Spatial Variations in Economic Attitudes and Voting Behaviour in Britain, 1983-92

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Acknowledgements

So much has changed since I began this thesis. In October 1990, Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister and John Major her Chancellor, Neil Kinnock led the Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrats did not even exist under that name. Britain had not even entered the ERM, Maastricht was only a small town in the Netherlands, there were no such places as 'the former Yugoslavia' or 'the former Soviet Union', and the excellent performance of exit polls in predicting the results of by-elections had generally contributed to the exemplary reputation of opinion polls among psephologists.

There are countless people without whom this research would never have been finished. Their support and assistance is greatly appreciated and my deepest thanks go to all of them. Needless to say, if you have helped with any aspect of this thesis I am eternally thankful. I am especially grateful to Professor Ron Johnston and Dr Charles Pattie for encouraging me to carry on and for the generally excellent standard of supervision they provided. I hope that the result proves to be a testament to their faith. I also have to thank the staff at the *ESRC* Data Archive and Elaine Winter at *NOP* for the provision of data, Dr. Doug Watts, Dr. Alistair Kirkbride and Professor Rob Ferguson for computing expertise and technical advice, Matt Sutton for his inestimable analytical advice and to the computing staff at Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester (especially the late Roger Richards from Sheffield and Paul Lever from Image Processing at MCC) for their willingness to address my problems.

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Dedication

For my grandfather Tom Russell, to whom I owe so much more than my middle name, my parents for their unending love and support, and the people responsible for making May 16 1987 the best day of my life; Ogrizovic, Phillips, Downs, Kilcline, Rodger, Peake, McGrath, Gynn, Bennett, Pickering, Houchen and Regis.

For something to be real, it must be local.

G.K. Chesterton

Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to assess the role of geography in the construction of economic attitudes and electoral behaviour in Britain during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Aggregate and individual level data are used to separate two specific time periods - the economic recovery of the 1980s and the 'new' recession of the early 1990s. The new recession also coincided with the long-campaign leading to the 1992 General Election, when the Conservatives were returned for a fourth successive term.

A two stage model of the relationship between social class, geography, economic attitudes and party support is constructed. Initially the link between geography and economic attitudes appears enigmatic. However, as the analysis progresses a clearer picture emerges of the geographic basis of prospective and retrospective, egocentric and sociotropic economic evaluations.

Analysis of Variance and Multiple Classification Analysis techniques reveal the extent of the growing geographic divide in party support and certain economic attitudes during the 1980s. A particularly crucial theme emerges with the investigation of partisanship during inter-election periods. Groups that tend to form the core of the Conservative vote in Election years, are identified as reluctant Conservatives in non-election years.

Important contextual effects are perceived in the analysis of reported vote intention, geography and economic attitudes in the run-up to the 1992 General Election. As well as the orthodox personal economic expectations variable, ascription of economic responsibility and economic approval for the Government's programme are shown to be critical to levels of Government support - and are spatially variable. Ordinary Least Squares and Logistic regression analysis reveal the precise role of geography in economic attitudes and party support. Here the 'devil is in the detail' as the interactions effects of the dependent variables reveal that when an individual's economic evaluations clashes with their geographic context, the contextual effect either dilutes - or overcomes completely - the economic effect. The analysis of individual level data represents an advance for electoral geography and for the study of geographic milieux and local socialisation effects.

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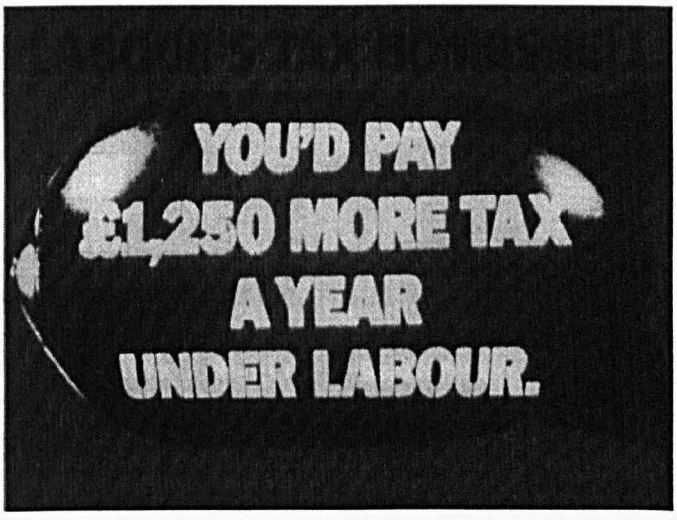
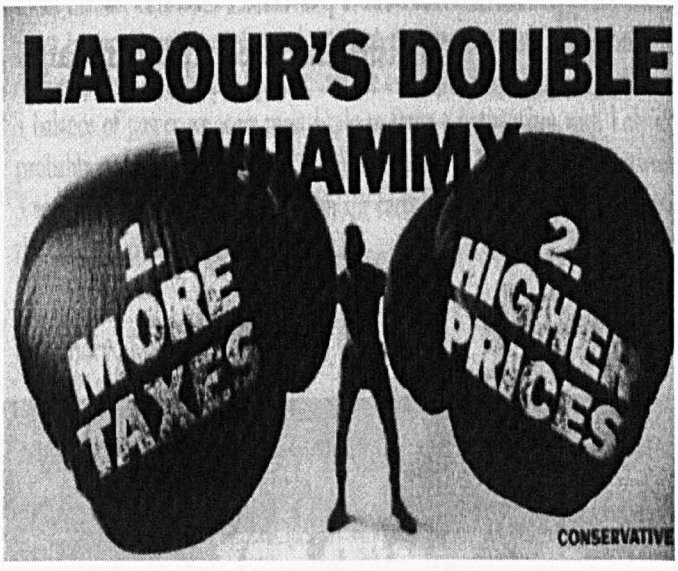
Introduction

Figure 1: Evidence of the Popular Link Between Personal Economy and Voting Patterns, 1959-92 (Sources; Butler, 1989 p.17; Crewe & Gosschalk, 1995; pp. 53-4).

'Well, gentlemen, I think we all fought a good fight . . .'





It is no exaggeration to say that the state of the economy is the key to government electoral success in modern times. Both politicians and academic analysts of elections have long recognised that the ability to deliver a strong, growing economy and rising levels of affluence among the electorate is a vital skill for the party of government to acquire (or at least be perceived to acquire). Harold Macmillan's celebrated "you've never had it so good" election victory in 1959 was won on a tide of growing public affluence which the incumbent government was able to present as the consequences of its policies (a point made humorously in a famous Trog cartoon, in which Mr Macmillan holds a post-election de-briefing session with a room full of consumer durables: figure 1). In modern jargon, the 1959 election was a classic "feel good" election. Some 33 years later, and in less propitious times for a government defending its economic record, the Conservatives recorded another notable election victory under John Major, despite a deep recession and a decline in consumer confidence. The party achieved this unlikely feat in part by playing on the economy. The clear message they presented to the electorate was "we know things are bad now, but they will get even worse if you elect anyone but us" (figure 1). The government managed a classic "feel bad" economic situation by playing on public perceptions that the other parties - especially Labour - were less reliable on economic matters than were the Conservatives.

The 1959 and 1992 elections are not untypical of post-war British electoral competition. It is now generally accepted that, in order to win, a party must be perceived by the electorate as more likely to deliver affluence (or at least less likely to deliver declining living standards) than its rivals. Increasingly sophisticated analyses have linked voting to the state of the economy (through so-called economic voting models) and (even more importantly in recent years) to public perceptions of the economy. Furthermore, powerful models have been developed to account for the link between the economy and party support not only at election time but also in inter-election periods.

Despite the growth in the academic study of economic voting, with a few exceptions, there is a tendency in the literature to treat the economy as though it was an undifferentiated whole. Britain's economy is treated, more often than not, as a single unit. However, there are good grounds for challenging this view. Perhaps the most important challenge is that the British economy varies markedly from region to region. As many commentators have shown, some regions can be mired in recession while others bask in economic growth and affluence. In other words, public perceptions of the state of the economy, and of government economic policy, may well vary markedly from place to place, depending on the state of the local economy. Some analyses have taken this on board, and have built the geography of the economy into their economic voting models, with encouraging results. However, even these studies have so far concentrated almost exclusively on the geography of the economic vote at election time only. Equally important, but so far seriously under-researched, are the inter-election dynamics of the effects of economic geography upon party support. This thesis seeks to fill that gap in the literature through an analysis of the inter-election links between geography, the economy, and party support in the period from 1983 to 1992.

The period 1979-92 saw major changes in Britain's economy, society and polity. Political change was in place from 1979, with the defeat of a Labour government, and the election of a new Conservative government committed to "rolling back the state" and breaking with the post-war consensus. The Conservatives went on to win (to date) four election victories in a row (an unprecedented feat in twentieth century British politics), culminating in their 1992 victory. For the most part, the party was able to govern throughout the period largely untroubled by the Parliamentary Opposition, thanks to a series of landslide victories (created in part by the split in the opposition vote between Labour and the Liberal-SDP Alliance, and in part by the geography of party

support). Thanks to their secure parliamentary base, the Conservatives were able to implement their radical agenda for change which, although not based on a coherent philosophy which lasted the full thirteen years between 1979 and 1992, drew on a belief in the need to reduce the economic power of the state and other interest groups (notable, but not only, the trades unions) and to create freer markets for capital.

Implementation of that agenda saw major changes to many aspects of the country's social, economic and political infrastructure. Change occurred everywhere, as manufacturing industry rapidly reduced in importance as an employer, and service industries grew - though they suffered somewhat in the recession that set in after 1990. However, whereas in some parts of the country those changes countered each other, with manufacturing decline paralleled by service-sector growth, in others the former occurred without the latter. Thus an economic and social divide - frequently referred to in shorthand as the North-South divide - opened up: the country was split between a relatively impoverished set of regions, mainly in the North, on the one hand, and an affluent set, mainly in the South-East, on the other.

Was this economic and social divide also a political one? Did the voting habits of residents of different regions change to follow it? Much psephological work during the early 1980s and early 1990s has focused on the economic determinants of voting - what is sometimes termed the 'feel good factor'; those who benefit economically from Government policies are more likely to reward incumbents with their vote, whatever their class and other backgrounds, whereas those who suffer are more likely to punish the incumbents by voting for the opposition. A number of analysts have argued that this link exists, but their evidence - almost all of it drawn from aggregate level data - is circumstantial only, and so while there is implicit support for the case that spatial variation should be introduced to voting models, there is no explicit evidence which

provides unequivocal support. Making that explicit link is the purpose of this thesis, using two datasets that allow voting intentions to be linked with economic attitudes and regional location during both the mid-1980s and the early 1990s.

The first task of this thesis is to identify the niche for the research conducted here. This involves the fusion of electoral geography, and elements of rational choice theory, social psychological models of electoral behaviour and econometric modelling. The central theme of this thesis concerns geographic variation in voting and in economic attitudes. This leads directly to the consideration of a number of interconnecting themes concerning why people vote they way they do, and why people from different parts of the country vote and apparently think differently from each other.

There was a pronounced regional geography of recession and recovery in the 1980s and 1990s. How well or badly the economy seemed to be depended very much on which part of the country was being investigated. As a consequence there were *a priori* grounds to expect that the 1980s and 1990 would provide an excellent setting for this research, since the geographic context was especially pertinent to the nature of the economic revival of the 1983-9 period and the new downturn of the early 1990s.

0.1 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Chapter One sets up the frames of reference that the thesis revolves around. There are five themes of study identified in this chapter; the self-interest axiom (which introduces the concepts of egocentric and sociotropic voting), the reward-punishment axiom (which includes a discussion of retrospective and prospective voting), the economy, economic perceptions and the spatial dimension. The third theme - the economy - is shown to be the linchpin between the other four.

The first chapter, then, attempts to show the interdependence of the five themes, and concludes that there are four faces of economic attitudes which ought to be studied; the egocentric and sociotropic, the retrospective and the prospective. All of these faces are important in the study of voting behaviour and all were likely to be spatially variable in the 1980s and 1990s.

The next task is to lock the research into place. That is to make the political, economic and geographic context of the 1980s and 1990s clear. This is the task of Chapter Two.

The political environment of this period included three consecutive Conservative election victories, a period of intense international crisis in the Gulf and a change in the leadership of the Conservative Party - and thus the premiership of the country.

Economically, the country underwent a considerable recovery in the 1983-9 period (as the service and financial sectors expanded rapidly) and a renewed slump in the 1990-2 period, as this expansion could not be sustained. Governments tend to be more confident about their chances of winning an Election if the electorate appears sanguine about the economic outlook. A recession - or indeed a spatially variable recovery - might spell trouble for an incumbent Government. The search for the 'feel good factor' associated with economic performance is seen as a crucial part of the recent electoral strategy of British Governments.

The changing economic structure of Britain during this period brought with it a changing geographic reality. The 1980s economic recovery was based in the South of England - the depressed manufacturing sector which was concentrated in Scotland, Wales and the North missed out during the economic regeneration of the 1980s. Furthermore the 1990s economic recession - unlike the early

1980s recession hit the service sector - and thus the South of the country; unemployment impacted on previously protected parts of the economy (and parts of the country). Consequently the changing geographic context of the 1980s and the 1990s is a crucial theme throughout the thesis, and is explored in detail in Chapter Two.

Once the scene has been set, the next task is to introduce the link between geography and attitudes. There are competing theories concerning the transmission of attitudes via geographic criteria. The Chapter attempts to outline the themes of geographic milieux and a lifetime of learning, of compositional and contextual geographic effects, of regional and functional causation.

Finally, the chapter outlines the hypothesised models of Government support, geography and economic attitudes. There are two types of geographic model - set out in Chapter Two - measured throughout the empirical chapters of the thesis. These are the regional and functional operationalisations of geography. The former includes the familiar North-South cleavage, the latter stresses the essential socio-economic characteristics of a constituency and links similar constituencies from diverse parts of the country.

Chapter Three is the first of the four empirical chapters. The aim of this chapter is to study the relationship between geography and attitudes towards the economy in the recovery between 1983 and 1990. This is achieved through the use of cross-tabulations.

It is important to note that the local variance in certain economic attitudes will be greater than in others. For instance, there are sounder reasons for expecting geographic variation in attitudes towards unemployment than towards inflation. This is because the local context is more relevant to unemployment figures - with highly publicised local unemployment rates and real differences between

unemployment rates in different regions - than to the rate of inflation which is more likely to be seen as a strictly national phenomenon. Hence an integral section of Chapter Three refines the hypothesised relationships between various egocentric and sociotropic attitudes and the geographic context.

A cursory look at this relationship is taken, using *British Social Attitudes* data from both panel cross-sectional surveys. An initial focus of this chapter is on party identification and on locating a place for geographic analysis in the modelling of party support. Attitudes studied in Chapter Three include perceptions of the state of the voter's home area, personal and family financial positions, attitudes to inflation, unemployment and the state of British industry. The pattern of changes over time in these attitudes and in party identification are analysed. Particular attention is paid to the differences in attitudes and party support in election years (1983 and 1987) and inter-election periods.

The initial findings of Chapter Three are refined in Chapter Four which probes the relationship between partisanship, economic attitudes and space in the 1980s recovery. A model of party support via economic attitudes, class and geography is tested using Analysis of Variance and Multiple Classification Analysis to dissect the differences in public attitudes to sociotropic issues (such as inflation, unemployment, industrial performance and efficiency and poverty) and egocentric issues (such as attitudes towards family income levels and personal wage expectations). The incidence of spatial variation in these attitudes is analysed thoroughly using the methods referred to above.

Chapters Five and Six deal with the 1990s. They deal explicitly with the run-up to the 1992 election. This period covers three major shocks in the political arena. Firstly, the community charge (or poll tax) had been introduced to much public hostility. Secondly, a great international crisis was developing in the Gulf from the summer of 1990. This culminated in the United Nations sponsored war

against Iraq (and provided natural parallels to the Falklands War of 1982, and the literature on the subsequent Conservative electoral victory in 1983). Thirdly - and probably most importantly for British politics - the governing party changed its leader in November 1990. How the British electorate would react to such rapid changes in the political environment was crucial to the understanding of British politics in the early 1990s and make this element of the research vital.

The 1992 Election was the closest for nearly two decades. The fact that the Conservatives were returned with a comfortable majority of 21 seats is rather incidental to the fact that the common perception of the 1992 campaign was that either of the two main parties could win. As Alt (1979) states, when elections are closely fought voters' minds are likely to be concentrated on the economy.

> Harder economic times present a set of circumstances in which not only are competitive parties more likely to take up competing positions with respect to economic management but individuals are also more likely to have an incentive to pay attention to these competing claims, and to adhere to positions and preferences with regard to economic policy (1979; p. 12).

This made the build up to the 1992 General Election particularly crucial for psephological study since the parties ability to manage the economy was the key electoral battleground, and the economic reality of the country was quite different from region to region.

The impact of geography, and class on economic attitudes and on voting intentions during the early 1990s, is assessed in Chapter Five. The concept of blame for the recession is introduced - which offers an explanation for why the South East failed to turn on the Government despite the dynamics of the new recession.

The need to test for two economic models - the recovery and the new recession economic models is introduced in Chapter Five. The extent of the feel good factor in the run-up to the 1992 election is analysed, and a crucial theme in Chapter Five emerges with a discussion of the extent of and the incidence of blame for the recession, and sociotropic and egocentric approval of the Government's handling of the economy. Chapter Five culminates with a regression analysis of the effects of class, geography and the feel good factor on reported vote intention.

Chapter Six builds on the findings in Chapter Five, breaking down the period into its component months. This enables a comparison between the Thatcher and Major premierships and electoral developments during the long campaign leading to the 1992 election are analysed thoroughly using Analysis of Variance, Multiple Classification Analysis, Ordinary Least Squares Regression and Logistic Regression analyses. The next stage of Chapter Six is to undertake regression analysis to more clearly isolate the impact of geography and class on the construction of economic attitudes and of all three on reported vote intention. A temporal dimension in the models of party support is constructed, which allows the testing of bandwagon and monthly models of reported vote intention, and the more rigorous exploration of the extent of Prime Minister Major's political honeymoon period. This chapter provides evidence to suggest why Conservative voters disadvantaged by the new recession did not turn against the Government in 1992.

This final empirical chapter provides an opportunity to test the model of class, geography, economic attitudes and party support in a critical period of British politics. It also enables the rigorous testing of competing theories about the place of geography in the process of determining how individuals vote, providing

a discussion of the local context and a lifetime of learning, the regional milieux and the functional division of class.

This thesis attempts to identify the sources of variation in attitudes towards the economy and the Government in the 1980s and 1990s by using geographic analyses. It presents a parsimonious model of party support using social class, two forms of geography and economic evaluations. The thesis fits neatly into a body of literature which uses econometric type models of Government support but introduces the crucial concept of geography and critically the geographic context of socialisation to the existing body of evidence about economic perceptions. The findings of this thesis underscore some of the knowledge about the geographic source of voting variation in the 1980s and add considerable weight to our understanding of how geography impacted upon economic attitudes during the 1980s recovery. The sections of the thesis dwaling with the early 1990s are critical to understanding the relationship between geography, the economy and party support during the new recession and contribute significantly to our understanding of the result of the General Election of April 1992.

Chapter One: Self-Interest, Reward-Punishment, The Economy, Economic Attitudes and Geography

The purpose of this chapter is to set the tone of the two fields of research that this thesis seeks to synthesise - the economic concentration in voting behaviour and electoral geography. This synthesis ought to be particularly fruitful in the late 1980s and early 1990s, since these two dimensions - economics and geography - were of massive interest during this period. Indeed in everyday terms, both dimensions had developed a common currency as the public were probably more aware of economic policy and the so-called North-South divide than ever before.

The downfall of Margaret Thatcher on 22 November 1990, marked the end of a particularly fascinating era in British politics. During her reign as Prime Minister between 1979 and 1990, her Governments overhauled the nature of British politics, winning three elections in the process. She remains the only British Prime Minister to have a coherent economic and political ideology named after her as Thatcherism became an identifiable set of values and attitudes.

The tendency therefore is to see the three Thatcher Governments as an ideological crusade, with the explicit aim of transforming the values and attitudes of the British public. In 1979, the Thatcher-led Opposition ousted the incumbent Government led by James Callaghan. In 1983 it won a landslide victory over a dispirited Labour Party and a fledging third party Alliance. By 1987 a third Thatcher

Government was elected, again with an overall majority of over one hundred parliamentary seats. The three electoral victories of the Conservative Party led by Mrs Thatcher certainly reinforced the impression that 'Thatcherism' was being absorbed into the mainstream of British public attitudes and voting behaviour.

There is evidence however, that the first Thatcher Government was an exercise in retaining power rather than an ideological crusade (see Bulpitt 1986), and it was only after the 1983 Election victory that the Thatcher administration developed the confidence to press on with its central ideological policies. This was certainly the case with the flagship of Thatcherite policies - privatisation - which began as a means of providing the Government with finance as public companies (like Amersham International) were offered to the private sector and developed into the championing of 'popular capitalism' with the general public being invited to own shares in the former nationalised companies, such as British Telecom and British Gas.

This research concentrates on the Thatcher era between 1983 and 1990, and its immediate successor with the accession of John Major to the Conservative Party leadership and the premiership of Great Britain. Hence it ought to be in an excellent position to gauge transformations in public attitudes to the economy and electoral behaviour, since the historical context of the period promoted common

usage of notions of economic policy and the geographic development of the British polity.

Many writers have made much of the divisive nature of "Thatcherism", claiming that the economic division between those who benefited from the years of Conservative Government and those who suffered under it resulted in a "two-nation" identity (Jessop, Bonnett, Bromley & Ling 1988). Reinforcing this point has been the marked spatial distinction in British voting behaviour during the Thatcher Governments, with the South of England being the most identifiable as a centre of support for the Conservatives, while the North of England, Scotland and Wales exhibited a growing hostility to the Government. Moreover the attitudinal core of Thatcherism - the desire for "the free economy and the strong state" (Gamble 1988) had its impact restricted to certain classes and certain regions. In this light it seems strange that in the Thatcherite era, the study of electoral behaviour in Britain has painfully sought to retain and revise traditional concepts of occupational class (Crewe, Sarlvik & Alt 1977, Dunleavy 1979, 1980, 1987, Sarlvik & Crewe 1983, Heath *et al* 1985, 1987, 1991) but has failed to absorb the notion of geographic variation into the mainstream of psephology.

If the economic consequence of Thatcherism was the uneven development of regional economies then it would not be unreasonable to expect that the economic division would be expressed both electorally and attitudinally. If the Thatcher years

were divisive economically then the electorate would have its perceptions clouded by this very division; and if geography is the best aid for viewing the uneven development of Britain, then it is also likely to be the best aid for perceiving a division in public attitudes and voting behaviour. This then is the thrust behind this thesis for assessing the impact of spatial variation in public attitudes to the economy

Moreover, the 1983-89 and 1990-92 periods permit comparative coverage across two distinct periods of British political history. The economic recovery of the mid-1980s and the 'new' slump of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Needless to say it also enables much of the work on 'Thatcherism' to be set in a comparative context. Did Thatcherism transform public opinion and voting patterns? If so did it promote a once and for all change or were the much vaunted changes associated with Thatcherism dependent on the 'new economic miracle' of the Lawson boom or the premiership of Mrs. Thatcher herself?

This chapter is split into five sections in its presentation, which may give the impression that each section relates to a topic of distinct and separate identity. In reality however, all five sections are in almost constant interchange. The first two categories, the self-interest axiom and the reward-punishment axiom, outline a traditional approach to electoral studies, encountering techniques and theories formulated in the 1950s. The fourth and fifth categories, dealing with economic

perceptions and the spatial dimension, are fairly recent developments in mainstream political science. The third category, the economy, is the linchpin between these two sets of categories.

1.1 THE SELF-INTEREST AXIOM

The self-interest axiom is a crucial strand running through the literature on political economy and the effects of economics on voting. It has influenced much of the rational choice approach to politics and economics from the 1950s onwards. Furthermore it has enjoyed a renaissance through recent developments in British psephology with the emergence of personal (rather than societal) economic expectations as objects of study. The self-interest axiom is outlined by Calhoun;

> The constitution of our nature which makes us feel more intensely what affects us directly than what affects us indirectly through others, necessarily leads to conflict between individuals. Each in consequence, has a greater regard for his own safety or happiness, than for the safety or happiness of others: and, where these come in opposition, is ready to sacrifice the interests of others to his own (1954; p. 15).

This kind of Hobbesian war of all against all was picked up by Downs and extrapolated in his *Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). In the Downsian model voters act as consumers and parties, acting as producers, compete for the favours of the electorate. It is crucial to note that both consumers and producers act primarily out of self-interest.

Thus the acid test of voting between an elector and a political party can be represented by the former asking one crucial question of the latter in the Downsian scenario - "what can you do for me?". It is not the aim here to deny the relevance of the phenomenon which American political science has termed "pocket-book voting" but it is the intention to tie this research into attempts to open up the debate and move it towards the possibility that motives other than self-interest may be equally important in the construction of attitudes and the procedure of voting behaviour.

It is fair to say that the Downsian Model is ruled by the self-interest axiom; voters act out of self interest in choosing which party to vote for, parties act out of self interest in choosing which policies to set before the electorate in order to get elected. The actions of consumers are typified in the Downsian model as "rational behaviour directed towards selfish ends", while party members act "solely in order to attain the income, prestige, and power which come from being in Office." Hence politicians in this model never perceive office as a means to an end, but an end in itself.

> Their only goal is to reap the rewards of holding office *per se*. They treat policies purely as means to the attainment of their private ends, which they can reach only by being elected (1957; p. 28).

This process will usually result in political parties competing around a central policy position in order to maximise votes. Any movement by one party away from

consensual ground should precipitate an equal and opposite shift towards the centre by opposing parties. Citizens have opinions and parties try to compete for their votes. A common anecdote that illustrates the Downsian competition for voters is the Ice Cream Van analogy. Here two competing ice cream vans in a busy high street begin to sell their wares at opposite ends of the street. However, in order to maximise sales one van moves slightly towards the centre of the street in an attempt to attract more custom. Assuming the aggregate distribution of preferences is unimodal, this shift in the position in ice cream van 1 is noted by the owner of ice cream van 2 who reciprocates by moving his van further towards the centre of the street. By the end of the day, the two vans are positioned next to each other, exactly in the centre of the street's length. When political parties replace ice cream vans, the parties move towards the centre of the political mainstream in order, not to maximise sales, but to maximise votes.

The attempt to achieve vote maximisation derives not from a desire to see policies implemented but in order to gain power. A cynic might claim that Downs portrays a kind of institutional megalomania, since the fundamental hypothesis of the Downsian model is that parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than to win elections in order to formulate policies.

In this type of orthodoxy then, the views of voters (in Downsian language, the choices of consumers) are paramount. Nevertheless it is important to note that

political parties and politicians themselves hold the real power. The electorate has a set of values which political parties have to react to by the formation of policy if they are to succeed at the polls. Furthermore, the electorate's values are pre-determined by individual self-interest. Acting out of self-interest, voters can scarcely avoid holding economic values since it is here that parties can most readily directly affect the lives of the public. The implication to be drawn from this is that the self-interest axiom works *via* economic forces until "pocket book voting" can presume near pre-eminence within this type of electoral analysis.

In their classic study of the effects of economic circumstances upon government popularity, Goodhart and Bhansali reach some rather curious conclusions. In their reluctance to abandon the Downsian model, Goodhart and Bhansali (1970) fail to ascribe any role to altruism in the determination of voting intentions. Faced with examples of erosion of support for the Government from voters not directly affected by unemployment themselves, they conclude that;

> our unemployment series was probably picking up the effects of all the other cyclical economic factors (such as opportunities for overtime working, rate of growth of earnings, etc.). It seems a plausible hypothesis that each voter would judge the economic record of the Government on the very narrowest and most selfish grounds, that is by the effect on their immediate family's income (1970: p. 67).

Thus the work of Goodhart and Bhansali is located neatly into a body of political economy literature which is hamstrung by its inability to move away from the

Downsian model of a self-interested rational acting electorate. Curiously the assertion that the voter remains selfish comes after Goodhart and Bhansali have made adjustments in their model for the concentration by the media on more obscure economic factors such as exchange rates and balance of payments. If voters are allowed to take their cue from media directives about the economy, then it seems senseless to suggest that their only motivation is self-interest since the media primarily deals with the aggregate rather than the individual level.

Downs argued that a citizen would vote only if his perceived vote value exceeded zero. If the rational actor that Downs describes, were to make precise calculations on the value of his or her vote, it may be likely that upon the realisation that his or her vote will probably fail to influence the overall result of the election, the marginal value of the electors vote would be minimal. In such a case, the potential voter may well decide that the act of voting would simply be a waste of the shoe leather expended on walking to the polling station, and as a consequence, abstention rates would rise dramatically (Ferejohn & Fiorina 1974 make this point).

The central concern here is that a theoretical cornerstone of Downsian modelling fails to stand up empirically. The most remarkable feature of most modern elections in the Downsian sense is how many people actually bother to vote at all. Moreover it seems likely that other cornerstones about the self-interest axiom and retrospective voting would be threatened when tested empirically. Few writers

have had difficulty in jettisoning this weakness in Downsian modelling, but fewer still have plucked up the courage to challenge the self-interest axiom or the retrospective bias inherent in the model (a notable exception to this tendency has been Dunleavy: see 1991: Chapters 4 & 5).

A crucial concern then ought to be how to measure attitudes and voting behaviour within the self-interest axiom. Furthermore, isolating the self-interested vote from the altruistic vote is much harder than it might appear.

In surveys asking questions about general feelings concerned with personal prosperity, the distinction between personal and societal advantage to be gained by partisanship is often blurred. In *How Britain Votes* (1985) Heath, Jowell and Curtice found that prospective and retrospective voter values followed party allegiance so much that Conservative supporters felt their interests were best served by past Conservative Governments and by the prospect of future Conservative Governments. Conversely they were inclined to feel that their interests would be most damaged by Labour Governments both historically and in the future. In addition, questions about the general performance of a government and the personal utility derived from a particular policy are invariably intertwined. Indeed, voters often seem to place societal values above their own benefit when surveyed about their vote preference. For instance Heath, Jowell and Curtice

discovered that the best predictor of voting choice in the 1983 British Election Study was the respondent's answer to the question

> "On the whole do you think the Conservative Government over the last four years has handled the problem of unemployment very well, fairly well, or not at all well?" (1983 British Election Study)

By way of contrast, personal questions were poor predictors of voting allegiance. An example of such a question was

> "Which do you think threatens *you and your family* most - the threat of rising prices or the threat of unemployment?" (1983 British Election Study)

In one of the few empirical studies to directly challenge the egocentric view of voting (the self-interest axiom), Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) report that:-

> voters who expressed unhappiness with their financial conditions were generally no more likely to support the opposition party than were the more economically secure voters (1981; p. 503).

They consider that voters vote via their impressions of the national economy not through their own personal circumstances. That is voters are motivated by altruistic feelings about society - sociotropism - rather than egocentrism.

Kinder and Kiewiet conclude that

> under ordinary circumstances, voters evidently do not make connections between their own personal economic experiences - however vivid, immediate and otherwise significant - and their political attitudes and preferences (1981; p. 522).

This view may be said to be the culmination of a movement within the literature (typically American) to introduce a sociotropic view of voting, altruism in action rather than the egocentrism of the self-interest axiom.

To reiterate then, the essential debate here concerns egocentric and sociotropic models of voting and attitudes. The former varies very little from the classic Downsian paradigm; the latter - sociotropic voting - was championed by Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) who illustrated that respondents tend to report that they have put the interests of the nation over their own personal interests. In addition, Johnston and Pattie (1990a) have illustrated that there is a considerable overlap between egocentric and sociotropic ambitions; people tend to equate what is "good for them" personally with the interests of the country as a whole.

The point here is that sociotropism, or altruism in the polling booth and in the construction of attitudinal structures must be possible and is worthy of further study. Data which allow the further exploration of the relationship between sociotropic and egocentric attitudes should be fully utilised. Typical opinion poll questions which deal, respectively, with egocentric and sociotropic values include:

Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements:

The Government's economic policies are good for me and my family;

- Agree strongly
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
- Disagree Strongly
- Don't know

The Government's economic policies are good for Britain;

- Agree strongly
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
- Disagree Strongly
- Don't know

(*NOP/Newsnight* Poll January 1991)

The analysis of both egocentric and sociotropic attitudes ought to identify distinct elements of public attitudes, even if they are hard to isolate at times.

A note of caution should be sounded here. Sanders, Ward and Marsh have shown that the immediate research need in this field is for disaggregated data in order to test sociotropic rather than group-based or egocentric concerns (see for instance Marsh *et al* 1992). This is because where aggregate level analyses have been replaced by individual level studies, mostly in American studies, the evidence for economic influence upon voting has tended to disintegrate (Hibbs 1982) Nonetheless the point remains, this type of analysis is worthy in order to fully test the Downsian model and its exclusion of altruistic motivations for voting choice.

Both academic research and public opinion have added to a revival in the self-interest axiom. Using a model derived from personal economic expectations, Sanders (1991) was able to predict the outcome of the 1992 Election with outstanding accuracy. This feat was all the more remarkable given the context in which the prediction was made; the common consensus of most academics and pollsters alike was that 1992 represented Labour's 'golden chance'.

The popular perception of the 1992 General Election may have aided the resuscitation of the self-interest axiom as an explanatory variable in British voting studies. Throughout the Election campaign, the polls placed Labour ahead of the Conservative Government. On the eve of polling day, all five of the major polling organisations were predicting an outright Labour victory or Labour to be the biggest single party in a hung parliament. In the event however, the Conservatives were returned to power with an overall majority in the House of Commons of 21 seats.

The commonest explanation for this unexpected Conservative victory was the Conservative tactic of concentrating upon Labour's taxation plans. Thus according to this explanation, electors acted selfishly in voting for the lower tax burden they thought would be imposed by the Conservatives. The polls had predicted that the electorate would vote sociotropically - the 'most important issues influencing my vote' identified by the pre-Election polls had been the National Health Service,

education and unemployment - but in the privacy of the polling booth, voters had succumbed to the more egocentric motivations identified by Downs.

There will be further discussion of opinion polls and the 1992 General Election in Britain later in this research, but the essential point here is that many commentators from academic writers (see for instance Crewe 1992) through to the politicians themselves (witness the pronouncements of leading Conservatives in the aftermath of their victory) felt that "pocketbook voting" had reached its zenith in Britain in 1992. It is worthy of note that the identical tactic of emphasising the tax plans of the opposition failed to save the Republican President, George Bush, from defeat in the US Presidential Election in the same year. The crucial point here must be feasibility. The reality behind the 'tax scare' of the Conservatives in Britain was believed by a significant number of the British public, the same tactic could not save an unpopular American President who had himself reneged on his 'no new taxes' pledge. Egocentrism may remain an important part of the electoral process but it continues to be only one part, sociotropism may be relegated at certain elections but it might have a significant role to play in the formation of voting cues.

This leads to the second generalisation in the rational choice and econometric literature under challenge here, the reward-punishment axiom.

1.2 THE REWARD-PUNISHMENT AXIOM

An important facet of much writing on the subject of motivations behind voting behaviour is the reward-punishment axiom of voting. In this model, voters reward governments for satisfactory performance at election time and punish governments which have failed to deliver sufficient results when in power. Heath, Jowell and Curtice (1985) categorise this as "the performance theory" where

> recent experiences, based on short-term political events, provide the main source of electoral change (Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 1985 p.159).

Many writers have succumbed to this type of model. Fiorina (1977) suggests that voting can provide

> a symbolic pat on the back or kick in the pants from an electorate (1977; p. 604).

Key (1964) describes the electorate as a;

> rational God of vengeance and reward (1966; p. 568),

while Weatherford believes that

> in the most straightforward way, the vote is an expression of approbation or anger, intended as reward or punishment (1986; p. 222).

Clearly the self-interest axiom can be fitted into the reward-punishment axiom of voting if it can be successfully claimed that voters base their retrospective judgements on how well their own self interests were satisfied by an incumbent government.

The essential problem with the reward-punishment axiom is that it displays a marked tendency to construct a recursive model of voting behaviour. Key (1966) states that

> voters may reject what they have known; or they may approve what they have known (1966; p. 61);

Key does not provide for the possibility that voters may positively choose that which they have yet to experience. The reward-punishment axiom lends weight to arguments which suggest that governments are capable of losing elections rather than opposition parties being capable of winning elections. This view should not go unchallenged, however: intuitively it seems that some elections must be won by Opposition policies rather than by any inherent fault in the government. For example, accounts of the 1945 British General Election, usually concentrate on the alternative policies proposed by the Labour Party rather than upon the deficiencies of the Conservative Party which had been in power prior to the war, and had provided the Prime Minister of the coalition Government, Winston Churchill (See Morgan 1984).

The preoccupation with government policies rather than those of the opposition is a legacy of the over-concentration within the reward-punishment axiom on retrospective evaluation on the part of the electorate. To illustrate, Fiorina's (1978) study of the impact of economic circumstances upon voting behaviour is typical in

placing great weight in the past experience of voters rather than in prospective feelings about their economic position.

Nonetheless, several writers have confused the retrospective and the prospective in their own arguments. Hibbing and Alford (1981) claim that

> those people who felt their personal financial condition was on the upswing would be more likely to support the party in power than would those who (felt that) their personal financial condition was declining (1981; p. 424).

Likewise, Fiorina (1978) assessing the 1956 US Presidential vote talks of

> those who believe they were trending upward and those who believe they were trending downward voting for the incumbent, Eisenhower, and the challenger, Stevenson, respectively (1978; p. 431).

Later, Fiorina writes of individuals'

> *fears* of financial duress or hopes for economic prosperity which have not *as yet* altered their personal economic circumstances (1978; p. 435 original emphasis).

The point here is that in both of these studies the public were alleged to be involved in positioning their economic circumstances on a general scale. Such a process cannot fail to be at least in part prospective, and the language the authors use betrays their stated defence of the reward-punishment axiom.

On these grounds it may be tempting to discard the reward-punishment axiom of voting since the paradigm case constructs a completely rational self-interested

electorate which fails to match the electorate empirical research has seemingly uncovered. However, Heath, Jowell and Curtice (1985) believe that the reward-punishment axiom may be used to explain short-term changes in consensual issues, arguing that dissensus issues such as nationalisation and defence may be the sources of long-term continuities of support (1985; p. 160).

Weatherford (1986) is surely correct in his assertion that

> economic voting is at least partly motivated by prospective considerations (p. 236).

At the same time, Lockerbie has provided evidence of prospective voting among the American electorate in a series of articles (in particular see Lockerbie 1989, and 1992). An escape route from the recursive nature of the reward-punishment axiom is provided by the image of a Janus-faced electorate portrayed by Rose and McAllister (1990).

> Voters can also think prospectively, considering the promises that parties make about their future actions. The party that an individual calculates will make him or her better off in the future will then be supported. Judgements about the delivery of future rewards can be tempered by a retrospective assessment of past performance. An election becomes an auction in which both parties make more or less credible bids for popular support (1990; p. 34).

It is with this type of model in mind that progress should be made.

Furthermore, the modern consensus of modelling party support places public expectations above public recollections in salience terms for predicting levels of government support. Price and Sanders (1993) claim that in voters' minds political history is discounted very quickly and that voters are more likely to be influenced in their electoral choice by political (and crucially economic) expectations.

> voters may take several months to assimilate what is happening to the economy, but they also have a short 'memory', so that current perceptions are given much higher weight than quite recent events (1993; p. 333).

This type of view is synonymous with the assessment of the role of the economy in the formation of public attitudes and subsequently voting behaviour. The economy then is the third axiom on which to concentrate.

1.3 THE ECONOMY

In 1978 Tufte felt confident enough to assert that the link between the electoral fortunes of political parties and economic fortunes were synonymous.

> When you think economics, think elections. When you think elections, think economics (1978; p. 65).

The notion that the economy is of critical importance to the British electorate when casting votes at a General Election has certainly filtered down from academia to politicians and parties themselves. In 1989 Margaret Thatcher confidently asserted that her third Government would stand or fall on its record on dealing with inflation, indeed the eleven years of Thatcherism could be typified by governmental

attempts to reduce inflation and reap the electoral reward. More generally, Harold Wilson was reported to have said to the Parliamentary Labour Party that

> All political history shows that the standing of a government and its ability to hold the confidence of the electorate at a General Election depend on the success of its economic policy. (Cited in Goodhart & Bhansali p. 45).

Back in the academic field, Kramer (1983) asserts that the chances of an incumbent governments' re-election are largely dependent upon the state of the economy more or less immediately prior to the election (1983; pp. 92-111). Fiorina's (1981) individual-level analysis of economic voting purported to illustrate that short-term economic conditions and popular opinion of the incumbent government's efficacy at managing macroeconomics cause significant effects on satisfaction levels with the US President's performance and ultimately on voting choice (1981 p 120).

Moreover, the economy and economic well being is a 'valence issue'. That is that the goal is universal - everyone wants the economy to be performing well, the question is not whether to achieve economic success but how the goal is achieved (Norpoth, 1992; p. 53, but see also Butler and Stokes 1969; pp. 390-1).

Research using survey data reveals that the British public has become increasingly concerned with economic matters. Hibbs (1982), using Gallup data, shows that between 1945 and 1980, when asked to prioritise the most urgent

problem facing the country, the British electorate has developed a marked tendency to give economic issues pre-eminence over domestic, political and social issues concerned with international affairs and defence (1982; p. 259-60).

An atmosphere has developed in which writers have increasingly come to assert that due to the loosening of the social structural base of party support and the undermining of partisanship as a reliable predictor of voting choice,

> the fate of parties is increasingly determined by short and medium term forces (Clarke and Whiteley, 1990; p. 116).

It would seem subsequently, that economic factors could bridge this gap in the voting cues of the public. If voters are to gain fewer directives about whom to vote for from their social position and their past party allegiance, it would seem reasonable to assume that economic factors may perform this formative role instead.

The work of Goodhart and Bhansali (1970) has been viewed as a pioneering study of the impact of economic factors on voting behaviour. Their basic aim was to assess how far swings in political popularity were affected by economic circumstances (1970; p. 45).

Two of their conclusions have achieved a large degree of fame - or infamy - within econometric circles. Firstly they claimed that in the period covered by their study,

1947-68, the British public became increasingly concerned with economic developments, 1959 being identified as the watershed year. Secondly Goodhart and Bhansali claimed to be able to quantify the effects of unemployment and inflation upon government popularity. To this end they asserted that

> for every increase in unemployment of 10,000 the government loses nearly one per cent of its popular lead (1970; p. 63).

Further they suggest that governments would do well to follow this advice;

> if inflation is not existent and with other things being equal, a governing party which allows the level of unemployment, seasonally adjusted, to exceed 450 thousand six months before the election is likely to lose, while if it can reduce unemployment below 400 thousand at this time it should win (1970; p. 64).

A similar relationship existed between inflation and government support, although the public pain threshold for inflation seemed much more elastic than for unemployment, an increase of five per cent in inflation being equal in terms of lost support to an increase of one per cent in unemployment.

It should be noted that the relationships noted by Goodhart and Bhansali were locked into place by temporal considerations; it is certainly true that the 1983 and 1987 elections would have been lost by the Conservative Government had the relationship between unemployment and government support held - indeed the Conservative vote would have fallen into minus numbers. Alt (1979) believes that the onset of stagflation in world-wide economies in the 1970s displaced many of

the boundaries set up by Goodhart and Bhansali (Alt, 1979; Ch 13), Whiteley (1986) advocates that such macroeconomic models as that of Goodhart and Bhansali should be adjusted in the aftermath of the 1973 Oil Shock (Whiteley, 1986; p. 77). In retrospect it seems that the boundaries shown by Goodhart and Bhansali existed only because they were limits of public expectations, and public expectations proved more elastic than Goodhart and Bhansali could have imagined. In 1979, Alt argued that the boundaries of what the public would let political parties "get away with" would be re-drawn to keeping unemployment down to one million and inflation to around ten per cent (Alt, 1979; p. 273). With hindsight, even Alt got this wrong, overestimating the British public's tolerance level of inflation (witness the fall in Conservative support, expressed in the polls whenever inflation rose above 8-9% in the last Thatcher Government) and underestimated the public's ability to stomach large scale unemployment.

A way forward in theories of economic voting may be the asymmetrical approach. Bloom and Price (1975) advocate the study of separate conditions of the political business cycle. Periods of economic growth lead to smaller rewards for incumbent governments than the degree of electoral punishment metered out at times of economic recession according to their theory. Hibbing and Alford (1981) differentiate between types of election in the USA, Presidential, Congressional (at different times) and types of incumbent (by party, length of office, etc.). They find that the extent of economic voting varies across types of election (1981; p. 435).

Sanders, Ward and Marsh (1987) assert that while "macroeconomic factors were at the root of Mrs Thatcher's political revival in 1982" they move away from one-dimensional studies of the impact of unemployment and inflation *per se*. In their model important routes of economic influence on voting include personal taxation levels, consumer spending, interest rates and short-time working (1987; p. 313). A similar move in the American literature has resulted in study of real per capita income rather than aggregate inflation and unemployment rates (Hibbing & Alford, 1981; Kramer, 1971).

1.4 PERSONAL ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS

The economic goals about which there is general agreement, are in effect hard to combine. As Norpoth (1992) states, full employment, stable prices, economic growth and a strong economy are:

> impossible to maximise simultaneously (1992; p. 54).

Moreover Alt (1979) claims that the public sense of economic literacy enables them to prioritise the economic criteria involved in the trade off between these goals.

> Harder economic times present a set of circumstances in which not only are competitive parties more likely to take up competing positions with respect to economic management but individuals are also more likely to have an incentive to pay attention to these competing claims, and to adhere to positions and preferences with regard to economic policy.(Alt, 1979; p. 12)

Thus by implication the economy should have been particularly relevant in the long campaign leading to the 1992 General Election, as the new recession heightened economic sensitivity of both parties and voters.

The financial journalist Samuel Brittan (1977) firmly placed the issue of economic expectations on the political agenda. Put simply, perhaps oversimply, Brittan's case was that politicians in their search for votes promise to solve economic problems which are in fact insoluble. Not unnaturally, the electorate believe these election promises and as a consequence the public hold exaggerated views of what they can personally achieve economically over the short-term.

Brittan's pessimism about the role of the public in the development of their personal economic expectations is not borne out by empirical work. Primarily Brittan's view of the 1970's economy was a snapshot of British expectations, and as such it failed to capture the dynamics of societal change. Brittan failed to see the gap between expectations and performance as self-correcting, whereas empirical evidence would seem to credit the public with a heightened sense of scepticism than Brittan could have noticed. Alt (1979), using data from both 1974 elections in Britain, shows that the electorate tend to view wild election promises as part and parcel of the robust nature of politics. He argues that with improved education on economic matters, the electorate develops more realistic views on what is actually possible and urges commentators to note

> the tendency for the popular sense of well-being to move closely with changes in the country's economy, and the probability that expectations of improvement were finite and declined rather than increased as things actually got better (1979; p. 265).

In truth, when parties are guilty of promising to deliver the impossible, the chances are that the electorate will not believe them. Downsian theory pointed out that competing parties need to be reasonable in their offers since the voting public would soon learn not to trust unsustainable promises. In 1974, three-quarters of the electorate in Britain thought that inflation was an insoluble problem, no matter which party was in power. Himmelweit, Humphreys and Jaeger (1981) report the existence of "limits of inability" and noted widescale voter scepticism about the capability of any party to implement consensual policies such as arresting the rise in unemployment, managing to keep inflation low, holding down mortgage rates and increasing the efficiency of British industry (1981; p. 108). The work of Sarlvik and Crewe (1983) on the 1970s revealed a similar reluctance on the part of voters to believe the wildest claims of political parties. Even voters' confidence in their own party's ability to settle the problems of strikes, unemployment and inflation was "tellingly qualified" (1983; p. 157).

All of this evidence from British psephology would seem to support Fiorina's (1981) assertion that the American electorate acquired sophisticated skills when listening to political parties.

> Citizens are not fools. Having often observed political equivocation, if not outright lying, should they listen

> carefully to campaign promises? Having heard the economic, educational, sociological, defence, and foreign policy expert advisors disagree on both the effects of past policies and the prospect of future ones, should they pay close attention to policy debates? (1981; p. 5).

As Alt has pointed out, Brittan confused desires, demands and expectations (1979; p. 265). By making much of the popular desire to raise personal living standards by one-fifth, Brittan assumed that this outcome is thought feasible by those respondents who merely reported it as desirable. The pay claims of the trade unions should be judged in the same light. Almost invariably the Unions accept settlements lower than their demands simply because their expectations do not, as Brittan seemed to think, equal their demands.

At this stage there has been no break with the self-interest axiom identified by Calhoun since voters may be personally affected by the impact of economic forces such as increase in unemployment, inflation and mortgage rates. Furthermore, it would be pertinent to acknowledge that the impact of economic hardship is seldom distributed evenly throughout society. Much has been made of the uneven distribution of economic displacement suffered during times of unemployment as particular social classes are particularly prone to routine periods of unemployment in conjunction with the political business cycle (see Hibbs 1982).

Among others to have commented on the uneven dislocation caused by economic crises, Weatherford (1986) has commented on the particular hardship caused to the working class coinciding with downturns in the political business cycle.

> In recession, blue-collar workers are more likely than the overall national average to lose their jobs or to be placed on shortened hours, while middle class losses of employment and real income at the trough of the cycle are below those of the population as a whole. Similarly, working class occupations tend to recover more slowly and to make smaller new gains as the national economy rises toward its next cyclical peak (1986; p. 230).

Certain writers obviously believe that economic well-being is the crucial factor in determining levels of government support, and that parties are themselves aware of the resultant need to "produce the goods" for the electorate. Clarke and Whiteley (1990) claim that their study of macroeconomic influences on party support revealed a significant impact of inflation and unemployment rates upon Conservative popularity between 1983 and 1987. They claim, that

> increases in both prices and joblessness were negatively associated with support for the governing party that had long made the battle against inflation its top macroeconomic policy priority (1990; p. 116).

Additionally, some writers have claimed that government may take advantage of their privileged position of power and attempt to manipulate the economy in order to precipitate electoral victories. To this end Miller *et al* (1990) claim that the build-up to a General Election is now split into two stages, the more orthodox traditional campaign during which parties openly compete for the public's favours and the

"long-campaign" - an ambiguous length of time during which the government uses its unique position of power in order to garner support in a distant election. Clarke and Whiteley (1990) feel that there is strong evidence to suggest that the 1983-87 Conservative Government "manipulated the Money Supply in order to bolster its popularity" during such a long campaign. They suggest that;

> In early 1986 the government began a rapid inflation of the Money Supply. Assuming that Tory strategists accepted the proposition that a reflated economy and the political beliefs thereof are lagged functions of macroeconomic policy, it is reasonable to conclude that they used monetary policy to initiate their 1987 election campaign months before voters went to the polls (1990; pp. 116-7).

Any attempt to gauge the impact of public perceptions towards the economy must pay a large debt of thanks to the work of Sanders, Ward and Marsh. In a series of articles, Sanders *et al* have illustrated the potential impact upon political support for parties of personal economic expectations. This marked a distinct departure from the reward-punishment axiom of voting behaviour, which threatened to achieve hegemonic status in psephological studies concerned with the public's economic attitudes, since Sanders *et al* offered the proposition that prospective attitudes could be just as important to the study of party support as retrospective attitudes.

In an attempt to show that the Falklands War had a much lesser role in the 1983 election victory of the Conservative Government, than had commonly been

supposed by commentators and psephologists alike, Sanders, Ward and Marsh (1987) identified the critical variable of personal economic expectations in determining levels of government support. Since the publication of this work, they have backtracked slightly on the direct influence of the Falklands War. Nevertheless the dye had been cast and the issue of personal economic expectations was firmly on the agenda for future research.

Although previously he had found only a weak connection between personal economic circumstances and voting patterns at the individual level in the USA, Fiorina (1981) later claimed to show that personally experienced or perceived economic effects have indirect impact upon voting choice (1981; pp 73-101). A crucial aspect of the work of Sanders, Ward and Marsh was that it followed this line of prospective personal economic attitudes and permitted a model to be constructed using public perceptions. Primarily they ascribed a positive correlation between personal economic expectations and government support - if expectations rise so does government popularity. They assert that objective economic conditions give rise to subjective perceptions of the economic reality which in turn affect the readiness of the public to vote for the government (1987; p. 292). Furthermore, rather than relying on the more usual economic factors such as unemployment and inflation, Sanders, Ward and Marsh utilised more diverse surrogates of economic activity whereby government popularity could be affected by economic forces such as taxation, consumer spending, interest rates, and

working hours, through the proxy of personal economic expectations (1987; p. 313).

Clarke and Whiteley (1990) seem to have taken up the challenge, in their study of Conservative Government support during the 1983-87 period. Clarke and Whiteley concede that personal economic expectations consistently hold more salience in determining voters' support for an incumbent government, than political shocks in the shape of ongoing political events. Sanders, Ward and Marsh (1987) denies the long-term Falklands Factor which was often heralded as the underlying reason for Conservative success in 1983, Marsh, Ward, Sanders and Price (1992) profess to show the lack of electoral impact of the 1984 Miners' Strike. In the same period, Clarke and Whiteley control for two political events, the US bombing of Libya in 1986 and the attempted assassination of the Thatcher Cabinet by the IRA in October 1984. The Libya and Brighton bombings had opposite effects, the former detracting from government support, the latter adding to it, but the crucial aspect of their effects is equally true of them both - their distinct lack of longevity, both being of essentially short-term salience in determining levels of government support. Here the point must be hammered home, in three different studies of incumbent government support in the 1980s, four of the most major political events of that time, the Falklands War, the Miners' Strike, the US Bombing of Libya and the Brighton Bombing all had less electoral impact than the public's personal economic expectations (however see Norpoth, 1987; and Clarke, Mishler and Whiteley,

1990; for accounts which propose alternative models). Moreover the personal expectations model successfully predicted (Sanders, 1991) and retrospectively justified (Sanders 1992, 1993) the outcome of the 1992 British General Election.

A central theme of this thesis will be that the impact of political shocks has to be measured in tandem with economic attitudes. Studies of the Thatcher era in British politics claimed - time after time - that the economic had primacy in the tension between political shocks and economic attitudes; this thesis will attempt to verify this examination and then to replicate it in the post-Thatcher era. Moreover the most obvious political shock which should be studied in this debate is the fall of Mrs Thatcher and the succession of John Major to the British Premiership. Hence this will remain a key focal point of the analysis of the thesis.

Typical opinion poll and survey questions which measure retrospective and prospective values include:-

> "Overall, how much success do you think the Government has had over the past 12 years in tackling Britain's long-term economic problems?" (*NOP/Newsnight* March 1991).

> "Looking ahead over the next year, do you think Britain's general industrial performance will improve a lot, improve a little, stay much the same, decline a little, or decline a lot?" (*British Social Attitudes* 1983).

1.5 THE GEOGRAPHIC DIMENSION

A Janus-faced electorate capable of expressing sociotropic tendencies, and primarily concerned with economic perceptions is not the complete story however. Indeed it is the contention here that no picture of electoral behaviour could be viewed as complete without considerable attention to regional variation. Weatherford (1986) would seem to concur as he believes that

> the connection between real economic variables and election outcomes might be seen more clearly if communities or electoral districts with widely varying economic histories could be isolated and contrasted (1986; p. 229).

While Harrop, Heath and Openshaw (1992) report that

> knowing peoples' addresses tells us at least as much about how s/he will vote as finding out his or her class or tenure. Electorally you are where you live (1992; p. 105).

In Britain, Curtice and Steed (1982) identified an important change in the relative strength of the main parties and the development of two electoral cleavages; a North-South cleavage and an urban-rural cleavage. The significant feature of these cleavages is that their context is spatial. Curtice and Steed claim that the North-South cleavage began to emerge between the 1955 and 1959 elections, and the urban-rural cleavage gained its force between the 1959 and 1964 contests (1982; p. 256 see also Steed 1986).

Curtice and Steed concluded that these cleavages had emerged because of three trends: a change in distribution of social and economic characteristics of the electorate; the differential behaviour of voters of the same social group according to location; and the political impact of third parties. Furthermore Curtice and Steed saw no reason to predict the imminent demise of any of these contributory factors towards spatial cleavages (1982; p. 266).

There seems to be a particularly relevant tie-in between economic perceptions and regional variation. Weatherford (1986) acknowledges that

> economic voting is conditioned by the social context in which it takes place...The immediate geographic area provides the voter with one important source of information and opinion relevant to evaluating incumbent economic policy. The state of the local economy is known largely from direct personal experience...contextual effects influence a number of political attitudes and behaviours including the public evaluation of macroeconomic policy (1986, p. 255).

Moreover electoral geography accounts have shown that public perceptions of economic circumstances will differ according to geographic location - even after other contextual criteria have been controlled for (see for example Johnston, Pattie and Allsopp, 1988; Johnston and Pattie 1989a - but compare to Rose and McAllister 1990, McAllister and Studlar 1992). There is strong evidence for an autonomous geographic cleavage in the British electorate.

It can be extrapolated from this that if economic conditions have a variable impact upon social classes and as a result re-shape policy preferences among particular classes, then if certain economic factors were to have a variable impact upon different regions the result might be to re-shape policy preferences among particular regions.

Marsh *et al* (1992) identify a separate part of this uneven dislocation. Not only can certain social classes suffer disproportionately in times of recession, but a spatial dimension may also be evident. They assert that

> it is quite plausible that, if unemployment has an effect on either government popularity or personal expectations, it is local or regional rather than aggregate national unemployment that is important (1992; p. 96).

According to Alt (1979), the uneven economic dislocation caused by unemployment led to an uneven distribution of concern for the problems of unemployment in the 1970s (1979; p. 271). In times of austerity, Alt asserts that the public internalise their economic expectations to a greater degree than in times of economic prosperity.

> It appears that people have to feel well off before they can be persuaded to be generous towards others in their social outlook (1979; p. 272).

But here he is wide of the mark. If this case were to hold, why are the super-rich sections of society not shown by empirical research to be the super-compassionate sections of society? Moreover, studies of the impact of

Thatcherism upon Britain have shown that the region which prospered the most from Thatcherite policies in the 1980s - the South of England - did not develop a particularly caring character which set it apart from the rest of the UK. Indeed regions which were marginalised under Thatcherism seem to have undergone a communal socialisation exhibiting greater concern for the problems besetting the region, even among social classes which are relatively unaffected by the problems affecting the region as a whole (Johnston & Pattie 1990b).

Further to this point, much can be made of regional analysis, especially if attention is paid to disaggregated data. In particular, although the inflation rate is a national constant (even though surrogates for inflationary pressure such as housing prices are not), rates of economic growth and unemployment are liable to vary dramatically from region to region. To this end Weatherford (1986) is optimistic about the way forward for political research;

> Research on contextual effects, social networks, and the interpersonal processes of political influence are especially promising of new insights into issue voting (1986; p. 257).

In a comprehensive study of the electoral map of Britain, Johnston, Pattie and Allsopp (1988) report that in the 1983 and 1987 elections, economic optimism was associated with Conservative voting (that is, incumbent support) but that this statement should be qualified by reference to regional impact. For example by 1987, the economically optimistic were increasingly likely to support Labour in

London, Urban Northern and Scottish and Welsh constituencies but remained loyal Conservatives in the South and the Midlands (1988; p. 254).

Further to this point, in 1979 on the evaluation of a Labour government, relatively few of those respondents who described themselves as economically optimistic were prepared to exhibit incumbent party support in their voting choice. In the South of England, the opposition Conservative Party even managed to gain a plurality of votes among such a section of the electorate. As Johnston, Pattie and Allsopp report

> even when economic evaluations were held constant, substantial regional variations in voting patterns remained (1988; p. 254).

The point here is that it is beginning to become clear how electoral geography and spatial location is worthy of study in itself, and as an input to voting direction should become a critical part of the model to explain party choice at an election.

In 1983 although the Conservative Government received widespread support among those respondents who felt they had benefited under Thatcherism, the party fared markedly better in the South and in London than elsewhere in Britain. In 1987 although a shift away from the broad base of Conservative support was evident, a regional dimension remained.

> Less than half the optimists voted Conservative (in London, the urban North and in Scotland and Wales), and in all three of (these regions) Labour out-polled the

> incumbent party of government among those whose situations had remained unaltered (1988; pp. 254-55).

Economic viewpoints failed to account for a significant degree of variance in voting patterns. By way of contrast, region managed to bridge much of this gap. Even when the effects of class were controlled for Johnston, Pattie and Allsopp reveal a large and growing spatial variation in voting patterns in Britain (1988; Ch 6).

In conclusion, recent work in mainstream political geography has shown that in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s there was a marked discontinuity in the economic development of the UK (Harvey 1982; Smith 1984; Massey 1984; Martin 1988). For example the parts of the country which suffered the least from the recession of the early 1980s were the first and the main beneficiaries of the economic upturn in the late 1980s (Pattie and Johnston 1990a). In short there was a spatial variation in the economic development of the UK. Further this has fed into spatial variation in voting patterns and attitudinal structures. The South of England which in relative terms prospered under the first wave of Thatcherism became almost a hot-bed of pro-Thatcherite sentiment and, even when class and various other factors were controlled for, showed a disproportionate tendency to vote Conservative as a result. The North of England and the Celtic fringe, which suffered disproportionately during the years of the Thatcher Governments, proved more resilient to Thatcherite values and became more likely to vote for non-Conservative parties at election times, other things being equal.

Additionally the dynamics of the new recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s brought with them a 'new geography', as the South was hit the hardest of all the regions by the downturn in the service sector of the economy. Labour made inroads into the Conservative vote in the 1992 Election (although often less marked than expected - or sufficient to win seats). Conversely the Conservative vote rallied in its hitherto weakest areas such as Scotland, where the economic dislocation caused by the new recession, had had relatively little impact.

Further ground can be made here by returning to the merger between sociotropic and egocentric values. Many writers have commented on the uneven impact of certain issues across social classes. It is often claimed that unemployment in particular causes variable economic dislocation across social classes and leads to an uneven distribution of concern for the issue of unemployment as a result. In times of austerity the public are often said to internalise their economic perceptions to a greater degree and hence it could be expected that only those sections of the public with the most precarious job security prospects would be unduly concerned by the problem of unemployment (Alt 1979; Hibbs 1981). The implication is that only those directly threatened by the imposition of increased joblessness will heighten their sensitivity to the issue. Unemployment will only be an important issue to those voters directly affected or threatened by it.

