

What Explains the Rise of Minor Parties in British General Elections since 1997?

James Downes

University of Essex

Abstract

This paper charts the rise of minor parties in British General Elections since 1997 at the ballot box. The first model states that issues such as environmentalism, immigration, and Europe have become more important in the calculus of voters and have given voters greater opportunities to vote for minor parties such as the Greens, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), and the British National Party (BNP) on Election Day. The second explanation focuses on structural changes in society and how the emergence of a more educated society has led to an increase in single-issue parties such as the Green Party. The second model outlines that a large part of minor party success is due to a protest thesis, where voters have shifted away from mainstream parties and voted for minor parties as a result. The paper argues that by shifting towards the centre-ground, the Conservative and Labour Party may have alienated their core voters to shift towards far-right parties such as the BNP and UKIP. The paper concludes by arguing that minor parties in Britain have had greater success at European and local elections, and that their rise in support has largely been hindered by institutional mechanisms such as the First-Past-The-Post system. The paper utilises examples from the federal system of Belgium where a proportional representation system is adopted and minor parties appear to have had greater representation under this type of electoral system.

“Third [Minor] parties are like bees: once they have stung, they die.”¹(Goodwin, 2011).

¹ The original statement was first coined by Richard Hofstadter in 1959. The remark initially made by Hofstadter related to third Parties and the stinging effect in 1955. I have inserted the term ‘minor’ here to replicate Hofstadter’s original analysis of Third Parties.

Keywords: UK Elections, minor parties, mainstream parties

Introduction

In the political science literature, the study of minor parties is a relatively new phenomenon. (Meguid, 2005; Birch, 2009; Goodwin et al., 2007). Since 1997, a number of minor parties have increased their vote share at the national level²(Webb, 2005). Independent candidates such as Dr Richard Taylor have experienced success, running for Parliament in 2001 and winning³(Webb, 2005). The landmark for minor party success came at the 2010 General Election, where the Green Party gained its first Member of Parliament (MP) in the constituency of Brighton Pavilion (Walker, 2010). Parties such as UKIP and to a lesser extent, the BNP, also continued their rise at the national level in the 2010 General Election.⁴This paper charts the rise of minor parties in British General Elections post-1997⁵ and the mechanisms responsible, from both a theoretical and empirical perspective. The first section of the paper defines the concept of the term 'minor parties' and outlines General Election data since 1997. I utilise two models from contemporary political science literature to explain the mechanisms for the rise in support: the Opportunities and Social Structure Model and the Protest Thesis Model.⁶The second section includes a brief caveat, analysing the limitations to minor party success since 1997 at the national level.⁷

² Data showing the increase in support for the minor parties will be outlined later on in the paper.

³ Dr Richard Taylor was the Independent MP for Wyre Forest between 2001 and 2010 and lost his seat at the 2010 General Election.

⁴ From now on, the United Kingdom Independence Party and the British National Party will be referred to as UKIP and the BNP respectively.

⁵ The minor parties that I have chosen to include in this analysis are the British National Party, the United Kingdom Independence Party and the Green Party. The Respect Party will only feature intermittently in this essay. I will not include parties such as the United Kingdom Referendum Party, or parties that are dominant in Northern Ireland Politics such as Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party, as these parties either abstain from sitting in Westminster or are more predominant in the politics that shape Northern Ireland. Additionally, I will not explore the SNP in this paper as I do not deem this party to be a minor party, due to its electoral predominance in Scottish Politics.

⁶ This Model focuses on the perceived negativity or weakness of mainstream parties on behalf of the electorate. A general feeling of alienation is prevalent here. Minor parties such as the BNP and UKIP are the major beneficiaries from this Model.

⁷ This argument focuses on the effect of institutional factors such as electoral systems which can hinder and aid minor parties on the whole.

What defines a Minor Party in the United Kingdom?

