Breaking Through: Measuring a Third Party's Pathway to Power in Nova Scotia, Canada

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Abstract

Nova Scotia's politics have historically been defined by their tendency towards "tradition and conservatism" (Beck, 1954; 1978). Provincial elections, for instance, typically had two competitors, the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, with a minimal presence among third parties. Moreover, as elections in Nova Scotia are conducted within the confines of a plurality system, the presence of a two-party system in the province served as an example of Duverger's Law (1955) at work, a theory which claims that two-partism naturally occurs where plurality electoral systems are in place. Since the 1998 general election, however, Nova Scotia has experienced a series of elections that are indicative of a shift towards a three-party system, as the New Democratic party (NSNDP) has emerged from its position as the perennial third party to form both the official opposition and, in 2009, the first ever NSNDP government. Drawing upon data found in election returns, this thesis employs measures taken from the political science literature, such as the effective number of parties (ENP), to explore the dynamics of electoral competition in Nova Scotia over the last 85 years, with particular emphasis placed on the performance of the third party. The question driving this research, namely how the historically third-place NSNDP emerged as a viable governing alternative to the two traditional parties, will be explored by analyzing the data herein, and by examining possible cleavages that created the opportunity for a third party to break through as a primary competitor and potential government-in-waiting, regardless of an electoral system that purportedly permits just two parties to thrive.

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List of Abbreviations

CCF: Co-operative Commonwealth Federation

CRA: Corporate Research Associates (market research and opinion polling firm)

ENP: Effective number of parties

ENEP: Effective number of electoral parties (parties receiving votes)

ENPP: Effective number of parliamentary parties (parties attaining seats in legislature)

ENS: Elections Nova Scotia

FPTP: First-Past-the-Post (electoral system; misnomer for SMP)

GPNS: Green Party of Nova Scotia

LPNS: Liberal Party of Nova Scotia

MHA: Member of the House of Assembly (in Newfoundland and Labrador)

MLA: Member of the Legislative Assembly

NBNDP: New Brunswick New Democratic Party

NLNDP: Newfoundland and Labrador New Democratic Party

NSNDP: Nova Scotia New Democratic Party

OTH/IND: Other parties and independent candidates

PCNS: Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia

PEI: Prince Edward Island

SMP: Single-member plurality (electoral system)

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Preface

The idea for this thesis had a humble beginning. It all started prior to the Easter holiday in 1998, which I remember only because of the connection I can make between that year's general election in Nova Scotia and speckled malted milk eggs (which is an odd and unnecessary story to tell). At that time, I was a 10-year-old boy growing up in rural Nova Scotia, and I had an insatiable interest in scholastics: I loved to read books, was fascinated by geography, and was very curious about current events and the wider world around me. It seems, through the benefit of hindsight, that my pursuit at a young age of new and exciting knowledge would inevitably lead to my interest in politics.

I was aware of elections as a child, as only a child can be aware of elections: every once in a while, large colourful placards would sprout upon the landscape; oddly-friendly adults would knock at our door and chat with my parents; radio and television ads would appear on the airwaves—then just as quickly disappear, much to the cartoon-loving pleasure of my brothers and I. To be frank, as an adult, my basic perception of elections has changed little, only that I am now the one chatting with political visitors at my door. Still, the vibrant signs and posters appear every so often, and the advertisements now appear on YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter, in addition to the traditional media. Plus ça change...

The Nova Scotia provincial general election of 1998 was, for all intents and purposes, my first real election. It was real in the sense that, for the first time I can remember, I was allowed to stay up late—while eating those speckled Easter eggs—and watch the election returns stream in on television. It was real in that I was made aware of

the basic function of an election, an awareness that was reinforced by my participation in a moot poll at my elementary school, in what was a precursor to the Student Vote initiatives of late. Yet at that time, I could not fathom what exactly it was that elected officials did or why they would choose to run for office, nor could I really grasp just how important and significant the results of the 1998 general election would be, either for the province of Nova Scotia; for the trajectory of politics in the province in the following years; or, for a budding 10-year-old political nerd from Cape Breton Island.

While this thesis does not focus solely on the 1998 provincial general election, that year certainly serves as a critical juncture, not unlike the election years of 1933—the first election with widespread use of single-member ridings—or of 2009, in which the election of the province's first NSNDP government occurred, to name just a couple. Instead, this thesis will look at a series of 24 elections held over the course of 85 years in order to capture important trends and changes to electoral competition in Nova Scotia, and over which time the changes to partisan competition can be mapped. In the ensuing pages, we will look at what the literature says about Nova Scotia (and Atlantic Canadian) politics and culture, party systems, and elections; we will dive into the data that emerges and is derived from over eight decades of provincial election returns; and, we will find the answers to the question of how the historically third place NSNDP emerged after decades in the political wilderness to become one of the province's governing parties.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On June 9, 2009, voters in the province of Nova Scotia went to the polls in their 38th general election. For the first time, they elected a majority government composed of 31 New Democratic Party members within the 52-seat House of Assembly. In terms of elections and the legislature, little had changed in the province over the preceding or succeeding years. In Nova Scotia, for instance, changing the electoral system or the electoral calendar—by implementing fixed election dates—has virtually no currency among politicians (The Canadian Press, 2015). Yet, the 2009 general election stands as a clear example of something that seemed nearly impossible, or at least very highly improbable, in the decades before the historically third-place NSNDP ascended to government with a secure majority of seats.

This thesis was originally envisioned as an examination of Nova Scotia's party system and its evolution over time from its traditional, two-party format into a competitive three-party configuration, but that is not really the case. It appears quite clear to the lay observer that the province has a three-party system and has had one since at least the late 1990s. Over the last two decades, the province's traditional political parties, the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, as well as the NSNDP have formed a government, and have held the roles of official opposition and third party inside the House of Assembly. Moreover, in general elections, each of the three parties has held their own bases of support—roughly between 20 and 25 percent of the popular vote—while gaining or losing seats in tightly contested ridings, as the province has seen a number of close two- and three-way contests in recent years. At present, there are no

indications that this political context will change in Nova Scotia any time soon. As such, the original question driving this thesis—does Nova Scotia have a three-party system—has essentially been answered with an affirmative and clear yes, as exemplified by recent election results, as well as the capacity and endurance of the now three governing-oriented political parties in Nova Scotia (see also Carbert, 2016).

How did this situation come to be in Nova Scotia? From an electoral systems perspective, the problem here is that the NSNDP even came to power at all considering how, according to Duverger's Law (1955), "the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system" (217). Nova Scotia has employed the single-member plurality[1] ballot since 1933[2], prior to which multi-member constituencies of various sizes were in place across the province's 18 counties. Even as Duverger himself adds the caveat that Canada is a different political animal in that it does not strictly adhere to two-partism, drawing his inferences from comparisons of Canada with his observations of electoral outcomes across the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1940s and 1950s, he still returned to his original argument that countries with single-member plurality electoral systems tend to develop two-party configurations (1955: 220; 223).

Looking at Canada in the mid-20th century, Duverger saw a Canadian parliament with four parties inside it, two of which were regional parties that drew almost all of their support from the western provinces of Alberta (in the case of Social Credit) and Saskatchewan (with regard to the former Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, precursor to the federal New Democratic Party)(1955: 223). Notwithstanding the

1 Colloquially, the single-member plurality electoral system is known as first-past-the-post (FPTP), which is a misnomer. Hereafter, it will be referred to as single-member plurality or SMP.

2 Between 1933 and 1981, there existed at various times a small number of multi-member districts centered in Colchester, Cumberland, Inverness, Kings, Lunenburg, Pictou, and Yarmouth counties.

national-level numbers that produced a critical mass of MPs from four political parties, Duverger noted the limit of the influence of the single-member plurality ballot "tends to the creation of a two-party system inside the individual constituency; but, the parties opposed may be different in different areas of the country" (*Ibid*.) In practice, what appears nationally to be a competitive electoral landscape with several parties each able to attain effective representation actually is a series of two-party constituency-level competitions with different actors being competitive in different locations across the entire jurisdiction.

The politics of Nova Scotia has been analyzed and studied before, with attention paid particularly to the actors and institutions in operation, the political culture, and the history of governance in the province (see Beck, 1954; Beck, 1978; Hyson, 1999; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003; MacLeod, 2006; Carbert, 2016). Provincial general elections over the years have also grabbed the attention of academics (Aucoin, 1972; Howell, 1979; Spafford, 1981; Turnbull, 2007; Turnbull, 2009). Nova Scotia's party system has received some attention in the distant past (Beck, 1954), but this thread of literature is in need of updating. In the 1950's, Beck noted the strength of the two-party system in Nova Scotia lay particularly in those areas where the population has "long been established," which in the period he analyzes between the 1830s and the 1950s was essentially all of Nova Scotia outside of Cape Breton County, in addition to those localities with a strong trade unionist vote and "considerable foreign-born element" (1954: 528-9). Recurrent themes in the literature on Nova Scotia party systems are the traditionalism and conservatism of the electorate and the party system (Aucoin, 1970; Beck, 1978; Hyson,

1973; Jenson, 1976). Still, these works were published at a time when the two-party system, which had long endured any possible disruption, was about to undergo unforeseen changes as voters began to more seriously explore their ballot options.

More broadly, Duverger (1955) set the pace with his seminal work in the subfield of party systems studies, from which his *Law* is derived. Later, scholars added to this body of work by providing pathways for the analysis of changes within party systems (Wolinetz, 1988; Wolinetz, 2006; Mair, 1997). Moreover, academics have developed quantitative indicators for detecting changes in partisan competition and have made cross-national comparisons using the same measures (Rae, 1967; Sartori 1976 [2005]; Laakso and Taagepera, 1979; Pedersen, 1980; Golosov, 2010; Nwokora and Pelizzo, 2017). While Canadian provinces have been explored by researchers (Rowat, ed., 1973; Bellamy, Pammett, and Rowat, eds., 1976; Robin, ed., 1978; Dunn, ed., 2016; Wesley, ed., 2016), including aspects of the electoral outcomes and partisan competition within, these studies look less specifically at elections and party systems than they do at the provinces generally, paying attention to actors, institutions, and intergovernmental relations, broadly speaking. In sum, the aforementioned sources have steered clear from providing a detailed and measured examination of a transition from one formation of the party system into another within a single jurisdiction, let alone across a group of them, and it is this identifiable gap that this thesis aims to fill.