This highly egocentric account can be improved if the overlap between sectional and universal interests is better perceived. Crucially the introduction of a geographic perspective would considerably aid the operation to clear the muddy waters. Primarily it should be re-iterated that sectional class interests may be overridden by perceptions of regional development; for example, the petit-bourgeoisie of economically depressed regions may come to realise that their sectional interests in conservative social and economic attitudes are irrelevant if their business interests require a greater degree of general prosperity than is actually present in the region. Hence sectional interests may prove secondary to a more general geographic consideration as a class-regional alliance is formed (see Harrop 1981???5). Furthermore, even if the egocentric bias inherent in this argument is accepted, a more geographic slant may aid understanding. If unemployment has an uneven impact according to social class then the economic development of the 1980s shows that unemployment also has an uneven impact according to region. If the economic incidence of unemployment has a variable impact upon social classes and as a result reshapes policy preferences among those affected classes then certain economic factors with a variable impact across regions might result in the re-shaping of policy preferences among respondents in affected regions. Voters in areas characterised by high levels of unemployment may be more inclined to consider unemployment an important issue in deciding how to vote than their cohorts from areas characterised by low levels of unemployment, regardless of their individual job security.

If prospective values are important and economic realities suggest that there is a significant spatial variation in economic performance which is replicated in public attitudes and voting intentions, then it would be reasonable to expect spatial variation in the prospective judgements of electors subject to regional identities. It could be predicted that respondents living in regions where economic development has been relatively favourable would be more optimistic than respondents from economically depressed regions, even when other factors such as class, age and gender are controlled for. In this light it would be expected that respondents in the South of England would be more optimistic about their future under the Conservative governments of the 1980s, and this optimism would be diluted in the North of England and in Scotland and Wales.

Meanwhile the new recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s would see the fracture of this North-South divide; since the downturn in the economy hit the Conservative heartlands in the South harder than the Labour heartlands in the North and the Celtic regions. It would be expected that the Conservative vote and the level of economic optimism in the South would be atrophied by the new economic reality. Conversely Labour would find it hard to improve on its 1987 position in its heartlands where the relative impact of the new recession was reduced.

1.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Political parties, academics and the public alike are convinced of the importance of economics in popular voting choice. Academic interest in the economy's effect upon electoral behaviour was stimulated by the apparent failure of sociological and psychological models of voting, and a desire to bridge the theory gap. Seminal but essentially unrefined work was witnessed, and its progress traced into the very sophisticated but controversial, econometric modelling of today, all of which aims to locate the position of the economic in the voting process.

A particularly important facet of this is economic perceptions. Expectations about the economic future have been on the political agenda since the 1970s in Britain but recent work has revitalised it as a salient issue in psephology. It would appear that governments seem to acknowledge the importance of public perceptions of the economy, and it was noted that some authors are convinced that the government manipulates the economy to its own advantage, using the political business cycle and the advantages of incumbency throughout the long campaign. It has been argued that a new model of voting should account for the role of perceptions of economic progress and expectations for the future.

In the discussion of the self-interest axiom, outlined earlier the inherent selfishness adopted by Downsian modelling of democracy and voting was encountered. Authors with a chance to set a new agenda in psephology have often failed to

progress because of their reluctance to challenge this model. A long overdue challenge to the selfish actor paradigm has now been launched however, in the form of sociotropic voting theories.

Inherent in most rational choice models of voting (including Downsian modelling) is the reward-punishment axiom. As pointed out earlier, the essential problem with this is that the axiom tries to explain a non-recursive activity in recursive terms. Furthermore, it has been noted that accounts from within the reward-punishment axiom have often fallen due to contextual error, their authors all too easily slipping outside the framework of the retrospective voter. There is an obvious need for a synthesised model which does not destroy the Downsian self-interest axiom or the reward-punishment axiom but replaces them with the possibility of an altruistic and forward thinking electorate.

Finally, a revitalised part of political theory was discussed, one which now looms large in any discussion of the way forward for mainstream electoral behaviour studies, the spatial context. The apparent demise of the old cleavage systems in providing cues for voters in the electoral process, has led to a search for new cleavages, and a return to older theories such as the neighbourhood effect. With a particular affinity to the economic dimension in the literature, and with a firm part to play in any future research using disaggregated data, it is clear that spatial variation accounts for some part of the process of determining who votes and for

whom. Determining the exact nature of this role is the next task of electoral geography. The five themes of this chapter form the basis for the discussion in the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Setting the Context of Research

The 1980s and early 1990s were critical periods in recent British economic and electoral history. The 1980s saw the first recession of the Thatcher era, and the Lawson boom towards the end of the decade: This was followed - at the turn of the decade - by the overheating of the economy and the second recession of the Thatcher era. Electorally this period saw the Conservatives maintain their grip on power - winning elections in 1983, 1987 and 1992, although Mrs Thatcher had been disposed of before the 1992 victory. The 1980s saw a widening gulf in the regional patterns of party support; but this gulf narrowed slightly by 1992 in the teeth of the new recession. Crucially these events had differential impacts upon different parts of the country, and this chapter stresses the importance of the geographic context for an understanding of the political and economic events during this time. The contention here is that where an individual lived had an autonomous influence on the construction of his or her own economic attitudes and subsequently voting behaviour.

This chapter seeks to locate the geographic context of electoral behaviour in the 1980s and early 1990s. Its premier task is to specify a theoretical model which will form the basis for the empirical research reported in later chapters. It achieves this by constructing a full model of the relationship between class, geography , economic attitudes and party support, and a half stage model which hypothesises about the relationship between class geography and

economic attitudes. It also provides testable hypotheses which are used in the subsequent analysis chapters.

Whereas the previous chapter set the parameters which guide this research - the self-interest axiom, the reward-punishment axiom, the economy, personal economic expectations and the geographic dimension - the purpose of this chapter is to secure the place of the geographic dimension at the heart of this thesis. The intention is to show that the geographic dimension holds together the central notions of class and voting and the construction of attitudinal beliefs in the 1980s and the 1990s. As such it is essential that an understanding of voting behaviour in this period takes account of the geographic variation in both voting behaviour and in the attitudes which help form voting trends.

This procedure involves the separation of the original model into two stages - the full model which assesses impact of class, economic attitudes and geography upon vote patterns or partisanship, and the half-stage model which examines the impact of class and geography upon the formation of economic attitudes. These are the models that are scrutinised in the following four results chapters of this thesis.

The connections between class and economic issue voting and between geography and the economic context of the 1980s and 1990s are discussed. The purpose here was to identify that during this period, the role of the economy was critical in understanding the political environment of the period and that the spatial unevenness of the economy resulted in a particular geographic skew to the

political context of voting behaviour in the 1980s and early 1990s. This requires discussion of attitudes and geography, compositional and contextual effects, and the competing themes of geographic milieux and a lifetime learning model.

The background to this research is laid by a discussion of the political environment during the 1980s and 1990s. Crucially this involves the changing geography of the 1980s boom and the 1990s recession. This discussion enables the formal composition of a set of hypotheses which forms the core of the thesis. Critically it shows that the propensity of an area to be identified with support for or hostility to a particular party may alter according to the economic reality of the time.

This chapter discusses the data and methods used for operationalising the model. Two distinct time periods have been examined by using two distinct data sources; survey data for the annual inspection of sociotropic and egocentric attitudes between 1983 and 1989, and poll data for the more detailed inspection of changes in personal economic expectations in the run up to the 1992 General Election. A critical feature of these sets of data was how they could be used to measure social class and geographic variation.

The first task of this chapter is to show how the link between economic attitudes and voting behaviour have been forged in recent elections- via the reward-punishment axiom (or in popular terms via the 'feel good factor').

2.1 THE HISTORICAL LINK BETWEEN THE 'FEEL GOOD FACTOR' AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Much political wisdom centres on the need for Governments to reap the benefit of the 'feel good factor'. Accordingly, electorates that feel good about their economic circumstances are supposed to return incumbent Governments, those who feel bad are inclined to 'throw the rascals out'. The major task facing any Government therefore is to manufacture a sufficiently large 'feel good factor' in order to ensure their re-election. This simplistic feature of the reward-punishment axiom withstands historical investigation.

The percentages in Table 2.1 are derived from the *British Election Study* series of surveys. They show that voters' partisanship at three General Elections - 1979, 1983 and 1987 - were closely associated with their economic attitudes. In each election those respondents who claimed to have voted for the incumbent party were more likely to 'feel good' about their personal economic circumstances over the past year than were supporters of the main opposition party. In 1979 enough voters felt unhappy with the ability of the Labour Government to deliver economic prosperity to ensure a Conservative majority (for discussions of the 1979 Election see Norpoth 1993, Whiteley 1983). In 1983 and 1987 the Conservative Government managed to keep enough of the electorate happy and were returned to power with very comfortably majorities.

The important point here may be that the feel good factor only works in the expected fashion if the electorate is willing to praise or blame the Government

for the delivery of economic prosperity or austerity - and that the Opposition is a viable alternative Government. Labour certainly suffered from a deficit of public faith in the 1983 Election under Michael Foot (see Butler & Kavanagh 1983, Heath et al 1985, Shaw 1994), and a campaign against Neil Kinnock and his shadow treasury team led by John Smith was mounted in 1992 (see Butler & Kavanagh 1992, Scammell 1995; p.265-7), although the effect of this campaign in 1992 was indeterminate. A more fundamental step in the reward-punishment axiom is responsibility; before the electorate can punish a Government which presides over economic failure, it must first apportion blame for failure to the Government. This thesis presents evidence to suggest that large sections of the electorate failed to punish the Conservatives in the run up to the 1992 Election because they did not hold the Government sufficiently responsible for the recession.

Table 2.1: Reported Vote at General Elections by Perceptions of Personal Economic Circumstances over the Previous Twelve Months

Vote	Lot Better	Little Bette	Same	Little Wors	Lot Worse
1979					
Con	22	24	30	39	45
Lbr	50	45	35	23	18
1983					
Con	72	60	45	23	10
Lbr	09	12	21	37	48
1987					
Con	63	51	35	15	08
Lbr	09	18	31	50	55

Source: Crewe, Day & Fox 1991

One of the main challenges of this chapter is to ascertain whether the reward-punishment axiom continued to be a fruitful explanation of partisanship and Government support in the 'long campaign' leading up to the 1992 General Election.

For four General Elections from February 1974 until 1983, *British Election Study* respondents were asked to assess their evaluations of personal living standards over the next twelve months. Responses fell into three categories, pessimists who felt that their own living standards would fall behind prices, neutrals who felt that their living standards would keep up with prices, and optimists who felt that their living standards would rise more than prices.

There were a number of problems with this set of questions that eventually led to their discontinuation in the 1987 *British Election Study*. Firstly they confused the issue of economic optimism and pessimism with the contentious issue of inflation. Chapters 3 and 4 shows that questions which require respondents to gauge inflation levels often result in universal levels of pessimism. In the period of super-inflation sparked by the 1973 Oil Crisis, this could have seriously contaminated the data. Secondly asking prospective questions after the incidence of an Election is liable to open up the possibility that the data measures partisanship rather than optimism or pessimism. Advocates of the winning party are liable to be more optimistic after the Election than those who voted for the losing party.

This explains the conundrum in Table 2.2 which appears to show that pessimists were more likely to vote for the Government in 1979 than in other elections, and were more prone to support the Government than economic optimists. However, it is important to bear in mind that this question was posed

after the election - not during the campaign. Once the alternation of power was accounted for, the evaluations of personal living standards are closely associated with voting behaviour; those who felt good tended to support the party in power, those who felt bad tended to support their main opposition.

Table 2.2: Evaluations of Personal Standard of Living over the Next Twelve Months by Reported Vote at General Elections 1974 - 1983

	Feb 1974		Oct 1974		1979		1983	
Own Living Standards Will	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr
Fall Behind Prices	47	43	61	52	49	72	30	67
Keep up with Prices	46	52	36	43	44	24	58	27
Rise More than Prices	08	05	03	05	07	04	12	06

Source: Crewe, Day & Fox 1991

It is now necessary to examine retrospective economic attitudes. The example to be used here required respondents drawn from the General Elections of October 1974, 1979 and 1983 to assess how their standard of living changed over the last year in relation to changes in prices.

Table 2.3: Evaluations of Personal Standard of Living over the Previous Twelve Months by Reported Vote at General Elections 1974 - 1983

	Oct 1974		1979		1983	
Own Living Standards Have	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr
Fallen Behind Prices	53	49	60	59	36	66
Kept up with Prices	42	45	34	34	54	29
Risen More than Prices	05	06	06	07	11	05

Source: Crewe, Day & Fox 1991

There was virtually no difference in the ability of the two main parties to garner support from economic optimists and pessimists in October 1974 and 1979 (Table 2.3). In 1983 however, as Labour support haemorrhaged, they drew much more support from the 'feel bad' electors and the Conservatives benefitted from the 'feel good factor'. It might be said that the 1983 contest represented an electoral watershed - the beginning of strong egocentric voting

patterns. The next five years provide the focus for the research into the years of economic recovery in Chapters 3 and 4.

This section has shown that, at the rudimentary level at least, a recent link between voters' choice and the extent of the 'feel good factor' was forged. A core theme of the empirical research here will be concerned with identifying this link throughout the 1983-9 recovery and the 1990-92 recession. It will seek to do this through the concepts of class and geography.

2.2 CLASS AND ECONOMICS

2.2.1 DEALIGNMENT AND THE RISE OF ECONOMIC ISSUE VOTING

The concept of class has dominated British psephology. The epitome of this domination is provided by Pulzer (1967; p. 68) who claimed that the study of British politics was essentially the study of class, all else being "embellishment and detail".

Nevertheless, by the elections of the 1970s, it became clear that the simplistic notion of the divide between the manual and non-manual sections of the electorate had lost a large degree of its explanatory force.

> None of the major occupational groups now provide the same degree of solid and consistent support for one of the two major parties as was the case in the earlier post-war era (Sarlvik & Crewe 1983; p. 32).

More recently Franklin (1985; p. 104) hypothesised that

> class voting goes up when Labour does well, and down when it does poorly.

This would imply that as the period 1964-83 was a period of Labour decline (their electoral victories in 1966 and 1974 notwithstanding), it was also reflected in a decreasing class cleavage. Labour's partial recovery in 1987 and 1992 might have been reflected by a re-emergence of the class basis of voting, but the nature of this recovery - in Labour's traditional heartlands in 1987, and the geographic disparity therein - was only cold comfort for both Labour and the class voting theorists, while Labour made inroads into the Midlands vote in 1992 but failed to make sufficient gains in the South.

Opponents of the dealignment thesis have stressed that a change in the sociological nature of modern society rendered the old meaning of class obsolete. Moreover, once class has been satisfactorily redefined, the artefact of class dealignment disappears. They have countered that although the importance of class in providing individuals with voting cues has changed over time, the pattern of this change has not been straightforward. Rather than class dealignment they suggest that the salience of class in determining voting patterns is one of "trendless fluctuation" (Heath *et al* 1987).

Heath *et al* created widespread controversy with the publication of *How Britain Votes* (1985). Amid a flurry of activity in the discussion pages of political science journals, the focal point of this controversy was the contention of Heath *et al* that class dealignment was not evident in the British electorate (see Crewe 1986,

Heath *et al* 1987, Dunleavy 1987). After a degree of backtracking and the publication of a new set of absolute voting figures, Heath *et al* (1987) interpreted their analysis as revealing no overall trend in the incidence of class voting between 1964 and 1983. Further they claimed that if dealignment had occurred in the electorate Sarlvik and Crewe (1983) and Robertson (1984) were incorrect to concentrate on this process in the working class; there was no evidence to suggest that dealignment affected any one class more than any another. That is while a decline in absolute class voting had occurred (due to a real sociological change in the nature of class) there was no evidence to suggest a decline in relative class voting - those who remained in the new, much smaller, working class were still likely to support Labour.

Although Weakliem (1989) has broadly supported the case made by Heath *et al*, claiming that the association between class and party declined between 1964 and 1970 but remained relatively constant afterwards, other independent empirical studies of this debate tend to conclude that the actual pattern of the importance of class in the construction of voting and attitudinal cleavages has more in common with the dealignment theory than with trendless fluctuation (see for example Johnston, Pattie and Russell 1992).

Support for the thesis that class voting was in decline was provided by an in-depth study of the impact of class upon the British electorate by Franklin (1985). He concluded that class could no longer be regarded as the primary motivational force in determining British electoral behaviour. Moreover this motivational feature had

been assumed by the rise in issue voting. Hence voters form values about issues that are constantly updated in changing social, political and economic circumstances. Dunleavy became associated with the argument that a consumption cleavage was replacing class as the primary motivation in British voting behaviour (Dunleavy, 1979, 1980, 1987, Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985).

The point here is that if class has declined in importance in structuring voting patterns, then some other cue must have filled the vacuum left by that decline in class voting. If one variable has lost salience in the equation of which party an individual should support, then an alternative variable may have increased in relative importance in the same equation.

Heath *et al* (1985), Robertson (1984) and Scarbrough (1984) have all explored the attitudinal structure of the British electorate and its impact upon voting behaviour. Heath *et al* clearly established a connection between attitudes and votes, concluding that each party drew from a "heartland" of support situated along two sets of axes - the libertarian-authoritarian and the left-right.

While Rose and McAllister (1986) argued that attitudes accounted for a quarter of the variance associated with voting patterns, Johnston and Pattie (1988a), using discriminant analysis, demonstrated that it was possible to predict voting patterns based upon knowledge of electors' attitudes.

This interest in attitudes as a means to predicting electoral behaviour and as an end in themselves results in the virtual interchangeability between the themes of vote and attitudinal structure. It is the contention here that the critical issue in forming attitudinal structures and influencing voting patterns is public attitudes to the economy.

It is important to note that while the impact of class on voting behaviour may have declined - and that this decline may have precipitated a rise in economic issue voting - class still provides an essential cue in the construction of voting patterns. The aim of this research then, is to augment class voting rather than replace it.

2.3 THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

If class dealignment has occurred, or even if as Heath *et al* believe the impact of class upon voting patterns is uncertain, then the context in which voters formulate attitudes and cast votes becomes vital.

> The dealignment thesis suggests that people have a clearly defined set of political attitudes, but that which party they vote for is no longer so clearly determined by those attitudes as was the case in the past. Instead they evaluate each party, its policies and its leaders, in the context of their attitudes and their interpretation of contemporary circumstances. Those contemporary circumstances may be spatially variable, and so produce spatially varying evaluations and voting (Johnston, Pattie & Allsop 1988; p. 59).

The classic work of Butler and Stokes (1969) presented an opportunity to gauge the impact of the local constituency environment upon voting patterns. Butler and Stokes (1969; p. 129-30) found that the ability of particular parties to mobilise

voters at constituency level over and above the national rate of mobilisation, could be attributed to the reinforcing effects of the local environment. Johnston *et al* concur:

> Mobilisation is a locality based strategy...Where it succeeds in creating a local environment very much skewed towards support for one party, then the ongoing processes of socialisation will sustain that party's dominance, across all classes (1988; p. 60).

Miller's (1977) work on the 1966 General Election hypothesised a contagion process at work within local environments. A network of social contact - the neighbourhood effect - precipitated the solidarity of local voting patterns regardless of the class of individual voters;

> those who speak together vote together (1977; p. 65).

Critically, Miller drew attention to a paradox within the local environment in which voting occurred. As class became less important in structuring an individual's voting behaviour, the impact of class differences between distinct areas became more important to the voting behaviour of the constituency as a whole.

> The class characteristics of the social environment have more effect on constituency partisanship than class differences themselves. The partisanship of individuals is influenced more by where they live than what they do (1977; p. 65).

In other words, the environment in which attitudes were formed and voting took place seemed to be an important feature of the electoral behaviour of the locality. Those constituencies that might be characterised as 'working class' tended to exhibit an even stronger affinity to Labour than the extent of their 'working

classness' would give cause to believe. This exaggerative quality is a key feature of the contagion process inherent in much of electoral geography, voters are influenced by the overall environment in which they live. Moreover this environment may cause them to disregard their personal class interests. Hence the bourgeoisie of a very working class community might develop solidaristic attitudes and pro-Labour voting patterns which override their 'natural' class interests because the local context overrules the personal context and the former demands a more universal outlook than the latter. So for instance, shop-keepers from depressed regions, who require vibrant local economies with low unemployment rates in order for their business to thrive might develop more solidaristic outlooks than their counterparts in economically buoyant areas.

Curtice and Steed (1982) identified the 1955 Election as the key contest in British post-war electoral history. Since then, they assert, long-term shifts in patterns of support for the two main British parties have been characterised by two major divides - the North-South and the urban-rural:

> A North-South cleavage began to emerge in the 1955-59 swing...While the urban-rural cleavage became clearly evident in the 1959-64 swing (p. 256).

The initiatory work of Curtice and Steed (1982, 1986) established the concept of spatial cleavages in the British electorate but was less successful in establishing causation. They offered three possible reasons. Firstly the growth in importance of the North-South and urban-rural cleavages might reflect changes in the class composition of constituencies across the nation as a whole. Hence the apparent

importance of region in determining voting behaviour could be seen merely as a cloak for class voting in a different circumstance. This explanation can be refuted, at least partially, since the amount of constituency change necessary to account for the extent of spatial differences in voting trends simply did not occur. Secondly Curtice and Steed thought that differences in electoral behaviour of otherwise socially similar voters might be due to essential characteristic differences between constituencies. Hence the relative weakness of trade unionism in rural areas and small towns might explain Labour's difficulty in mobilising voters in these regions. However this implies that social change occurred to bring about the haemorrhage of Labour support in these areas, whereas Labour previously gained a great deal of support in areas where unionisation was low. While it may account for present day low level Labour support in rural areas, this explanation fails to account for the historically high levels of Labour support that these areas were responsible for. Thirdly, Curtice and Steed suggest that the growth of third parties (namely the Liberals and the Nationalists) may have influenced the electoral geography of Britain. A resurgent third party may squeeze out the weaker of its two main rivals, thus altering on a long-term basis, the electoral environment of that constituency. This third explanation appears to be the most watertight of the three. The rise of the Liberal vote in the late 1970s and the strength of the Alliance throughout the General Elections of the 1980s was particularly harmful to the soft Labour vote in constituencies where they were in second place behind the Conservatives - although the divide between Conservative and Labour voters had its genesis in the 1960s. The evidence of the 1992 Election would suggest that Labour has not

overcome its difficulty in mobilising in many of these constituencies particularly in the rural South of England.

2.4 THE GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

The economic conditions of the 1980s and early 1990s were spatially variable; the manufacturing recession of the early 1980s hit the North, the 1980s recovery benefited the South, and the new recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s caused most distress in the service sector and the South. In other words the economic conditions of the 1980s and 1990s ought to have had a differential impact according to the geographic location of an individual voter, and according to the timing of the interview.

For this reason, economic issues ought to be seen in the geographic context. If geography is important in explaining variation in voting patterns, it ought to be important in explaining variation in those attitudes which also help structure voting behaviour. If the local environment is the milieu in which information is internalised, then the local economic position ought to influence the economic attitudes of individuals.

Some authors have rejected the notion of the direct influence of geography on attitudinal structure. They reject the contagion process of regional influence in favour of a compositional effect of regional variation. McAllister and Studlar (1992; p. 192) claim that regions are the 'arena' in which other variables affect voting patterns but do not exert an independent causal role themselves.

They further assert that local economic conditions are merely a surrogate for class conditions;

> Regional voting is a *functional rather than a territorial division*: it is caused by the concentration of individuals with certain social and economic characteristics in particular geographic areas (1992, p. 175 - my emphasis).

This precipitates two research design problems. Firstly a functional definition of geography needs to be used in conjunction with - and in comparison to - a regional definition. This would make it possible to ascertain whether the geographic location or the kind of economic context of a constituency that determines the voting behaviour of its inhabitants, and Miller's paradox which sees the class basis of a constituency as a multiplier in the class voting patterns of a locality. Secondly the relationship between geography and vote, and geography and attitudes must be explored in two separate stages, since the case for suggesting that economic conditions affect vote patterns is similar - but not identical to - the case for suggesting that regional variations in economic conditions contribute to variation in economic attitudes. A full and half-stage model needs to be constructed.

This thesis then, needs to reinforce the position of geographical analysis in the mainstream of psephological study. The crucial part of this procedure is the imposition of regional considerations alongside those concerning social class. This goes some way to redress the balance inherent in most of British psephology which despite the supposed decreasing influence of class, has tended in recent years to concentrate on the subject of class voting (Dunleavy 1979, 1980, 1987;

Sarlvik & Crewe 1983; Heath *et al* 1985, 1991) or has endeavoured to discount geographic considerations by erroneously specifying its incidence of impact in a "lifetime learning process" (Rose & McAllister 1990). It is important to note that the issue of space should be added to the equation before economic attitudes since it is a major contention here that spatial considerations contribute to the process of the construction of economic attitudes. Hence this chapter attempts to avoid some of the temporal errors made in other accounts which fail to see that theoretically the imposition of a regional identity must predate the construction by respondents of attitudinal structures.

Moreover it is crucial to realise that the effects of spatial impact may manifest themselves in a number of different manners. The uneven economic development of Britain under Thatcherism generated a considerable amount of interest in the apparent division between "Northern" and "Southern" parts of the country - and this distinction plays its part in the analysis put forward here - but it would seem plausible that factors other than nominal region may play a part in the spatial variation in attitudes and partisanship. A competing claim about the compositional nature of geographic variation stresses the economic character of a region, so that the use to which space is put rather than its geographic location is important. A critical part of the regional dimension of this thesis is that two different spatial distinctions are tested, the so called 'North/South divide' of nominal regions and the functional utility of space divide which groups together similar constituencies in disparate parts of the country.

Towards these ends, the attitudes and partisanship of respondents may be looked at in two ways; firstly respondents may be divided into subgroups by a simple notion of region, such as Scotland, Wales, North England, Midlands, South England & London; secondly they may be analysed by groups characterised by common features of their constituency, for example a high incidence of local authority housing could be used to create a group consisting of respondents from nominally diverse regions, say Plymouth Devonport and Middlesbrough, or a group whose main characteristic was a high incidence of New Commonwealth immigration may link respondents in the East of London with respondents in the East Midlands.

2.4.1 GEOGRAPHIC MILIEUX VS LIFETIME LEARNING

Critics of the contagion effect in electoral geography suggest that the geographic impact upon voting behaviour is merely a feature of the combined characteristics of the different regions. Hence the North-South divide is merely a function of the different class composition of Northern and Southern constituencies; the North is simply more working class than the South.

Rose and McAllister (1986, 1990) dispute many of the central tenets of electoral geography. In their second account of voting behaviour, their 'lifetime learning model' purports to show that after constant features such as respondent's class and individual characteristics such as political values are controlled for, the regional impact on voting behaviour disappears.

> Where a person lives is of little electoral relevance. Individuals do not express a sentiment that is place specific; what they express is derived from an accumulation of experiences. *Once we control for prior influences* in a lifetime of learning, then urbanisation, regional differences, national differences and differences in the socio-economic composition of a constituency altogether account for less than one per cent of the variance in voting...What an individual learns in the South of England or the North may be different but it is different because it reflects nationwide socio-economic differences and political values rather than a distinctive regional culture. Controlling for previous experiences show that *context reinforces what has already been learned*; it does not alter how an ordinary person votes (Rose & McAllister 1990; p. 124 - my emphasis).

The crux of the issue here is that the Rose and McAllister model misspecifies the point at which geography should be added to the equation. If local communities, constituencies and regions are the miliuex in which attitudes are formed - the context in which political information is internalised - then they ought to be controlled for prior to the consideration of the attitudes that they help form. Rose and McAllister's model which considers geography after it considers attitudes is therefore seriously flawed.

Rose and McAllister fail to provide evidence to support their assertion that family loyalties, socio-economic interest and political values are learnt *prior* to knowledge of regional conditions. Furthermore, the regional environment cannot merely 'reinforce what has already been learned' since it cannot be divorced from the socialisation process than an individual undergoes as a whole. The impact of the local environment does not suddenly arrive when an elector reaches the age of

eighteen, or on the day of polling. It has to be as constant an influence on political (and economic) values as family loyalties and socio-economic interests.

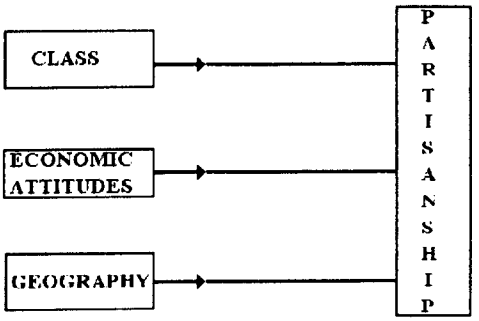
Thus the model that this research seeks to build must avoid this erroneous placement of geographic considerations. Hence geography and class predate the formation of economic attitudes in the half stage model, and all three feed into the production of voting trends in the full model of partisanship.

2.5 SPECIFYING THE MODEL

The previous chapter attempted to set the tone for this research; this chapter narrows the focus sufficiently in order to see the impact of economic attitudes and geographic variation on voting behaviour in the 1980s and the early 1990s. The first task in this operation is the specification of the model under scrutiny.

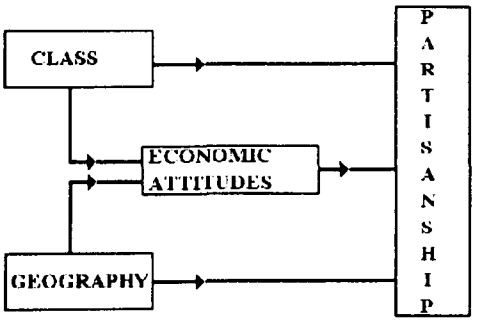
This thesis aims to suggest that three factors are crucial to understanding levels of party support during the period 1983-1992. These are class, economic attitudes and geography - and all three feed directly into vote outcomes (see Figure 2.1). This is not to suggest that these three factors are the sole determinants of levels of party support but they should represent a parsimonious account of partisanship with a decent amount of explanatory force.

Figure 2.1: The Relationship Between Class, Economic Attitudes, Geography and Partisanship



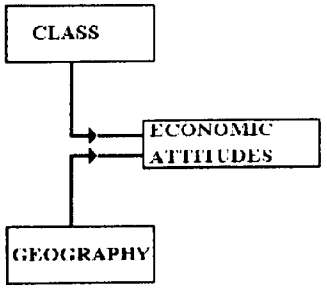
However it is important to note that economic attitudes are derived from other factors - they are the product of the environment and socialisation process in which they are formed. Moreover class and geographic backgrounds are intrinsic parts of this environment. Thus, contrary to the claims of some authors, class and geography must predate the incidence of economic attitudes in the model (see Figure 2.2, compare to Rose & McAllister, 1990).

Figure 2.2: The Combined Relationship Between Class, Economic Attitudes, Geography and Partisanship



The next stage of this research involves the separation of the original model into two phases. In phase one, class and geography feed into attitudes (Figure 2.2) and all three variables contribute to the outcome of government support. In the half stage model of economic attitudes (Figure 2.3), class and geography combine to produce an autonomous impact in the formation of economic attitudes.

Figure 2.3: The Half Stage Model: The Relationship Between Class, Economic Attitudes and Geography



In order to explore the relationship between class, region and attitudes fully it was necessary to dissect the concept of economic attitudes. For this purpose the next phase of the research was the careful investigation of four types of economic attitudes as each dependent variable. Hence it was possible to gauge the effect of spatial and class distinctions upon egocentric, sociotropic, retrospective and prospective economic values.

Research from the late 1970s and 1980s opened up the debate in two ways; firstly it introduced the concept of region to the whole equation; secondly it tested for the

influence of class and region upon other interactions of economic attitudes - prospective, sociotropic values, retrospective, egocentric values and retrospective, sociotropic values. The research into the 1990s and the long campaign of the 1992 Election concentrated on the relationship between personal egocentric values and party support.

2.6 THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH: A CHANGING ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

It is now necessary to briefly sketch the political context which provided the background against which this thesis is set. The crucial theme to bear in mind is that the political and economic developments of the period were consistently entangled with geography. It has been noted that the recession associated with the first Thatcher government had been spatially variable. It is also true however, that the recovery of the second and third Thatcher governments and the overheating economy that caused the new recession at the end of the decade were also associated with differential regional impact.

2.6.1 THE 1980s BOOM

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, continuing the work of his predecessor Geoffrey Howe (see Young, 1990, Barnes & Cockett, 1994), presided over a substantial boost in consumer confidence and spending. By further relaxing credit controls and introducing deregulation to large financial institutions - especially to the City of London and the stock market that benefited from the revolution of trading methods (the Big Bang) and the Government's privatisation programme which resulted in widespread share ownership and large profits for

hitherto nationalised corporations - the Lawson Chancellorship of the mid 1980s was characterised by immense institutional change and financial prosperity. Nevertheless, the development of financial institutions and the City necessarily brought with it an uneven geographic dimension since these institutions - and the people who worked in them - were based in the capital and the South-East.

The nature of this change and prosperity was thus limited in scope since its base lay in the financial markets and the service sector rather than in existing staple industry. Hence the parts of the country that suffered most from the decline in the manufacturing sector in the early 1980s were not the most obvious beneficiaries of the 'Lawson Boom'. In what the Chancellor himself called "our own economic miracle" (Lawson 1993; p. 685). Britain's manufacturing base was not resuscitated and the recovery was far from orthodox - having its origin in new areas of the economy rather than in manufacturing renewal.

The service sector economy - which was concentrated in the South East of the country - expanded rapidly, but the manufacturing sector failed to respond to the economic recovery (see for example Lewis & Townsend 1989). Unemployment levels fell sharpest in those areas where they were already relatively low; living standards rose most sharply for those individuals - and in those regions - that were already economically secure (Pattie & Johnston 1990a, 1990c). The Lawson Boom then, accentuated the existing North-South and functional space divisions in British society. It would be unsurprising if these expanded divides found articulation in patterns of voting.

A crucial tenet of the 'Lawson Boom' was the impetus to the markets and consumer spending given by his Budgets in March of 1986 and 1987. These budgets were widely perceived as the cornerstone of Conservative electoral strategy increasing personal disposal income and vastly increasing the supply of money (after a period of its strict regulation during the early Budgets of Lawson and his predecessor Geoffrey Howe). In particular this was achieved by the use of cuts in taxation, especially to those members of the public identified as prone to Conservative support - and who of course tended to be concentrated in the buoyant economic regions.

Although the Lawson budgets of the mid-1980s were weighted in favour of those sections of society that were already far from poor, the general atmosphere generated by them was to suggest all round prosperity made possible by the new sectors of the economy - the service sector and the new financial institutions. Those sections of society that benefited from the prevailing Government policy were further rewarded by Lawson's tax policy in his budgets. Those sections that did not greatly benefit from these policies were less well assisted by the Chancellor's Budgetary programme.

Hence the spatial disparity of economic decline and recovery was accentuated by the Lawson Boom. The boom notwithstanding, we might expect that, throughout the 1980s voters from the industrial North of Britain would be less enthusiastic about their economic outlook than voters from the relatively prosperous South.

2.6.2 THE 1990s BUST

In the aftermath of Lawson's expansionary budget of 1988, the economic 'miracle' had slowed down significantly. By the following year it was obvious that the economy was in decline.

The changing geographic context of the two recessions meant that the regions hit hardest by the first recession were less affected by the second recession (see Table 2.4 and Figure 2.4). Between 1989 and 1991 the dynamics of recession changed dramatically; unemployment rose 3.1 percentage points in the South East, but actually fell by 0.6 percentage points in Scotland (Table 2.4). Moreover the rate of unemployment increases throughout the Conservative heartlands outstripped unemployment increases in the North of Britain. If the Government were popularly held to be culpable for the new recession, the Conservative regime faced a huge challenge in their search for re-election.

Figure 2.4: The Rise in Unemployment in the 1990s Recession; Percentage Change in Unemployment, March 1990 to October 1992 (Source: Martin 1993; Figure 3)

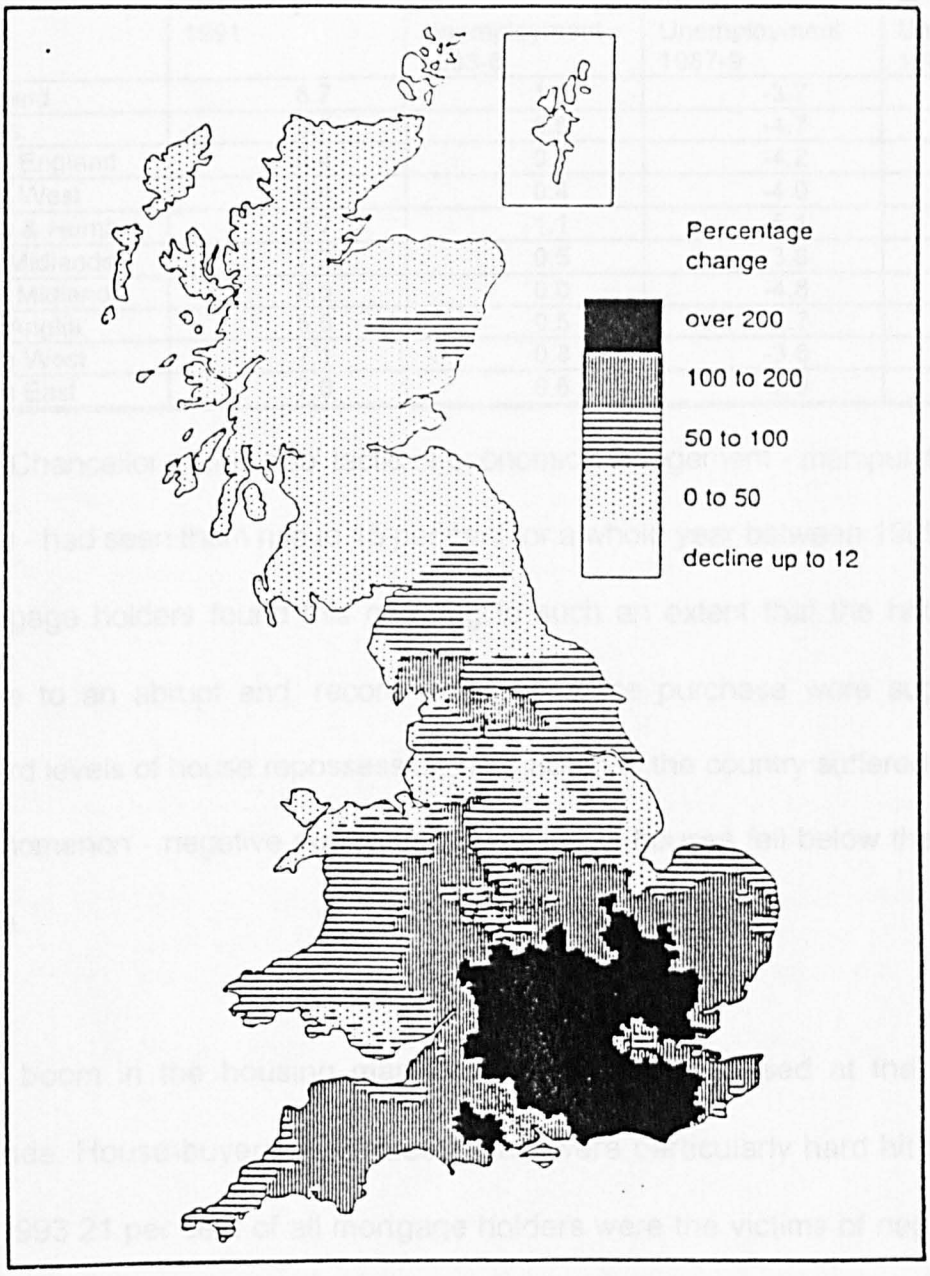


Table 2.4: The Changing Regional Geography of Unemployment 1983-91 (Source: Regional Trends 1992, Table 7.16)

	% Unemployment 1991	% point change in Unemployment 1983-6	% point change in Unemployment 1987-9	% point change in Unemployment 1989-91
Scotland	8.7	1.0	-3.7	-0.6
Wales	8.7	0.6	-4.7	1.4
North England	10.4	0.7	-4.2	0.5
North West	9.4	0.4	-4.0	0.9
Yorks & Humb	8.7	1.1	-5.1	1.3
East Midlands	7.2	0.5	-3.6	1.8
West Midlands	8.6	0.0	-4.8	2.0
East Anglia	5.8	0.5	-3.7	2.2
South West	7.1	0.8	-3.6	2.6
South East	7.0	0.6	-2.9	3.1

The Chancellor's 'one-club' tactic of economic management - manipulating interest rates - had seen them rise to 15 per cent for a whole year between 1989 and 1990. Mortgage holders found this crippling to such an extent that the housing boom came to an abrupt end; record levels of house purchase were supplanted by record levels of house repossession. The South of the country suffered from a new phenomenon - negative equity - as the value of houses fell below their purchase price.

The boom in the housing market in the 1980s collapsed at the turn of the decade. House-buyers in the South East were particularly hard hit (Table 2.5). By 1993 21 per cent of all mortgage holders were the victims of negative equity (in London and the outer South East the average was nearly 40 per cent). The slump in the housing market and the new geography of unemployment combined to make the prognosis for Government re-election rather poor.

Table 2.5: Average Property Prices, 1991 and Proportion of Households with Negative Equity, Third Quarter 1993, by Geographic Region (Source: Pattie, Dorling & Johnston 1995)

	Property Price 1991 (£'000s)	% Change in Property Price 1983-6	% Change in Property Price 1987-9	% Change in Property Price 1989-91	% Negative Equity 1993
Stratchclyde	42.44	13.39	19.65	11.95	6.66
E Cent Scot	47.01	12.25	26.16	8.66	1.12
Rural Scot	39.19	8.60	27.98	23.06	2.07
Rural North	51.81	21.43	47.02	6.29	11.08
Industrial N E	38.27	12.98	31.59	6.83	5.53
Merseyside	46.99	8.31	44.01	22.17	8.72
Gtr M'chester	48.68	17.82	48.97	4.98	8.05
Rest of N W	57.04	20.32	51.06	11.22	10.83
W Yorks	47.34	14.40	49.49	9.33	5.89
S Yorks	41.10	12.35	43.16	12.01	6.27
Rural Wales	45.05	13.14	49.18	2.26	10.05
Ind'l S Wales	43.61	21.54	35.99	-0.82	4.14
W Mid Conb	51.86	18.15	47.39	6.36	9.81
Rest W Mids	59.68	23.85	52.84	3.07	19.39
E Mids	51.71	28.32	44.24	3.70	28.13
East Anglia	57.02	40.31	31.15	-12.91	27.34
Dev & Corn'll	59.27	30.71	46.52	-10.72	33.66
Wessex	63.94	37.02	32.99	-6.11	36.53
Inner L'don	78.15	62.34	13.14	1.81	39.83
Outer L'don	86.38	56.72	16.19	-3.38	39.36
Outer Metrop	84.86	50.91	25.37	-6.91	34.29
Outer S E	68.78	43.38	32.60	-10.90	38.79
GB	59.20	30.18	35.01	2.19	21.04

The key point to this downturn was that - as Tables 2.4 and 2.5 show - that those sections of the electorate (and those regions) that were the most recent beneficiaries of the Lawson boom were the first in the firing line when the slump set in.

The Conservatives who had benefited from the 'feel good' factor in the 1987 election, now suffered from a tangible 'feel bad' factor. Moreover those electors who felt worse were typically those who had previously felt good, as unemployment began to rise in the heartlands of Conservatism in the South East and the service sector economy. As the personal expectations of a natural community of

Conservatives worsened, there was an obvious danger of a haemorrhage of Conservative support.

By this time, the Prime Minister and her Chancellor were in open conflict over economic policy. She installed Sir Alan Walters, a vociferous critic of Lawson, as her own economic advisor; and her refusal to sack Walters led directly to Lawson's resignation in October 1989. He was replaced by John Major who was forced to admit in the autumn of 1989 that Britain was in the midst of a deep rooted recession (see Norton 1993).

The recession continued for much longer than the Government had anticipated; and it continued to hit the natural Conservative communities in the South and the service sector. With John Major's accession to the Premiership in November 1990, the new regime inherited a serious economic malaise. Furthermore its impact was disproportional geographically and almost wholly to the Conservatives' disadvantage.

> The economic upturn was supplanted by the reality of the recession deepening. Unemployment continued to rise, the housing market was stagnant and economic growth was lower in 1991 than in 1990. Small businesses continued to struggle. In 1991 44,000 of them went out of business. The recession hit particularly hard in the South of England, the heartland of Conservative support (Norton 1993; p. 64).

The Conservatives had survived the electoral impact of a severe recession before, when the first Thatcher Government oversaw a sharp decline in Britain's manufacturing base. However, the threatened sector of the electorate had been

based in their main opponent's natural communities - the industrial North. Now the Conservatives were faced with a deep and lengthy recession that attacked their own supporters - the very sections of the electorate that had returned them to power in 1987. This represented the biggest test for the Conservative Government in the run up to the 1992 election. Their success in 1992 suggests that they managed to overcome these electoral disadvantages in the South of England. The analysis of the long-campaign up to the 1992 Election attempts to see how and why this success was accomplished.

2.7 HYPOTHESES

2.7.1 CLASS

It is necessary to hypothesise about the direction that the models specified earlier will take. The specified model of class and voting should remain fairly constant throughout the thesis. The higher up the social scale people are, the more likely that they will support the Conservative government throughout the period 1983-1992. The lower down the scale individuals reside, the more likely they are to support the Labour party. The testable null hypothesis for class voting then is that there is no difference in the patterns of partisanship attributable to the incidence of social class.

Likewise it should be the case that the relationship between social class and personal economic attitudes remains more or less constant throughout the period 1983-1992. Individuals from the higher echelons of society are likely to be more optimistic about their economic future and more satisfied with their economic past

than their counterparts from lower down the social scale. The testable null hypothesis for class and economic attitudes then is that there is no discernible difference in the construction of economic attitudes across all social classes.

2.7.2 ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

The expected pattern of economic attitudes comes directly from the reward-punishment and self-interest axioms, and the possibility of prospective and altruistic voting presented in the previous chapter. Put simply the more satisfied individuals are with their economic position or prospects, the more likely they are to support the incumbent government. This relationship ought to hold throughout the years 1983-1992, but it is crucial to note that the respondents who fit this profile may change significantly.

The testable null hypothesis for economic attitudes and voting is that voting patterns are not affected by the relative economic optimism or pessimism, economic satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the electorate. Furthermore the likelihood that an individual will support a particular party will not be altered by their personal or societal, recollections or predictions.

2.7.3 GEOGRAPHY

Given that the time period 1983-1992 was characterised by geographic fluctuations, it would be reasonable to expect that the economic attitudes and voting behaviour of individuals would be dependent on their geographic location. During the 1980s Britain suffered from a tangible slump in the manufacturing base

of the economy, but then recovered in the service sector economy. There was of course a real geographic dimension to this. During this period, electors from the North and constituencies identified with manufacturing industry would tend to be less optimistic about their economic future and less pleased with their economic past than those electors from the South and constituencies identified with service sector employment.

By implication the state of an individual's economic outlook might predetermine their propensity to support the government. Those who were optimistic about the future or pleased about the past would be natural government supporters, if they deemed the government to be responsible for the economic conditions. Those who were pessimistic or dissatisfied would be unlikely to support the incumbent regime.

Throughout the 1980s, those electors from areas that suffered the most from the early 1980s recession - the North and Scotland and Wales and the industrial sector of the economy would - *ceteris paribus* - be the least likely of all respondents to support the incumbent Conservative administration. The Conservative heartland of support would thus be the South of the country and the service sector economy which benefited the most from the economic upturn in the middle of the decade.

The changing economic reality of the late 1980s and early 1990s however, would be expected to alter the geographic pattern of party support. It would be reasonable to assume that as the new recession hit the South-East of the country and the service sector of the economy hardest of all, then the new geography of

recession would feed into a change in the familiar North-South divide in voting behaviour and attitudinal structure.

The narrowing of the North-South divide in economic performance might be reflected in a narrowing of the North-South divide in economic attitudes; electors in the South-East and the service sector would be less likely to be sanguine about their economic future or pleased with their recent economic past than they had been previously. Furthermore they might be less likely to support the Conservative government in the new recession than in the previous recession or the Lawson boom. The North-South and functional cleavages of voting behaviour might not disappear completely but they might narrow - or at least stop growing.

The testable null hypothesis throughout this period is that geography, however measured, has no influence upon the attitudinal structure or the voting patterns of electors.

2.8 OPERATIONALISING THE MODEL I

2.8.1 DATA AND METHODS

2.8.1.1 THE *BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES* SERIES

In order to give greater depth to the analysis of the 1980s, the *British Social Attitudes* series of surveys was used for this research. The *British Social Attitudes* series used here comprises six separate surveys running from 1983 until 1989, with the Comparative European Study of the 1988 *British Social Attitudes* omitted from this thesis. There was also a panel survey in the series which assessed

attitudes of respondents between 1983 and 1986. The sample size of the *British Social Attitudes* surveys was consistently around 2500 and once again the surveys were designed to yield representative cross-sections of the adult populations of England, Scotland, Wales. Essentially there is much continuity in the *British Social Attitudes* series and their concentration upon attitudes enables extensive analysis of economic outlooks.

The *British Social Attitudes* series facilitate a more detailed analysis of public attitudes to the economy over a shorter period of time than the *British Election Study*. Being conducted on an inter-Election basis, and throughout the 1987 campaign, the *British Social Attitudes* series does not offer the same theoretical problems which the *British Election Study* series does over the timing of questionnaires, although it does have some problems associated with its temporal incidence (see below).

A potential problem with the *British Social Attitudes* series was its use of the party identification variable. Theoretically the import of Party Identification from the USA has proved troublesome (see Robertson 1976). In particular it should be noted that Party Identification ought to prove more resilient to change than voting allegiance since the theory suggests that voters retain an identification with a party over and above short term shifts in party popularity. Empirically however, outside the USA the notion of Party Identification has failed to exhibit a great degree of strength over and above last reported vote. In fact, the empirical evidence would suggest that, as a consequence, the meaning of party identification to non-American

respondents is close enough to the meaning of the concept of party support to justify the use of the former as a surrogate for the latter in this research. Indeed there is strong evidence to suggest that the Party Identification variable measured by the *British Social Attitudes* series can be considered approximate to the vote intention question asked by the *NOP/Newsnight* series of opinion polls.

The *British Social Attitudes* series allowed a widespread interpretation of the impact of spatial variation upon economic attitudes and upon voting behaviour. In both cases, coding by area is by constituency identification which permitted the recoding of respondents by region into a number of categories according to theoretical needs. Firstly respondents were disaggregated by standard region, a compressed version involved five categories, Scotland and Wales, North of England, the Midlands, Greater London and the South of England: this categorisation would permit robust examination of the distinctions between the "North" and "South" of the country. Secondly respondents were recoded into constituency type variables following the work of Webber (1978), and CACI Market Analysis in order to examine the thesis that the important distinction, in geographic terms, of public perceptions of the economy and of voting behaviour was between different functional areas (see also Crewe and Fox 1984). In this manner it was possible to cluster respondents' location by constituency type in order to test the functional division of space theory for surveys conducted after the constituency boundary changes which were first used in the 1983 Election in Britain, the year of the first *British Social Attitudes* survey.

According to the *British Social Attitudes* series Handbooks, sampling typically occurred over a number of months. In fact it usually took place between January and late February, but crucially in 1986 and 1987 the time period for sampling coincided with the timing of the Budget. In these two years, interviewers were in the field until late March and early April respectively. This would of course make little difference to most analyses using the *British Social Attitudes* series. However, for the analysis of economic attitudes, this may be a critical consideration.

If it could be shown that those members of the public who exhibited a marked disinclination to economic optimism were interviewed before the Budget and those respondents who were relatively optimistic about their predictions for family income levels were interviewed after the budget, then the previously held contention that optimism and pessimism were associated with spatial differences would be nullified. Instead the likelihood that the differences in relative optimism or pessimism was caused by temporal considerations could not be refuted.

Although it is not strictly true that the data which forms the *British Social Attitudes* series was collected region by region, the nature of national data collection raises a suspicion that each area of Britain may be surveyed separately. This suspicion is confirmed by analysis of the date of each interview. Scottish respondents are typically dated as being interviewed before those respondents from London. Although interview dates for all regions span the whole data collection period, the suspicion that the subtle differences in average deviations from the Grand Mean

across the country, can be associated as readily with interview timing as with spatial placement remains too strong for comfort.

Although this section has concentrated on the incidence of one particular political event, the spring Budget, and indeed two particular budgets by a particular Chancellor, in truth, the measurement of economic attitudes may be prone to distortion from a number of political events which may be effect response to questions related to the coming year. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement (although now unified with the Budget) and the ending of the Tax Year are two annual events which might influence economic attitudes if respondents were asked to forecast personal income levels directly after their incidence. Furthermore specialised one-off events might affect expectations: the very first community charge bills, trade wars and currency devaluation are all examples of political shocks which may impact upon economic expectations.

The fault may not lie with the question itself, but in the manner in which it is posed. Forecasts of economic expectations may fluctuate over the course of any one year to such an extent that one annual question could not hope to measure the true dynamics of the relationship between personal economic forecasts and political events. In this case it would be as well to measure economic attitudes more regularly than the annual question posed by the *British Social Attitudes* series.

The two considerations here, that the economic evaluations of respondents may be contaminated by temporal sampling procedures and that in any case the

process of formulating economic attitudes may be much more dynamic than a static annual question could ever hope to pick up upon, lead to a major upheaval in the research strategy behind this thesis.

2.8.1.2 THE *NOP/NEWSNIGHT* SET OF OPINION POLLS

Access was also obtained to the *NOP/Newsnight* set of opinion polls which comprised a monthly poll of public opinion from January 1990 until February 1992 inclusive. Sample sizes for these polls vary but the usual number of respondents was in the region of 1500 interviewees. The *NOP/Newsnight* polls were designed to be representative of the country as a whole and their small sample size means that their representativeness of the regions was impaired. Nevertheless, the sheer number of polls and their tendency to replicate questions month after month, meant that this data source lent itself exceptionally well to in-depth analysis of spatial variation in economic attitudes and partisanship in the early 1990s and over a crucial period of time in British politics - the long campaign leading to the 1992 General Election.

Once again the data were constructed by the use of constituency codes which permitted the recoding into suitable variables to test the North/South - urban/rural, and functional area effects. The essential flaw in the *NOP/Newsnight* data, however, was that the monthly poll data were culled from a much smaller sample size than the *British Social Attitudes* series. The result of this is that the size of each cell or subgroup was less than would be required in order to assume the required statistical representational qualities for each region. Nevertheless it was

still possible to construct a five fold regional schema. However the under representation of inner-metropolitan areas in the poll series required a reconstruction of the constituency type schema (see below).

2.9 THE USE OF OPINION POLL DATA IN THE LIGHT OF THE 1992 GENERAL ELECTION

2.9.1 THE CASE FOR OPINION POLLS

In order to assess economic attitudes, and particularly personal expectations, survey data such as that provided by the *British Social Attitudes* series would have to be replaced by a more regular examination of the issue. Opinion Polls often ask respondents about economic issues. Typically they sample far fewer respondents but nevertheless obtain a representative sample of the nation, which may be disaggregated by certain criteria including class, region and constituency type. The quota sampling technique of opinion polls means that polling is usually complete within one or two days (unlike the complex and time-consuming random sampling used for survey data). Hence the temporal contamination which may be evident in survey data should not be present in poll data. Furthermore, the knowledge that Britain was gearing up for a General Election, and the subsequent proliferation of opinion polls gave an unique opportunity to measure attitudes in the period of time identified by Miller *et al* as "The Long Campaign" (1990).

When the decision to use Opinion Poll data was first made and the *NOP/Newsnight* series obtained, the use of Opinion Poll data did not appear to be contentious. The Opinion Polls had performed well throughout the 1987-92

parliament, while the *NOP/Newsnight* polls commissioned by the BBC had received lavish praise for their performance in predicting the outcomes of by-elections.

With hindsight, it might be claimed that the reliability of Opinion Poll data was first brought into question by the Langbaurgh by-election of November 1991. All the polls, including an *NOP* exit poll, indicated a sweeping victory for the Labour candidate Dr Ashok Kumar in the Conservative held seat. However, although Labour won the by-election they did so with a much smaller majority than the polls had predicted, and the final statistics were outside the accepted margin of error of plus or minus three per cent.

The failure of the polls to gauge, within the acceptable margin of error, the extent of the Labour victory at Langbaurgh in 1991 was popularly ascribed to the Labour candidate's ethnicity. Many traditional working class Labour voters and potential defectors from other parties were said to be unwillingly to vote for a Black candidate, even given his party affiliation. Moreover although such racist attitudes were supposedly prevalent among potential Labour voters, they remained covert rather than overt. Put simply many voters lied to pollsters about their stated intention to vote Labour. This theme was rehearsed over and over again in the aftermath of the General Election of 1992, when the general failure by all Opinion Polls to correctly predict the outcome of the national election was ascribed to the 'shame' factor involved in respondents admitting to vote Conservative (Crewe 1992; also see Butler and Kavanagh 1992; Worcester 1995).

2.9.2 THE POLLS AND THE 1992 GENERAL ELECTION

Opinion polls are designed to reflect public opinion. Their most high profile usage is in predicting the outcome of elections. In April 1992, the British polls failed their acid test, overestimating Labour support and underestimating the Conservative vote. Most polls gave the impression that there would probably be a hung parliament - with Labour as the biggest party. At the very least, the Conservative government would lose its overall majority. In the event the Conservatives were returned with a 21 seat majority. The discrepancy between predicted vote patterns and the actual result was so great that no piece of academic research which aims to utilise Opinion Poll data, collected at the time of or in the run up to the 1992 British General Election, can proceed without some discussion of the performance of the polls in 1992 (For a more detailed discussion of the polls in 1992 see Broughton, 1995, Waller, 1995, Wybrow, 1995 and Worcester, 1995).

The attempts to explain John Major's victory have fallen into two schools of thought: Either the pollsters were talking to the wrong people (they had a misspecified sample), or they were talking to the right people who were not telling the truth. The next step here has to be to examine what this means to the research presented here using Opinion Poll data.

2.9.2.1 UNREPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES

If the pollsters in the 1992 British General Election were talking to the wrong people, conducting research among a misspecified population, then it is

remarkable that all the polling organisations were equally wrong and that the bias in the polls occurred in the same direction, inflating Labour and deflating Conservative support. Clearly, if bias was inherent in the sampling scheme of the polling organisations then it was systematic and not random bias.

Although the Market Research Society Enquiry denied that poll tax evasion was a significant contributory cause to the sample misspecification of the polls, Smith and McLean (1994) have suggested however, that the de-registration of voters which was encouraged by the poll tax, may have been partly responsible for the Conservative victory.

Comparing the 1991 Census data with the existing electoral register, Smith and McLean report that the rate of unregistered electors was regionally variable. Hence while only six per cent of people on the census failed to be on the electoral register in the metropolitan areas outside London, twenty per cent of those present on the inner London census were absent from the electoral register (1994; p. 234 - also see McLean & Smith 1995). Thus the MRS enquiry could have overlooked the spatial variation in the effects of poll tax evasion. Nationally it might not have been a significant factor but in certain localities and in certain constituencies, disenrolment from the electoral register due to the poll tax, may have been enough to make a real difference to the outcome of particular seats.

Smith and McLean conclude that if the opposition parties had captured only forty per cent of the deregistered vote (and there are good grounds for assuming that

poll tax evaders were not naturally Conservative voters) they would have captured an additional ten seats and thus reduced the Conservative majority in the House of Commons to one seat (1994; p. 240).

It is possible that those respondents who refused to participate in polls were concentrated in groups of the electorate which tended to support the Conservatives - for example Curtice (1995) considers the differential refusal of elderly women voters. There was limited evidence to suggest that refusal to answer the 'who would you vote for?' question, or to be interviewed at all, increased in 1992. However, the real problem here is how to measure such a phenomenon since no hard facts exist about the profile of non-respondents. Suspicions that non-respondents are usually Conservative voters must remain suspicions rather than evidence. However, a more central geographic problem about differential refusal was not addressed by the MRS. If the so-called 'shame factor' was particularly marked in 1992, then it would be probably be concentrated in certain regions where voting Conservative might be seen as acting against local interests. For instance, voters from East Anglia and the South East might have been especially reluctant to identify themselves as Conservative supporters given the state of the recession in those areas in the run-up to 1992.

A consistent criticism of opinion polls is that they had an inadequate sample size. However, the evidence from 1992 suggests that size did not matter after all. Polls of just over 1,000 respondents fared no worse than those of over 2,000 or even *ICM*'s 10,000 sample survey for the Press Association. Nevertheless weekend and

in-home interviewing techniques were used by only one organisation, *Harris*, which quickly abandoned the practice after two polls suggested a significant Conservative lead (Waller, 1995). With hindsight it might be said that the unease of the *Harris* organisation with these results was misplaced, and that the more orthodox interview techniques miss significant seams of Conservative support.

The most publicised of all the outcomes from the Market Research Society enquiry into the performance of Opinion Polls in the run up to the 1992 Election was the assertion that there may have been errors in sampling which created a pro-Labour bias in polling since 1959. This however, may be less worrying for research purposes than first impressions might suppose. The systematic over-estimation of Labour support still permits analysis of relative changes in party support. Only study of absolute levels of support would be denigrated by this systematic error.

2.9.2.2 UNRELIABLE RESPONSES

The second common explanatory factor in the failure of the polls in 1992 concerns the possibility that the population as a whole was correctly specified, but that a significant number of respondents chose to misinform the pollsters; that Britain had become a 'nation of liars' (Crewe, 1992).

The misinformation thesis may have its roots in two phenomena. Either an exceptionally late swing, in the very last days of the election campaign, caused most of the pre-election polls to be skewed towards Labour, or the Conservative

lead in the public at large was deliberately hidden by Conservative voters - that Conservatives were 'ashamed' to admit their partisanship.

Two points are central about the 'late swing' theory. Firstly, the late swing effect must have been very late indeed since the final day polls were also incorrect (as were the exit polls). Secondly, the late swing effect can only be a legitimate phenomenon if the timing of the election was crucial to the late swing itself. Would the result have been different if the Election had been held earlier? If a late swing towards the incumbent party of government was inevitable, this represents a huge dilemma for the future of Opinion Polls. After all, what was the point of asking respondents how they would vote if there was a General Election tomorrow if their responses could not be relied upon? If the act of focusing attention on the choice between alternative governments occurs only when there *will be* a General Election tomorrow, the validity of the standard vote intention question is thrown into doubt.

Moreover some analysts have virtually dismissed the significance of late swing in 1992. Using the panel study element built into the 1992 *British General Election Study* - which combined a pre-election interview and a post-election interview, Heath Jowell, Curtice & Clifford (1994) report that Labour were never in a position to win the 1992 Election. Indeed they contest that Labour were undamaged by late swing and conclude that the polls never accurately reflected the state of the parties in the 1992 Election campaign (1994 pp. 116-27).

The 'shame factor' theory also causes problems. Why should Conservative supporters be less likely to admit to their partisan preference than non-Conservatives in 1992 and Conservatives in previous elections? Some authors believe the Conservative domination of 'selfish' issues such as taxation, and Labour's concentration on 'moral' issues such as welfare, fuelled the fire of the shame factor (see Waller 1995). The crucial proposition here is that the public perception of the way that they ought to vote fell out of step with the way they wanted to vote. Again this is problematic since it is virtually impossible to quantify.

