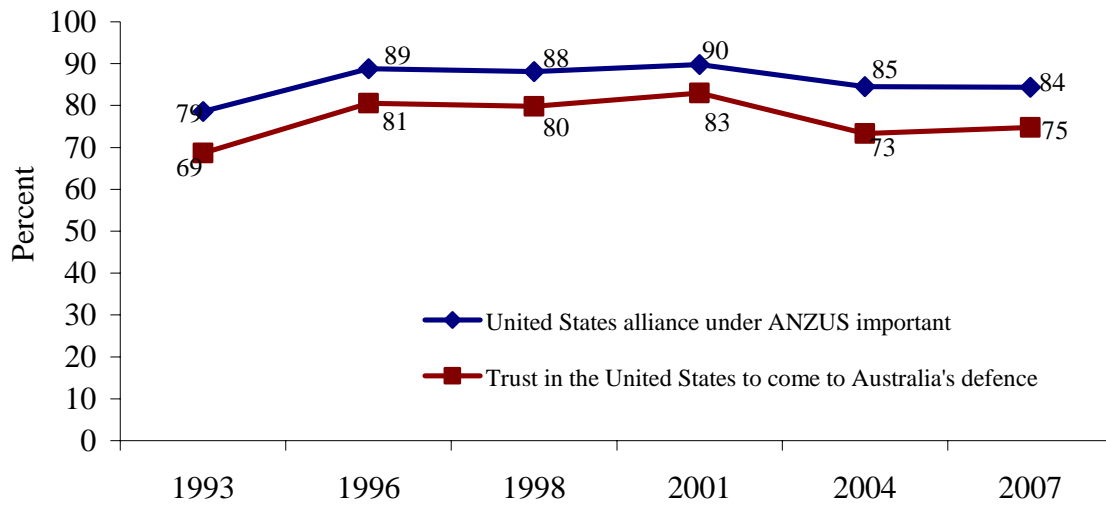
Notes. Estimates combine 'very likely', 'fairly likely' and 'not very likely'.

The United States as a Security Threat to Australia



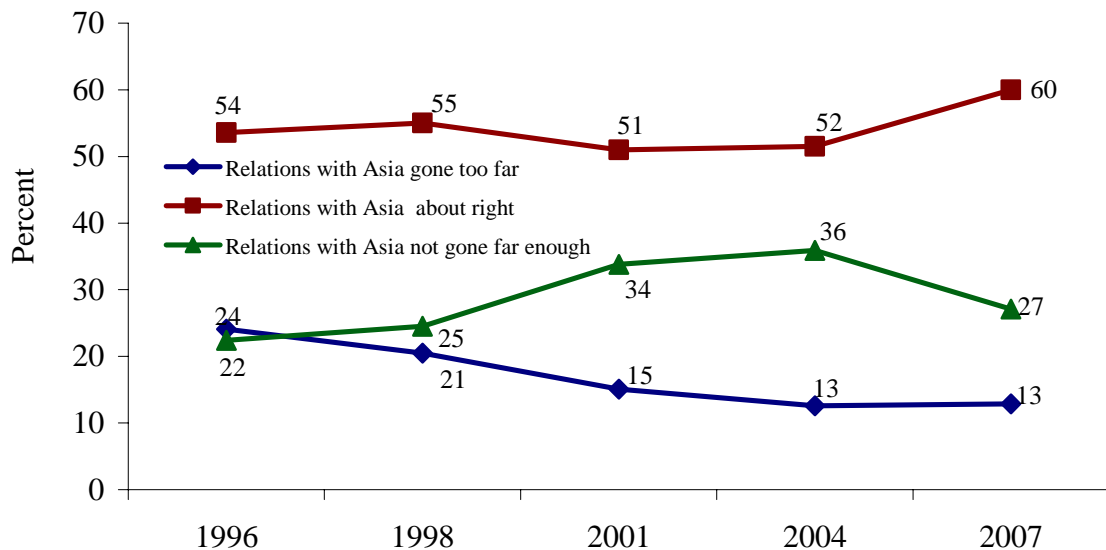
Notes. Estimates combine 'very likely', 'fairly likely' and 'not very likely'.

Attitudes Towards Defence Links with the United States

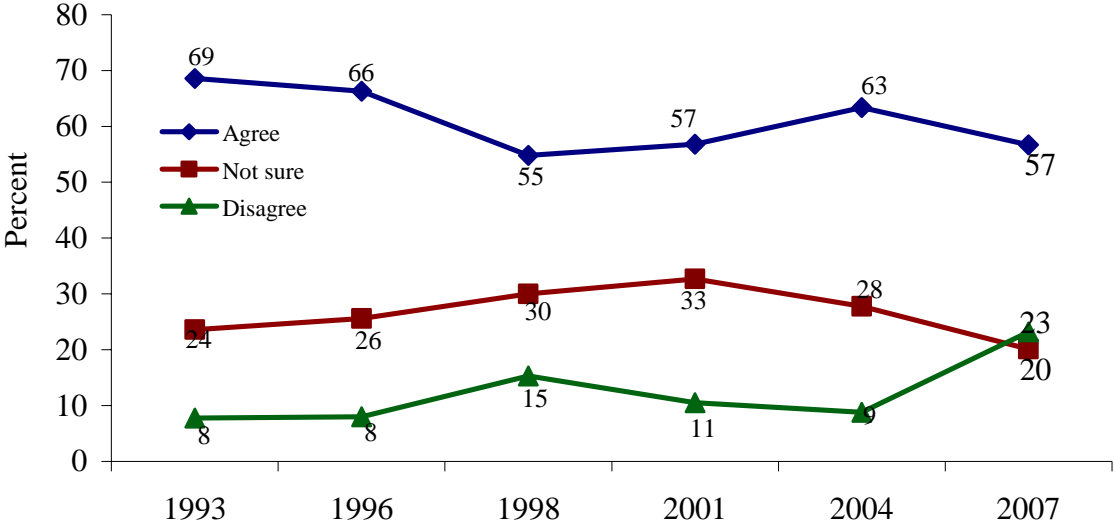


Notes. For United States alliance under ANZUS important, estimates combine 'very important' and 'fairly important'. For trust in the United States to come to Australia's defence, estimates combine 'a great deal' and 'a fair amount'.

Attitudes Towards Closer Relations with Asia



Attitudes Towards More Trade Relations with Asia



Notes. For agree, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For disagree, estimates combine ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’.

Appendix A: Tables

1. The Election Campaign

Followed the Election in the Mass Media

Television

1969: 'First of all, did you follow the election campaign on television?'

	1969
Yes	62.9
No	31.1
Don't have TV	5.8
(N)	(1872)

1967, 1979: 'Do you follow politics much on television?'

	1967	1979
Yes	34.4	59.3
No	65.6	39.9
(N)	(2,032)	(2,015)

1987-90: 'During the election campaign, how often did you follow the election news on television, or did you not follow it at all?'

	1987	1990
Often	51.9	42.2
Sometimes	32.1	36.9
Rarely	10.6	14.4
Not at all	5.4	6.5
(N)	(1,771)	(2,007)

1993-2007: 'Did you follow the election campaign news on television?'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good deal	41.9	30.5	32.3	26.4	28.0	36.5
Some	38.1	39.0	44.1	42.2	41.0	40.1
Not much	15.8	23.3	18.3	22.4	23.9	17.6
None at all	4.1	7.2	5.3	9.0	7.1	5.8
(N)	(2,270)	(1,733)	(1,815)	(1,867)	(1,665)	(1,817)

Radio

1969: 'Did you follow the election campaign on the radio?'

	1969
Yes	18.1
No	81.9
(N)	(1,855)

1967, 1979: 'Do you follow politics much on the radio?'

	1967	1979
Yes	16.8	32.2
No	83.2	66.9
(N)	(2,038)	(2,012)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1993-2007: 'And did you follow the election campaign news on the radio?'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good deal	21.4	14.7	17.5	16.0	14.2	19.1
Some	33.4	31.1	32.6	27.2	29.9	30.8
Not much	25.9	30.4	26.2	29.2	30.7	26.8
None at all	19.3	23.8	23.7	27.7	25.2	23.3
(N)	(2,102)	(1,642)	(1,686)	(1,818)	(1,622)	(1,664)

1987-90: 'And how often did you follow the election news on the radio?'

	1987	1990
Often	30.2	22.5
Sometimes	27.7	29.2
Rarely	20.3	24.6
Not at all	21.7	23.6
(N)	(1,594)	(1,916)

Newspapers

1969: 'Did you follow the election campaign in the [first newspaper mentioned]?'

	1969
Yes	55.0
No	40.7
Don't have TV	4.3
(N)	(1,866)

1967, 1979: 'Do you follow news about politics much in [first newspaper mentioned]?'

	1967	1979
Yes	39.7	47.9
No	53.4	46.5
Don't read newspapers	6.9	5.6
(N)	(2,054)	(2,011)

1987-90: 'And how about newspapers, how often did you follow the election news there?'

	1987	1990
Often	33.1	27.4
Sometimes	32.3	32.2
Rarely	19.0	23.3
Not at all	15.6	16.9
(N)	(1,622)	(1,924)

1993-2007: 'How much attention did you pay to reports about the election campaign in the newspapers?'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good deal	29.1	18.4	21.1	16.0	15.2	21.1
Some	38.4	40.2	41.6	37.4	41.7	40.1
Not much	23.5	29.1	26.2	30.9	30.1	26.7
None at all	8.9	12.3	11.1	15.6	13.0	12.2
(N)	(2,359)	(1,787)	(1,876)	(1,998)	(1,744)	(1,836)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

Talkback Radio

2001-04: 'There are a number of programs on radio in which people call in to voice their opinions about politics. How often do you listen to political talkback radio programs of this type?'

	2001	2004
Every day	5.9	4.8
Most days	9.0	10.3
Once or twice a week	8.7	8.9
Only occasionally	25.6	29.4
Not at all	50.8	46.7
(N)	(2,000)	(1,751)

Internet

1998-2004: 'Did you make use of the internet at all to get news or information about the [1998/2001/2004] Federal election?'

	1998	2001	2004	2007
Don't have access	72.6	40.7	33.3	25.2
Have access but didn't use	22.9	49.8	54.7	54.9
Once or twice	2.7	5.8	5.6	8.8
On several occasions	0.9	2.6	3.1	5.8
Many times	0.8	1.5	3.2	5.3
(N)	(1,826)	(1,763)	(1,998)	(1,834)

2007: 'Did you follow the election campaign news on the internet?'