This thesis will look at the evolution of Nova Scotia's party system since 1933, as that year's general election was the first to widely employ single-member districts and was the first in a series of 24 general elections stretching through to 2017 for which all

election data—such as valid votes, rejected ballots, electors, and turnout rates—has been captured, retained, and publicly released by Elections Nova Scotia. This data provides the baseline of information for this thesis, and it is from this data that empirical measures of party system change, like the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979; Golosov, 2010), are calculated.

There is a growing need for research of the type undertaken in this thesis because of the political and electoral changes that are occurring in Atlantic Canada, and for which this thesis could provide a way forward for researchers of the party systems in neighbouring provinces. Nova Scotia has had a persistent presence of third party MLAs in its legislature over the time period of this study, but that historical presence does not extend beyond the Isthmus of Chignecto or the shores of the Northumberland Strait. Indeed, the political culture of the Atlantic Provinces has been recognized for its conservatism, the durability of its two-party systems, and "traditional" voting for the two oldest parties (Bellamy, 1976; Howell, 1978; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003). Now that these traits appear to be changing across the region, it is even more important to engage in this research to better understand the depth and breadth of the demographic, electoral, and political evolution of Atlantic Canada, especially within the context of the present.

In New Brunswick, third party MLAs are uncommon but not unheard of. Candidates from the New Democratic and the Confederation of Regions parties were elected in New Brunswick for the first time in 1982 and 1991, respectively, but members from these parties were largely unable to get re-elected. The one exception to this trend was former NBNDP leader Elizabeth Weir, who held her seat for 14 years after being first

elected in 1991. It would take nine years following Weir's resignation—when, in 2014, Green Party leader David Coon was first elected in Fredericton—until another third party MLA would be elected again in New Brunswick. Across the strait in Prince Edward Island and prior to 2019, only three candidates who were not affiliated with either of the Liberal or Conservative parties had ever been elected in general elections to that province's legislature.

Yet, even as the two traditional parties in those provinces continue to survive and thrive, their hegemonic positions within those provinces' party systems is currently facing unprecedented challenges. In 2018, New Brunswick voters elected six MLAs from two third parties, or three each from the aforementioned Greens and the upstart, populist People's Alliance (Fraser, 2018; Donkin, 2018). In 2019, electors on Prince Edward Island were faced with their first ever three-way race province-wide, as the Green Party there had taken the lead in a series of opinion polls over the governing Liberals and the opposition Progressive Conservatives. Peter Bevan-Baker, the leader of the Island Greens, became only the third independent or third-party candidate to be elected in a PEI general election when he won his seat in the 2015 election (see Desserud, 2019). He was joined by Hannah Bell in 2017, when she won a by-election for the Greens in the east end of Charlottetown (Fraser, 2017). In the 66th provincial general election held on April 23, 2019, the Green Party of PEI formed the official opposition on the strength of 30 percent of the vote and eight elected members, outpacing the governing Liberal party who fell to third-party status for the first time in its history. That this came about in Prince Edward Island is even more astounding, especially when one reflects on the entirety of Island

political history and the durability of its two-party system.

It should not be lost on people just how unusual is the advance of third parties in the Maritime Provinces. The region is known for its purported adherence to traditional voting patterns and aversion to third party candidates in elections (Beck, 1954; Beck, 1978; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003), but those old habits are changing fast. The emergence of a third party as a contender for government in Nova Scotia happened gradually over eight decades; in Prince Edward Island, by contrast, the Green Party was established only 14 years ago and is already grasping at the reins of power. In New Brunswick, Green and People's Alliance MLAs hail from parties that were established barely ten years ago. Something is clearly changing on the ground in the Maritimes, in terms of elections and legislative representation, and through this thesis and its exploration of the Nova Scotia case, those changes will be explored using election data and quantitative methods in political science.

The purpose of this research is to seek an explanation for these changes in partisan competition and legislative composition and to establish a framework for the exploration of the same that can be applied to studies of other provinces. To recap, the central question of this thesis is not whether Nova Scotia has a three-party system because recent elections have demonstrated this. Even though the case appears to be made *prima facie*, it is still important for this to be proven convincingly with additional information and questioning. Both the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties are alive and well in Nova Scotia, and the transition to a period of increased competition has not hindered their electoral prospects all that much. The focus here, thus, will be one the trajectory of the

New Democratic party, their persistent presence in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, and their gradual ascent into government. How and why did a third party—in this case, the NSNDP—emerge as a credible contender for power, alongside the two traditional parties in Nova Scotia's plurality electoral system? From where and from whom did they draw popular support? What changes and events were occurring in Nova Scotia in the lead-up to the 1998 general election (and thereafter) that would create the opportunities necessary for the third party to exploit for electoral gain? To understand why the historical third party emerged as a governing party, one must look at the NSNDP's long and winding road to power more so than at the performance of its two main competitors.

This thesis begins in earnest with a review of pertinent literature on the state of politics in Atlantic Canada, with an emphasis on Nova Scotia. I will also delve into the literature on party systems and party system change, focusing particularly on the theoretical aspect of this stream of publications, as well as academic works on quantitative indicators of systemic changes to electoral and partisan competition. Following that, I provide an overview of the methods employed in this thesis to observe key political and demographic changes within Nova Scotia. Subsequently, I review the results of my calculations and observations, teasing out the reasons behind the changing face of the Nova Scotia electorate. Lastly, I conclude with comments on and analysis of the issues raised in this thesis, including discussion on the framework of this study and how it could be applied to the study of other places and could be expanded into a comparative study across a battery of jurisdictions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This thesis is based on the premise that three-party systems are oddities when they occur within single-member plurality electoral systems. Duverger (1955) established the theory that "the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system," and his theory has been resilient, with Duverger himself noting that his premise "approaches the most nearly perhaps to a true sociological law" (217). Duverger's Law has maintained a strong presence in the literature over the years (Benoit, 2006; Blais, 2002; Bowler and Lanoue, 1992; Cairns, 1968; Chezenko, 2017; Gaines, 1999; Gerring, 2005; Johnston and Cutler, 2009; Riker, 1982); as such, it is from this starting point that this thesis proceeds theoretically.

If we look, as did Duverger, at the United Kingdom and the United States, the theory makes sense, as both countries' two party systems date back well over a century. These two countries' party systems exemplify the *mechanical* effect of Duverger's Law, that being smaller parties' systematic underrepresentation in the legislature to the benefit of two large, dominant political parties (see also Blais, 2002; Gaines, 1999; Johnston and Cutler, 2009). Moreover, there is a *psychological* effect to Duverger's Law, that being voters' apparent aversion to voting for parties with little to no chance of winning in a given contest (*Ibid*.). In practice, Duverger's Law works against smaller parties through the plurality electoral system by over-awarding legislative seats to the parties receiving the most votes; and, by dissuading potential voters from voting for smaller parties because of their diminished chances of attaining legislative representation and/or electoral victory.

Yet, this thesis looks at Nova Scotia, which has had an enduring three party system for a little more than two decades, stemming from the results of the 1998 provincial general election (see also Carbert, 2016). However, the province did not undertake any major or substantive changes to its electoral system in the years preceding or succeeding 1998—such as changing to a proportional representation system—that would stimulate changes to electoral competition and give rise to new political parties. What is it about Nova Scotia that stimulated and fostered multi-party competition within the framework of plurality elections? We will pursue this answer first by perusing the literature.

Duverger's Law

The proposition known as Duverger's Law is a fundamental concept in the subfield of electoral studies, one that has spawned a multitude of papers, debates, and hypotheses explaining how party systems are shaped by electoral institutions (Benoit, 2006; Blais, 2002; Bowler and Lanoue, 1992; Cairns, 1968; Chezenko, 2017; Gaines, 1999; Gerring, 2005; Johnston and Cutler, 2009; Riker, 1982). In *Political Parties*, Duverger adroitly proposed that “the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system,” and that “this approaches the most nearly perhaps to a true sociological law” (1955: 217). His confidence in declaring a law is as likely to have drawn the attention of scholars to the subfield as is the seeming disjuncture between Duverger's claim and the political reality in particular jurisdictions. Although the correlation between the single-member plurality electoral system[3] and a two-party system

3 The single-member plurality electoral system is commonly referred to by the misnomer of 'first-past-the-post'.

is not always perfect, Duverger's Law is a starting point in the genesis of electoral studies and party systems literature, in no small part because, at its core, his law has yet to be fully refuted.

There is a second part to Duverger's party systems proposition, referred to as his "hypothesis" (Riker, 1982; Benoit, 2006), wherein he claims that runoff voting and proportional representation are conducive to multiparty systems (1955: 239). This argument has been less forcefully stated, owing arguably to the proponent's deliberate ambiguity (Riker, 1982: 754) and the inability of his hypothesis "to hold for the party system and the electorate" writ large (Sartori, 2005: 84). Indeed, there are cases where proportional and runoff systems are dominated by two large parties—Australia and New Zealand come to mind in this instance—along with a multitude of minor players, and others where coalition building is the norm due to the proliferation of small- and medium-sized parties, such as in the high fractionalized Israeli Knesset. A common thread in the literature, however, suggests that there are more accurate explanations for party system development in non-plurality voting systems than the hypothesis proffered by Duverger. Following from Riker, then, for the purposes of this review, in order to avoid any possible confusion, and because this thesis focuses on Nova Scotia and its plurality electoral system, I shall focus herein solely on Duverger's 'Law'.