Disagreements have arisen within the political science literature in defining minor parties. (Meguid, 2005; Copus et al., 2009). A myriad of labels have been used to define minor parties, ranging from 'hinge' parties, to labels such as 'anti-system', 'pro-system', 'niche' parties and 'anti-establishment' parties (Copus et al., 2009, p. 9). Sartori (1976) defines minor parties in terms of their blackmail capacity and of the way in which they can influence mainstream parties through their blackmail potential. The Copus et al. terminology defines minor parties as having a small electoral base that competes regularly at general and local elections. The Copus et al. definition is adopted instead of the Sartori model as it provides a more comprehensive definition overall, with the Sartori classification merely focusing on the blackmail capacity of minor parties. Furthermore, political parties such as the Green Party do not act in a blackmail capacity, thus limiting the scope of the Sartori model.

Minor parties in the United Kingdom tend to operate around different ideologies and have divergent spatial positions (Clarke et al. 2004). In terms of spatial location, minor parties have tended to compete spatially around a narrow electoral space. Parties such as the BNP and UKIP have predominantly acted as protest parties in capturing support (Goodwin et al., 2009). UKIP competes electorally towards the far-right of the ideological spectrum and has tended to appeal to disaffected Conservative supporters on policy areas such as the European Union (Abedi et al., 2009). On the whole, the BNP adopts a different spatial position. Similarly, to UKIP, the BNP positions itself towards the right-wing of the spectrum on issues such as immigration, the European Union, law and order. However, in contrast to UKIP, the BNP have adopted a left-wing view on the economy as the party seeks to nationalize core services and holds sceptical views towards privatization (Goodwin, 2007). Conversely, the Green Party traditionally adopts a moderate centre-left ideological position, and their core policy issue is the environment (Birch, 2009).

Minor Party General Election Data Post-1997

Traditionally, minor parties have performed better in European and local level elections, with scholars arguing that voters vote for minor parties at these elections due to dissatisfaction with mainstream parties. Other explanations centre on the differing electoral system that is used to elect

representatives from member states in European Parliament elections (Goodwin, 2007). Election data in the United Kingdom since 1997 shows empirically how parties' vote shares have increased in Westminster elections. Table 1 shows the evolution of vote shares since 1997 for both the minor and mainstream parties in the United Kingdom. The table shows that support for mainstream parties at General Elections has decreased since 1997, with the Conservative and Labour Party experiencing the sharpest decrease in support. In turn, minor parties such as the Greens, UKIP, and the BNP have increased their overall vote shares (Bastion, 2010).

1. The Green Party:

The Green Party gained 0.21% of the total vote at the 1997 General Election and marked a decline from the 1992 General Election when the party received 0.52% of the total vote. Since the 1997 General Election the Green Party has increased its share of the vote at every General Election apart from the 2010 General Election. Whilst the Green Party vote decreased from 1.04% in 2005 to 0.96% in 2010 (Electoral Reform Society, 2010; Kimber, 2012), the party received its first Green MP in Parliament with Dr. Caroline Lucas gaining the seat of Brighton Pavilion. This marked a breakthrough for the party (Birch, 2010).

2. UKIP:

The overall vote share for UKIP has increased since 1997. The party's vote share went from 0.34% in 1997 to 1.48% in 2001 (Kimber, 2012). The party received its highest overall share of the vote at the 2005 and 2010 General Elections. The party achieved 2.20% and 3.10% of the vote respectively in the 2005 and 2010 General Elections. Though the party received 920,000 votes at the 2010 General Election, UKIP were not able to capitalise on this and win a seat in the House of Commons (Electoral Reform Society, 2010). The inability of UKIP to win a seat at the 2010 General Election can largely be explained by the mechanics of the First-Past-The-Post electoral system which tends to penalise smaller parties and reduce the chances of these parties translating their vote shares into seats (Duverger, 1972).

3. The BNP:

Similar to UKIP, the BNP has failed to translate aggregate level increases to individual level increases in constituencies across the UK. From 1997 onwards, the British National Party has increased its share of the vote at every General Election. The percentage of votes for the party in

What Explains the Rise of Minor Parties in British General Elections since 1997?

1997 was 0.1% and in 2002 had increased to 0.2%. The party has gained its highest levels of support in 2005 and 2010, where the party gained 0.7% and 1.9% of the overall vote respectively (United Kingdom General Election Results Database, 2010). Although the party increased its vote share to nearly 2% at the 2010 General Election, the BNP failed to capture any seats in Westminster.⁸ Empirically speaking, minor parties have increased their vote share at Westminster elections yet have failed to translate these vote shares into seats since 1997 and have tended to perform better at European Parliament and local level elections.