In truth, any notion of shame cannot be assumed to be unidirectional and can only be applied to specific elections. The shame factor simply restates the case for treating 1992 as an aberrant election. If the 1992 General Election had some special qualities that made it different from all other Elections in post war Britain, then this would have direct implications for research.

2.9.3 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE 1992 ELECTION FOR OPINION POLL BASED RESEARCH

There are then two basic forms of explanation for the poor predictive power of the pre-election Opinion Polls during the 1992 General Election campaign. Either the polling organisations misspecified the population so badly that the results thrown up by analysis of the data cannot be trusted, or else the correctly specified population were highly selective with the facts they chose to divulge to the pollsters. Both types of explanation have wider ramifications for the role of Opinion Poll data in research in general and for this study in particular. Nevertheless the

contention here is that this research is not critically damaged by the debacle of the 1992 Election.

If the polling organisations continually contacted the wrong people, then at least it can be safely assumed that they did so consistently. If the Market Research Society enquiry was right in asserting that polls have fundamentally been guilty of overestimating Labour support, then this will be of negligible interest to the modelling of changes in party or government support. While the overestimation of Labour and underestimation of Conservative support remains constant, studies aiming to assess relative changes in support over a series of months are less seriously fractured than studies that aim to assess and predict absolute values of support.

If the correct population was defined, then the likelihood is that any serious explanation for their duplicity will, revert to the claim that the 1992 Election was in some way extraordinary. If the Election itself was itself responsible for what Denver (1994; p. 131) called the 'self-falsifying' factor in the discrepancy between poll predictions and the election result, and especially if the late swing theories are correct, then studies that concentrate on the 'long-campaign' are less likely to fall foul of the same contamination process. The *NOP/ Newsnight* dataset which begins in January 1990 and ends in February 1992 will escape much of this contamination since the need to deceive pollsters, for whatever reason, would only be heightened by the immediate focal point provided by an impending General Election.

Finally and most crucially, the type of information provided by opinion polls remain the best information available. They provide a means by which fluid and volatile attitude structures can be analysed faster and more reliably than by the use of survey data. As long as the sampling procedure provided by the polls remains valid, the debate on the future of Opinion Polls has centred on the use of the vote intention question. No parallel suggestions that attitudinal measures are equally flawed by the shame factor have been articulated, indeed the Market Research Society enquiry even suggested that problems with vote intention questions could be overcome by the use of secondary questions about attitudes (see also Waller, 1995, p. 180).

Monthly political information over the time in which Britain's longest serving Prime Minister this century was ousted by her own party, and replaced by a relatively unknown quantity, would be worthy of study in its own right. Its coincidence with the build-up to the Election in 1992 when the new Major administration was forced to face the electorate in the middle of a deep economic recession, makes it indispensable.

2.10 OPERATIONALISING THE MODEL II

2.10.1 HOW TO MEASURE CLASS

2.10.1.1 THE FIVE-FOLD CLASS SCHEMA

As indicated earlier, the classic concept of class in psephological studies drew from a dichotomous cleavage between manual and non-manual sectors of the

workforce. In rejecting the general thrust of the dealignment literature, Heath *et al* (1985) argued that a fundamental reassessment of the concept of class was necessary. Using the schema invented by Goldthorpe and Llewellyn for their sociological study of social mobility (in Goldthorpe & Hope 1974) they developed a more complex picture of class based upon the position in the workplace. In this manner three broad sectors of the electorate were identified; a middle class of managerial and salaried classes, a smaller than usual core working class, and a small but important group of intermediate classes.

The class schema of Heath *et al* was borne from a frustration with the concentration on income levels and life-styles that epitomised the two-class model endemic in the 1960s and 1970s. Collapsing the seven fold schema of Goldthorpe & Llewellyn, Heath *et al* formulated a five band scheme of class based on economic interest covering three basic groupings, the middle class, an intermediate class and a residual working class.

The key asset of the five fold schema is its identification of small but important electoral groups. For example, Heath *et al* argued that the self-employed were constantly overlooked by studies that graded them according to their heterogeneous lifestyle or income attributes but the economic interests of this group were homogeneous, and their attitudes and voting instincts were very similar as a result.

The five fold schema encompasses the following classes: the salariat, routine non-manual, the petty bourgeoisie, foremen and technicians, and the working class. Each of these classes has important and distinct economic interests.

The salariat consist of managers and administrators, professionals and semi-professionals. These are occupations that afford long-term job security and involve either the exercise of authority over others or a high degree of autonomy in the workplace. It should be noted that following the work of Dunleavy (1980) on the political implications of the growth of the public sector, several studies have sought to disaggregate this group according to sectoral employment. In this way differences in the attitudinal structures and voting patterns between those members of the salariat employed in the public and the private sectors have been noted (Johnston & Pattie, 1988b).

Routine non-manual workers such as clerks and secretaries are usually subordinate to the salariat. Heath *et al* describe them as

> a kind of white-collar labour force (1985; p. 16).

The petty bourgeoisie are a small section of the electorate drawn from a very wide base. What they have in common is a position as independents reliant upon their own business acumen to save them from the full force of the free market. They also have direct control over their own business affairs.

Foremen and technicians are a small group of workers who nevertheless exhibit distinct differences in their economic outlook to the rest of the working class. This is probably a result of their key position in the workforce independent of the shop floor but not quite in management. Usually they have a degree of autonomy and supervisory duties.

The working class are a residual group. They consist of the rest of the workforce and although they represent a large number of people, it is important to note that the size of working class on the terms of Heath *et al* is significantly smaller than is the case in most conventional schemata. Income from working class occupations may be quite high but the key issue in their definition is the high degree of economic vulnerability and the subordinate nature of these jobs.

Whatever the faults in the conceptional analysis in *How Britain Votes*, the construction of the five-fold class schema has been widely welcomed and used elsewhere (see for example , Johnston & Pattie, 1990; Russell *et al,* 1992). When using the *British Social Attitudes* survey data it is possible to follow the procedures outlined in *How Britain Votes* for the construction of the five class schema used by Heath *et al.* Hence this schema will be utilised for the survey data involved in this thesis, providing an opportunity to measure the impact of social class using the most sophisticated of class designs.

2.10.1.2 THE ABC1/C2DE SCALE

It was not possible however, to follow the procedures set out by Heath *et al* when analysing the *NOP/Newsnight* sample data. This is because the Opinion Poll data hold a great deal less information about respondents' positions in the workforce than the much more detailed *British Social Attitudes* series. Therefore the analysis of the sample data will have to revolve around the original classification of social groups found in the polls. These classify respondents according to the class schema developed by the Market Research Society (MRS, 1963; Monk, 1968) usually referred to as the ABC1/C2DE scale.

This scale initially divides the electorate into two groups - the middle and the working classes - depending on whether their stated occupation involves manual work. Each class is then further separated into three subdivisions. Class A, the upper middle class, includes company directors and higher professionals; Class B comprises those in junior executive and management positions; Class C1, the lower middle class, includes high esteem clerical staff such as bank workers and the supervisors of manual workers; Class C2, skilled manual workers, denotes the first working class group (examples of occupations that qualify as C2 include electricians and machinists). Class D, the semi-skilled, and Class E, the unskilled, complete the scale. Economically inactive respondents are usually classified by spouse's occupation unless they themselves are unemployed or wholly reliant upon state benefits. In this case, respondents are placed into the lowest strata, Class E. The analyses presented here usually links together Classes A and B and Classes D and E in order to increase the size of comparison groups.

An important point to make about the MRS scheme is that its continued use has masked an important demographic change. In 1970 GALLUP calculated that the ABC1 groups comprised 37 per cent of the total electorate. By 1987 the proportion of non-manual workers in the electorate had risen to 41 per cent of the total (Rose & McAllister 1990, p. 65).

Although the ABC1 scale is less robust than the five-fold class schema derived from Goldthorpe, it nevertheless represents the best data available for analysis of a critical period in British politics. This enforced use of this imperfect class schema remains a drawback rather than a critical flaw. This research has a primary interest in the incidence of spatial variation in the economic attitudes and voting behaviour of the British electorate, during the Thatcher and immediately post-Thatcher era. Social class plays a part in this analysis but its role is secondary to the geographic aspect of this research. The availability of this data makes its use imperative regardless of the demerits of the class schema it enforces.

2.10.2 HOW TO MEASURE GEOGRAPHY

2.10.2.1 DEFINING REGION AND CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Two spatial classifications are to be used for the analysis in this thesis. These are geographic region and functional region.

Geographic region is the most obvious of the two classifications relying on relative location as its defining characteristic. Numerous accounts have employed the

geographic regions used by the Government's office of Population Censuses and Surveys that divided Britain into 10 standard regions, while others used the 22 region schema employed by *The Economist* for their analysis of British Elections. The full list of Standard Regions and *Economist* regions are given in Table 2.6.

All data analysed here is disaggregated by constituency. Therefore the classification by standard region or *Economist* region was possible. However, the nature of the sampling technique employed for the *British Social Attitudes* survey and the *NOP/Newsnight* opinion polls necessitated the collapsing of region into a manageable set of five regions so that all cells could have sufficient numbers in order to be statistically representative of the region as well as the country as a whole.

Table 2.6 Economist Regions and Collapsed Geographic Regions

	Economist Region	*Collapsed Region*
01	Strathclyde	SCOTLAND/WALES
02	East Central Scotland	
03	Rural Scotland	
04	Rural Wales	
05	Industrial South Wales	
06	Rural North	NORTH ENGLAND
07	Industrial Northeast	
08	Merseyside	
09	Greater Manchester	
10	Rest of Northwest	
11	West Yorkshire	
12	South Yorkshire	
13	West Midlands Conurbation	MIDLANDS
14	Rest of West Midlands	
15	East Midlands	
16	Inner London	GREATER LONDON
17	Outer London	
18	Outer Metropolitan	
19	Devon and Cornwall	REST OF SOUTH ENGLAND
20	East Anglia	
21	Wessex	
22	Outer Southeast	

Table 2.7 CACI Groupings and Collapsed Functional Regions

	CACI Functional Regions	*Collapsed Groups*
01	Metropolitan Inner City with Immigrants	DEPRESSED AREAS WITH IMMIGRATION
02	Industrial Areas with Immigrants	
03	Poorest Immigrant Areas	
04	Intermediate Industrial Areas	
05	Old Industrial and Mining Towns	
06	Textile Areas	
07	Poorest Domestic Conditions	
08	Conurbation Local Authority Housing	POOR CONDITION LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING
09	Black Country	
10	Maritime Industrial Areas	
11	Poor Inner-City Council Housing	
12	Clydeside	
13	Scottish Industrial	
14	Scottish Rural	
15	High Status Inner Metropolitan	INNER METROPOLITAN
16	Inner Metropolitan	
17	Outer London Suburbia	
18	Very High-Status	
19	Conurbation White-Collar	AFFLUENT, SERVICE EMPLOYMENT
20	City Constituency Service Employment	
21	Resort and Retirement	
22	Recent Growth and Modern Housing	
23	Stable Industrial Towns	
24	Small Manuf.Towns Rural Hinterlands	
25	Southern Urban	PROSPEROUS, OWNER OCCUPATION LOW UNEMPLOYMENT
26	Manuf Towns Commuter Hinterlands	
27	Metropolitan Industrial	
28	Modestly Affluent Urban Scotland	
29	Areas of Rapid Growth	
30	Prosperous Towns Little Industry	
31	Agricultural	

Functional regionalisation depends on criteria other than simple relative location. The British Census of 1981 enabled the grouping of constituencies according to population and housing characteristics. The market research organisation CACI

Inc. constructed a functional schema that was adopted by Crewe and Fox (1984) in their account of *British Parliamentary Constituencies*. This schema comprised 41 variables covering demographic characteristics, such as age structure, household structure and ethnic structure, the occupational structure and housing characteristics, such as age, tenure and availability of amenities, of each constituency. This information is then used to produce the 31 functional groups shown in Table 2.7.

The use of both sets of schema can be problematic when used with surveys, however. Although surveys and polls are designed to be representative of the nation as a whole, no such claim can be made for smaller sections of the sample. For example, the *NOP/Newsnight* polls may be representative of the class, age and gender structures of mainland Britain, but it is unlikely that they reflect the correct mix of classes, ages and gender of respondents from Wessex or City Constituencies with Service Employment. In other words the small number of cases in each cell does not provide confidence that each sub-sample would be a truly accurate depiction of the region or area that it represents.

Therefore it was necessary to further collapse the functional regions. For the geographic variable this meant the construction of a five fold schema representing respondents from Scotland and Wales, the North of England, the Midlands, Greater London and the rest of the South of England.

The functional region scale was initially redrawn according to the procedure set out by CACI. This produced another five fold schema that categorised respondents into units described as Depressed areas with high levels of Immigration; areas with a high concentration of poor condition Local Authority Housing; Inner Metropolitan areas; Affluent areas with Service Employment; and Prosperous areas with high levels of Owner-Occupation and low levels of Unemployment. This procedure did not however increase the size of the Inner Metropolitan group sufficiently to eradicate fears of misrepresentation and required further modification. To this end the inner-metropolitan areas were reconsigned to other areas (according to the clustering strategy set out by Webber (1978) and Crewe and Fox (1984)) and a three fold schema designed for use with the *NOP/Newsnight* data. This three fold schema comprised depressed areas with high levels of immigration and local authority housing (usually referred to as the DEPLA group), areas characterised by service sector employment (the SERVICE group), and areas characterised by economic affluence (the AFFLUENT group).

2.11 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter sought to set the context in which an understanding of geographic matters becomes vital to developing an understanding of political and economic attitudes and voting behaviour in the period of the second and third Thatcher Governments and the new regime of John Major.

In specifying the model under investigation, this chapter attempted to lock the geographic context into the assessment of economic attitudes and voting

behaviour. It has shown that the major electoral phenomena of recent times - dealignment and economic issue voting - are also geographically variable, and has argued that an attempt to control for geographic effects must predate any attempt to control for attitudinal structures.

The social, economic and political context of this research was also examined. This included a discussion of the 1980s boom and the 1990s recession, and the turmoil caused by the fracturing Thatcher administration in the late 1980s. The political and economic contexts were, of course, linked to the geographic context of Britain in the 1980s, and the geographic variability of the economic recovery between 1983-9 is a vital strand of this chapter.

A model has been specified which sees the three factors which contribute to voting behaviour; class, economic attitudes and geography as intrinsically linked in both the full and half stage models. Furthermore formal hypotheses have been set out which show the direction in which the expected relationships will work. A critical feature here is the new geographic variation associated with the new recession which began at the start of the decade.

The hypotheses presented here and their associated null hypotheses provide the basis for the analysis in succeeding chapters. Critically this involves examination of the two definitions of geography, the impact of class, geography and economic attitudes on party support - and the half stage model with economic attitudes as the

dependent variable. This chapter has shown how these models will be operationalised via the schema used for class and geography.

Finally this chapter has shown how the two distinct time periods - the 1980s recovery and the 1990s recession - will be addressed in the subsequent analysis chapters. Chapters 3 and 4 concern the 1980s recovery and use the *British Social Attitudes* survey data; Chapters 5 and 6 concern the 1990s recession and make use of the *NOP/Newsnight* series of opinion polls.

Chapter 3: The 1980s; Egocentrism, Sociotropism & Tergiversating Tories

There are two distinct time periods covered by this thesis, the Thatcherite recovery of 1983-1989 and the new recession of 1990-1992. These two time periods will be analysed separately and via two distinct datasets because they are distinct and require separate objects of analysis. This is the first of four results chapters in this thesis. The first set of two chapters deal with the 1983-1989 period; the second set of two chapters deal with the 1990-1992 period of British politics. In each case the first chapter sets the scene in a largely descriptive fashion; the second deals more robustly with the specific relationships identified by the former. The purpose, then, of this chapter is to set the scene for the period between 1983 until 1989, opening the way for a more detailed analysis of the same period in the next chapter. Finally it serves as a comparative chapter parallel to the first results chapter for the 1990-1992 period.

The two previous chapters of this thesis have identified the need to synthesise the literature on voting behaviour and electoral geography, and have suggested that this might be done through the analysis of economic expectations. This will provide the focus for this chapter, which concentrates on the impact of geography and economic attitudes upon partisanship during the sustained economic recovery between 1983 and 1989.

As the impact of class declines, certain issues become more important in influencing how electors decide between the political parties at election times. Electoral

geography has shown that throughout the 1980s, geographic variation was significant in how individuals made this choice. Mainstream political science has hinted that the crucial issue in voting choice concerns economic issues. The next stage, and the aim of this chapter, is to find a role for geographic explanation in accounting for the variation in not just voting patterns, but also in economic attitudes between 1983 and 1989.

3.1 ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND CONSERVATIVE DOMINATION 1983-89

It is necessary to set the scene for this section of the thesis dealing with the 1980s. For the most part, the 1983-9 period was clearly defined by two distinctive features; economically the period was characterised by sustained economic recovery; electorally the Conservative Party retained their dominance of the British electoral system. Moreover, both features were spatially skewed; neither the economic recovery nor the electoral hegemony of the Conservatives were common to all parts of the country.

In 1983, the Conservatives were returned with a landslide majority of 144 seats and 44 per cent of the vote in mainland Britain, while the opposition parties closely contested second place with Labour taking 28 per cent and the Alliance 26 per cent of the popular vote. In 1987 the Conservatives were again victorious - with a majority of 102 seats in the Commons while collecting 43 per cent of the popular vote - although Labour comfortably reasserted themselves as the other major party, particularly in their heartlands of traditional support such as the industrial North of England and the Celtic fringe. Nationally the Labour share of the vote in 1987

increased to 32 per cent, the Alliance vote fell to 23 per cent (Butler & Kavanagh, 1988, Heath *et al* 1990). The geographic variation in Labour's share of the vote meant that they were able to pile up seats in their heartlands, while the uniformity of the Alliance vote across all constituencies, put them at a distinct disadvantage in translating votes into seats.

The spatial variation in party support was crucial during this period. Primarily the Government was able to consolidate power thanks to a divided opposition and a hefty core of support in the South-East of the country and among service sector employees. Secondly, Labour were able to avoid parliamentary obliteration in 1983 thanks to the geographic base of their support; the Single-Member Single Plurality electoral system benefits parties with large heartlands of support concentrated in certain constituencies and areas, and disadvantages parties whose support is geographically heterogeneous (see Rae 1971, Reeve & Ware 1992)

Moreover, as voting behaviour was spatially disaggregated, so too were political attitudes. The heartlands of Thatcherism were also the cornerstone of faith in the free market and a strong defence policy (Johnston & Pattie, 1990a; Fieldhouse, 1995). Thus in order to study the impact of Thatcherism, the geographic dimension is integral, and this time period represents the epitome of the Thatcherite programme - as the Government embarked on its first privatisation programmes with the flagship British Telecom in 1984, and high profile privatisation of British Gas in 1986, British Airways and British Petroleum in 1987, British Steel in 1988 and the Water and Sewerage companies of England and Wales in 1989. The programme of

assisted sale of council houses to tenants was in full swing, the Falklands War had been won in 1982 and the striking miners were defeated after a long and bitter dispute in 1984-85. Hence if Thatcherism ever represented an ideological project or the Great Moving Right Show (Hall, 1988), then it is in this period that its impact upon the attitudes of the British public should have been at its height, when the political agenda was dominated by talk of popular capitalism and share owning democracies, of the enemy without and the enemy within. Nevertheless there is little evidence to suggest that, at the national level, the public embraced the ideological tenets of Thatcherism to a great extent (see Heath 1991; Crewe 1988; Crewe and Searing 1988; Garrett 1994). Indeed it appears that it was the ability of the Conservative Government in the Thatcher era to deliver economic success - particularly the recovery after 1983 - rather than the ideological nature of Thatcherism that lay at the heart of their continued success (see Hahn 1988; Minford 1988).

One of the most interesting themes throughout the period is the position of the third party. In 1983, the Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance came very close to usurping Labour as the main party of opposition - at least in terms of the popular vote if not in seats gained. In 1987 however, they were unable to capitalise on this and were beaten back to third place by a resurgent Labour party. Directly after the 1987 General Election the Liberal and Social Democratic parties embarked upon a bitter and acrimonious merger which resulted in a breakaway led by the SDP leader David Owen and a significant dip in support for the newly merged party - known originally as the Democrats and later as the Liberal Democrats. In 1989, the Liberal

Democrats were beaten into fourth place by Labour, the Conservatives and the Greens in the European Elections in Britain. This is the context in which 1983-89 should be viewed as the third party support surged and declined radically throughout the period. Moreover, the level of Liberal Democrat support at the end of the 1980s was significantly suppressed due to the merger *debacle*, hence the anti-Government opposition became increasingly focused upon the Labour party, albeit as a temporary phenomena.

3.2 THE *BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES* SERIES DATA

The dataset used for this analysis was the *British Social Attitudes* series of surveys which were carried out annually between 1983 and 1989 (with the exception of 1988). The series also included a panel survey between 1983 and 1986. Its design allowed the comprehensive analysis of both political partisanship (though not voting behaviour) and economic attitudes and the inter-relationship between the two. The central thrust of this thesis is that variations in economic attitudes have fed into political partisanship (and ultimately voting behaviour).

3.2.1 THE PANEL STUDY

An important element in the *British Social Attitudes* series of surveys is the panel study. Between 1983 and 1986, the surveyors returned to the same respondents in order to assess the extent of real individual change in attitudes and political behaviour.

A serious problem with panel studies is the atrophy of respondents. Each new attempt to contact members of the panel would be likely to encounter decreasing numbers of original members as respondents become uncontactable. To this end, responses were weighted for the years subsequent to 1983. Nevertheless, the panel is likely to be represented by an ever decreasing sample size unless attempts are made to replace respondents who have died, have moved, or have become otherwise uncontactable. There may be a problem of representativeness if the panel members who fall out of the survey are vital for the construction of a representative sample. On the other hand, however, the fact that the analysis here does not present obvious differences between the attitudes of the panel and of the members of the general survey suggests that the *British Social Attitudes* panel was not significantly different from the annual survey and that sample atrophy was not a critical problem.

3.3 PARTISANSHIP; THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

3.3.1 PARTY IDENTIFICATION

The links between economic and political choice ought to be present between as well as in election years. Moreover, as pointed out earlier, the period 1983-1989 was particularly crucial to the economic and electoral climate as economic recovery (in some regions only) coincided with the continued political dominance of the Conservatives. The culmination of this interest in the inter-election periods as well as the 1983 and 1987 Elections is that this thesis requires the use of some surrogate measure of voting choice rather than voting behaviour *per se*. Hence the

analysis of the *British Social Attitudes* dataset between 1983 and 1989 concentrated upon partisan identification rather than vote itself.

Partisan identification may be defined as the affinity an elector feels towards a political party, enabling the voter to cope with the vast array of political information with which he or she is inundated, as partisan identification provides the cue to the formation of attitudes (see Campbell *et al* 1960). Moreover partisan identification strengthens over time as voters embark on a learning process of voting. Crucially electors may switch between vote preferences in the short-term without affecting their partisan identification. As such it should be a more permanent feature of party fealty than actual voting behaviour which could be offset by any number of should-term phenomena. The proliferation of split-ticket voting in the USA has been seen as evidence of the relevance of partisan identification as a theoretical tool for political analysis, since voters who identify themselves as supporters of one party seem to have little difficulty in voting for individual candidates of the other party. In this way many Democrat identifiers may have voted for the Republican candidate Eisenhower in the 1952 and 1956 Presidential Elections, or for Reagan in the 1980 and 1984 Presidential contests - without having to realign their self-identification with the Democratic Party.

The primary thing to note about this is that partisan identification is not identical to vote - and its use as a surrogate variable for voting behaviour studies should proceed cautiously with this in mind. Indeed a central theme running throughout the partisan identification literature was that partisan identification was distinct from

voting behaviour *per se*. Campbell *et al* (1960) stressed that partisan identification was a different phenomena entirely to how an elector casts his or her vote.

As a theoretical tool however, partisan identification has not survived intact its export from the USA. Butler and Stokes (1969) for instance found that while 90 per cent of British voters had a 'partisan self-image' between 1963 and 1966, British voters were less likely than their American counterparts to switch voting behaviour without also changing their partisan identification.

> In the main, partisan self-images and electoral preferences travel together in Britain far more than in America (1969; p. 40).

Robertson (1976) considers the theoretical concept of partisan identification to be seriously flawed and numerous studies have demonstrated its lack of explanatory force as a cross-national concept (see for instance, Thomassen 1976, Le Duc 1981, Mughan 1981). Nevertheless it remains a curious feature of mainstream political science that although partisan identification fails to stand up as a theoretical concept, it does survive empirically. Harrop and Miller (1987) believe that it provides a useful baseline of support for political parties 'natural' electorates. Thus 1983 could be characterised as an aberrant rather than a realigning Election since although Labour support fell significantly, its level of party identifiers held reasonably well. Heath and MacDonald (1988) believe that empirically the notion survives partly due to its habitual use in surveys. In short its presence lends itself to analysis even if that which it measures cannot be isolated satisfactorily.

The presence of partisan identification in this analysis can be defended on two fronts. Firstly if as Butler and Stokes claim, the distinction between partisan identification and actual voting behaviour is blurred in the British case, then this does not necessarily harm the purpose of the analysis here which is after all a study of voting behaviour in elections and vote intention in inter-election periods. Secondly, party identification represents the best available variable to measure party support across a period which covers two election years and four inter-election years.

Party Identification varies markedly by region (Table 3.1 reports data from the panel study, and Table 3.2 reports data from the annual cross-section). This data derives from the *British Social Attitudes* 1983-86 panel and the full series of cross-sectional series between 1983 and 1989 respectively. The first feature to note is that even when the atrophy of panel members is recognised there is very little variation in the expressed partisanship of panel member respondents from the entire *British Social Attitudes* series. This would seem to indicates that there was little evidence to support the notion that panel members quickly become atypical respondents due to their constant investigation by survey organisations.

The regional pattern of party identification throughout the entire *British Social Attitudes* series (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2) shows little change in the relative propensities of respondents to identify with a particular party. Scottish and Welsh respondents were among the most hostile of all respondents to Conservative identification throughout the period 1983-89, and the most inclined of all respondents to express identification with the Labour Party. Meanwhile respondents from the South were typically pro-Conservative and anti-Labour in their identification tendencies.

TABLE 3.1: PARTY IDENTIFICATION BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	31	29	29	27
Labour	65	64	60	55
Liberal-SDP Alliance	04	08	10	18
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	33	27	25	26
Labour	51	54	54	50
Liberal-SDP Alliance	16	18	21	24
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	64	58	61	47
Labour	30	31	26	31
Liberal-SDP Alliance	06	11	13	22
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	48	44	32	34
Labour	33	28	32	32
Liberal-SDP Alliance	19	28	36	34
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	56	57	55	50
Labour	25	24	22	21
Liberal-SDP Alliance	20	19	23	29

Source; *BSA* Panel Study

TABLE 3.2 PARTY IDENTIFICATION BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	32	34	29	27	27	32
Labour	57	54	54	55	49	56
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	12	13	17	17	24	12
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	37	38	30	30	38	41
Labour	48	49	51	51	42	50
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	16	13	19	19	20	09
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	52	54	39	48	50	49
Labour	35	35	45	28	29	38
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	13	11	17	17	20	13
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	46	45	27	39	47	45
Labour	37	42	54	43	35	42
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	17	13	19	18	18	13
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	53	50	49	48	55	58
Labour	24	28	24	27	21	25
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	23	22	27	25	24	17

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

The next set of Tables 3.3 (panel data) and 3.4 (cross-section data) reveal a similar story for the fivefold constituency type schema which is the second measurement of

geography in the analysis of party identification and economic attitudes. Despite some very big variations over time - most notably the drop in inner metropolitan Conservatism between 1984 and 1985 - the Conservative Government were able to count a strong base of support concentrated in constituencies typified by white-collar and agricultural employment. Conversely, they fared poorest in areas typified by industrial decline and a high proportion of council housing, where respondents were prone to support Labour. This variation in party identification formed the basis of the winning electoral strategy the Conservatives built among voters from the South and the service sector throughout the 1980s.

TABLE 3.3 PARTY IDENTIFICATION BY CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Depression/Immigration	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	34	30	26	28
Labour	50	56	51	48
Liberal-SDP Alliance	17	14	23	24
Council Housing	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	29	22	23	24
Labour	66	69	68	63
Liberal-SDP Alliance	35	10	09	13
Innermetropolitan	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	38	21	15	17
Labour	38	29	46	42
Liberal-SDP Alliance	25	50	38	42
White Collar	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	55	55	52	48
Labour	29	21	22	17
Liberal-SDP Alliance	16	24	27	35
Buoyant/Agriculture	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Conservative	59	55	51	44
Labour	26	27	25	25
Liberal-SDP Alliance	15	18	24	30

Source; *BSA* Panel Study

TABLE 3.4 PARTY IDENTIFICATION BY CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Depression/Immigration	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	35	35	24	28	34	36
Labour	52	54	62	56	48	55
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	14	11	14	16	18	08
Council Housing	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	32	31	22	30	29	25
Labour	57	57	60	53	48	69
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	11	12	18	17	24	06
Innermetropolitan	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	40	44	17	31	31	36
Labour	38	41	64	58	54	57
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	21	16	19	11	15	07
White Collar	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	48	52	49	48	60	58
Labour	33	34	25	28	18	27
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	19	14	26	23	22	15
Buoyant/Agriculture	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Conservative	55	52	44	46	50	52
Labour	25	28	33	30	26	30
Alliance/Liberal Democrats	20	20	23	23	25	17

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

This fits neatly into the existing body of knowledge about British politics during this period. Firstly support for the Conservative Government held firm in the Southern sections of the electorate and among constituencies typified by service sector and agricultural employment. Labour support (although not necessarily party identification) haemorrhaged in 1983 and although Labour consolidated its support in its traditional heartlands, it failed to break through in the South, hence Labour's relative strength in the Celtic regions and the North, in depressed regions and areas typified by high intensity council housing in the 1987 *British Social Attitudes* survey.

Since the information known about the Election years of 1983 and 1987 fits with the findings of this analysis for those election years, the next question must concern the inter-election periods between 1983 and 1987 and 1987 and 1989. In fact, for the most part the pattern of Government and opposition parties' identification is

remarkably similar to that for election years. Conservative identification was particularly strong in the South, the Midlands and areas typified by white-collar or agricultural employment; it was weakest in areas of industrial depression and council housing and in the North and Scotland and Wales.

3.3.2 TERGIVERSATION IN CONSERVATIVE IDENTIFICATION

There is however, an interesting feature of Conservative identification highlighted by the geographic disaggregations of party identification in Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. This is the inter-election tendency of certain sections of the electorate to desert identification with the governing party in non-election years, but their subsequent return to the fold in the years of a General Election.

Voters from Greater London were more prone to vacillate between pro- and anti-Government identification during the 1983-89 period (see Tables 3.2 and 3.4). In the two General Election years, 1983 and 1987, respondents from Greater London were particularly prone to express Conservative identification; in inter-election years their expressed Conservative identification was seriously diluted. In 1985 - the year the Greater London Council was abolished - respondents from the Greater London area were twice as likely to express Labour identification than Conservative identification. However by the year of the next Election, 1987, identification with the Labour party had withered among Greater Londoners and the in-built pro-Conservative bias had reasserted itself. A similar but not so pronounced tendency of anti-Government drift in identification in inter-election years was also discernible among respondents from the Midlands.

Although these tergiversating Tories seem to be particularly concentrated in the Greater London area, subsequent analysis will show that a similar trend for increased tendency to express Conservatism in General Election years also exists among foremen and technicians (see Chapter 4 below). As a phenomenon, they may be important electorally if it can be shown that they represent a target group of support for the Government in the run-up to an Election, particularly in what Miller *et al* (1990) call 'the long campaign'. Hence if the governing party set out specifically to elicit the support of (or to dilute the hostility of) sections of the electorate who otherwise exhibit hostility to them in Election years, then this may go some way to explaining the electoral durability of Thatcherism. In Chapters 5 and 6, evidence is provided to suggest that John Major's Government managed to manufacture its re-election via an appeal to certain sections of the electorate.

3.4 LOCATING A PLACE FOR GEOGRAPHY

3.4.1 THE STATE OF THE AREA

The connection between the geography of the recession and recovery of the 1980s and the geography of attitudes needs to be forged. An obvious way of achieving this is through attitudes to the area in which an individual lived. There were grounds for considering the geographic cleavage in the British electorate to be significant in the formation of attitudes. In 1983, *British Social Attitudes* respondents were asked for their interpretations of 'the state of the area' in which they live compared to two years before. It was noticeable that a far smaller proportion of Southerners thought that their area had 'worsened' than respondents from the Midlands or the North of

England (Table 3.5). In contrast, Midlanders were unlikely to express the feeling that their area had improved over the last two years in 1983, while respondents from the South of England were the most likely of all sections of the electorate to believe their area had improved. This matched the economic geography of the period; individuals were reacting in line with the real regional conditions.

TABLE 3.5 STATE OF THE AREA SINCE TWO YEARS AGO BY REGION. 1983-86 PANEL

1983	HAS IMPROVED	STAYED THE SAME	HAS WORSENED
Scotland & Wales	12	68	21
North	07	65	28
Midlands	05	63	31
Greater London	11	59	29
South	15	76	10

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

It is important to note that respondents were not provided with any prompt concerning the specific meaning of area, and that the five sub-classifications of region used here were not necessarily identical to those which respondents may have had in mind when they answered the question. Hence it is not possible to ascertain whether respondents restricted their view of 'the area in which you live' to a notion of a few streets, a town, a city, a county, a nation or indeed some other idea of district. What is clear is that whichever notion of area was used, the analysis provided interesting results which were consistent with the regional economic vote model.

A brief return to the partisanship of electors in 1983 reveals that the spatial pattern of an area's relative performance was not replicated in the analysis of partisan identification with the three major parties. It might have been assumed that those respondents who felt their area had fared badly in recent years would be unlikely to

express Government support, while those respondents who felt their area had done well would be likely to support and identify with the Government. However, this does not appear to be the case for 1983 - an Election year. The Midlands represented an apparent hot-bed of resentment to the recent changes in an area's prosperity (Table 3.5), but Table 3.2 illustrated a marked inclination of respondents from the Midlands to identify themselves as Conservative in 1983. This apparent conundrum for the position of the geographic context of electoral politics in Britain requires attention. Geography was apparently important in explaining what individuals thought of their region but was significant in explaining their partisanship in a conflicting manner. A possible solution to this paradox may be found by reference to the construction of personal and economic attitudes presented in Table 3.6. If attitudes to the local area do not form the link between geography and vote, the next stage of this chapter has to scrutinise geographic variation in economic attitudes and perceptions of personal circumstances in the 1980s.

3.4.2 ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

The next step then is to scrutinise the economic attitudinal structure of the electorate between 1983 and 1989. This will involve personal financial positions, inflation, unemployment and attitudes to industry. This range is crucial since it involves not only sociotropic issues but also egocentric ones; that is, economic issues which affect the country as a whole as well as the individual. Most of these attitudinal questions concerned the predictive forecasts of the public to changes in these economic items over the coming year - that is they are prospective rather than

retrospective. There were however a few retrospective evaluations of family income levels and industrial performance.

3.4.2.1 PERSONAL FINANCIAL POSITIONS

In 1983 - the same year as the perceptions of changes to the respondents area was gauged - the regional geography of personal economic recollections (Table 3.6) was similar to the geography of party identification rather than to the geography of perceptions of the area. patterns. Respondents were asked to compare the current financial status of their family to their status five years before. This is crucial for a number of reasons. Primarily, it concentrates the issue on personal economic attitudes; secondly the different time scale to the area change question (which required a two year recollection of the state of the area) presented respondents with different criteria on which to form opinions. Critically the period covering the previous five years invited comparison with the final year of the last Labour Government.

TABLE 3.6 1983 FINANCIAL STATE OF FAMILY COMPARED TO FIVE YEARS AGO

1983	HAS IMPROVED	STAYED THE SAME	HAS WORSENED
Scotland & Wales	26	16	58
North	31	22	47
Midlands	27	43	30
Greater London	25	26	49
South	33	27	40

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

Midlanders were the least dissatisfied with their personal financial development under the Conservatives. In contrast, Scots and Welsh respondents were the most likely of all sections of the electorate to state their belief that their personal financial state had deteriorated over the period 1978-83. On the other hand the Southern

section of the electorate were the most impressed by the relative changes in personal wealth rates over the preceding five years.

This general picture reflected the pattern of partisanship (Table 3.2) rather than the perceptions of changes to the respondent's area in the previous two years. Personal retrospective economic attitudes appear to form a link with partisanship between 1983 and 1989 - the geographies of both being very similar. Moreover, economic perceptions provided a stronger association with party identification - and therefore voting choice - than the more obvious geographic variation in regional status. This then gives considerable hope for the central theme of the thesis, that economic evaluations are influenced by the local context, and that both are influences on voting behaviour.

3.4.2.2 FAMILY INCOME LEVELS

The next step is to move from retrospective to prospective judgements. Throughout the recovery period of 1984-89 very few respondents were willing to state that their personal positions would improve, but there were notable variations in the propensity of individuals to make pessimistic forecasts according to where they lived (Table 3.7). People from the South and Greater London were less likely to say that their personal economic fortunes would decline than their counterparts in Scotland and Wales or the North of England. This tendency was particularly marked in the Election year of 1987 when 48 per cent of Celts and 47 per cent of Northerners thought that their personal futures would decline compared to only 34 per cent of Greater Londoners and 35 per

cent of Southerners. Of course the regions where individuals felt that they were less likely to be disadvantaged formed the core of the Conservative vote in 1987, and the hostile regions were the basis of the Labour Opposition vote in the General Election.

TABLE 3.7 FORECASTS OF FAMILY INCOME BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	08	05	06	08	11
Stay the same	40	36	45	44	38
Decline	52	59	48	48	51
North	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	07	06	08	10	09
Stay the same	43	36	40	43	44
Decline	49	58	52	47	47
Midlands	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	05	09	09	08	08
Stay the same	46	45	43	50	43
Decline	49	46	48	41	49
Greater London	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	12	11	13	13	13
Stay the same	49	38	50	53	43
Decline	39	51	37	34	44
South	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	09	11	10	11	11
Stay the same	54	47	49	54	45
Decline	37	42	41	35	45

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

The regional disaggregations for family income forecasts are presented in Table 3.7 and the disaggregation of family income forecasts by the five fold constituency type schema is presented in Table 3.8.

TABLE 3.8 FORECASTS OF FAMILY INCOME BY CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Depression/Immigration	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	06	07	06	08	10
Stay the same	41	33	41	44	41
Decline	53	60	54	48	49
Council Housing	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	10	06	07	12	08
Stay the same	36	36	44	41	39
Decline	55	58	49	47	52
Innermetropolitan	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	16	10	17	14	12
Stay the same	47	40	48	48	36
Decline	38	50	35	38	53
White Collar	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	09	11	11	14	11
Stay the same	51	42	49	51	45
Decline	39	46	40	35	44
Buoyant/Agriculture	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	08	09	11	09	10
Stay the same	53	46	46	53	44
Decline	39	45	43	38	46

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

The most obvious phenomenon presented in these tables on which to comment on is that there is an in-built and manifest reluctance to assume an optimistic position among almost all respondents. It could well be the case that all questions which ask respondents to evaluate criteria involving finances and the cost of living are liable to suffer from this type of contamination. The family income levels questions which required respondents to evaluate their family standing in terms of either falling behind or keeping ahead of costs or prices would seem particular prone to this problem.

Overall then, it might be surprising that there is any variation in family income forecasts according to geography. As they stand, there is a slight inclination for respondents from Scotland and Wales, the North, depressed and council housing dominated areas to express heightened pessimism. Throughout the series, these

respondents were more likely to express the view that their family incomes would worsen in relation to the cost of living than their counterparts in the South, and in white-collar and buoyant areas. The point here is that although the level of optimism is universally low, there are discernible differences in the rates of those respondents who thought that their relative position would decline or stay the same. Southerners and respondents from white-collar and buoyant areas were just as likely to eschew optimism about their family finances but seemed more likely to adopt neutral positions than their peers in the North and in areas typified by council house provision.

A final point to comment on here, is that both Tables 3.7 and 3.8 appear to illustrate a slight flattening of any regional disparity in 1989 - the last year of the *British Social Attitudes*, as the relative propensity of respondents to express pessimism, neutrality and optimism about their family income levels became virtually unanimous across all regions and constituency types. This might be at least in part explained by the dynamics of the 'new' recession which had begun to bite in 1989. Moreover it would be surprising if the reality of the 'new' recession which struck the service sector and the South of England disproportionately was not picked up by a 'flattening out' of the regional disparities in economic expectations.

3.4.2.3 INFLATION

As was te case with predictions of income levels, throughout the 1983-89 economic recovery, the British public remained pessimistic about inflation, unemployment and Britain's industrial performance. They were especially reluctant to exhibit optimism

about the prospect of falling inflation, even though these attitudes were expressed in the context of real economic recovery (Tables 3.9).

TABLE 3.9 INFLATION FORECASTS

Inflation: in a year from now, do you expect prices generally to have gone up, to have stayed the same, or to have gone down?

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
To have gone up by a lot	24	31	40	26	26	45
To have gone up by a little	56	52	48	49	52	43
To have stayed the same	12	13	08	17	17	08
To have gone down by a little	05	03	02	06	03	03
To have gone down by a lot	01	00	01	01	00	00
DK/NA	02	02	01	01	02	01

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

When the reluctance to anticipate a decrease in prices over the next year was disaggregated regionally, it was clear that pessimism about the future levels of prices did not seem to be more prevalent in some regions than in others (Table 3.10). Among panel members, the period 1983-86 saw an almost unflinching pessimism in relation to their forecasts about rising prices. Respondents from Scotland and Wales seemed as likely to think that prices would go up as respondents from the Southern heartlands of Conservative support. Furthermore this picture was replicated by the non-panel element of the *British Social Attitudes* series (Table 3.11). For the whole of the *British Social Attitudes* series from 1983 until 1989, respondents from areas characterised by disproportional levels of Labour identification - the Celtic fringe and the North, were just as likely to be either pessimistic or optimistic about the future levels of prices as were respondents from regions typified by strong Government identification such as the South of England. However, the lack of spatial variation in attitudes to inflation is not in itself surprising. Although a core element of the economic context, inflation is far less likely to vary

across regions than other criteria such as unemployment. Even when local inflationary pressures can exhibit independence from national trends- for example the local housing market - they cannot conform to the normal constraints of inflation (normally retail prices do not fluctuate in the same way that house values did throughout the 1980s). Moreover while much of the media interest in economic criteria such as unemployment is focused on the local level, inflation is almost always represented as a national phenomenon. As a result, the context in which inflation is internalised is likely to be national rather than local; spatial variation in attitudes to inflation is therefore highly unlikely.

TABLE 3.10 1983-86 PANEL MEMBERS; INFLATION FORECASTS BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Go Down	06	03	02	01
Stay the Same	11	09	05	15
Go Up	84	89	93	85
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Go Down	05	03	02	02
Stay the Same	10	07	09	09
Go Up	85	90	79	79
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Go Down	03	02	01	01
Stay the Same	15	20	17	25
Go Up	83	78	83	75
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Go Down	06	02	02	01
Stay the Same	10	07	04	09
Go Up	84	91	94	89
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Go Down	08	01	02	04
Stay the Same	12	09	11	19
Go Up	81	90	87	77

Source; *BSA* Panel Study

TABLE 3.11 FORECASTS OF INFLATION BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	06	04	03	08	04	03
Stay the same	11	12	05	19	16	06
Go up	82	85	91	73	79	91
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	05	04	03	04	03	04
Stay the same	10	11	07	16	16	07
Go up	85	85	90	79	80	89
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	05	01	03	08	03	03
Stay the same	16	13	10	16	17	08
Go up	79	86	87	76	78	89
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	05	02	03	07	02	02
Stay the same	09	12	08	18	17	09
Go up	86	86	90	75	81	89
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	05	02	03	07	03	04
Stay the same	15	16	08	19	17	09
Go up	80	82	89	75	80	87

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

When the focus of analysis was switched from geographic regions to functional areas, that is away from regional disaggregations and towards disaggregations based on constituency type, a similar story emerged (Table 3.12). Throughout the whole of the *British Social Attitudes* series, respondents from areas typified by economic buoyancy and white collar employment were as likely to be pessimistic about the levels of future prices than respondents from area typified by industrial depression and high intensity council housing. There is, however, a very slight tendency for respondents from buoyant areas to express ambivalence about the future levels of prices - stating that prices would stay much the same over the next twelve months - compared to respondents from depressed areas or from areas typified by high levels of local authority housing tenure.

TABLE 3.12 FORECASTS OF INFLATION BY CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Depression/Immigration	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	05	03	04	05	03	03
Stay the same	12	12	07	14	14	07
Go up	82	85	89	80	83	90
Council Housing	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	06	04	04	06	04	03
Stay the same	09	11	05	17	14	03
Go up	84	84	81	76	82	95
Innermetropolitan	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	04	03	03	07	01	02
Stay the same	09	10	14	14	19	07
Go up	87	87	81	76	82	91
White Collar	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	04	04	03	06	03	03
Stay the same	14	13	09	19	17	08
Go up	82	84	88	75	80	89
Buoyant/Agriculture	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	06	02	02	08	03	04
Stay the same	13	15	09	20	19	09
Go up	81	83	90	72	78	87

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

On the whole however, it would be extremely unwise to claim that a discernible geographic variation occurred between 1983 and 1989 in the attitudes of respondents towards inflation. This may be due to a problem of question wording - confusing inflation (the rate at which prices rise) and the phenomena of rising prices *per se*, or it may reflect a universal reluctance to express optimism about sociotropic phenomena - such as inflation - which impact upon personal finances. It may be considered good practice in future to shy away from analysis of these types of question - which confuse technical terms with everyday concepts, and merge knowledge of national phenomena with personal consequences - in favour of more specific questions about egocentric or sociotropic values and attitudes. Alternatively the issue could be simpler. As a national phenomenon, geographic differences need not be expected in attitudes to inflation.

Even if inflation forecasts between 1983 and 1989 were not spatially variable, that in itself does not represent a defeat for the regional economic vote model since inflation might not in itself be disaggregated to the local level. Indeed most people's perception of the inflation rate would probably be a *national* prediction rather than a local one. Thus it would be surprising if geographic variation in inflation forecasts did exist.

3.4.2.4 UNEMPLOYMENT

The British public seemed reluctant to exhibit optimism about the prospect of falling unemployment in the early 1980s. By the end of the decade however, they had steadily grown more optimistic about the prospect of defeating unemployment (Table 3.13). This makes sense as headline unemployment declined from 1986 onwards.

TABLE 3.13 UNEMPLOYMENT FORECASTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
To have gone up by a lot	31	25	33	29	17	10
To have gone up by a little	37	31	34	29	23	16
To have stayed the same	17	31	23	37	32	37
To have gone down by a little	13	11	08	25	23	30
To have gone down by a lot	01	01	01	07	02	05
DK/NA	02	02	02	01	03	02

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

In reality of course, the incidence of unemployment had been spatially variable throughout the 1980s (see Chapter 2). As a consequence, it ought to be the case that attitudes to unemployment would also be spatially variable.

A rudimentary analysis of a phenomena such as inflation which is usually reported as a national figure exposed little variation according to geographic criteria. A similar analysis of unemployment forecasts, however, does expose significant variation

according to spatial dimensions. This may be because although absolute unemployment figures are usually quoted as a national figure or rate, there is also wide reporting of local levels of unemployment in Britain in the mass and local media - and also because unemployment *does* vary significantly from region to region. In short, respondents are used to disaggregating unemployment figures from the national to the local; people may be aware of the national picture but their overall attitude to unemployment may be tempered by their notion of the local picture. Moreover during the period of the *British Social Attitudes* series there were real differences in unemployment rates according to geographic criteria. Respondents in the South of England were much less likely to be unemployed themselves or know unemployed people than their counterparts in the industrial North. In short, the more regional context of unemployment is likely to be the *milieu* in which notions of unemployment are internalised by the public. Hence it would be surprising if this did not feed into a regional disparity in attitudes towards unemployment among respondents from disparate parts of the country.

The analysis of both panel members between 1983 and 1986 and the whole *British Social Attitudes* surveys between 1983 and 1989 reveal tangible distinctions in the forecasts of unemployment levels of respondents according to regional placement. Table 3.14 shows that throughout the panel element of the *British Social Attitudes* series, respondents from Scotland and Wales, were more likely to exhibit pessimism about the future level of unemployment than respondents from the South of England. Conversely respondents from the South and from the Midlands were the

most likely of all panel members to forecast a reduction in unemployment rates of the next year.

TABLE 3.14 UNEMPLOYMENT FORECASTS BY REGION 1983-86 PANEL

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Will Decrease	10	03	03	04
Will Stay the Same	15	30	21	26
Will Increase	75	67	75	70
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Will Decrease	16	13	07	09
Will Stay the Same	14	28	19	20
Will Increase	70	59	74	71
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Will Decrease	19	22	08	08
Will Stay the Same	17	31	43	31
Will Increase	64	47	50	61
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Will Decrease	13	07	04	09
Will Stay the Same	17	28	29	22
Will Increase	70	65	67	70
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**
Will Decrease	16	13	10	10
Will Stay the Same	15	37	26	19
Will Increase	69	50	64	71

Source; *BSA* Panel Study

A cursory glance at the forecasts for unemployment by geographic region for the whole of the *British Social Attitudes* studies between 1983 and 1989 (Table 3.15) reveals, firstly, that the overall picture between 1983 and 1986 was virtually identical to that identified in the panel element of the survey. Secondly, it reveals a manifest increase in overall levels of optimism about the future levels of unemployment beginning in the Election year of 1987 and compounded in 1989. This is unsurprising since the recovery was underway by 1987 and the consequences of the Lawson boom were fully apparent by the time of the *British Social Attitudes* sampling in early 1989. Nevertheless the regional disparities in unemployment forecasts evident in the 1983-6 period was maintained thereafter. Although Scots and Welsh respondents had become significantly more optimistic overall about the

future level of unemployment by 1989, their optimism was still a diluted version of the optimism expressed by respondents from the South of England and the capital.

TABLE 3.15 FORECASTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	10	12	05	06	23	32
Stay the same	16	28	15	27	30	32
Go up	74	60	80	67	46	36
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	13	14	09	08	23	35
Stay the same	15	27	22	25	30	36
Go up	71	59	69	67	46	28
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	17	16	09	10	26	34
Stay the same	20	31	21	24	33	42
Go up	63	54	70	66	36	24
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	14	11	08	08	34	40
Stay the same	15	27	18	23	31	35
Go up	70	63	74	69	45	25
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	13	11	10	07	28	38
Stay the same	19	38	32	28	36	42
Go up	68	51	58	65	35	20

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

The analysis of the impact of constituency type upon unemployment forecasts (Table 3.16) essentially tells the same story. Primarily there is a definite leap in the levels of optimism about unemployment forecasts in 1987 across all constituency types. Furthermore this leap in levels of optimism is compounded by a further increase in 1989. Hence the 1989 electorate was markedly less pessimistic about the level of unemployment over the coming year than the electorate had been prior to the 1987 Election.

TABLE 3.16 FORECASTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Depression/Immigration	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	14	15	08	07	22	35
Stay the same	15	27	20	24	32	36
Go up	72	58	72	68	46	29
Council Housing	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	11	15	10	06	25	27
Stay the same	13	28	12	23	24	32
Go up	76	57	78	71	51	42
Innermetropolitan	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	17	18	14	10	21	32
Stay the same	11	18	23	24	25	35
Go up	72	64	63	65	53	32
White Collar	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	10	12	09	07	30	38
Stay the same	20	34	23	24	35	40
Go up	71	54	68	68	35	22
Buoyant/Agriculture	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Go down	15	10	09	09	26	38
Stay the same	20	35	26	28	35	40
Go up	65	55	65	63	36	22

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

Nevertheless it is also true that the disaggregation of unemployment forecasts by constituency type shows that despite the overall increased optimism in the electorate the geographic disparities in forecasts identified by constituency type remained intact with respondents from constituencies typified by a large proportion of council houses still being relatively less optimistic than respondents from areas typified by economic buoyancy or agriculture or constituencies characterised by white collar employment.

The direction of the relationship between unemployment forecasts and geography fits with the general model of the economic recovery in the 1980s. Respondents from those regions with low rates of unemployment, tended to be optimistic about the future level of unemployment while respondents from those areas which failed to

recover from the barrage of industrial recession prior to 1983 were the most pessimistic about future levels of unemployment.

3.4.2.5 INDUSTRY

Despite the reality of economic recovery in the 1980s, respondents throughout Britain were reluctant to say that Britain's general industrial performance would "improve a lot" (Table 3.17). The numbers who felt it would "improve a little" steadily declined through the 1983-89 period - from about 40 per cent to 25 per cent of all respondents - but the proportion of respondents who felt that Britain's general industrial performance would decline (by either a little or a lot) remained fairly constant at around 13 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. Again this is unsurprising since industrial output did not match 1979 levels until 1990.

TABLE 3.17 BRITAIN'S GENERAL INDUSTRIAL PERFORMANCE FORECASTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
To improve a lot	05	04	03	03	07	05
To improve a little	39	34	25	22	29	25
To stay much the same	34	41	44	47	41	47
To decline a little	13	12	15	16	12	12
To decline a lot	04	04	06	07	06	04
DK/NA	06	06	07	06	07	07

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

Respondents were fairly willing to state the view that British industry was becoming more efficient. From 1986-1989, the proportion of the public who felt that the efficiency of British industry had improved over the past five years grew from 32 per cent to 44 per cent. Those who felt that industry had become less efficient declined by 10 percentage points to 14 per cent of the public by 1989 (Table 3.18). If the public were willing to give the Government the credit for this perceived improvement in industrial efficiency then this would be a likely source

of electoral support for the Government via the reward-punishment axiom. Moreover forecasts for the next five years were as favourable for the Government as public recollections had been. By 1989 43 per cent of the public felt that British industry would become more efficient over the next five years, while only 7 per cent felt it would become less efficient over the next five years (Table 3.19). A model of Government support based on expectations looked as favourable for the Government in 1989 as the reward-punishment axiom did.

TABLE 3.18 EFFICIENCY OF BRITISH INDUSTRY OVER LAST FIVE YEARS

	1986	1987	1989
More efficient	32	39	44
About the same	37	38	37
Less efficient	24	18	14
DK/NA	06	05	06

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

TABLE 3.19 EFFICIENCY OF BRITISH INDUSTRY OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

	1986	1987	1989
More efficient	36	45	43
About the same	42	40	41
Less efficient	13	09	07
DK/NA	08	07	09

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

The next step of this analysis is to look at attitudes to British industry by geography. A rudimentary analysis of the attitudes of the public towards the fate of industry illustrates a marked distinction in forecasts of industrial performance according to both region and constituency type reveals two trends (Table 3.20). Firstly, unlike the case with unemployment forecasts, the recovery of the late 1980s did not result in an across the board increase in optimistic industry forecasts. All that is clear is that there was a marked increase in relatively optimistic industrial forecasts in the Election year of 1987, particularly among respondents from the Midlands, from the capital and from the South of England. This leads directly to the second feature of

the industrial forecasts which is that throughout the 1983-9 *British Social Attitudes* series. There was an obvious difference in levels of optimism and pessimism according to geographic region. Furthermore, the direction of this variation was also in keeping with the expected hypothesis - as respondents from the Conservative heartlands in the South of the country were much more prone to express confidence in the ability of British industry to improve over the coming year than their counterparts in the more industrial Labour heartlands of the Celtic fringe and the North of England. Again there could be an objective basis for this spatial variation. The industrial restructuring of the 1980s pitted the "sunrise industries" of the South against the "rust-belt" industry in the North. A dislocation of attitudes towards the industrial economy according to where an individual lived would be a natural result of this conflict.

TABLE 3.20 FORECASTS OF INDUSTRY BY REGION

Scotland & Wales	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	41	34	24	23	34	32
Stay the same	32	47	51	48	42	46
Decline	27	19	25	30	23	22
North	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	44	36	25	25	31	31
Stay the same	34	43	48	49	46	51
Decline	22	22	26	26	23	18
Midlands	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	49	46	31	27	41	36
Stay the same	34	41	50	53	46	50
Decline	16	13	19	20	13	14
Greater London	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	51	43	27	27	40	30
Stay the same	33	46	43	48	42	49
Decline	16	11	30	25	17	21
South	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	47	43	38	29	45	30
Stay the same	41	42	45	48	41	53
Decline	12	15	18	22	14	17

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

The differences in the industrial forecasts of respondents according to constituency type over the entire *British Social Attitudes* period of 1983-9 revealed a similar story (Table 3.21). The shift towards optimism in white collar and economically buoyant areas was again discernible, while respondents from inner-metropolitan areas, from areas characterised by a high proportion of council housing and from depressed constituencies were relatively immune from the 1987 Election year confidence of their higher status counterparts.

TABLE 3.21 FORECASTS OF INDUSTRY BY CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Depression/Immigration	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	43	37	22	23	33	31
Stay the same	35	42	51	50	44	50
Decline	22	21	27	26	33	19
Council Housing	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	39	33	23	22	32	30
Stay the same	29	46	46	44	41	41
Decline	32	21	31	34	27	29
Innermetropolitan	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	57	41	32	24	31	21
Stay the same	24	45	51	48	44	49
Decline	19	13	17	28	25	31
White Collar	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	49	42	36	29	47	32
Stay the same	35	45	43	46	38	52
Decline	15	13	20	25	15	17
Buoyant/Agriculture	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1989**
Improve	49	44	33	29	40	34
Stay the same	39	42	47	51	46	52
Decline	12	14	20	20	14	15

Source; *BSA* Cross-Sectional Study

Throughout the series respondents from depressed areas and constituencies typified by council housing were the less optimistic and more pessimistic about the future of Britain's industrial performance over the coming year than respondents from areas typified by white collar employment and by economic prosperity. This fits with the accepted knowledge of the dynamics of the recession and recovery of the Thatcher era, as the white collar and service sectors which suffered the least from

the initial recession of the early 1980s were also the biggest beneficiaries of the recovery in the mid-1980s. Meanwhile the industrial sector was hit the hardest by the first recession of the Thatcher premiership as Britain's manufacturing base was eroded, but failed to be in the vanguard of the recovery which was based on service sector employment (Lewis & Townsend 1989, Johnston & Pattie 1990b). The evidence of Table 3.21 would tend to support this knowledge as respondents from areas typified by service sector employment appeared less distressed about industrial prospects in the teeth of the recession and more optimistic in the subsequent recovery, than respondents from areas typified by industrial sector employment. Although the pessimism about industry in industrial areas speaks volumes about the economic restructuring of the 1980s.

3.5 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter geographic variations in both partisan preferences and attitudes to economic variables have been sought. However, it has been an introductory rather than a definitive exercise and much remains to be done.

Initially there appears to be an evident disparity in the impact of geography upon economic attitudes. Questions which probe knowledge of inflation rates or the cost of living tended to elicit universally pessimistic responses. As a result, no general geographic variation in the responses to these questions were found - although the central premise that geographic variation should have been present is questionable. On the other hand however, apparent disparity associated with geographic variation was recorded in other areas of economic issues. This seemed to be particularly true

for those issues where the local context was as appropriate - or even more appropriate - as the national context for the public to form their views. Hence although most respondents might have had a firm notion of the national level of unemployment, it might be their local knowledge that forms their outlook on the issue of unemployment - regardless of whether or not the incidence of unemployment affects them directly.

An important finding in this chapter was the phenomena of tergiversating Tories. These were groups of voters - from the Midlands and Greater London, and in supervisory job capacities - who were likely to support the Conservatives only in election years. In the inter-election period they seemed inclined to favour the opposition parties. This made them a key 'target' group of voters for the Government seeking re-election. The ability of the Government to persuade these voters to return to the fold in election years would form a crucial part of the Conservatives electoral strategy during the 1980s and beyond.

This chapter has concentrated on the analysis of geography in isolation to other factors. This is of course seldom the case, as geography will in part reflect other significant cleavages. Moreover, several authors have concluded that after the effects of class have been controlled for, the North-South divide in voting behaviour disappears - that the North is more pro-Labour because it is more working class (see for instance Rose & McAllister, 1986, 1990). Consequently subsequent chapters will endeavour to measure the effects of geography in alliance with the

effects of class in order to control for any cointegration or interaction effects between the two.

Finally this chapter has provided an introductory analysis of the place of geography in the study of economic attitudes. There is an obvious need to push this analysis further and the aim of the next chapter will be to test the association between geography, economic issues and party identification between 1983 and 1989 more robustly.

Chapter 4: Partisanship, Economic Attitudes & Space During the Recovery of the 1980s

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the relationship between economic attitudes and geography came under preliminary scrutiny. Evidence of a geographic divide in economic evaluations during the recovery of the 1980s was provided. This chapter has the aim of scrutinising the relationship between economic attitudes and geography in more detail and in a more robust statistical fashion. Furthermore it will adopt the fuller model of economic attitudes and partisanship outlined in Chapter 2.

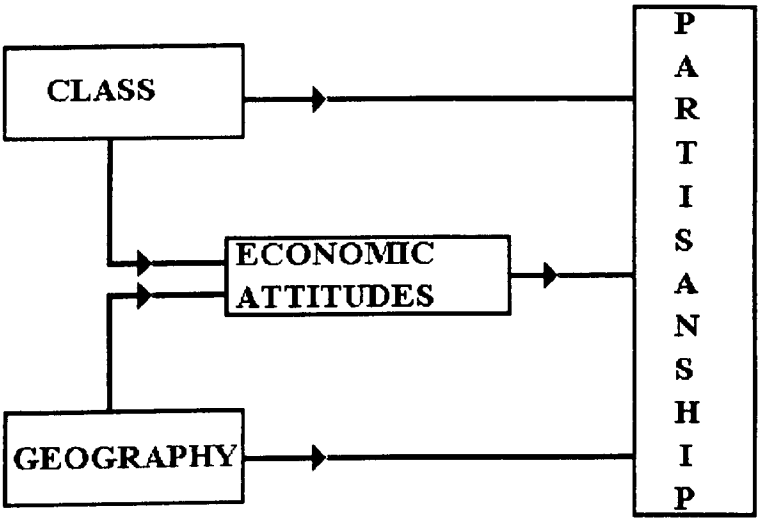
The hypothesised relationship between social class, geography, economic attitudes and partisanship is reiterated in Figure 4.1. An objective of this chapter is to measure the full model with party identification as the dependent variable and the half-stage model with economic evaluations as the dependent.