While Duverger's "forceful" and "widely-cited" proposition is undoubtedly the best known expression of the relationship between plurality elections and party systems (Ware, 1996; Benoit, 2006), Riker adds a caveat to this popular notion by pointing to previous iterations of the same idea, dating back as far as Droop's 1869 observation that

plurality voting leaves the elector with only two practical choices (1982: 756). Academics and thinkers subsequent to Droop in 1869—notably T. R. Ashworth and H. P. C. Ashworth, A. Lawrence Lowell, Ramsay MacDonald, Arthur Holcombe, and Carl Friedrich—expressed the mechanics and the outcomes of Duvergerian systems without expressly stating the law or claiming it as such (Riker, 1982; Benoit, 2006). As much as the product of electoral studies has stemmed from Duverger's propositions, his was merely the most forceful and succinct expression of an idea that predated him by nearly a century—something Riker used to prove the existence of a "history" of political science, but which also alludes to the inherent resilience of the concept underpinning Duverger's Law.

The Effects of Duverger's Law: Mechanics and Psychology

There are two factors identified by Duverger that explain how the law works in effect. The *mechanical* effect is exemplified by the expectation that, in plurality elections, the third-place party in terms of popular vote will be heavily penalized in terms of legislative seats won relative to the first and second parties. Duverger notes that, in two-party systems, the vanquished party is always underrepresented relative to the victor, and the degree of under-representation for the third party is much greater than that experienced by the second-place party (1955: 226). In operation, the single-member plurality electoral system tends to over-reward the winning party, penalize the second-place party, and marginalize third parties up to the point of exclusion from legislative representation.

This is not always the case, however, and it can depend upon the location of a

party's voters. In the 2013 Nova Scotia provincial election, the NSNDP finished second in the overall popular vote, or about half a percentage point ahead of the third place Progressive Conservatives, yet it wound up with four fewer seats than the PCNS because the NSNDP's popular support was more evenly spread across the province (Coffin, 2013). Likewise, in the 2019 Newfoundland and Labrador provincial election, what was anticipated to be a disastrous campaign for the NLNDP—they received only 6.3 percent of the popular vote, or about half the number of votes the party received in 2015, and only about a quarter of the number of votes received by that party in 2011—actually resulted in that party winning three seats on the strength of its candidates in the centre and east end of St. John's, and a surprise, five-vote margin of victory in Labrador West, a district that has elected New Democratic MHAs in the past (Hutchings, 2019; MacEachern, 2019). This highlights a weakness in the mechanical aspect of Duverger's Law inasmuch as an incredibly weak party organization, such as the 2019 NLNDP, can overperform in terms of legislative representation by concentrating their efforts on a very limited number of attainable seats—after all, the NLNDP did not run candidates in 26 of that province's 40 electoral districts. Focusing on a particular seat or group of seats is also a strategy that has been employed successfully by Green parties in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, as well as federally, as all of the aforementioned Green parties have won legislative representation by first channeling their efforts on the riding of the leader and getting that person elected before broadening their party's focus in subsequent elections (see Mildenberger, 2019). These idiosyncrasies, coming as they do in the Canadian context, are explored a bit further a bit

later on in this chapter.

The *psychological* effect of Duverger's Law is, generally speaking, synonymous to the concept of strategic voting in that, hypothetically, voters in a plurality system are less likely to vote for a third party if that vote is perceived to be a wasted one (see also Blais, 2002; Gaines, 1999; Johnston and Cutler, 2009). Cox (1997) succinctly described the concept of strategic voting thusly:

> Some voter, whose favourite candidate has a poor chance of winning, notices that she has a preference between the top two candidates; she then rationally decides to vote for the most preferred of these two competitors rather than for her overall favorite, because the latter vote has a much smaller chance of actually affecting the outcome than the former (71; see also Blais, et al., 2001).

The non-strategic vote is considered a wasted one because the third (or preferred) party does not stand a realistic chance at election, either in the local district or in great numbers nationally. Strategic voters are then likely to cast their vote in favour of the most palatable of the larger alternative parties. Voters have been shown to use "objective contextual information" like past election results and public opinion polling, in addition to their own personal preferences, to decide whether or not to vote strategically; however, the occurrence of strategic voting depends upon the individual, how attentive they are to current political trends, and their own interpretation of their preferred party's chances in a given election (Blais and Bodet, 2006). This process takes place in voters' minds prior to casting a ballot, although research has shown this to be a minor phenomenon, with only about 3 to 6 percent of voters casting strategic votes in Canadian elections (Blais, 2002; Blais, et al., 2001; Blais, Young, and Turcotte, 2005).

In some instances, the psychological effect appears to have been a powerful factor

in the outcome of plurality elections. The most vivid recent example would be the 2015 Canadian federal election, in which the Justin Trudeau-led Liberal party vaulted from third-party status into a strong and stable majority government overnight. That election campaign was lengthy at 78 days, and for much of the first half of the election, the Liberals ran neck-and-neck with Stephen Harper's Conservatives and Tom Mulcair's NDP; voters ultimately coalesced around the Trudeau Liberals as the best-positioned vehicle for ousting the sitting Conservative government (see Grenier, 2015; Press, 2015). However, as evidence from previous studies (Blais, 2002; Blais, et al., 2001; Blais, Young, and Turcotte, 2005; Blais and Bodet, 2006) has shown, strategic voting does not occur all that often, and even in the case of the 2015 federal election, it seems doubtful that strategic voting will continue to exert a powerful pull on the electorate, as the context of the upcoming election has changed dramatically since the previous one.

Challenging Duverger's Law

The theme of the critiques of Duverger's Law has not been one of refutation but one of reimagination. Riker notably revised Duverger's initial claim with the qualifier that two-party competition in plurality electoral systems is persistent except in those places where the national third party is one of the two parties locally, and where one party among several is "almost always" the Condorcet[4] winner (1982: 761). This is exemplified somewhat by federal party system in Canada through the 1990s, as regional parties were elected to large blocs of seats in the House of Commons, facing off in all regions against the dominant federal Liberal Party. Dobell (1986) remarks that it is the "absence of more than one party possessing a plausible image of being a national party"

4 A Condorcet candidate is one "who can beat any other in a pairwise contest" (Riker, 1982: 761).

that has contributed to the persistent presence of third parties, noting that the "central dominance of one national party and the weakness of the second party"—to which he is referring to the Liberal and Conservative parties, respectively—has created both the opportunity and the space for third parties to break through and survive in the Canadian party system (594-5).

Moreover, the most persistent third party presence belongs to parties of the left, as Dobell states that it is the left-leaning parties who "refuse to negotiate coalition governments... but retain the most persistent third-party representation in the legislature" (*Ibid.*). Perhaps, by not participating in governing with another party, smaller parties are avoiding existential threats such as, on one hand, being absorbed into the larger governing coalition partner, as had happened when the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan was decimated when most of its MLAs abandoned the party to join the governing Saskatchewan NDP after their coalition government was forged around the turn of the millennium (see McGrane, 2008; Rayner and Beaudry-Mellor, 2009); or, on the other hand, being outperformed by their larger coalition partner at the polls, as a recent British Columbia by-election illustrated the peril faced by the Green party in that province (Chan, 2019; Smyth, 2019).

Cox (1997) recognizes the tendency in Canadian elections for third parties to persist in particular regions, noting that "Duverger's Law holds only if the social cleavage structure is not characterized by geographically concentrated minorities who might form the basis of a successful, albeit localized, third party" (24-25). Still, the idea persists here that, at the riding level, only two parties are in competition, which some researchers

(Gaines, 1999) suggest is not necessarily the case at all.

On the other hand, Colomer (2005) challenges us to reverse the order, arguing that is it the number of parties that determines the choice of electoral system. That party configuration influences electoral system choice is a common refrain among Duverger's dissenters (Benoit, 2007: 368). Colomer points out that a small number of parties or a minimal number of social cleavages ultimately leads to a majoritarian, two-party system. Similarly, multiparty systems had developed before the adoption of proportional electoral systems. Colomer argues that this indicates the party system is a causal factor in the change of electoral rules. Moreover, elections immediately after the adoption of PR systems have confirmed the previously existing multiparty configuration, a phenomenon that Duverger himself acknowledged (Colomer, 2005: 18; Benoit, 2007: 365). That said, all federal and provincial elections in Canada are currently held within the framework of a SMP electoral system, after recent efforts to change the electoral system in some jurisdictions having failed. Finally, Colomer observes that the effective number of parties increases over the long term, electoral system notwithstanding.

Cairns (1968) would suggest instead that the electoral system exerts the strongest force on the evolution of the party system in Canada. He pointed out that the plurality electoral system in Canada had put in a “mediocre” performance in the mid-20th century\ when it is measured by its ability to create “artificial legislative majorities to produce cabinet stability,” noting that, of the 14 elections at the federal level between 1921 and 1965, only eight produced a majority government, two of which were thin majorities of 52 percent or less of the seats in the House of Commons (Cairns, 1968: 56). Moreover,

Cairns notes that “minor parties with sectional strongholds” perform fairly well within the context of a plurality electoral system, as opposed to parties whose support is less concentrated and spread more thinly (*Ibid.*: 59), a phenomenon that has been observed at the federal level in years past through the resiliency of the parliamentary presence of the Bloc Québécois, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the Reform party, and Social Credit at various points in time.

Another major critique of Duverger's Law is the persistence of exceptional cases, particularly those of Canada and India, which is discussed in further detail below. Douglas Rae offered a reformulation of Duverger's Law that suggested plurality elections are “always associated with two-party competition except where strong local minorities exist” (as cited in Riker, 1982: 760). Chhibber and Kollman show that multiparty competition persists over time in Canada and India to an extent unobserved in the United Kingdom or the United States (2004: 167-8). As we will see later, the persistence of the Canadian exception, like that of India, is based on explanations highlighting the influences of federalism and regionalism on the party system.