	2007
A good deal	6.6
Some	8.9
Not much	13.0
None at all	71.4
(N)	(1,520)

Watched the Leaders' Debates

1990: 'Did you watch the televised debate between Bob Hawke and Andrew Peacock on Sunday 25 February?'

	1990
Yes	55.8
No	44.2
(N)	(2,024)

1993, 1996: 'Did you watch the two televised debates between Paul Keating and [1993: John Hewson; 1996: John Howard]?'

	1993	1996
Watched both	39.7	32.2
Watched one only	30.8	25.8
Didn't watch either	29.5	42.0
(N)	(2,359)	(1,784)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1998-2007: 'Did you watch the televised debate between John Howard and [1998, 2001: Kim Beazley; 2004: Mark Latham, 2007: Kevin Rudd] on [1998: Sunday 13 September; 2001: Sunday 14 October; 2004: Sunday 12 September; 2007 Sunday 21 October]?'

	1998	2001	2004	2007
Yes	42.7	40.1	35.0	46.5
No	57.3	59.9	65.0	53.5
(N)	(1,871)	(1,957)	(1,752)	(1,850)

Interest in the Election

1993-2007: 'And how much interest would you say you took in the election campaign overall?'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good deal	49.1	34.2	37.6	30.7	29.7	40.2
Some	34.9	40.7	41.7	39.7	44.4	40.8
Not much	13.8	21.1	17.1	23.3	20.7	15.2
None at all	2.2	4.0	3.7	6.3	5.1	3.8
(N)	(3,004)	(1,785)	(1,877)	(1,975)	(1,735)	(1,830)

1967-1969: 'Would you say that you usually care a good deal which party wins a general election or that you don't care very much which party wins?'

	1967	1969
Care a good deal	60.2	65.9
Don't care very much	39.8	34.1
(N)	(1,957)	(1,843)

1987-2007: 'Would you say you cared a good deal which party won the federal election or that you did not care very much which party won?'

	1987
Cared a good deal	78.8
Didn't care very much	21.2
(N)	(1,782)

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Cared a good deal	82.3	74.8	74.0	65.0	71.7	75.9
Didn't care much	15.4	21.6	22.3	28.2	24.9	21.3
Didn't care at all	2.2	3.7	3.7	6.8	3.4	2.8
(N)	(3,002)	(1,776)	(1,875)	(1,977)	(1,977)	(1,835)

Involvement in the Campaign

1969: 'Did you attend any political meetings during the campaign?'

	1969
Yes	3.4
No	96.6
(N)	(1,869)

1969: 'Did you do any work for any party or candidate during the campaign?'

	1969
Yes	2.4
No	97.6
(N)	(1,866)

1969: 'Did you make any donation to any of the parties or to a candidate?'

	1969
Yes	3.0
No	97.0
(N)	(1,873)

1993-1998: 'During the election campaign, did you do any of the following things?'

	1993	1996	1998
Discuss politics with others	88.2	82.4	84.4
Talk to any people about why they should vote for or against on of the parties or candidates?	48.6	35.1	41.9
Go to any political meetings or rallies	3.2	2.1	2.3
Contribute money to a political party or election candidate	2.5	2.0	1.5
Do any work for a political party or election candidate	2.8	2.2	2.0
(N)	(2,376)	(1,756)	(1,896)

2001-07: 'Here is a list of things some people do during elections. How often did you do any of these things during the recent election?'

Discuss politics with others

	2001	2004	2007
Frequently	19.6	21.2	28.1
Occasionally	46.9	47.0	46.7
Rarely	21.8	22.5	18.4
Not at all	11.7	9.3	6.8
(N)	(1,975)	(1,740)	(1,834)

Talk to other people to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate

	2001	2004	2007
Frequently	2.3	3.9	4.2
Occasionally	8.7	10.6	13.7
Rarely	15.6	17.9	19.6
Not at all	73.4	67.6	62.5
(N)	(1,893)	(1,700)	(1,768)

Go to any political meetings or rallies

	2001	2004	2007
Frequently	0.5	0.9	1.6
Occasionally	1.7	1.6	3.4
Rarely	2.9	4.5	4.6
Not at all	94.8	92.9	90.4
(N)	(1,880)	(1,702)	(1,766)

Contribute money to a political party or election candidate

	2001	2004	2007
Frequently	0.9	1.4	1.1
Occasionally	1.7	1.9	2.5
Rarely	1.9	2.4	2.6
Not at all	95.5	94.3	93.7
(N)	(1,888)	(1,709)	(1,771)

2. Voting and Partisanship

Timing of the Voting Decision

1987: 'How long ago did you decide that you would definitely vote the way you did?'

	1987
A long time ago	50.0
Sometime last year	6.3

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

Sometime this year	16.8
During the election campaign	26.9
(N)	(1,800)

1990-2007: 'When did you decide how you would definitely vote in this election?'

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A long time ago	45.9	42.1	49.9	35.2	44.8	46.9	55.3
A few months ago, before election day	10.7	13.2	12.1	13.6	13.8	14.3	16.1
About the time the election was announced	7.7	6.8	6.6	9.0	6.8	6.5	5.4
In the first few weeks of the campaign	9.5	14.5	8.0	13.6	8.9	9.6	6.5
A few days before election day	16.4	16	12.7	17.3	13.4	14.2	8.9
On election day	9.9	7.5	10.7	11.4	12.3	8.6	7.9
(N)	(2,026)	(2,355)	(1,768)	(1,885)	(1,978)	(1,750)	(1,838)

The Use of Voter Prompts

1996-2007: 'In voting for the House of Representatives, did you follow a party 'How to Vote' card or did you decide your own preferences?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Followed a 'How to Vote' card	56.0	52.2	50.2	53.1	50.8
Decided my own preferences	44.0	47.8	49.8	46.9	49.2
(N)	(1,762)	(1,846)	(1,955)	(1,726)	(1,816)

1996-2007: 'And in voting for the Senate, did you vote by placing a "1" in a party box above the line or did you decide your own preferences by voting below the line?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Ticked a party box above the line	87.5	88.0	84.0	87.9	87.3
Decided my own preferences below the line	12.5	12.0	16.0	12.1	12.7
(N)	(1,747)	(1,839)	(1,943)	(1,722)	(1,811)

Voting Volatility

1967-1979: 'Since you have been voting in Federal elections, have you always voted for the same party or have you voted for different parties? (Which one was that?)'

	1967	1969	1979
Same, Liberal	33.0	31.5	25.8
Same, Labor	33.2	32.4	33.3
Same, Country Party	4.2	4.1	1.6
Same, D.L.P	1.0	0.8	
Same, Other	0.2	0.4	0.1
Different	28.4	30.8	39.1
(N)	(1,873)	(1,699)	(1,712)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1987: 'Since you have been voting in Federal elections, have you always voted for the same party, or have you voted for different parties?'

	1987
Always Liberal	20.5
Always Labor	37.9
Always National	3.6
Always Democrat	1.2
Liberal and Labor	21.8
Liberal and National	6.4
Labor and National	2.3
Other	6.3
(N)	(1,728)

1987-1990: 'Was there any time during the election campaign when you seriously thought you might vote for another party in the House of Representatives?'

1993-2007: 'Was there any time during the election campaign when you seriously thought you might give your first preference to another party in the House of Representatives? (Circle one number only.)'

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
No	75.4	69.7	75.5	77.9	70.6	71.4	75.0	76.6
Yes				22.1	29.4	28.6	25.0	
(Liberal Party)	9.4	5.7	10.2	6.0	6.3	5.5	5.5	3.9
(Labor Party (ALP))	6.0	6.4	6.6	4.6	8.0	7.5	7.7	8.1
(National (Country) Party)	4.4	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.7	.08
(Australian Democrats)	3.8	12.9	4.1	5.7	5.5	4.9	1.4	-
(Greens)				1.8	2.0	4.0	5.7	5.7
(One Nation)				-	5.0	2.5	1.3	-
(Another party/independent)	0.7	3.9	2.5	2.9	1.8	3.4	2.7	4.8
	(1,779)	(2,006)	(2,337)	(1,767)	(1,853)	(1,964)	(1,730)	(1,819)

1987-2007: Considered changing vote during election campaign, Labor and Lib-Nat voters

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Labor	28.2	29.9	26.9	26.4	26.7	30.7	27.5	24.9
Liberal	23.2	23.5	17.7	16	26.5	20	17.3	17.3

1967-1979: 'In the past did you ever prefer a different party?'

	1967	1969	1979
Yes	20.7	22.9	27.9
No	79.3	77.1	72.1
(N)	(1,738)	(1,643)	(1,677)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1967-1979: 'Which was that?'

	1967	1969	1979
Liberal	29.1	37.8	34.8
Labor	59.9	48.8	45.7
(National) Country Party	5.2	5.5	6.8
D.L.P	2.9	3.5	
Australian Democrats			6.8
Other	2.9	4.5	5.9
Total	(353)	(376)	(446)

1990: Before this current election, have you always voted for the same party in Federal elections for the House of Representatives, or have you voted for different parties?

1993: 'In previous Federal elections for the House of Representatives, had you always voted for the same party, or had you sometimes voted for different parties?' 1) Sometimes Liberal 2) Sometimes voted Labor (ALP) 3) Sometimes voted National (Country) 4) Sometimes voted Australian Democrats 5) Did not vote before this election'

1996-2007: 'Before this current Federal election for the House of Representatives, had you always voted for the same party, or had you sometimes voted for different parties? (Circle as many as apply.)'