The separation of economic attitudes into their component forms is now required so that a precise set of hypotheses can be formulated and tested. This requires the scrutiny of retrospective and prospective, and egocentric and sociotropic economic evaluations. The key point about the sociotropic economic attitudes measured here - attitudes towards inflation, unemployment and industrial performance - is that they are likely to be internalised by individual electors in different ways and thus have differential impacts depending on their relevance to the local context. Inflation for instance, can usually be seen as a national phenomenon and so it would not be reasonable to expect geographic variation in attitudes to inflation. On the other hand, other

economic issues such as unemployment and industrial decline tend to vary dramatically from region to region. Moreover the media attention placed upon them will often concentrate on the local context as the focal point for these issues. As a result regional variation would be much more likely. Finally the changes over time involved during the 1983-9 period - from slow to rapid recovery and slippage back into recession - would increase the likelihood that attitudes to all of these economic variables would fluctuate markedly. As already seen in Chapter 2, the cycle of recovery and recession varied according to where an individual lived.

As well as the nuances in the economic evaluations used in this chapter, it is important to note that there are two types of geographic variation under investigation here; the nominal regional variation (geographic model 1) which could measure the North-South divide, and the variation according to different types of constituency (geographic model 2) which could be used to measure the functional cleavage in British electoral geography.

Figure 4.1: The Hypothesised Relationship Between Class, Geography, Economic Attitudes and Partisanship



4.2 DATA & METHODS

The dataset used for this analysis was the *British Social Attitudes* series of surveys. The *British Social Attitudes* series was designed to

> chart movements in a wide range of social attitudes in Britain, including attitudes towards politics, the economy, the workplace, and other social and moral issues" (*British Social Attitudes* Technical Report 1989; p.1).

The analyses adopted here are based on a recoding of responses in the *British Social Attitudes* data. All attitudinal responses were recoded into one of three possible categories. In each case a score of minus one represents any degree of dissatisfaction with current circumstances or pessimism about the future, a score of zero indicates a neutral response (including don't knows) and a score of plus one reflects any degree of satisfaction with current conditions or optimism about the future. Some *British Social Attitudes* questions originally offered respondents more choice than this but for the sake of consistency all were recoded into this threefold schema. The class and geographic variables used here are those identified in the previous chapters.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF DATA

This chapter involves the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Classification Analysis of the relationships between class, geography, economic attitudes and partisanship. The results are presented in the tables below.

ANOVA enables scrutiny of two forms of variance, the relative importance of within - and between - group variaition, controlled for degrees of freedom (SPSS 1993, p.270-271).

The null hypothesis for all ANOVA tests is that all groups have the same mean as the population, and is measured by the F-statistic. A value close to 1 would suggest that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In the tables in this chapter only those variables that have a F-statistic with an associated significance

below or equal to .05 are reported; an asterisk denotes the failure of the variable to meet this threshold.

The within group variance is measured by the Beta coefficient reported by the Multiple Classification Analysis derived from the ANOVA technique. These coefficients are similar to the partial regression coefficient in standard multiple regression. They indicate the difference between the average respondent and the respondent in the identified category - as the co-variables are held constant.

There are three types of table reported in this chapter: Table 4.1 shows the grand mean scores for all variables in this analysis. That is the average position of respondents for each variable from the *British Social Attitudes*. For the identification variables the grand mean simply represents the level of identification each party gained. Hence the Conservative grand mean for 1983 was 0.39 which can be translated as 39% of popular support. For the attitudinal variables, a grand mean of zero represents a neutral electorate, a negative score reflects a pessimistic or dissatisfied population and a positive score represents a relatively optimistic or satisfied electorate. The second type of table shows statistical significance and magnitude of explanatory force; the third type shows parameters of the model. The second type of table (of which Table 4.2 is an example) shows F-values and Beta coefficients derived from the Analysis of Variance statistical technique: F-values provide information about the relative importance of each independent variable in the analysis. Here the absolute magnitude of F-values may have been suppressed due to the loss of degrees of freedom necessitated by the collapsing of responses into

a threefold schema. The Beta coefficient is equivalent to the standardised partial regression coefficient for the independent variable. The third type of table (of which Table 4.4 is the first example) shows the average deviations from the Grand Mean associated with the disaggregations of the explanatory variable - *ceteris paribus*. A negative deviation represents a body of respondents who were less likely on average than all other respondents to favour a particular point of view; a positive deviation denotes that this group of respondents were more likely to favour this view than the average respondent. For example, Table 4.4 shows that the Scots and Welsh were the most hostile to Conservative identification in 1983 of all regional groups (with an average deviation from the Grand Mean of -.10); respondents from the Midlands were the most pro-Conservative (with an average deviation of +.08) others things being equal.

Table 4.1: GRAND MEANS FOR VARIABLES USED IN THIS ANALYSIS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
Partisanship						
CON	.39	.39	.32	.35	.39	.40
LBR	.32	.35	.36	.34	.28	.33
LIB	.16	.13	.18	.18	.19	.11
Sociotropism						
INFFC	-.76	-.80	-.86	-.69	-.76	-.85
UMFC	-.53	-.41	-.57	-.58	-.14	.10
INDYFC	.31	.22	.08	.00	.20	.13
EFFCYL5Y				.04	.10	.23
EFFCY5FC				.11	.18	.22
POVL10Y				-.17		-.17
POV10FC				-.15		-.14
Egocentrism						
FAMYLY		.50	-.48	.53	-.34	-.70
FAMYFC		.48	-.40	.49	-.29	-.65
WAGEFC	-.08	-.10	-.12	-.06	.00	-.12

The differences between classes and spatial variables are given in the third type of table. These differences derived from Multiple Classification Analysis, are the average deviations from the grand mean score of the dependent variable for each region, or for each constituency type and for each occupational class when the other variables in the model are held constant.

In all types of table, an empty cell represents a year in which the appropriate question was not asked by the *British Social Attitudes* survey. An asterisk denotes that although the question was asked the data derived from the responses failed to meet the .05 level of statistical significance.

There are three basic types of variables in the tables; partisanship and sociotropic and egocentric attitudes. The partisanship variables are self-explanatory CON, LBR and LIB representing Conservative, Labour and Liberal partisan identifiers respectively. The sociotropic variables usually concern projections rather than recollections; one year forecasts of inflation (INFFC), unemployment (UMFC), and Britain's industrial performance (INDYFC); a five year forecast of the level of industrial efficiency in Britain (EFFCY5FC) and a ten year forecast of the level of poverty in Britain (POV10FC). There are however, two sociotropic variables which measure recollections rather than forecasts. These concern the level of industrial efficiency over the last five years (EFFCYL5Y) and levels of poverty over the last decade (POVL10Y). The egocentric variables concern family income levels forecast over the coming year (FAMYFC) and a recollection of them over the previous year (FAMYLY), and personal wage levels forecast for the next twelve months (WAGEFC).

The British public were very pessimistic throughout the 1980s about the prospects for falling inflation (revealed by the negative Grand Means in Table 4.1). Personal wage forecasts were also predominantly negative, but the pessimism about unemployment rates fell sharply in the election year of 1987, by 1989 the average respondent thought unemployment would fall over the coming year.

Overall, public opinion throughout the 1983-9 period altered over time. Views of the economy slumped then recovered: trends of unemployment and industrial forecasts in particular seemed to exhibit a 'lagged' feel good factor - as the 'Good News' of economic recovery percolated down to the electorate rather slowly.

4.4 PARTY IDENTIFICATION VARIABLES

In the *British Social Attitudes* series, respondents were classified as identifying with a particular political party on one of three counts: supporters of the party, those respondents who classify themselves as closer to it than other parties, and those who are more likely to support it in the event of a General Election. These three groups are described respectively in the *British Social Attitudes* annual reports as 'partisans', 'sympathisers' and 'residual identifiers' and are then combined into a single group of 'identifiers'. Those respondents who indicated no party preference at all (that is not even residual identifiers) were classified as non-aligned. This variable was further compressed by the construction of identification variables for each of the main three political parties, the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties. In the case of the Liberals, the identification variable includes identifiers for the Liberal Party, the

Social Democratic Party, the Alliance between the two and, in 1989, the Liberal Democrats. To be explicit then, in the following analysis identifiers refers to all types of identifiers highlighted by the *British Social Attitudes* series; partisans, sympathisers and residual identifiers. The variables were constructed by comparing all respondents who classified themselves - by whatever criteria - as identifiers with one particular party to those respondents who did not identify with that party. Therefore all respondents were included in each analysis since they fell into one of the two possible responses - either identification or non-identification with the particular political party. An examination of the links between economic evaluations and the strength of party identification would be an illuminating further research project, but does not fit into the remit of this thesis.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show the F values and Beta coefficients for each of the three party identification variables when the variance was analysed after controlling for the effects of class and space (as detailed in Chapter 2). Two measures of space were used, compressed region (Geographic Model 1) and constituency type (Geographic Model 2). These tables show that the effect of space, both in terms of region and its functional division was of increasing importance between 1983 and 1989, especially in the construction of Conservative and Labour identification. Typically the Beta coefficients in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 do not increase over time for the spatial variables but the F-values do. Thus it can be claimed that the differences between regions and between constituency types became clearer although the extent of these differences was relatively unaffected.

Table 4.2: Tests for Geographic Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Partisanship

	CON		LABOUR		LIBERAL	
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta
REGION						
1983	6.3	13	8.4	15	3.2	10
1984	6.2	12	10.0	16	5.1	12
1985	11.0	16	16.5	19	3.5	9
1986	17.4	15	27.6	19	5.0	8
1987	22.0	17	21.0	17	*	*
1989	19.3	16	23.1	17	4.3	8
CLASS						
1983	20.1	24	27.1	28	3.5	10
1984	28.3	27	26.4	26	*	*
1985	25.2	24	29.7	26	4.7	11
1986	44.3	24	50.8	26	4.6	8
1987	31.1	21	35.2	22	4.8	8
1989	42.8	24	48.1	25	3.2	7

Table 4.3 :Tests for Geographic Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Partisanship

	CON	CON	LABOUR	LABOUR	LIBERAL	LIBERAL
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta
C TYPE						
1983	5.7	13	10.9	18	*	*
1984	4.5	11	12.5	18	2.8	9
1985	12.1	17	21.0	22	2.8	8
1986	16.3	15	30.0	20	5.6	9
1987	28.0	20	30.0	20	3.7	7
1989	22.5	17	34.1	22	10.5	12
CLASS						
1983	19.2	24	23.5	26	3.4	10
1984	25.6	26	23.6	24	2.5	8
1985	20.0	22	22.7	23	4.2	10
1986	41.3	23	47.9	25	4.1	8
1987	29.4	20	32.9	21	4.6	8
1989	38.9	23	44.7	23	3.1	7

4.4.1 CONSERVATIVE IDENTIFICATION

The average deviations in Conservative identification by region and class (Table 4.4) show that the hostility of respondents in Scotland and Wales to the Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher grew in intensity over the period of economic recovery between 1983 and 1989 - especially during the 1987 election year and beyond. The North of England retained an anti-

Conservative identification bias over this period, while the pro-Conservative bias of respondents in the Midlands and the South of England held firm. The most changeable region of Conservative support was Greater London. In the Election year of 1983, Greater Londoners showed a slight inclination to identify with the Conservative government, but this inclination was reversed in the following year and this new hostility to Conservative identification intensified in 1985. Hence it could be claimed that after successfully wooing the voters of Greater London in 1983 the Conservative government failed to keep their support in the inter-election period, an interpretation apparently confirmed by local Elections in mid-term where in the aftermath of the abolition of the GLC, Labour made inroads into the capital's vote. By 1986, however, the hostility to the Conservative government in London appeared to be on the wane again. Moreover by the next Election in 1987, when the Conservative campaign sharply focused upon the alleged shortcomings of Labour's record in the capital, respondents in Greater London were, other things being equal, swinging away from Labour identification and back towards the Conservatives via overall neutrality. In 1989 respondents in Greater London had once more reverted to hostility to Conservative identification. This atrophy of Conservative support in Greater London between Elections but the ultimate identification with the Government of Londoners in Election years is a picture which was repeated in different classes and constituency types.

Table 4.4: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Conservative Identification by Region and Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	-.10	-.11	-.07	-.11	-.16	-.16
North	-.06	-.02	-.05	-.06	-.05	-.03
Midlands	.08	.08	.04	.07	.05	.05
G L'don	.01	-.05	-.11	-.01	.00	-.02
South	.05	.04	.09	.07	.09	.08
CLASS						
Salariat	.18	.18	.21	.20	.14	.15
RNM	.03	.05	.02	.03	.03	.05
S-E	.17	.29	.12	.08	.13	.11
Foremen	.00	-.09	-.11	-.12	-.03	-.04
W/C	-.14	-.16	-.12	-.13	-.13	-.16

Table 4.5: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Conservative Identification by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	-.05	-.04	-.08	-.08	-.08	-.05
Poor Cl	-.10	-.11	-.13	-.09	-.17	-.20
Innermetro	.00	-.01	-.24	-.09	-.13	-.13
Wh-Collar	.01	.03	.09	.06	.13	.08
Buoy /Agri	.07	.04	.04	.06	.05	.05
CLASS						
Salariat	.18	.17	.19	.20	.15	.15
RNM	.03	.05	.01	.03	.03	.05
S-E	.16	.28	.11	.07	.12	.10
Foremen	.02	-.09	-.11	-.12	-.02	-.04
W/C	-.14	-.15	-.10	-.13	-.12	-.15

Respondents from constituencies typified by high levels of immigration or depressed industry were generally constant in their antipathy to the Conservative government throughout the period 1983-1989. Anti-Conservatism was also prevalent in constituencies typified by large scale council housing and a relatively high degree of poverty; indeed this hostility intensified substantially between 1983 and 1989. The pro-Conservative sentiment shown by respondents in constituencies typified by buoyant economic conditions and agricultural land and those in regions where most respondents are employed in

white-collar occupations held firm in the recovery years, but were particularly strong in the Election years of 1983 and 1987 respectively. The biggest change in propensity to identify with the Conservative party occurred among respondents living in inner metropolitan areas. In 1983 these respondents exhibited no overall inclination towards or away from Conservative identification but in each subsequent year the inner metropolitan group was hostile to Conservative identification. Since 1985 these respondents displayed a marked disinclination to support the Conservatives. The peak of Conservative unpopularity within this group of respondents occurred in 1985 but hostility to the Conservative government remained high in the subsequent surveys of 1986, 1987 and 1989. Inner metropolitan voters, like the voters in Greater London in the previous analysis, were relatively inclined towards Conservative support in the Election year of 1983, and like respondents in Greater London moved away from Conservatism in the inter-election period, but unlike respondents in Greater London, respondents in inner metropolitan areas were not successfully wooed back to Conservatism by the Election of 1987.

Due to the logistics of the *British Social Attitudes*' sampling procedure, there is a very heavy London bias in the construction of the inner metropolitan grouping by the constituency type spatial schema. Theoretically the construction of this group did not exclude other cities such as Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, but in practice the selection of respondents for interviewing who can then be recoded into an inner-city sub-group remained a predominantly London phenomenon. Thus if the inclusion of non-Londoners in the inner metropolitan grouping for each *British Social Attitudes* survey, can be

regarded as negligible, the distinction between this group and the previously constructed Greater London group needs further explanation.

The essential difference between respondents in the inner metropolitan area of the constituency type schema and those respondents identified as living in Greater London by the regional schema is that the London component of the inner metropolitan group excludes some of the poorest communities and the high status suburban areas of the capital. The regional grouping Greater London is inclusive of all of these constituencies. Hence although constituencies such as Lambeth, Holborn and St. Pancras, Islington North, Lewisham Deptford, Streatham, Tooting and Battersea are categorised as inner metropolitan areas by the constituency type schema, other London constituencies have been allocated elsewhere by the CACI guide-lines. This allocation occurred in two directions. Firstly a number of constituencies have been placed in groups further down the numeric scale; hence Barking and Leyton and Walthamstow have been redefined into the first of the five CACI groups typified by high levels of immigration and depressed industry, while constituencies such as Peckham in Southwark were placed in CACI's second grouping characterised by a high ratio of council housing. Secondly higher status and less urbanised constituencies were relocated into a different group in the CACI five group schema. In this manner Barnet, Uxbridge, Kingston upon Thames and Sutton and Cheam were allotted to groups characterised by white collar occupations and buoyant regions.

The picture of Conservative identification according to class is essentially the same in both geographic models, because the interaction terms between class

and region in the first analysis (Table 4.4) and between class and constituency type (Table 4.5) were virtually identical. Therefore for the purposes of this description, the remarks about class distinctions in Conservative identification apply to both Tables 4.4 and 4.5 and both sets of analysis. The biggest relative sources of class support for the Conservatives in the period 1983-1989 were the Salariat and the self-employed. Respondents in routine Non-Manual occupations were less inclined to favour Conservative identification but were nevertheless consistently pro-Conservative in their outlook, while working class respondents were typically hostile to Conservatism throughout the period. Respondents characterised as Foremen and supervisors were usually anti-Conservative in their identification but were prone to move towards Conservative identification in Election years. In 1983 foremen were typically pro-Conservative and were markedly less hostile to the Conservative government in 1987 than was usually the case in the inter-election period. Once again it appears that an important sector of the electorate may have been wooed by the Conservatives in Election years in the 1980s at least to the extent that their anti-Conservative sentiment was diluted in those years.

4.4.2 LABOUR IDENTIFICATION

The deviations from the grand mean in Labour identification by class and spatial considerations (Tables 4.6 and 4.7), reveal a similar story. Respondents from the Celtic fringe of mainland Britain and in the North of England were the typically the most prone to Labour identification throughout the period of economic recovery in the 1980s. Moreover, respondents in the Greater London area were also pro-Labour in their sentiment, although this sentiment was more variable and there was some evidence to suggest that Labour support in

Greater London withered during the build-up to the 1987 General Election. Respondents in the South of England were consistently hostile to Labour in the period 1983-1989, while respondents from the Midlands were relatively hostile to Labour in every year except 1985 when they expressed a slight relative pro-Labour identification.

When constituency type replaced region as the spatial control in the analysis (Tables 4.3 and 4.7) a more complex picture was revealed. Blocs of strong Labour support were constructed in areas with high immigrant populations and depressed industry and from areas with a high ratio of council housing. Blocs of hostility to Labour were apparent in white collar and buoyant or agricultural areas. Respondents living in inner metropolitan areas underwent a marked intensification of their pro-Labour sentiment. In the Election year of 1983 respondents in inner metropolitan areas were only slightly pro-Labour, but in subsequent surveys this group expressed a much greater inclination to identify themselves as supporters of the Opposition throughout the years of economic recovery. Moreover not only did respondents in inner metropolitan areas become more prone to identify with the Labour Party in this period, they became assimilated into the heartland of Labour's support, their allegiance intensifying until the inner metropolitan areas have become among the most likely sources of relative Labour support. To highlight just how profitable the electorate of the inner cities became for the Labour party, it can be noted that since 1985, respondents in inner metropolitan areas were more likely, other things being equal, to identify with Labour than respondents in the North of England. This would seem to support theories which champion the urban-rural

cleavage over the North-South cleavage in spatial politics in Britain (see Curtice & Steed, 1982, 1986).

Table 4.6: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Labour Identification by Region and Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	.08	.08	.04	.09	.10	.06
North	.07	.08	.08	.10	.06	.09
Mids	-.03	-.04	.01	-.06	-.05	-.03
G L'don	.04	.04	.10	.04	.03	.04
South	-.09	-.09	-.13	-.11	-.09	-.11
CLASS						
Salariat	-.15	-.13	-.17	-.15	-.11	-.12
RNM	-.07	-.08	-.05	-.06	-.05	-.08
S-E	-.20	-.23	-.17	-.13	-.11	-.08
Foremen	.03	.12	.05	.18	.05	.09
W/C	.16	.15	.15	.15	.13	.16

Table 4.7: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Labour Identification by Constituency Type & Region

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	.08	.10	.15	.12	.10	.14
Poor Cl	.12	.10	.05	.06	.09	.11
Innermetro	.01	.09	.20	.15	.17	.12
Wh- Collar	-.03	-.05	-.10	-.06	-.10	-.08
Buoy /Agri	-.08	-.08	-.07	-.09	-.07	-.07
CLASS						
Salariat	-.14	-.12	-.15	-.15	-.12	-.11
RNM	-.06	-.07	-.05	-.06	-.05	-.07
S-E	-.17	-.22	-.15	-.11	-.09	-.07
Foremen	.02	.12	.05	.18	.04	.09
W/C	.15	.14	.14	.15	.13	.16

Labour identification dissected by class revealed an unsurprising trend of hostility to Labour among the Salariat and the self-employed and of a more diluted hostility to Labour exhibited by respondents with jobs described as routine non-manual (Tables 4.6 and 4.7). Labour support was strongest among foremen and the working class. Once again however, it is pertinent to note that the allegiance to the Labour Party among those with supervisory

responsibilities appeared to slump in the General Election years of 1983 and 1987 and grew again in inter-election periods. This might be because this relatively affluent group of workers were the most prone to Conservative pressure at Election time, and the most likely to desert Labour because of their taxation and home-ownership policies.

4.4.3 LIBERAL IDENTIFICATION

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 illustrate that throughout the period 1983-1987, the Liberal/Social Democratic Alliance and more latterly the Liberal Democrats attracted their support more evenly across social classes and from all regions and constituency types than the other two mainstream political parties in Britain. This was shown in each year by the lower incidence of statistical significance of both types of spatial variables and of social class in these analyses. Moreover as Tables 4.2 and 4.3 illustrated, the between group and within group variance in Liberal identification explained by class and either of the geographic criteria, were consistently lower than for the other two main parties. Where regional variations did exist in the composition of Liberal identification it may be noted that respondents in the South of England, in buoyant and agricultural areas, and among those occupied in routine non manual occupations were the most prone of all groups to identify with Liberalism, while respondents in the Celtic fringe, the North of England, in depressed areas and areas with a high degree of council housing were less prone to exhibit pro-Liberal sentiment than respondents in the rest of the country.

Table 4.8: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Liberal Identification by Region and Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.02	*	-.02
North	-.02	-.02	.00	-.03	*	-.04
Midlands	-.03	-.03	-.04	.01	*	.00
G L'don	-.01	-.02	-.03	-.04	*	.00
South	.05	.06	.05	.04	*	.03
CLASS						
Salariat	-.01	*	-.01	.01	.01	.00
RNM	.04	*	.04	.03	.03	.02
S-E	.03	*	.01	-.02	-.03	.00
Foremen	-.06	*	.08	-.06	.01	-.05
W/C	-.03	*	-.05	-.03	-.04	-.02

Table 4.9: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Liberal Identification by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	*	-.03	-.04	-.03	-.04	-.03
Poor Cl	*	-.03	-.04	-.04	.00	-.04
Innermetro	*	-.03	-.01	-.09	-.06	-.09
Wh-Collar	*	-.01	.04	.03	.01	.03
Buoy /Agri	*	.03	.02	.03	.03	.03
CLASS						
Salariat	-.01	-.03	-.02	.00	.01	.00
RNM	.05	.03	.04	.03	.03	.02
S-E	.02	-.02	.00	-.02	-.04	.00
Foremen	-.06	-.03	.08	-.06	.01	-.06
W/C	-.03	-.02	-.04	-.03	-.04	-.02

4.5 ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

In addition to the questions which permit the testing of partisan identification, the *British Social Attitudes* questionnaires have posed a number of economic attitude questions. By and large these can be characterised into two main sub-groups: sociotropic questions and egocentric questions. When respondents were asked questions about the general economic performance of the country as a whole, then they were, in effect, asked for a sociotropic evaluation. Examples of this type of question from the *British Social Attitudes* series

concerned issues such as inflation, unemployment, industrial performance, efficiency and poverty. When respondents were probed for evaluations of their own personal position they were being asked for an egocentric evaluation. In the *British Social Attitudes* series this type of question tended to be couched in terms of financial positions or personal wealth. Examples of egocentric questions in the *British Social Attitudes* series involved the assessment of personal wage expectations and the assessment of family income fluctuations.

It is important to note that both of these groups of questions - the sociotropic and egocentric - involved two types of evaluation, the prospective and the retrospective. That is respondents were required by the *British Social Attitudes* series not only to recollect the state of an economic phenomenon and compare it to the current state but also to forecast the change in that position over a similar period of time. In an example of this from the sociotropic set of questions, respondents were required to recollect the general state of efficiency in British industry compared to five years ago and compared to a prediction of the state of efficiency in British industry in five years time. From the egocentric set of *British Social Attitudes* questions, respondents were asked to compare their family's current level of income to that of last year (alongside controlling features such as the cost of living) and to the level of family income they expected to have over the next year.

It was anticipated therefore, that the analysis of economic attitudes of the electorate during the years of the economic recovery between 1983 and 1989, would reveal not two distinct groups of economic attitudes the sociotropic and

egocentric, but a four-way split, sociotropic recollections, sociotropic expectations, egocentric recollections and egocentric expectations.

4.5.1 SOCIOTROPIC EVALUATIONS

Questions posed by the *British Social Attitudes* which can be used to measure sociotropic evaluations tended to over-emphasise forecasts at the expense of recollections. While respondents were required to forecast the rates of inflation, unemployment and the general state of Britain's industrial performance over the next year, they were not asked for their perceptions of inflation, unemployment or relative industrial performance over the previous year. While this makes intuitive sense for the inflation, since official inflation rates are well publicised and is unlikely to vary a great deal in the public's perceptions, it is less satisfactory in the case of unemployment and industrial performance. Firstly, unemployment varies significantly according to geography. Hence geographic variation in perceptions of past changes in unemployment would be highly likely. Secondly, official figures regarding industrial performance such as balance of trade figures and productivity rates are much less prominently portrayed in the media. Indeed respondents seem almost as likely to gain their cues about industrial performance from local media than from the national media and local media will be primarily concerned with parochial industrial performance. For example the closure of a local firm or factory would be more newsworthy at the regional than the national level and thus may impel respondents to give regionally skewed answers to questions of satisfaction with industrial performance. Hence it would be feasible to expect spatial variation in the public's responses to questions which chart their evaluations of industrial performance.

Table 4.10: Tests for Geographic Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Sociotropism

	INFFC		UMFC		INDYFC			
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta		
REGION								
1983	*	*	*	*	4.1	11		
1984	*	*	*	*	3.2	9		
1985	*	*	6.2	12	5.7	12		
1986	3.0	7	*	*	2.4	6		
1987	*	*	4.8	8	10.0	12		
1989	*	*	4.0	8	2.8	6		
CLASS								
1983	*	*	*	*	6.1	14		
1984	3.1	9	9.7	16	11.2	17		
1985	*	*	4.6	10	9.0	15		
1986	5.7	10	9.5	12	4.0	8		
1987	2.9	7	15.6	16	12.6	14		
1989	2.8	6	13.9	14	*	*		
	EFCYL5Y		EFCY5FC		POVL10Y		POV10FC	
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta
REGION								
1983								
1984								
1985								
1986	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1987	7.8	11	3.5	7				
1989	2.6	7	2.4	7	3.4	7	5.2	9
CLASS								
1983								
1984								
1985								
1986	9.4	11	4.0	8	3.8	7	4.2	8
1987	8.5	11	3.3	7				
1989	6.4	12	7.1	12	7.0	10	6.7	10

Table 4.11: Tests for Geographic Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients; Sociotropism

	INFFC		UMFC		INDYFC			
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta		
C TYPE								
1983	*	*	*	*	4.0	11		
1984	*	*	*	*	*	*		
1985	*	*	*	*	3.9	10		
1986	2.4	6	*	*	4.8	09		
1987	*	*	5.7	9	9.7	12		
1989	2.6	6	7.1	10	7.0	10		
CLASS								
1983	*	*	*	*	5.7	13		
1984	3.1	9	10.1	17	10.8	17		
1985	*	*	4.5	10	7.0	13		
1986	5.3	9	9.5	13	3.8	8		
1987	3.0	7	15.5	15	13.2	14		
1989	2.7	6	13.1	14	*	*		
	EFCYL5Y		EFCY5FC		POVL10Y		POV10FC	
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta
C TYPE								
1983								
1984								
1985								
1986	*	*	*	*	2.9	7	*	*
1987	3.0	7	*	*				
1989	2.7	8	2.7	8	3.4	7	4.1	8
CLASS								
1983								
1984								
1985								
1986	9.3	12	4.1	8	3.5	7	4.1	8
1987	8.7	11	3.5	7				
1989	5.1	10	5.9	11	6.1	9	7.7	11

4.5.1.1 ATTITUDES TO INFLATION

Throughout the *British Social Attitudes* series, respondents have been invited to forecast the direction of inflation over the following year. This question failed to yield any tangible results for this study, not least because reality seems to have taught respondents that prices will increase over any given period of time and they assume that prices will increase at a faster rate than before. This led to an in-built pessimism bias in the prediction of the cost of living across all regions, constituency types and classes. As already noted, the grand mean for inflation

forecasts in each survey was consistently negative (Table 4,1). With a maximum of one and a minimum of minus one, the average mean scores in the period of recovery from 1983 to 1989 were -.70, -.80, -.86, -.69, -.76 and -.85. In short, the vast majority of respondents tended to believe that inflation would worsen over the following period, and the distinction between rising prices and rates of increase may not have been successfully grasped by the public as inflation rates seem to be almost universally expected to rise. Furthermore this in-built pessimism about costs and inflation seemed to contaminate all other *British Social Attitudes* questions concerning the relationship between prices and other issues.

Furthermore, as stated in the previous chapter, there are good grounds for assuming that respondents will take the cues that form their opinions about inflation from the national rather than the local context. Therefore inflation may not constitute a local issue where geographic variations would be a significant explanatory variable, unlike other issues that seem to be internalised at the local rather than the national level.

For this reason there is a very high incidence of statistical insignificance in the analyses of inflation forecasts by region or constituency type and class (Tables 4.10 and 4.11). Indeed Tables 4.10 and 4.11 show that where region and constituency type did achieve statistical significance at the .05 level (in 1986 for both, and 1989 for constituency type, respectively) their F values and Beta coefficients were much lower than those for class in the same analysis. For the record, respondents in Scotland and Wales were the most optimistic about falling rates of inflation in 1986 while those from the North of England, from

depressed regions and from buoyant areas were the most pessimistic groups of society, other things being equal. Respondents living in areas typified by poor council housing were the most pessimistic about inflation in 1989, and those living in buoyant areas the least pessimistic.

Table 4.12: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Inflation Forecasts By Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	*	*	*	.06	*	*
North	*	*	*	-.06	*	*
Midlands	*	*	*	.00	*	*
G L'don	*	*	*	.01	*	*
South	*	*	*	.02	*	*
CLASS						
Salariat	*	.10	*	.12	.05	.06
RNM	*	-.01	*	-.03	-.01	.00
S-E	*	.03	*	.11	.07	-.02
Foremen	*	-.05	*	.00	.05	-.01
W/C	*	-.02	*	-.02	-.02	-.02

Table 4.13: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Inflation Forecasts by Constituency Type & Region

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	*	*	*	-.05	*	-.01
Poor Cl	*	*	*	.01	*	-.07
Innermetro	*	*	*	-.01	*	-.02
Wh-Collar	*	*	*	-.01	*	-.01
Buoy /Agri	*	*	*	-.04	*	.02
CLASS						
Salariat	*	.10	*	.11	.05	.06
RNM	*	-.01	*	-.03	-.02	.00
S-E	*	.03	*	.11	.07	-.02
Foremen	*	-.05	*	.00	.05	-.01
W/C	*	-.02	*	-.02	-.03	-.02

The class distinctions in the same analyses of variance achieve statistical significance much more often (although not consistently throughout the series). Here it was the Salariat - the section of society most immune from the effects of inflation - which was the most likely section of society to believe that inflation

would decrease over the coming year. The self-employed were also likely to predict a reduction in the rate of inflation as a rule, although this was not the case in 1989. The working class was consistently pessimistic about the prospect of falling inflation rates over the next year. It is crucial to bear in mind, however, that a deviation score should not be interpreted as an absolute propensity within that group to favour one particular response. Instead it shows that compared to other groups and with independent variables held constant that section of society deviates from the overall mean towards that direction. Table 4.1 shows that the grand mean for inflation forecasts was consistently negative. The largest grand mean, that is the year in which pessimism was at its least was 1986 (-.69), and it may be no coincidence that this was the only year that both types of spatial differences entered statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Nevertheless a clear suggestion from the class differences in inflation forecasts can be drawn. The Conservative Government appeared to be able of convincing their 'natural supporters' - their electoral heartland of class support - that they had inflation under control in the 1980s. Furthermore, they were also successful in convincing foremen and supervisors of this fact in 1987 - an election year.

It should be remembered that in no way can these results for spatial considerations in the analysis of inflation forecasts be said to represent any trend at all. The null hypothesis that no difference in attitudes to inflation can be attributed to spatial variation cannot be rejected, although this might not

represent a defeat for the geographic thesis if inflation is perceived as a national rather than a local issue.

4.5.1.2 ATTITUDES TO UNEMPLOYMENT

Studies of the impact of unemployment upon electorates have revealed that only those sections of the population most affected or most threatened by the prospect of job loss, are likely to prioritise unemployment as an issue in an Election.(Alt 1979; Hibbs 1981) Thus as the industrial restructuring of Britain in the 1980s was spatially variable (see Pattie & Johnston 1990a), it might be reasonable to expect that respondents in areas most affected by economic displacement and industrial depression would tend to view industrial performance in less satisfactory terms than respondents from areas which have benefited from the economic reorganisation of the Thatcher period. In terms of direction, respondents from regions which suffered the most from the first recession of the 1980s, which were also the regions which were the slowest to recover during the economic upturn of the mid-late 1980s would be less satisfied with Britain's relative industrial performance than respondents living in areas which suffered least in the recession and were among the first to recover in the upturn. Levels of satisfaction would thus be greater in the South of England than in the North of England and the Celtic fringe, greater in buoyant areas than in inner-cities and depressed industrial regions. The exclusion of questions which charted recollections of industrial performance from the *British Social Attitudes* series results in the loss of a possible source of spatial variation from this analysis.

Forecasts of unemployment can also be gauged throughout the period 1983-1989 by the *British Social Attitudes* series. Tables 4.10 and 4.11 show that region and constituency type were more significant than they proved to be in the inflation forecast analyses, but still remained insignificant in one-half and two-thirds of all surveys respectively. In all analyses (except for 1985 where the F value for region outperformed that for class) even where spatial concerns were significant to the .05 level their impact in the analyses was considerably less than that of class, as shown by F values and Beta coefficients.

Where significant at the .05 level, regional variations were much as expected. In all analyses deviations from the mean revealed that Scots and Welsh and Northern respondents were most prone to express pessimism on the future levels of unemployment, while Southerners tended to be the group most likely to express optimism in unemployment forecasts (Table 4.14). Respondents in both the Midlands and Greater London fluctuated between relative optimism and pessimism during the 1980s economic upturn. In 1985 Greater Londoners were, along with Scots and Welsh respondents, the most likely of all respondents to be pessimistic about the future levels of unemployment in Britain. This pessimistic tendency had been diluted slightly by 1987 and by 1989 Greater Londoners stood just behind Southern respondents as the most optimistically prone sections of society. The attitudes of Midlanders towards unemployment forecasts underwent a less coherent change during the economic recovery. In 1985 Midlanders were less likely to express optimism than the national mean but this had altered to a quite dramatic degree of relative optimism in 1987 and no overall deviation from the national mean in

1989. The optimism of Midlanders in 1987 might of course have been crucial to the Conservative success in the General Election.

Table 4.14: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Unemployment Forecasts by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	*	*	-.12	*	-.08	-.11
North	*	*	-.03	*	-.05	-.03
Midlands	*	*	-.01	*	.06	.00
G London	*	*	-.08	*	-.06	.04
South	*	*	.11	*	.07	.06
CLASS						
Salariat	*	.23	.10	.17	.24	.18
RNM	*	.02	-.01	.01	-.03	.01
S-E	*	.14	.09	-.01	.11	.16
Foremen	*	-.09	.18	-.01	.05	-.07
W/C	*	-.12	-.07	-.08	-.11	-.12

Table 4.15: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Unemployment Forecasts By Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	*	*	*	*	-.07	-.03
Poor Cl	*	*	*	*	-.10	-.22
Innermetro	*	*	*	*	-.12	-.07
Wh-Collar	*	*	*	*	.08	.03
Buoy /Agri	*	*	*	*	.05	.05
CLASS						
Salariat	*	.23	.10	.17	.24	.18
RNM	*	.02	-.01	.01	-.03	.01
S-E	*	.15	.10	-.02	.10	.15
Foremen	*	-.09	.19	-.01	.07	-.07
W/C	*	-.12	-.07	-.08	-.10	-.12

In terms of constituency type (Table 4.15) respondents from high immigration, depressed industry intensive areas, from areas typified by poor council housing, and from inner metropolitan areas were the three groups who in 1987 and 1989 inclined to negative deviations from the mean. That is these groups tended - *ceteris paribus* - to be the most pessimistic sections of society about the future levels of unemployment. In both analyses which were statistically

significant at the .05 level, respondents from areas dominated by white collar occupations and from buoyant or agricultural areas exhibited positive deviations from the mean; that is they tended to be more optimistic about the future level of unemployment than the national average. Once again comparison with Table 4.1 reveals that statistically significant spatial variations were at their greatest when the population as a whole were at their least pessimistic. Thus the highest grand means occurred in 1987 (-.14) and 1989 (.10) the only surveys when both types of spatial variables were significant at the .05 level.

This finding makes intuitive sense; as the recovery strengthens, only those in stagnant regions or in threatened occupations are directly concerned about unemployment. Hence at the height of the Lawson boom between 1987 and 1989, geographic differences are at their most significant in explaining variation in attitudes towards unemployment. On the other hand, in the depths of recession, the gap in the optimism of respondents towards the prospect of unemployment may narrow, especially if the recession hits the hitherto protected sections of the economy and geographic areas of the country. Of course this was the dynamic of the new recession of the 1990s, and it might be expected that the geographic differences about attitudes towards unemployment might narrow significantly or disappear altogether.

Class deviations in both sets of analyses revealed that the Salariat were the most confident about the prospect of a reduction in the level of unemployment. Some way behind the Salariat in their optimism were the self-employed who even flirted with pessimism in 1986. The group of respondents in routine non

manual occupations behaved almost as a barometer class, rarely deviating from the national mean of optimism/pessimism. The major exception to this was their relative pessimism in 1987. The tendencies of foremen switched direction in alternate surveys during the period of economic recovery. It is interesting to note that one of the years of relative optimism about unemployment occurred in the Election year of 1987. The class analysis of 1983 was statistically insignificant at the .05 level and thus the trend noted earlier among those in a supervisory position to lurch towards Conservatism in Election years can only be alluded to. Working class respondents consistently exhibited an average score which deviated negatively from the national mean. The size of these deviations meant that the working class tended to be the most pessimistic about the chances of reducing unemployment in the following year.

Where the analyses for unemployment forecasts were statistically significant at the .05 level, they generally supported the thesis that those sections of society most prone to displacement by unemployment were the most prone to pessimism about the possibility of a reduction in its level. This meant the working class, Scots and Welsh respondents, Northern respondents, respondents from depressed areas, areas with high intensity poor council housing and inner metropolitan areas were more likely to express doubt that the level of unemployment over the next year would fall than the national average suggested should have been the case. On the other hand the Salariat and respondents from areas dominated by white collar occupations and from buoyant or agricultural areas were most likely to exhibit optimism in their assessment of the future levels of unemployment. The high incidence of insignificance in the regional and constituency type analyses of unemployment

forecasts could reflect the temporal dimension. Regional differences in unemployment forecasts are likely to fluctuate if the public take their cues from the local context which itself fluctuated during this period.

An important trend has begun to emerge. Geography appears to have been at its most important when the population as a whole was at its most optimistic. The height of the Lawson boom was also the height of the geographic variation in unemployment forecasts; when the chances of an individual securing a job were very different in different parts of the country. The analysis for both inflation and unemployment forecasts have underlined this variable impact of spatial variables.

4.5.1.3 ATTITUDES TO INDUSTRIAL PERFORMANCE

Throughout the *British Social Attitudes* series respondents have been invited to forecast the fortunes of British industry over the coming year. They were not, however also invited to express their perceptions of the past year industrial performance and this remains a matter for regret in the search for spatial variation.

Regional differences in the public perception of the likely future performance of British industry were statistically significant at the .05 level in every year of the *British Social Attitudes* series (Tables 4.10 and 4.11). Constituency type was significant at the same level in each year except 1984. In both sets of analysis (region and class and constituency type and class) class differences failed to achieve significance at the .05 level in 1989. Indeed for the first time in this study, F values and Beta coefficients for regional and constituency type

differences are approximate to those for class differences and even outperform them at the end of the 1980s. Thus the prognosis for testing the null hypothesis (that there were no spatial differences in forecasts of the fortunes of British industry) was better than so far witnessed in the study of sociotropic attitudes.

Table 4.16: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Industry Forecasts By Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	-.17	-.07	-.07	-.07	-.08	-.02
North	-.04	-.07	-.07	-.04	-.11	-.01
Midlands	.05	.10	.05	.05	.07	.09
G London	.07	.03	-.11	.00	.01	-.06
South	.06	.03	.10	.04	.09	-.01
CLASS						
Salariat	.15	.22	.22	.09	.18	*
RNM	-.03	.05	-.01	.00	-.05	*
S-E	.23	.08	.08	.04	.16	*
Foremen	.05	-.08	-.02	.12	.11	*
W/C	-.09	-.14	-.09	-.06	-.07	*

Table 4.17: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Industry Forecasts By Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	-.02	*	-.08	-.03	-.08	-.01
Poor Cl	-.20	*	-.15	-.15	-.15	-.12
Innermetro	.14	*	.02	-.06	-.13	-.22
Wh-Collar	.04	*	.07	.01	.09	.01
Buoy /Agri	.05	*	.04	.06	.06	.05
CLASS						
Salariat	.15	.22	.19	.09	.18	*
RNM	-.03	.05	-.01	.00	-.05	*
S-E	.21	.07	.08	.03	.15	*
Foremen	.06	-.09	-.01	.12	.12	*
W/C	-.08	-.14	-.08	-.06	-.07	*

Deviations from the national mean were consistently negative for respondents from Scotland and Wales and from the North of England (Table 4.16). This meant that respondents from those area were less likely to express confidence in the ability of British industry to improve over the next year than the national

mean. Midlanders were among the most consistently optimistic respondents in terms of their forecasts for the fortunes of British industry. Southerners also exhibited a marked tendency to express confidence in the British industrial sector when compared to the national mean, the only exception being in 1989 when a very slight negative deviation from the national mean occurred. Greater Londoners exhibited a fluctuating trend over the period. In 1983 and 1984 their average score deviated positively from the mean; that is Greater Londoners inclined towards relative optimism in their forecasts for British industry. But in 1985 Greater Londoners were the most relatively pessimistic of all groups in their forecasts of British industrial performance. This relative pessimism lasted only one year as Greater Londoners reverted to the grand mean score in 1986. Nevertheless the circumstances had transformed again by 1989 when Greater Londoners were once again the most pessimistic in their views of Britain's industrial performance. This fluctuating trend of optimism and pessimism among respondents from Greater London may have contained a great deal of white noise combining two or more effects to show a confused picture. Once Greater Londoners are separated into inner-city respondents and other groups by the constituency type schema the picture of optimism/pessimism in forecasts of Britain's industrial performance became clearer.

Where constituency type was statistically significant at the .05 level (every year of the *British Social Attitudes* series except 1984) two solid bases of relative pessimism emerged (Table 4.17). Respondents from areas typified by immigration or depressed industry, and from areas with a high proportion of council housing were consistently pessimistic in their forecasts for British industry. In all cases the relative pessimism of the latter group outstripped that

of the former. There also existed two blocs of relative optimism for the prospects of British industry in respondents residing in areas dominated by white collar occupations and in buoyant or agricultural areas. The most intriguing development shown up by the analysis of constituency type is the changing pattern of the industrial forecasts of respondents living in inner metropolitan areas. This group was the most prone of all groups to express optimism in 1983 but this optimism was steadily eroded over the rest of the decade. By 1985 the hitherto optimism of the inner metropolitan group had diminished when compared with the national mean and since 1986 it increasingly grew more pessimistic in relative terms, becoming the most pessimistic of all groups in 1989. It is likely that this shift in attitudes among the relatively small number of respondents that comprise the inner metropolitan group had been concealed by the inclusion of high status areas in the Greater London component in the analysis of regional differences above.

As mentioned earlier, class was not statistically significant at the .05 level in analyses of both regional differences and constituency type differences in 1989. Prior to then, however, the Salariat and the self-employed were identified as solid blocs of relative optimism in industrial forecasts. Foremen were relatively optimistic in 1983, 1986 and 1987 but relatively pessimistic in 1984 and 1985. The routine non manual class fluctuated between optimism and pessimism in alternate surveys, while the working class were consistently relatively pessimistic about the future of British industrial performance.

Clearly the null hypothesis here that there were no spatial differences at work in the construction of evaluations of industrial performance can be refuted with

some confidence. Over a period of time which spans the economic upturn of the mid-1980s and the beginning of the second recession of the Thatcher governments in the late 1980s clear spatial differences in the forecasting of British industrial performance were apparent. Not only did blocs of optimism (white collar areas, buoyant areas, the Midlands and the South) and relative pessimism (poor council housing areas, depressed industrial regions, Scotland and Wales, and the North of England) emerge but a transforming group (inner metropolitan respondents) where pessimism intensified over the period of economic recovery in the 1980s has clearly been identified

4.5.1.4 ATTITUDES TO INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY

In the last three *British Social Attitudes* surveys respondents were asked for their perceptions of the level of industrial efficiency in Britain compared to the level of efficiency five years previously and compared to the predicted level of efficiency five years in the future.

Looking at recollections of efficiency over the past five years, Tables 4.10 and 4.11 showed that both types of spatial differences achieved statistical significance at the .05 level in the last two surveys of the *British Social Attitudes* (that is 1987 and 1989). Class differences were significant at the .05 level in all three *British Social Attitudes* surveys which posed the question. Moreover the F values and Beta coefficients revealed that class typically outperformed both concepts of spatial variation.

Table 4.18: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Recollections of Efficiency Over the Last Five Years by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale				*	-.03	-.01
North				*	-.04	.02
Midlands				*	.03	.04
G London				*	-.10	.03
South				*	.07	-.04
CLASS						
Salariat				.14	.11	.08
RNM				-.02	-.01	-.01
S-E				-.03	.09	.08
Foremen				-.01	-.07	-.07
W/C				-.04	-.05	-.05

Scots and Welsh respondents were inclined to be relatively dissatisfied with the current level of efficiency in British industry compared to five years ago, while respondents from the Midlands were inclined to be relatively satisfied by the same comparison (Table 4.18). All other regional differences had been subject to a change in relative direction of satisfaction/dissatisfaction which made for a rather confusing picture of evaluations of current efficiency standards compared with five years ago. However, the specificity of the question might have precipitated wild fluctuations in responses. It is not particularly likely that information about industrial efficiency is internalised at the local level rather than the national level - if at all. Hence the issue is hard to divorce from the general concept of industrial performance since respondents might not hold well formed opinions about the state of local industrial efficiency. As a result, the responses of the public might be inconsistent and be volatile from year to year.

Table 4.19: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Recollections of Efficiency Over the Last Five Years by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep				*	-.02	-.01
Poor Cl				*	-.03	-.06
Innermetro				*	-.13	.07
Wh-Collar				*	.02	-.03
Buoy /Agri				*	.03	.03
CLASS						
Salariat				.14	.11	.07
RNM				-.02	-.01	-.01
S-E				-.04	.09	.06
Foremen				-.01	-.06	-.07
W/C				-.04	-.05	-.04

The variations in Table 4.19 related to constituency type reveal that the inner metropolitan group which was the most dissatisfied of all groups in 1986 became the most satisfied in 1989. Elsewhere dissatisfied sections of the population according to constituency type reside in council house intensive or depressed areas.

In terms of class, the Salariat and, despite their relative dissatisfaction in 1986, the self-employed were again the cornerstones of relative satisfaction with the level of industrial efficiency compared to five years ago - and implicitly the key to support for the Conservative Government. Meanwhile, respondents from routine non manual, supervisory and working class occupations inclined towards relative dissatisfaction with the same comparison between efficiency levels now and five years ago.

Respondents were also asked to assess the current level of efficiency in British industry and compare this with the level of efficiency they expected to be

prevalent in five years time. Scrutiny of this variable revealed very little about spatial variation in the construction of these forecasts.

Regional differences were statistically significant at the .05 level twice in the three *British Social Attitudes* surveys that this question was asked, while constituency type differences achieved significance only once. Midlanders were the most prone to express optimism in their forecasts of efficiency (Table 4.20). All other groups changed between pessimism and optimism in the two years that such evaluations entered statistical significance of the .05 level. Of course the most obvious connotation of 'industrial efficiency' was likely to concern the manufacturing sector - which was concentrated in the Celtic fringe, North and the Midlands. Moreover during the economic recovery of the 1980s the Midlands was the region where manufacturing renewal would be the most apparent - the South having precious little manufacturing industry - and the North did not really benefit from industrial regeneration. This might explain the optimism of Midlanders above all other regions on the question of industrial effiency. Furthermore it would be a helpful electoral boost to the Conservatives in the Election year of 1987.

In 1989 poor council areas and white collar areas were the most pessimistic and inner metropolitan areas the most optimistic of all constituency types (Table 4.21). Class differences show that once again the Salariat and the self-employed represented the most optimistic sections of society in their evaluations of modern efficiency compared to efficiency in five years time, the efficiency forecasts of respondents from routine non manual occupations

deviated little from the national mean, while foremen and working class respondents formed a bloc of relative pessimism.

Table 4.20: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Forecasts of Efficiency over the Next Five Years by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale				*	-.05	-.01
North				*	-.02	.01
Midlands				*	.06	.04
G London				*	-.03	.03
South				*	.02	-.04
CLASS						
Salariat				.08	.07	.09
RNM				-.01	.00	-.01
S-E				.01	.01	.08
Foremen				-.04	-.05	-.09
W/C				-.02	-.03	-.04

Table 4.21: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Forecasts of Efficiency over the next Five Years by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep				*	*	-.02
Poor Cl				*	*	-.04
Innermetro				*	*	.06
Wh-Collar				*	*	-.03
Buoy /Agri				*	*	.03
CLASS						
Salariat				.08	.07	.08
RNM				-.01	.00	-.01
S-E				.00	.00	.06
Foremen				-.04	-.05	-.09
W/C				-.02	-.03	-.04

4.5.1.5 ATTITUDES TO POVERTY

Public perceptions of poverty were charted in the 1986 and 1989 *British Social Attitudes* surveys. This involved questions concerning the extent of poverty compared to its extent ten years ago and to its forecast extent ten years in the future.

As already shown, constituency type differences achieved statistical significance at the .05 level in both 1986 and 1989 in explaining attitudes to changes in the extent of poverty compared to a decade ago, while regional differences failed to match this level of significance in 1986 (Tables 4.10 and 4.11). Class remained significant at the .05 level in both analyses in both years.

Respondents from Scotland and Wales were the 'most dissatisfied' with the changes in the extent of poverty over the previous ten years in 1989, while respondents from the North and from Greater London were relatively satisfied (Table 4.22). Similarly respondents from depressed areas, from areas of high levels of council housing, and from inner metropolitan areas were likely to express dissatisfaction with the changes in poverty levels over the last decade (Table 4.23). Respondents from white collar and buoyant areas were inclined to be relatively satisfied with the same comparison. The class distinctions in the analyses of perceptions of changes in the level of poverty over the past decade were statistically significant at the .05 level in all cases. Moreover they revealed a core of satisfaction among the Salariat and dissatisfaction among working class and supervisory respondents. Interestingly the self-employed, who usually provided the government with a strong basis of support, failed to deliver relative satisfaction with changes in the level of poverty over the past decade in 1986, but became the strongest of all groups expressing satisfaction in 1989.

Table 4.22: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Perceptions of Changes in the Level of Poverty over the Past Ten Years by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale				*		-.09
North				*		.03
Midlands				*		-.01
G London				*		.03
South				*		.01
CLASS						
Salariat				.07		.06
RNM				.01		.02
S-E				-.04		.12
Foremen				-.07		-.10
W/C				-.04		-.06

Table 4.23: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Perceptions of Changes in the Level of Poverty over the Past Ten Years by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep				-.04		-.02
Poor Cl				-.06		-.11
Innermetro				-.06		-.03
Wh-Collar				.04		.04
Buoy /Agri				.02		.02
CLASS						
Salariat				.07		.05
RNM				.01		.02
S-E				-.05		.11
Foremen				-.06		-.10
W/C				-.04		-.06

In the same years that respondents were asked to recollect their evaluations of past poverty levels they were also invited to forecast the amount of change in the levels of poverty that could be expected over the next ten years.

In 1986 regional and constituency differences failed to achieve statistical significance at the .05 level in the explanation of variation in the forecasting of levels of poverty over the next decade. However, in 1989 both spatial variables achieved statistical significance with reasonable explanatory force and sizeable

deviations between sub-groups (Tables 4.10 and 4.11). Class differences were significant when combined with either region or constituency type and proved to be the most robust explanatory variable in all analyses.

By 1989 the new recession began to bite in the buoyant sections of the economy. It was also the only year in which spatial differences held independent from class were significant in explaining variation in the forecasts of poverty over the next decade. Respondents from Scotland and Wales were the most inclined to express pessimism in their forecasts. Respondents from the Midlands and the South deviated little from the grand mean but respondents from the North and from Greater London were relatively optimistic about the prospects for the alleviation of poverty (Table 4.24). Respondents from areas with high rates of council housing were by far the most prone of all constituency type groups to express pessimism in their evaluations of poverty over the next ten years (Table 4.25). Meanwhile respondents from areas dominated by white collar occupations were relatively prone to optimism by the same calculation. Class differences within poverty forecasts showed yet again that the Salariat and the self-employed were firmly optimistic while foremen and working class respondents were relatively pessimistic about the prospects for the easing of poverty.

Table 4.24: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Forecast of Poverty Levels over the Next Ten Years by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale				*		-.09
North				*		.03
Midlands				*		.00
G London				*		.04
South				*		.01
CLASS						
Salariat				.08		.07
RNM				-.01		.01
S-E				.03		.12
Foremen				-.05		-.02
W/C				-.03		-.07

Table 4.25: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Forecasts of Poverty Levels over the Next Ten Years by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep				*		.00
Poor Cl				*		-.14
Innermetro				*		-.01
Wh-Collar				*		.03
Buoy /Agri				*		.02
CLASS						
Salariat				.08		.06
RNM				-.01		.01
S-E				.03		.11
Foremen				-.05		-.03
W/C				-.03		-.06

In conclusion to the measurement of sociotropic evaluations, clear class differences have been reported from most analyses with the Salariat and the self-employed seeming particularly prone to report either satisfaction with current positions or optimism about the future. Both these positions are consistent with disproportionate Conservative support during this period, which has been reported above. The working class, conversely, were inclined to express dissatisfaction and pessimism which would be consistent with the anti-government stance reported by these respondents earlier.

As far as spatial differences were concerned, regional disaggregations showed that respondents from the North and from Scotland and Wales were typically dissatisfied and pessimistic in their sociotropic evaluations while Southerners, and often Midlanders, leaned towards satisfaction and optimism in their sociotropic evaluations. Again this is quite consistent with the levels of partisan support by regional differences reported earlier.

Turning to consistency type disaggregations, the most interesting development here involved respondents from inner metropolitan areas. Respondents from inner metropolitan areas were subject to an attitudinal movement away from optimism and satisfaction and towards pessimism and dissatisfaction. The same period witnessed a movement away from relative Conservative identification in 1983 towards hostility to Conservatism in 1989 among those respondents. Solid blocs of pessimism and dissatisfaction were often identified among respondents from areas dominated by council housing and of optimism/satisfaction among respondent from high status white collar and buoyant areas. Again this was mirrored by trends in partisan identification as the former group were hostile to Conservatism and the latter group its strongest supporters.

4.5.2 EGOCENTRIC EVALUATIONS

As mentioned above the *British Social Attitudes* survey allows the measurement of personal and well as societal values, the charting of trends in egocentric attitudes as well as sociotropic values. Egocentrism is a well defined strand of mainstream psephological insight having its roots in the Downsian analysis of

the 1950s (Downs 1957). Although a central theme of this study is that sociotropic values also effect partisanship it should nevertheless be remembered that egocentric values are still valid as a cue to respondents in this structuring process. It is to egocentric values to which attention must now turn.

Little analysis could be achieved for egocentric values from the *British Social Attitudes* survey series. The most explicitly personal questions posed concerned forecasts of personal wage levels and the forecasting and recollection of changes in family income levels.

4.5.2.1 ATTITUDES TO FAMILY INCOME LEVELS

Respondents were asked to record their degree of satisfaction with family income levels in every *British Social Attitudes* survey from 1984 on. In the evaluation of changes in family income over the past year, regional differences and constituency type differences when combined with class disaggregations were statistically significant at the .05 level in each year except 1983 and 1989 (see Tables 4.26 and 4.27) although class consistently proved to be the most important explanatory variable of the two in each set of analysis.

Table 4.26: Tests for Geographic Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Egocentrism

	FAMYLY		FAMYFC		WAGEFC	
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta
REGION						
1983					3.8	10
1984	*	*	3.0	10	*	*
1985	6.0	12	8.1	14	5.2	11
1986	6.6	10	3.4	7	*	*
1987	7.6	10	5.0	8	*	*
1989	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASS						
1983					*	*
1984	6.5	14	3.7	11	2.9	9
1985	15.6	19	13.9	18	5.2	11
1986	11.0	14	13.0	15	21.3	17
1987	18.2	16	19.7	17	15.3	15
1989	15.8	22	16.7	22	14.4	14

Table 4.27: Tests for Geographic Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Egocentrism

	FAMYLY		FAMYFC		WAGEFC	
	f	Beta	f	Beta	f	Beta
C TYPE						
1983					*	*
1984	*	*	3.4	10	*	*
1985	4.5	10	4.5	11	4.7	11
1986	6.6	10	2.9	7	*	*
1987	6.0	9	3.9	8	*	*
1989	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASS						
1983					2.5	9
1984	6.0	14	3.3	10	2.6	9
1985	12.9	18	11.3	17	4.4	10
1986	8.2	12	12.4	14	20.7	17
1987	17.7	16	19.1	17	15.3	15
1989	16.2	22	17.3	23	13.6	14

When the average deviations from the grand mean were scrutinised (see Table 4.28), for the degree of satisfaction with the changes in family income levels over the past year, no clear pattern emerged. Indeed in the last three surveys where regional disaggregations achieved statistical significance at the .05 level - 1985, 1986 and 1987 - the relative direction of satisfaction or dissatisfaction

changed for each group of respondents at least once, and in the case of respondents from Scotland and Wales, the North and the South, changed twice. The same analysis by constituency type disaggregations (Table 4.29) revealed that only respondents from areas typified by poor council housing were consistent in their relative dissatisfaction with their changes in family income over the past year. Both analyses of social class differences revealed a similar lack of consistency in the relative direction of satisfaction or dissatisfaction throughout the series. For instance the Salariat, the self-employed and foremen all exhibited massive fluctuations from the grand mean in both directions throughout the series. The volatility of these deviations made interpretation of these results very difficult indeed, but was in itself very interesting. The volatility of egocentric economic evaluations ought to be placed on the agenda for future research.

Table 4.28: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Family Income Recollections by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale		*	-.05	.03	-.04	*
North		*	-.09	.06	-.08	*
Midlands		*	.03	.00	-.03	*
G London		*	-.04	-.10	.08	*
South		*	.09	-.04	.08	*
CLASS						
Salariat		-.08	.23	-.11	.17	.31
RNM		-.03	.00	-.02	.03	-.02
S-E		-.19	.13	-.06	.08	.22
Foremen		.03	.01	.07	.01	-.19
W/C		.08	-.12	.07	-.13	-.11

A similar operation for the forecasting of changes in family income levels over the next year led to very similar conclusions. Tables 4.26 and 4.27 illustrate that regional and constituency type disaggregations when allied to class failed to achieve statistical significance at the .05 level in 1989. Throughout the

series, where both independent variables were statistically significant at the .05 level, class outstripped geography in explanatory force.

Table 4.29: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Family Income Recollections by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep		*	-.08	.08	-.09	*
Poor Cl		*	-.06	-.02	-.03	*
Innermetro		*	-.13	-.05	.06	*
Wh-Collar		*	.09	-.05	.06	*
Buoy /Agri		*	.03	-.03	.04	*
CLASS						
Salariat		-.08	.22	-.10	.17	.31
RNM		-.03	.00	-.02	.03	-.02
S-E		-.19	.13	-.05	.07	.22
Foremen		.03	.01	.06	.01	-.19
W/C		.08	-.11	.07	-.13	-.11

A glance at the average deviations from the grand mean shown by Tables 4.30 and 4.31 reveals that once again every group of respondents disaggregated by region and constituency type changed relative direction at least once in the series perhaps reflecting a change in the dynamics of the economy. Once again respondents in Scotland and Wales, the North, and the South were very volatile fluctuating between relative optimism and pessimism three times in the four surveys shown to be significant. Every group in the constituency type variable changed direction between relative optimism and pessimism three times, showing a high degree of volatility in the forecasting of changes in levels of family income over the next year. The class pattern interpreted from both analyses repeated the procedure for family income forecasts with the Salariat, the self-employed and foremen being prone to large swings in relative optimism and pessimism.

Table 4.30: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Family Income Forecasts by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale		.05	-.11	.00	-.08	*
North		.04	-.10	.04	-.04	*
Midlands		.03	.05	.03	-.01	*
G London		-.02	.03	-.08	.09	*
South		-.07	.09	-.02	.04	*
CLASS						
Salariat		-.06	.23	-.11	.20	.34
RNM		-.03	-.03	-.02	.00	-.06
S-E		-.14	.17	-.10	.08	.18
Foremen		.05	-.06	.19	-.12	-.24
W/C		.06	-.09	.06	-.11	-.08

Table 4.31: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Family Income Forecasts by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep		.04	-.09	.05	-.06	*
Poor Cl		.10	-.10	.02	-.02	*
Innermetro		-.03	.03	-.08	.10	*
Wh-Collar		-.04	.07	-.02	.06	*
Buoy /Agri		-.04	.04	-.02	.02	*
CLASS						
Salariat		-.05	.21	-.11	.21	.35
RNM		-.03	-.03	-.02	.00	-.06
S-E		-.14	.16	-.09	.07	.19
Foremen		.06	-.07	.19	-.12	-.23
W/C		.05	-.08	.06	-.10	-.08

No clear pattern emerged from these analysis although as implied earlier it may be the case that this *British Social Attitudes* question was contaminated by its linkage to evaluations of the cost of living. The massive fluctuations in the grand means of these variables, as witnessed in Table 4.1, might be taken to mean that measurement of attitudes to family income levels amounted to little more than the recording of 'white noise'; on the other hand it might represent the spread of waves of recovery through the 1980s, and in different places at different times.