However, the most forceful critique comes from Dunleavy (2012), who suggested that “Duverger's Law is extinct,” “has ceased to be,” and “is a dead parrot,” alluding to a famous Monty Python sketch. In his analysis, Dunleavy demonstrates clearly that elections to the American House of Representatives, using the 2006 midterm elections as an example, adhere “completely” to Duvergerian expectations; whereas, in the other two cases he explores—India's 2004 Lok Sabha elections and the 2005 general election in the United Kingdom—show quite different outcomes relative to their American counterparts,

with UK elections having some areas of two-party dominance but others where liberal and nationalist parties break through, and in India, wherein there are district-level contests in which the two main parties there are not even in contention (*Ibid*.) Dunleavy ultimately argues that expressions of Duverger's Law in practice can scarcely be found "outside the USA, except for a few small Caribbean nations," adding that "all the major Westminster system countries [which Dunleavy identifies as Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom] have shown strong trends towards multi-partism" (*Ibid*.). Of the aforementioned Westminster system countries, only Canada, India, and the United Kingdom have a SMP electoral system. While this thesis does not go so far as to dismiss Duverger's Law as deceased, it certainly challenges the notion that the 'law' holds for a Canadian province, even at the district or riding level, adding instead to the notion that Canada is an exceptional case—indeed a problematic one—when analyzed through a Duvergerian lens.

Duverger's Law and Canadian Exceptionalism

The main thrust of the relevant literature pertaining to Duverger's Law and elections in Canada is that this country is exceptional. This idea of Canadian exceptionalism is as old as Duverger's Law itself—really. Duverger mentions how Canada does not neatly conform with his eponymous law in *Political Parties* (1955), wherein he writes, notwithstanding the presence of four parties in the House[5], Canada's pluralistic parliamentary politics still displays "a fairly obvious tendency towards dualism" (223). He appears to rationalize the presence of the two smaller parties—at the

5 Duverger's book, *Political Parties*, was originally published in 1951. He wrote about the membership of the Canadian House of Commons at that particular point in time, most of whom would have been elected at the 1949 general election.

time, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and Social Credit—as the effect of regionalism at the national level, noting that the CCF is "almost entirely confined to Saskatchewan, where it [held] the government [at the time]" and that Social Credit was "a purely local party with no representation outside the Province of Alberta where it replaced the United Farmer's party" (*Ibid.*). In other words, Canada, per Duverger, is not much of an exception after all, when you discount the presence of regionally-based political parties. Even if Canada has a national legislature with multiple political parties attaining representation, the single-member plurality ballot still "tends to the creation of a two-party system inside the individual constituency; but the parties opposed may be different in different areas of the country" (*Ibid*.; see also Park, 2003).

A problem arises with this line of reasoning is when data refutes its premise. While some researchers hold that, at the riding level, Canada confirms to Duvergerian expectations of two-party competition (Duverger, 1955; Park, 2003), others are less convinced, stating that Canadian constituencies typically range between two- and four-party competition and that "sectional insurgency" can spawn regionally-based political movements that are electorally successful (Gaines, 1999; Johnston and Cutler, 2009; Johnston, 2013). Indeed, it has been recognized for some time that the "electoral system positively favours minor parties with sectional strongholds and discourages minor parties with diffuse support" (Cairns, 1968: 59), which is why, on one hand, the Bloc Québécois —with its support rooted among Quebec separatists and nationalists, who are geographically concentrated in vote-rich francophone Quebec—maintained a substantive parliamentary presence over two decades, whereas the Green Party—an entity which

predates the Bloc by nearly a decade, and which espouses ecological positions on policy matters—has struggled to attain a foothold in any Canadian legislature until recently because of a lack of geographically concentrated groups of environmentally conscious voters. To speak idiomatically, parties spread a mile wide and an inch thick are not likely to attain legislative representation, as opposed to parties whose support is highly concentrated in a particular locale.

Even when sectionality is factored in, there is still the possibility that multiple candidates and parties can break through in a given riding, which may result in several candidates attaining a not-insignificant level of support, ultimately creating a competitive multipartisan climate at the riding level. Chhibber and Kollman (2004) provide evidence of the phenomenon of national multipartism and district two-partism across four federal countries, yet even here they find that Canadian constituencies show an effective number of parties (or ENP) greater than 2 and a similar accelerating trend line to that of India, a country whose population is both many times greater, and more demographically diverse, than that of Canada. Indeed, as one study points out, Canadian ridings generally "do not seem to move toward bipartisan [or Duvergerian] competition over time" (Gaines, 1999: 850). For example, during the 2015 federal election in the Quebec riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot , the New Democratic candidate ultimately won the seat with a mere 28.7 percent of the vote, with only 12 percentage points separating her from her fourth-place Conservative challenger (Schwartz, 2015). With the right mix of candidates, typically drawn from the ranks of municipal and provincial politics in addition to those candidates who have run multiple times before, riding-level races across Canada can

become competitive three-, four-, and even five-way races. Moreover, with the rise in popularity of historically small parties like the federal Green and People's parties, fractionalized competition at the riding level—at least federally—is more than likely to increase.

So, what accounts for Canada's perpetual exception to the Duvergerian norm? Regional voting patterns recur as a theme, with entrenched "traditional" voting habits, the salience of provincial political issues and their "contamination" of federal politics, and variations in party competitiveness being the primary factors influencing the fractionalization of the federal party system (Gaines, 1999; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003; Johnston and Cutler, 2009). However, others view regionalism as proof of localized two-party systems with variations on the parties at play (Taagepera and Grofman, 1985: 342; see also Duverger, 1955: 218; Gaines, 1999: 842). Scant evidence has been provided that class or cultural cleavages have exerted as strong an influence as regionalism. Even for an obvious case such as Quebec, its influence on the federal party system is generally considered no different than any other region, and for that matter it is comparable to the western provinces in its historical receptiveness to third parties. By and large, the consensus in the literature is that regionalism and regional differences have the largest influence on the federal party system.

Canadian Provincial Politics

Canadian party systems literature flourished in the 1960s and 1970s with the publication of detailed qualitative analyses of the state of partisan competition, contemporary electoral trends, and expectations in provincial general elections. Coming

as it did at a time when Canada hewed closer to a two-party norm and prior to the advent of indicators of partisan competition, many of the claims and assumptions within the literature are blind to more recent trends in Canadian politics. Moreover, it also appears that Canada is inordinately exceptional in the sense that its party systems, at the federal and provincial levels, have regularly veered away from Duvergerian expectations. This phenomenon could be better understood by applying underemployed methods to analyze Canadian provincial party systems, especially in case studies at the provincial level.

Canada's political arenas are diverse and ripe for study. Thus far, much that has been explored in the literature about Canada has had to do with the federal party system, yet Canada's provinces and territories are smaller versions of the same electoral processes and party dynamics. Stewart, Sayers, and Carty (2016) provide a brief update to works issued decades earlier that explored the party systems of the provinces. Their analysis shows that Duverger's Law is alive and well at the provincial level, with most provinces having a firm two-party system in place with variations in the ordering of the party constellation (2016: 144-7). Even then, recent elections in the provinces have pushed back against the narrative that the provinces exhibit Duvergerian norms.

One model for a detailed analysis of provincial party systems is found in *Canadian Provincial Politics: The Party Systems of the Ten Provinces*, edited by Martin Robin (1972), which provides a thorough qualitative analysis of the provincial party systems, reviewing historical events, elections, and social trends in each one. Though this appears before the advent of 'effective' party indicators, it nonetheless provides a comprehensive overview of the party systems and political cultures of the provinces up to

the early 1970s. Similar edited books (Rowat, 1973; Bellamy, et al., 1976) emerged around this time, providing a greater description and analysis of provincial government and politics on the whole than anything previous. Though none delves as deeply into provincial party systems as Robin's edited book, space is still dedicated to updating previous analyses of party systems. Taken altogether, these three books are the most prominent of the foundational texts on Canadian provincial party systems.

Moreover, *Provinces*, a compilation of essays and studies edited by the late Christopher Dunn; a recent edition of the *Canadian Political Science Review,* dedicated to provincial studies; and, *Big Worlds: Politics and Elections in the Canadian Provinces and Territories*, are recent publications that have rejuvenated the study of the provinces with new and updated research, something that this subsection of Canadian politics has been sorely lacking since a surge of provincial politics literature was released in the 1960s and 1970s (Wesley, 2015: 2-3). Still, these latest entries reserve only a small space for elections and party systems analysis, focusing more broadly on issues of demographics, the structures and processes of provincial governments, and pertinent policy issues.

In the decades since the initial provincial studies publications were released, there had been little apparent interest in provincial party systems. Wesley noted this gap and the problems it poses, especially since the literature on some aspects of Canadian provincial politics "is now so dated that any generalizations are becoming dangerous" (2015: 3). The recent additions to the body of literature on provincial politics have ignited hopes that there will be renewed interest in this subsection of Canadian politics—

as evidenced, in part, by this thesis—and that the flow of publications, particularly on provincial electoral and party systems, will start to increase.

Generally speaking, however, provincial politics has historically been given short shrift, overlooked by scholars of Canadian politics who tend to favour the bigger issues encountered at the national and international levels. There are several reasons why this is perilous. For starters, Canadian provinces are very powerful subnational entities in a decentralized federal state, and provincial constitutional responsibilities are becoming much more important and salient with people in modern society. How provincial institutions cope with these challenges has implications for students interested in federalism and comparative politics. On provincial party systems, the assumption that two-partism is the norm across the board is ripe for rebuttal. If, for instance, the ENP naturally trends upward over time (Colomer, 2005; see also Gaines, 1999), it only makes sense that we are now seeing the presence in most provincial legislatures of elected members from three or more political parties—only in Alberta and Saskatchewan are the legislatures presently bipartisan. Finally, there is a renewed sense of momentum for provincial studies literature with an uptick in new publications drawing the attention and interest of scholars. It is important that we seize on this newfound momentum by adapting theories and approaches from elsewhere in political science to the problems and puzzles of provincial politics, thereby fashioning a modern and more robust genre of provincial studies.