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Always voted for the same party	59.9	54.7	52.9	48.9	48.0	50.1	45.2
Sometimes voted Liberal	10.5	20.7	21.6	21.1	19.2	20.6	31.1
Sometimes voted Labor (ALP)	10.6	19.2	22.9	22.7	23.9	24.1	33.0
Sometimes voted National (Country)	2.2	5.1	6.4	4.7	5.2	3.9	6.9
Sometimes voted Australian Democrats	4.2	9.3	9.9	10.6	11.4	10.9	12.9
Sometimes voted Greens							16.5
Sometimes voted for other party/independent	12.7	10.5	11.4	11.6	16.2	17.6	15.9
Did not vote before this election		3.5	4.5	5.0	4.8	4.4	3.5
(N)	(1,979)	(1,665)	(1,795)	(1,897)	(1,967)	(1,724)	(1,873)

Lifetime voting

	1967	1969	1979	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Stable Liberal-Nat	36.3	34.9	27.1	24.1	29.2	22.6	25.3	20.3	20.0	24.5	23.5
Stable Labor	32.3	31.7	32.9	37.8	27.3	29.4	23.3	22.5	20.7	19.1	19.8

Note: Liberal and National parties treated as a single group

Considerations in Voting Decision

1996-2007: 'In deciding how you would vote in the election, which was most important to you?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
The party leaders	15.3	8.5	18.0	18.6	16.0
The policy issues	48.6	66.0	47.3	49.0	52.5
The candidates in your electorate	6.9	5.9	8.7	6.4	5.7
The parties taken as a whole	29.2	19.6	26.0	25.9	25.8
(N)	(1,698)	(1,861)	(1,971)	(1,738)	(1,823)

Political Partisanship

The Direction of Political Partisanship

1967-1969: ‘Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Liberal, Labor, Country Party or D.L.P?’

1979: ‘Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, National Country Party or Australian Democrat?’

1987-2007: ‘Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, National, or what?’

	1967	1969	1979	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Liberal	40.5	40.2	36.4	34.1	36.0	35.9	36.5	34.1	37.5	41.5	36.3
National	7.1	6.6	4.1	6.3	5.0	4.4	4.8	4.4	3.5	3.1	3.7
(Total Coalition)					0.8	0.7					
Labor	38.2	39.9	42.4	49.4	46.6	44.4	37.2	40.5	35.6	32.0	37.1
D.L.P	2.8	2.6									
Democrats			2.6	2.2	5.4	1.1	3.2	2.4	2.6	0.7	0.4
New Nat-Joh Party				1.0							
Greens					0.9		1.2	1.5	2.7	4.9	5.6
One Nation								2.5	2.5	0.6	.2
Other	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.7		1.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.9	1
Independent				0.1	1.2						.2
None	11.2	10.0	14.1	6.1	4.2	12.0	16.5	13.8	15.0	16.2	15.5
(N)	(2,054)	(1,873)	(2,016)	(1,787)	(1,960)	(2,346)	(1,738)	(1,857)	(1,956)	(1,719)	(1,830)

The Strength of Partisanship

1967-1979: ‘Now thinking of the Federal parties, how strongly (NAME OF FEDERAL PARTY PREFERRED) do you feel, very strongly, fairly strongly, or not very strongly?’

1987-2007: ‘Would you call yourself a very strong, fairly strong, or not very strong supporter of that party?’

	1967	1969	1979	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very strongly	33.4	33.7	34.0	20.1	17.5	19.9	18.8	18.0	18.3	20.5	24.4
Fairly strongly	43.9	48.3	47.2	47.1	47.7	49.0	45.5	50.2	47.5	47.5	48.8
Not very strongly	22.7	18.0	18.8	32.8	34.8	31.1	35.7	31.8	34.3	31.9	26.8
(N)	(1,758)	(1,656)	(1,677)	(1,776)	(1,875)	(2,556)	(1,558)	(1,640)	(1,681)	(1,466)	(1,528)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

Strength of Partisanship by Party Identification

	Labor				Liberal-National			
	Very strong	Fairly strong	Not very strong	(N)	Very strong	Fairly strong	Not very strong	(N)
1967	38.5	39.3	22.3	(754)	29.1	48.0	22.9	(943)
1969	41.3	43.4	15.3	(733)	27.1	53.0	19.9	(864)
1979	37.0	46.4	16.7	(828)	31.8	47.5	20.7	(796)
1987	28.2	51.1	20.7	(833)	34.5	46.8	18.7	(722)
1990	16.8	49.0	34.2	(912)	18.7	47.6	33.7	(818)
1993	19.1	51.3	29.6	(1,004)	20.0	46.8	33.2	(930)
1996	18.3	44.2	37.5	(640)	20.1	50.8	29.1	(707)
1998	22.5	51.4	26.1	(733)	14.1	53.5	32.4	(701)
2001	22.0	46.8	31.1	(681)	16.6	50.9	32.5	(782)
2004	22.3	45.8	31.9	(530)	20.8	50.5	28.8	(751)
2007	26.4	50.4	23.2	(647)	23.8	49.6	26.6	(688)

Two Party Preferences

1996-2007: 'If your first preference was for the Australian Democrats, Greens [1998-2004: One Nation] or other minor party: In the end, which of the two major parties, the Liberal-National Coalition or the Labor Party, did you give your preference to in the House of Representatives?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Liberal-National	43.5	35.8	35.2	40.7	34.3
Labor	35.0	40.5	40.4	37.9	47.2
Not sure/Don't know	21.6	23.7	24.4	21.5	18.5
(N)	(858)	(991)	(1,162)	(1,006)	(1,089)

1996-2007: 'And in the Senate election?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Liberal-National	42.5	32.8	31.8	37.1	31.5
Labor	32.9	40.0	41.4	38.7	44.7
Not sure/Don't know	24.6	27.2	26.8	24.2	23.8
(N)	(833)	(918)	(1,095)	(803)	(1,067)

Flow of the Vote

<i>1984 vote</i>	<i>1987 vote</i>				(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Democrat	Other	
Labor	83.5	11.2	4.6	0.7	(935)
Liberal-National	7.9	88.5	2.7	0.9	(671)
Aust Democrat	17.0	27.7	51.1	4.2	(47)
Other	25.0	12.5	25.0	37.5	(8)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

<i>1987 vote</i>	<i>1990 vote</i>					(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Democrat	Greens	Other	
Labor	73.8	11.3	12	1.2	1.6	(996)
Liberal-National	4.5	87.3	6.1	0.3	1.8	(793)
Aust Democrat	6.8	11.4	73.9	2.3	5.6	(88)
Other	0.0	40.0	13.3	6.7	40.0	(15)

<i>1990 vote</i>	<i>1993 vote</i>				(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Democrat	Other	
Labor	82.5	12.9	2.4	2.2	(1,147)
Liberal-National	9.0	87.5	1.7	1.8	(923)
Aust Democrat	44.2	20.8	23.4	11.6	(77)
Other	30.0	20.0	3.3	46.7	(30)

<i>1993 vote</i>	<i>1996 vote</i>				(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Democrat	Other	
Labor	75.8	17.5	5.4	1.3	(702)
Liberal-National	3.5	93.8	2.5	0.2	(752)
Aust Democrat	30.0	15.7	51.4	2.9	(70)
Other	25.0	22.9	18.8	33.3	(48)

<i>1996 vote</i>	<i>1998 vote</i>				(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Democrat	Other	
Labor	82.0	12.4	4.3	1.3	(645)
Liberal-National	11.7	82.9	4.5	0.9	(770)
Aust Democrat	46.6	19.4	29.1	4.9	(103)
Other	25.0	37.5	6.2	31.3	(32)

<i>1998 vote</i>	<i>2001 vote</i>					(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Democrat	Greens	Other	
Labor	80.0	7.2	5.0	5.5	2.0	(705)
Liberal-National	6.5	85.5	3.1	1.7	3.2	(826)
Aust Democrat	18.8	20.3	42	14.5	4.4	(69)
Greens	20.9	14.0	9.3	53.5	2.3	(43)
One Nation	11.1	33.3	3.2	1.6	50.8	(63)
Other	7.9	31.6	2.6	10.5	47.4	(38)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

<i>2001 vote</i>	<i>2004 vote</i>					(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	ADemocrat	Greens	Other	
Labor	80.1	10.8	0.7	6.6	2.0	(564)
Liberal-National	8.4	86.9	0.4	1.8	2.5	(773)
Aust Democrat	26.7	26.7	17.8	22.2	6.6	(45)
Greens	24.7	9.4	0.0	62.4	3.5	(85)
Other	25.9	36.2	0.0	6.9	31.0	(58)

<i>2004 vote</i>	<i>2007 vote</i>				(N)
	Labor	Lib-Nat	Greens	Other	
Labor	89.2	4.3	4.2	2.3	(530)
Liberal-National	18.2	75.5	2.4	3.9	(875)
Aust Democrat	51.9	13.5	23.1	11.5	(52)
Greens	42.4	4.5	51.5	1.6	(132)
Other	34.4	19.7	11.5	34.4	(61)

3. Election Issues

Most Important Election Issues

1990: ‘Which of these issues has worried you and your family most in the last 12 months?’

1993: ‘Still thinking about the same 14 issues, which of these has worried you and your family most in the last 12 months?’

1996: ‘Still thinking about these 13 issues, which of these issues has been most important to you and your family?’

1998-2007: ‘Still thinking about these 13 issues, which of these issues has been most important to you and your family during the election campaign?’

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Unemployment	10.7	27.2	13.4	8.8	3.8	1.9	2.2
Inflation	17.6	2.8	2.1	0.7			
Wages	5.1						
Interest rates	29.2	6.0	9.8	1.5		9.4	7.0
Education	5.1	6.5	11.2	5.8	17.0	15.0	10.5
The environment	11.0	4.0	5.1	2.9	3.7	5.5	7.7
Taxation	10.7		18.3	23.2	16.3	16.4	11.0
Cuts in govt. spending	1.8						
Privatisation			1.8	0.4			
Links with Asia			0.7	0.4			
Business taxes		6.3					
Child care		1.5					
Enterprise bargaining		1.5					
GST		22.6		42.0	12.8		
Employment contracts		4.0					
Medicare		6.2					
Social security		3.9					
Tariffs		1.1					
Immigration			4.0	2.8	4.5	1.8	2.9
Industrial relations			7.0	1.2	1.4	2.3	16.3
Health and Medicare	8.8	6.4	25.5	9.9	16.1	30.2	20.5
Defence and nat. security			0.6		5.8	5.7	2.7
Sale of Telstra				0.3			
State and Territory Issues			0.3				
Refugees, Asylum seekers					13.0	2.7	
Worker entitlements					0.8		
Terrorism					4.8	4.8	1.8
The war in Iraq						4.3	2.4
Global warming							7.4
Management of water							6.6
Treatment of Aborigines							.9
(N)	(1,915)	(2,208)	(1,622)	(1,765)	(1,849)	(1,677)	(1,796)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

Preferred Party Policies

1990-1996: 'Here is a list of important issues that were discussed during the election campaign. Which of the Party's views – the Labor Party or the Liberal-Coalition – would you say came closest to your own views on each of these issues?'