4.5.2.2 ATTITUDES TO PERSONAL WAGE LEVELS

A related question posed by the *British Social Attitudes* required respondents to gauge how well they would fare over the next year by comparing their forecasts of personal wage levels to their forecasts for the cost of living. Once more having noted a general tendency for all respondents to exhibit pessimism about the rising costs and inflation, and the inappropriateness of the local context as a barometer for attitudes to inflation, a lack of clear trends disaggregated by space or class should not have been surprising.

Although class began to feature as an explanatory variable - as the economic upturn slowed down at the end of the decade - region and constituency type disaggregations flirted with statistical significance only twice and once respectively, in the six year series (Tables 4.26 and 4.27). Both types of geography briefly performed as well as class in 1985, and class disaggregations failed to be significant in 1983.

Respondents in Scotland and Wales and the North of England were consistent in expressing relative pessimism in their forecasts of wage expectations on the two occasions that regional disaggregations ventured into statistical significance at the .05 level (Table 4.32). Respondents in Greater London and the Midlands were relatively optimistic in both years.

Table 4.32: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Wage Forecasts by Region & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
REGION						
Scot/Wale	-.02	*	-.03	*	*	*
North	-.05	*	-.08	*	*	*
Midlands	.06	*	.03	*	*	*
G London	.10	*	.05	*	*	*
South	-.01	*	.05	*	*	*
CLASS						
Salariat	*	.08	.11	.19	.14	.13
RNM	*	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.02	-.01
S-E	*	.08	.11	.06	.00	.12
Foremen	*	.01	.01	-.01	.04	-.09
W/C	*	-.03	-.03	.07	-.05	-.07

Table 4 33: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Wage Forecasts by Constituency Type & Class

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989
C TYPE						
Imm/Dep	*	*	-.04	*	*	*
Poor Cl	*	*	.00	*	*	*
Innermetro	*	*	.04	*	*	*
Wh-Collar	*	*	.12	*	*	*
Buoy /Agri	*	*	-.02	*	*	*
CLASS						
Salariat	.05	.08	.10	.19	.14	.13
RNM	-.01	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.02	-.01
S-E	.06	.08	.11	.06	.00	.11
Foremen	.05	.01	.00	-.21	.05	-.09
W/C	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.07	-.06	-.06

The picture is less solid in terms of constituency type (Table 4.33) where respondents from depressed areas were most pessimistic about their prospects of wage increases keeping up with inflation in 1985 the only year where the variable proved significant. Respondents from inner metropolitan and white collar areas were relatively optimistic in 1985. The inclusion of inner metropolitan respondents here is not surprising since their relative optimism in 1983 was much weaker than that of respondents from white-collar areas and at this time their partisanship was relatively pro-Conservative. The change in inner metropolitan sympathies noted elsewhere from satisfaction to

dissatisfaction, from optimism to pessimism and from pro-Conservatism to anti-Conservatism in this report did not impinge upon the analysis of wage forecasts due to the failure of constituency type to enter statistical significance after the transformation had occurred.

Class deviations reveal that while the Salariat and the self-employed were optimistic about their wage prospects, routine non-manual workers and the working class were always pessimistic in their evaluation of wage forecasts versus inflation forecasts. Foremen and supervisory workers were prone to fluctuate in their assessments of wage forecasts.

To conclude this section on egocentric evaluations it must be said that no clear relationship was found between egocentric evaluations and region, constituency type, or even class. This may have been caused by the imperfect trade off between evaluations of the cost of living and personal economic well being, and the inappropriate nature of the local context in which matters related to inflation are judged.

4.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that a two stage process was under examination. The basis for this thesis was that spatial variation had occurred in the economic attitudes of the public and that this had a causal role in the spatial variation in patterns of electoral behaviour within mainland Britain.

It should be clear after reading this chapter that the existence of spatial variation in partisanship has been illustrated by the use of the *British Social Attitudes* series. The null hypothesis that no such variation exists has been firmly rejected. Indeed the extent of this variation seemed to intensify over the period of economic recovery during the 1980s.

As the economic restructuring of the 1980s gained momentum, the hostility towards the Conservative Government exhibited in Scotland and Wales, the North and in depressed areas stiffened. Meanwhile the resolve of the Conservative heartlands of the South and in the prosperous and service sector areas strengthened. At the same time the dimensions of Labour identification mirrored Conservative identification; relatively strong in the Celtic fringe, the North and in depressed areas with high proportions of council housing; weaker in areas typified by white-collar employment and the South; strongest among the working class electorate, weakest among the Salariat and the self-employed. While the two main parties could be characterised as class and geographically based, the third party Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance gained its support across all social strata and all geographic criteria.

However a much less clear picture emerged from the second stage of analysis, the search for the original and causal spatial variation in economic attitudes although encouraging signs were present in the analysis of sociotropic evaluations.

There were not good grounds for believing that attitudes to inflation would be spatially variable - and indeed no such variation was identified through the

1983-9 period of economic recovery. However, where the relevance of the local context was important to the internalisation of economic issues (such as perceptions of unemployment and industry) significant variations were identifiable according to social class and spatial location. In summary, the Salariat and the self-employed, people from the South and from white-collar areas were the most sanguine of all respondents about the prospects for falling unemployment rates and the improvement of British industry. The working class, the Scots and Welsh, Northerners and those from areas with a high proportion of local authority housing were the most pessimistic of all sections of society by the same criteria. There were signs that foremen and supervisors and to a lesser extent Londoners and Midlanders were less pessimistic (and thus less hostile to the Government) in General Election years than in the inter-election periods of the 1980s. The ability to manufacture this type of electoral support is a vital theme of this thesis. As shall be demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, the tergiversating Tories of the 1980s had their parallel in the subsequent analysis of the 1990s.

There was a less clear picture from the analysis of egocentric economic evaluations during the 1980s - such as income and personal wage forecasts and recollections. The link between egocentric evaluations and perceptions of inflation might have been the root cause here. After all if inflation is a national phenomenon, variations in perceptions related to it could not be expected - notwithstanding the almost universal tendency to express pessimism about the cost of living. The trendless fluctuation in these variables might represent the different 'waves' of economic recovery and overheating in the 1983-9 period. A more dynamic approach to the 1990s recession could reveal a more precise

interpretation of how geography impacted upon egocentric economic evaluations.

Another feature of this section of the thesis concerns the disproportionate impact of Geography according to the state of the country as a whole. Geographic variation was often at its most marked when the population as a whole was at its most optimistic. In other words, geographic variation emerged as an expression of the geographic variability of economic recovery. The Lawson boom may have been particularly important here, producing real differences in the wealth of the nation and also in the perceptions of the public - especially about inflation and unemployment prospects.

A key difference in the way in which the public evaluates egocentric and sociotropic issues was suggested in this chapter. Attitudes to sociotropic issues were more spatially varied than egocentric issues. That is individuals' interpretations of society were more likely to be influenced by the context in which they lived than their judgements of personal matters. Furthermore the spatial variation in sociotropic issues mirrored the spatial variation in party identification. Labour areas were most pessimistic and dissatisfied areas of the country about unemployment, of poverty, and industrial efficiency. On the other hand, 'Conservative' areas were the most prone to exhibit optimism about these issues. An obvious conclusion might be that, once class is held constant, people are much more likely to reflect local and personal conditions in their attitudes and support for the Government than they are to reflect personal circumstances.

The remaining results chapters attempt to study a different time period, as the Lawson boom caved in and a new recession took hold - a recession which hit the sunrise industries and the Conservative hearltands rather than the industrial North and the manufacturing base of Britain from which Labour usually recruited.

Chapter 5: The New Recession of the 1990s and the 'Feel Good Factor'

The previous two chapters focused on the economic recovery of the 1980s. The task of the remaining results chapters is to attempt to gauge the relationship between geography, class, economic attitudes and partisanship during a period of economic recession - the early 1990s.

In the context of this thesis, the 'new' recession of the 1990s is particularly important since its impact was felt hardest in the geographic regions which constituted the heartlands of Conservative support during the heyday of Thatcherism; whereas the Labour heartlands of electoral support - which had never fully recovered from the manufacturing recession of the early 1980s - were relatively unaffected by the new economic downturn. By implication then, it might be reasonable to expect the North-South divide in partisanship and to a lesser extent in economic attitudes to have narrowed during the early 1990s - as the new recession 'evened out' the existing regional inequality in prosperity by pegging back the areas that had benefited most from the Lawson boom. There is evidence from the 1992 General Election that while the North-South divide had indeed narrowed, it also remained a significant influence on voting behaviour (see Pattie, Johnston & Fieldhouse 1993; Pattie, Johnston & Fieldhouse 1994). One of the major challenges for this thesis is to explain why the Southern heartlands of Conservative support for the most part remained Conservative during the run up to the 1992 General Election despite economic adversity.

This chapter looks at the 1990-2 period as a whole. The tables refer to the pooled *NOP/Newsnight* data which ran form January 1990 until February 1992 unless specifically broken down by month. Some analyses are specific to a particular month when a unique question was asked; indications of these are given in the text. Despite the fact that this chapter concentrates on the 1990-2 period as a whole, significant changes over time are discovered (this is especially true of the run-up to the 1992 Election). A more challenging set of analyses of changes over time will form the basis of the final results chapter.

5.1 THE HYPOTHESES UNDER SCRUTINY

The next stage of this analysis requires scrutiny of a new political environment - the recession of the early 1990s rather than the recovery of the 1980s. This is likely to affect the expected relationships between explanatory and dependent variables, and will particularly affect the expected relationship between geography and economic attitudes.

5.1.1 CLASS

Due to the different methods of data collection used in the survey and opinion poll data, the class schema used for the 1990s differs from the schema used for the 1980s recovery period (see below). Nevertheless the expected relationship will remain unaltered; economic attitudes will depend upon social class in the orthodox manner. Those sections of the electorate from the higher echelons of society will be more satisfied with their economic circumstances and more optimistic about their personal economic futures than those sections of the

electorate from the lower echelons of society. In other words Class AB will be more satisfied and more optimistic than Class DE - and of course ultimately more prone to support the Conservative Government. By their very nature, recessions hit the working class harder than the middle class, and when they hit the middle class they do so especially hard in some regions. The new economic reality of the 1990s caused considerable discomfort for many members of the higher social classes but the impact of the new recession did not unduly alter this relationship between class and economic attitudes since the incidence of the recession was largely geographic. Hitting sectors of the economy which were geographically concentrated, its effects could be picked up by changes in the spatial relationship between geography and attitudes rather than through differences in economic attitudes according to social class.

5.1.2 GEOGRAPHY: THE RECOVERY AND NEW RECESSION MODELS

There are then two competing models of geographic variation in economic attitudes (and ultimately in voting behaviour) during the 1990s. The first follows the pattern of variation set during the economic recovery of the 1980s, the growing North-South and urban-rural divide familiar from accounts of Thatcherism and from the earlier analysis of the 1983-1989 period. However, the 1990s brought with them an entirely different economic climate, as the service sector overheated and the Southern heartlands of Conservative support were damaged disproportionately by the new recession.

This 'Recovery Model' hypothesises that the gap between North and South, and between depressed and buoyant areas would continue to be relevant in the 1990s. Moreover the pattern of these cleavages would give cause to think that they would bound to increase overtime. Hence not only would these cleavages remain important, but their importance would inevitably increase over time.

On the other hand, the 'New Recession Model' hypothesises that although the general distinctions between North and South and between industrial depression and economic buoyancy might still play a role in explaining differences in economic attitudes: There would inevitably be a narrowing of the gaps between the traditional cleavages of Thatcherism because the heartlands of Conservative support were in the vanguard of the new recession. The new recession which hit the South and the service sector for the first time in the 1990s would inevitably account for a reduction in the level of satisfaction and optimism of respondents from these areas during this time.

As other chapters have shown, the *British Election Study* data for the three General Elections of the post oil shock era support the central thesis of the reward punishment axiom of traditional psephology; voters reward Governments that deliver and if their own personal standards are not improved by the Government they are likely to 'throw the rascals out' (Norpoth 1993). The new economic reality of the early 1990s ought to have had a different electoral impact to that of the 1970s and 1980s. The sections of society which had benefited most from the Thatcherite era and which formed the basis of

Thatcherism's electoral support, might have started to turn against the Conservative Party due to the increased incidence of economic hardship if the Government were held responsible for economic austerity.

5.2 ANALYSING ATTITUDES TO THE ECONOMY IN THE 1990S RECESSION

Previous chapters have explored the relationship between economic attitudes and voting behaviour in the boom period of Thatcherism during 1983-1989; the next step is to measure the relationship between economic attitudes and electoral support in the recession of the early 1990s. The use of the *British Election Study* data for prospective economic attitudes however, proved unreliable since the timing of the *British Election Study* questionnaire appeared to affect the responses of both Government and opposition supporters. Moreover data which looked at the inter-election changes in public opinion would provide a valuable asset to the study of the 1990s recession. To this end the *NOP/Newsnight* series of opinion polls which ran from January 1990 to February 1992 was obtained.

With the *NOP/Newsnight* data it was possible to reconstruct the relationship between economic attitudes and reported vote intention for the run up to the 1992 General Election, substituting recollections with personal economic expectations.

The *NOP/Newsnight* series of opinion polls ran from January 1990 until February 1992. Thus it coincided with three crucial developments in the British

economic and political landscape; the fall of the longest serving Prime Minister in modern political history, the deepest recession since the war, and the longest of 'long campaigns' leading up to the April 1992 General Election. It remains an invaluable source of data for assessing the impact of economic attitudes upon partisanship and of spatial variation in those economic attitudes during the early 1990s.

5.2.1 EGOCENTRIC VALUES

Since the academic earthquake caused by the publication of the original Sanders *et al* model (1987), much emphasis has been placed on the importance of the electorate's personal economic expectations in guiding electoral behaviour. From July 1990 until February 1992 inclusive the same personal economic expectations question was asked by the *NOP/Newsnight* series of opinion polls.

Over the next 12 months do you think the financial position of your household will get...

- *A lot better*
- *A little better*
- *Stay the Same*
- *A little worse*
- *A lot worse*

Responses to this question are given the acronym HHEGO here (derived from the egocentric prediction of the position of the Household). Usually responses were recoded into three simple categories 'better' 'same' or 'worse' - to represent personal economic optimists, neutrals and personal economic pessimists.

Occasionally respondents were also asked for their egocentric approval of the Government's economic policies through the following question.

How strongly do you agree with this statement?

The Government's economic policies are good for me and my family.

- *Definitely agree*
- *Tend to agree*
- *Neither*
- *Tend to disagree*
- *Definitely disagree*

Again responses were often collapsed into three categories for coding purposes, EGOGD (those who definitely agreed or tended to agree), EGONEUT (those who did not know or gave a neutral response), and EGOBAD (those who definitely disagreed or tended to disagree). This enables a second facet of egocentrism to be measured (and one which can be tied directly to the reward-punishment axiom).

5.2.2 SOCIOTROPIC VALUES

In the wake of the furore surrounding the Sanders *et al* model, the sociotropic dimension of public attitudes has often been relegated in importance compared to egocentric values. Nevertheless they remain a vital research source and the remaining results chapters will attempt to analyse the impact of sociotropism upon partisanship and Government support.

There were two main ways in which respondents were permitted to express their sociotropic evaluations; by assessing the state of the British economy and by

assessing the societal impact of the Government's economic policies. The *NOP/Newsnight* questions used here were:-

Which of these statements comes closest to your own view about the British economy?

- *The Economy is strong and doing well.*
- *The Economy is basically strong but there are short-term problems.*
- *The Economy is weak but on the mend.*
- *The Economy is weak and doing badly.*

How strongly do you agree with this statement?

The Government's economic policies are good for Britain.

- *Definitely agree*
- *Tend to agree*
- *Neither*
- *Tend to disagree*
- *Definitely disagree*

Again responses were often collapsed into three categories for coding purposes, 'strong' (satisfaction), 'neutrals' (including don't knows) and 'weak' (dissatisfaction) for the first question and into SOCIOGD (those who definitely agreed or tended to agree), SOCIONEUT (those who did not know or gave a neutral response), and SOCIOBAD (those who definitely disagreed or tended to disagree) for the second.

5.3 THE FEEL GOOD FACTOR AND THE SELF-INTEREST AXIOM

A central theme running through much of the popular wisdom about elections is that the general public are motivated by economic self-interest (the self-interest axiom). In common terms, the fate of a Government depends on the strength of the 'feel good factor' in the electorate. If the public are satisfied with their current economic circumstances or optimistic about their economic future then this 'feel

good factor' is likely to translate directly into votes for the Government. On the other hand, a dissatisfied or pessimistic electorate would turn on the incumbent regime and a 'feel bad factor' would rebound on the Government electorally. An exploration of the 'feel good factor' in the 1990s recession must be the basis of this analysis.

Table 5.1: Reported Vote Intention by Perceptions of Personal Economic Circumstances over the Coming Year; July 1990 - February 1992

Jul '90-Feb '92	Lot Better	Little Better	Stay the Same	Little Worse	Lot Worse
Conservative	60	48	37	21	13
Labour	22	27	35	46	53

The historical relationship between economic attitudes and voting records identified in Chapter 2 (and through the 1980s in Chapters 3 and 4) was replicated by the analysis of reported vote intention in the run up to the 1992 General Election (Table 5.1). The most pessimistic sections of society were also the least likely to express support for the incumbent Government. Conversely the most optimistic sections of society were the most likely to express support for the Conservative regime.

The link between the so-called 'feel good factor' and Government support has been established by Table 5.1. Put simply, the greater the level of economic optimism, the greater the level of Government support throughout the 1990-1992 period of economic downturn. Of all respondents who felt that their personal economic conditions would get 'a lot better' over the next year, between July 1990 and February 1992, three-fifths were reported to be Conservative sympathisers, only a little over one-fifth claimed to be likely to vote Labour.

Moreover the pro-Government bias of optimists was repeated even when the level of optimism was diluted. A little under one half of those who felt their personal position would get 'a little better' also reported a Conservative vote intention. In this category Labour was able to claim just over one-quarter of respondents. However, Labour could claim a majority among the pessimistic parts of the electorate. Approximately one half of respondents who expected their personal economic circumstances to get 'a little worse', and approximately 55 per cent of those expecting their own position to get 'a lot worse', identified themselves as likely Labour voters The Conservatives found it difficult to recruit pessimistic voters. Of those who expected their personal economic condition to get 'a little worse' the Conservatives were able to garner the support of only about 15 per cent. Furthermore, increased pessimism led to a decreased propensity to support the Conservatives; the party of Government being able to recruit less than one-tenth of the section of the electorate that felt that their personal economic condition would get 'a lot worse' over the next twelve months.

The solution to why economic optimists tended to be Conservatives might be glimpsed through the introduction of the notion of Government responsibility in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. When egocentric approval was broken down by partisanship it revealed that of all Conservative identifiers, over two-thirds thought that the Conservative Government's economic policies were 'good' for them (Table 5.2). Less than one tenth of Labour supporters felt similarly. Conversely four-fifths of all Labour identifiers felt that the economic policies of the Conservative Government were 'bad for themselves and their families'. Only one fifth of

Conservative identifiers was prepared to stick to the Government despite feeling that their economic policies were 'bad' for them.

Meanwhile, of all respondents who claimed that the economic policies of the Conservative Government were 'good for my family and myself', 70 per cent were Conservative supporters. Less than 10 per cent of this group intended to vote Labour (Table 5.3).

Table 5.2: Egocentric Approval of the Government's Economic Policy by Reported Vote Intention. January 1990 - February 1992

	Good for Self & Family	Neither/DK	Bad for Self & Family
Conservative	61	19	21
Labour	08	12	80

Table 5.3: Reported Vote Intention by Approval for Government's Economic Policy; January 1990 - February 1992

	Conservative	Labour
Good for Self & Family	70	14
Neither / Don't Know	30	35
Bad for Self & Family	09	64

These two tables confirm a central aspect of the economic voting thesis; the beneficiaries of Government economic policies tend to be Government supporters. The self-interest axiom and the feel good factor seem to be decent explanations of variations in Government support.

When the analysis of personal expectations and reported vote intention is considered (see Tables 5.4) the trend for 'feel-good' Government support is further supported. In the whole period between January 1990 and February 1992, a time of substantial downturn in economic fortunes as the deep recession

set in, only 17 per cent of all Conservative identifiers were pessimistic about their personal economic expectations over the coming year. Although a high proportion of potential Conservatives expressed neutrality or ambivalence on this issue, 41 per cent of all Conservatives in this period were optimistic about their personal economic prospects over the coming year. The breakdown of personal economic expectations by support for the major Opposition Party reveals the obverse side of the same coin. A little over one-fifth of all Labour voters were optimistic about their own personal economic fortunes over the next year; twice as many were pessimistic. Moreover there remains the distinct possibility that this gap is underestimated by the sampling mechanics of the polls. Throughout this period Labour led in the polls and it would be unsurprising if Labour partisans were more optimistic about their personal future - if they were expecting Labour to take office *within the next twelve months* - than would have been the case had the polls correctly forecast a Conservative victory in the 1992 General Election.

Table 5.4 Personal Economic Expectations By Reported Vote Intention: January 1990 - February 1992

	Pessimism	Neutrality	Optimism
Conservative	17	42	41
Labour	43	37	21

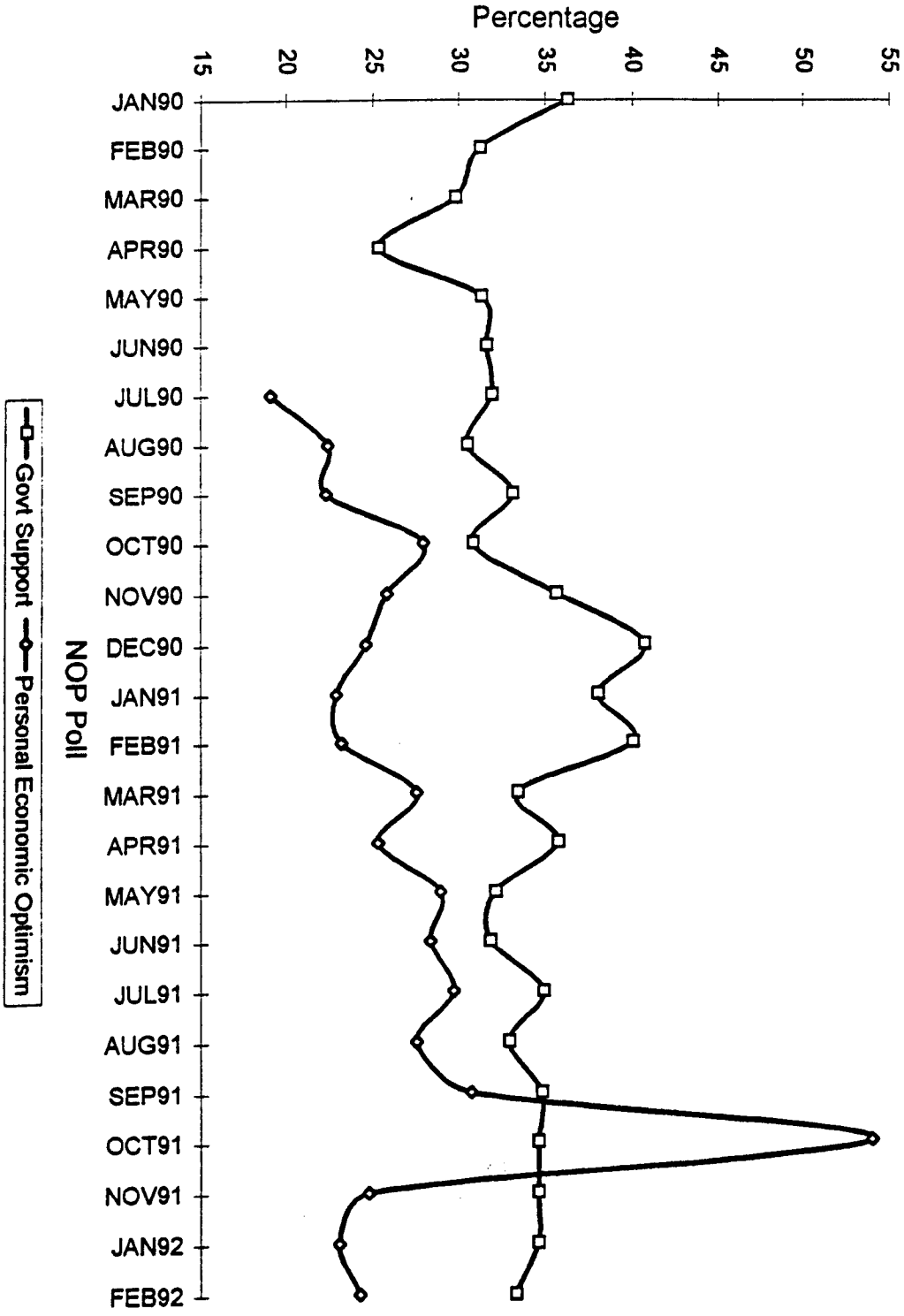


Figure 5.1: Government Support & Economic Optimism

The public did grow more optimistic towards the end of the 1990-2 period (Figure 5.1). In other words the Government may have stimulated a marked 'feel good factor' in late 1991 but that it did not directly relate to levels of Government support. Of course the boost to optimism in the run-up to the election (witness the massive 'blip' in optimism in October 1991) might take time to filter down into voting intentions. The challenge to the Government was thus to turn the boost in personal economic optimism into Government votes in April 1992. As Conservative identifiers seemed particular prone to be optimistic about their economic future, while Labour supporters - the general drive towards optimism notwithstanding - were more likely to be pessimistic about their personal economic future, the popular notion of 'feel-good factor' voting may have been the basis of the Conservatives' electoral recovery despite the long running and deepening economic recession of the early 1990s.

5.4 CLASS & ATTITUDES TO THE ECONOMY

The class dealignment debate has necessitated the search for alternative explanations to social class for enduring voting patterns. If economic attitudes can be shown to have an explanatory force equal to - or greater than - that of social class then the embellishment and detail hypothesis would be firmly rejected.

Table 5.5 Personal Economic Expectations By Class: January 1990 - February 1992

	Pessimism	Neutrality	Optimism
AB	23	41	36
C1	28	39	34
C2	34	38	27
DE	39	38	22

Table 5.6 Approval of the Government's Economic Policy by Class. January 1990 - February 1992

EGOCENTRIC	Good For Self & Family	Neither/DK	Bad for Self & Family
AB	46	16	39
C1	31	17	51
C2	25	16	59
DE	17	19	64
SOCIOTROPIC	Good for Britain	Neither/DK	Bad for Britain
AB	49	13	38
C1	39	18	42
C2	32	19	50
DE	24	23	54

A strong association between economic attitudes and class structure was identified between July 1990 and February 1992 (Table 5.5). Respondents from the AB class were the most likely to exhibit personal economic optimism, while respondents from classes C2 and DE were likely to express pessimism in their economic expectations. Moreover, the relationship was 'linear' in that progress from Class AB to Class DE was accompanied by progressive personal economic pessimism.

Approval for the Conservative Government's economic policies by social class defined by the AB/C1 scale identified in Chapter 2, reveals the association between class and the personal benefit derived from Government policies (Table 5.6). A marked distinction in egocentric attitudes to the Government's economic record according to social class was apparent. In each of the class categories except AB, a simple plurality of respondents felt that the Government's economic policies were 'bad' for themselves. Nevertheless the expected linear relationship between egocentric approval for the Government's economic policies and social class was upheld.

Analysis of sociotropic approval of Government policies revealed a similar story. The sociotropic evaluations of those in the AB class category were remarkably similar to their responses to the egocentric question. Once again the relationship between the sociotropic approval of the Government's economic policies and social class was virtually 'linear'. In other words, their perception of what is good for them was identical to their perception of what was good for the country as a whole. In the other classes, however, there were interesting distinctions between sociotropic and egocentric evaluations of the Government's economic policies. In terms of egocentric evaluations the C1 group seemed reluctant to back the Government but for their sociotropic evaluations, the figures for the C1 class expressing the negative option fell from 51 per cent to 42 per cent. Further those C1 respondents who expressed positive sociotropic perceptions outweighed the corresponding egocentric score by eight per cent. Respondents from the C2 and DE classes exhibited a similar reluctance to taint the Government's national record as 'bad' when compared to their egocentric perception of economic utility. This dilution of hostility to the Government's economic record across otherwise unfavourable classes may have been important in upholding the Conservative vote in their unexpected election victory of April 1992, if voters were inclined to think sociotropically rather than egocentrically when casting their vote.

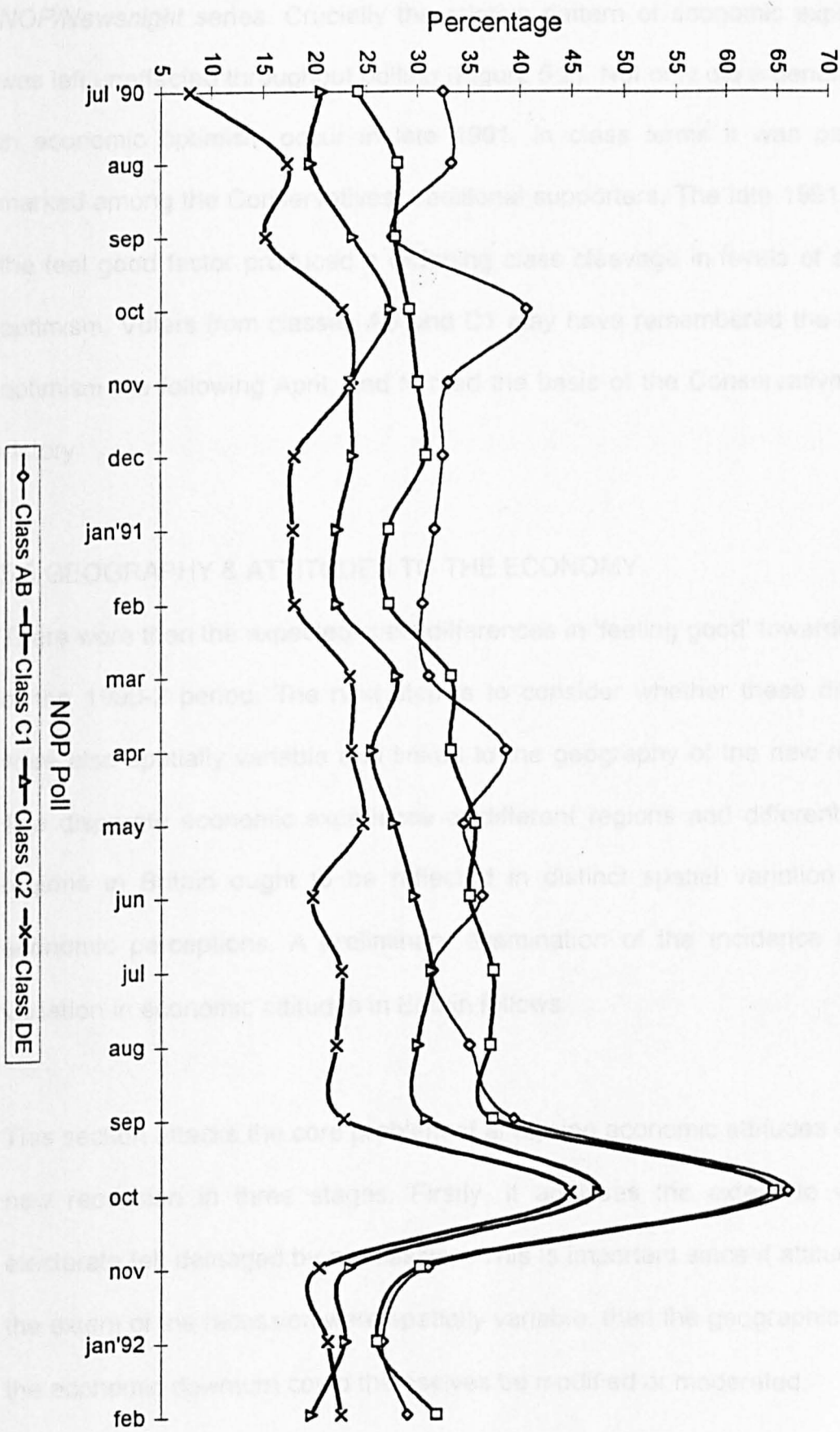


Figure 5.2: Personal Economic Optimism By Class

The pattern of class variation in economic attitudes held throughout the *NOP/Newsnight* series. Crucially the relative pattern of economic expectations was left unaffected throughout polling (Figure 5.2). Not only did a general upturn in economic optimism occur in late 1991, in class terms it was particularly marked among the Conservatives' traditional supporters. The late 1991 boom in the feel good factor produced a widening class cleavage in levels of economic optimism. Voters from classes AB and C1 may have remembered the upturn in optimism the following April, and formed the basis of the Conservative election victory.

5.5 GEOGRAPHY & ATTITUDES TO THE ECONOMY

There were then the expected class differences in 'feeling good' towards the end of the 1990-2 period. The next step is to consider whether these differences were also spatially variable and linked to the geography of the new recession. The disparate economic experience of different regions and different types of regions in Britain ought to be reflected in distinct spatial variation in those economic perceptions. A preliminary examination of the incidence of spatial variation in economic attitudes in Britain follows.

This section attacks the core problem of analysing economic attitudes during the new recession in three stages. Firstly, it analyses the extent to which the electorate felt damaged by a recession. This is important since if attitudes about the extent of the recession were spatially variable, then the geographic effects of the economic downturn could themselves be modified or moderated.

The second stage is to analyse how well the electorate thought the government was dealing with the recession - how appropriate their economic policies were. Again an understanding electorate which recognised that the Government was doing all in its power to rectify the economic underperformance might be more forgiving than an electorate which felt that the Government's economic policies were inappropriate or inadequate. Furthermore a spatial variation in the public attitudes concerning the appropriateness of the government's economic policy would have important consequences for the ability of the government to be re-elected.

Thirdly, a direct link to the reward-punishment axiom will be analysed. If respondents are to punish a Government which presided over a recession, they must first hold the Government responsible for that recession. If on the other hand, the Government is absolved of blame for economic failure then there would be no reason for the electorate to act as Key's 'rational God of vengeance'. Crucially, the possibility that an individual's propensity to blame the Government for the 1990s recession was largely dependent upon where they happened to live will be examined.

5.5.1 THE EXTENT OF THE RECESSION

Perceptions of personal economic performance over the next twelve months by compressed region and constituency type, and controlling for reported vote intention are shown in Table 5.7. It also shows an Optimism - Pessimism index

for all respondents in each region and in each type of constituency. An Optimism - Pessimism index of 1 represents a neutral electorate, a score greater than 1 represents an optimistic electorate, a score less than 1 represents a pessimistic electorate.

Table 5.7 Perceptions of Personal Economic Performance over the Next Twelve Months By Region and Constituency Type and By Reported Vote Intention. January 1990-February 1992

	GET BETTER		STAY SAME		GET WORSE		O:P INDEX
	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr	Con	Lbr	
Region							
Scot/Wales	41	21	43	38	16	41	0.82
North	40	20	43	38	17	42	0.84
Midlands	42	21	41	36	18	43	0.92
G London	40	21	41	35	19	44	0.90
South	42	20	41	36	17	44	0.97
C Type							
Dep/LA	40	20	43	38	17	41	0.80
Service	41	22	41	35	18	44	0.97
Prosperous	42	20	41	36	17	44	0.94

All in all there appeared to be some substantial variation in partisan optimism and pessimism according to geographic location. The proportion of optimists and pessimists in the Conservative and Labour electorates were variable across all five compressed regions and across three constituency types. The South, Midlands and London, service and prosperous areas were characterised by higher degrees of economic optimism throughout the 1990-2 period (Table 5.7). The Celtic fringe, North and depressed areas were characterised by relative pessimism about their personal economic futures. The Optimism-Pessimism ratios in Table 5.7 clearly show the continued significance of a North-South divide - albeit a weaker divide than identified in the 1980s. This is perhaps unsurprising in the context of the new recession of the 1990s which effectively 'narrowed' the real economic differences between regions. All in all, the new

recession evened out regional disparity and the narrowing of the gap between personal economic expectations according to region may have been the manifest result of the new economic reality.

Spatial variation does appear to play a role in the construction of economic attitudes (the half stage model). The usual North-South and functional geography cleavages were replicated in the run-up to the 1992 General Election - the recovery model of the geography of economic attitudes performed better than the new recession model. Nevertheless the new recession hit the South and the service sector economy *for the first time*, turning then from heartlands of economic optimism into clusters of pessimism. The recovery of the 1980s failed to reach the traditional 'depressed areas' that were traumatised by the early 1980s depression, since it was not based on a recovery in manufacturing industry. Consequently respondents from depressed areas typified by a high concentration of local authority housing could still be even more pessimistic than respondents from 'service' constituencies who were themselves more pessimistic than would traditionally have been the case.

The greater significance of constituency type than regional schema might be interpreted as support for the assertion that the geographic cleavages in British electoral behaviour were the result of the character of regions rather than mere location. It is true that the class profile for respondents from those constituencies typified by work in the service sector is quite distinct from the class profile for respondents from constituencies typified by industrial depression and high rates

of local authority housing. This class distinction inherent in the constituency type schema may be enough to mask the effects of constituency type *per se*. Further work must be done in order to assess the competing claims about geographic variations in attitudinal structure.

The half-stage model of personal economic attitudes as a function of both types of geography is presented in Table 5.8. Its most obvious feature is the lack of significant variation in the distributions of economic expectations according to either regional or type of location. All respondents were generally pessimistic about their personal economic outlook over the next twelve months, around one third of all respondents - regardless of their geographic location - thought their personal position would deteriorate. Nearly two-fifths of all respondents were neutral in their economic outlook, expecting their economic outlook to 'stay the same' over the course of the coming year. Only just over one-quarter of all respondents felt that their personal economic circumstances would improve over the next twelve months.

Table 5.8 Economic Perceptions of Future by Region : All Respondents January 1990 - February 1992

	GET BETTER	STAY THE SAME	GET WORSE
COMPRESSED REGION			
Scot/Wales	27	41	33
North	27	40	33
Midlands	30	38	32
Gtr London	30	38	33
South	30	38	31
CONSTITUENCY TYPE			
Depressed/LA	27	40	33
Service	30	39	31
Prosperous	30	39	32

There was very little geographic variation in personal economic expectations. Again the most pessimistic of all regions appeared to be Scotland and Wales, while respondents from the Midlands provided the most relatively optimistic of outlooks. Also respondents from areas typified by depressed industry and from areas with a high intensity of local authority housing tended to be slightly more pessimistic than other respondents but the levels of optimism and pessimism expressed by respondents from areas typified by the service sector and prosperous areas were barely distinguishable. However, these trends perceived in differences in levels of economic outlooks in Table 5.8 were slight and should only be viewed with caution. The relative lack of spatial variation may simply reflect the impact of the new recession in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the regional and constituency type variations in attitudes and ultimately voting behaviour began to even out due to the unusual impact of the economic downturn on hitherto prosperous areas. Although the South was experiencing recessionary pressure, it was not reflected in voters' attitudes (see Tables 5.6 and 5.7). The willingness of Southerners to discount their recessionary experience may have been because they thought the recession temporary or nothing to do with the Government, whereas Northerners thought the recession permanent and the direct consequence of Government policy. This and later sections of this thesis contend that this was due to the reluctance of respondents from these areas to blame the Government for the recession.

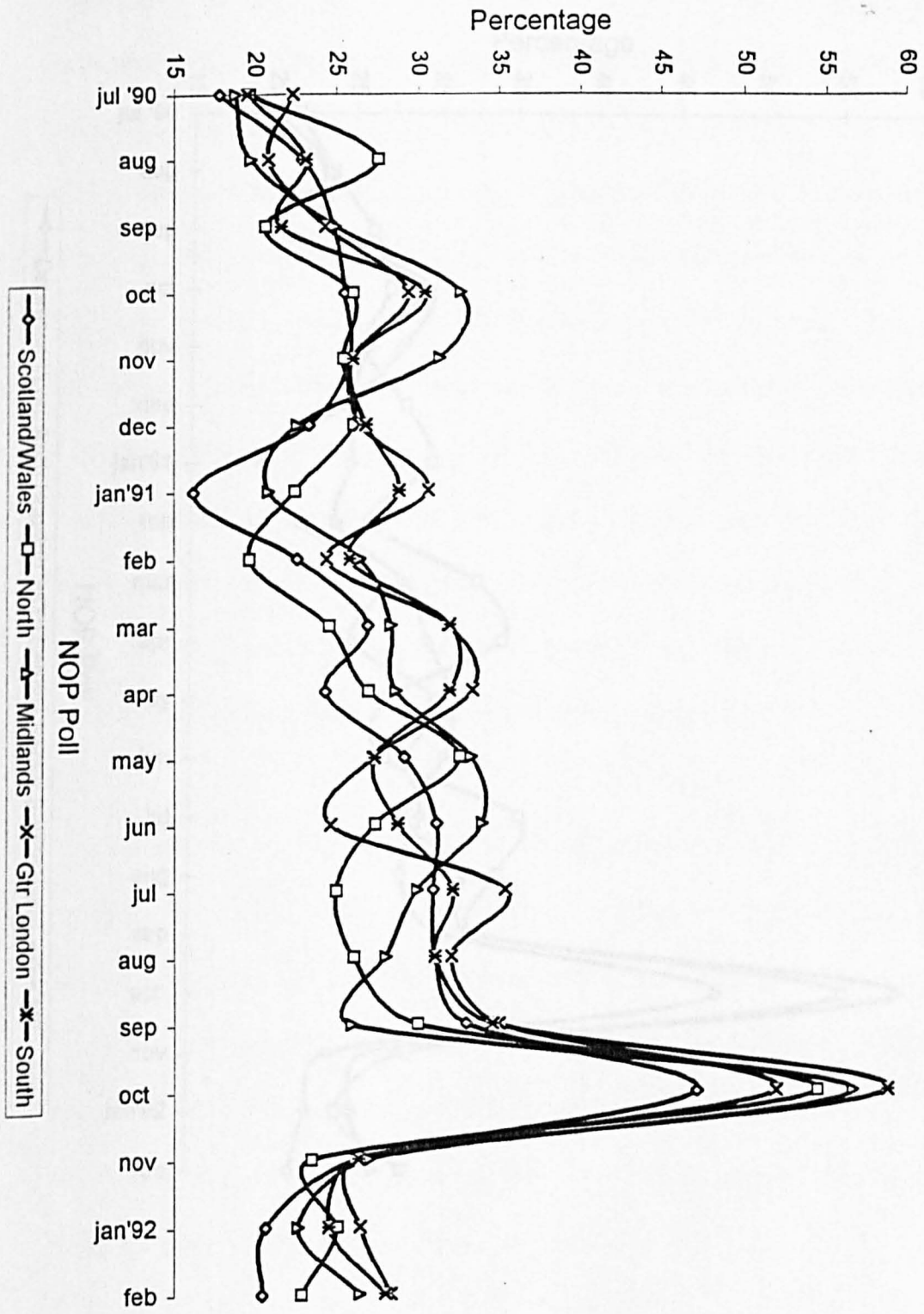


Figure 5.3: Personal Economic Optimism By Region

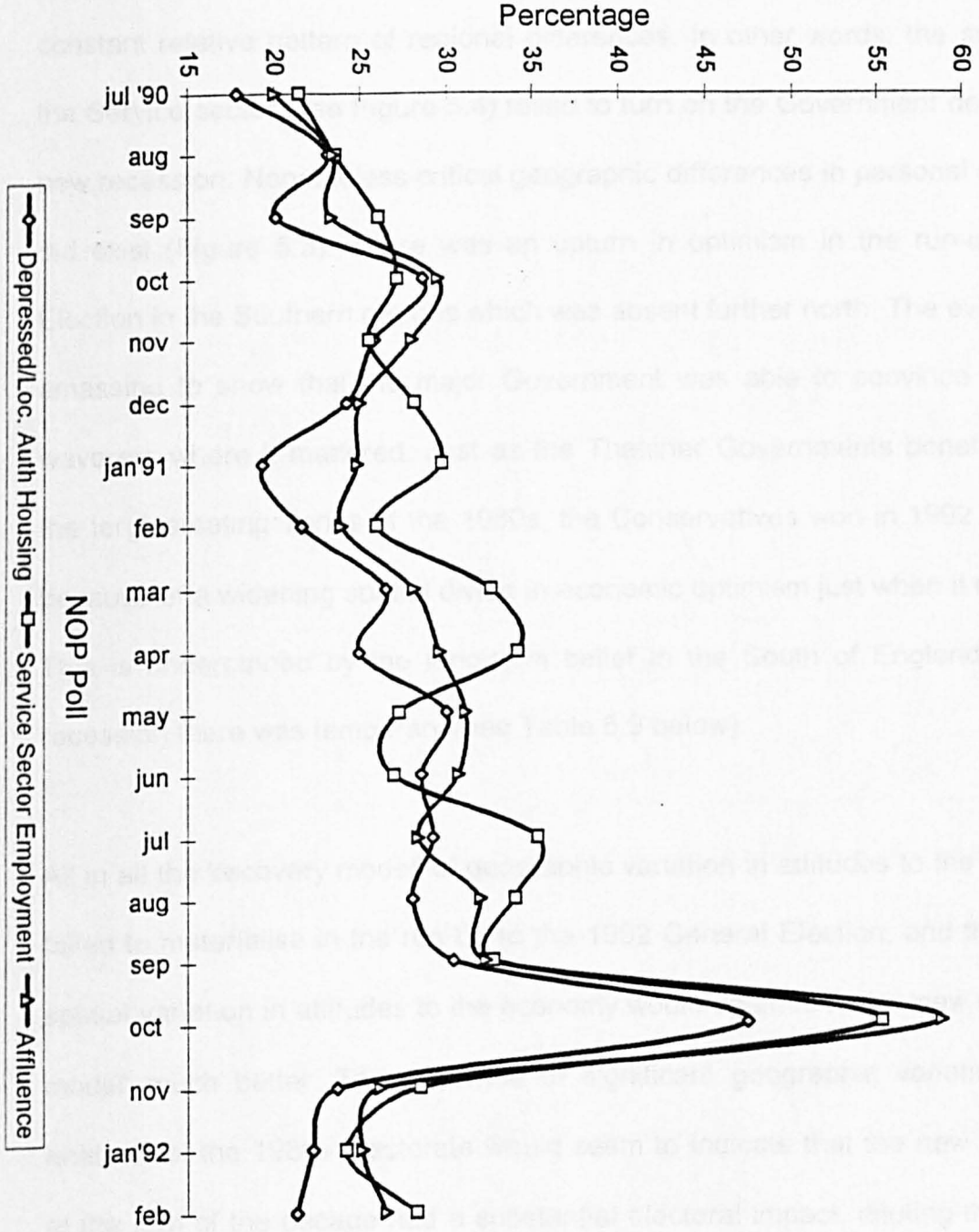


Figure 5.4: Personal Economic Optimism By Constituency Type

The pictorial representation of regional variations in personal optimism and pessimism throughout the poll period (Figure 5.3) again revealed a fairly constant relative pattern of regional differences. In other words, the south and the Service sector (see Figure 5.4) failed to turn on the Government despite the new recession. Nonetheless critical geographic differences in personal optimism did exist (Figure 5.3). There was an upturn in optimism in the run-up to the Election in the Southern regions which was absent further north. The evidence is amassing to show that the major Government was able to convince potential waverers where it mattered. Just as the Thatcher Governments benefited from the tergiversating Tories of the 1980s, the Conservatives won in 1992 not least because of a widening spatial divide in economic optimism just when it mattered. This is underpinned by the long-term belief in the South of England that the recession there was temporary (see Table 5.9 below).

All in all the 'recovery model' of geographic variation in attitudes to the economy failed to materialise in the run up to the 1992 General Election, and the lack of spatial variation in attitudes to the economy would seem to fit the 'new recession model' much better. The presence of significant geographic variation in the analysis of the 1980s electorate would seem to indicate that the new recession at the turn of the decade had a substantial electoral impact, diluting the degree of geographic variation in economic attitudes.

Before the discussion of the incidence of blame for the economic recession and after the analysis of the sociotropic and egocentric approval for the

Government's economic policies, it is necessary to analyse the public perception of the state of the British economy. When respondents were asked to gauge the strength of the British economy they were reluctant to express positive views about the state of the British economy (Table 5.9). Typically, over twice as many respondents from all regions and constituency types felt the state of the economy was weak rather than strong.

Table 5.9 Sociotropic Views on the Strength of the Economy By Geography: January 1990 - February 1992

	Strong & Doing Well	Strong but Short-Term Problems	None/DK	Weak but On the Mend	Weak & Doing Badly
COMP REGION					
Scot/Wales	04	21	04	33	39
North	02	35	03	24	37
Midlands	02	34	03	28	34
Gtr London	08	27	02	27	35
South	12	24	02	29	33
CONST TYPE					
Depressed/LA	02	30	03	35	38
Service	08	27	03	22	34
Prosperous	07	27	03	43	34

An interesting distinction shown in Table 5.9 is that between respondents who felt that the British economy was 'strong and doing well' and those who felt the economy was basically 'strong but with some short-term problems'. Respondents from the South of England were six times more likely to think that the economy was 'strong and doing well', than their counterparts form the Midlands. Celtic respondents were the least satisfied of all voters with the state of the economy, almost two-fifths of them thinking that the economy was 'weak and doing badly'. There was also a marked disinclination among respondents from areas typified by industrial depression and high proportions of local authority housing to believe that the economy was 'strong and doing well'. Conversely those from

areas identified as prosperous by the constituency type schema were particularly prone to express the view that the economy was 'weak but on the mend', being almost twice as likely to favour this option than their cohorts from areas typified by service sector employment.

A key feature of the public's perception of the extent of the 1990s recession is that of the two types of geographic criteria, the regional schema outperforms constituency type. Only twenty five per cent of Scots and Welsh felt that the economy was 'strong', whereas thirty-six per cent of Southerners felt the same way. Moreover a full ten per cent more - and seventy-two per cent in total - Celts believed the economy was 'weak' than their counterparts in the South. The parallel analysis of constituency type fails to produce such significant differences between geographic criteria. This lends support to the notion that the geographic context was confined to the 'real' nature of geographic location rather than the more 'artificial' character of the constituency. The long-term belief in the South of England that the recession there was a temporary entity may have been the crux of the Conservative victory in April 1992. That Southerners were not in a permanently pessimistic state suggests that the contextual socialisation of Southerners (of which Conservative support was a part) was stronger than a few years of economic recession: A little local difficulty could not overcome their economic and political outlook.

5.5.2 THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE RECESSION

Respondents in the *NOP/Newsnight* series of polls were asked to assess the Government's economic record in two ways; firstly egocentrically - whether the Government's economic policy was good for themselves personally; and secondly sociotropically - whether the Government's economic policy was favourable for the society as a whole. These assessments were carried out periodically in the *NOP/Newsnight* poll series and the data derived from them was combined into a large dataset covering the period January 1990 to February 1992.

5.5.2.1 EGOCENTRIC APPROVAL

The distribution of approval, in personal terms, for the Government's economic policy by the standard eleven-fold regional schema and the construction of an Approval - Disapproval index similar to the Optimism - Pessimism index revealed some regional variation (Table 5.10). While all the regions exhibited an inclination to express overall disapproval for the Government's economic policy and the personal benefit derived from it, the Scots and Welsh were - on average - the most disapproving of the Government's policy, while respondents from the South were the least disapproving of all compressed regions.

Table 5.10 EGOCENTRIC Approval of the Government's Economic Policy by Geography. January 1990 - February 1992

	Good For Self & Family	Neither/DK	Bad for Self & Family	A:D Index
COMPRESSED REGION				
Scotland/Wales	23	17	61	.38
North	27	16	57	.47
Midlands	29	18	53	.55
Gtr London	27	18	56	.48
South	31	16	53	.58
CONSTITUENCY TYPE				
Depressed/LA	25	16	59	.42
Service	29	19	53	.56
Prosperous	29	17	54	.54

Analysis of the constituency type schema shows that respondents from areas typified by depressed industry and a high proportion of local authority housing were the most likely to express personal dissatisfaction with the Government. Respondents from areas typified by the service sector or prosperity were quite similar in their propensity to express personal dissatisfaction with the Government with Approval - Disapproval indices of between 0.5 and 0.6.

5.5.2.2 SOCIOTROPIC APPROVAL

The sociotropic approval rating of the Government's economic policy suggested that respondents were typically more sympathetic to the Government in terms of societal benefit than they are for their personal benefit derived from the Government's economic policies (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 SOCIOTROPIC Approval of the Government's Economic Policy by Geography. January 1990 - February 1992

	Good For Britain	Neither/DK	Bad for Britain	A:D Index
COMPRESSED REGION				
Scotland/Wales	27	20	52	.52
North	32	18	49	.65
Midlands	37	18	45	.82
Gtr London	34	20	47	.72
South	37	18	44	.84
CONSTITUENCY TYPE				
Depressed/LA	30	19	51	.59
Service	37	18	46	.80
Prosperous	35	19	46	.76

The general improvement in egocentric approval for the Government's economic policies notwithstanding, the relative pattern of approval and disapproval according to the regional schema held constant. Scottish and Welsh respondents had the lowest Approval - Disapproval index, respondents from the South of England the highest (Table 5.11).

The relative pattern of variation in sociotropic approval for the Government's economic policies according to constituency type was upheld. The most disapproving of constituency types were typified by depressed industry and high proportions of local authority housing, while respondents from areas typified by service sector employment and by economic prosperity were less likely to express dissatisfaction.

With the changed dynamics of the new recession in the 1990s, a critical feature of this research is the extent of electoral approval for the Government's policies. The next step of this chapter is a more robust discussion of how approval of the Government's economic record was broken down geographically. For the most

part this is achieved by mixing egocentric and sociotropic approval with the already familiar personal economic expectations variable and party support.

Regional variation in egocentric approval of the Government's economic record and its manifestation via party support certainly existed (see Tables 5.12 and 5.13). However a note of caution ought to be sounded before grandiose claims are made. Some of the percentages presented in Table 5.13 actually represent very few cases. Great care then should be taken when interpreting that 54 per cent of personally pessimistic Londoners who thought that that the Government's economic policies were good for them, were not Government supporters. Nevertheless there are important features of Table 5.13; notably Greater London and the South of England were significantly less anti-Conservative than the Celtic fringe and the North of England. Of the Southern electorate who thought that the Government's policy was good for them, and were personally optimistic about their economic future (perhaps because of the Government's action), a massive majority (87 per cent) were likely to vote Conservative. Conversely only three-quarters of Celts in the same personal position who approved of Government policy were likely to express a Conservative reported vote intention. Of course this group were predominantly pro-Government, but significantly less so than their counterparts in the heartland of Conservative support - and it is likely that the filter which reduces their propensity to vote Conservative was their geographic context.

Table 5.12 Egocentric Approval of Government's Economic Policy by Personal Economic Optimism and Government Support.

	HHEGO		
	Pessimist	Neutral	Optimist
non-Conservative	40	25	19
Conservative	60	75	81

Table 5.13 Egocentric Approval of Government's Economic Policy by Personal Economic Optimism, Region and Government Support.

	HHEGO		
Scot/Wales	Pessimist	Neutral	Optimist
non-Conservative	43	34	26
Conservative	57	66	74
North			
non-Conservative	39	27	22
Conservative	61	73	78
Midlands			
non-Conservative	33	26	18
Conservative	67	75	82
Gtr Ldon			
non-Conservative	54	27	21
Conservative	46	73	79
South			
non-Conservative	36	18	13
Conservative	64	82	87

Turning next to respondents who felt that the Government's economic policies were bad for themselves and families, a similar regional variation was apparent (although so was the concern about small numbers in a few cells). Respondents who were personally optimistic about their economic future but thought that the Government's economic policies were 'bad' for them had no reason to support the Government, presumably thinking that their positive economic outlook was not the result of any Government action. Personal optimism despite the Government's economic policies did not lead to Conservatism in Scotland and Wales - 98 per cent of this small group were non-Conservatives, but in the South and the capital, over a quarter of these respondents favoured the Government anyway (Table 5.14). In other words, the geographic location of respondents

affected their propensity to support the Government even if they felt that Governmental policies were harmful to them.

Southerners tended to be more pro-Conservative than the rest of the electorate even though they had no apparent economic self-interest in being so. This is a conundrum that might be solved by paying attention to context. The little local difficulties resulting from the recession was insufficient to override the long-term socialisation of Southern voters. In other words the impact of geography was not locational *per se* - it was contextual.

Table 5.14 Egocentric Disapproval of Government's Economic Policy by Personal Economic Optimism, Region and Government Support.

	HHEGO		
Scot/Wales	Pessimist	Neutral	Optimist
non-Conservative	94	92	98
Conservative	6	7	2
North			
non-Conservative	93	85	85
Conservative	7	15	15
Midlands			
non-Conservative	88	84	86
Conservative	12	16	14
Gtr Ldon			
non-Conservative	89	88	74
Conservative	11	13	26
South			
non-Conservative	89	87	73
Conservative	11	13	27

The analysis of sociotropic approval for the Government's economic policies told a similar story of the importance of the regional context in which voters lived (Table 5.15). One-third of personal optimists who felt that Government polices were good for the country as a whole were nevertheless non-Conservatives in the Celtic fringe of Scotland and Wales. On the other hand, nearly three-fifths of personal pessimists from the South who felt that the Government was good for

the nation as a whole were Conservative supporters despite their personal economic outlook.

Table 5.15 Sociotropic Approval of Government's Economic Policy by Personal Economic Optimism, Region and Government Support.

	HHEGO		
Scot/Wales	Pessimist	Neutral	Optimist
non-Conservative	54	34	33
Conservative	46	66	67
North			
non-Conservative	46	30	24
Conservative	54	70	76
Midlands			
non-Conservative	45	26	24
Conservative	55	75	76
Gtr Ldon			
non-Conservative	61	29	22
Conservative	39	71	78
South			
non-Conservative	42	19	13
Conservative	59	81	88

Finally, the regional importance to partisanship is confirmed by the analysis of those sections of the electorate who felt that the Government's policies were 'bad' for the country as a whole - that expressed sociotropic disapproval (Table 5.16). Personal economic pessimism and sociotropic disapproval for the Government's economic policies resulted in a universal distaste for Government support, but the extent to which this could be offset by personal economic optimism was regionally variable. Ninety-six per cent of Scots and Welsh voters who were optimistic about their own economic prospects but who believed the Government was pursuing policies detrimental to the country as a whole, felt unable to endorse the Conservatives. However, 'only' seventy-eight per cent of personal optimists from the South who disapproved of the sociotropic impact of Government policies were non-Conservatives, twenty-three per cent of this group were proudly pro-Tory. Clearly the 'I'm alright Jack' syndrome was a more

potent electoral cue in the South than the Celtic fringe. This raises interesting questions about the context of the regions of Britain. Maybe Celts have more connections with their local context and were thus more open to sociotropic voting, Southerners were typically more isolated and hence more likely to look to the personal (egocentric) context to form their voting cues. It might be the case that voters in the North and the Celtic fringe have long been socialised to believe in the power of Government (the majority of nationalised industries and those - such as defence - which are reliant on Government contracts were overwhelming based there). On the other hand, voters in the South have more reliance on and faith in the market. The Thatcher Governments stoked this cultural divide and it remained in place during the 'Southern recession' of the early 1990s. Further research ought to pursue this line of thought.

Table 5.16 Sociotropic Disapproval of Government's Economic Policy by Personal Economic Optimism, Region and Government Support.

	HHEGO		
Scot/Wales	Pessimist	Neutral	Optimist
non-Conservative	96	92	96
Conservative	4	8	4
North			
non-Conservative	94	89	87
Conservative	6	11	13
Midlands			
non-Conservative	89	86	90
Conservative	11	14	10
Gtr Ldon			
non-Conservative	90	90	88
Conservative	10	10	12
South			
non-Conservative	91	92	78
Conservative	9	8	23

5.5.3 GEOGRAPHY AND BLAME FOR THE RECESSION

Despite the failure of regional criteria to account for variation in economic attitudes (the half-stage model), the significance of geography in the full model

of partisanship can begin to be understood with reference to geography. Put simply perceptions of the extent of Government culpability for the recession were spatially variable. Throughout this analysis it should be remembered that the cause of the early 1990s recession was under debate at the time, while the Opposition parties were keen to put the blame on the Government, the Conservatives were prone to stress that Britain had been caught up in a world recession which had consequences beyond their control.

There was significant regional variation in the degree to which the Government were blamed for the new recession (Table 5.17). Nearly two-fifths of Celtic respondents felt the Government was a 'great deal' responsible for the recession compared to around one-half of all Southerners. Conversely Southerners and Greater Londoners were much more likely to absolve the Government of responsibility (ascribing them to only 'a little' blame or claiming they were 'not at all' to blame' for Britain's recession) than their counterparts from the North and the Celtic fringe. The point here is that if electors do not blame the Government for the recession, there is no logical reason for them to punish the Government at election times. Furthermore a large section of the Southern electorate failed to blame either the Government or world conditions for the recession (see tables 5.17 and 5.18). If the 1990s recession was a blameless one then voters could hardly desert the Government.

Table 5.17 Government Blame for the Recession by Region: February 1992

Government to Blame for Recession	Scot/Wales	North	Midlands	Gtr Ldon	South
Gt Deal	39	37	28	28	26
Fair Deal	38	34	37	35	40
A Little	15	19	25	25	24
Not at all	06	07	10	11	09
DK/NA	02	02	0	0	01

Pearson Chi-Sq	37.2
DF	16
Significance	.001

The analysis of public perceptions of the responsibility of world conditions for the British recession also revealed significant regional variation (Table 5.18). Respondents from the North of England were reluctant to blame the state of the world economy for the British recession - and prone to blame the Government (see Table 5.17) - but their counterparts in the South and the Capital were quite likely to blame world conditions for the recession (and absolve the Government while they were at it).

Table 5.18 World Conditions to Blame for the Recession by Region February 1992

World Conds to Blame for Recession	Scot/Wales	North	Midlands	Gtr Ldon	South
Gt Deal	21	16	23	25	28
Fair Deal	42	47	47	40	42
A Little	24	27	27	23	23
Not at all	08	06	02	08	04
DK/NA	05	04	01	04	03

Pearson Chi-Sq	32.8
DF	16
Significance	.008

A similar story emerged from the analysis of variation in the Government's culpability for the recession by constituency type; 39 per cent of those from depressed areas blamed the Government 'a great deal' for the recession,

compared to only 28 per cent of those from areas typified by service sector employment and prosperity (Table 5.19). Conversely, while one-third of respondents from prosperous constituencies felt the Government were only 'a little' to blame for the recession, less than one-quarter of those from depressed areas were inclined to absolve the Government from this extent of responsibility.