Table 1: Evolution of Vote Shares post-1997 at UK General Elections (Kimber, 2012)

General Election Year	Conservatives	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green	UKIP	BNP
1997	30.70%	43.20%	16.80%	0.30%	0.30%	0.10%
2001	31.70%	40.70%	18.30%	0.60%	1.50%	0.20%
2005	32.40%	35.20%	22.00%	0.90%	2.20%	0.70%
2010	36.10%	29.00%	23.00%	0.90%	3.10%	1.90%

Two Divergent Models that Explain the Rise of Minor Parties post-1997

Model I- Opportunities and Social Structure Model

This Model is two-fold in its explanation of the success of minor parties' post-1997 at UK General Elections.

i. New Policy Avenues giving rise to greater voting opportunities:

This Model states that minor party success at UK General elections since 1997 can be attributed to new policy avenues, such as environmentalism, that have given younger middle class voters greater incentives to vote at General elections for credible moderate parties, such as the UK Green Party

⁸ Since the 2010 General Election, the BNP has faced competition from the English Defence League and the party has been marred by a series of internal disputes.

(Birch, 2009). According to scholars such as Birch (2009), the UK Green Party is perceived to be the most competent party in resolving environmental issues, thus drawing a range of middle class young voters to vote for the party. Nonetheless, the predominant rise of core issues such as immigration and unemployment in the policy making arena has facilitated the rise and relative success of both the UKIP and the BNP post-1997. These anti-political establishment parties have surfaced, providing voters with opportunities to vote for parties whose policies are solely dominated by issues of discontent (Goodwin, 2007). Empirical research conducted by YouGov indicates that a large extent of gains on behalf of both parties post-1997 were achieved by the party attracting supporters who generally adopt an anti-immigrant and anti-European stance (Goodwin et al., 2010).⁹

ii. The changing social structure of society:

The Model posits that the social structure of society in the UK has changed. Inglehart's (1990) post-materialist thesis emphasises that society is structured on a different basis in the post-globalized world, with western economies shifting increasingly from industrial manufacturing towards a service based economy (Hay, 1999). Greater emphasis was placed on education in empowering the individual in society (Berlin, 2004).¹⁰ The emergence of a more educated society and an embracing of the post-materialist agenda through a green economy may explain why liberal and arguably single-issue parties¹¹ such as the UK Green Party have made significant inroads at Westminster Elections (Birch, 2009). Issues such as environmentalism have arguably empowered younger voters, conceivably breaking down core socialization ties (Clarke et al., 2004) and giving greater opportunities to vote and influence the political system (Birch, 2009). Inglehart's thesis may also explain why parties such as the BNP and UKIP have gained support, as the effect of the post-materialist thesis may be that, paradoxically, embracing the globalized and economically

⁹ See the YouGov 2009 European Parliament study.

¹⁰ This conforms to the positive conception of liberty. Both the negative and the positive conceptions of liberty were differentiated in Berlin's seminal work that focused on the divergent two concepts of liberty. A core tenet of New Labour was the doctrine of equality of opportunity which replaced the former democratic socialist goal of the party, pertaining to equality of outcome.

¹¹ Parties such as the Green Party and, to a lesser extent, both the UKIP and the BNP, can be viewed as parties which have single-interests in terms of the policy sphere. For example, the UK Green Party espouse environmentalism and pursue shallow ecological policies, but parties such as the BNP and UKIP predominantly adopt policies focussed specifically on the issue of Immigration or Europe respectively.

interdependent world (Beitz, 1979) may have fostered the nationalistic and anti-European attitude of both the far-right parties and their voters.

Similarly, the Dunleavy (1980) thesis asserts that new sectoral cleavages have emerged that cut across traditional social class divides. With higher levels of unemployment and the decline of working class occupations under both the Thatcherite and New Labour governments, the BNP have fed on the discontent of the working classes (Jones, 2011). With unemployment highly concentrated in old mining towns and general discontent with New Labour's shift to the centre-right, the BNP support has won extensive political capital in areas which have high levels of relative deprivation (Goodwin et al., 2010). The BNP has also campaigned on the necessity to reverse the globalized economy of the UK, impose tariffs on foreign products and implement a nationalist based economy (Copsey, 2011). Factors such as these may explain the success of parties such as the BNP since 1997.