1998-2007: 'Whose policies – the Labor Party's or the Liberal-National Coalition's would you say come closer to your own views on each of these issues?'

Unemployment

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
ALP	35.3	30.1	23.6	38.7	30.6	25.6	26.4
Coalition	38.4	39.7	47.4	28.7	28.7	35.7	33.9
No difference	16.0	19.8	16.9	19.8	25.6	23.0	25.3
Don't know	10.3	10.3	12.1	12.8	15.0	15.7	14.4
(N)	(1,882)	(2,248)	(1,707)	(1,778)	(1,939)	(1,709)	(1,789)

Industrial Relations

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
ALP	49.1	33.3	33.5	29.2	27.1	52.3
Coalition	27.1	41.9	29.9	32.2	37.3	31.6
No difference	12.8	10.0	16.7	20.1	15.5	7.8
Don't know	11.0	14.9	19.8	18.5	20.1	8.3
(N)	(2,226)	(1,693)	(1,759)	(1,876)	(1,696)	(1,815)

Interest rates

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2004	2007
ALP	25.1	36.4	20.2	17.7	17.5	25.3
Coalition	37.6	24.3	31.0	35.2	46.2	31.2
No difference	23.3	22.2	24.7	26.6	22.7	30.8
Don't know	14.0	17.1	24.1	20.5	13.6	12.7
(N)	(1,885)	(2,183)	(1,696)	(1,762)	(1,707)	(1,798)

Education

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
ALP	34.1	43.7	28.7	40.2	47.5	44.3	57.5
Coalition	22.6	27.4	31.1	23.8	26.7	35.1	21
No difference	23.3	16.6	23.8	22.1	16.5	11.9	14.8
Don't know	20.0	12.3	16.4	13.9	9.4	8.7	6.8
(N)	(1,843)	(2,209)	(1,705)	(1,776)	(1,903)	(1,691)	(1,810)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

Taxation

	1990	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
ALP	27.3	21.0	35.9	33.3	27.4	29.7
Coalition	38.9	42.1	44.8	39.0	41.4	31.9
No difference	17.0	20.6	10.5	17.5	18.1	26.8
Don't know	16.8	16.4	8.8	10.2	13.1	11.6
(N)	(1,856)	(1,693)	(1,803)	(1,899)	(1,689)	(1,815)

Health

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
ALP	45.8	52.6	38.7	41.4	40.9	43.5	48.3
Coalition	29.0	31.9	38.4	26.8	27.9	37.2	24.6
No difference	13.2	8.3	14.0	17.4	19.5	11.2	17.7
Don't know	12.0	7.2	8.9	14.4	11.6	8.1	9.4
(N)	(1,863)	(2,230)	(1,710)	(1,783)	(1,903)	(1,724)	(1,816)

Environment

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
ALP	54	33.9	29.5	28.1	26.9	34.7	55.5
Coalition	15.4	17.3	29.7	17.1	20.9	28.4	19
No difference	17.1	31.7	25.8	34.7	36.2	23.3	17.7
Don't know	13.5	17	15	20	16.1	13.7	7.9
(N)	(1,858)	(2,751)	(1,696)	(1,756)	(1,879)	(1,673)	(1,796)

Defence and national security

	1996	2001	2004	2007
ALP	15.8	18.1	21.2	26
Coalition	24.5	41.1	48.5	34.1
No difference	27.2	27.9	18.6	25.5
Don't know	32.5	12.9	11.7	14.4
(N)	(1,693)	(1,885)	(1,679)	(1,790)

Terrorism

	2001	2004	2007
ALP	12.9	19.5	23.6
Coalition	41.7	44.8	29.1
No difference	31.3	22.7	29.1
Don't know	14.1	13	18.1
(N)	(1,892)	(1,683)	(1,802)

4. The Economy

Finances over Past Year

1987-2007: 'How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 12 months ago?'

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A lot better	5.6	2.9	3.8	4.2	5.5	4.7	6.5	10.1
A little better	12.9	10.2	11.3	14.9	15.0	16.0	21.2	16.5
About the same	38.3	33.2	40.8	45.2	49.7	38.3	49.0	41.6
A little worse	28.6	32.4	26.8	23.5	20.6	25.6	17.1	20.6
A lot worse	14.6	21.4	17.3	12.2	9.3	15.5	6.2	11.2
(N)	(1,817)	(2,015)	(2,342)	(1,747)	(1,851)	(1,952)	(1,717)	(1,809)

1987: 'How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months?'

1990, 1993: 'And how do you think the general economic situation in the country [1993: in Australia] now compares with what it was a year ago?'

1998-2007: 'And how do you think the general economic situation in Australia now compares with what it was 12 months ago?'

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A lot better	5.1	0.8	1.3	1.7	6.7	6.8	11.7	13.9
A little better	26.2	7.3	14.4	15.4	22.9	18.9	30.9	21.9
About the same	22.4	17.7	22.2	35.6	34.8	33.8	42.2	35.1
A little worse	27.0	28	24.6	25.3	23.3	25.2	11.7	21.9
A lot worse	19.4	46.3	37.5	21.9	12.3	15.4	3.6	7.2
(N)	(1,816)	(1,978)	(2,251)	(1,674)	(1,782)	(1,892)	(1,653)	(1,732)

Government Effect on Economy over Past Year

1987: 'Compared with a year ago, would you say that the government's policies have had a good effect, a bad effect, or that they really have not made much difference with regard to the financial situation of your household?'

1990-1993: 'Compared with a year ago, would you say that the Federal government's policies have had a good effect, a bad effect, or that they really have not made that much difference to the financial situation of your household?'

1996-1998: 'Compared with 12 months ago, would you say that the Federal Labor government's policies have had a good effect, a bad effect, or that they really have not made much difference to the financial situation of your household?'

2001-2007: 'Compared with 12 months ago, would you say that the Federal government's policies have had a good effect, a bad effect, or that they really have not made much difference to the financial situation of your household?'

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Good effect	10.0	4.7	5.2	8.1	9.5	11.8	18.7	18.9
Not much difference	59.2	56.9	65.8	66.6	75.1	56.8	68.8	59.5
Bad effect	30.8	38.4	29.0	25.3	15.4	31.4	12.6	21.6
(N)	(1,788)	(2,007)	(2,340)	(1,750)	(1,853)	(1,950)	(1,720)	(1,804)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1987: ‘And how about the country's general economic situation?’

1990-2007: ‘And what effect do you think they have had on the general economic situation in Australia as a whole?’

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Good effect	29.0	8.8	9.1	13.2	27.7	23.4	34.6	29.9
Not much difference	40.2	38.9	43.6	46.5	56.0	50.1	57.2	51.6
Bad effect	30.9	52.3	47.3	40.3	16.3	26.5	8.2	18.5
(N)	(1,758)	(1,981)	(2,896)	(1,690)	(1,896)	(1,894)	(1,667)	(1,752)

Finances in Year's Time

1990-2007: ‘Compared to now, what do you think the financial situation of your household will be in 12 months time?’

	1990	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A lot better	4.3	6.1	4.8	3.8	4.7	5.1
A little better	19.8	29.8	18.7	18.3	21.5	21.6
About the same	39.3	46.1	42.0	48.7	53.0	48.9
A little worse	23.1	13.1	23.6	19.0	15.7	19.1
A lot worse	13.5	4.9	11.0	10.2	5.1	5.3
(N)	(1,996)	(1,745)	(1,851)	(1,952)	(1,712)	(1,795)

1990-2007: ‘And what do you think the general economic situation in Australia [1990: this country] as a whole will be in 12 months time? [1990: compared to now]’

1993: Compared to now, what do you think the general economic situation in the country will be in 12 months time?’

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A lot better	3.0	5.7	4.7	4.7	4.2	6.1	3.7
A little better	20.1	37.6	34.0	19.8	18.2	23.9	16.4
About the same	27.0	29.1	39.6	35.7	42.0	48.4	44.0
A little worse	22.6	14.4	14.5	25.7	23.8	17.0	26.7
A lot worse	27.3	13.2	7.2	14.1	11.8	4.6	9.2
(N)	(1,983)	(2,359)	(1,700)	(1,812)	(1,910)	(1,676)	(1,747)

Government Effect on Economy in Year's Time

1990: ‘Do you think that, a year from now [1993-2004: 12 months from now], the Federal government's policies will have had a good effect, a bad effect, or that they really will not make much difference to the financial situation of your household?’

	1990	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good effect	11.0	21.5	13.2	10.7	15.8	17.8
Not much difference	67.6	66.9	60.6	70.4	73.0	68.8
A bad effect	21.4	11.6	26.2	18.9	11.2	13.4
(N)	(1,991)	(1,737)	(1,844)	(1,949)	(1,704)	(1,781)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1990-2007: ‘And what effect do you think they will have had on general economic situation in Australia as a whole? [1990: And how about the country’s general economic situation?]

1993: ‘Do you think that, a year from now, the Federal government’s policies will have had a good effect, a bad effect, or that they really will have not made much difference to the general economic situation in the country as a whole?’

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good effect	18.0	25.2	30.7	21.0	18.5	25.1	18.7
Not much difference	50.6	57.7	55.5	55.8	63.6	62.5	58.8
A bad effect	31.4	17.0	13.8	23.2	17.8	12.4	22.5
(N)	(1,976)	(2,349)	(1,702)	(1,796)	(1,905)	(1,666)	(1,742)

5. Politics and Political Parties

Interest in politics

1967-2007: ‘[1993: Generally speaking] how much interest do you usually have in what’s going on in politics?’

	1967	1969	1979	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good deal	17.7	21.8	26.7	35.2	35.6	37.5	32.0	36.5	32.4	33.0	39.3
Some	37.0	46.5	44.1	44.9	46.1	44.5	46.6	45.0	43.7	46.1	43.7
Not much	33.7	26.2	23.0	15.2	15.3	15.2	17.9	15.5	18.6	17.6	13.9
None	11.6	5.5	6.2	4.7	3.0	2.8	3.5	3.1	5.4	3.4	3.1
(N)	(2,044)	(1,870)	(2,004)	(1,815)	(2,027)	(2,359)	(1,789)	(1,876)	(1,999)	(1,748)	(1,845)

Compulsory and Voluntary Voting

1967-1979: ‘Do you think that compulsory voting should be retained, or do you think that people should only have to vote at Federal and State elections if they want to?’