Table 5.19 Government Blame for the Recession by Constituency Type February 1992

Government to Blame for Recession	Depressed/ Local Authority	Service Sector Employment	Prosperous / Affluent
Gt Deal	39	28	28
Fair Deal	35	38	38
A Little	17	23	25
Not at all	07	10	08
DK/NA	03	01	0

Pearson Chi-Sq	32.8
DF	16
Significance	.008

At the same time, although depressed areas were associated with a reluctance to blame world conditions for the recession, those from constituencies characterised by service sector employment (and hence in the front-line of the new recession) were the most likely to hold world conditions responsible for the recession (See Table 5.20). A major contention of this thesis is that this begins to explain the reluctance of this group of electors to punish the Conservative Government in 1992. They may have been the most 'hurt' by the new recession of all groups in society but they did not hold the Government responsible for their predicament.

Table 5.20 World Conditions to Blame for the Recession by Constituency Type February 1992

World Conds to Blame for Recession	Depressed / Local Authority	Service Sector Employment	Prosperous / Affluent
Gt Deal	17	28	24
Fair Deal	47	42	42
A Little	25	22	26
Not at all	06	04	06
DK/NA	05	04	02

Pearson Chi-Sq	18.3
DF	8
Significance	.019

5.6 THE REGRESSION MODELS OF THE FEEL GOOD FACTOR AND REPORTED VOTE INTENTION: FEBRUARY 1992

The regression tables used in this chapter report the regression coefficients, standard error and significance levels of the independent variables. As a general rule of thumb a B coefficient has to be twice the size of its own standard error in order to be statistically significant. Only those variables which assumed statistical significance at or below the .1 level are reported. An asterisk in a cell denotes an insignificant variable. The table also reports the appropriate diagnostic statistics; adjusted R^2, Durbin-Watson, F and the significance of F.

Where possible the independent variables have been dichotomised in order to ensure that the goodness of fit statistics could be calculated without falling below a critical value sufficient to fill each cell. The explanatory variables are class, region, constituency type, personal economic expectations and Government and world conditions blame for the British recession.

When dichotomies or dummy variables were used, one category for each of the independent variables was left out of the model. The reported coefficients for the other categories of each variable should be seen in relation to this comparator category. The comparator categories were Class DE, the South of England, Affluent areas, egocentric pessimism, Government not at all to blame for British recession and World conditions Not at all to blame for British recession. The B coefficient for Conservative reported vote intention presented in Table 5.21 for who felt that the Government was a GREAT DEAL to blame for the British recession was -.14. The direction of the coefficient shows that these respondents were less likely than those who felt the Government was NOT AT ALL to blame for the recession to express an intention of voting for the Conservative Party. The magnitude of the coefficient shows the intensity of this likelihood; so for instance the B coefficient of -.14 for the CELT category and of -.12 for those who felt the Government was a FAIR DEAL responsible illustrates that both groups of respondents were less likely to express a reported vote intention for the Conservatives than the NOT AT ALL comparator category, but whereas the FAIR DEAL respondents were only twelve percentage points below the national Conservative share, the GREAT DEAL group were fourteen percentage points below the national average for Conservative reported vote intention, other things being equal.

Table 5.21: Regression Models of Feel-Good Factors: Optimism/Pessimism on Class, Region, Constituency Type and Blame for Britain's Recession: February 1992

	OPTIMISM			NEUTRALITY			PESSIMISM		
	B	E (B)	Sig	B	E (B)	Sig	B	E (B)	Sig
CLASS AB	*	*	*	*	*	*	-.07	.04	.035
CLASS C1	.07	.03	.030	*	*	*	-.13	.03	.000
CLASS C2	*	*	*	.07	.03	.049	*	*	*
CELT	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NORTH	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDLANDS	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
GTR LDON	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
SERVICE	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Govt Blame GT DEAL	-.14	.04	.001	-.10	.05	.040	.26	.04	.000
Gv Blame FAIR DEAL	-.12	.04	.005	*	*	*	.12	.04	.002
Gv Blame LITTLE	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
World Conds GT DEAL	.10	.05	.031	.10	.05	.062	-.14	.05	.003
W Conds FAIR DEAL	.09	.04	.039	*	*	*	-.13	.04	.003
W Conds LITTLE	.09	.04	.046	*	*	*	-.09	.04	.037
CONSTANT	.25	.06	.000	.39	.07	.000	.29	.06	.000

	OPTIM	NEUTRALITY	PESSSIM
Adjusted R^2	0.033	0.007	0.069
F	4.2	1.7	7.9
Significance	0.000	0.048	0.000
Durbin-Watson	1.97	2.02	2.02

The regression models of economic optimism reveal that the major determinant of economic evaluations was who was deemed to be - and to what extent - responsible for the economic recession (Table 5.21). Moreover the relationships between class and geography with economic attitudes were also dominated by this feature - class exacting only a slight influence on the composition of personal economic evaluations, geography failed to be statistically significant in any analysis of economic optimism, pessimism or neutrality. Nevertheless, the predictive power of the three models (especially neutrality) - as shown by the adjusted R^2 - was rather poor. However, this eliminates the possibility that any regional variation in reported vote intention (Table 5.22 shows there was a not insubstantial amount of this) was the residual geographic variation in the feel good factor in for instance Table 5.14. The next, and final, step of this chapter is

to build a regression model for reported vote intention which controls for the effects of class, geography, blame for the recession and the feel good factor of personal economic optimism.

The regression model of Conservative and Labour support for the February 1992 poll illustrated that aspects of class, geography, economic attitudes and the extent of Government and world culpability for the recession were all significant in explaining variations in reported vote intention (Table 5.22).

Table 5.22 Regression Model: Conservative and Labour reported vote intention on Class, Region, Constituency Type, Personal Economic Attitudes and Blame for Britain's Recession: February 1992.

	CONID			LBRID		
	B	SE (B)	Sig	B	SE (B)	Sig
CLASS AB	.17	.03	.000	-.19	.04	.000
CLASS C1	.05	.03	.064	-.15	.03	.000
CLASS C2	.07	.03	.009	-.10	.03	.001
CELT	-.11	.04	.002	*	*	*
NORTH	-.08	.03	.024	.10	.04	.006
MIDLANDS	*	*	*	*	*	*
GREATER LONDON	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA	*	*	*	.11	.03	.001
SERVICE	*	*	*	*	*	*
Egocentric OPTIMISM	.12	.03	.000	*	*	*
Egocentric NEUTRALITY	.07	.03	.002	*	*	*
Govt Blame GT DEAL	-.61	.04	.000	.47	.04	.000
Gv Blame FAIR DEAL	-.43	.04	.000	.28	.04	.000
Gv Blame LITTLE	-.11	.04	.005	*	*	*
World Conds GT DEAL	.12	.04	.004	*	*	*
W Conds FAIR DEAL	.08	.04	.049	*	*	*
W Conds LITTLE	*	*	*	*	*	*
CONSTANT	.59	.05	.000	.16	.06	.006

	CONID	LBRID
Adjusted R^2	0.322	0.248
F	40.4	27.1
Significance	0.000	0.000
Durbin-Watson	1.98	1.92

Social class works in the expected manner; CLASSAB were the most pro-Conservative and anti-Labour group. The comparator class DE was the most

hostile to Conservatism and the most prone to report an inclination to support the Labour Party.

Regional geography may have failed to meet the accepted standard of statistical significance at the overall level, but some individual characteristics of regionalism did enter the regression equation. CELTS and NORTHERN respondents were significantly less likely to express Government support than the comparator SOUTHERN group; and NORTHERNERS were much more likely - *ceteris paribus* - to favour Labour. Constituency type was also significant in the regression equation. Those from constituencies characterised by industrial depression and local authority housing (DEPLA) were markedly more Labour than the AFFLUENT comparator group. All in all, the geographic coefficients produced by this analysis provided some support for the geographic context thesis rather than the argument of Rose and McAllister which would deny geographic significant effects once class characteristics had been controlled for. In the final results chapter this argument is taken further when the interaction terms between geography and economic attitudes - which have highly significant effects - are shown to rely more on the geographic context than the economic.

Personal economic expectations have a significant impact upon the level of Conservatism (although tellingly not on Labour reported vote intention). OPTIMISTS and NEUTRALS were significantly more likely to favour the Government than the PESSIMIST comparator group. The size and direction of

the coefficients associated with personal economic expectations were in line with the expectation.

It is with the notion of responsibility for the recession that this regression analysis comes alive. Those who blame the Government a GREAT DEAL had an associated b coefficient of -.61, (thus they were extremely less likely to support the Government) compared to those who felt the Government were NOT AT ALL responsible for the recession. Those who felt that the Government should shoulder A FAIR DEAL of blame for the recession had an effect of -0.43 on the regression curve - and therefore were a major drag on Government support. Finally even those who thought the Government were only A LITTLE to blame for the recession were significantly less likely to favour the Government than the comparator group. On the other hand, those who blamed the Government a GREAT DEAL (B coefficient 0.47) and A FAIR DEAL (B 0.28) were significantly more Labour than the comparator group who absolved the Government of responsibility completely. There was no significant difference between the comparator group and those who blamed the Government A LITTLE in their propensity to express Labour support.

Furthermore while there was no difference between groups ascribing different degrees of culpability for the recession to world conditions in their preponderance to express support for Labour, the Conservative model worked in the anticipated manner. Those who felt that world conditions were A GREAT DEAL to blame were the most likely group to exhibit a pro-Conservative bias;

those who felt that world conditions were A FAIR DEAL to blame were also more likely to support the Conservatives than those who felt that world conditions were NOT AT ALL responsible for the British recession.

This type of regression analysis will become more familiar in the next chapter, as attempts will be made to observe the significant effects of geography in the construction of partisanship. Furthermore, analysis will build to dissect the interaction terms between geography and economic attitudes which for the most part secure the role of geography in economic attitudes and party support.

5.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a snapshot of the relationship between class and geography with economic attitudes in the early 1990s. The next stage has to tie this analysis to a more definite account of how this impacts upon voting behaviour - measured by reported vote intention.

The expected hypothesised relationship between class and attitudes has been upheld by this preliminary analysis. Movement across the social class scale - from Class DE towards Class AB - is associated with an increase in the absolute level of optimism about the future and satisfaction with the present. The new recession of the 1990s did little to affect this relationship substantially possibly because the new recession was seen by the people displaced by it as both temporary and blameless.

The competition between hypotheses about the relationship of geography and economic attitudes during the 1990s appeared to be one-sided. At first glance it appeared that regional differences in economic attitudes were less significant in the run-up to the 1992 General Election than throughout the 1980s, but the Conservative heartlands of the South and the service sector failed to turn against the Government as the dynamics of the new recession might have led us to believe. Furthermore they returned to economic optimism in late 1991 and Conservatism by April 1992. The work in this chapter on the extent of the recession, the sociotropic and egocentric approval for the Government's economic record, and the responsibility for the recession, suggested a viable thesis for why this might have been so - that all three features were spatially variable. In doing this it provided considerable support for viewing geography as a vital component of the miliuex in which attitudes and voting behaviour were formed, rather than the school of thought which viewed geography as the mere accumulation of class characteristics. Crucially, the spatial variation in these economic attitudes tended to reflect the 1980s recession rather than the early 1990s recession; it was the resurgence of the old North-South divide rather than the reflection of a new geography of recession - the gap was wider than in 1979 but narrower than in 1987. This suggests that the Conservatives benefited from a rejuvenation of old prejudices and from the apparently "temporary and blameless" nature of the new recession - and casts a new light on the Conservative electoral strategy during the 1992 Election which stressed the dangers of a Labour Government and must have been aimed at the Southern heartlands of Conservative support.

This chapter has looked at the 1990-2 period as a whole. Nonetheless significant changes over time were shown in the analysis of the feel good factor and reported vote intention. This is the central thrust of Chapter 6 which provides a more detailed discussion of the 1990s recession and the long-campaign, and particularly the incidence of the recession and the geographic context in which economic attitudes were over-ruled when individuals chose how to vote.

Chapter 6: Modelling Reported Vote Intention, Class, Geography and Economic Optimism in the 1990s Recession and During the Long Campaign

This chapter further explores the relationship between reported vote intention, class, geography and economic attitudes in the early 1990s. The aim of this chapter is to build on the preliminary findings of the previous chapter which explored the relationship between class, geography and economic attitudes on the aggregate scale, by exploring these relationships at the individual level.

This chapter involves the use of Analysis of Variance and Multiple Classification Analysis statistical techniques which will form an obvious parallel to the exploration of attitudes and partisanship in the 1980s in Chapter 4. It also uses multiple linear and logistic regression techniques in order to specify the interactions between the independent variables. In order to take advantage of the nature of the *NOP/Newsnight* dataset it also builds a temporal dimension into the analysis.

The primary objective of this thesis is to look at how geography and economic attitudes combine to influence partisanship. Two different geographic measures, compressed region and constituency type, and two aspects of political choice, Conservative and Labour reported vote intention are used here. It was not possible to analyse Liberal Democrat reported vote intention since the number of respondents willing to identify themselves as Liberal Democrat prospective voters was not always

sufficient to enable the analysis of the sub-cells involved in the class and geographic analysis.

If the expected relationship is to hold then all three explanatory variables will prove to be significant in the explanation of partisanship. That is to say that class, geography and economic attitudes should all contribute to the variations in levels of party support. The null hypothesis under investigation was that there was no connection between, on the one hand, class, geography and economic attitudes and, on the other hand, between class, geography, economic attitudes and reported vote intention.

As shown in Chapter Two, while the impact of class upon partisanship has diminished in recent years, the impact of geography on voting patterns has increased, as has the impact of economic attitudes. Moreover if the actual voting behaviour of the British electorate can be shown to be influenced by the geographic context in which it is placed, then it would be consistent to expect spatial variation in economic attitudes, and especially egocentric expectations since these too must be formed by voters in a distinct geographic context.

It should thus be possible to develop a two stage model, where the contextual effects of class and geography have an *a priori* impact upon the formation of economic attitudes in voters' minds and where class, geography and economic attitudes affect the partisan preferences of the electorate.

The premier task of this chapter is to establish a link between class, geography, economic attitudes and reported vote intention (the overall model). A secondary aim is to establish a link between class, geography and economic attitudes - the half stage model.

6.1 THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN REPORTED VOTE INTENTION AND ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

The initial analysis in this chapter replicates the analysis of the economic recovery of the 1980s in Chapter 4 for the period of the renewed recession in the 1990s. As such it involves Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Classification Analysis. A more detailed definition of these techniques was given in Chapter 4. The variables used in this analysis are identified in Chapter 5. The class variable is based on the four-fold ABC1 scale, geography is measured by the five-fold compressed regional schema and the three-fold constituency type schema, and personal economic optimism by the HHEGO variable which scores 1 for personal economic optimism, zero for economic neutrality and -1 for personal economic pessimism. The partisanship variables is reported vote intention.

The tables presented for this section of the thesis are based on ANOVA and Multiple Classification Analyses. The presentation of these tables is the same as encountered in Chapter 4. There are two types of table derived from the ANOVA and Multiple Classification Analysis techniques; one shows Grand Means, information about the statistical significance and magnitude of explanatory force of the independent

variables; the other shows the parameters of the model. The former provides F-values and Beta coefficients derived from the Analysis of Variance statistical technique: F-values provide information about the relative importance of each independent variable in the analysis. The latter shows the average deviations from the grand mean score of the dependent variable attributable to each category within the independent variable when the other variables in the model are held constant.

All component F-value and Beta score are shown in the ANOVA and Multiple Classification Analysis tables. A single asterisk by a F-value indicates that the independent variable was not statistically significant in the explanation of variation in the dependent variable. A double asterisk indicates that although not significant at the .05 level, the independent variable did enter statistical significance at the 0.1 level.

A figure in the ANOVA tables which is prefixed by an 'i' indicates that interaction terms between two or more of the independent variables were significant to the .05 level. Hence Table 6.3 shows that the incidence of personal economic expectations and social class interacted significantly on the likelihood of reporting a vote intention for Labour in June and October 1991.

The effects of variations in class, region and personal economic futures on Conservative and Labour reported vote intention in the separate analysis of individual polls between July 1990 and February 1992 are shown in Table 6.1. The penultimate column of Table 6.1 shows that the addition of class, region and personal economic

expectations can explain between nine and thirty-four per cent of the total variance in Conservative reported vote intention. Typically, a model which contains class regions and personal economic expectations accounts for around 10-15 per cent of the total variance in Conservative reported vote intention.

The deviations in reported vote intention according to the class, regional and personal economic evaluation disaggregations were, for the most part, as hypothesised (Table 6.2). Individuals from Class AB, from the South of England and who were optimistic about their economic future were the most pro-Conservative sections of the electorate; Labour's solid core of support came from individuals from Scotland and Wales, the North of England, from Class DE and those who were pessimistic about their economic future.

When a different geographic dimension is used to explain the variance in Conservative reported vote intention, as the three-fold constituency type schema replaces the five compressed regions, (see Table 6.3) the total amount of variance explained tends to fall slightly for each individual poll i.e. the geographic milieux model tends to outperform the lifetime learning model.

The analysis of the reported levels of Labour vote intention by class, geography and personal economic expectations was typically less impressive than the model of Conservative support. The total explained variance of Conservative reported vote intention shown by the R^2 in Tables 6.1 and 6.3 exceeds the counterpart columns for

Labour reported vote intention throughout the poll period from July 1990 to February 1992. This would seem to indicate that the model of partisanship is better suited to explaining levels of Conservative - or Government - support than for the major opposition party. This may be due to the electoral make-up of Britain, with the Liberal Democrats being the effective opposition to the Conservatives in many Southern seats. On the other hand, as the analysis in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 illustrated, the Conservatives were able to claim 'ownership' of economic issues and hence the model of Conservative support was able to reap the benefit of a closer association with economic evaluations than the parallel Labour model.

Table 6.1: Tests for Geographic Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention

	GM	GM	CLASS		CLASS		REGION		REGION		HHEGO		HHEGO		R^2	R^2
	(Con)	(Lbr)	F (C)	F (L)	β (C)	β (L)	F (C)	F (L)	β (C)	β (L)	F	F (L)	β (C)	β (L)	(Con)	(Lbr)
Jul '90	.323	.421	29.1	26.9	.15	.16	6.6	6.8	.12	.13	61.6	39.8	.27	.22	.135	.111
Aug '90	.307	.406	47.3	34.7	.24	.20	6.9	8.3	.13	.14	23.2	21.0	.16	.16	.122	.103
Sep '90	.333	.370	21.1	25.7	.16	.18	11.7	11.4	.17	.17	41.5	24.7	.22	.17	.110	.099
Oct '90	.313	.381	32.2	23.5	.20	.17	3.3	7.8	.09	.14	33.5	14.0	.20	.13	.104	.078
Nov '90	.363	.382	32.0	29.3	.21	.21	3.9	8.3	.09	.14	38.5	15.6	.21	.14	.108	.090
Dec '90	.409	.362	38.7	31.2	.21	.19	15.1	18.5	.18	.20	40.5	20.5	.21	.15	.140	.117
Jan '91	.385	.381	29.3	23.0	.20	.18	2.8	5.9	.08	.12	38.5	11.2	.22	.12	.104	.070
Feb '91	.401	.358	43.2	32.6	.22	.20	7.3	9.2	.13	.14	57.1	26.3	.25	.17	.146	.106
Mar '91	.339	.329	21.3	24.9	.16	.19	7.2	6.1	.13	.12	34.8	8.7	.20	.10	.095	.070
Apr '91	.357	.337	25.4	22.4	.18	.18	8.4	10.2	.14	.16	25.2	6.4	.17	.09	.093	.072
May '91	.322	.380	28.7	24.0	.19	.17	3.7	9.7	.09	.16	67.1	25.1	.27	.17	.129	.092
Jun '91	.323	.386	25.2	25.9	.17	.19	5.5	10.3	.12	.16	48.0	18.3	.24	.15	.115	.094
Jul '91	.349	.362	21.8	21.1	.16	.17	13.4	7.6	.17	.13	41.4	9.6	.22	.11	.117	.069
Aug '91	.327	.366	32.4	29.0	.21	.20	7.0	14.1	.13	.19	26.4	15.2	.18	.14	.107	.104
Sep '91	.351	.341	24.4	31.9	.16	.21	9.5	8.2	.16	.14	50.9	13.0	.25	.13	.124	.093
Oct '91	.347	.367	40.4	35.0	.13	.13	6.6	5.8	.07	.09	321.3	193.0	.54	.44	.340	.250
Nov '91	.349	.327	18.1	23.5	.15	.19	8.9	6.8	.15	.13	47.2	12.5	.24	.13	.112	.077
Jan '92	.354	.344	19.0	29.7	.16	.21	4.7	5.6	.11	.13	31.7	14.1	.20	.14	.091	.091
Feb '92	.336	.361	21.6	25.3	.17	.19	11.1	13.5	.16	.18	31.7	11.4	.20	.12	.111	.101

Table 6.2: Parameters of Geographic Model 1; Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention by Class, Region and Economic Attitudes

Con	Jul '90	Aug '90	Sep '90	Oct '90	Nov '90	Dec '90	Jan '91	Feb '91	Mar '91	Apr '91	May '91	Jun '91	Jul '91	Aug '91	Sep '91	Oct '91	Nov '91	Jan '92	Feb '92
CLASS																			
AB	.11	.21	.12	.18	.19	.15	.14	.14	.12	.16	.14	.14	.12	.17	.13	.10	.11	.06	.16
c1	.06	.06	.05	.03	.05	.09	.07	.10	.04	.03	.05	.05	.05	.07	.06	.04	.06	.10	.01
c2	-.03	-.07	-.01	-.04	-.05	-.05	.00	-.03	.00	-.02	.00	-.02	-.03	-.05	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.02
DE	-.08	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.10	-.12	-.13	-.14	-.10	-.09	-.11	-.10	-.09	-.10	-.08	-.07	-.08	-.10	-.08
REGION																			
Sct/Wal	-.10	-.08	-.13	-.08	-.07	-.15	-.05	-.11	-.08	-.11	-.07	-.09	-.15	-.07	-.09	-.06	-.14	-.09	-.10
North	-.02	-.05	-.03	.01	-.03	-.05	-.01	-.02	-.05	-.04	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.07	-.07	.01	-.03	-.02	-.07
Mids	.02	.03	-.01	.00	.02	.02	.08	.02	.04	.07	.05	.03	-.01	.06	.10	.06	.03	-.02	.03
Gtr L'don	.00	.08	.05	.05	.04	.11	-.04	.09	.09	.06	.00	.06	.09	.02	-.03	.00	.06	.06	.04
South	.07	.05	.10	.02	.04	.07	.01	.04	.04	.05	.04	.05	.07	.06	.07	.00	.06	.05	.09
HHEGO																			
Pessimist	-.13	-.10	-.12	-.12	-.14	-.16	-.13	-.15	-.13	-.13	-.19	-.18	-.16	-.12	-.09	-.29	-.17	-.13	-.15
Neutral	.06	.05	.06	.03	.04	.05	.05	.06	.01	.03	.02	.03	.02	.02	.02	-.27	.03	.01	.02
Optimist	.19	.08	.12	.11	.11	.10	.13	.15	.12	.08	.15	.12	.12	.10	.12	.23	.14	.14	.11
Labour	**Jul '90**	**Aug '90**	**Sep '90**	**Oct '90**	**Nov '90**	**Dec '90**	**Jan '91**	**Feb '91**	**Mar '91**	**Apr '91**	**May '91**	**Jun '91**	**Jul '91**	**Aug '91**	**Sep '91**	**Oct '91**	**Nov '91**	**Jan '92**	**Feb '92**
CLASS																			
AB	-.14	-.15	-.19	-.14	-.16	-.12	-.13	-.12	-.14	-.11	-.13	-.14	-.12	-.16	-.13	-.09	-.13	-.12	-.15
c1	-.06	-.08	-.02	-.06	-.06	-.09	-.07	-.09	-.06	-.09	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.10	-.05	-.09	-.10	-.06
c2	.05	.03	.04	.05	.01	.04	.01	.03	.03	.06	.03	.02	.02	.04	.05	.02	.05	.02	.02
DE	.07	.12	.07	.08	.13	.11	.12	.12	.10	.08	.10	.11	.10	.10	.12	.09	.10	.13	.12
REGION																			
Sct/Wal	.07	.00	.08	.09	.00	.10	.00	.09	.05	.10	.05	.07	.06	.06	.06	.01	.06	.06	.07
North	.05	.09	.09	.06	.10	.09	.06	.05	.06	.06	.08	.08	.07	.14	.08	.07	.08	.05	.11
Mids	.02	.03	.01	-.02	.03	.05	-.06	.03	.01	-.04	.00	.01	.00	-.06	-.02	-.01	-.07	.03	-.02
Gtr L'don	-.01	-.03	-.07	-.08	-.10	-.06	.08	-.10	-.09	-.02	.01	-.05	-.02	-.05	-.02	-.02	-.06	-.03	-.07
South	-.09	-.09	-.10	-.07	-.06	-.13	-.06	-.07	-.05	-.09	-.11	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.08	-.05	-.04	-.08	-.10
HHEGO																			**.10**
Pessimist	.12	.10	.10	.09	.09	.11	.06	.11	.07	.06	.11	.12	.08	.09	.10	.28	.08	.10	.10
Neutral	-.08	-.05	-.04	-.05	-.02	-.03	-.01	-.05	-.02	-.01	.00	-.04	-.01	-.01	-.01	.20	-.01	-.03	.03
Optimist	-.13	-.07	-.11	-.04	-.08	-.07	-.09	-.09	-.05	-.05	-.11	-.06	-.06	-.08	-.06	-.19	-.08	-.06	-.05

An interesting feature of Table 6.3 is that it shows that on three occasions, the interactions effects between class and economic attitudes (in June and October 1991) and constituency type and economic attitudes (in August 1991) were significant to the .05 level. More robust modelling (see below) will explore these inter-relationships between independent variables more fully.

6.1.1 CLASS & PARTISANSHIP

6.1.1.1 CLASS AND CONSERVATIVE REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

Class is the major explanatory factor in the variance in Conservative reported vote intentions throughout the *NOP/Newsnight* series of opinion polls (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.3). The reported F-values in these tables show that class consistently outperformed either of the geographic classifications in the explanation of Conservative reported vote intention. Moreover class was always statistically significant to at least the 0.05 level in the analysis of variance in Conservative reported vote intentions.

The average deviations between classes in their propensity to express a Conservative vote intention were all in the expected direction (see Table 6.2). Moreover they match the basic pattern set out in Chapters 3 and 4 for the *British Social Attitudes* dataset, which would suggest that the dynamics of the 'new' recession in the early 1990s did not alter the relative party preferences of the different classes in the electorate, and once again, the conventional class cleavage emerged.

6.1.1.2 CLASS AND LABOUR REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

Differences between classes in their levels of reported vote intentions for Labour for the period between July 1990 and February 1992 also reached statistical significance in each opinion poll. In fact since the F-values for class were usually larger than those for region and constituency type and personal economic expectations, class was the most important of the co-variables in the analysis of variance in Labour reported vote intention (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.3).

The average deviations from the Grand Mean for the sub-divisions of class in the analysis of Labour support illustrates the expected - and conventional - pattern of class support. Class AB was the most hostile of all sections of the electorate to Labour support, while Class DE was the most likely to favour Labour support throughout the period covered by the polls. The C1 class shied away from Labour support - shown by the negative deviations from the Grand Mean, although they were less hostile than Class AB. Class C2 had a marked inclination towards Labour support albeit a more diluted inclination than that of class DE.

6.2 GEOGRAPHY & PARTISANSHIP

6.2.1 COMPRESSED REGION AND REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

The five-fold regional schema was statistically significant at the 0.05 level for every analysis of variance during the poll period between July 1990 and February 1992, when analysed in addition to class and personal economic expectations. Nevertheless, the explanatory force of compressed region was quite small when

compared to the impact of class and personal economic expectations in the explanation of levels of Conservative support - expressed by relatively low F-values in Table 6.1 - compared to those of the co-variables. Similarly the beta values for region tend to be smaller than those for class and personal economic expectations revealing less overall variation within the regional schema than that associated with class and personal economic expectations.

The overall pattern of geographic variation in Conservative reported vote intention in the period between July 1990 and February 1992 was almost identical to that identified in Chapters 3 and 4 by analysis of partisan identification of respondents in the *British Social Attitudes* dataset (see Table 6.2). Respondents from Scotland and Wales and the North of England were the most hostile to Conservative support, while voters based in the South of England were typically the most ardent Conservative supporters and the most likely to identify themselves as probable Conservative voters. Meanwhile, the average deviations from the Grand Means shown in Table 6.2 illustrate that regional characteristics affected the pattern of Labour support in the expected manner - with strong Labour support in the North of England and the Celtic fringe, and weaker Labour reported vote intention in the South of England. Respondents from the Greater London area were - *ceteris paribus* - less likely to support Labour than the average voter, but did flirt with a reported intention to vote Labour on a couple of occasions during the poll period - as they did in the inter-election periods of the 1980s (see Chapters 3 and 4). However, the overall picture of

respondents from Greater London being relatively disinclined to favour Labour is hard to escape.

The extent of variations over time in all regions in Table 6.2 would seem to reveal that the pattern of geographic support for the two major parties was not set in stone during the long-campaign leading up to the 1992 General Election.

Despite this, however, the geographic variation in party support is crucial since it shows that the strength of the core of Conservative support in the Lawson-boom led economic recovery in the 1980s held firm during the 'new' recession of the early 1990s. Southerners did not desert the Conservatives to any extent which would indicate that the economic downturn had upset the relative geographic equilibrium. That is the geographic gap in voting patterns, accentuated under the early Thatcher years and the Lawson boom, did not narrow significantly during the economic downturn (Pattie, Johnston & Fieldhouse, 1994 show that the regional divide narrowed between 1987 and 1992 but did not disappear). Moreover, the areas typified by the decline of staple industries and manufacturing, which had turned against Thatcherism during the 1980s, continued to express a relative disinclination to favour Conservatism. As a result, the geographic skew in the partisanship of the electorate identified throughout the 1980s via the *British Social Attitudes* dataset remained intact during the 1990s, with the South embracing Conservatism and the North and Celtic regions eschewing it (see also Johnston, Pattie and Allsopp; 1988, Johnston & Pattie; 1989a, Pattie and Johnston; 1990a).

Table 6.3: Tests for Geographic Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention

	GM	GM	CLASS				C TYPE				HHEGO				R^2	
	Con	Lbr	F (C)	F (L)	β (C)	β (L)	F(C)	F (L)	β (C)	β (L)	F(C)	F (L)	β (C)	β (L)	Con	Lbr
Jul '90	.323	.421	28.9	27.0	.15	.16	9.1	12.3	.09	.11	60.2	38.3	.27	.22	.129	.108
Aug '90	.307	.406	47.4	34.5	.24	.20	7.7	11.9	.09	.12	21.5	20.3	.16	.16	.113	.097
Sep '90	.333	.370	20.7	25.4	.15	.17	17.0	24.1	.14	.17	38.1	22.3	.21	.16	.100	.098
Oct '90	.313	.381	32.3	23.1	.20	.17	*1.3	5.6	.04	.09	33.6	13.6	.20	.13	.097	.066
Nov '90	.363	.382	31.8	29.2	.20	.20	3.8	6.7	.07	.09	39.6	15.5	.22	.14	.105	.078
Dec '90	.409	.362	38.2	30.8	.21	.19	14.8	17.4	.13	.14	42.8	22.5	.22	.16	.127	.098
Jan '91	.385	.381	29.2	22.8	.19	.18	*0.6	4.1	.03	.07	38.2	10.5	.21	.12	.098	.060
Feb '91	.401	.358	43.2	32.5	.21	.19	11.8	17.5	.12	.14	57.4	27.1	.25	.18	.144	.106
Mar '91	.339	.329	21.4	24.8	.15	.18	10.2	10.4	.11	.11	35.0	9.1	.20	.11	.090	.069
Apr '91	.357	.337	24.9	22.1	.17	.18	10.6	4.8	.11	.07	24.0	6.2	.17	.09	.085	.053
May '91	.322	.380	28.7	23.9	.18	.17	5.7	15.6	.08	.14	68.2	24.3	.28	.17	.129	.087
Jun '91	.323	.386	25.2	i25.7	.17	.18	3.6	10.1	.07	.12	48.0	i18.6	.24	.15	.106	.082
Jul '91	.349	.362	21.5	20.9	.15	.17	7.4	4.4	.10	.08	42.7	10.5	.23	.12	.097	.057
Aug '91	.327	.366	32.2	28.6	.20	.18	7.7	i19.4	.10	.16	26.4	i15.0	.18	.14	.099	.094
Sep '91	.351	.341	24.1	32.1	.16	.20	12.8	17.2	.12	.14	47.9	12.8	.24	.13	.114	.094
Oct '91	.347	.367	40.5	i34.9	.12	.13	17.3	16.1	.08	.09	318.9	i187.9	.54	.44	.342	.250
Nov '91	.349	.327	17.9	23.3	.14	.18	11.4	10.9	.12	.12	44.9	11.8	.24	.12	.102	.073
Jan '92	.354	.344	19.0	29.3	.16	.21	13.7	12.3	.14	.13	31.2	13.4	.20	.13	.096	.091
Feb '92	.336	.361	20.9	25.6	.17	.18	15.3	31.6	.13	.20	31.5	12.7	.21	.13	.103	.107

Table 6.4: Parameters of Geographic Model 2; Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention by Class, Constituency Type and Economic Attitudes

Con	Jul '90	Aug '90	Sep '90	Oct '90	Nov '90	Dec '90	Jan '91	Feb '91	Mar '91	Apr '91	May '91	Jun '91	Jul '91	Aug '91	Sep '91	Oct '91	Nov '91	Jan '92	Feb '92
CLASS																			
AB	.11	.21	.11	.18	.18	.15	.13	.14	.11	.16	.13	.13	.12	.17	.13	.09	.11	.06	.16
c1	.06	.06	.05	.03	.05	.09	.07	.09	.04	.03	.05	.05	.05	.07	.05	.04	.06	.09	.01
c2	-.03	-.07	-.01	-.04	-.05	-.05	.00	-.03	.00	-.02	.00	-.02	-.03	-.05	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.02
DE	-.08	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.10	-.11	-.13	-.13	-.10	-.09	-.11	-.09	-.08	-.10	-.08	-.07	-.08	-.09	-.08
C TYPE																			
Dep/LA	-.05	-.06	-.09	-.02	-.05	-.08	-.02	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.05	-.04	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.05	-.07	-.09	-.09
Service	.01	.03	.03	-.01	.03	.04	.02	-.01	.07	.03	.00	.02	.01	.02	-.04	.00	.06	.03	.03
Affluent	.05	.04	.06	.02	.03	.06	.01	.07	.02	.04	.04	.03	.05	.04	.07	.04	.03	.06	.05
HHEGO																			
Pessimist	-.13	-.09	-.12	-.12	-.14	-.16	-.13	-.15	-.12	-.12	-.19	-.18	-.16	-.12	-.18	-.29	-.16	-.13	-.15
Neutral	.06	.05	.06	.02	.04	.05	.05	.06	.01	.03	.02	.03	.02	.02	.02	-.27	.03	.01	.02
Optimist	.19	.07	.12	.11	.11	.10	.13	.15	.12	.08	.15	.11	.12	.10	.12	.23	.14	.14	.11
Labour	**Jul '90**	**Aug '90**	**Sep '90**	**Oct '90**	**Nov '90**	**Dec '90**	**Jan '91**	**Feb '91**	**Mar '91**	**Apr '91**	**May '91**	**Jun '91**	**Jul '91**	**Aug '91**	**Sep '91**	**Oct '91**	**Nov '91**	**Jan '92**	**Feb '92**
CLASS																			
AB	-.14	-.14	-.17	-.14	-.15	-.13	-.13	-.12	-.13	-.11	-.13	-.14	-.12	-.15	-.13	-.09	-.12	-.12	-.14
c1	-.06	-.08	-.02	-.06	-.06	-.09	-.06	-.08	-.06	-.09	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.10	-.05	-.08	-.09	-.06
c2	.05	.02	.04	.05	.01	.04	.01	.03	.03	.06	.02	.01	.02	.04	.05	.02	.04	.02	.01
DE	.07	.12	.07	.09	.13	.11	.11	.12	.10	.08	.10	.11	.10	.10	.11	.08	.09	.13	.11
C TYPE																			
Dep/LA	.07	.07	.10	.05	.06	.09	.04	.08	.07	.04	.09	.07	.05	.10	.08	.06	.07	.08	.13
Service	-.05	-.06	-.09	-.02	-.04	-.07	-.01	-.01	-.05	-.03	-.02	-.06	-.02	-.07	.00	-.04	-.05	-.02	-.08
Affluent	-.04	-.04	-.04	-.04	-.03	-.05	-.03	-.07	-.04	-.02	-.06	-.03	-.03	-.05	-.07	-.03	-.04	-.06	-.06
HHEGO																			
Pessimist	.12	.10	.09	.09	.09	.12	.06	.11	.07	.06	.11	.12	.08	.09	.10	.28	.08	.10	.10
Neutral	-.08	-.05	-.04	-.05	-.02	-.04	-.01	-.05	-.02	-.01	.00	-.04	-.01	-.01	-.01	.20	-.01	-.03	-.03
Optimist	-.16	-.07	-.10	-.04	-.08	-.07	-.09	-.09	-.05	-.05	-.12	-.06	-.06	-.08	-.06	-.19	-.08	-.06	-.05

There was a deal of vacillation from respondents in Greater London - an area identified with tergiversating Tories in the 1980s - although this may at least in part be due to the sampling procedure in the metropolis (over-concentrating one month on inner-city areas, the next on outer-London suburban areas). Respondents from the Midlands were however also quite likely to alter their predilection for Conservative support from month to month. At the same time, Midlanders vacillated between relative Labour support and reluctance to report an intention to vote Labour in the next General Election, but the overall pattern of their propensity to support Labour was trendless. The Midlands were of course involved in the vanguard of both the Lawson boom recovery and the 'new' recession of the 1990s and represent an area characterised by both old style manufacturing industry in the West Midlands conurbation and the new style service sector more prominent in the East Midlands. As such it is hardly surprising that the level of support for Labour in this region should have no clear pattern during the poll period as the effects of the new recession wore on and bit into existing areas of prosperity. For the record, Labour made significant gains in the West Midlands in the General Election in April 1992 but failed to make the extensive inroads into the East Midlands vote that the party expected or indeed required in order to mount a serious challenge to the Conservative Government.

6.2.2 CONSTITUENCY TYPE AND REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

The three-fold constituency type schema was statistically significant at the 0.05 level in the explanation of Conservative reported vote intention for most - but not quite all - of the analyses of variance conducted during the poll period between July 1990 and

February 1992, when analysed in addition to class and personal economic expectations. In the parallel explanation of Labour reported vote intention, the three-fold constituency type schema was significant each month. However, the relatively small size of the F-scores reported in Table 6.3 reveal that the constituency type schema was the least forceful of the three co-variables in the analysis of variance in the explanation of party support.

The Beta scores in the Conservative model were typically smaller than those for the other variables in the analysis - class and personal economic expectations. This means that the within group variance as well as the between group variance explained by constituency type is inferior to that explained by class and personal economic expectations. On the other hand, the associated Beta values for Labour reported vote intention show that the within group variance of the geographic variable was comparable to that provided by the class and personal economic expectations variables.

The basic pattern of geographic variation in reported vote intention is identical to that expected from the general knowledge of the nature of party support in the 1980s and 1990s. Respondents from areas typified by industrial depression and a high intensity of local authority housing were much less likely to support the Conservatives and much more prone to support the Labour Party than the average respondent when the effects of class and personal economic expectations were controlled for. Those sections of the electorate residing in areas typified by service sector employment and

by affluence were likely - other things being equal - to eschew Labour support. At the same time, respondents from affluent areas were the most likely to support the Conservatives - *ceteris paribus*. Respondents from areas characterised by service sector employment may be typically inclined towards Conservative support but their pro-Conservative bias was diluted during the new recession of the early 1990s.

This pattern of affluent and service sector affinity with the Government fits with two explanations of Conservative support during this period. Firstly it supports the reward-punishment axiom which states that voters reward Governments that deliver prosperity; and various studies have shown that these respondents were the 'biggest winners' in the era of Thatcherism. (see Pattie and Johnston; 1990a, Pattie & Johnston 1990c) Secondly it supports a general thesis that prosperity *per se* delivers voters towards political conservatism regardless of the political colour of the Government.

A critical feature of this pattern of Conservative support is that it fails to highlight the dynamics of the 'new' recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s. This economic downturn hit the service sector disproportionately and it might have been suspected that the strength of any association between areas typified by this type of employment and the governing Conservative Party might have weakened as a consequence. However little support for this notion can be found in the evidence of Table 6.4 as respondents from these areas were typically Conservative supporters throughout the poll period regardless of the 'new' recession. As Chapter 5 showed, the 'temporary

and blameless' recession did not rebound on the Government in the run-up to the 1992 General Election.

The distinction between the effects of the 'new' and 'old' recessions is critical in the analysis of the Thatcher and post-Thatcher environment of British politics. As Table 6.4 illustrates, although the level of relative hostility to Labour among respondents from constituencies characterised by service sector employment was prone to fluctuate in terms of magnitude - as was their pro-Conservative bias - the direction of their antipathy towards Labour was constant. Table 6.4 reveals that the geography of the new recession may have diluted the relative Conservatism of these respondents, but also that they were never pulled into active Labour support. The jolt to the natural heartland of Conservative support provided by the new recession was insufficient to promote large scale desertion of Conservative supporters to Labour. In itself this is not surprising. Traditionally most floating voters flow to or from the centre parties rather than directly between the two main parties. The very real differences in the organisational strength of local parties and the existing electoral settlement in a constituency - with the Liberal Democrats in second place in many Southern seats - would serve only to further complicate the picture of tactical and expressive voting (see Johnston and Pattie; 1991).

6.3 ECONOMIC ATTITUDES & PARTISANSHIP

6.3.1 PERSONAL ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS AND REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

The analysis of personal economic expectations is the prime mover in the analysis of variance in Conservative reported vote intention. The F-scores in Table 6.1 indicate that personal economic expectations regularly outperformed class and region in explaining the pattern of Conservative support. Moreover, the Beta values indicate that personal economic expectations consistently provided the greatest within group variance of the three co-variables in Conservative reported vote intentions. When the three-fold constituency type replaced the five compressed regions as the geographic variable, personal economic expectations remained the most important of all three co-variables, outperfoming class and constituency type both in terms of magnitude of F-scores and the size of the Beta coefficients (Tables 6.3 and 6.4).

For the counterpart analysis of Labour reported vote intentions during the same period a similar claim cannot be made with great confidence. Although personal economic expectations exceeded the 0.05 threshold of statistical significance, the magnitude of F-values for personal economic expectations, while exceeding those for the five compressed regions, was usually exceeded by the F-value for class in the analysis of Labour support. This is perhaps unsurprising. According to the economic orthodoxy, optimists will vote for the Government, but pessimists face a tactical dilemma compounded by the vagaries of the British voting system and the variable

geographic pattern of organisational strength of the parties, having at least two opposition parties to choose from.

The figures presented in Tables 6.2 and 6.4 reveal relative tendencies in Conservative reported vote intentions not absolute numbers. Hence it is feasible for economic optimists to become more likely to support the Conservatives in a period when the absolute number of them declined sharply. In fact as the Grand Means from Table 6.1 illustrate, the extent of Conservative support recovered sharply after the change in leadership in the Autumn of 1990, reaching a peak of 41 per cent of the electorate in December 1990, but tended to fall away slowly thereafter throughout the rest of the recession.

Meanwhile, those sections of the electorate who expressed pessimism about their economic future were liable to exhibit a pro-Labour bias, when the effects of class and geography were held constant. Those respondents who were optimistic about their personal economic future were unlikely to support Labour - other things being equal. An important point to make here is that those respondents who expressed neutrality in their assessment of personal economic futures were also predisposed - *ceteris paribus* - to exhibit a preference for Conservatism for all polls except the rogue poll of October 1992. Remarkably, those sections of the electorate who were neutral about their personal economic prospects were only slightly less likely to eschew Labour support than the economic optimists. Not only were the winners prepared to back the Government but those who felt they would not lose under the policies of the

Government were prepared - *ceteris paribus* - to give them another chance. This provides further evidence of an in-built pro-Conservative (or more specifically pro-Government) bias in the matter of economic attitudes since typically, only those openly dissatisfied with their economic prospects were prepared to voice opposition to the governing Conservative Party. Butler and Kavanagh (1992) and Scammell (1995) both point out that a consistent thread of Conservative electoral strategy was to assert that although the country was in recession, the economy would be much worse under Labour in an attempt to dissipate the anti-Government economic vote.

Overall the trend for reported vote intentions via economic optimism and pessimism is consistent with the economic voting orthodoxy which includes the work of Sanders *et al.* Those sections of the electorate who felt the Government were liable to oversee a period of personal economic prosperity - or at least would not worsen their personal circumstances - would be likely to vote for the continuance of the policies that promote this prosperity. In short, the winners vote for continuity, the losers for change.

Not only does the hypothesis of class, geography and personal economic expectations explain less of the variance in levels of Labour support than for Conservative support, but the impact of personal economic expectations itself also seems to have a differential impact upon Conservative and Labour supporters. In short the salience of personal economic expectations seems greater to Conservative supporters than it does to Labour supporters. This might begin to explain why the Conservative Party tend to gain from concentrating on personal economic issues in

General Elections - and particularly their appeal to egocentrism, and Labour benefit more from appeals to sociotropic sentiments (Crewe 1988, and Garrett, 1994 among others, have held that the Conservatives were popular *despite* their social agenda not because of it). The partisan ownership of these agendas would seem to have been vindicated by the 1992 General Election campaign. In 1992 the Conservatives concentrated on issues of taxation - and their own and their opponents' plans to implement tax policies. Meanwhile Labour were defensive on the question of taxation but were on safer ground when campaigning on sociotropic issues such as the health service, education and welfare.

Clearly the problem of cause and effect need to be addressed. On the one hand, Conservatives seem more susceptible to appeals to their economic interests than Labour supporters. On the other, however, feelings towards the economy seem to have a significant impact upon how people vote. This leaves a conundrum: do economic attitudes influence voters or does partisanship affect the way that voters think about the economy? The more robust LOGIT analysis later in this chapter (see below) will go some way to solving this conundrum.

6.4 ECONOMIC ATTITUDES AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE (The Half-Stage Model)

The next phase of this analysis was the reduction of the model to its two component stages. The effects of class, geography (in its two forms) and personal economic expectations upon partisanship have already been measured. In order to assess the

role of both class and geography in the formation of economic attitudes, it is now necessary to treat economic attitudes as the dependent variable in a 'half stage model', and explore the effects upon personal economic expectations of class and the two types of geography.

The Grand Means for personal economic expectations shown in Tables 6.5 and 6.7 (the parameters for each model are shown in Tables 6.6 and 6.8 respectively), reveal that throughout the poll period, the electorate became more optimistic about the economy over time. They also suggest, however, that this new optimism had peaked and was falling again by the time of the election campaign. Nevertheless, the trend is clear, away from the overwhelming pessimism which characterised the beginning of the poll period - and particularly the last four months of the Thatcher Premiership.

The primary point to make about the analysis of variations in personal economic expectations by class and the two types of geography is that the total amount of explained variance in levels of personal economic expectations is much smaller than the first analysis of partisanship by class, geography and personal economic expectations. The final column in Tables 6.5, and 6.7, which reveal the R^2, show that the total amount of variance in personal economic expectations levels explained by the half stage model is limited. Hence the empirical evidence for the model which states that personal economic expectations are a function of the contextual milieux in which they are formed appears to be weak. If geography has a significant impact upon economic attitudes, it must exert influence in an indirect or unorthodox manner. The

LOGIT analysis presented below indicates that the form of this indirect and unorthodox influence might be the coincidence of geographic and other factors - measured through interaction terms.

Table 6.5: Tests for Half Stage Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Personal Economic Attitudes

	GM	CLASS		REGION		R^2
		F	Beta	F	Beta	
Jul '90	-.246	31.1	.24	*0.6	.04	.059
Aug '90	-.150	19.5	.19	*1.5	.06	.040
Sep '90	-.169	8.3	.13	*0.6	.04	.017
Oct '90	-.047	17.5	.18	*1.0	.05	.036
Nov '90	-.056	6.0	.11	*0.8	.05	.014
Dec '90	-.051	12.6	.15	*0.7	.04	.025
Jan '91	-.148	9.9	.13	2.5	.08	.026
Feb '91	-.136	10.7	.14	*0.8	.04	.022
Mar '91	-.036	8.9	.13	*1.2	.06	.020
Apr '91	-.004	15.2	.17	*0.5	.03	.030
May '91	.014	8.2	.13	*1.9	.07	.020
Jun '91	.017	14.1	.17	*1.5	.06	.031
Jul '91	.029	11.5	.14	*1.5	.06	.025
Aug '91	-.027	10.6	.15	2.5	.08	.027
Sep '91	.066	12.3	.15	2.4	.08	.030
Oct '91	.376	21.6	.20	3.5	.09	.049
Nov '91	-.033	5.8	.11	*1.0	.05	.015
Jan '92	-.053	5.2	.11	*0.4	.03	.012
Feb '92	-.010	10.7	.15	**2.0	.07	.029

Table 6.6: Parameters of Half Stage Model 1; Personal Economic Attitudes by Region and Class

	Jul '90	Aug '90	Sep '90	Oct '90	Nov '90	Dec '90	Jan '91	Feb '91	Mar '91	Apr '91	May '91	Jun '91	Jul '91	Aug '91	Sep '91	Oct '91	Nov '91	Jan '92	Feb '92
CLASS																			
AB	.28	.24	.11	.28	.16	.18	.17	.17	.12	.18	.09	.17	.08	.13	.16	.18	.12	.13	.09
c1	.12	.12	.11	.04	.03	.06	.07	.09	.09	.12	.13	.10	.11	.05	.09	.16	.07	.05	.15
c2	.00	-.09	-.02	-.04	-.06	-.01	-.03	-.05	-.02	-.07	-.06	-.01	.02	.06	-.02	-.08	-.01	-.05	-.08
DE	-.24	-.15	-.13	-.15	-.07	-.14	-.12	-.12	-.13	-.14	-.10	-.17	-.16	-.17	-.15	-.17	-.11	-.07	-.10
REGION																			
Scl/Wal	-.05	.03	.03	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.09	.01	.02	-.04	-.02	.02	.01	.00	.06	-.13	.04	.03	-.02
North	.02	.05	-.01	-.03	.00	.02	.02	-.04	-.06	-.01	.05	-.02	-.07	.03	-.03	.03	-.01	.01	-.08
Mids	.04	-.04	.04	.08	.08	-.06	-.06	-.01	-.02	-.01	.07	.09	.03	.06	-.10	.06	.03	-.03	.04
Gtr L'don	.02	-.08	.02	-.04	-.01	.02	.10	-.03	.03	.04	-.08	-.08	.06	-.16	.08	-.03	-.09	.03	.07
South	-.02	.00	-.04	.01	-.02	.02	.03	.05	.05	.02	-.04	.00	.01	.01	.01	.04	.01	-.02	.03

Table 6.7: Tests for Half Stage Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Personal Economic Attitudes

	GM	CLASS		C TYPE		R^2
		F	Beta	F	Beta	
Jul '90	-.246	31.1	.24	*1.0	.04	.059
Aug '90	-.150	19.6	.19	*0.0	.01	.036
Sep '90	-.169	8.3	.12	*0.8	.03	.017
Oct '90	-.047	17.5	.18	*0.3	.02	.034
Nov '90	-.056	6.0	.11	*0.4	.02	.012
Dec '90	-.051	12.4	.15	*0.2	.02	.023
Jan '91	-.148	9.9	.14	*0.7	.03	.020
Feb '91	-.136	10.7	.14	*0.2	.02	.020
Mar '91	-.036	8.9	.13	*1.6	.04	.019
Apr '91	-.004	15.2	.16	4.0	.07	.033
May '91	.014	8.2	.13	*1.6	.05	.017
Jun '91	.017	14.1	.17	*0.8	.03	.028
Jul '91	.029	11.5	.15	**2.3	.05	.025
Aug '91	-.027	10.5	.15	*1.1	.04	.022
Sep '91	.066	12.2	.15	*0.1	.01	.024
Oct '91	.376	21.6	.19	6.3	.09	.048
Nov '91	-.033	5.8	.11	*0.5	.02	.012
Jan '92	-.053	5.2	.10	*0.1	.01	.011
Feb '92	-.010	10.7	.14	**2.5	.06	.027

Table 6.8: Parameters of Half Stage Model 2; Personal Economic Attitudes by Constituency Type and Class

	Jul '90	Aug '90	Sep '90	Oct '90	Nov '90	Dec '90	Jan '91	Feb '91	Mar '91	Apr '91	May '91	Jun '91	Jul '91	Aug '91	Sep '91	Oct '91	Nov '91	Jan '92	Feb '92
CLASS																			
AB	.28	.24	.10	.28	.16	.19	.16	.17	.13	.18	.09	.17	.08	.13	.16	.18	.11	.13	.08
c1	.11	.11	.10	.05	.03	.06	.08	.09	.09	.12	.13	.10	.12	.05	.09	.15	.06	.05	.15
c2	.00	-.08	-.02	-.04	-.06	-.01	-.03	-.05	-.02	-.06	-.06	-.01	.02	.06	-.02	-.09	-.01	-.05	-.08
DE	-.24	-.15	-.12	-.15	-.07	-.14	-.13	-.12	-.13	-.14	-.10	-.17	-.17	-.17	-.15	-.16	-.10	-.07	-.09
C TYPE																			
Dep/LA	-.03	.00	-.03	.01	.02	.01	.00	.00	-.01	-.05	.03	.02	.01	.02	-.01	-.08	-.01	.00	-.06
Service	-.01	-.01	.03	-.03	-.01	.01	.04	.02	.06	.10	-.06	-.04	.06	-.06	.01	-.01	-.02	.02	.05
Affluent	.03	.00	.01	.00	-.01	-.01	-.02	-.01	-.02	-.01	.01	.01	-.04	.01	.00	.07	.02	-.01	.02

6.4.1 CLASS & ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

6.4.1.1 CLASS AND PERSONAL ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS

Class has the expected impact upon the formation of economic attitudes, especially personal economic expectations. The findings of Chapter 5 which indicated a linear relationship between class and personal optimism are supported here. Tables 6.5 and 6.7 illustrate the impact of social background upon economic outlooks, as the class variable accounts for most of the explained variance in levels of personal economic expectations. The fourfold measurement of class utilised here is statistically significant in every poll in the explanation of deviations in the level of personal economic expectations. Furthermore the F-values and Beta scores associated with class were relatively large scale indicating a deal of explanatory force and within group variation. This would seem to indicate that class is an essential part of the milieux in which personal economic expectations are formulated; hence - and contrary to the model of Rose and McAllister (1990) - class considerations ought to predate the analysis of economic attitudes.

The pattern of relative changes in personal economic expectations according to class is illustrated in Tables 6.6 and 6.8. They reveal that the expected pattern of optimism from the highest class echelons and economic pessimism from the lowest echelons of the class schema held firm over the early 1990s. The most optimistic of all classes were respondents from Class AB, although their relative advantage declined throughout the series as the electorate as a whole became more optimistic. Conversely, respondents from the DE class were the least optimistic of all sections of

the electorate - *ceteris paribus* - although their relative pessimism was diluted by the general (non-specific in class terms) upturn in economic optimism after the end of the Thatcher Premiership and the beginning of the long campaign.

Between these polar groups the pattern was again much as expected from the general hypothesis. Respondents from Class C2 were generally more pessimistic about their personal economic future than the average voter; while respondents from the C1 Class were typically optimistic about their economic future but were nevertheless markedly less optimistic than their cohorts in Class AB.

6.4.2 GEOGRAPHY & ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

If social class constitutes part of the milieux in which attitudes are structured, and if geographic variation is shown to be significant in the analysis of partisanship - or reported vote intention, then it would be reasonable to expect that geography would also form part of the milieux in which the attitudes that structure partisanship are formed. The hypothesis under scrutiny, then, is that either of both of the operationalisations of geography - the five compressed regions and the three constituency types - ought to play a significant role in the formation of personal economic expectations attitudes.

Despite the stated aim of this thesis to show that geography constitutes the context in which economic attitudes are formed, the initial result from the poll data damages this notion. In fact the null hypothesis that the five compressed regions and attitudes to the

personal economy are not related cannot be refuted by the separate analysis of personal economic expectations here.

The analysis of personal economic expectations by regional distinctions fails to breach the 0.05 threshold of statistical significance on all but four occasions during the poll period between July 1990 and February 1992. Moreover, as Table 6.5 shows, even when the five compressed regions were significant the explanatory force they provide is tiny, their associated F-values were not high and the Beta scores were small. Only a tenuous link between either of the geographic schema and personal economic expectations could be forged (Tables 6.5 and 6.6). While region in general was relatively unimportant, specific regions did differ markedly from the national trend; regression analysis reported later in this chapter explore this in more detail.

Table 6.9: Tests for Major Succession Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention

	GM	GM	CLASS		CLASS		REGION		REGION		HHEGO		HHEGO		R^2	R^2
	Con	Lbr	F (C)	β (C)	F (L)	β (L)	F (C)	β (C)	F (L)	β (L)	F (C)	β (C)	F (L)	β (L)	Con	Lbr
Thatcher	.319	.394	i123.4	.18	i107.6	.18	i24.4	.12	30.6	.14	150.8	.21	i95.7	.17	.110	.093
Mjr 1-4mths	.384	.358	128.2	.20	i110.4	.19	25.6	.12	i29.4	.13	163.9	.22	61.7	.14	.115	.084
Major	.355	.357	i363.7	.18	i368.3	.19	i85.9	.12	i111.0	.14	i528.0	.21	202.9	.13	.105	.085

Table 6.10: Parameters of Major Succession Model 1; Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention by Class, Region and Economic Attitudes

	Thatcher	Mjr 1-4 mths	Major	Thatcher	Mjr 1-4mths	Major
CLASS	Con	Con	Con	Lbr	Lbr	Lbr
AB	.16	.14	.14	-.15	-.13	-.13
c1	.05	.08	.06	-.06	-.08	-.08
c2	-.04	-.02	-.03	.04	.03	.03
DE	-.09	-.12	-.10	.09	.11	.11
REGION						
Sct/Wal	-.10	-.10	-.10	.06	.06	.06
North	-.02	-.03	-.03	.07	.07	.08
Mids	.01	.04	.04	.01	.00	-.01
Gtr L'don	.05	.07	.05	-.05	-.05	-.03
South	.06	.04	.05	-.09	-.08	-.08
HHEGO						
Pessimist	-.12	-.14	-.14	.10	.09	.09
Neutral	.05	.04	.01	-.05	-.03	-.01
Optimist	.12	.12	.12	-.08	-.07	-.08

Table 6.11: Tests for Major Succession Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention

	GM	GM	CLASS		CLASS		C TYPE		C TYPE		HHEGO		HHEGO		R^2	R^2
	Con	Lbr	F (C)	β (C)	F (L)	β (L)	F (C)	β (C)	F (L)	β (L)	F (C)	β (C)	F (L)	β (L)	Con	Lbr
Thatcher	.319	.394	i122.2	.18	i107.0	.17	i29.0	.09	49.7	.12	145.7	.21	i91.2	.17	.104	.089
Mjr 1-4mths	.384	.358	127.4	.19	109.8	.18	27.0	.09	44.4	.12	166.7	.22	65.5	.14	.109	.081
Major	.355	.357	i361.6	.17	i366.4	.18	ii114.4	.10	i168.5	.12	i527.3	.21	203.5	.13	.101	.080

Table 6.12: Parameters of Major Succession Model 2; Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention by Class, Constituency Type and Economic Attitudes

	Thatcher	Mjr 1-4mths	Major	Thatcher	Mjr 1-4mths	Major
CLASS	Con	Con	Con	Lbr	Lbr	Lbr
AB	.15	.13	.13	-.15	-.13	-.13
c1	.05	.07	.06	-.06	-.07	-.07
c2	-.04	-.02	-.03	.04	.03	.03
DE	-.09	-.12	-.10	.09	.11	.11
C TYPE						
Dep/LA	-.05	-.06	-.06	.08	.07	.08
Service	.01	.03	.02	-.05	-.03	-.04
Affluent	.04	.04	.04	-.04	-.05	-.05
HHEGO						
Pessimist	-.12	-.14	-.14	.10	.09	.09
Neutral	.05	.04	.01	-.05	-.03	-.01
Optimist	.12	.12	.12	-.08	-.07	-.08

6.5 THE ACCESSION OF JOHN MAJOR

One of the features of the time scale which the *NOP/Newsnight* set of opinion polls span, is the array of political shocks that occurred during the period. Three obvious shocks are apparent; the Poll Tax (first implemented in England and Wales in March 1990, the Gulf War (during the Autumn and Winter of 1990/1) and the succession of John Major to the Premiership (in November 1990). Any account of public opinion and of domestic politics during this time ought to be able to take some of these features into account. For the purposes of this thesis it is important not to lose focus on the central relationship between geography, economic attitudes and electoral behaviour, but a simple account of any change in this relationship due to one of these shocks - the Major succession - may be attempted (There is a wide literature on the impact of 'political shocks'. See for instance Sanders *et al* 1987, 1990, Norpoth 1987, and Clarke and Whiteley 1990).

6.5.1 COMPARING THATCHER WITH MAJOR

Margaret Thatcher's departure from the Premiership on November 22 1990 and John Major's succession one week later meant that the fieldwork for one poll (November 1990) fell into the interim period between Prime Ministers. It was possible to construct a dataset which compared the final four full months of the Thatcher Premiership, the first four months of Major's reign (the honeymoon period) and the rest of the Major Premiership until the end of the series in February 1992.

The Grand Means for Conservative and Labour reported vote intention shown in Table 6.9 reveal that the level of public support for the Conservatives increased after the political demise of Mrs Thatcher. Furthermore, although the initial spurt of support that provided by the succession of John Major (a Grand Mean of .384 for his first four full months in charge is equitable to 38.4 per cent of public support for the Conservatives) did decay afterwards, the absolute level of Conservative reported vote intentions did not slip back to the nadir of the end of the Thatcher period. Labour reported vote intention declined after the fall of Thatcher from an average of 39.4 per cent to 35.7 per cent of public support (Table 6.9). It appeared, initially at least, as though John Major was able to neutralise a potential surge in Labour popularity in the run-up to the 1992 Election. This is supported by scrutiny of the parameter tables (Table 6.10 and 6.12) which illustrate that Major's initial electoral appeal was general rather than specific, boosting Conservative support in every group of social class, geographic location and economic outlook.

The basic model which associates class, region and personal economic expectations with levels of Conservative support explains around 11 per cent of the total variance in Conservative reported vote intentions for the last four months of the Thatcher Premiership and nine per cent of the variance in Labour support (Table 6.9). A similar story emerges when constituency type replaced region in the parallel analysis of party support under Margaret Thatcher and her successor (see Table 6.11).