Model II- The Protest Thesis Model

This model posits that minor parties have accrued increasing levels of electoral success due to a perceived negativity towards mainstream parties. Mainstream parties in the UK have failed "to aggregate and represent adequately the diverse range of views and interests that make up the political dynamic" (Copus et al., 2009).

i. The BNP:

If one observes the UK Labour Party and the general electoral fortunes of the BNP since 1997, protest voting and greater electoral volatility may have conceivably led to the increase in support for the BNP. However, there is no clear data that can empirically verify the causality of this claim. Blair's premiership as Labour Prime Minister saw a shift in policies, with the revision of Clause IV which outlined the party's historical commitment towards the nationalisation of public services. New Labour now espoused privatization policies and arguably the party shifted towards the spatial position of the centre-right (Odmalm, 2012). The Labour Party maximized its electoral position by conforming to the Downsian Model and seeking the median voter (Downs, 1957). The perceived notion amongst many working class voters was that New Labour had abandoned the working class, by embracing higher levels of immigration to the detriment of British workers (Goodwin et al.,

2009). With higher levels of unemployment in manual industry and a perceived fear amongst working class voters that directly equated higher levels of unemployment with increased levels of immigration, it appears that the protest thesis holds.

Concurrently, Goodwin and Ford have shown an empirical relationship between former disaffected working class Labour voters voting for the BNP (Goodwin 2007). Linehan hypothesized a similar statistical model which purports that an increase of BNP support, not only at local, but also at national elections post-1997, can be attributed to protest voting by traditional former working class Labour voters (Linehan, 2005). The BNP has sought to distinguish itself outside the political sphere, as an anti-political establishment party, with its strong stance on immigration and a strong nationalistic state directly opposed to the UK Labour Party's stance on these issues, and to a lesser extent, the UK Conservative Party (Abedi, 2009). Goodwin remarks on the "disaffected white working class" who feel betrayed by the ideological shift of the Labour Party and have thus protested in an antipathetic manner, either directly or indirectly by voting for the BNP (Goodwin, 2011, p. 98).

ii. The UKIP:

The UKIP sees itself "as a challenger to the parties that make up the political establishment" (Abedi, 2009, p. 74). The notion that mainstream parties are perceived to be weak on policy issues such as immigration arguably leads to direct political capital for UKIP. Ideologically, UKIP is a Eurosceptic centre-right party, its support is drawn primarily from antipathetic right-wing Conservative party voters, who feel disaffected by the current policies of the Conservative hierarchy in relation to Europe and immigration (Goodwin et al. 2009). The Conservative Party's policy on the Euro has arguably had a detrimental effect on their right-wing support base. The issue has become side-lined under Cameron's period as party leader, with the party preferring to ignore the toxic issue of Europe, by advocating that any future decision on Europe would be decided through a referendum on the issue (Goodwin et al., 2009). UKIP provides an alternative for disaffected right-wing voters, with their tough stance on immigration and their hostility towards supranational institutions, therefore providing a basis for disaffected former Tory voters to join (Daniel, 2005). UKIP has operated as a blackmail party in the Sartori (1976) mould, by shifting the Conservatives towards the right, in order to counteract the threat posed by UKIP. Empirical research solidifies the protest thesis by showing that the majority of UKIP respondents' attitudinal predictors are ideologically

right-wing, and hold anti-European Union sentiments (Goodwin et al., 2009). The study found that many voters voted for UKIP due to the negative policies on Europe and immigration that the Conservative Party espoused, alongside a high level of tactical voting by UKIP supporters (Goodwin et al., 2010). This has led to engendering the strength of the protest thesis model in explaining Minor party success since 1997, both at Westminster, European, and local level elections.

iii. The Green Party:

Green Party success post-1997 at UK General Elections can, to an extent, be explained by protest voting. A large degree of Green Party success may have been due to New Labour's centre-right shift according to Birch (2009). New Labour's weak stance on environmentalism and inability to achieve core goals in environmental reforms may have played an integral role in the protest vote, with affluent middle class Labour voters voting for the Greens due to their policy competence on environmentalism. Conceivably, disaffected middle-class Liberal Democrats may directly protest against the Liberal Democrats role in the Coalition at the next General Election (Birch, 2009). These voters may comprise discontented students who may voice their anger at fundamental former Liberal Democrat policies which have been jettisoned in Coalition, such as the increase in Tuition fees. A general perception is that the Liberal Democrat Party may have abandoned core principles of social liberalism, in favour of more classical liberal ideals, of a smaller state and less of an emphasis on pursuing a social reformist agenda (Carter, 2008). The Green Party may likely have been seen not merely as a protest vote by alienated Liberal Democrat voters, but as the most viable alternative party. To a lesser extent, minor parties like 'Respect' have achieved representation in Westminster through the election of Galloway, due to issues such as their strong stance on the Iraq War (Ingle, 2007). A general shift of Muslim voters occurred in Bethnal Green and Bow, with the latter virtually deserting the Labour Party in favour of the Respect Party and to a lesser extent, the Liberal Democrats (Quinn, 2005, p. 176). Therefore, the protest thesis explains that a large extent of support for Minor parties related broadly to voter disaffection, which had a detrimental effect on mainstream party support.

Limitations to minor party success post-1997: The dynamics of minor party support at the local level and the effect of institutional variables in hindering electoral support.

Both Models I and II explain a large degree of variance in the success of minor parties electorally since 1997 in the United Kingdom. Minor parties have gained increased levels of the vote share since 1997, both at national, local, and European level elections. Most significantly though, local and European elections are paramount in explaining the rise of minor party success post-1997 at a national level. In effect, local and European level elections have acted as a springboard for these parties, engendering higher levels of political capital at a national level, therefore boosting political and electoral credibility for these parties. Nonetheless, there are inherent limitations to their electoral success, with only the Green Party translating their vote share into pure electoral representation at Westminster. Firstly, if we compare the success of UK minor parties at General, European, and local elections, then clearly the performance of the majority of minor parties in the latter is far superior. What then explains minor party success at the local level? If we compare the party systems adopted by our West European counterparts, clearly, proportional representation based systems have had a direct impact in affecting the party system and subsequently empowering minor parties (Heywood et al., 2011). In consociational polities such as Belgium, minor parties commonly enter into Coalitions, due to the fragmented nature of the party system¹²(Deschouwer, 2012, pp. 61-3). In the region of Flanders in Belgium, minor parties such as the Flemish Liberals and Democrats, the Green Party and Vlaams Belang have had varying levels of electoral success, more so than minor parties have done in the UK (Mudde, 2000).

The core difference of the minor parties in Flanders is that these minor parties have attained representation and seats in the Flemish Parliament (Hainsworth, 2000). A few studies on minor parties have focussed on institutional variables, such as how the electoral system impacts directly

¹² The political separations in Belgium are clearly defined in the Constitution. Belgium is a federal state in which the communities and regions exercise different powers. There are three main language communities in Belgium, namely the Flemish Community, the French Community, and the German Community. The three regions are the Flemish Region, The Brussels Capital Region, and the Walloon Regions. For the sake of clarity, the paper solely focuses on the Flemish legislature which creates laws for the Flemish Community and Flemish Region and works independently from the federal legislature and the legislature of the other Communities and Regions. For further information see: http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/government/federale_staats/structure/

on their success (Norris, 2005). As noted earlier, a tendency of the First-Past-The-Post electoral system is that it disadvantages smaller parties, thus making it more difficult for vote shares to translate into seats at Parliament. Conversely, at European level elections, the BNP, UKIP, and the Greens have performed decidedly better (Clark, 2008). In the 2009 European Parliament Elections, the Green Party received 8.6% of the overall vote and the British National Party achieved 6.2%, considerably higher than what both parties achieved at Westminster elections. In terms of the minor parties, the biggest winners were the United Kingdom Independence Party who gained 16.5% of the vote with a total of 13 MEPs for the Party (BBC, 2009).