	1967	1969	1979
Vote if want to	24.3	23.2	31.2
Compulsory better	75.7	76.8	68.8
(N)	(1,998)	(1,833)	(1,985)

1987: ‘Do you think that compulsory voting should be retained, or do you think that people should only have to vote at Federal and State elections if they want to?’

	1987
Strongly favour voting only if want to	19.7
Favour voting only if they want to	13.4
Doesn’t matter	2.6
Favour compulsory voting	31.2
Strongly favour compulsory voting	33.1
(N)	(1,812)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1993-2007: 'Do you think that voting at Federal elections should be compulsory, or do you think that people should only vote if they want to?'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly favour compulsory voting	39.9	42.4	43.7	46.9	46.9	50.6
Favour compulsory voting	27.8	28.3	27.7	22.7	27.2	26.1
Favour people only voting if they want to	18.2	17.5	18.3	17.1	14.9	14.6
Strongly favour people only voting if they want to	14.1	11.8	10.2	13.2	10.9	8.6
(N)	(2,357)	(1,781)	(1,879)	(1,987)	(1,748)	(1,851)

1996-2007: 'Would you have voted in the election if voting had not been compulsory?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Definitely would have voted	67.5	67.3	62.4	68.4	72.7
Probably would have voted	18.6	17.9	17.2	17.4	15.7
Might, might not	5.6	6.0	8.2	6.1	5.7
Probably not	5.1	6.1	7.4	5.5	3.8
Definitely not	3.3	2.7	4.8	2.6	2.1
(N)	(1,780)	(1,865)	(1,983)	(1,748)	(1,849)

The Role of Political Parties

1967-1979: 'In general, would you say there is a good deal of difference between the parties, some difference, or not much difference?'

	1967	1969	1979
Good deal of difference	33.7	39.9	39.5
Some difference	24.0	28.6	27.1
Not much difference	42.3	31.4	33.4
(N)	(1,789)	(1,748)	(1,946)

1993-2007: 'Considering everything the Labor Party and the Liberal Party stand for, would you say there is ...'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A good deal of difference between the parties	44.1	30.6	29.8	24.2	29.7	30.4
Some difference between the parties	39.6	44.3	46.2	44.8	48.7	50.2
Not much difference between the parties	14.7	21.9	20.8	26.2	19.1	17.8
No difference between the parties	1.6	3.2	3.1	4.7	2.5	1.6
(N)	(2,351)	(1,769)	(1,874)	(1,981)	(1,751)	(1,831)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1996-2007: ‘Some people say that political parties in Australia care what ordinary people think. Others say that political parties in Australia don't care what ordinary people think. Where would you place your view on this scale from 1 to 5?’

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
1 Care what ordinary people think	5.0	4.6	5.4	5.4	7.2
2	18.2	16.2	18.9	22.9	24.8
3	36.9	33.5	34.7	34.6	39.6
4	23.2	26.2	23.8	23.9	18.6
5 Don't care what ordinary people think	16.6	19.6	17.2	13.2	9.8
(N)	(1,770)	(1,823)	(1,960)	(1,733)	(1,845)

1996-2007: ‘Where would you place your view on this scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means that political parties are necessary to make our political system work, and 5 means that political parties are not needed in Australia?’

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
1 Necessary to make our political system work	43.6	43.0	40.5	46.2	49.0
2	27.6	25.2	27.2	27.8	27.5
3	19.5	20.5	22.3	18.0	16.4
4	5.0	6.2	5.9	5.0	4.4
5 Not needed in Australia	4.4	5.1	4.0	3.0	2.7
(N)	(1,768)	(1,816)	(1,952)	(1,733)	(1,840)

Feelings about Political Parties

1993: ‘We would like to know your feelings about the political parties. Please show how you feel about them by circling a number from 0 to 10. 10 is the highest rating, if you feel very unfavourable about a party, and 0 is the lowest rating, for parties you feel very unfavourable about. If you are neutral about a particular party or don't know much about them, you should give them a rating of 5. How do you feel about:’

1996-2007: ‘We would like to know what you think about each of our political parties. Please rate each party on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party and 10 means that you strongly like that party. If you are neutral about a particular party or don't know much about them, you should give them a rating of 5.’

Mean Scores

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Liberal	5.35	5.80	5.39	5.59	5.79	5.31
Labor	5.39	4.97	5.74	5.54	5.41	5.89
Green	3.86	3.99	4.36	4.66	4.17	4.44
Democrat	3.87	5.15	5.13	4.60	3.95	-
National	4.24	4.76	4.73	4.72	4.80	4.4

6. The Left-Right Dimension

Voters' Left-Right Position

1996-2007: 'In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?'

Mean Scores

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Self	5.46	5.36	5.3	5.34	5.29
N	(1,548)	(1,597)	(1,588)	(1,454)	(1,705)

Where Voters Place the Parties

1987: 'And where would you place the political parties on the left-right scale?'

1996-2007: 'Using the same scale, where would you place each of the Federal political parties?'

Mean Scores

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Labor	4.33	4.52	4.71	4.31	4.35
Liberal	6.45	6.50	6.49	7.04	6.85
Green	3.84	3.74	3.65	3.21	3.61
Democrat	4.69	4.65	4.39	4.41	-
National	6.50	6.36	6.31	6.59	6.57

7. The Political Leaders

How the Political Leaders are Rated

1987-1990: 'We would like to know your feelings about the party leaders you hear about in the news today. We would like you to show your feelings by rating them 0 to 10. You may use any number from 0 to 10. 10 is the highest rating, for people you feel very favourable about, and 0 is the lowest rating, for people you feel very strongly against. If you are neutral about a particular person, you should give them a rating of 5. How do you feel about:'

1996-2007: 'Using a scale from 0 to 10, please show how much you like or dislike the party leaders. Again, if you don't know much about them, you should give them a rating of 5. How do you feel about:'

Mean Scores

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
John Howard	4.87	4.93		5.73	5.30	5.57	5.71	5.14
Bob Hawke	6.23	5.46						
Paul Keating	4.33	4.01	4.73	4.22				
Kim Beazley					6.11	5.73		
Mark Latham							5.05	
Kevin Rudd								6.31
Mark Vaile								4.60
Bob Brown								4.48
Peter Costello								4.13
Julia Gillard								5.19

8. Democracy and Institutions

Satisfaction with Democracy

1969, 1979: ‘On the whole, how do you feel about the state of government and politics in Australia? Would you say that you were very satisfied, fairly satisfied, or not satisfied?’

	1969	1979
Very satisfied	6.7	3.7
Fairly Satisfied	69.9	51.8
Not satisfied	23.4	44.5
(N)	(1,820)	(1,944)

1996: ‘On the whole, are you satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia?’

1998-2007: ‘On the whole are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia?’

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Satisfied	30.9	14.2	16.1	20.9	22.9
Fairly satisfied	47.1	57	57.5	60.7	62.7
Not very satisfied	17.2	22.6	21.8	14.5	11.9
Not at all satisfied	4.9	6.1	4.6	4.0	2.5
(N)	(1,765)	(1,878)	(1,977)	(1,729)	(1,857)

Trust in Government

1969, 1979: ‘In general, do you feel that the people in government are too often interested in looking after themselves, or do you feel that they can be trusted to do the right thing nearly all the time?’

	1969	1979
Do right thing	51.0	29.3
Look after self	49.0	70.7
(N)	(1,727)	(1,883)

1993-2007: ‘In general, do you feel that the people in government are too often interested in looking after themselves, or do you feel that they can be trusted to do the right thing nearly all the time? 1) Usually look after themselves 2) Sometimes look after themselves 3) Sometimes can be trusted to do the right thing and 4) Usually can be trusted to do the right thing.’

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Usually themselves	42.4	29.8	44.6	40.3	33.8	28.6
Sometimes themselves	23.6	22.5	21.9	28.1	26.7	28.5
Sometimes trusted	25.9	32.8	23.8	20.7	24.7	27.6
Usually trusted	8.1	14.9	9.7	11.0	14.8	15.3
(N)	(2,326)	(1,727)	(1,864)	(1,960)	(1,706)	(1,819)

1987, 1993: ‘Would you say the Federal government is pretty much run for a few big groups (1993: interests) looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all people?’

	1987	1993
Few big groups	65.2	71.6
All the people	34.8	28.4

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

(N) (1,773) (2,299)

1998-2007: 'Would you say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all people?'

	1998	2001	2004	2007
Entirely run for big interests	15.0	13.6	10.5	7.8
Mostly run for big interests	37.5	34.1	31.2	30.2
Half and half	35.6	35.7	37.8	41.6
Mostly run for benefit of all	11.1	15.8	18.8	19.1
Entirely run for benefit of all	0.8	0.8	1.7	1.3
(N)	(1,849)	(1,979)	(1,727)	(1,849)

Political Efficacy

2001-2007: 'Some people say it makes a difference who is in power. Others say that it doesn't make a difference who is in power. Using the scale below, where would you place yourself?'

	2001	2004	2007
1 It makes a big difference who is in power	22.6	35.7	34.3
2	28.7	30.9	33.9
3	24.8	16.8	19.2
4	14.0	9.3	8.4
5 It doesn't make any difference who is in power	9.9	7.2	4.2
(N)	(1,976)	(1,752)	(1,854)

1996-1998: 'If 1 means no matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens, and 5 means that who people vote for can make a difference, where would you place your view?' (values presented in opposite direction)

2001-2007: 'Some people say that no matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens. Others say that who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens. Using the scale below, where would you place yourself?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
1 Who people vote for can make a big difference	39.8	30.4	24.1	33.5	35.9
2	30.4	33.3	32.4	32.2	35.5
3	16.9	20.2	22.6	16.5	18.7
4	6.0	9.2	12.1	10.9	6.4
5 Who people vote for won't make any difference	6.9	6.8	8.8	7.0	3.5
(N)	(1,773)	(1,846)	(1,976)	(1,750)	(1,854)

The Head of State

1967, 1979: ‘How important do you feel the Queen and the Royal Family are to Australia, very important, fairly important or not very important?’

1987-2007: ‘How important do you feel the Queen and the Royal Family are to Australia?’

	1967	1979	1987	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very Important	27.5	24.7	18.1	13.4	12.4	9.9	10.2	9.5	10.6
Fairly Important	25.8	29.2	29.0	21.8	27.1	20.5	21.1	22.8	25.0
Not very Important	46.7	46.1	52.9	64.7	60.5	69.6	68.7	67.7	64.4
(N)	(2,004)	(1,994)	(1,805)	(2,376)	(1,757)	(1,856)	(1,980)	(1,731)	(1,850)

1993-2007: ‘Do you think that Australia should become a republic with an Australian head of state, or should the Queen be retained as head of state?’