Politics of Nova Scotia

Turning one's attention specifically to Nova Scotia, one sees that the dominant

themes in much of the literature are the province's tendency towards tradition and conservatism, and as it pertains to the latter, the emphasis is less on political conservatism than on cultural stasis. Beck is foremost among the authors here, as his works set the pace for the study of Nova Scotia politics, coming as they did during the 1950s through the 1970s, at a time of heightened interest in publications on provincial-level politics and culture. Beck remarked on the province's historically traditional voting patterns, wherein "whole families maintain with a sort of proud tradition an unbroken history as partisans for generations" (Langley, as cited in Beck, 1954: 519). Put another way, voters would be inclined—perhaps even pressured—to vote in the same way as their forebears, typically for either the Liberal or Conservative parties.

Traditional voting was tied, in the case of Nova Scotia, to the province's "static" nature, having experienced "few disturbances of its socio-economic, religious, racial, or ethnic composition," having been "[s]ettled largely by British and Loyalist stock," in the years prior to Confederation through to the 1970s (Aucoin, 1972: 25; Norman, 1973: 19; see also Beck, 1978). Some segments of Nova Scotia society have described their traditional voting habits as a form of "secularized religion," with partisan allegiances considered "an integral part of one's identity" and their party identification "remain[ing] with them for life" (Bellamy, 1976: 13). While traditional voting habits were not universal to all Nova Scotians, they were well enough engrained to be documented as a recurring feature of Atlantic Canadian political culture through much of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Casting one's eye on demographics reveals that the province's "static" nature has

held up relative to changes that have been seen elsewhere in Canada. As of the 2016 Census, fully 93.5 percent of Nova Scotia (versus 77.7 percent of all Canadians) do not consider themselves to be a visible minority, and another 84.6 percent of Census respondents from the province (compared to 58.4 percent of all respondents) have stated that their "generation status"—having both parents born within Canada—goes back three or more generations, which indicates that the demographic composition of the province still has not changed all that much from what was observed in the 1970s (Statistics Canada, 2017). Even groups whose presence reached a critical mass in Nova Scotia prior to Confederation—those being Aboriginals of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis ancestry; French-speaking Acadians; and, African Nova Scotians—remain small minorities, with individuals identifying as members of these groups totaling 8.2 percent, 2.6 percent, and 2.4 percent of the overall population of Nova Scotia, respectively (*Ibid.*). In sum, present-day Nova Scotia does not appear that differently than it did in the 1970s—or even the 1870s—although it is, to a degree, less ethnically homogenous than it used to be.

In terms of the party systems across Atlantic Canada, and in Nova Scotia particularly, up to the 1970s, the enduring patterns of competition were "relatively old, being formed during the late 1800s" in the period following Confederation, and having "escaped major socio-economic upheavals" nor having been "faced with large-scale immigration," the region's politics grew to be dominated by oscillations between periods of Liberal and Conservative rule, with those parties avoiding hardened ideological divisions by practicing brokerage politics in order "to appeal to all segments of [Nova Scotian] society" (Hyson, 1973: 480-82). Neither of the two old parties had overly strong

ideological leanings, with one author describing partisan competition in Nova Scotia as akin to “contests between the 'ins' and the 'outs'” (Aucoin, 1972: 25), while another remarked at how “the Liberals and the Conservatives are pragmatic parties that take stands on specific issues more on grounds of expediency than principle” (Beck, 1978: 179). Indeed, whereas in the first half of the 20th century, both parties would have “emphasize[d]... that too much can be expected of governments and that paternal legislation is not the remedy for economic and political ills” (Beck, 1954: 519), later governments of both parties took an outright interventionist approach to economic, industrial, and social development (see Beck, 1978; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003). On the whole, “*no* basic issue distinguishes the [political] parties, and politics continues in response to preference patterns on short-run issues, within the context of traditional and strong party affiliations” through a persistent party system “that has not changed greatly since the 19th century when the lines of support were drawn” (Jenson, 1976: 129).

The concept of traditionalism and traditional voting is nothing new in the annals of Atlantic Canadian and Nova Scotian political literature (Aucoin, 1972; Beck, 1954; Beck, 1978; Bellamy, 1976; Howell, 1978; Jenson, 1976; Kenny, 1999; Norman, 1973; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003; Rowat, 1973), but both are concepts that are perhaps less applicable to Nova Scotia and its neighbours presently than it had been in the past (Carbert, 2016; see also Kenny, 1999; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003). First of all, in the literature on the party system and electoral competition in Nova Scotia—and as with Duverger's Law—one clear exception is noted, and that is Cape Breton County and its consistent support of Labour, CCF and NDP candidates (Beck, 1954: 528-9; Beck, 1976:

178; Beck, 1978: 183; Bellamy, 1976: 14; Carbert, 2016: 48; Clutterbuck, 1973: 458-60; Hyson, 1973: 480-82; Norman, 1973: 20). Throughout the 20th century, Cape Breton County was an base of industry, as it was home to multiple coal mines and a large steel plant, in addition to traditional resource extraction in the fisheries, forestry, and agricultural sectors. In the collieries especially, organized labour was active and present, and it was the coal miners' union that ultimately spurred the establishment of the Nova Scotia wing of the CCF in the late 1930s (Beck, 1954: 528; Beck, 1978: 182-3; see also Earle and Gamberg, 1989). Whereas earlier attempts to harness the political power of agrarians and unionists across Nova Scotia had borne fruit with the success of some Farmer-Labour candidates shortly after the First World War, the cohesiveness of that political alliance proved ephemeral as both camps experienced difficulties cooperating and coordinating their political activities, and their elected members proved ineffectual, leading to the reassertion of the traditional, two-party system by the time of the 1925 provincial election (*Ibid*.). However, in the years following a by-election victory in 1939 —and with the exception of two terms in the 1960s—the CCF and NSNDP have maintained a continuous presence in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, with all of their members prior to 1981 being elected from constituencies in Cape Breton County.

What the pre-1980s literature on Nova Scotia fails to capture is the gradual rise in NSNDP support and, moreover, the shift in that party's base of support from its industrial, unionist base in Cape Breton County, towards the diverse, highly-educated, metropolitan voters situated in Halifax County. It is obvious as to why authors up to the 1970s could not detect the shift in NSNDP electoral support out of Cape Breton County, and that is

because the NSNDP was not electing members in any of the province's other 17 counties, and the party's popular vote in those counties was not reaching a point where electing MLAs seemed a realistic proposition. More to the point, there was no data to analyze, such as election returns, as it was only in the 1980s that NSNDP support outside Cape Breton began to reach a critical mass.

Indeed, it was only in 1980 when Alexa McDonough was elected the first NSNDP leader based outside Cape Breton, and the first woman to lead a major political party in Canada (McDonough, 2006; Smith and Guildford, 2011; Carbert, 2016). In 1981, during her first election as party leader, McDonough was the only NSNDP candidate to win a seat, and she did so in a Halifax area riding (Smith and Turnbull, 2008; Smith and Guildford, 2011). In the same election, the McDonough-led NSNDP failed to retain any of the four seats the party had won in Cape Breton County in 1978, and it would be another 16 years before another NSNDP candidate would be elected there, in the form of Helen MacDonald in a 1997 by-election (see Swick, 1997).

That a party like the NSNDP, especially one that had been so culturally and geographically entrenched in a specific region of the province, could, with the election of a particular leader, shift its audience and base so suddenly is a stark example of the importance of leaders within the framework of parliamentary politics (see Bittner, 2010; Bittner, 2018; Stewart and Carty, 1993). To be clear, Bittner does not argue that there is an increasing "presidentialization" or leader-centric focus in Canadian elections; rather, she posits that leaders "are important and continue to play an important role in the minds of voters" (Bittner, 2018: 297-8.) Her research has shown that, in Canadian elections,

voters' evaluations of the leaders' traits are "an important factor incorporated into vote choice"; that the leaders' character is more important than their competence in influencing vote choice; and, that leaders' traits are evaluated relative to those of their fellow competitors (Bittner, 2010: 200). Others have found, however, that changing the party leader "provide[s] no observable general boost in partisan support at the polls," and as for non-governing parties, while they "usually see their vote and seat shares increase after a leadership change, these changes are typically very small" (Stewart and Carty, 1993: 318; 329).

Still, if "leaders have always mattered" in Canadian politics, as Bittner (2018) suggests, than this is no less true in Nova Scotia, where Alexa McDonough's impact on provincial politics continues to reverberate, especially in the reorientation of the NSNDP from the party of Cape Breton labour to a party of urban professionals and social activists (see Carbert, 2016). While, as Stewart and Carty (1993) might have expected, there was no immediate boost in party fortunes in the election following McDonough's ascension to the party leadership—the NSNDP lost its four seats in Cape Breton, McDonough won the party's first seat outside the island, and the party's vote rose by four percent—it is clear in hindsight that McDonough's reorientation of the NSNDP gradually led to a change in the party system, from the traditional, two-party format it had had since Confederation (Beck, 1954; Beck, 1978) towards a competitive, three-party system (Carbert, 2016: 46; see also Chezenko, 2017). Compared to its political history, little has been written about the present state of multiparty competition in Nova Scotia, a gap which this thesis intends to address and one which will be discussed further at the end of this chapter.