A large factor in the success of minor parties may be due to the proportional representation based electoral system that is used at European Parliament Elections (Curtice and Steed, 2001). Evidently, whilst minor parties have prospered since 1997 in the UK at General elections, the electoral system used hinders greater representation for these parties at the national legislature, with the above aforementioned parties performing markedly better at both second and third order elections (Goodwin et al., 2009).

Conclusion

This essay has explored two different models that explain the mechanisms behind the rise of minor parties in UK General elections since 1997. Empirically, minor parties increased their respective vote shares at a national level. I believe both Models I and II explain the success adequately.¹³ Greater opportunities have arisen in minor parties in the UK gaining more exposure and coverage, alongside the changed nature of the social structure in society, which has arguably increased their electoral strength post-1997. The Protest thesis engenders that a large extent of minor party success can be attributed to a negative trend towards mainstream parties, in terms of their policies and empirical data which validates the claim that partisan dealignment is increasing.¹⁴ This model explains that the BNP and UKIP have increased their vote shares by picking up disaffected

¹³ Nonetheless, if it is the case that the Protest thesis explains Minor Party success more than the opportunities and social structure model, then it is likely that future minor party inroads may rest on further protest voting, which could also act in a counter-productive manner for minor parties in the UK

¹⁴ This is evident through an increase in support both locally and nationally for minor parties such as: the UKIP, BNP, the Green Party, and to a lesser extent, Respect.

traditional working class voters and discontented right-wing Conservative voters. Section II briefly addressed the limitations to minor party success in the UK at national level. Institutional factors such as the First-Past-The-Post system have had a detrimental effect on minor party gains at national level, with the dynamics of local level support normally higher.¹⁵ Though minor parties have performed significantly well post-1997, clouds inevitably loom ever more on the horizon for minor parties such as the BNP, with party funds dried up, corruption scandals, and leadership problems engulfing the party. The BNP may be supplanted in the future by resurgent and expanding organisations such as the National Front and English Defence League. Question marks remain whether UKIP can gain representation in Westminster and whether the Green Party can hold onto their only seat. Hofstadter's poignant remark about the stinging effect of minor parties resonates well in today's fragmented political climate in the United Kingdom with electoral volatility high on the horizon.¹⁶ Time will tell whether minor parties wax or wane electorally in the future of British politics.

References

BBC NEWS. (2009). *European Election 2009: UK Results*. [Online] Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/elections/euro/09/html/ukregion_999999.stm> [Accessed 29 May 2013].

Beitz, C. (1979). *Political Theory and International Relations*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Berlin, I. (2004). *Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ These parties have a tendency to perform better electorally at both second and third order elections, rather than at the national level. Furthermore, the 2010 AV Referendum defeat will have been a bitter blow for Minor parties in the UK.

¹⁶ Recent events such as the 2011 London Riots encapsulate the negativity towards not only mainstream parties but, in general, towards the political establishment. Additionally, the 2009-10 expenses scandal may have led to increased levels of minor party support at the 2010 General Election.

What Explains the Rise of Minor Parties in British General Elections since 1997?

Birch, S. (2009). "Real Progress, Prospects for Green Party Support in Britain". *Journal of Parliamentary Affairs*, 62(1), pp. 53-71.

Carter, N. (2008). "The Green Party: Emerging from the Political Wilderness?" *Journal of British Politics*, 3(2), pp .223-40.

Clark, A., Bottom, K., and Copus, C. (2008). "More Similar Than They'd Like to Admit? Ideology, Policy and Populism in the Trajectories of the British National Party and Respect". *Journal of British Politics*, 3(4), pp. 511-34.

Clarke, H. D. et al. (2004). *Political Choice in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copsey, N. and Macklin, G. (eds.). (2011). *The British National Party: Contemporary Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Copus, C. et al. (2009). "Minor Party and Independent Politics beyond the Mainstream: Fluctuating Fortunes but a Permanent Presence". *Journal of Parliamentary Affairs*, 62(1), pp. 4-18.

Curtice, J. and Steed M. (2001). An Analysis of the Results, In: Butler, D. and Kavanagh, D. (eds.). *The British General Election of 2001*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 304-38.