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly favour republic	27.1	29.2	34.3	38.2	33.0	30.9
Favour republic	32.6	29.7	31.5	25.5	28.9	29.1
Favour retain Queen	26.4	28.8	25.2	25.3	27.4	30.3
Strongly favour retain Queen	13.8	12.4	9.0	11.1	10.6	9.7
(N)	(2,376)	(1,730)	(1,833)	(1,960)	(1,722)	(1,830)

1987-1998: ‘On the issue of the Australian flag, do you 1) Strongly favour changing the flag 2) Favour changing the flag 3) Favour retaining the flag 4) Strongly favour retaining the flag’

	1987	1993	1996	1998
Strongly for flag change	12.6	17.0	15.5	15.1
For flag change	16.4	25.1	18.6	24.1
For retaining flag	28.5	25.2	27.4	27.7
Strongly for retaining flag	42.6	32.7	38.5	33.0
(N)	(1,792)	(2,346)	(1,752)	(1,835)

9. Trade Unions, Business and Wealth

The Power of Trade Unions and Big Business

1967-1979: ‘Do you think that the trade unions in this country have too much power or not too much?’

	1967	1969	1979
Too Much	52.2	59.9	82.0
Not Too much	46.8	40.1	18.0
(N)	(1,740)	(1,658)	(1,903)

1967-1979: ‘Do you think big business in this country has too much power or not too much power?’

	1967	1969	1979
Too Much	59.8	62.4	68.3
Not too much	40.2	37.6	31.7
(N)	(1,764)	(1,644)	(1,859)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1987: 'Do you think that trade unions in this country have too much power or not enough power? And how about big business? Do you think they have too much power or not enough power?'

<i>Trade unions</i>		<i>Big business</i>	
	1987		1987
Too much power	70.5	Too much power	50.9
Not too much	13.9	Not too much	18.5
It depends	15.5	It depends	30.6
(N)	(1,802)	(N)	(1,765)

1990, 1996-2007: 'Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements.'

1993: 'Here are some statements about economic issues. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.'

The trade unions in this country have too much power

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	35.4	38.0	37.6	24.2	19.4	15.5	14.6
Agree	33.1	24.4	24.2	28.8	28.2	25.7	22.8
Neither	19.3	18.0	19.0	23.0	29.0	31.1	29.8
Disagree	10.7	14.8	14.0	18.2	18.2	22.2	25.3
Strongly disagree	1.4	4.8	5.2	5.9	5.2	5.8	7.5
(N)	(2,004)	(2,314)	(1,749)	(1,842)	(1,940)	(1,702)	(1,834)

Big business in this country has too much power

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	22.1	27.7	29.0	31.1	31.8	27.1	25.3
Agree	42.4	34.6	35.5	39.7	39.8	44.5	43.9
Neither	25.4	25.4	25.1	23.1	21.9	22.0	22.6
Disagree	9.2	10.6	9.0	5.4	5.2	4.9	7.1
Strongly disagree	0.9	1.7	1.4	0.8	1.3	1.5	1.2
(N)	(1,998)	(2,300)	(1,736)	(1,829)	(1,939)	(1,697)	(1,817)

Class Self-Image

1967: 'To which class would you belong?'

1969-1979: '[1979: Now I would like to talk for a moment about social classes in Australia] First of all, to what class would you say you belonged?'

1987: 'To what social class would you say you belong?'

1990-2007: 'Which social class would you say you belong to?'

	1967	1969	1979	1987	1990	1993	1998	2001	2004	2007
Upper	0.5	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.7	2.4
Middle	56.5	48.8	57.4	47.7	47.5	45.7	48.3	48.8	54.1	53.2
Working	43.0	49.7	41.3	51.3	51.3	52.7	50.2	49.8	44.2	44.4
(N)	(1,516)	(1,792)	(1,933)	(1,476)	(1,649)	(2,139)	(1,626)	(1,737)	(1,532)	(1,633)

Trade Union Membership and Support for Industrial Action

1967-1979, 1996-2007: 'Do you belong to a trade union?'

1990, 1993: 'Do you belong to a trade union or a staff association?'

	1967	1969	1979	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Yes	26.1	25.7	27.9	41.8	40.5	30.4	29.9	26.0	24.4	25.5	24.5
No	73.9	74.3	72.1	58.2	59.5	69.6	70.1	74.0	75.6	75	75.6
(N)	(1,962)	(1,869)	(2,011)	(1,437)	(1,816)	(2,296)	(1,586)	(1,703)	(1,807)	(1,603)	(1,698)

1990-2007: 'Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.'

There should be stricter laws to regulate the activities of trade unions

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	28.0	32.9	26.0	19.7	17.6	14.6	15.1
Agree	39.7	29.0	32.8	33.4	31.4	29.3	26.8
Not sure	20.2	19.5	23.1	27.3	31.4	34.2	32.6
Disagree	10.6	13.9	13.1	14.9	15.0	15.7	19.1
Strongly disagree	1.5	4.7	5.1	4.7	4.6	6.3	6.4
(N)	(1,995)	(2,304)	(1,739)	(1,827)	(1,950)	(1,709)	(1,820)

Priorities for Government Spending

1987-2007: 'If the government had a choice between reducing taxes or spending more on social services, which do you think it should do?'

	1987	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly favour less tax	43.7	37.4	40.8	33.4	27.1	21.7	21.4
Mildly favour less tax	21.6	18.0	16.3	13.5	14.8	13.8	12.6
It depends	19.8	26.6	26.1	27.5	28.5	27.5	19.2
Mildly favour spending more on social services	7.6	10.7	9.4	12.4	14.5	16.5	20.3
Strongly favour spending on more social services	7.2	7.3	7.4	13.2	15.0	20.5	26.6
(N)	(1,740)	(2,312)	(1,797)	(1,804)	(1,951)	(1,711)	(1,816)

1987-2007: 'Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.'

Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary working people

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	17.3	16.3	24.1	18.2	17.0	20.9	17.6	19.2
Agree	28.4	25.3	27.0	28.9	32.6	34.9	33.4	31.6
Not sure	20.1	23.3	23.2	28.2	27.2	26.6	28.9	27.0
Disagree	24.9	24.5	19.0	19.4	17.3	13.5	16.0	17.3
Strongly disagree	9.3	10.6	6.7	5.3	5.9	4.1	4.0	4.9
(N)	(1,778)	(1,977)	(2,324)	(1,727)	(1,826)	(1,949)	(1,701)	(1,807)

10. Social Issues

Censorship

1987-2007: 'The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years: For each one, please say whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or about right?'

The right to show nudity and sex in films and magazines

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Gone much too far		23.8	29.1	27.8	25.1	20.4	21.2	19.8
Gone too far	48.8	30.5	29.3	27.7	28.7	25.4	28.8	28.4
About right	43.5	37.8	33.3	36.8	39.0	44.8	40.0	41.4
Not gone far enough	7.7	6.0	5.1	5.0	4.9	6.6	6.9	6.8
Not nearly far enough		1.9	3.1	2.7	2.3	2.8	3.2	3.6
(N)	(1,787)	(2,002)	(2,290)	(1,768)	(1,813)	(1,951)	(1,706)	(1,827)

Abortion

1979, 1987: 'Do you think women should be able to obtain an abortion easily when they want one, or do you think abortion should be allowed only in special circumstances?'

1990-2007: 'Which one of these statements comes closest to how you feel about abortion in Australia?
1) Women should be able to obtain an abortion readily when they want one 2) Abortion should be allowed only in special circumstances 3) Abortion should not be allowed under any circumstances 4) Don't know'

	1979	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Obtain readily	46.2	38.6	52.5	60.9	55.7	53.1	61.1	58.5	60.8
Special circumstances	48.5	55.0	41.2	33.8	38.5	42.0	34.5	37.2	34.9
Banned	5.3	6.4	6.3	5.2	5.7	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.3
(N)	(1,939)	(1,793)	(1,937)	(2,227)	(1,706)	(1,741)	(1,854)	(1,595)	(1,747)

Marijuana

1990: 'Here are some statements about some legal issues and about some more general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements'

1993-2007: 'Here are some statements about general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?'

The smoking of marijuana should NOT be a criminal offence

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	10.6	11.1	13.3	12.0	11.7	8.9	9.2
Agree	21.6	23.6	22.5	23.0	22.8	24.0	20.1
Not sure	18.1	21.6	18.5	20.2	21.4	20.3	20.5
Disagree	29.9	23.7	22.8	25.6	27.1	28.8	29.3
Strongly disagree	19.7	20.0	22.8	19.1	17.0	18.0	20.9
(N)	(2,012)	(2,315)	(1,775)	(1,833)	(1,967)	(1,714)	(1,829)

Crime

1987: 'Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.'

1990: 'Here are some statements about some legal issues and about some more general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?'

1993-2007: 'Here are some statements about general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?'

People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	56.5	39.0	42.2	43.9	40.0	33.3	30.0	29.2
Agree	31.3	43.1	38.7	36.9	39.9	41.0	40.5	40.8
Not sure	9.1	13.4	14.9	14.4	15.8	17.3	20.9	21.6
Disagree	2.4	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.7	5.7	6.0	5.9
Strongly disagree	0.7	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.6	2.7	2.6	2.5
(N)	(1,775)	(2,016)	(2,313)	(1,771)	(1,822)	(1,956)	(1,708)	(1,815)

1987: 'Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.'

1990: 'Here are some statements about some legal issues and about some more general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?'

1993-2004: 'Here are some statements about general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?'

1987-1990: Bring back the death penalty

1993-2007: The death penalty should be reintroduced for murder

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	40.8	39.7	40.8	38.8	38.6	29.9	24.0	19.5
Agree	18.7	26.8	26.8	27.5	26.6	26.6	27.1	24.1
Not sure	17.1	11.9	11.7	12.7	13.8	16.7	16.2	18
Disagree	11.2	12.9	12.2	11.5	12.1	15.0	16.4	18.8
Strongly disagree	12.3	8.7	8.5	9.5	8.9	11.9	16.3	19.6
(N)	(1,774)	(2,015)	(2,328)	(1,781)	(1,833)	(1,965)	(1,718)	(1,833)

Aborigines

1990: 'On the whole, do you think that Aborigines get too little or too much help from the government, or do you think that present arrangements are about right?'