All of the co-variables in the analysis of variance of Conservative reported vote intentions were significant at the 0.05 level (Tables 6.9 and 6.11). Of these co-variables personal economic expectations appears to be the primary factor in explaining Conservative support. It also provides the largest source of within group Conservative reported vote intention variance. In the Labour model however, class proved a more potent explanatory variable than personal economic expectations; no doubt due in part to the split opposition but it also points yet again to the monopoly over economic evaluations that the Conservatives had.

The relative pattern of party support by class, geography and personal economic expectations is reported in Tables 6.10 and 6.12. People from Class AB were most prone to support the Conservatives in the final phase of the Thatcher Premiership, while Class DE were the most reluctant Conservatives. The relative support of Class AB actually declines after John Major's accession, while respondents from Class DE seemed to move further away from the Conservative Government in relative terms. This may mean that as well as a general increase in the overall electability of the Conservative Party, John Major brought with him a specific appeal to the middle range of social classes: classes C1 and C2 were apparently more likely to support the Government after Margaret Thatcher's removal from Office.

The relative leanings of the Labour electorate according to class, geography and personal economic expectations (Tables 6.10 and 6.12) were not altered by the Major succession, although Class DE - the most potent source of Labour support - became

even more sympathetic to Labour and Class AB less antipathetic to Labour after Margaret Thatcher's removal in November 1990.

Geographically, Scots and Welsh respondents and those from depressed areas, were the most disinclined to favour the Conservative Government - whether led by Thatcher or Major. On the other hand, Greater Londoners, Southerners and respondents from areas characterised by affluence were the most likely to express a preponderance to support the Thatcher-led Conservative Party. Economic pessimism was an indication of relative hostility to Conservative support while Optimism (and to a lesser degree Neutrality) indicated a predilection for a pro-Conservative stance. After the Major succession it appears that the new Prime Minister's 'honeymoon' was clearest in the Midlands (Table 6.10) - a region associated with tergiversating Tories in the 1980s, which represented a key electoral battleground and a region where both the 'new' and 'old' recessions had impacted. At the same time he seemed to lose some of the relative support of those who felt 'neutral' about their economic prospects, although the immediate decrease in the number of 'pessimists' may have influenced this.

Moving on to the half stage model of economic attitudes rather than partisanship, it is clear that, under Thatcher, neither type of geography was able to account for a significant degree of variation in the level of public economic optimism (Table 6.13 and Table 6.15). However, for the first four months of the Major Premiership the standard regional divide in electoral geography reappeared - with a pessimistic Celtic fringe, North and Midlands, and an optimistic South and Greater London (Table 6.14).

Constituency type failed to account for significant variation in personal economic expectations even during the major honeymoon period (Tables 6.15 and 6.16). Nevertheless, the Major succession provided the Conservatives with an opportunity to benefit from the re-opening of the North-South divide in economic optimism during the first four months of his premiership (Tables 6.13 and 6.14). The traditional heartlands of Conservatism were seemingly more inclined to believe that the new recession was either 'temporary' or 'blameless' than before the fall of Mrs. Thatcher.

Table 6.13: Tests for Major Honeymoon Half Stage Model 1; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Personal Economic Attitudes

	GM	CLASS		REGION		R^2
		F	Beta	F	Beta	
Thatcher	-.153	68.7	.18	*0.8	.02	.033
Mjr 1-4mths	-.093	41.1	.13	2.4	.04	.021
Major	.004	128.5	.13	*1.3	.02	.018

Table 6.14: Parameters of Major Honeymoon Half Stage Model 1; Personal Economic Attitudes by Region and Class

	Thatcher	Mjr 1-4mths	Major
CLASS			
AB	.23	.16	.13
c1	.10	.08	.10
c2	-.04	-.03	-.03
DE	-.17	-.13	-.13
REGION			
Sct/Wal	.00	-.02	-.01
North	.01	-.01	-.01
Mids	.03	-.04	.01
Gtr L'don	-.02	.03	.00
South	-.01	.04	.01

Table 6.15: Tests for Major Honeymoon Half Stage Model 2; F-Values and Beta Coefficients, Personal Economic Attitudes

	GM	CLASS		C TYPE		R^2
		F	Beta	F	Beta	
Thatcher	-.153	68.7	.18	*0.5	.01	.033
Mjr 1-4mths	-.093	41.1	.14	*2.0	.02	.020
Major	.004	128.5	.13	*2.0	.01	.018

Table 6.16: Parameters of Major Honeymoon Half Stage Model 2; Personal Economic Attitudes by Constituency Type and Class

	Thatcher	Mjr 1-4mths	Major
CLASS			
AB	.23	.16	.13
c1	.10	.08	.09
c2	-.04	-.03	-.03
DE	-.16	-.13	-.13
C TYPE			
Dep/LA	-.01	.00	-.01
Service	.00	.03	.01
Affluent	.01	-.02	.00

6.6 DRAWBACKS OF THE ANOVA MODELS AND THE CASE FOR REGRESSION

The ANOVA and Multiple Classification Analyses used in this section of the thesis have pointed to the broad inter-relationship between class, geography and economic attitudes and then vote intention. They have suggested that there is little support for the hypothesis that geography forms an essential part of the milieu in which economic attitudes are formed. A more detailed analysis which looks at the association between variables at a lower level (or through a finer filter - looking at regions *individually* rather than as a whole) might prove more useful in explaining the role of geography and economic attitudes in the voting process.

Furthermore, the most striking asset of the *NOP/Newsnight* data when compared to the *British Social Attitudes* data is that the poll data allows analysis based on temporal

considerations - a quasi-time series is possible. This data provided a host of individual monthly polls, each gathered within a day or two, thus eliminating the possibility of contamination by a lengthy delay between the start and end of surveys. A model was constructed comprising all the data combined from all the monthly polls, with dummy variables for each month of the series.

The regression analysis used here uses a technique with two distinct advantages: firstly, because it treats the monthly poll data as a 'trend', it enables the fitting of time as an explicit dimension - thus enabling a more rigorous exploration of temporally specific phenomena such as the 'honeymoon period' of the Conservative Party under John major; secondly it benefits from much larger numbers than the twenty-two snapshots of public opinion obtained for the ANOVA modelling.

So far the analysis for this thesis has suggested that although geography can account for significant variation in the reported vote intention of the British electorate, it cannot account for variation in the construction of economic attitudes. Nonetheless, the ANOVA modelling remains a broad sweep technique which illustrates a fair deal but might still leave some aspects of variation unexplained. For instance, while the ANOVA modelling has shown that the compressed regional schema has no overall effect on the construction of personal economic expectations, a more robust method of modelling might reveal aspects of the regional cleavage which can explain variation within the broader picture. In the case of geography this might be particularly important, for while ANOVA looks for significant variations across *all* regions, other

methods might give a better view of what occurs in *individual* regions. Multiple regression analysis might provide this insight, it would also enable the building of an equation for party support. For this reason the emphasis of the rest of this thesis shifts from the Analysis of Variance to Regression analysis. Two types of regression analysis were undertaken; Ordinary Least Squares and Logistic Regression analysis.

Moreover a regression analysis approach permitted a more detailed look at some of the interaction effects which the ANOVA analysis hinted were occasionally significant. Thus the effects of interactions between class and economic evaluations, region and economic evaluations, constituency type and economic evaluations, and the more conventional class geographic and economic cleavages could all be measured simultaneously with a chronological dimension designed to measure the effects of political shocks such as the Major succession. This, then, is the next and final stage of this thesis.

6.7 DATA PRESENTATION

The regression tables used in this chapter report the regression coefficients, standard error and significance levels of the independent variables. The logistic regression tables are similar but report the exponent of B (the odds-ratio) rather than significance levels. As a general rule of thumb a B coefficient which is twice the size of its own standard error is statistically significant. For both types of regression tables, only those variables which assumed statistical significance at or below the 0.1 level are reported. An asterisk denotes an insignificant variable. Each type of table also reports

the appropriate diagnostic statistics; R^2, adjusted R^2, standard error, F and the significance of F in the ordinary least squares model; original and improved 2 log likelihoods, improvement figures and significance tests for the logistic regression model.

6.8 THE VARIABLES:

The following variables were used in this analysis. The dependent variables Conservative and Labour reported vote intention were dichotomised so that a score of 1 equalled a reported vote intention for that party, a score of zero denoted some other outcome (including reported vote intentions for other parties, and don't knows and refusals). Categoric independent variables were taken and each of their categories was expressed as a binary dummy variable. This enabled the fitting of categoric data in an unambiguous fashion.

When dichotomies or dummy variables were used, one category for each of the independent variables is left out of the model. The reported coefficients for the other categories of each variable should be seen in relation to this comparator category. The comparator categories were February 1992, the South of England, Affluent areas, Class DE and personal economic pessimism. In all cases, the comparator category was the most populous category of the independent variable from which it was constructed. The B coefficient for Conservative reported vote intention presented in Table 6.17 for respondents from the CELT region (Scotland and Wales) was -.11. The direction of the coefficient shows that these respondents were less likely than

Southern respondents to express an intention of voting for the Conservative Party. The magnitude of the coefficient shows the intensity of this likelihood; so for instance the B coefficient of -.11 for the CELT category and of -.05 for the NORTH category illustrated that both groups of respondents were less likely to express a reported vote intention for the Conservatives than the SOUTH comparator category, but whereas the Northern respondents were only five percentage points below the Southern Conservative share, the Scots and Welsh were eleven percentage points below the Southern average for Conservative reported vote intention, other things being equal.

The relatively small size of the series - there were only 19 consecutive monthly polls where the personal economic expectations question was asked - effectively ruled out an attempt to model party support through time series analysis. Since time series analysis invariably involves the construction of lags and leads for independent variables, too much data would be lost from an already small trail of data. It was possible however to use a temporal variable in the regression model in order to assess the impact of time-related phenomena upon party support. Hence time remains a feature of the data series by becoming an independent variable, a monthly variable and, in the logistic regressions, a variable constructed from the lagged level of party support.

Month: divides the 19 separate months in which the personal economic expectations question was asked in the *NOP/Newsnight* series of Opinion Polls. The 18 monthly dummies were compared to the last poll - FEBRUARY 1992 - which serves as the

base month against which the impact of each poll is compared. This permitted the testing for particular 'period' effects in the poll series upon levels of party support and economic attitudes. For example much will be made of the honeymoon period of John Major's regime after he became Prime Minister in November 1990.

Region: divides the five geographic regions of mainland Britain into discrete regions. Four regional dummies, CELT (respondents from Scotland and Wales), NORTH, MIDLANDS, and LONDON were compared to SOUTH the 'baseline' group.

Constituency Type: is a measure of the functional use of space which divided the British electorate into three categoric groups. Two constituency type dummies, DEPLA (respondents from constituencies typified by industrial depression and local authority housing), and SERVICE (respondents from areas characterised by service sector employment) were set against AFFLUENT (respondents from high status economically prosperous areas) which serves as the default comparator category.

Class: is the respondent's occupational class as measured by the *NOP/Newsnight* pollsters. The schema used is the ABC1 scale leaving four class dummies CLASS AB, CLASS C1, and CLASS C2 and a comparator category CLASS DE.

Personal Economic Expectations: divides the three combinations of economic outlooks of respondents for the next twelve months. This allows two economic

expectation dummies OPTIMISM and NEUTRALITY to be compared to a baseline variable called PESSIMISM.

Share: This is a non-dichotomous lagged measure of party support at any one monthly poll in relation to its level of support in the preceding month. The value of the 'share' variable in any given month, is the proportion of the previous month's poll level of support for the party. In other words, it is equivalent to the percentage of overall support for the party lagged by one month. For the estimates of Conservative reported vote intention, the appropriate variable is called CONSHARE, for Labour reported vote intention it is called LBRSHARE.

These 'share' variables ought to pick up any 'bandwagon' or 'boomerang' effects of the polls themselves as voters use the poll evidence in order to instruct their voting behaviour. Traditionally, opinion polls have been criticised for an in-built tendency to be self-fulfilling; instructing electoral behaviour rather than reflecting it. This self-fulfilment galvanises the predicted result either as electors opt to join the winning side or decline to vote for their preferred party since the poll show no chance of victory. This alone ought to make the party share variable worthy of study; the context of the 1992 Election makes its inclusion in the model imperative.

According to some analysts, the polls in the run up to the 1992 General Election may have contributed to their own inaccuracy in this way as voters perceived a clear prospect of a Labour victory and reacted against it. The consequent late swing to the

Conservatives directly from Labour and particularly from the Liberal Democrats led some to conclude that the polls in 1992 were in effect 'self-falsifying' (Denver, 1994; p. 131).

6.9 LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL 1: CONSERVATIVE AND LABOUR REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

The linear regression models of both Conservative and Labour reported vote intentions from July 1990 until February 1992 are presented in Table 6.17. All variables were entered into the equation but only those variables that yielded results which were significant to the 0.1 level are presented here.

The linear regression model specified here explained about 11% of the total variance in Conservative reported vote intention during the period July 1990 - February 1992 (see Table 6.17). The adjusted R^2 may not seem particularly high but the lack of auto-confirmatory variables in the model, such as previous vote records, attitudes to issues, public approval of party leaders and strength of partisanship ought to be noted. The desire for parsimony meant that a model had to be constructed which was logically straightforward, and it was particularly crucial that this model avoided the confusion that some studies have introduced by mixing geographic criteria with artefacts which ought logically to occur as a result of geographic phenomena (see for instance Rose and McAllister, 1990, McAllister and Studlar, 1992).

The amount of variance explained by the models (shown by the adjusted R^2 statistic) is quite low for both models - but the Conservative model slightly outperforms the Labour counterpart. Nevertheless, the sheer size of the sample (31,000 respondents spread over 20 months) and the absence of auto-correlated variables such as previous voting behaviour or attitudes to party policy and leaderships would not give cause for hope the such a model would yield a high value for R^2 anyway. The slightly better performance of the Conservative model tends to support the claim made earlier that the Conservatives 'owned' the economic issues during this period - and benefited disproportionately from the upturn in economic optimism during the run up to the 1992 General Election.

6.9.1 TEMPORAL EFFECTS ON REPORTED VOTE INTENTION: THE MAJOR HONEYMOON PERIOD

The premier note of interest about the linear regression model for Conservative reported vote intention is that the poll month itself was of limited significance. By and large the timing of the questions had little effect on the responses of the British electorate (see Table 6.17). However, there is an important exception to this general trend of temporal insignificance. The linear regression model shows that there was a significant increase in Conservative support in the month in which Margaret Thatcher was ousted, which lasted for the first three months of the Major Premiership. Thus the Major honeymoon was a distinct and identifiable phenomena and was highly statistically significant. However, it was also short-lived; the changeover month coefficient (November 1990) was only significant to the .06 level.

The direction of the monthly B coefficients for the demise of Thatcher and the succession of Major also reveals that the change in personnel had a positive influence of Conservative fortunes while the magnitude of the same coefficients demonstrates that John Major's initial popularity as Conservative leader amounted to more than the simple fact that he was not Mrs Thatcher since the coefficient for the first three months of his Premiership were all larger than the positive coefficient gained in the changeover month of November 1990.

Major's, honeymoon period was significant in terms of Conservative reported vote intention for only three months, falling into statistical insignificance thereafter. The only other polls which in themselves were significant to the 0.1 level occur at the end of the series and have contradictory effects of similar magnitude. October 1991 (the month in which both Conservative and Labour Party Conferences were held, and incidentally when a November election was finally ruled out) proved to be a drag on Conservative support - when compared to February 1992 - but November 1991 saw a turnaround in Conservative fortunes. It ought to be noted however that not only do these coefficients cancel each other out, their absolute magnitude is about half the size of those for the Major honeymoon period of December 1990 to February 1991. The suggestion is that the John Major honeymoon was short-lived; he was not much of an electoral asset over Margaret Thatcher in the run up to the 1992 General Election.

The timing of the monthly polls on the pattern of support for the Labour Party differs from that for Conservative reported vote intention quite substantially. Primarily it can be seen that only two polls towards the end of the series - October and November 1991 - were significantly different from the comparator poll month February 1992 for the pattern of support for both main parties. Moreover and perhaps more surprisingly the Major honeymoon period which increased Conservative support between November 1990 and February 1991 had no discernible effect on the variance in Labour support during this period. Although John Major may have proved an electoral asset for the Conservatives, he did not apparently attract substantial support away from Labour - he merely neutralised their electoral appeal.

Labour did benefit in the first two monthly polls of the economic attitudes series, in July and August 1990, when Mrs Thatcher's personal popularity was at its nadir. This makes the failure of John Major's political honeymoon period all the more surprising. Thereafter in only three months was the level of Labour support significantly different from the level in February 1992. The direction and magnitude of the coefficients associated with these months is uneven. Labour lost support in March 1991 but had recovered by October of the same year; this recovery was reversed again the following month. Overall, then, once the Thatcher era was over, Labour support fell to a steady level and did not recover significantly before the election.

6.9.2 REGIONAL EFFECTS ON REPORTED VOTE INTENTION:

The familiar North-South divide in voting behaviour appears to be relevant to the likelihood of Conservative reported vote intention throughout the poll period between July 1990 and February 1992. The negative B coefficient for the CELT and NORTH variables reveals that Conservative reported vote intention in these groups was markedly less widespread than among Southern respondents. The magnitude of the coefficients reveals the extent of the regional antipathy to Conservative reported vote intention; respondents in Scotland and Wales were the most antipathetic to the Conservatives, but respondents in Northern England were also less likely to express Conservative reported vote intention than their Southern counterparts.

Although the CELT and NORTH regions were shown to be significantly different to (and much more disinclined to support the Conservatives) than the comparator category SOUTH, respondents from the Midlands and London did not seem to be significantly different to their counterparts in the South of England in their preponderance to express reported vote intention for the Conservatives. Thus the real difference in geographic voting patterns in the run up to the 1992 Election was that between Northern Britain and the rest of the country not between the Midlands, London and the South.

Analysis of the regional variations in Labour reported vote intention in Table 6.17 reveals that while the North-South divide in Conservative voting behaviour was a fairly straightforward phenomenon, for Labour voting it was altogether more complex. The

Scots and Welsh were the least likely to support the Conservatives. They were also more likely to support Labour than were Southerners, but voters in the North of England - where the absence of Nationalist parties meant that the anti-Conservative vote was split between two rather than three opposition parties - were the most likely to support Labour. Furthermore, although the MIDS and LDON variables appeared indistinguishable from the SOUTH comparator category for Conservative reported vote intention, respondents in the Midlands and the capital were more likely to vote Labour than their Southern counterparts according to the B coefficients for Labour reported vote intention.

This may be a reflection of the state of political party organisation in the regions. Thus while the anti-Conservative vote in the North of England was likely to transfer directly to Labour, in Scotland and Wales it could transfer to the Nationalist parties. Furthermore in parts of the South of England, opposition to the Conservatives may have been better mobilised by the Liberal Democrats than by Labour, whereas in the capital and especially in the Midlands, the electoral contest was better characterised by an old style two party battle between the Conservatives and Labour. Hence anti-Conservatives in the Midlands were likely to transfer their reported vote intention to Labour, but in the South - and to a lesser extent in Scotland - they may have gone to a third party.

6.9.3 CONSTITUENCY TYPE EFFECTS ON REPORTED VOTE INTENTION:

The threefold constituency type schema was significantly related to the preponderance of individuals to express an intention to vote Conservative between 1990 and 1992 (Table 6.17). The B coefficients were all in the expected direction. Respondents from depressed areas and those typified by local authority housing were more disinclined to support the Conservatives than their counterparts in those constituencies typified as affluent. Respondents from SERVICE areas were also less Conservative than those in the AFFLUENT comparator group but the smaller magnitude in this variables B coefficient reveals that their hostility to Conservative reported vote intention was more dilute than those respondents from the DEPLA areas.

The impact of the functional use of space on Labour support was much as expected. Respondents from areas characterised by depression and local authority housing were much more likely to identify with the Labour Party than their counterparts in the Affluent areas of the country. Although respondents from areas characterised by service sector employment were slightly less likely to express a preference for the Conservative Party than their counterparts in the AFFLUENT constituency type, the SERVICE dummy variable proved insignificant for the parallel model of Labour reported vote intention. Again this may be due to the vagaries of party organisation; the Liberal Democrats being more likely to form the real opposition to the Conservatives in these seats than the Labour Party. Thus although apparently counter-intuitive, and in comparison with affluent areas, the SERVICE constituency

type variable was relatively poor ground for the Conservatives. However, it remained far from encouraging for Labour between July 1990 and February 1992.

6.9.4 CLASS EFFECTS ON REPORTED VOTE INTENTION:

The effect of social class on Conservatism appears to be exactly that which was expected prior to this analysis (Table 6.17). CLASS DE the comparator group was expected to be the most hostile of all sections of the electorate to Conservatism, and the positive B coefficients for the other class dummies reveal that all other social classes were more likely to express a reported vote intention for the Conservatives than the lowest social class. Furthermore the magnitude of the coefficients shows that the further up the social scale one looks, the more likely it is that one would encounter a pro-Conservative stance. The relationship between social class and Conservatism appears to be almost perfectly linear.

The expected relationship between class and reported vote intention worked equally well for both main parties. The higher up the social scale a respondent was, the more likely it was that his or her reported vote intention would go to the Conservative Party. Conversely Labour had its heartland of support in the lowest social strata, and managed to perform progressively worse in the other social classes. Once again the linear relationship between class and vote intention is supported by the analysis of support for both main parties.

6.9.5 PERSONAL ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON REPORTED VOTE INTENTION:

A primary thrust of this thesis - that economic attitudes influence voting behaviour - appears to be supported by the linear regression model presented in Table 6.17. Those optimistic about their economic future were the most prone to express Conservative reported vote intention, but the positive and large coefficient for those expressing neutral views about their own economic future were also much more likely to express Conservative reported vote intention than their counterparts who express pessimism about their economic future. Presumably those with no axe to grind with the Government about their economic future had no reason to vote against them. Whether economic neutrals merely plumped for 'the devil they know' will become clearer when the issue of blame is considered towards the end of this chapter.

For economic attitudes the pattern of Labour support provided the mirror image of the pattern of Conservative support. Economic optimists were prone to support the Conservatives (in relation to the comparator PESSIM group) and were also clearly disposed to be anti-Labour in the parallel study of Labour reported vote intention - when compared to economic pessimists. Furthermore, those who expressed neutrality in their personal economic expectations were less likely to express support for the Labour Party than those who were pessimistic about their own personal future. This would tend to suggest that the Conservative ownership of the economic dimension of electoral politics has positive results for them not just among voters who felt things

would get better for them but also among those who felt their economic prospects would not change.

The next phase of this thesis is to explore the extent to which economic optimism is regionally varied, and the localised impact of these variations on party support. For this a model was constructed which examined economic attitudes and regional interactions via the LOGIT regression technique.

Table 6.17: The Impact of Month, Region, Constituency Type, Class and Economic Attitudes on Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention July 1990 - February 1992 (Linear Regression)

	CONID			LBRID		
VARIABLE	**Beta**	**S E**	**Sig**	**Beta**	**S E**	**Sig**
Jul '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.04	.016	.014
Aug '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.03	.016	.081
Sep '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Oct '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nov '90 (vs Feb '92)	.03	.016	.055	*	*	*
Dec '91 (vs Feb '92)	.08	.016	.000	*	*	*
Jan '91 (vs Feb '92)	.07	.016	.000	*	*	*
Feb '91 (vs Feb '92)	.09	.016	.000	*	*	*
Mar '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	-.04	.017	.027
Apr '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
May '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jun '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jul '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Aug '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Sep '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Oct '91 (vs Feb '92)	-.04	.017	.020	.05	.017	.008
Nov '91 (vs Feb '92)	.03	.017	.090	-.05	.017	.007
Jan '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CELT (vs South)	-.11	.009	.000	.10	.009	.000
NORTH (vs South)	-.05	.008	.000	.12	.009	.000
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	.05	.009	.000
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	.04	.009	.000
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	-.06	.007	.000	.06	.007	.000
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	-.02	.007	.022	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs ClassDE)	.23	.008	.000	-.23	.008	.000
CLASSC1 (vs ClassDE)	.15	.007	.000	-.17	.007	.000
CLASSC2 (vs ClassDE)	.06	.007	.000	-.06	.007	.000
OPTIM (vs Pessim)	.26	.007	.000	-.17	.007	.000
NEUTRAL (vs Pessim)	.16	.006	.000	-.10	.006	.000
CONSTANT	.16	0.14	.000	.46	.014	.000

	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std Error	N	F	Sig F
CONID	.11	.11	.448	30093	128.0	.000
LBRID	.09	.09	.461	30093	98.3	.000

6.10 THE CASE FOR LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Ordinary Least Squares regression has several advantages over the ANOVA modelling of party support. Nevertheless it in itself is far from perfect. Greene points out that the error terms in this type of approach are:

> heteroscedastic in a way that depends on β. (1993; p. 637)

Critically, it treats the error terms for the dependent variable as normally distributed - an assumption which cannot be sustained for a dichotomous variable such as party support, where possible responses can only have the values of one (party supporter) or zero (non-supporter). A binary response does not run from zero to infinity and hence OLS estimates are likely to give biased and nonsensical estimates. To this end, and despite its widespread use in the modelling of party support (see for instance Rose and McAllister 1990), it is not a wholly satisfactory method for predicting levels of party support. A preferable method involves logistic regression or LOGIT modelling which can be used for predicting values for dichotomous dependent variables. Moreover since this method is more robust it ought to enable the interaction effects between geography and economic attitudes to be modelled with greater confidence.

Furthermore, this type of regression analysis has the distinct advantage over least square variants of regression since it allows for the predictive values of the B coefficients to be expressed in terms of log-odds ratios which seem intuitively preferable. In least squares linear regression modelling it is common to predict that an individual could have a chance of greater than 1 (or less than 0) of following a certain

outcome. This is clearly senseless for modelling Government support, since an individual cannot have a chance of voting for a party that is equal to greater than one or less than zero (see also Gujarati 1992). As Greene has it the failure to constrain $\beta' \chi$ to the zero-one interval

> produces both nonsense probabilities and negative variances. In view of this, the linear model is becoming less frequently used except as a basis for comparison to some other more appropriate models. (1993; p. 637)

Some authors have attempted to rescue the linear regression model, or have attempted to modify it, but even in studies where its shortcomings have been noted

> the resulting estimator may have no known sampling properties (1993; p. 637 footnote)

From LOGIT modelling then it is possible to arrive at estimated probabilities of party support for individuals that are fairly robust and as Paulson states 'more sticky' than for least squares linear modelling (Paulson, 1994; p. 98), in that the probabilities it produces make more intuitive sense at the top and bottom of the scale.

The odds-ratios produced by LOGIT modelling represents the multiplier by which the constant can be combined in order to produce the final impact of the variable. An odds-ratio of less than one means that an event is less likely to happen; a ratio of more than one means that the event is more likely to happen. So for example, Table 6.18 which shows the LOGIT models for economic optimism and pessimism can be interpreted in the following manner. The exponents of the B coefficients (the odds ratio) for personal economic optimism in July 1990 was 0.74, and 1.22 for October

1990. This can be interpreted that in July 1990 respondents were only 0.74 times as likely (and therefore less likely) to be optimistic about their personal economic future as respondents from the comparator poll in February 1992; while in October 1990, respondents were 1.22 times as likely (and thus more likely) to be optimistic than respondents in the comparator poll.

6.10.1 PERSONAL ECONOMIC OPTIMISM

As the regression models of party support have shown, geographic phenomena could account for some variation in the levels of reported vote intention for the two main parties, along with class and economic attitudes. The second phase of this modelling ought to measure the effects of geography and class upon economic attitudes. This was achieved in two ways; firstly, a LOGIT regression analysis was carried out with economic optimism or pessimism as the dependent variable. In this way the direct effects of geography upon economic attitudes could be gauged. Secondly a more sophisticated LOGIT model was used with party support as the dependent variable but the interaction terms between economic attitudes, geography and class were included in the equation. This permitted the measurement of indirect and overlapping effects between the independent variables and upon the dependent variable.

6.11 LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL 1: THE MONTHLY MODEL OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC OPTIMISM & PESSIMISM

6.11.1 EFFECTS OF MONTHLY POLLS

The LOGIT modelling of variations in the levels of optimism throughout the NOP/Newsnight series of opinion polls presented in Table 6.18 reveals that the breakthrough in Conservative fortunes achieved by the Major succession to the Premiership was not reflected by an upturn in economic optimism. Moreover although economic optimism grew in general as the poll series progressed before falling away again in the comparator poll of February 1992, no simple Major honeymoon period of the kind visible in the Ordinary Least Squares regression models of Conservative support was discernible in the model of economic optimism. John Major's electoral strategy may have been an exercise in high-risk brinkmanship, riding a tide of optimism and calling the Election just as the public's economic attitudes were beginning to deteriorate again.

The parallel analysis of economic pessimism in Table 6.18 shows that the likelihood of an individual being pessimistic about his or her personal economic future declined as the series progressed until April 1991. Hence in July 1990 individuals were 2.24 times more likely to be pessimistic about their economic future than those respondents interviewed in February 1992. This is followed be a steady pattern of atrophy in the odds-ratios until respondents from April 1991 were only 1.17 times more likely to be pessimistic than the comparator group from February 1992. It should of course be remembered that as the election drew near, the electorate became more

optimistic - or at least less pessimistic - about their personal economic futures. The Conservative victory at the April Election may be strongly related to this phenomena.

6.11.2 EFFECTS OF REGION

The odds-ratios presented in Table 6.18 for economic optimism reveals that the expected relationship between regional criteria and economic attitudes was not quite identical to that expected. Overall the five-fold schema was statistically insignificant. However, unlike the ANOVA models presented earlier, the LOGIT models permitted a more robust interpretation of the effect of regional location upon economic optimism. Thus while no overall regional effect upon economic optimism could be claimed, being from Scotland and Wales proved a significant drag on levels of personal economic optimism. The odds-ratio for CELT respondents shows that they were only 0.90 times as likely to express economic optimism than respondents from the comparator group in Southern England. Although the wider range of regional schema had no overall effect on levels of optimism, specific regional effects were observed through the finer filter provided by the LOGIT modelling.

Table 6.18: Half Stage Model; The Impact of Month, Region, Constituency Type and Class on Economic Attitudes July 1990 - February 1992 (Logistic Regression)

	OPTIM			PESSIM		
VARIABLE	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**
Jul '90 (vs Feb '92)	-.30	.090	0.74	.81	.080	2.24
Aug '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.55	.081	1.73
Sep '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.63	.081	1.89
Oct '90 (vs Feb '92)	.20	.084	1.22	.35	.082	1.42
Nov '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.30	.082	1.35
Dec '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.22	.082	1.24
Jan '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.56	.081	1.75
Feb '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.54	.081	1.71
Mar '91 (vs Feb '92)	.18	.084	1.20	.28	.082	1.32
Apr '91 (vs Feb '92)	.21	.083	1.23	.15	.083	1.17
May '91 (vs Feb '92)	.25	.083	1.28	*	*	*
Jun '91 (vs Feb '92)	.22	.084	1.25	*	*	*
Jul '91 (vs Feb '92)	.29	.083	1.33	*	*	*
Aug '91 (vs Feb '92)	.18	.085	1.20	.24	.083	1.27
Sep '91 (vs Feb '92)	.33	.083	1.40	*	*	*
Oct '91 (vs Feb '92)	1.32	.081	3.72	-.51	.092	0.60
Nov '91 (vs Feb '92)	.31	.084	1.37	*	*	*
Jan '92 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.15	.085	1.16
CELT (vs South)	-.11	.045	0.90	*	*	*
NORTH (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs ClassDE)	.64	.040	1.90	-.74	.042	0.48
CLASSC1 (vs ClassDE)	.55	.036	1.73	-.50	.034	0.61
CLASSC2 (vs ClassDE)	.26	.036	1.29	-.21	.032	0.81
CONSTANT	-1.45	.071		-.78	.069	

	ORIG - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	NEW - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	DF	SIG	IMPROVEMENT	DF	SIG
OPTIM	35363.2	34302.5	30095	.000	1060.7	27	.000
PESSIM	37038.1	36106.8	30095	.000	931.2	27	.000

The regional disparity between the Celtic regions and the rest of mainland Britain discernible in the levels of economic optimism were not replicated in the analysis of economic pessimism, as respondents from all regions were equally likely to be pessimistic about their personal economic future.

6.11.3 EFFECTS OF CONSTITUENCY TYPE

The analysis of the effects of the threefold constituency type schema on economic optimism shows that the two dummies and the comparator category were indistinguishable from each other; that there was no constituency type effect.

Similarly no statistically significant coefficients or ratios were returned for the analysis of the effects of constituency type on levels of economic pessimism. This was consistent with the analysis of optimism in the parallel LOGIT model presented in Table 6.18. Until interaction effects are considered no claim can be made for a constituency type effect on economic attitudes.

6.11.4 EFFECTS OF CLASS

While the effects of geographic variables on economic optimism were refined by the regression analysis (region was important in economic attitudes - but not every region was different to the others) the expected relationship between social class and economic optimism held true (Table 6.18). The higher up the social scale a respondent resides, the more likely he or she was to express optimism about their personal economic future. Respondents from Class AB were 1.90 times more likely to

be optimists than their counterparts in the comparator class DE; Class C1 respondents were 1.73 times more likely and Class C2 respondents 1.29 times more likely to be optimists than those from the default category Class DE.

The relationship between class and economic pessimism matched the expected one of increased pessimism with a lowering of social class. The comparator class DE were the most pessimistic of all respondents while Class AB respondents only half as likely to be pessimistic than the comparator group. The odds ratios for Class C1 and C2 were 0.61 and 0.81 respectively, illustrating the maintenance of a basic 'linear' relationship between economic pessimism and social class.

6.12 LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL 2: THE BANDWAGON MODEL OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC OPTIMISM & PESSIMISM

6.12.1 EFFECTS OF CONSHARE & LBRSHARE

The share variables are non-dichotomous measures of party support in relation to the level of the previous month's support. Their inclusion in this model enables the measurement of a 'bandwagon effect'; that voters are encouraged to favour successful parties. The share variables could not be included in the same model as the monthly variables, since they effectively measure different aspects of the same temporal phenomena. Their coincidence would result in severe problems of multi-collinearity.

The LOGIT modelling of optimism using the CONSHARE variable, shown in Table 6.19, proved to be insignificant statistically. The level of Conservative Party support (and by implication the state of Labour support too) at the previous poll thus had no direct role in the explanation of variance in levels of economic optimism.

CONSHARE achieved significance in the model of pessimism, but its overall effect was small. The odds ratio of 1.01 translated as virtual equity with the electorate as a whole; the chances of predicting an individual's reported vote intention from the level of party support in the previous month was no more than 'evens'.

6.12.2 EFFECTS OF GEOGRAPHY

Once again the regional analysis of variations in economic optimism shows that respondents from the Celtic regions were 0.90 times as likely (and hence 1.11 times less likely) to express optimism than the default regional variable - Southerners. For both optimism and pessimism, the constituency type schema failed to provide an insight into the variation of economic attitudes, while the relationship between class and optimism and pessimism was that which was expected, the higher social classes espousing optimism and eschewing pessimism, the lower classes favouring relative pessimism and being relatively disinclined to express optimism about their personal economic future.

Table 6.19: Half Stage Model; The Impact of Previous Poll Ratings, Region, Constituency Type and Class on Economic Attitudes July 1990 - February 1992 (Logistic Regression)

	OPTIM			PESSIM		
VARIABLE	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**
CONSHARE	*	*	*	.01	.005	1.01
CELT (vs South)	-.10	.045	0.90	*	*	*
NORTH (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs ClassDE)	.59	.041	1.80	-.71	.043	0.49
CLASSC1 (vs ClassDE)	.52	.036	1.68	-.48	.035	0.62
CLASSC2 (vs ClassDE)	.22	.036	1.25	-.20	.033	0.82
CONSTANT	-1.09	.167		-.95	.163	

	ORIG - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	NEW - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	DF	SIG	IMPROVEMENT	DF	SIG
OPTIM	33774.3	33432.2	28545	.000	342.1	10	.000
PESSIM	34778.9	34392.1	28545	.000	386.8	10	.000

6.13 LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL 3: THE MONTHLY MODEL OF CONSERVATIVE & LABOUR REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

6.13.1 MONTH

After considering the effects of geography and class upon economic attitudes using monthly poll data (the half stage model), the next step is to consider the role of geography, class and economic attitudes upon partisanship. The results of the LOGIT modelling of Conservative support by month during the period July 1990 - February 1992, presented in Table 6.20, confirm the picture painted by the Ordinary Least Squares regression model of the Major honeymoon period in Conservative electoral fortunes. Conservative support was first swelled by Mrs. Thatcher's departure and was built on by the new regime as the Major Premiership was positively associated

with levels of Conservative reported vote intention for the next three months. The Major honeymoon period, however, was a transient feature of British electoral politics, decaying after only three months. Nevertheless it should be remembered that throughout the run-up to the 1992 Election, support for the Major-led Conservatives was always higher than during the nadir of Conservative support under Mrs. Thatcher, and that the change of personnel in Downing Street may have been vital to electoral fortunes of the Conservative Party.

Conservative support during the four months between November 1990 and February 1992 was significantly different from the level of Conservative support in February 1992. Thereafter only two other polls (October and November 1991) were substantially different from the comparator poll in February 1992 and their effects were contradictory.

The parallel model of Labour reported vote intention presented in Table 6.20 also supports the findings of the Ordinary Least Squares regression model that suggested that although the Major succession had helped to revive the electoral fortunes of the Conservatives, it did not have the reverse effect of dampening Labour support significantly. At best, Major's leadership helped to neutralise Labour's electoral base. Indeed the only trend in the monthly dummies appears to be the benefit Labour accrued at the beginning of the series in July and August 1990 which coincided with the height of Mrs Thatcher's unpopularity, when respondents were 1.21 and 1.14 times more likely to express an intention to vote Labour than in February 1992. The

rest of the monthly dummies which achieve statistical significance to the 0.1 level were sporadic in their incidence and have contradictory effects - two acted as relative drags on Labour support, one boosted the relative Labour advantage.

6.13.2 REGION

The LOGIT modelling of Conservative support presented in Table 6.20, again supported the classic North-South divide in British voting behaviour. Other things being equal, respondents from the Celtic regions and from the North of England were less likely to express support for the Conservatives than the comparator category which covers respondents in the South of England. The odds-ratios of 0.57 and 0.80 for the CELT and NORTH dichotomous variables illustrate the extent to which the propensity to support the Conservatives is hampered by living in Scotland or Wales and the North. The failure of the MIDS and LDON dummy variables to produce statistically significant coefficients or odds ratios showed that for the purposes of recruiting potential Conservative voters, the Midlands and the capital were just as fertile for the governing Party as the default SOUTH category.

Variations in Labour reported vote intention could be explained to a considerable degree by regional differences. Not only was the classical North-South divide in evidence, with the North being relatively more predisposed to Labour than Scotland and Wales, the Midlands and London also represented more fertile territory for Labour than the South of England.

The differences in the odds-ratios for the four regional dummies confirmed many of the findings of other studies into modern British voting behaviour. Respondents from the North of England were - *ceteris paribus* -1.86 times more likely to express a reported vote intention for Labour than their counterparts in the South of England. At the same time, Scots and Welsh were 1.55 times more likely , Midlanders 1.27 times more likely and Londoners 1.21 times more likely to express a preference for Labour than respondents from the comparator group in the South of England taking all the other effects in the model into account.

It is interesting to note that the pattern of Conservative support meant that the Midlands and London were no different from the South, while they both provided Labour with a relative advantage over the South of England. This may well reflect the differences in the state of the anti-Conservative vote in different parts of the country. With the Liberal Democrats providing the effective opposition to the Conservatives in parts of the South, but remaining firmly in third place in much of the Midlands, the nuances of the anti-Conservative vote in the run-up to the 1992 election were not altogether surprising.

6.13.3 CONSTITUENCY TYPE

Constituencies characterised by industrial depression and local authority housing proved to be difficult recruiting territory for the Conservatives throughout the period July 1990 - February 1992. Table 6.20 showed that respondents from depressed

areas were only 0.84 times as likely as respondents from affluent areas to express an intention to vote Conservative.

Meanwhile if it can be seen that DEPLA constituencies were relatively disinclined to support the Conservatives, those in SERVICE areas were no different from AFFLUENT areas in their propensity to support the Conservatives. The parallel model of Labour reported vote intention showed that the type of constituency in which a respondent resided did affect his or her likelihood to support the Labour Party. Constituencies characterised by industrial depression and council housing provision were relative hotbeds of Labour support; individuals from these constituencies were 1.21 times more likely to support Labour than those from AFFLUENT constituencies. At the same time, those in SERVICE areas appeared no different from AFFLUENT areas in their propensity to express an intention to vote Labour.

6.13.4 CLASS

The expected relationship between class and Conservative Party voting - that the Conservatives pull support disproportionately from the highest social classes - proved to be a reasonable explanation of the variation in levels of Conservative reported vote intention. The comparator class, Class DE appeared to be the most hostile of all social classes to Conservative support, while respondents from classes C2, C1 and AB were 1.30 times, 2.10 times and 3.37 times more likely to express an intention to vote for the Conservatives than respondents from Class DE.

Conversely Labour fared best among voters from the lower social classes and worst in the higher social strata. Thus the comparator category - Class DE were the most prone of all social classes to support Labour, while those from classes C2 were only 0.84 times as likely to support Labour. Individuals from Class C1 were just over half as likely to support Labour and Class AB respondents only 0.38 times as likely to express a reported vote intention for Labour - other things being equal - as individuals from Class DE.

6.13.5 ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

One of the major themes of this thesis - that economic attitudes have a clear effect on levels of party support - was supported by this regression analysis (Table 6.20). Put simply, economic optimists were - after considering the effects of the other variables in the model - more prone to express an affinity to Conservative reported vote intention than those who feel pessimistic about their personal economic futures. The odds ratio presented in Table 6.20 reveals that they were in fact 4.26 times more likely to support the Conservatives than pessimists *ceteris paribus*. The fact that this was the largest single odds-ratio in the model revealed the comprehensive explanatory power of personal economic expectations for the level of Conservative support.

Those expressing neutral forecasts about their economic circumstances were also relatively likely to favour Conservative reported vote intention when compared to economic pessimists. The odds ratios revealed that neutrals were nearly two and a half times more likely to favour the Conservatives than personal economic pessimists.

The original thrust behind much of this research was that those who felt well disposed towards their own economic fortunes were likely to reward the Government at election times. By implication, opposition parties needed to capitalise on hostility to personal economic fortunes among the electorate. In short while the Government could claim the votes of those who 'felt good' about their economic conditions, those who did not would form part of the Opposition's natural electoral community.

The LOGIT model of Labour support revealed this to be the case; those who felt optimistic about their economic future were less than half as likely to support Labour than those who felt pessimistic (Table 6.20). Those who expressed neutrality in their economic future were also less prone to Labour support than those who felt their economic position would worsen over the coming year.

6.13.6 INTERACTIONS

The ANOVA modelling showed that geographic variation as a whole was of limited use in explaining variation in the levels of optimism and ultimately reported vote intention. On a few occasions however, it did provide evidence of significant interaction terms between independent variables. In order to explore these interactions it was helpful to turn to regression analysis.

Indeed, for the subject matter of the thesis, the most interesting aspects of the LOGIT modelling of Conservative and Labour support in Table 6.20 were the interaction

effects between geography and economic attitudes. In effect they provide evidence for an autonomous geographic cleavage in the reported vote intentions of the British electorate.

While there were no significant interaction effects for the regional schema and economic attitudes in the model of Conservative reported vote intention, there was a significant interaction term between constituency type and economic optimism (see Table 6.20). These interactions are the crux of this chapter - and indeed this thesis - because they illustrate how the geographic context in which economic attitudes are formed can remain important despite the necessary restructuring of the original model. They show how geography can act as the filter through which economic attitudes are viewed, diluting or exacerbating the trends in reported vote intention associated with views about the economy. The importance of these interactions terms requires a full explanation of how they may be interpreted.

Each interaction effect has an independent B coefficient and associated log odds-ratio. Where these effects are statistically significant to the 0.1 level, they are reported in Table 6.20. However, it is important to acknowledge that these independent effects are additive, and must be integrated into the main effects of the model. This integration gives three comparator combinations against which to judge the effect of the interaction.

Table 6.20: The Impact of Month, Region, Constituency Type, Class and Economic Attitudes (with Interaction Effects) on Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention July 1990 - February 1992 (Logistic Regression)

	CONID			LBRID		
VARIABLE	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**
Jul '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.19	.079	1.21
Aug '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	.13	.079	1.14
Sep '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Oct '90 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nov '90 (vs Feb '92)	.16	.081	1.18	*	*	*
Dec '91 (vs Feb '92)	.39	.080	1.48	*	*	*
Jan '91 (vs Feb '92)	.36	.081	1.45	*	*	*
Feb '91 (vs Feb '92)	.42	.081	1.53	*	*	*
Mar '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	-.18	.080	0.84
Apr '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
May '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jun '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Jul '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Aug '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Sep '91 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Oct '91 (vs Feb '92)	-.19	.083	0.83	.22	.081	1.25
Nov '91 (vs Feb '92)	.15	.082	1.16	-.22	.081	0.80
Jan '92 (vs Feb '92)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CELT (vs South)	-.57	.091	0.57	.44	.069	1.55
NORTH (vs South)	-.22	.082	0.80	.62	.067	1.86
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	.24	.070	1.27
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	.15	.072	1.16
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	-.18	.072	0.84	.19	.056	1.21
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs ClassDE)	1.22	.079	3.37	-.98	.073	0.38
CLASSC1 (vs ClassDE)	.74	.069	2.10	-.64	.056	0.53
CLASSC2 (vs ClassDE)	.26	.068	1.30	-.18	.050	0.84
OPTIM (vs Pessim)	1.45	.091	4.26	-.78	.088	0.46
NEUTRAL (vs Pessim)	.89	.085	2.44	-.36	.074	0.70
Interactions						
CELT BY OPTIM	*	*	*	.23	.111	1.26
NORTH BY OPTIM	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS BY OPTIM	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON BY OPTIM	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA BY OPTIM	-.22	.095	0.80	*	*	*
SERVICE BY OPTIM	-.21	.094	0.81	*	*	*
CLASSAB BY OPTIM	-.24	.106	0.79	-.20	.111	0.82
CLASSC1 BY OPTIM	*	*	*	-.26	.089	0.77
CLASSC2 BY OPTIM	*	*	*	-.20	.083	0.82
CELT BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
NORTH BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
SERVICE BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	-.25	.099	0.78
CLASSC1 BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	-.15	.078	0.86
CLASSC2 BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	-.13	.071	0.88
CONSTANT	-1.75	.089		-.22	.077	

	ORIG - 2 L L	NEW - 2 L L	DF	SIG	IMPROVEMENT	SIG
CONID	38777.1	35263.8	30075	.000	3513.3	.000
LBRID	39587.7	36834.7	30075	.000	2753.0	.000

To show how interaction terms are interpreted, an interaction from Table 6.20 will be analysed in detail. Economic Optimists were much more likely to express Conservative support than those who were pessimistic about their personal economic future. The B coefficient for the OPTIM group of respondents was 1.45, the associated odds-ratio 4.26; hence those who were optimistic about their personal economic future were 4.26 times more likely to express Government support than those who felt pessimistic about their personal economic prospects. On the other hand, those respondents who resided in depressed areas with high intensity local authority housing were relatively disinclined to support the Conservative Government. The B coefficient for the DEPLA group was -.18, the associated odds-ratio 0.84; that is the DEPLA group of respondents were only 0.84 times as likely (and therefore less likely) to support the Conservative Government than respondents from AFFLUENT areas of Britain. The interaction effect for the combination of economic optimism and residence in depressed constituencies had an independent effect upon the dynamic of party support, - illustrated by a coefficient of -0.22. These statistics can be interpreted in the following manner.

The analysis of the interaction effect of economic optimism and residence in a depressed constituency provided three comparator groups - pessimists living in affluent regions, optimists living in affluent regions, and pessimists living in depressed areas. These coefficients provided the following matrix and the addition of these coefficients provided a new set of coefficients with associated odds-ratios:-

Table 6.21: Interaction Matrix for Economic Optimists Living in Depressed Areas:

	Economic Pessimism	Economic Optimism
Affluent Areas	0	1.45
Depressed Areas	-.18	-.22

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Pessimists in Affluent Areas	-0.22 +1.45 -0.18	1.05	2.86
Optimists in Affluent Areas	-0.22 -0.18 +0	-0.4	0.67
Pessimists in Depressed areas	-0.22 +1.45 +0	1.23	3.42

The addition of the coefficients provided the following comparisons. Economic optimists in depressed areas were 2.86 times more likely to express Conservative support than pessimists in affluent areas (the addition of the coefficients [-.22 + -.18 + 1.45 = 1] has an associated odds-ratio of 2.86); they were less likely (0.67 times more likely) to support the Government than optimists in affluent areas (-.22 + -.18 = -0.40 [Exp. = 0.67]); and they were 3.42 times more likely to express Conservative support than pessimists in depressed areas (-.22 + 1.45 = 1.23 [Exp. = 3.42]).

Meanwhile optimists in constituencies characterised by service employment were 3.46 times more likely to support the Conservative Government than pessimists from affluent areas, and pessimists from service areas but were only 0.81 times as likely to support the Conservatives as optimists from affluent areas. If the interaction between optimism and service areas had been insignificant, these ratios would have been 4.26 and 1 respectively.

A similar interaction effect occurred with the coincidence of economic optimism and residence in an area typified by SERVICE sector employment. From Table 6.20 the following matrix of Conservative reported vote intention was constructed:-

Table 6.22: Interaction Matrix for Economic Optimists Living in Service Areas:

	Economic Pessimism	Economic Optimism
Affluent Areas	0	1.45
Service Areas	0	-.21

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Pessimists in Affluent Areas	1.45 -.21 +0	1.24	3.46
Optimists in Affluent Areas	-.21 +0 + 0	-.21	0.81
Pessimists in Service Areas	1.45 -.21 +0	1.24	3.46

As a result of the interaction between economic optimism and residence in an areas typified by service sector employment, respondents were 3.46 times more likely to support the Government than pessimists in either AFFLUENT or SERVICE areas, but were less likely (0.81 times as likely) Conservatives than optimists in AFFLUENT regions. The geographic interactions in the Conservative model have begun to illustrate that when economic attitudes contradicted the general outlook of the surrounding area, the effect of the local environment tended to dilute personal economic attitudes. The economic optimism of these respondents should have made them pro-Government, but the over-riding local context tempered their Conservatism.

While there were no significant interaction effects for the constituency type schema and economic attitudes in the LOGIT model of Labour reported vote intention, there was a significant interaction term between aspects of region and economic optimism. The following interaction matrix was constructed:-

Table 6.23: Interaction Matrix for Economic Optimists Living in Celtic Regions:

	Economic Pessimism	Economic Optimism
Southern Region	0	-.78
Celtic Regions	.44	.23

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Pessimists in Southern Region	-.78 +.23 +.44	-0.11	0.90
Optimists in Southern Region	.23 +.44 +0	0.67	1.95
Pessimists in Celtic Regions	.23 -.78 +0	-0.55	0.18

Economic optimists who lived in the Celtic regions of Scotland and Wales were 0.90 times as likely to report an intention to vote Labour as Southern pessimists (+.23 +.44 -.78 = -0.11 [Exp 0.58]). In other words, the Celtic identity of these Labour supporters was almost as important as their personal economic outlook. This provides evidence for the existence of an autonomous regional cleavage, as individuals who felt optimistic about their personal economic circumstances but which lived in Scotland and Wales were nearly as inclined - *ceteris paribus* - to support Labour than those economic pessimists living in the South. Incidentally, they were also 1.95 times more likely to support Labour than Southern optimists (+.23 +.44 +0 = 0.67 [Exp = 1.95]), but only 0.58 as likely to support the Labour Party than Celtic pessimists (1.23 -.78 +0 = 0.55 [Exp = 0.90]). Once more it seems that whenever personal circumstances and spatial location provided voters with contradictory cues for reported vote intention, the geographic criteria took precedence.

To reiterate this important point, a more detailed look at Table 6.20 would prove beneficial. If no interaction terms were significant, the effects of coincidental independent variables could be estimated by adding their respective B coefficients. Hence, an individual from the CELT region has a B coefficient of .44, and thus as the

odds ratio shows was - other things being equal - 1.55 times more likely to express support for Labour than a Southern respondent. At the same time an economic neutral - who had a coefficient of -.36 - was only 0.70 times as likely to support Labour as an economic pessimist. The absence of significant interaction terms allowed the simple addition of coefficients to predict the likelihood of Labour support among Celts who also happened to be neutral about their personal economic future. By combining these coefficients it could be ascertained that Celtic Neutrals had an associated B coefficient of (.44 -.36 = 0.8). The odds - ratio derived from this coefficient shows that Celtic Neutrals would be only 2.23 times as likely to support Labour than their Southern Pessimist counterparts, whereas it is clear from the interaction of CELT and OPTIM, that optimists who resided in Scotland and Wales were almost as likely (0.94 times as likely) to support Labour as pessimists from the South. The dynamics of the relationship between Celtic residence and personal economic attitudes were altered by the interaction terms. In short, residence in Scotland and Wales was an advantage for Labour in the construction of - and to some extent regardless of - personal economic attitudes.

Despite the apparent primacy of economic attitudes over geographic criteria which the ANOVA models hinted at, the interaction terms gained from LOGIT modelling revealed that being optimistic about one's personal economic future was watered down for Scottish and Welsh electors in favour of the local context in which their optimism was formed. The coincidence of two features which had opposite effects on the likelihood of Labour support in fact increased the relative chances that individuals

would express an intention to vote Labour; the regional criteria fought against the natural instinct otherwise associated with economic optimism.

6.14 LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL 4: THE BANDWAGON MODEL OF CONSERVATIVE & LABOUR REPORTED VOTE INTENTION

The LOGIT analysis of Conservative support presented in Table 6.24 replicated the model presented above but replaced the monthly dummies with the CONSHARE variable which attempted to model levels of Conservative support by using the previous month's level of support. As such it aimed to pick up any 'bandwagon' or - as Denver has it - 'self-falsifying' effects in the Opinion polls during the long campaign between July 1990 and February 1992.

The effect of CONSHARE upon current rates of Conservative reported vote intention was positive but the odds ratio produced is near to equity. The parallel analysis of LBRSHARE yields very similar results; the previous poll's record of Labour support is positively associated with the current level of reported vote intention for Labour, but the magnitude of this association was small, suggesting that any poll effect was positive (a bandwagon effect) but slight.

The impact of geographic, class and economic attitude variables upon levels of Conservative and Labour support reproduced the results of the analysis which includes the monthly dummies. Geography explained some variation at the margins, while class and economic outlooks had a strong correlation with partisanship. The

interaction effects uncovered by the LOGIT models again showed how geography strengthened or diluted economic forecasts - and pointed to the existence of an autonomous geographic cleavage in reported vote intention (see Table 6.24).

Table 6.24: The Impact of Previous Poll Ratings, Region, Constituency Type, Class and Economic Attitudes (with Interaction Effects) on Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention July 1990 - February 1992 (Logistic Regression)

	CONID			LBRID		
VARIABLE	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**
CON/LBR SHARE	.02	.005	1.02	.01	.005	1.01
CELT (vs South)	-.57	.095	0.57	.45	.072	1.56
NORTH (vs South)	-.23	.085	0.79	.63	.069	1.88
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	.22	.072	1.25
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	.14	.074	1.15
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	-.16	.074	0.85	.17	.058	1.19
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs ClassDE)	1.22	.081	3.39	-.98	.076	0.38
CLASSC1 (vs ClassDE)	.76	.071	2.14	-.64	.058	0.53
CLASSC2 (vs ClassDE)	.26	.070	1.30	-.19	.052	0.83
OPTIM (vs Pessim)	1.38	.093	3.97	-.75	.090	0.47
NEUTRAL (vs Pessim)	.86	.088	2.36	-.33	.077	0.72
Interactions						
CELT BY OPTIM	*	*	*	.24	.114	1.27
NORTH BY OPTIM	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS BY OPTIM	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON BY OPTIM	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA BY OPTIM	-.22	.098	0.80	.16	.090	1.17
SERVICE BY OPTIM	-.19	.096	0.83	*	*	*
CLASSAB BY OPTIM	-.22	.108	0.80	-.23	.114	0.80
CLASSC1 BY OPTIM	*	*	*	-.25	.091	0.78
CLASSC2 BY OPTIM	*	*	*	-.18	.085	0.84
CELT BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
NORTH BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	.14	.081	1.15
SERVICE BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	-.25	.102	0.78
CLASSC1 BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	-.17	.080	0.68
CLASSC2 BY NEUTRAL	*	*	*	-.13	.073	0.88
CONSTANT	-2.48	.177		-.57	.198	

	ORIG - 2 L-L	NEW - 2 L-L	DF	SIG	IMPROVEMENT	DF	SIG
CONID	36811.4	33648.2		.000	3163.2		.000
LBRID	37428.0	34928.6		.000	2499.5		.000

6.15 ECONOMIC APPROVAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD AND BLAME FOR THE RECESSION

So far this chapter has illustrated how the relationship between economic attitudes and reported vote intention was tempered via geographic considerations. Thus the natural inclination of economic optimists to favour the Government was tempered if they happened to reside in Scotland or Wales. What is not clear, however, is why the context in which these attitudes were formed differed from place to place. The previous chapter provided a few clues to this research dilemma. The remaining aim of this chapter is to refine the model to incorporate the spatial variation in the extent of approval for the Government's economic record and the extent to which the Government was blamed for the recession of the early 1990s.

A close relationship between spatial location and attitudes to the economic reality facing Britain in the early 1990s emerged in this analysis. The most central point here is that there was no 'British' economic reality - the economic reality in each locality was different. Two particular questions were used to highlight the dynamics of spatially varied party support in the run-up to the April 1992 Election. The first asked the state of sociotropic approval for the Government's economic policies, and the second ascertained the extent to which the Government or world conditions were blamed for Britain's economic position. The first question was posed three times during the series of *NOP/Newsnight* polls - and the resultant data was the combination of those three polls. The second question was asked only in the last poll in the series - February 1992 - (when the approval question was absent). The analysis of these

questions provides evidence for the suggestion that sociotropic approval of the Government's economic policies was highly variable according to geography. Where people lived provided them with a formula for approval or disapproval for the Government's economic record and if approval was forthcoming, its electoral effect could be nullified by the geographic context.

This section also provides evidence to suggest that the ascription of blame for the recession was spatially variable in a similar manner. Furthermore, even those respondents who felt that the Government was 'blameless' in causing the recession in Britain were less likely to support the Government at the polls if they lived in the Labour heartlands of the Scotland and Wales or the North.

This section analyses these questions, again focusing on LOGIT regression analysis and the significant interactions therein. Evidence is provided to show that when individuals receive contradictory information about how to vote from their geographic location and their economic outlook, the geographic dimension often takes precedence. Voters who approved of the Government's economic policies and those who do not blame the Government for the recession, but who lived in the North of Britain or in depressed areas, were discouraged to express support for the Conservative Government in spite of their notional 'economic interests'.

6.15.1 DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC APPROVAL QUESTION

The pooled data from the three polls in the *NOP/Newsnight* series where respondents were asked to express their retrospective approval for the Government's economic record are presented later in this analysis (Table 6.31). Approval or disapproval could occur across two dimensions - the egocentric and the sociotropic. Egocentric approval results from a respondent thinking that the Government's economic record was good for them and their family; sociotropic approval results from a respondent thinking that the Government's economic record was good for the country as a whole.

The measures of egocentric or sociotropic approval are distinct from the egocentric and sociotropic variables used elsewhere in this thesis, which measure prospective expectations on economic grounds - things would get better or worse for them or for the country as a whole over the course of the next twelve months. Although these measures are not identical, respondents tended to think that Governments which are good for themselves were also good for the country as a whole.

A logistic regression using the sociotropic and egocentric economic approval variables, dichotomous dummy independent variables was constructed. First the original variable was collapsed into three groups (combining those who definitely agreed and those who tended to agree with the statement that the Government's economic policy was good for them or for the country as a whole, and those who definitely disagreed and those who tended to disagree). Thus, three dichotomous variables were constructed for each dimension of economic approval: EGOGD, which

represented all those respondents who felt that the Government's economic policy was good for them and their family; EGOBD - respondents who felt the Government's economic policy was bad for them and their family; and EGONEUT - which denoted a neutral response. These variables were coded one for those who fitted the category, and zero for the others. The sociotropic approval of the Government's economic record had three similar dichotomous variables, SOCIOGD, SOCIOBD and SOCIONEUT. For both approval dimensions, the comparator variable comprised those who felt the Government's economic policy was a source of disapproval. All respondents were represented by one positive score and two zero scores in these families of variables.

16.15.2 MODEL BUILDING STRATEGY

Two sets of analyses were undertaken. The first tracked all the main effects and seventy-five interaction effects (the vast majority of which were insignificant). This led to a great deal of 'noise' in the model as the interaction terms swamped the main effects. To construct a more parsimonious model a second analysis was carried out. This second method contained only those interactions that the fuller model had suggested were statistically significant to the 0.1 level. The tables presented here are derived from the second set of data analyses.

Once again the logistic regression analyses for Conservative and Labour reported vote intention display the B coefficients, standard errors, and the associated odds-ratio. The latter which allow a more rational interpretation of the effect of variables

upon the dependent variable than the B coefficient. A blank cell denotes that an item was omitted from the analysis - an interaction that was significant for Conservative reported vote intention in the fuller model may not have been significant in the parallel Labour analysis and would thus have been left out of the more parsimonious Labour model. An asterisk denotes that a variable or interaction between variables failed to reach the accepted level of statistical significance at the 0.1 level in the parsimonious model.

16.15.3 MAIN EFFECTS

The LOGIT model (Table 6.25) included the independent variables encountered in the preceding LOGIT models for region, constituency type, class and personal economic expectations, plus the new independent variables for sociotropic and egocentric approval for the Government's economic record. The dependent variables were the familiar dichotomised versions of Conservative and Labour reported vote intention. The main effects of the LOGIT modelling of economic approval and reported vote intention repeated many of the results of the earlier models for reported vote intention and economic attitudes. Regional criteria, constituency type, class and personal economic expectations all produced similar pockets of Government and Opposition support identified in the preceding analysis. For this reason, discussion will centre on the new dimension of this analysis - the introduction of economic approval as an independent variable - and the interactions between independent variables in the model.