Cutts, D., Ford, R., and Goodwin, M. J. (2009). "Anti-Immigrant, Politically Disaffected or Still Racist After All? Examining the Attitudinal Drivers of Extreme Right Support in Britain in the 2009 European Elections". *European Journal of Political Research*, 50(3), pp. 1-10.

Daniel, M. (2005). *Cranks and Gadflies: The Story of UKIP*. London: Timewell Press.

Deschouwer, K. (2012). *The Politics of Belgium: Governing A Divided Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Downs, A. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.

Dunleavy, P. and Boucek, F. (2003). "Constructing the Number of Parties." *Journal of Party Politics*, 9(3), pp. 291-315.

What Explains the Rise of Minor Parties in British General Elections since 1997?

Dunleavy, P. (1980). "The Political Implications of Sectoral Cleavages and the Growth of State Employment, Part 2, Cleavage Structures And Political Alignment". *Journal of Political Studies*, 28(1), pp. 527-49.

Duverger, M. (1972). "Factors in a Two-Party and Multiparty System". *Journal of Party Politics and Pressure Groups*, pp. 23-32.

Electoral Reform Society. (2010). *The UK General Election 2010 In-depth*. London: The Electoral Reform Society.

Ford, R., Goodwin, M. J., and Cutts, D. (2010). "Strategic Eurosceptics and polite xenophobes: Support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the 2009 Parliament elections". *European Journal of Political Research*, 51(2), pp. 204-34.

Ford, R. and Goodwin, M. J. (2010). "Angry White Men: Individual and Contextual predictors of support for the British National Party". *Journal of Political Studies*, 58(1), pp. 1-25.

Goodwin, M. J. (2007) "The Extreme Right in Britain: Still an 'Ugly Duckling' but for How Long?" *The Political Quarterly*, 78 (2), pp. 241-250.

Goodwin, M. J. (2011). *New British fascism: A rise of the British National Party*. Abingdon : Routledge.

Grant, W. (2000). *Pressure groups and British politics*. Basingstoke : Macmillan.

Hainsworth, P. (2000). *The Politics of the Extreme Right, From the Margins to the Mainstream*. London : Pinter.

Hay, C. (1999). *The Political Economy of New Labour*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Heywood, P. et al. (2011). *Developments in European Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ingle, S. (2007). *The British Party System: An Introduction*, 4th Edition. London: Routledge.

What Explains the Rise of Minor Parties in British General Elections since 1997?

Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jones, O. (2011). *Chavs: Demonization of the Working Class*. London: Verso Books.

Kimber, R. (2012). *Party Vote in UK General Elections since 1945*. Political Science Resources, [Online] Available at: <<http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/partyvote.htm>> [Accessed: 18 December 2013].

Laakso, M. R. and Taagepera, R. (1979). "Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe". *Journal of Comparative Political Studies*, 12(3), pp. 3-27.

Linehan, T. (2005). Whatever happened to the Labour movement? Proletarians and the far right in Contemporary Britain. In: Copsey, N. and Renton, D. (eds.). *British Fascism, the Labour movement and the state*. Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, pp. 160-81.

Lynch, P. (2007). "Party System change in Britain: Multi-Party Politics in a Multi-Level Polity". *Journal of British Politics*, 2(3), pp. 323-46.

Meguid, B. (2005) "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success". *American Political Science Review*, 99(3) pp. 347-59.

Mudde, C. (2000). *The Ideology of the extreme right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Norris, P. (2005). *Radical Right, Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Odmalm, P. (2012). "Party competition and positions on immigration: Strategic advantages and spatial locations." *Comparative European Politics*, 10(1), pp. 1-22.

Quinn, T. (2006). "Choosing the Least-Worst Government: The British General Election of 2005". *West European Politics*, 29(1), pp. 169-78.

Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and Party Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

What Explains the Rise of Minor Parties in British General Elections since 1997?

Walker, P. (2010). *Historic win for Greens in tight Brighton race*. The Guardian. Available at: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/may/07/greens-historic-win-brighton>> [Accessed: 27 January 2012].

Webb, P. (2000). *The Modern British Party System*. London: SAGE Publications.

Webb, P. (2005). "The Continuing Advance of the Minor Parties". *Parliamentary Affairs*, 58(4), pp. 757-75.