	1990
Too little help	16.4
About right	25.2
Too much help	58.4
(N)	(1,774)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1993-2007: ‘The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years. For each one, please say whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is about right?’

Government help for Aborigines

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Much too far	21.4	29.6	24.0	19.6	19.8	10.8
Too far	23.0	25.8	30.2	27.6	24.9	19.8
About right	29.5	27.8	26.5	31.1	29.7	33.3
Not far enough	17.5	12.7	13.8	15.4	18.9	26.7
Not nearly far enough	8.5	4.2	5.4	6.3	6.7	9.4
(N)	(2,293)	(1,758)	(1,802)	(1,934)	(1,689)	(1,812)

1987-2007: ‘The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years. For each one, please say whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is about right?’

Transfer of land rights to Aborigines

	1987	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Much too far		32.7	25.8	22.0	19.7	13.2
Too far	59.0	27.9	29.2	27.8	24.0	22.3
About right	28.6	26.2	24.3	30.3	31.8	39.3
Not far enough	12.4	10.0	14.5	13.3	17.0	17.7
Not nearly far enough		3.1	6.2	6.6	7.5	7.5
(N)	(1,775)	(1,755)	(1,799)	(1,930)	(1,679)	(1,822)

Materialist and Postmaterialist Values

1990-2007: ‘A question about what you think the aims of Australia should be for the next ten years. Here is a list of four aims that different people give priority. 1) Maintain order in the nation 2) Give people more say in important government decisions 3) Fight rising prices 4) Protect freedom of speech. If you had to choose among these four aims, which would be your first choice?’

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Maintain order	26.4	37.5	36.1	37.2	37.9	37.5	34.5
Give people more say	30.4	32.6	31.7	33.0	26.1	26.0	18.2
Fight rising prices	34.6	18.7	17.7	15.7	20.7	19.6	33.6
Protect free speech	8.6	11.3	14.5	14.1	15.3	16.9	13.8
(N)	(2,003)	(2,322)	(1,743)	(1,841)	(1,937)	(1,713)	(1,832)

1990-2007: ‘And which would be your second choice?’

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Maintain order	21.3	21.2	19.4	19.4	18.9	18.7	20.6
Give people more say	28.0	25.5	27.9	25.4	27.9	26.2	27.2
Fight rising prices	30.6	29.9	27.7	27.8	28.6	28.6	29.4
Protect free speech	20.1	23.4	25.0	27.4	24.6	26.4	22.8
(N)	(1,986)	(2,306)	(1,718)	(1,832)	(1,920)	(1,703)	(1,802)

Gender Equality

1990-2007: ‘The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years. For each one, please say whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is about right?’

Equal Opportunities for Women

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Much too far	7.1	6.2	5.9	3.8	3.1	3	2
Too far	14.1	11.9	11.7	8.3	7.9	6.5	4
About right	52.3	47.4	50.7	56.3	51.1	50.4	52.3
Not far enough	21.4	24.4	23.1	23.6	29.0	30.3	31.6
Not nearly far enough	5.2	10.1	8.6	8	8.9	9.9	10.1
(N)	(1,998)	(2,281)	(1,759)	(1,811)	(1,921)	(1,685)	(1,805)

1993-2007: ‘Here are some statements about general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?’

Women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs and promotions

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	3.0	3.9	2.7	3.5	4.1	3.3
Agree	5.0	4.8	5.2	5.9	7.1	7.3
Not sure	22.6	20.7	23.3	26.3	27.1	28.7
Disagree	48.6	48.8	48.1	45.2	45.7	46.1
Strongly disagree	20.7	21.7	20.8	19.1	16.0	14.7
(N)	(2,309)	(1,777)	(1,831)	(1,970)	(1,721)	(1,826)

1993-2007: ‘Here are some statements about general social concerns. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements?’

The government should increase opportunities for women in business and industry

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	8.9	9.8	9.5	10.7	10.7	8.9
Agree	32.1	29.5	32.4	31.8	33.7	31.3
Not sure	35.5	37.9	35.6	37.3	35.9	39.3
Disagree	18.2	17.4	16.4	15.1	14.8	16.1
Strongly disagree	5.3	5.4	6.2	5.1	4.9	4.4
(N)	(2,302)	(1,778)	(1,833)	(1,971)	(1,725)	(1,818)

Immigrants and Immigration

1987-2007: ‘The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years. For each one, please say whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is about right?’

Equal opportunities for migrants

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Much too far	8.2	19.3	19.8	13.0	13.0	9.3	10
Too far	12.9	24.5	24.4	20.5	21.5	17.4	17.8
About right	59.6	45.1	45.7	53.6	53.5	56.3	55.3
Not far enough	15.3	8.7	8.4	10.8	9.2	13.6	13.5
Not nearly far enough	3.9	2.4	1.8	2.1	2.7	3.4	3.4
(N)	(1,981)	(2,274)	(1,755)	(1,797)	(1,936)	(1,685)	(1,820)

The number of migrants allowed into Australia at the present time

	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Much too far	29.1	40.2	33.5	20.3	15.8	13.2	16.6
Too far	28.9	29.7	29.5	23.3	19.1	17.8	23.3
About right	33.8	23.3	30.4	45.8	46.5	49.0	46.4
Not far enough	6.6	4.4	4.8	8.2	14.3	15.6	10.3
Not nearly far enough	1.7	2.4	1.8	2.4	4.3	4.4	3.4
(N)	(1,999)	(2,291)	(1,765)	(1,802)	(1,933)	(1,695)	(1,815)

1996-2007: ‘There are a number of opinions about the effects that immigrants have on Australia. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?’

Immigrants increase the crime rate

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	21.4	16.9	15.8	12.2	12.8
Agree	30.4	30.1	30.9	28.6	29.9
Neither	26.1	27.3	29.5	30.5	30.8
Disagree	16.4	20.5	18.4	21.5	20.8
Strongly disagree	5.7	5.2	5.4	7.2	5.7
(N)	(1,765)	(1,855)	(1,957)	(1,709)	(1,818)

Immigrants are generally good for the Australian economy

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	8.0	6.9	7.4	10.0	6.9
Agree	41.8	49.9	46.5	49.6	52.2
Neither	30.5	29.4	30.7	29.6	29.9
Disagree	14.6	11.1	11.2	8.5	9
Strongly disagree	5.0	2.7	4.1	2.3	2
(N)	(1,754)	(1,852)	(1,951)	(1,715)	(1,821)

Immigrants take jobs away from people who are born in Australia

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	14.4	12.6	11.8	8.5	8.1
Agree	26.6	24.7	22.8	21.4	21
Neither	27.8	25.7	28.2	29.6	29.1
Disagree	23.6	29.8	28.7	31.2	34.2
Strongly disagree	7.6	7.2	8.5	9.4	7.6
(N)	(1,758)	(1,853)	(1,959)	(1,711)	(1,824)

Immigrants make Australia more open to ideas and cultures

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	26.8	22.0	21.0	24.0	20.2
Agree	52.2	57.6	54.4	56.6	57.4
Neither	13.7	14.5	17.1	13.7	16.2
Disagree	4.6	4.0	5.2	3.9	4.3
Strongly disagree	2.7	1.8	2.3	1.8	1.9
(N)	(1,760)	(1,855)	(1,957)	(1,716)	(1,832)

1996-2007: 'Do you think the number of immigrants allowed in Australia nowadays should be reduced or increased?'

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Increased a lot	3.0	3.6	7.6	6.5	4.3
Increased a little	5.4	10.0	17.6	17.3	10.7
Remain about the same	28.2	38.4	38.0	41.1	38.7
Reduced a little	29.6	25.7	16.7	18.5	25.1
Reduced a lot	33.7	22.3	20.1	16.6	21.2
(N)	(1,775)	(1,863)	(1,973)	(1,727)	(1,843)

11. Defence and Foreign Affairs

Defence Spending

1987: 'Do you think the government should spend more or less money on defence?'

	1987
Spend more	48.9
Doesn't matter	24.5
Spend less	26.6
(N)	(1,780)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1993-2007: 'Do you think that the government should spend more or spend less on defence?'

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Spend much more on defence	14.1	10.2	18.5	20.6	15.5	14.9
Spend some more on defence	27.5	28.8	33.6	39.7	36.4	31.9
About right at present	43.3	45.7	38.4	33.2	37.7	41.2
Spend less on defence	11.3	11.2	7.5	4.7	8.0	8.4
Spend a lot less on defence	3.8	4.1	1.9	1.7	2.4	3.6
(N)	(2,311)	(1,751)	(1,849)	(1,968)	(1,730)	(1,842)

Defence Capability

1996-2007: 'Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements'

Australia would be able to defend itself successfully if it were ever attacked

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	3.4	5.2	3.9	3.1	3.7
Agree	11.4	14.5	11.8	16.1	19.2
Neither agree nor disagree	20.3	20.2	22.2	24.5	28.9
Disagree	40.1	40.2	42.0	41.9	37.2
Strongly disagree	24.8	20.0	20.1	14.4	11.1
(N)	(1,712)	(1,843)	(1,942)	(1,711)	(1,801)

Australia's defence is stronger now than it was 10 years ago

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	4.5	3.3	5.4	10.4	9
Agree	23.4	19.5	26.1	44.1	45
Neither agree nor disagree	43.1	42.2	40.1	30.7	33.2
Disagree	21.9	26.1	21.8	12.1	11.2
Strongly disagree	7.1	8.9	6.5	2.7	1.6
(N)	(1,722)	(1,833)	(1,960)	(1,719)	(1,834)

Security Threats to Australia

1996-2007: 'In your opinion, are any of the following countries likely to pose a threat to Australia's security?'