Measuring Partisan Competition: The Effective Number of Parties

Devising indicators as a means of comparing party systems has spawned a robust stream of its own literature. The catalyst for this line of work were questions as to whether or not a large number of parties is destabilizing to a political system. Simply counting the number of extant parties would tell us nothing other than the number of political parties, and it would provide no insight as to the viability of these entities or their likelihood of electoral success. Election results provide a snapshot of party support at a given time, and there exists a multitude of qualitative explanations for changes in party support between elections. There was thus a need to come up with an objective indicator of relative party strength.

An important milestone in this stream of literature is Laakso and Taagepera's "'Effective' Number of Parties," wherein they identify the "need for a number that takes into account [a party's] relative size" (1979: 3). Their measure is expressed as $N = 1/\Sigma p_i^2$, where p_i is the fractional share of the i-th component (1979: 24). Typically, the effective number of parties is lower than the number of parties in competition, as this measure indicates the relative strength of parties in a system, unless parties are near parity in their levels of support. Presently, Laakso and Taagepera's effective number of parties (ENP) as originally devised remains an important indicator of relative party strength, and their work ought to be considered the starting point for comparative and quantitative analysis of party systems.

Laakso and Taagepera also note in their original work that the ENP measure can and should be applied to both the number of votes that parties receive as well as the

number of legislative seats that parties win. Whereas analyzing vote totals will provide guidance as to the relative size of parties and voting blocs among the electorate, analyzing seat counts provides a more conservative and succinct measure of the relative size of 'effective' parties, understood here to mean parties with a reasonable likelihood of attaining some power through the receipt of legislative representation.

In pursuit of ENP, it is important to know where one should look to determine this number. Laakso and Taagepera (1979) initially applied the ENP measure to national-level vote shares in western European countries, which then provided insight into the number of parties in competition at a given election, as well as a comparative measure of party systems across national cases. Chhibber and Kollman (2004) notably employ ENP in this fashion in their comparative analysis of national party systems in federal states., and other researchers have employed ENP in a similar fashion in order to compare different polities and to analyze one polity over time (see Gaines, 1997; Gaines, 1999; Johnston and Cutler, 2009; Johnston, 2013; Park, 2003).

Some have suggested refining where we look to find measures of ENP. Gaines (1997) suggests that researchers delve further into constituency-level analysis to provide a “fuller” view of national-level competition. This process can be tedious and time-consuming, especially in those polities with large numbers of constituencies, but Gaines' argument is that it provides a more realistic picture of party strength and competition, and can help identify aberrations from the expected outcome. Geographic discrepancies can indicate the presence of regional divides or could correlate with demographic differences. Indeed, Chhibber and Kollman's analyses showed that the national party systems reported

a range of values—Canada and India being the exceptions on the high end—but that Duvergerian expectations were often realized at the constituency level (for examples, see Chhibber and Kollman, 2004: ch. 6).

Neto and Cox argue that the ENP appears to be dependent upon "the product of social heterogeneity and electoral permissiveness, rather than being an additive function of these two factors" (1997: 166-7). In other words, they argue that the greater the number of exploitable cleavages in a polity and the more permissive the electoral system, the higher the likelihood of multipartism. In effect, a polity with a plurality electoral system and few social cleavages likely operates with a bipartisan system. Like Gaines, Neto and Cox suggest more openness to the idea of constituency-level analysis, not solely for election returns but also to find local indicators of social diversity. In essence, Neto and Cox suggest that scholars probe the interaction between electoral laws and social cleavages as an intuitive indicator of ENP.

Overall, the effective number of parties measure first posited by Laakso and Taagepera is the key indicator quantifying of the size of a party system, aiding in efforts to compare different cases and analyze Duvergerian effects on electoral events. Taken by itself, ENP is a clinical measure that tells us little about the qualitative realities of party competition, yet ENP can also be applied to provide a detailed summary of a party system when used in conjunction with other indicators and approaches. For the purposes of all research at the provincial level in Canada, ENP analyses are among the lowest hanging fruit in scholars' reach which demonstrates the presence of research opportunities, in particular for academics with an interest in provincial politics.

Alternative Measures of Party System Change

A more recent alternative to Laakso and Taagepera's ENP was proffered by Golosov, who critiqued the former's measure for producing unrealistically high ENP figures (2010: 187-8). This index is expressed as $N = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{1}{1 + (p_1^2/p_i) - p_i}$ where n is the number of parties, p_i is the fractional share of the i-th component, p_i^2 is the square of each party's proportion of votes or seats, and p_1^2 is the square of the largest party's proportion of votes or seats. Generally speaking, figures devised from the Golosov index tend to be lower than those calculated using the Laakso-Taagepera index[6]. Further, Golosov claims his index is more sensitive to the relative weight of parties in a given system, producing higher figures in more competitive systems and smaller scores where the number of important parties is relatively few (2010: 188).

Fractionalization as a measure of party systems came to prominence in Rae's (1967) *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*. In his discussion leading to the introduction of fractionalization as a concept, Rae looks first at simple measures of party system composition starting with the share of the vote won by any one party, *T*, noting that "[a]ny aggregate description of elective party systems will be constructed from concepts which are derived from it" (1967: 49). The indices used in this thesis largely draw upon the vote shares of competing parties to formulate their outputs. Rae continues his discussion by looking at the number of parties receiving any votes, N_e, which he notes is helpful in the counting of parties but is less useful in describing party systems (*Ibid*.). Following that, Rae examines the vote share of the strongest party, P_e, which may

6 In my calculations of ENP at the provincial and sub-provincial levels in Nova Scotia, Golosov's formula has virtually always produced lower ENP scores than that of Laakso and Taagepera.

indicate the degree of dominance of the first party within a given system but is limited in that it "tells us nothing about the competitive positions of the second, third, fourth, or n^{th} parties" (50-51). Lastly, Rae determines the combined vote shares of the two largest parties, W_e, which is a stronger indicator of "how closely a system approaches the condition of two-party competition" but "does not tell us how evenly the two compete with each other" (52).

To address gaps with other indicators, Rae devised the fractionalization of vote shares index, F_e, that "resolves itself into two lesser concepts: (1) the number of party shares, and (2) the relative equality of these shares (53). At one end of the spectrum sits a non-fractionalized system that contains only a single share, which "contains the whole pool of competitive power," also described as a one-party system analogous to a whole apple (*Ibid*.), and whose fractionalization score would be 0. At the other end would be a highly fractionalized system that "has a great many shares of about equal magnitude so that no one of them contains a very large share of the total pool of strength (i.e. votes)," which would indicate an extreme case of multipartism analogous to an apple sliced into many pieces (*Ibid*.), and whose fractionalization score would be closer to 1[7].

Rae is careful not to equate fractionalization with the number of parties, acknowledging that the "relative equality of the party shares, whatever their number, is also an integral part of the (fractionalization) concept" (54). Rae uses the comparative example of two party systems with three parties in each: whereas the vote split in the first system is 90-6-4, the vote split among the parties in the second instance is 34-33-33.

7 As opposed to a numerical value, Rae uses the term "unity" to refer to a highly fractionalized party system (1967: 57).

Both systems have three parties, but it is plain to see that in the first instance there is little competition faced by the dominant party, ergo the first system is much less fractionalized than the second. Moreover, the number of parties in a given system does not determine so much as it limits the extent of fractionalization, and a "given number of shares can attain only a certain degree of fractionalization" (*Ibid.*). Therefore, by quantifying the fractionalization continuum, Rae's analysis is sensitized "to the many subtle variations found in actual elective party systems" (55).

Nwokora and Pelizzo (2017) devised the fluidity index for use as a "tool to capture the stability of polity party systems"(8), which they did to counter problems of measurement in their analysis of African party systems. To start, they note that party system changes can be detected by measuring fragmentation—not altogether dissimilar to Rae's fractionalization concept—and power alternation as "these dimensions together provide enough information to identify the type currently in operation and to determine whether and when any system changes occur" (2017: 6). Nwokora and Pelizzo opt not to consider polarization in their analysis because, in the context of Africa, polarization "is not usually based on a left-right division" (16). Moreover, changes to party systems are not always reflected in changes in polarization; and, even when changes in polarization are detected, those changes are usually reflected in alterations to fragmentation and power alternation (2017: 6).

Nwokora and Pelizzo attempt to address problems with measurement with their fluidity index. They note that two kinds of entity, "types" of party system and "polity" party systems, are typically the subject of measurement, although Nwokora and Pelizzo's

goal with the fluidity index is “to capture the stability of polity party systems, which is a more difficult interpretation to operationalize” (6). With typical measurement, the “aim is to assess and compare the tendency of different [party system] types to be stable or unstable,” whereas with polity measurement, the “aim is to assess and compare the stability of country or regional party systems” (*Ibid.*: 6-7). For both measures, the authors suggest that they be tested within the framework of a large-n study of cases.

Sartori (2005) lays out his criteria for counting parties in a given system, and again, this goes beyond a mere count of parties receiving votes or seats, although that serves as the initial step. Sartori omits the counting of votes because “strength in seats... is, in the final analysis, what really counts once the elections are over” (2005: 107). Further, he suggests that one begins by measuring the “strength of the parliamentary party as indicated by its percentage of seats in the lower chamber” (*Ibid.*). Further, he suggests that one begins by measuring the “strength of the parliamentary party as indicated by its percentage of seats in the lower chamber” (*Ibid.*). To suss out any parties that should not be counted due to their lack of governing potential or relevance, Sartori posits two rules for when a party should or should not be counted. The first is that a “minor party can be discounted as irrelevant whenever it remains over time superfluous, in the sense that it is never needed or put to use for any feasible coalition majority” (*Ibid.*: 108). Sartori's second rule is that a “party qualifies for relevance whenever its existence, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the direction of the competition... of the governing-oriented parties” (*Ibid.*). To summarize, parties should be counted when they have “coalition potential,” they are able to provide

confidence and supply—Sartori uses the term "blackmail potential"—or, they have a "competitive relevance in the oppositional arena" (*Ibid.*).