Table 6.25: The Impact of Region, Constituency Type, Class, Personal Economic Expectations and Sociotropic and Egocentric Economic Approval of the Government's Policies (with Interaction Effects) on Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention, July 1990 - February 1992. (Logistic Regression)

	CONID			LBRID		
VARIABLE	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**	**B**	**S E**	**EXP (B)**
CELT (vs South)	-0.54	.143	0.58	0.23	.129	1.26
NORTH (vs South)	*	*	*	0.51	.126	1.67
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	0.22	.122	1.24
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	0.47	.130	1.63
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	-0.27	.126	0.76	0.35	.097	1.42
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	*	*	*	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs Class DE)	0.99	.221	2.68	-0.81	.129	0.45
CLASSC1 (vs Class DE)	0.58	.113	1.78	-0.41	.113	0.66
CLASSC2 (vs Class DE)	0.45	.110	1.57	-0.18	.093	0.84
OPTIM (vs Pessim)	0.58	.111	1.78	*	*	*
NEUTRAL (vs Pessim)	0.45	.096	1.57	*	*	*
SOCIOGD (vs Sociobad)	1.92	.126	6.81	-0.87	.165	0.42
SOCNEUT (vs Sociobad)	0.92	.134	2.50	-0.64	.154	0.53
EGOGD (vs (Egobad)	1.90	.122	6.70	*	*	*
EGONEUT (vs Egobad)	1.03	.140	2.80	-0.61	.144	0.54
Interactions						
CLASSAB BY EGOGD	-0.86	.289	0.42			
CLASSAB BY EGONEUT	-0.94	.297	0.39			
CLASSAB BY SOCIOGD	0.67	.287	1.96			
CLASSAB BY SOCNEUT	0.70	.314	2.01			
CLASSC1 BY EGOGD				-0.93	.276	0.40
CLASSC2 BY EGOGD				-0.89	.258	0.41
SOCIOGD BY EGOGD				-0.99	.274	0.37
SOCNEUT BY EGOGD				-0.76	.363	0.47
CELT BY EGONEUT				0.40	.240	1.50
CLASSC1 BY EGONEUT				-0.66	.238	0.52
CLASSAB BY SOCIOGD				-1.24	.346	0.29
OPTIM BY SOCIOGD				-0.59	.255	0.55
NEUTRAL BY SOCIOGD				-0.63	.216	0.53
NORTH BY SOCNEUT				-0.35	.211	0.70
OPTIM BY SOCNEUT				-0.49	.259	0.61
NEUTRAL BY SOCNEUT				-0.50	.199	0.60
CONSTANT	-3.05	.146		0.42	.108	

	ORIG - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	NEW - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	DF	SIG	IMPROVEMENT	DF	SIG
CONID	5926.2	3838.6	15	.000	2087.6	5	.004
LBRID	5727.2	4784.6	15	.000	942.6	13	.000

16.15.3.1 SOCIOTROPISM

The new dimension that this analysis of the economic approval dataset allows is the study of approval for the Government's economic record in both sociotropic and egocentric terms. Indeed in the model of Conservative and Labour reported vote intention, the Government approval ratings proved to be the largest of all the main effects.

The effects of sociotropic approval of the Government's economic policies were large - witness the size of the exponents and the extent of the B coefficients (which represent the slope of the gradient) in the regression model (Table 6.25). The most obvious feature of the introduction of economic approval variables to the regression model is the amount of explanatory force the disaggregations within this schema appear to have. The B coefficients and associated exponents outperform the covariables in the model. Therefore, those respondents who felt that the Government's economic policy was good for the country as a whole were 6.81 times more likely to express support for the Conservative Government than were those respondents who felt the Government's economic policy was 'bad for the country as a whole'. Even those who remained neutral about the Government's economic record were two-and-a-half times more likely to express a Conservative reported vote intention than those in the comparator group. Conversely, those who felt that the Conservative's economic policy was good for Britain, and those who were neutral in their economic approval rating were significantly less likely to identify with Labour than

those who felt the Government's economic policy was harmful to the country as a whole.

The popular perception of the 1992 General Election was that it was won and lost on egocentric issues such as taxation. It is certainly true that the Conservative party manifesto and advertising campaign was centred on egocentric issues - one poster memorably made a direct appeal to egocentric voters by proclaiming "Labour's tax bombshell: You will pay £1250 more tax a year under Labour" (Crewe & Gosschalk; 1995 p. 53) - but these figures show that in the run-up to the 1992 General Election voters were at least as motivated in their reported vote intention, by their sociotropic appraisal of the Government's economic record as by their egocentric one. The coefficients derived from sociotropic economic approval match those for egocentric economic approval in the Conservative model and actually outstrip them in the Labour reported vote intention model. This would seem to suggest that although the Labour Party was right to concentrate on 'sociotropic' issues, such as the NHS and welfare rights, in order to maximise votes, the public perception that the Conservatives only profited from appealing to the self-interest axiom might be wide of the mark since the Conservatives apparently fared as well from their voters societal approval as from their personal approval. However a cross-tabulation of sociotropic approval by personal approval reaffirms the popular perception (see Table 6.26 below). Nearly 70 per cent of those who approved of the Government's economic policies on sociotropic grounds also approved on egocentric grounds. Hence it is likely that the Conservative supporters who felt the Government were 'good' for them also felt that the

Government was 'good' for the country as a whole. On the other hand Labour supporters were seemingly more inclined to divorce their sociotropic and egocentric approval ratings - and as the regression analysis showed - if the two came into conflict, tended to vote with their sociotropic perception rather than their egocentric evaluation (Table 6.25).

16.15.3.2 EGOCENTRISM

The importance of public endorsement for the Government's economic record is confirmed by the analysis of egocentric approval (Table 6.25). Those who felt that the Government's economic policy was 'good for them and their family' were almost seven times more likely to report a preference for the Conservatives, and those who were unable to decide whether the Government's economic policy was personally beneficial or detrimental were nearly three times more likely to do so, than those who felt the Government's policy was 'bad' for them and their families. In the parallel model of Labour reported vote intention, those who gave neutral responses were a little more than half as likely to express support for Labour as those who felt the Government's economic policy was harmful to them personally. Statistically there was no difference between those respondents who benefited from the Government's economic policy and those who felt damaged by it. This confirms that the personal economy was the realm of the Conservative Party while Labour had its heartland among voters who stressed the importance of sociotropism rather than egocentric policies.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that there was much overlap between those respondents who felt that the Government's policy was good or bad for them and good or bad for society as a whole. Sixty-nine per cent of those who felt that the Government's economic policy was good for the country as a whole also felt that the policy was beneficial to themselves and their family, while 88 per cent of those who felt that the Government's economic policy was bad for the country as a whole felt that it was also detrimental to themselves and their family (Table 6.26).

Table 6.26; Approval for the Government's Economic Policy; Sociotropic Approval by Egocentric Approval.

The Government's Economic Policies are:	Good Egocentrically	Neutral Egocentrically	Bad Egocentrically
Good Sociotropically	69% (1077)	15% (234)	17% (260)
Neutral Sociotropically	14% (121)	49% (434)	37% (328)
Bad Sociotropically	05% (104)	7% (157)	88% (1885)

16.15.3.3 INTERACTIONS

As was the case with the earlier logistic regressions, it is the interactions in the economic approval model that reveal the role of geography in the construction of voter-party ties. A full model which specified 75 possible interactions between the dichotomous explanatory variables was 'trimmed down' for the sake of parsimony - and a curtailed model which fitted only those interactions which were significant in the full model was constructed. The analysis presented here is the result of the parsimonious model of economic approval.

16.15.3.4 CONSERVATIVE INTERACTIONS

The interrelationships between explanatory variables that are independently significant in the Conservative model of economic approval and reported vote intention are dominated by interactions with social class. However, some of the interactions do not seem to occur in the expected direction. In particular, the coincidence of being a member of Class AB and not disapproving of the Government's economic policy - egocentrically or sociotropically - might be expected to produce a distinct boost for the Government (1.90 + 0.99 = 2.89 [Exp = 17.99]). In reality, however, while the expected relationship holds for the sociotropic endorsement or neutrality of the Government's economic policy, it is diluted when members of Class AB also extend egocentric endorsement (1.90 + 0.99 - 0.86 = 2.03 [Exp = 7.61]). It may be that the main effects of egocentric approval and neutrality and membership of Class AB are so unambiguous that it would be remarkable if the interaction between them produced an even bigger pro-Government bias. Nonetheless, this statistical quirk is hard to explain.

16.15.3.5 LABOUR INTERACTIONS

With the exception of sociotropic approvers from Class AB, the interaction terms from the Conservative economic approval model are insignificant in the Labour economic approval model (Table 6.25). In fact the most startling facet of the Labour model of support and economic approval is the geographic dimension. It shows how geography was important in determining partisanship over and above its effect in the main model. When two explanatory variables with different effects on the propensity of an

individual to support Labour interact, it is the geographic effect that comes out on top. This implies that the geographic context is important when individuals receive contradictory information from their geographic location and their personal economic outlook. Thus when respondents from the CELTIC regions (a positive impact on the propensity to report a vote intention for Labour) also express neutrality on the egocentric impact of the Government's economic policy (which usually has a negative effect on Labour reported vote intention), the result of this interaction is to provide an relative boost to Labour. From Table 6.25 it is possible to produce the following interaction matrix;

Table 6.27: Interaction Matrix for Economic Optimists Living in Celtic Regions:

	Economic Pessimism	Economic Optimism
Southern Region	0	-0.61
Celtic Regions	0.23	0.40

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Pessimists in Southern Region	040 + 0.23 - 0.61	0.02	1.02
Optimists in Southern Region	040 + 0.23 + 0	0.63	1.88
Pessimists in Celtic Regions	0.40 - 0.61 + 0	-0.21	0.81

This matrix reveals that CELTS who express neutrality on the question of egocentric approval for the Government's economic record are 1.02 (0.4 + 0.23 - 0.61 = 0.02 [Exp 1.02]) times more likely to support Labour than Southerners who feel they personally suffer from the Government's economic policy, 1.88 times more likely to favour Labour than Southerners who were neutral about the personal consequences of the Government's economic record, and 0.81 times as likely (and thus less likely) to support Labour as Celtic respondents who feel the Government's economic policies have a detrimental effect on their personal fortunes. It was through the interaction effects that the full value of the logistic regressions became apparent. Given the stress

on egocentric economic evaluations, it is remarkable that Celts who were neutral about their personal economic futures were more likely to support Labour than Southern pessimists.

Similarly, the negative effects on Labour support of expressing sociotropic neutrality (a B coefficient of -0.64) were tempered by the coincidence of these feeling with living in the NORTH of England. The following interaction matrix was constructed:-

Table 6.28: Interaction Matrix for Sociotropic Neutrals Living in Northern Regions:

	Sociotropic Disapproval	Sociotropic Neutrality
Southern Region	0	-0.64
Northern Region	0.51	-0.35

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Disapprovers in South	-0.64 + 0.51 - 0.35	-0.48	0.62
Neutrals in South	-0.35 + 0.51 + 0	0.16	1.17
Disapprovers in North	-0.64 - 0.35 + 0	-0.99	0.37

Thus respondents from the NORTH who also expressed neutrality about the sociotropic effects of the Government's economic policy were 0.62 times as likely to vote Labour as Southerners who feel that society as a whole suffers from the economic policy of the Government, 1.17 times more likely to favour Labour than Southerners neutrals and only 0.37 times as likely to support Labour as Northerners who felt the Government's economic record was bad for the country as a whole. The advantage Labour gained from neutrals in the North as opposed to neutrals in the South show that the primary relationship in this interaction was clearly geographic and not economic.

6.16 BLAME FOR THE RECESSION

A critical feature of the central thesis under investigation here - that voters use their economic perceptions to frame their voting behaviour - is that the reward-punishment axiom may be important in the construction of economic attitudes. Moreover the geographic concentration provided by this thesis offers some hope that the milieux in which the reward-punishment axiom is constructed may be spatially varied. It has been shown that voters who held the Government responsible for their deteriorating position withheld their support in the 1992 Election, and that certain regions of mainland Britain were more likely to hold the Government responsible and consequently withhold their support than others (see Pattie & Johnston 1995).

Using the 'blame for Britain's recession' question from February 1992, first used in Chapter 5, the public perceptions of Government and world responsibility for economic adversity were analysed within a model of reported vote intention.

The expectation here was that voters in certain regions - subjected to a long-term socialisation about the 'arms length' nature of Government control and the primacy of the market would be less inclined to blame the Government for the recession of the 1990s and as a consequence more forthcoming in their support for the Conservatives. This might also explain the apparent reluctance of the Southern regions and Service areas to punish the Government in the run-up to the General Election of 1992; their relatively weakened position during the 'new recession'

would be irrelevant to their voting patterns if they failed to hold the Government responsible for the creation of this weakness. If respondents did not blame the Government for their impoverished position, they were unlikely to punish them electorally.

This theory of spatial variation in ascription of blame for the recession was supported by the analysis in Table 6.29 Thirty-nine per cent of respondents from Scotland and Wales thought that the Government were a 'great deal' to blame for the recession, only twenty-six per cent of Southerners felt similarly. Furthermore whereas thirty-seven per cent of Greater Londoners were willing to say that the Government was only 'a little' or 'not at all' to blame for the British recession, only twenty-six per cent of Northerners and twenty-one per cent of the Scots and Welsh were as willing to absolve the Government of responsibility for the recession.

Table 6.29 The Extent of Government Responsibility for Britain's Recession by Region: February 1992

	Scot/Wales	North	Midlands	Gtr London	South
Great Deal	39	37	28	28	26
Fair Amount	38	35	37	35	40
A Little	15	19	25	26	24
Not at all	6	7	10	11	9
DK/NA	2	1	1	0	1

In order to analyse attitudes to responsibility for the recession and their consequent effect on voting behaviour, these categories were disaggregated into dummy explanatory variables suitable for regression analysis and added to the familiar controls for class, geography and economic optimism (See Table 6.30).

For Government responsibility, those who held the Government greatly responsible (GVBGTDEAL), fairly responsible (GVBFAIR), and a little responsible (GVBLTL) were compared to the default group of respondents who felt the Government could be absolved of blame for the recession altogether (GVBNOTAL). For the responsibility of world conditions for the recession in Britain, those who felt that world conditions carried a great deal of responsibility for the recession (WORGTDEAL), were fairly responsible (WORFAIR), and a little responsible for the recession (WORLTL) were compared to the default group of respondents who felt that world conditions were not at all to blame for the recession in Britain (WORNOTAL).

Table 6.30: The Impact of Incidence for Britain's Recession, Region, Constituency Type and Personal Economic Expectations (with Interaction Effects) on Conservative and Labour Reported Vote Intention, February 1992. (Logistic Regression)

	CONID			LBRID		
VARIABLE	B	S E	EXP (B)	B	S E	EXP (B)
GOVTBLAME GT DEAL	-3.91	.317	0.02	2.88	3.60	17.79
GOVTBLAME FAIR DEAL	-2.21	.376	0.11	2.08	.359	7.96
GOVTBLAME LITTLE	-0.84	.284	0.43	1.34	.457	3.81
WCONDSBLAME GT DEAL	1.06	.360	2.90	-1.51	.380	0.22
WCONDSBLAME FAIR	1.03	.380	2.81	-0.92	.326	0.40
WCONDSBLAME LITTLE	0.69	.388	1.99	*	*	*
CELT (vs South)	-0.66	.245	0.52	*	*	*
NORTH (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDS (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
LDON (vs South)	*	*	*	*	*	*
DEPLA (vs Affluent)	-0.38	.207	0.69	0.54	.179	1.72
SERVICE (vs Affluent)	-0.82	.400	0.44	*	*	*
CLASSAB (vs ClassDE)	2.66	.907	14.24	-1.13	.223	0.32
CLASSC1 (vs ClassDE)	0.38	.197	1.46	-1.10	.235	0.33
CLASSC2 (vs ClassDE)	0.90	.301	2.46	-0.91	.215	0.40
OPTIM (vs Pessim)	0.85	.206	2.35	*	*	*
NEUTRAL (vs Pessim)	0.66	.185	1.94	*	*	*
Interactions						
GVBFAIR BY SERVICE	0.81	.457	2.26			
GVBLTL BY SERVICE	1.19	.524	3.27			
WORGTDL BY CLASSAB	-2.26	.947	0.10			
WORFAIR BY CLASSAB	-1.69	.923	0.19			
WORLTL BY CLASSAB	-2.09	.966	0.12			
WORLTL BY CLASSC2	-0.82	.457	0.44			
GVBLTL BY WORFAIR				-1.34	.503	0.26
GVBLTL BY WORLTL				-1.63	.566	0.20
WORGTDL BY CELT				1.48	.506	4.38
WORGTDL BY NORTH				1.12	.490	3.07
WORGTDL BY LDON				1.71	.521	5.51
WORFAIR BY NORTH				0.59	.341	1.81
WORFAIR BY CLASSC1				0.59	.334	1.80
WORFAIR BY CLASSC2				0.84	.311	2.31
CONSTANT	-0.19	.413		-1.80	.430	

	ORIG - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	NEW - 2 LOG LIKELIHOOD	DF	SIG	IMPROVEMENT	DF	SIG
CONID	1798.8	1245.7	17	.000	553.1	12	.000
LBRID	1843.4	1408.1	17	.000	435.4	9	.000

6.16.1 MAIN EFFECTS

6.16.1.1 GOVERNMENT TO BLAME

The logistic regression analysis shown in Table 6.30 follows the expected pattern according to the reward-punishment axiom of voting behaviour. Those respondents who felt that the Government was culpable for creating Britain's recession were - ceteris paribus - significantly less likely to support the Conservatives than those voters who absolved the Government from blame. This relationship is massively supported by the analysis of those respondents who felt that the Government were greatly responsible for the recession. This section of the electorate was nearly eighteen times more likely to support Labour and fifty times less likely to support the Conservative Government (with an exponent of .02) than those respondents who felt that the Government had not caused the recession. Moreover as the continuum of Government blame is pursued, the extent of hostility to the Government and affection towards the Labour opposition strengthens proportionally. The pattern of hostility to the Government - and of support for the official Opposition - is altogether consistent with Hibbing and Alford's version of the reward-punishment axiom (see Chapter 1). Those who blame the Government for economic misfortune punish them - those who absolve them of responsibility are more likely to express Government support.

6.16.1.2 WORLD CONDITIONS TO BLAME

Once again the expected pattern between responsibility for the recession and intended voting pattern is upheld by the analysis of respondents perceptions of

world conditions and their impact upon the British recession. Those who ascribe much blame for the downturn in the British economy to the condition of the world economy (and by implication absolve the Government of responsibility) are most likely to support the Conservative Government. Those who thought that the contribution of world conditions to the British recession was negligible were more likely to support the Labour opposition and less likely to express a Conservative reported vote intention.

Table 6.31: Responsibility for Britain's Recession, Government Blame by World Conditions to Blame; February 1992

	Government Blame; Gt Deal	Government Blame; Fair Amount	Government Blame; A Little	Government Blame; Not at all
World Conditions Blame; Gt Deal	18	32	33	17
World Conditions Blame; Fair Amount	31	41	21	7
World Conditions Blame; A Little	41	38	17	3
World Conditions Blame; Not at all	53	24	13	8

Those respondents who thought that world conditions caused the British recession tended to absolve the Government of blame for the recession to a greater degree than those respondents who absolved world conditions from responsibility for the recession (see Table 6.31). While only eight per cent of those who thought that world conditions were 'not at all' responsible for the recession also thought the Government was 'not at all' to blame, fifty three per cent thought that the Government should shoulder a 'great deal' of responsibility. However this appears to be an issue which disadvantaged the Government, since they stood to lose much more than they could gain. Whereas seventeen per cent of those who felt that world conditions were 'a great deal' to blame for the British recession felt that

the Government could be absolved of responsibility for the recession in 1992, eighteen per cent thought the Government were also a 'great deal' responsible for the recession.

6.16.1.3 OTHER MAIN EFFECTS

The LOGIT analysis of blame for the recession and reported vote intention reaffirms many of the findings of earlier analyses (Table 6.30). The effects of region, constituency type, social class and personal economic expectations are - by and large - the same identified in the analysis of reported vote intention. For this reason, this section will concentrate on the interaction terms between independent variables in the analysis of geography, blame for the recession and reported vote intention.

6.16.2 INTERACTION EFFECTS

Once again the most revealing aspect of the logistic regression model is the interaction terms between independent variables. As before, the results presented here are the outcome of the second set of analysis which included only those relationships shown to be significant to the 0.1 level in the initial analysis.

The significant interactions in the Conservative reported vote intention model concern the incidence of blame for the recession, either attributed to the Government or to world conditions. The interactions which deal with Government blame are also associated with SERVICE constituencies and it is interesting to

note that when GVBFAIR and GVBLTL interact with living in a constituency associated with service sector employment, it is the influence of the geographic criteria which dominates the interaction effect.

The following interaction matrices were constructed for SERVICE with both GVBFAIR and GVBLTL:-

Table 6.32: Interaction Matrix for Respondents who hold the Government 'A Fair Amount' Responsible for Britain's Recession Living in Service Areas:

	Government Blame; Not at all	Government Blame; Fair Amount
Affluent Areas	0	-2.21
Service Areas	-0.82	0.81

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Govt Absolvers in Affluent Areas	-2.21 - 0.82 + 0.81	-2.22	0.11
Fair Amounters in Affluent Areas	-0.82 + 0.81 + 0	-0.01	0.99
Govt Absolvers in Service Areas	-2.21 + 0.81 + 0	-1.40	0.25

Table 6.33: Interaction Matrix for Respondents who hold the Government 'A Little' Responsible for Britain's Recession Living in Service Areas:

	Government Blame; Not at all	Government Blame;A Little
Affluent Areas	0	-0.84
Service Areas	-0.82	1.19

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
Govt Absolvers in Affluent Area	-0.84 - 0.82 + 1.19	-0.47	0.63
Little Blamers in Affluent Areas	1.19 - 0.82 + 0	0.37	1.45
Govt Absolvers in Service Areas	1.19 - 0.84 + 0	0.35	1.42

The incidence of Government blame would normally be a drag on Government support, while residence in an area associated with SERVICE sector employment would be a boost (with the ascription of a fair amount of blame to Government - 2.21 - 0.82 = -3.03 [Exp = 0.05] and with little blame -0.84 - 0.82 = -1.66 [Exp 0.19]). When the effects combine with a significant interaction effect, the result is

a relative bonus for Conservative fortunes - in that the interaction effect reduces the anti-Conservative bias associated with Government blame (with odds-ratios of 0.11 and 0.63 compared to people who absolved the Government of blame completely and lived in AFFLUENT areas, respectively). That is that the geographic criteria has dominated the interaction effect.

This is a critical finding since it shows how the geographic filter operated in the run-up to the 1992 Election. The geographic context was able to over-ride or dilute the contradictory messages individuals received from economic evaluations. In this case, the punishment the Government might have expected from being held culpable for the recession was significantly reduced when the individuals who blamed the Government also lived in part of the Conservative electoral heartland - constituencies dominated by service sector employment.

The combination of blaming both the Government and world conditions for Britain's recession produces a significant drag on the level of Labour support. In other words, when the national and international perspectives coincide, the effect of the international view takes precedence.

The combination of regional characteristics with blame for the recession reveals the domination of the geographic context in all measures of Labour reported vote intention. For instance the following interaction matrix was constructed for CELTS who felt that world conditions were greatly responsible for Britain's recession:-

Table 6.34: Interaction Matrix for Respondents who hold World Conditions ' A Great Deal' Responsible for Britain's Recession Living in Celtic Regions:

	World Conditions Blame; Not at all	World Conditions Blame; Great Deal
Southern Region	0	-1.51
Celtic Regions	0	1.48

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
World Absolvers in South Regions	1.48 - 1.51 + 0	-0.03	0.97
Great Dealers in Southern Region	1.48 + 0 + 0	1.48	4.39
World Absolvers in Celtic Regions	1.48 - 1.51 + 0	-0.03	0.97

CELTS who felt that world conditions a 'great deal to blame' for Britain's recession were nearly as likely (0.97 times as likely) to support Labour than the Southerners, and CELTS, who felt that world conditions were not at all to blame. This is contrary to the original message derived from the main effects of the Labour reported vote intention model which stressed that blaming world conditions for the recession was likely to be associated with Government support and a decreased propensity to support the Labour opposition. Similar results are obtained by the coincidence of living in the North and the capital and the extension of a 'great deal' of responsibility for the British recession to World conditions.

Table 6.35: Interaction Matrix for Respondents who hold World Conditions 'A Great Deal' Responsible for Britain's Recession Living in Northern Regions:

	World Conditions Blame; Not at all	World Conditions Blame; Great Deal
Southern Region	0	-1.51
Northern Region	0	1.12

COMPARATOR GROUP	Coefficients to add	Cumulative B	Exp. (B)
World Absolvers in South	1.12 - 1.51 + 0	-0.39	0.68
Great Dealers in South	1.12 + 0 + 0	1.12	3.06
World Absolvers in North	1.12 - 1.51 + 0	-0.39	0.68

Northerners who held world conditions greatly responsible for Britain's recession were 0.68 times as likely to support Labour than those who absolved world

conditions from blame and who lived in either the SOUTH or the NORTH. They were 3.06 times more likely to support the Labour Party than those who held the world recession to be the root cause of the British recession and who lived in the South. In short, a clear geographic cleavage in voting according to the incidence of blame was evident. This is all the more remarkable since the main effects showed that the effects of geographic region *per se* are insignificant in the Labour model. Meanwhile, those respondents who felt that world conditions were 'fairly' responsible for the recession were more likely to support the Labour party if they also lived in the North of England, or were members of CLASS C1 or CLASS C2. In short the geographic context of the interaction terms dominated the direction that the interaction effect had, so much so that it often had the effect of magnifying the geographic effect on increased levels of Labour support. Once more, the interaction terms in the model have illustrated how the effects of geography are filtered by the electorate. The direct effects of the reward-punishment axiom could be cancelled or over-ridden by the residual contextual effects of geography. The incidence of blame was less important in determining voters' partisanship than where they lived.

6.17 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This Chapter has explored the relationship between class, geography, personal economic attitudes and reported vote intention in the 1990s. It has shown that the relationships between class and reported vote intention and between economic optimism and reported vote intention identified in the 1980s (see Chapter 4) were

upheld in the new recession of the 1990s. It has also shown that although weaker than the other causal variables, geography was also associated with variation in levels of reported vote intention. During this period the Conservative Government relied heavily on support from areas characterised as AFFLUENT but that compared to the 1980s the strength of Conservative support in areas typified by service sector employment had diminished. This suggests that the new economic reality of the 1990s had altered the electoral environment and well as the economic environment.

The ANOVA modelling in this Chapter supported the preliminary findings of Chapter 5 - that no general association between geography and levels of economic optimism existed. Nevertheless it did allude to significant interaction effects between levels of optimism and geographic factors, which suggested that the relationship between geography and economic attitudes might be more complex than the ANOVA technique could explain. The need to look at these relationships through a finer filter, and at the component categories of the geographic variables rather than as a single factor was obvious. The regression modelling provided this additional information.

The multiple Ordinary Least Squares regression and the LOGIT regression modelling confirmed that class, economic attitudes and geography all played significant roles in explaining variations in reported vote intentions in the 1990s. They also showed that temporal considerations were important, clearly identifying John Major's electoral honeymoon period and the subsequent steady decay in Conservative support thereafter - although Conservative support never returned to its experienced under tha

last months of Margaret Thatcher's premiership. There was no evidence for a significant bandwagon effect since knowing the level of party support for one month was of little assistance in predicting an individual's reported vote intention in the next.

For the most part Conservative support was apparently based on egocentric values. Labour Party support tended to be determined by sociotropism. The 'ownership' of these issues was confirmed by this chapter. Moreover while Conservatives seemed to think that what was good for them was also good for the country, significant numbers of Labour supporters were intending to vote Labour in spite of the economic self-interest. How egocentric and sociotropic issues mixed was largely a matter of socialisation and geographic milieux.

A key finding in this Chapter was provided by the regression modelling which revealed the spatial variation in levels of economic optimism and pessimism. The detail of the regional analysis rather than the general schema was important here. Hence living in Scotland or Wales proved a significant drag on levels of personal economic optimism. This relationship became even clearer when the interaction terms between geography and economic attitudes were considered.

There are two research conundrums here. Firstly it is necessary to explain why electors in the Celtic fringe were more pessimistic about their economic future than the rest of the country during a recession which had its biggest impact in the South. Secondly, it is necessary to approach why living in Scotland or Wales should prove a

drag on economic optimism, but living in industrially impoverished regions of England, say the North, did not. Scotland and Wales, with their heavy reliance on the public sector, suffered markedly from the industrial decline on the 1980s - but may not have done so more than the industrial North (and the North did not benefit from the oil industry in the late 1970s). Scotland and Wales are however, *nations* rather than regions and there may be an element of national grievance - rather than regional differences - being picked up here. On the other hand, it is worth bearing in mind that just because it hit hardest in the South, the 1990s recession did not impact on the vast majority of Southern electors - with long-term memories of the pre-1979 period, many Southerners could still be sanguine about their economic futures with secure jobs and homes likely to be worth more than they had been fourteen years ago. Furthermore the industrial decline of the 1980s hit the Celtic fringe so hard that it may have meant that the change in geographic marginalisation of the 1990s was 'too little, too late' to alter the relative optimism of the Scots and Welsh. Finally, and most importantly here, although only the CELT region significantly differed from the SOUTH comparator for the analysis of economic optimism or pessimism, there was more geographic variation in other economic attitudes - notably the ascription of blame for the recession, and approval for the Government's policies, and when spatial variation occurred in all economic attitudes it mirrored the pattern of the 1980s geographic economy rather than the one associated with the new recession - suggesting that the 'temporary and blameless' recession had a limited impact.

Approval for the Government's handling of the recession was spatially variable. Again this variation reflected the economic geography of the 1980s rather than that of the 1990s. The Northern regions were associated with disapproval, the Southern regions with approval. This was repeated in the analysis of responsibility for the recession - the ascription of blame to the Government or world conditions. Here electors in Northern Britain were more likely to hold the Government responsible than their counterparts in the South; conversely Southerners were more likely to hold world conditions responsible for Britain's economic recession. Furthermore there was a progression of importance in economic attitudes; in terms of impact on voting intentions, economic optimism or pessimism was the least forceful of all three economic attitudes, responsibility for the recession the most explanatory. The regression analysis confirmed that these relationships stood after socio-economic characteristics, and other economic attitudes, had been held constant, and that they had an independent effect on voting intentions - an autonomous regional cleavage based on context not composition. Further, the context that appeared important was the 1980s geographic divide not the one associated with the new economic recession. This indicated that electors had a long-term memory of economic disadvantage or were reacting to long-term socialisation patterns rather than short-term economic marginalisation. This of course, opened up the way for the Conservative Government to benefit from the re-opening of the more traditional North-South cleavages in attitudes and voting behaviour - shown in Chapter 5 - which prefaced their electoral victory in 1992.

The exploration of interaction effects between independent variables showed how geographic variation may have influenced economic attitudes in the 1990s. Hence the Celtic regions, the North and depressed areas were associated with a reluctance to express support for the Conservative Government, while economic optimists were typically pro-Conservative in their reported vote intentions. However, when these factors coincided the most likely outcome was that the regional characteristics would overcome individual economic evaluations in predicting how an individual would behave. Thus Scots and Welsh optimists were significantly less likely to support the Conservatives than Southern pessimists; respondents from depressed areas who were personally optimistic about their economic future were still more prone to support Labour than pessimists who live in AFFLUENT areas. In short under certain conditions the regional cleavage defeated the challenge from the economic cleavage.

This chapter and the preceding chapter have concerned themselves with the 1990s recession. They replicated one of the core findings of the chapters which dealt with the 1980s recovery period. Geography accounted for some variation in partisanship but less in economic evaluations. This conundrum was eventually solved in this chapter by recourse to the geographic milieux in which economic attitudes are formed.

Furthermore people thought about economic issues in different ways; egocentric issues (how individuals thought of themselves and their families) did not vary greatly spatially but sociotropic evaluations (how individuals thought of society as a whole) varied greatly according to where individuals resided, and did so according to the

familiar North-South geographic divide. The local cultural issues that this raises ought to be a vibrant item on any further research agenda.

The geographic-economic interaction effects highlighted in this chapter were the most revealing aspect of the whole thesis. They showed that how an individual decided to vote was largely shaped by what they thought of the economy - through personal economic expectations, egocentric approval or disapproval of Government policies, sociotropic approval and the question of responsibility for economic recession. Conservative support was largely motivated through egocentric issues, Labour support through sociotropic issues. However, the extent to which optimism or pessimism, approval or disapproval, blame or absolution could be discounted was spatially variable. Northerners who approved of the Government's economic policies were less likely to back the Government than their Southern counterparts; Scots and Welsh voters who felt the Government were not culpable for the British recession were less inclined to express support for the Government as a result of their local context; individuals from areas typified by service sector employment who were pessimistic about their personal economic future were less likely to turn on the Government than their counterparts in the North. The economy - geography interactions illustrated that an autonomous regional cleavage was an important part of the socialisation milieux that framed an individuals' partisanship in the early 1990s.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions, Implications and Future Research Agenda

7.1 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the 1980s presented in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis do much to confirm much of that which is already known about the state of party support and attitudinal structure in that decade. However, there are also some very interesting new findings which add to existing knowledge about the relationship between geography, economics and voting behaviour.

The first thing to say is that the empirical research on the Election years of the 1980s revealed a growing spatial division in partisan support. Moreover there was a tendency for the spatial variation in economic attitudinal structures to grow over the same period. Individuals residing in the South of the country were typically more sanguine about their economic future, and more satisfied with the current set of economic circumstances, and much more likely to support the Conservative Government, than their counterparts in the North of the country - who were typically pessimistic, dissatisfied and anti-Conservative - other things being equal. It is the findings of the inter-election period however, that remain the crux of the matter for the 1980s research.

An important finding from the 1980s recovery period was that the spatial variation in economic attitudes was at its peak when the population as a whole was at its most optimistic. The height of the Lawson boom was also the height of

the North-South divide; the South was experiencing rapid growth, the North was still in deep recession. As a consequence it was also the height of the geographic variation in the unemployment forecasts of voters; when the chances of an individual securing a job were very different in different parts of the country. The most optimistic sections of society were concentrated in the Conservative heartlands, the most pessimistic sections of society formed the bedrock of Labour support through the 1983-9 period.

Crewe has written of Thatcherism as "the crusade that failed"; the social agenda of Thatcherism was, he claims, never very popular with the electorate despite Mrs. Thatcher's three Election victories (1988; p. 35-40). This thesis suggested an added dimension to this failed ideological crusade; that the doctrine of Thatcherism - and indeed the Conservative Party itself - were not very popular with large sections of the electorate in non-election years. Hence sections of society from which the Conservatives could recruit in election years, were likely to exhibit hostility to the Conservatives in the intervening years.

The phenomenon of tergiversating Tories is one of the core findings of this thesis. Some of the most fervent anti-Conservative sections of society in the inter-election periods of the 1980s, would dilute their hostility or become pro-Conservative in Election years. Electors in the Midlands and Greater London, and voters who were employed as foremen or supervisors were in the forefront of tergiversating Toryism in the 1980s. If this phenomenon could be repeated in other economic circumstances, then it might represent the blueprint for electoral

success in otherwise unpromising conditions. If the Conservative Government could swing key groups of the electorate behind them in the run-up to an Election, then this might begin to explain their surprise success in 1992, particularly if short-term economic interests could be subverted by the long memories and long-term socialisation patterns of Conservative voters.

Tergiversation, then, might present a pattern for future Election success. Indeed, this thesis suggests that the familiar class and geographic variations of the 1980s were reasserted towards the end of the long-campaign leading to the 1992 Election, and that the Government could have benefited from the renewed differences in personal economic optimism.

For the most part there was little spatial variation in egocentric economic evaluations, whereas the spatial variation in sociotropic evaluations was substantial. That is, individuals' interpretations of society were more likely to be influenced by the context in which they lived than their judgements of personal matters affecting themselves only. This suggests that - as Pattie and Johnston have recently stated - individuals think separately, and think differently about personal and social issues (see Pattie & Johnston 1995). Furthermore, the spatial variation in sociotropic issues mirrored the spatial variation in party identification. After controlling for class, individuals were more likely to reflect local and personal conditions in their attitudes and support for the Government than they were to reflect personal circumstances. Moreover, where spatial variation in economic attitudes was present, it tended to reflect the 1980s

economy rather than the 1990s economy. In other words, the attitudinal differences in public perceptions of the economy according to geography were associated with the North-South divide rather than the dynamics of the new recession of the 1990s.

Throughout the two periods of study, it was clear that the two main parties had distinct electoral territories where they could appeal to a baseline of support. For the Conservatives this centred around an appeal to egocentric issues, for Labour it was sociotropism. The models presented here performed better for explaining variance in Conservative support than Labour Party support - and not merely because there was a split opposition in Britain. This all points to the fact that throughout the 1980s and the 1990-2 period, the Conservatives staked a considerable claim of "ownership" on the personal economy; whether they are still able to do this after Britain's enforced exit from the ERM in November 1992 is another matter, and one which future research should concentrate on.

The research into the long campaign leading to the 1992 General Election, revealed some essential findings. One of the most immediate findings was that John Major's electoral honeymoon was very short, his accession to the premiership successfully transformed Conservative fortunes in the polls - and there is some evidence to suggest that he neutralised potential Labour support - but only for the first four months of his leadership. Conservative support fell thereafter, and the monthly coefficients in the logistic regression analysis were insignificant, suggesting that by the time of the Election, his accession to the

leadership was no real advantage. This in turn raises interesting questions about whether Conservative fortunes would have recovered under the old leadership, was it possibly that Mrs. Thatcher could have won the 1992 Election for the Conservatives?

Nevertheless, there was a spurt of economic optimism towards the end of the poll period. The Conservatives seem to have benefited from the upturn in the electorate's optimism a few months later - even if John Major was incidental to its rise. The key to the renewed optimism, however, may have been - as Chapter 5 showed - that it marked the renewal of the 'old' divides of the 1980s rather than reflecting the new recession of the 1990s. The Conservatives were able to convince enough of their 'natural' support from the 1980s that they were the best option in 1992.

Indeed the Conservative victory in 1992 might have followed the blueprint for tergiversating Tories outlined in the empirical results from the 1980s. The rise in economic optimism and the resurgent gulfs in economic evaluations according to class, regional and constituency type suggest that the Government were able to exploit the return to the fold of various groups of key electors. For this scenario to be feasible in the real and unusual recession of the 1990s, the long-term socialisation patterns of voters would have to be strong enough to overcome short-term economic interests - since the tergiversators would have had to include many voters at the sharp end of the new recession. There were two factors which made this scenario plausible. Firstly the geographic context of the

long-term socialisation of Southern voters - which included faith in the market and job security - contradicted the evidence of the new recession. Secondly, the tendency to ascribe the recession as both 'temporary' and 'blameless' was particularly marked in the South of the country. All of this evidence points to a case for Conservative victory in 1992.

The functional geographic divisions (geographic model 2) tended to fare less well in explaining variation in party support and attitudes than the standard regional schema (geographic model 1). This was particularly true of the period of the 1990s recession, suggesting that the geographic divide in British psephology was based on regional foci rather than the type of constituency in which a person lived. Voters who were not themselves worse-off were more likely to exhibit sociotropism or favour Labour support if they lived in Scotland, Wales or the North than if they lived in the South of England. Coupled with the mis-specifications in the Rose and McAllister model of a lifetime of learning, this would tend to suggest that it was local context rather than composition which gave geography its impact on electoral behaviour and attitudinal structure in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The apparent (although not actual) failure of the initial model of geographic variation in economic attitudes in both decades was only a temporary setback. The logistic regression models in the last chapter - and the interactions therein - suggested real evidence for the existence of an autonomous regional cleavage in attitudinal structure and party support.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS

Although the geographic context had a sizeable impact throughout the 1980s and 1990s, it is important to note that the geographic variation in voting intentions and economic attitudes in the 1990s took the economic dynamics of the 1980s, rather than those of the 1990s as their cue.

Since 1992, however, a number of factors have coincided which might have corrupted the Conservative blueprint for electoral success suggested in this thesis. Since Britain was forced out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992, public opinion seems to have undergone a sea-change. The Conservatives have found it difficult to come to terms with public hostility to their economic programme, and it appears that the Labour Party has overcome its traditional obstacle in the economic competency questions in polls. The in-built advantage the Conservatives gained from concentrating on economic issues have been diminished, at least in the short-term. After the Conservatives were forced to put up taxation rates (including imposing Value Added Tax on domestic fuel) it is hard to envisage "Labour's Tax Bombshell" being so potent an electoral image in 1996 or 1997.

In 1992, the Conservative Government benefited from the perception of the 1990s recession as temporary and blameless - a view which was particularly potent in the Conservative heartlands of the South. However, despite modest economic improvement since 1993, the public have appeared reluctant to

express any 'feel good factor' since the 1992 Election. Moreover poll evidence has shown that the problems of the early 1990s may prove more resilient than the Government might have hoped; the economic dislocation caused by the recession might not be temporary after all, and the Government may no longer be seen to be blameless as a result. This might present the Conservative Government with a huge electoral problem in the next General Election, if the public have indeed realigned their economic evaluations after the crises of late 1992.

7.3 FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

It is important to note that the geographic interactions are unique; the significant interactions associated with social class did not have the same type of effects as the geographic interactions. In other words, geography was able to overcome contradictory economic evaluations, social class was not. Moreover in the final analysis, geographic context was capable of eclipsing economic interests: being a Celt was more pertinent to voters than approving of the Government's economic record or feeling optimistic about the sociotropic or egocentric future. This is the triumph of the contextual basis of the geographic thesis, and the evidence for it is consistently shown in Chapter Six.

This raises questions of locally based identities. Why do people from different regions feel and behave differently? Is the local context in say the North, so very different to that in the Midlands or the South? More work will have to be done on this, and which will certainly benefit from narrowing the focus of local identity

(the context of any local identity might well be much smaller than the simple five-fold schema presented here). An obvious opportunity exists for more qualitative research into the local context of political attitudes, which could prove instructive for the way voters frame their core attitudinal structure. It may be that certain areas have a particularly strong local identity (the nations of Scotland and Wales are obvious examples, but so too are regions such as Yorkshire, Lancashire or Essex) and as a consequence are more cohesive communities promoting more unitary attitudinal structures.

Taylor (1979), Denver and Halfacree (1992) and McMahon, Heath, Harrop and Curtice (1992) have investigated the phenomenon of the migration rates of voters. By and large they have concluded that migration flows are far too small to account for regional variation in voting patterns; and migrants tend to be self-selecting and self-cancelling. It could still be, however, that information about migration might provide an indication of the extent of cohesion within a community, since an area with a static population might be a reflection of close community ties. Regional Trends data (1995) and evidence from the 1991 census supports the speculative case that Northern areas appear more cohesive than Southern regions. Figure 7.1 and the regional maps of migration (Figures 7.2 and 7.3) show the extent of population movement within mainland Britain.

These representations of the proportions of the population who have left their region of residence in the year between 1992 and 1993, incomers who had moved from their place of residence within the year prior to the 1991 census,

and incomers who had migrated to their current residence from another district, another county, or between Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England all show a marked - and similar - geographic skew. The maps clearly show that migration was concentrated in the South of the country (the Oil industry in the North notwithstanding). Figure 7.2 shows all residents who were at a different address on census night in 1991 to twelve months previously. If a line were drawn from the mouth of the Avon to The Wash, the regions below this line could be said to be in the vanguard of migration. However, this map may reveal little other than the state of the housing market since movement within districts is included. A better measure of community cohesion is provided by Figure 7.3. This map shows migrants who had moved to a new district, county or country within the United Kingdom. Again a crude line could dissect the general pattern of differential migration rates - this time from the Avon to the Humber, revealing a marked geographic divide. Above this line less migration occurred and many of the 'old style' Northern cities (such as Glasgow, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and South Yorkshire) are clearly visible at the bottom of the migration scale. Once more the only exception to this general pattern appeared to be associated with the oil industry in Northern Scotland, which required a constant in-flow of employees. Below the Avon-Humber line, much more migration was visible. A North-South divide in migration levels, and perhaps in communal cohesion, clearly exists. This information provides support for the need for further research into locally based identities.

The fact that there were markedly fewer migrants in Northern areas than in the Southern areas would tend to support the theory that the former are more cohesive communities and are likely to have stronger local identities.

Figure 7.1 Regional Migration (Leavers) 1993, as a Proportion of Population (Source: Regional Trends 1995, 30)

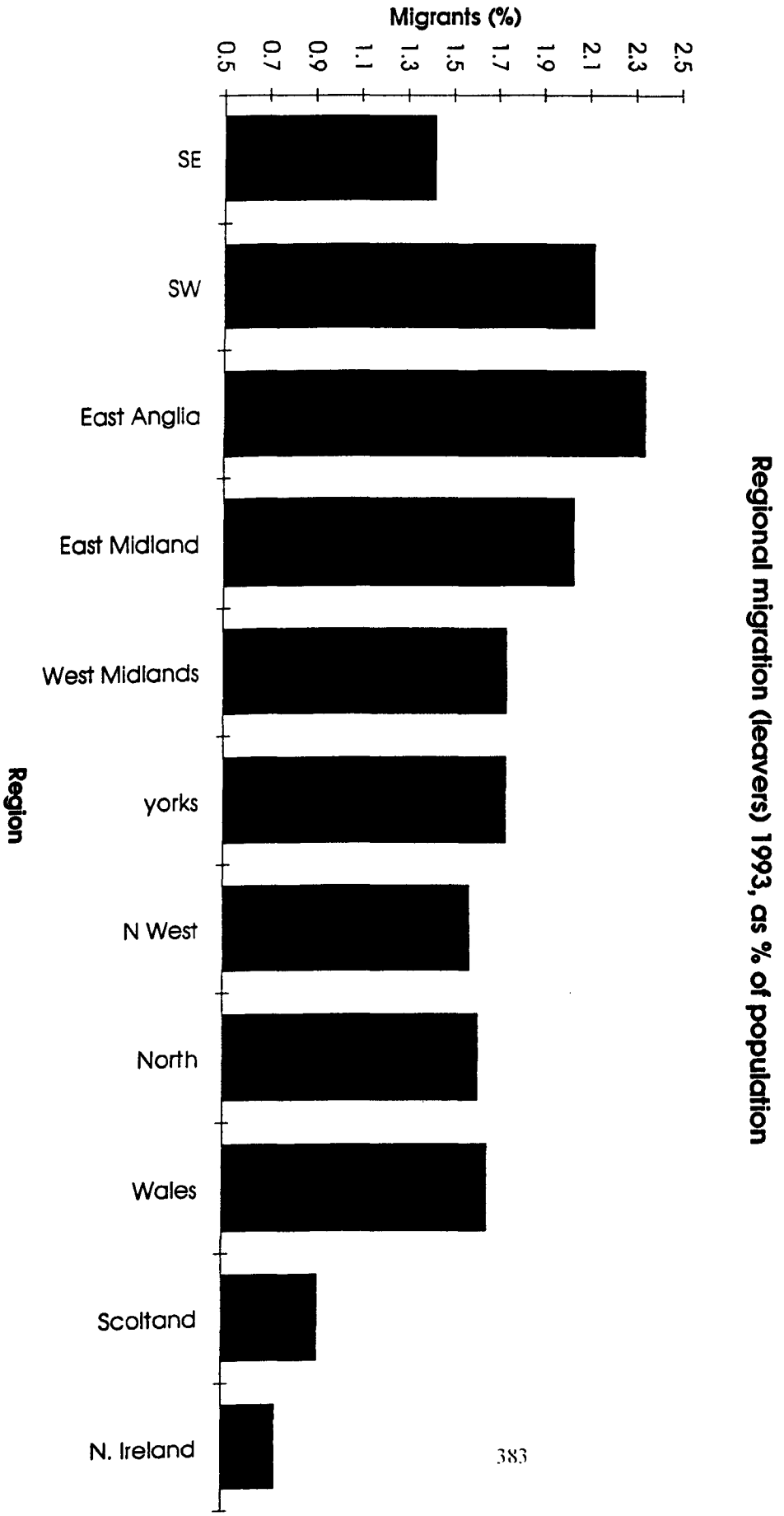


Figure 7.2 All Migrants as a Proportion of Population 1991. (Source: 1991 Census, OPCS)

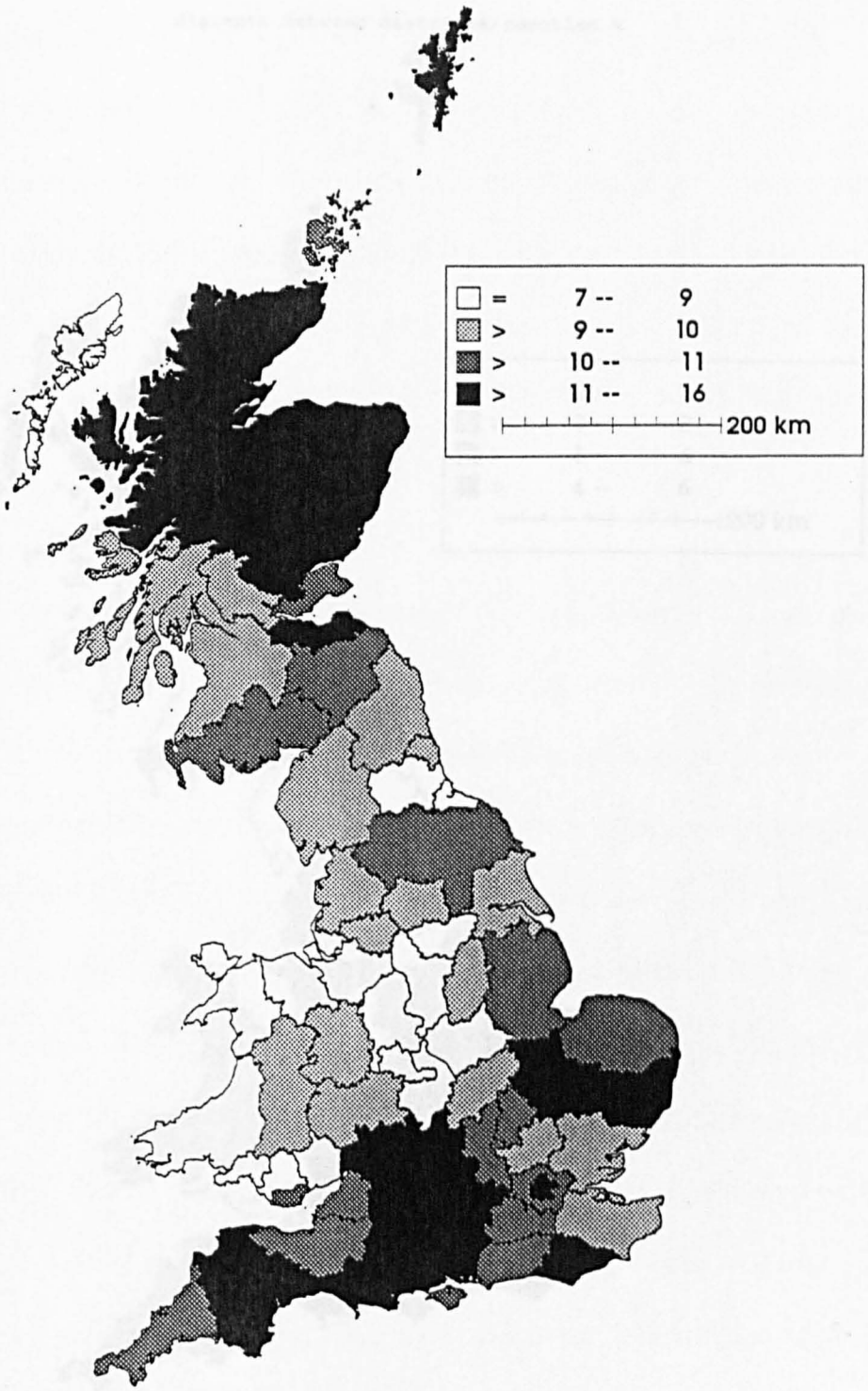
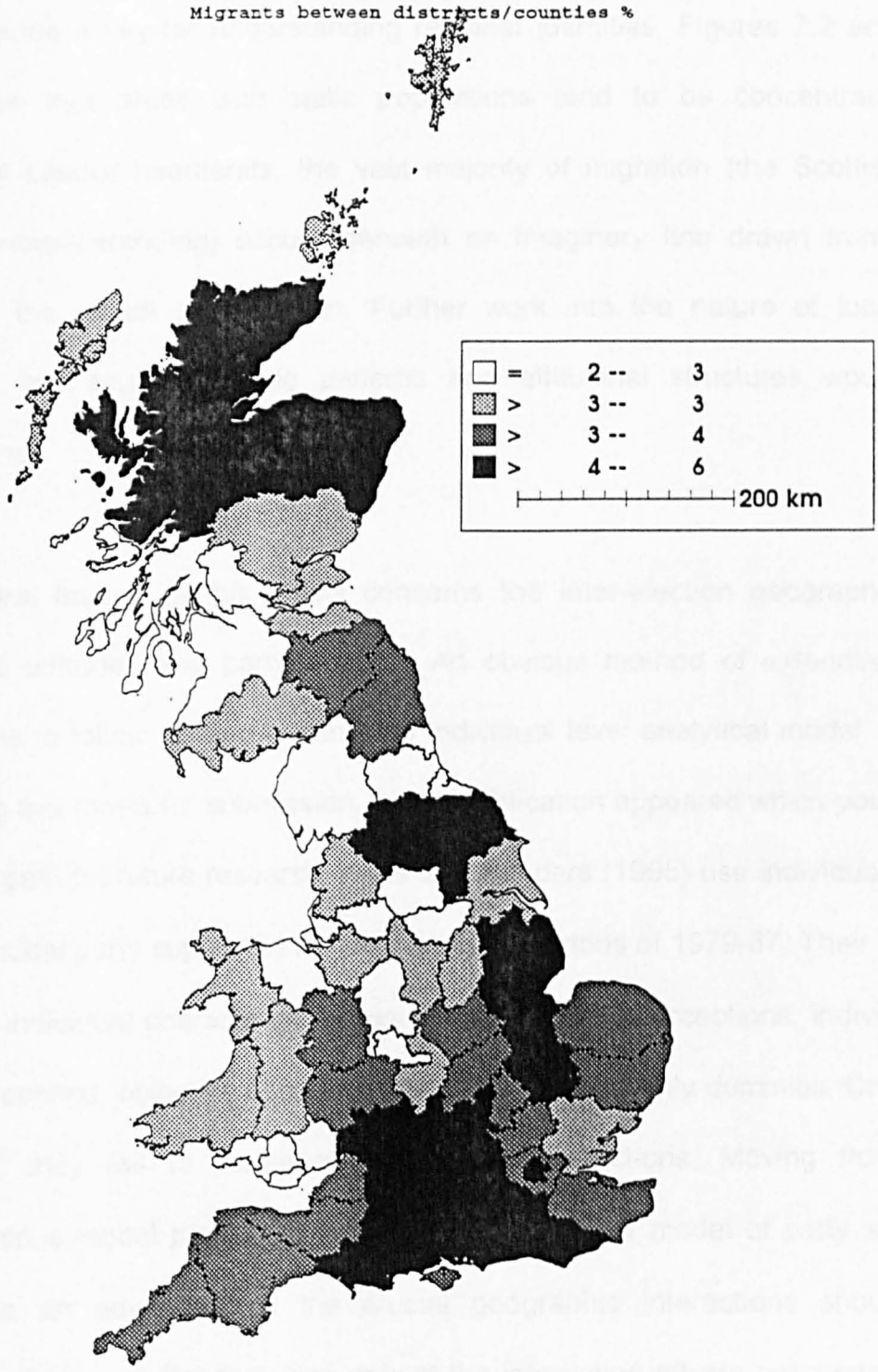


Figure 7.3 Migrants Between Districts & Counties 1991. (Source: 1991 Census, OPCS)



This is of course only preliminary evidence of the local identity thesis, but is an obvious item on a future post-thesis research agenda. At the same time material from the 1991 Census suggests that the incidence of migration between regions might provide a key for understanding regional identities. Figures 7.2 and 7.3 both show that areas with static populations tend to be concentrated in traditional Labour heartlands, the vast majority of migration (the Scottish Oil industry notwithstanding) occurs beneath an imaginary line drawn from The Wash to the mouth of the Avon. Further work into the nature of localised identities and regional voting patterns and attitudinal structures would be illuminating.

The central feature of this thesis concerns the inter-election geographies of economic attitudes and party support. An obvious method of extending this analysis is to follow up and expand the individual level analytical model. While preparing this thesis for submission, a new publication appeared which pointed a possible path for future research. Price and Sanders (1995) use individual level data to model party support in the inter-election periods of 1979-87. Their model includes individual characteristics, individual economic perceptions, individual's regional context, objective economic conditions and monthly dummies. Crucially however, they fail to scrutinise geographic interactions. Moving from the parsimonious model presented in this thesis to a fuller model of party support would be an advance, but the crucial geographic interactions should be included; Price and Sanders look only at the interaction effects associated with economic perceptions (1995; p. 467).

Price and Sanders also confirm one of the core findings of this thesis - that sociotropic evaluations provide a better indication of an individual's reported vote intention than egocentric evaluations. However, they only consider the personal economic expectations poll question. Clearly much work could be done to isolate the relationship between expectations and other economic attitudes such as economic competence, responsibility and approval for Government policy. This research has indicated that during the 1990-2 period, the geography of economic responsibility and economic approval were more crucial to understanding variations in Government support than the more orthodox economic expectations question. Further research to discern this relationship in other times and in different political and economic contexts would prove illuminating. The post-election era should be particularly ripe for future research - particularly if the events of Black Wednesday 22 September 1992 (which culminated in Britain's enforced expulsion from the Exchange Rate Mechanism of the European Union) produced the sea-change in political opinion that all polling evidence conducted since has suggested.

7.4 EVALUATION

This research has shown that over two very different time periods, with distinct political and economic contexts, the geographic setting was relevant to the incidence of party support. In particular it has established themes about the pattern of Government support in inter-election periods.

The aggregate level data used for the 1980s reaffirmed much of the existing knowledge about the geographic context of electoral behaviour, but also added to the understanding of the pattern of fluctuation among Government supporters in non-election years. More work could be done on the nature of partisanship - perhaps splitting groups of partisans according to the intensity of their party identification, and the concentration on aggregate data necessarily constrained the implications of the findings.

The individual level analysis of the 1990s provided this thesis with a much improved chance to estimate the chances of an individual supporting a party under certain circumstances. The less constrained nature of individual level analysis could provide a way forward for research into party support, and the extension of the model remains an obvious item for future research. Moreover the geographic context in which an individual resided appeared to exert a critical influence on his or her chances of supporting the Government or holding specific economic attitudes in the early 1990s. However, this research could only assert about the nature of the geographic context and several challenges are still to be met. This thesis has shown compressed forms of geographic and functional regions to be significant but it is possible that the geographic context is internalised via an even smaller scale by individuals (for instance, a reference group of streets, towns or city conurbations may form the vital milieu, rather than the regional or functional schema used here). Understanding the exact nature of the geographic context remains a research aim for electoral geography.

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Appendix I

British Social Attitudes Questions 1983-9

Now I would like to ask you about two of Britain's economic problems - inflation and unemployment.
First, inflation: in a year from now, do you expect prices generally to have gone up, to have stayed the same, or to have gone down?
Asked in:-

UMFC	Question Asked
1983	Yes
1984	Yes
1985	Yes
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

Second, unemployment: in a year from now, do you expect unemployment to have gone up, to have stayed the same, or to have gone down?

INFFC	Question Asked
1983	Yes
1984	Yes
1985	Yes
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

Looking ahead over the next year, do you think Britain's general industrial performance will improve, stay much the same, or decline?

INDYFC	Question Asked
1983	Yes
1984	Yes
1985	Yes
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

Do you think that British Industry is more efficient than it was five years ago, less efficient, or about the same?

EFFCYL5Y	Question Asked
1983	No
1984	No
1985	No
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

And do you think that, in five years' time, British industry will be more efficient or less efficient compared to now, or about the same?

EFFCY5FC	Question Asked
1983	No
1984	No
1985	No
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

Over the last ten years, do you think that poverty in Britain has been increasing, decreasing, or staying at about the same level?

POVL10Y	Question Asked
1983	No
1984	No
1985	No
1986	Yes
1987	No
1989	Yes

And over the next ten years, do you think that poverty in Britain will increase, decrease or stay at the same level?

POV10FC	Question Asked
1983	No
1984	No
1985	No
1986	Yes
1987	No
1989	Yes

Looking back over the last year or so, would you say your household's income has fallen behind prices, kept up with prices, or gone up by more than prices?

FAMYLY	Question Asked
1983	No
1984	Yes
1985	Yes
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

And looking forward to the year ahead, do you expect your household's income will fall behind prices, keep up with prices, or go up by more than prices?

FAMYFC	Question Asked
1983	No
1984	Yes
1985	Yes
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

If you stay in this job, would you expect you wages or salary over the coming year to rise by more than the cost of living, rise by the same as the cost of living, or rise by less than the cost of living?

WAGEFC	Question Asked
1983	Yes
1984	Yes
1985	Yes
1986	Yes
1987	Yes
1989	Yes

Appendix II

NOP/Newsnight Poll Series: Constituency Sampling Frame

Langbaurgh	Hexham
Sunderland North	Easington
Stockton North	Hartlepool
Sheffield Hallam	Shipley
Hull West	Sheffield Heeley
Huddersfield	Leeds East
Doncaster Central	Colne Valley
Leeds North West	Wakefield
Grantham	Gainsborough & Horncastle
Chesterfield	Derby South
Leicester East	Leicester South
Leicestershire N.W.	Rugby & Kenilworth
Cambridgeshire S.W	Cambridge
Bedfordshire S.W.	Herts. North
Suffolk Central	Suffolk South
Brentwood & Ongar	Castle Point
Southampton Itchen	Portsmouth North
Berkshire East	Henley
Hampshire East	Guildford
Folkestone & Hythe	Aldershot
Crawley	Dartford
Gravesham	Tonbridge & Malling
Sevenoaks	Mitcham & Morden
Croydon North East	Eltham
Sutton & Cheam	Norwood
Old Bexley & Sidcup	Orpington
Greenwich	Enfield North
Wanstead & Woodford	Hornchurch
Tooting	Hayes & Harlington
Brentford & Isleworth	Reigate
Plymouth Devonport	Plymouth Sutton
Gloucester	Wiltshire North
Devizes	Honiton
Weston-Super-Mare	Poole
Gower	Caerphilly
Swansea East	Newport East
Cardiff North	Cardiff South & Penarth
Meriden	Stoke on Trent South
Stafford	Aldridge-Brownhills
Wolverhampton North East	Walsall South
Coventry South East	Staffs. South East
The Wrekin	Shrewsbury & Atcham
Rossendale & Darwen	Wirral South
Wirral West	Chorley
City of Chester	Stretford
Worsley	Preston
Denton & Reddish	Tatton
Liverpool West Derby	Wigan
Dundee West	Dunfermline West
Edinburgh East	Edinburgh Central
Gordon	Perth & Kinross
Glasgow Govan	Paisley South
Stirling	Kilmarnock & Loudon
Dumfries	Glasgow Hillhead