Indonesia

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very likely	23.6	23.1	31.3	28.8	28.1
Fairly likely	35.9	38.8	42.2	43.1	44.7
Not very likely	40.5	38.1	26.6	28.1	27.2
(N)	(1,674)	(1,731)	(1,888)	(1,562)	(1,781)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

China

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very likely	18.6	14.3	9.0	7.7	10.4
Fairly likely	41.1	37.7	33.0	31.7	35.3
Not very likely	40.4	47.9	57.9	60.6	54.3
(N)	(1,643)	(1,709)	(1,792)	(1,577)	(1,680)

Japan

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very likely	10.7	9.3	4.8	3.5	4.1
Fairly likely	21.2	21.3	14.9	10.3	13.9
Not very likely	68.2	69.4	80.3	86.2	82
(N)	(1,629)	(1,682)	(1,788)	(1,562)	(1,659)

Malaysia

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very likely	8.1	7.7	6.5	7.2	7.3
Fairly likely	25.8	29.8	29.0	31.4	26.6
Not very likely	66.1	62.6	64.5	61.5	66.1
(N)	(1,606)	(1,667)	(1,779)	(1,565)	(1,654)

United States

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very likely	3.3	2.3	2.2	5.8	3.7
Fairly likely	6.2	5.5	5.5	7.6	7.3
Not very likely	90.5	92.2	92.5	86.5	89
(N)	(1,598)	(1,672)	(1,791)	(1,576)	(1,640)

Vietnam

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very likely	5	5.1	3.5	3.9	3.5
Fairly likely	19.5	18.6	16.6	15.5	16.2
Not very likely	75.5	76.3	79.9	80.6	80.3
(N)	(1,601)	(1,655)	(1,777)	(1,553)	(1,627)

Defence Links with the United States

1993: ‘As you know Australia is allied with the United States in the ANZUS Treaty. How important do you think the United States alliance under ANZUS is for protecting Australia’s security?’

1996-2007: ‘As you know Australia is allied with the United States in the ANZUS Treaty. How important do you think the United States alliance under ANZUS is for protecting Australia’s security?’

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Very important	36.5	55.4	47.0	57.9	45.3	41.5
Fairly important	42.1	33.4	41.1	31.9	39.2	42.9
Not very important	18.2	9.0	9.6	8.3	12.2	12.1
Not at all important	3.1	2.2	2.3	1.9	3.3	3.5
(N)	(2,325)	(1,730)	(1,848)	(1,970)	(1,736)	(1,841)

1996-2007: ‘If Australia’s security were threatened by some other country, how much trust do you feel Australia can have in the United States to come to Australia’s defence?’

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
A great deal	25.4	35.5	33.1	38.5	33.4	31.3
A fair amount	43.3	45.1	46.7	44.5	39.9	43.5
Not very much	27.0	16.2	17.7	14.4	22.5	20.7
None at all	4.3	3.2	2.5	2.6	4.2	4.5
(N)	(2,329)	(1,736)	(1,857)	(1,973)	(1,733)	(1,842)

Relations with Asia

1996-2007: ‘The statements below indicate some of the changes that have been happening in Australia over the years. For each one, please say whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is about right?’

Building closer relations with Asia

	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Much too far	10.9	8.7	5.1	4.5	4.4
Too far	13.2	11.8	10.0	8.1	8.5
About right	53.6	55.0	51.0	51.5	60
Not far enough	17.7	20.2	26.7	29.0	22
Not nearly far enough	4.7	4.3	7.1	6.9	5.1
(N)	(1,759)	(1,806)	(1,917)	(1,686)	(1,814)

Trends in Australian Political Opinion

1993-2007: 'During the election campaign, there was a lot of discussion about Australia's trade with other countries. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.'

Australia's trading future lies with Asia

	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007
Strongly agree	23.1	20.9	11.1	10.8	14.4	25.9
Agree	45.5	45.4	43.7	46.0	49.0	30.8
Not sure	23.6	25.6	30.0	32.7	27.8	20.1
Disagree	6.0	6.5	11.9	8.4	6.6	16.5
Strongly disagree	1.8	1.5	3.4	2.1	2.2	6.7
(N)	(2,277)	(1,715)	(1,836)	(1,938)	(1,717)	(1,816)

Appendix B: The Australian Election Study

The Australian Election Study (AES) surveys are designed to collect data during federal elections for academic research on Australian electoral behaviour and public opinion. Since 1998 the AES has been a member of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) group (see <http://www.cses.org>). The AES commenced operation in 1987 (although three academic surveys of political behaviour were collected in 1967, 1969 and 1979, respectively, but they are not strictly speaking election surveys).

The AES routinely collects data among a nationally representative sample of voters and among major party candidates standing for election. Both the voter and candidate instruments combine a common set of questions. The AES is mounted as a collaborative exercise between several Australian universities. The first survey was funded by a consortium of universities; all of the subsequent surveys have been funded on a competitive basis by the Australian Research Council.

Each of the nine surveys conducted to date has had a central theme:

- 1987: The economy;
- 1990: The environment and environmentalism;
- 1993: Political culture;
- 1996: National identity and citizenship;
- 1998: Constitution, rights and minorities;
- 1999: Constitutional referendum;
- 2001: Challenges to governance;
- 2004: The decline of political parties;
- 2007: Democracy and representation

All of the data are publicly available from the Australian Social Science Data Archive at The Australian National University (see <http://assda.anu.edu.au/>). In the case of the candidate data, demographic variables are removed so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

Year	Principal Investigators	Funder	Study Number
1987	Ian McAllister, Anthony Mughan	University of NSW, ANU	ASSDA 445
1990	Ian McAllister, Roger Jones, David Gow	University of NSW, ANU	ASSDA 570
1993	Roger Jones, Ian McAllister, David Denemark, David Gow	ARC/ A79131812	ASSDA 763
1996	Roger Jones, Ian McAllister, David Gow	ARC/ A79530652	ASSDA 943
1998	Clive Bean, David Gow, Ian McAllister	ARC/A79804144	ASSDA 1001
1999	David Gow, Clive Bean, Ian McAllister	ARC/ A79937265	ASSDA 1018
2001	Clive Bean, David Gow, Ian McAllister	ARC/ A00106341	ASSDA 1048
2004	Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Rachel Gibson, David Gow	ARC/ DP0452898	ASSDA 1079
2007	Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, David Gow, Rachel Gibson	ACSPRI/ACSR	ASSDA 1120

Methodology

Voters. All the studies are national, post-election self-completion surveys with the sample drawn randomly from the electoral register. The 1993 AES oversampled in some of the smaller states and because of this the sample was weighted down to a national sample of 2,388 respondents. The overall response rates have varied, the most recent survey producing a response rate of 44.5 percent. In 2001 and 2004 an online survey was conducted in parallel with the regular AES.

The 1987-2007 AES Voter Response Rates

	Total sample	Moved/gone away	Refusals/ non-responses	Valid responses	Effective response ^a
1987	3,061	156	1,080	1,825	62.8
1990	3,606	125	1,461	2,020	58.0
1993	4,950	137	1,790	3,023	62.8
1996	3,000	95	1,110	1,795	61.8
1998	3,502	215	1,391	1,896	57.7
2001	4,000	369	1,621	2,010	55.4
2004	4,250	275	2,206	1,769	44.5
2007	5,000	337	2,790	1,873	40.2

a Estimated as: valid responses/(total sample—moved or gone away).

The sample is drawn by the Australian Electoral Commission from their computerised rolls (with the exception of one state, where the sample had to be manually drawn in 1987 and 1990). Respondents are then mailed on the Monday following the federal election (which is held on a Saturday). The envelopes contain an individually-addressed and signed letter explaining the purposes of the study and a guarantee of confidentiality, the questionnaire, and a return postage-paid envelope. One week later all respondents are mailed a thank you/reminder postcard; this postcard has a considerable impact on the response rate.

About three weeks following Wave 2, a second follow-up of all respondents who had by that time not returned questionnaires or who had not indicated that they wished to be excluded from the study is mailed. The follow-up envelope consists, once again, of an individually-addressed and signed letter re-stating the purposes of the study and emphasising confidentiality, another questionnaire, and a return post-paid envelope. In the 1987 survey a fourth and final wave was used, consisting of a letter. However, this elicited comparatively few extra responses and was not considered cost-effective; it has not been used in the post-1987 surveys.

These extensive follow-ups, summarised below, account for the comparatively high response rates of the AES surveys, bearing in mind the self-completion methodology. The survey remains in the field for about 8 weeks; the bulk of the responses are received following waves 1 and 2.

- Wave 1 Questionnaire, letter Week 1
- Wave 2 Thank you/reminder postcard Week 2
- Wave 3 Questionnaire, letter Week 5
- Wave 4 Final letter Week 7

Candidates. The Australian Candidates Study (ACS) surveys are conducted in parallel with the surveys of voters. In 1987 all candidates for the House of Representatives and Senate were sampled. Since 1990 the surveys have been restricted to samples of all major party candidates, plus identifiable Green and other environmental candidates. This restriction was designed to cut costs, since about half of the total number of candidates were minor party or independent candidates, almost all of whom lost their deposits. In 1993 the criteria were broadened to include other candidates whom it was anticipated would obtain more than 10 per cent of the first preference vote.

The 1987-2004 Australian Candidate Surveys

	Election candidates			ACS		
	House of Reps	Senate	Total	Total	Valid response	Effective % response ^b
1987	613	255 ^a	868	868	612	70.5
1990	782	223	1,005	631	410	65.0
1993	943	266	1,209	593	415	70.0
1996	908	255	1,163	672	427	63.5
2001	1,039	285	1,324	840	477	56.8
2004	1,091	330	1,421	998	535	53.6
2007	1,054	367	1,421	952	470	49.9

a Double dissolution election for the Senate. Other elections were half-Senate.

b Estimated as valid responses/total.

The survey instruments are mailed to candidates about one week after the election. As in the voters' survey, the envelopes contain an individually-addressed and signed letter explaining the purposes of the study and a guarantee of confidentiality, the questionnaire, and a return postage-paid envelope. In addition, a letter of introduction from the candidate's political party is usually included. Approximately one week later a thank you/reminder postcard is mailed to all those included in the survey. A follow-up of all survey respondents who do not return questionnaires or who do not indicate that they wish to be excluded from the study is conducted about six weeks after the election. The follow-up envelope consists of an individually-addressed and signed letter re-stating the purposes of the study and emphasising confidentiality, another questionnaire, and a return post-paid envelope.

The ACS surveys are concerned with political background such as electoral history, party political involvement and membership of community organisations, questions relating to the role of the elected representative, the conduct of the election campaign and the party selection process, the deciding factors that resulted in them standing for election, and the support they received from family, friends and various subgroups. A major component of the candidate survey is to replicate questions asked of the voters. This enables us to bring a unique perspective to bear on the election, by examining not only how voters evaluated election issues, but the perspectives that party elites brought to bear on them and, most important of all for public policy outcomes, the views of federal elected representatives.