Whereas some aspects of the Sartori method rely on quantifiable measures, such as a party's legislative strength, other aspects of his method are more subjective and require thought and research on the part of the analyst. A party may appear relevant on its face due to its electoral performance, but in practice, that same party may be superfluous or irrelevant to governing. Sartori discusses the example of sizable Communist parties in Europe "that poll one-fourth, and even as high as one-third of the total vote but whose governmental coalition potential has been... virtually zero," and to account for this, he suggested that the analyst try to determine the "size or bigness" that makes a party relevant, all other things notwithstanding (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, some historical research on legislators, constituencies, and a party's public presence, such as media coverage, can provide qualitative insights into the relevance of a particular party. There have been cases across Canada of parties of personality, or those parties that have achieved representation as a result of a single member who is popular and entrenched in their constituency, but beyond whose boundaries the party is organizationally feeble. There have also been ephemeral parties that have contested one or two elections, sometimes successfully so, only to disappear into the ether shortly thereafter. All this is to reassert the importance of carefully researching the case prior to making a subjective determination, for it is important to make the call—in this instance, whether a party is relevant—with as much information and background as possible.

Lacunae

There are several gaps in the literature that this thesis seeks to address, and it is in so doing that this thesis will contribute to the wider study of party systems and electoral competition. For instance, I have previously demonstrated an application of ENP at the county level in Nova Scotia, which I pursued because provincial constituencies had historically been coterminous with county boundaries (Chezenko, 2017). A similar approach could also be useful for research into the party systems in other provinces, particularly for neighbouring New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, who share similar histories to Nova Scotia when it comes to the drawing of electoral boundaries (see Carty, 1985; Hyson, 1995). Although less specific than analyzing constituencies—electors vote within the confines of ridings, which may not necessarily fit within one or more counties—the county-level approach does provide one with smaller, more stable units of analysis to compare over a longer period of time which, in turn, allows one to observe when and where changes in the provincial party system are occurring. Why this is important is because it allows one to probe regional differences within the individual provinces—especially the smaller provinces, where regional differences may be less evident to outside observers—at an established sub-provincial level, in a manner similar to how studies of Canadian federal party competition would look at the provinces to attain regional statistical breakdowns.

Moreover, the provincial studies literature has tended to shy away from indicators, such as the effective number of parties, that have been effectively employed in national level comparative studies. In one of the works cited here, for example, ENP was used

effectively to compare, map, and track regional differences in federal party competition over time (see Johnston and Cutler, 2009). This thesis aims to adopt those methods and apply them at the provincial level in order to provide a more robust and complete quantitative analysis of party systems and electoral competition in the provinces.

What's more, recent changes to electoral competition in Atlantic Canada merit further exploration. In 2017, when I first started working on this thesis, the number of NSNDP MLAs was nearly double that of elected independent and third-party provincial politicians in the other Atlantic provinces combined. That the NSNDP had previously formed a government, in addition to having maintained a considerable presence in the provincial legislature in recent decades, contributed to my interest in pursuing the particular case of partisan competition in Nova Scotia. Two years later, the Green Party of PEI serves as the official opposition to a PC minority government; the NLNDP has increased its seat count while, at the same time, losing half of its popular vote; two independent MHAs from Newfoundland retained their seats at the 2019 general election; and, there are four party caucuses—with multiple MLAs in each—now present in the New Brunswick legislature. Something is up in Atlantic Canada, and the days of tradition and conservatism certainly seem to be in the past. To determine when and where these apparent changes in electoral competition have taken root, the methods employed herein to examine Nova Scotia could be readily adapted to do the same in nearby provinces, each of which appears to be undergoing unforeseen changes with unpredictable outcomes.

Finally, from a theoretical standpoint, this thesis continues the conversation as to

the relevance and validity of Duverger's Law. Exploring how and why the NSNDP emerged to become a effective competitor to the province's two traditional parties seems counterintuitive to the Duvergerian theory that plurality electoral systems promote two-partism; after all, following that line of thinking, such a scenario ought to be near impossible. That said, critics of Duverger have often looked to Canada—more precisely, to Canadian federal politics—to dispute his concept, pointing to the multitude of parties that have been represented in the House of Commons over time. Because of this, Duverger himself noted that Canada was exceptional, yet he added that, at the riding level, the tendency towards two parties would reassert itself. Without yet revealing the outcome of the data analysis herein, this thesis seeks to continue the lengthy conversation in the annals of political science as to the validity of Duverger's Law, whether its tenets can still be upheld, and whether we ought to proclaim as law a concept that appears to be flawed and dysfunctional.

Chapter 3: Methods

Within the literature on party systems, it is clear that there is no single indicator that defines or determines changes within a party system. The measures that have been discussed and employed typically describe changes to a party system by computing formulae that draw upon election results or legislative representation. Some indices, such as Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) effective number of parties, have attained a broad acceptance among political science scholars as a means of quantifying the number of viable electoral contenders in a polity, as opposed to merely counting the number of registered political entities. The literature provides plenty of examples of formulae that seek to provide a reliable indication of changes to party systems; however, the best approach here is one that employs multiple measures, gathers and computes data, and analyzes the results for patterns that presage alterations to partisan competition.

To recap, the central research question of this thesis asks how and why a third party emerged as a credible contender for power, alongside the two traditional parties in Nova Scotia's plurality electoral system. In this chapter, I identify and describe the indicators have been selected for this study of the Nova Scotia provincial party system. Some measures, such as the two named above, are the creation of political scientists whose purpose is the determination of particular changes to patterns of electoral competition through the use of complex formulae. Other indicators, such as election returns and public opinion polling, are series of data that have been amassed from documents that are publicly available from elections agencies or polling companies, as well as information gleaned from past newspaper articles and internet archives. Results

are provided and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Overall, the purpose of these indicators is to show us the level of competition and the relative size of provincial political parties in Nova Scotia throughout the period between 1933 and 2017. This will assist in determining whether and when the province's party system held to Duvergerian expectations—those being that two parties will be the dominant players within the confines of a plurality electoral system—as well as if and when the province veered from Duvergerian norms towards a different form of electoral competition among the parties. Most of the indicators applied herein derive their data from election returns, as these returns fully captured the will of the electorate at a given point in time, and these particular records[8] have been preserved for posterity virtually in their entirety. In this chapter, I outline and describe the indicators used to provide the necessary data to answer the research question, beginning with the results of previous general elections. To provide additional detail and to enhance our understanding of the most recent elections, I have included political polling data from a Nova Scotia-based market research company, data which can provide context particularly when it comes to leadership and popularity. Then, indicators of electoral competition drawn from the literature are employed to provide a more robust accounting of the state of play amongst the province's political parties over the last eight decades.

Election Returns

Complete Nova Scotia provincial election returns dating back to the 1933 general

8 Elections Nova Scotia provides the Election Returns for provincial general elections from 1933 onwards, which include valid votes, rejected ballots, and total number of electors. For previous elections, ENS provides an incomplete summary of results, with rejected ballots, numbers of electors, some vote totals, and some party affiliations omitted. Elections Nova Scotia's data can be found at https://electionsnovascotia.ca/election-data/past-results.

election can be found online, and it is these data that will drive the remainder of this thesis. With regard to the 1933 general election, it is a significant event because it was the first Nova Scotia general election held within an electoral system consisting primarily of single-member districts (Nova Scotia, 1934). Prior to this, provincial electoral districts in Nova Scotia had multiple members, ranging from two to five members per riding (Nova Scotia, 2011; Nova Scotia, 2018). To summarize, the analysis herein of Nova Scotia elections and the province's party system commences at 1933 for two reasons: first, that a full complement of data is available for each provincial general election including and after 1933; and, second, that the general election of 1933 was the first in a continuing series of elections that have been held largely[9] under a system of single-member district plurality elections.

For election results, the information was sourced from original documents published online by Elections Nova Scotia, all of which are available for download on their 'Past Elections Results' webpage. This information was collected and processed in a spreadsheet, which ultimately established a temporal series of provincial general election data spanning eight decades. The number of seats won, the number of votes received, and the percentage share of the popular vote received by each party are all listed in the original election documents, which go on form the baseline of my calculations; some of these data points—seats and votes especially—are employed as variables in other formulae, such as in calculating the effective number of electoral (votes) and parliamentary (seats) parties.

9 Although the first single-member provincial electoral districts appeared in 1933, it was not until the 1981 general election that the last remaining multi-member ridings, in Inverness and Yarmouth counties, had been abolished.

Public Opinion Polling

Corporate Research Associates (CRA)[10] is a market research firm based in Halifax, and they have been asking Nova Scotians what their partisan preferences are, through its *Atlantic Quarterly* omnibus poll, since 1988. Their polling is often cited in local news media when it is released, and they have been publishing their data online for over 15 years, which sets them apart from other market research firms[11] as the pollster of record for Nova Scotia political polling. Their public dissemination of data has made the information they provide readily accessible to anyone with an internet connection, and especially to researchers and individuals with an interest in Atlantic Canadian provincial politics. Moreover, CRA has been conducting polls on a quarterly basis in the region for thirty years, which provides a significant series of data from which to draw information and insight into the political preferences of Atlantic Canadian voters over time.

Methodologically, CRA polls between 800 and 1,200 Nova Scotians each February, May, August, and November, and releases the findings of their political polling in the first week of the following month. The margin of error in their poll runs between 3 and 4.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. CRA asks and publicly releases three political questions: the first question speaks to the respondent's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the provincial government's performance; the second question asks

10 Corporate Research Associates changed its name to Narrative Research in April 2019. For further detail, its website can be consulted at https://narrativeresearch.ca/say-hello-to-narrative-research/.

11 While there are several polling companies that occasionally conduct research in Nova Scotia, the issues with using their data here are two-fold, those being consistency and novelty. Pollsters based outside of Atlantic Canada tend to concentrate their polling efforts haphazardly in and around election periods. A recent entrant into the Atlantic market, MQO Research has been conducting its *Atlantic Matters* omnibus poll on a quarterly basis since 2016 which, while providing a valuable set of political polling numbers, has not yet established a data set lengthy enough to usefully analyze for temporal trends.

one's voting intention were a provincial election held as of the date of polling; and, the third question asks which party leader is the respondent's preferred option for premier.

In terms of accessibility, I was able to attain data from the *Atlantic Quarterly* poll directly from CRA's website, specifically all polling released in and after March 2006. I was able to access much the same series of polling data released between June 2001 and March 2006 by searching the CRA website through the Internet Wayback Machine, which is a search engine that saves archived versions of websites for posterity. For releases prior to June 2001, I was able to piece together much of CRA's political polling data from archived newspaper articles; however, some gaps persist, particularly early on in the timeline. In this thesis, the first partisan polling report is from November 1990, and the party polling series ends with the most recent poll conducted by CRA and released in June 2019. The missing data in this time series are the releases in June and September 1993; March 1994; June and December 1995; and, March 1999. CRA started asking their leadership preference question in May 2002, and government satisfaction data is available beginning with the polling released in September 2000.

While I discuss the data from CRA's *Atlantic Quarterly* poll in the next chapter, it is important to clarify how this data will assist in answering the central research question of this thesis, that being how and why a third party emerged as a credible governing alternative within the confines of a plurality electoral system. Whereas elections occur infrequently—typically every three to four years—and irregularly[12], CRA's polling does occur on a regular basis, providing us with four sets of data in each calendar year. For instance, whereas a general election will provide a single set of data, this polling series

12 Nova Scotia does not have fixed election date legislation.

could provide 16 sets of data, measured quarterly, in between two elections that are scheduled four years apart from one another. Moreover, CRA's polling data coincides with the recent period of heightened electoral competition in Nova Scotia, and these polling numbers will assist in answering the research question by illustrating provincial political competition between general elections over the last quarter-century. The hope is that polling data will reveal patterns that could help us understand the nature of recent election outcomes. Was support for the historically third-place NSNDP ephemeral, appearing only at election time? Was the NSNDP able to consolidate and sustain its popular support between elections? How did each of the party leaders affect his or her party's standing in the eyes of the electorate? These questions, along with information from CRA's polling, will provide additional context on the state of the party system in Nova Scotia in recent years, and it will assist us in answering the main research question.

Sartori's Method for Counting Parties

To start, Sartori counts the number of seats for each party in lower houses of national parliaments; however, as Nova Scotia has a unicameral legislature, the count will be of seats in the House of Assembly. Further, Sartori suggests beginning by measuring the "strength of the parliamentary party as indicated by its percentage of seats in the lower chamber" (2005: 107). To simplify this method, I start with a count of parties receiving seats in the House of Assembly. From a glance at election returns, one can observe that there are a limited number of parties participating and receiving votes in provincial elections—Nova Scotia does not have a proportional electoral system that would result in a multitude of parties attaining legislative representation—and even fewer

parties winning seats. Moreover, there are other methods used in this thesis that employ a quantitative measure of parliamentary strength, thus the purpose of the Sartori method here is to illustrate the presence of 'relevant' parties over the time period under examination here.

Next, Sartori looks at the "governing... or coalitional potential of each party," by which he means "the extent to which a party may be needed as a coalition partner for one or more of the possible governmental majorities" (*Ibid.*: 107-8). Nova Scotia has had periods of minority government, but to date, it has never experienced a coalition government. For this aspect of Sartori's method, I look at the potential for a seated party to provide confidence and supply guarantees to a minority government. Nova Scotia has experienced four periods of minority government as a result of the outcomes of general elections in 1970[13], 1998, 2003, and 2006. While it is important not to preclude the potential for coalition formation, it is an extremely rare occurrence in Canadian politics, whereas agreements for confidence and supply are more commonplace.

To suss out any parties that should not be counted due to their lack of governing potential or relevance, Sartori posits two rules for when a party should or should not be counted. The first is that a "minor party can be discounted as irrelevant whenever it remains over time superfluous, in the sense that it is never needed or put to use for any feasible coalition majority" (*Ibid.*: 108). In this category would be independent candidates and members of small upstart parties whose legislative presence proves ephemeral, and in the context of Nova Scotia, these are extremely few—so much so that

13 With respect to the 1970 general election outcome, the governing Liberal party had exactly half of the seats in the House of Assembly; however, a 1971 by-election victory meant that the Liberal party had an additional seat and, as a consequence, a majority government.

this group consists of a single individual. Sartori's second rule is that a "party qualifies for relevance whenever its existence, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the direction of the competition... of the governing-oriented parties" (*Ibid.*). To summarize, parties should be counted when they have "coalition potential," they are able to provide confidence and supply—Sartori uses the term "blackmail potential"—or, they have a "competitive relevance in the oppositional arena" (*Ibid.*).

Whereas some aspects of the Sartori method rely on quantifiable measures, such as a party's legislative strength, other aspects of his method are more subjective and require thought and research on the part of the analyst. A party may appear relevant on its face due to its electoral performance, but in practice, that same party may be superfluous or irrelevant to governing. Sartori discusses the example of sizable Communist parties in Europe "that poll one-fourth, and even as high as one-third of the total vote but whose governmental coalition potential has been... virtually zero," and to account for this, he suggested that the analyst try to determine the "size or bigness" that makes a party relevant, all other things notwithstanding (*Ibid.*).

Furthermore, some historical research on legislators, constituencies, and a party's public presence, such as media coverage, can provide qualitative insights into the relevance of a particular party. There have been cases across Canada of parties of personality, or those parties that have achieved representation as a result of a single member who is popular and entrenched in their constituency, but beyond whose boundaries the party is organizationally feeble. There have also been ephemeral parties

that have contested one or two elections, sometimes successfully so, only to disappear into the ether shortly thereafter. All this is to reassert the importance of carefully researching the case prior to making a subjective determination, for it is important to make the call—in this instance, whether a party is relevant—with as much information and background as possible.

As it pertains to the central research question in this thesis, the Sartori method will help us to establish the number of relevant political parties in Nova Scotia over time. This way of counting parties relies less on data indicators—aside from election returns—and more on a qualitative analysis of the power and presence of political parties in the province, in particular their ability to win seats, to influence policy and the orientation of the two main parties, and to form a confidence agreement or a government in their own right. Unlike data indicators that can give us a precise weighting on political parties in a given system, the Sartori method is more subjective, as it requires some background knowledge of a polity's political and electoral history, and it requires the analyst to make decisions whether or not to count a party while following Sartori's set of rules. Still, this method will help us establish our expected parameters—how many relevant or effective political parties have there been in Nova Scotia—before embarking further into the methods of quantitative data analysis.

Effective Number of Electoral and Parliamentary Parties

Next, drawing from Laakso and Taagepera (1979), I calculate the effective number of parties in Nova Scotia. ENP is expressed as $N = 1/\Sigma p_i^2$, where p_i is the fractional share of the i-th component (1979: 24). ENP can be determined in two ways:

it can be calculated using the vote totals in a constituency or a jurisdiction, the outcome being the effective number of *electoral* parties or ENEP; alternatively, it can be calculated using the number of seats each party won at an election, which is called the effective number of *parliamentary* parties or ENPP. Typically, ENP is lower than the actual number of parties in competition, as this measure indicates the relative strength of parties in a system, unless parties are near parity in their levels of support. Moreover, ENPP tracks lower than ENEP because the latter produces information based upon the number of valid votes cast for all parties, whereas the former draws upon the seat distribution following an election which, in a plurality system, tends to over-award the first-place party and to penalize those parties finishing in second place or lower. As a result, ENEP is a "better indicator of the long-term nature of the party system [because it] is affected by the operation of the electoral system in previous elections [and not] by the translation of votes into seats in the current election" (Lijphart, 1990: 483).

A more recent reconfiguration of Laakso and Taagepera's ENP was proffered by Golosov, whose critique of the original ENP formula is that it produces unrealistically high ENP scores (2010: 187-8). Golosov's ENP is expressed as $N = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{1}{1 + (p_1^2/p_i) - p_i}$ where n is the number of parties, p_i is the fractional share of the i-th component, p_i^2 is the square of each party's proportion of votes or seats, and p_1^2 is the square of the largest party's proportion of votes or seats. The benefit of the reimagined ENP formula, Golosov claims, is that his index is more sensitive to the relative weight of parties in a given system, producing higher figures in more competitive systems and smaller scores where the number of important parties is relatively few (2010: 188). To test the new formula

comparatively against Laakso-Taagepera, I will also calculate both ENEP and ENPP using the Golosov index. If Golosov's claims are correct, his formula should put out more conservative ENP scores that accurately gauge the true level of competition amongst the parties.

Using the effective number of parties as a means of analyzing the party system of a jurisdiction, and comparing jurisdictions to one another, is hardly new (for instance, see Laakso and Taagepera, 1979; Gaines, 1999; Park, 2003; Chhibber and Kollmann, 2004; Johnston and Cutler, 2009; Johnston, 2013). What is new is the application of ENP to the study of provincial politics, specifically Nova Scotia. Determining ENP will be critical to finding out how and why a third party emerged as a credible alternative to the two traditional parties in Nova Scotia's plurality electoral system. How many effective parties has there been in Nova Scotia over time? Has competition fluctuated between a greater and smaller number of effective parties? When was competition weakest, and when was it more intense? Is there a difference between province-wide ENP and ENP in the ridings? These are all questions to which ENP calculations can provide answers and insight in response to primary research question.

Rae's Fractionalization Index of Votes and Seats

The fractionalization index is “based on the probability that any two randomly selected voters will have chosen different parties in any given election,” which is advantageous as this measure is “sensitive to both the number and relative equality of the party shares” and it allows consideration of and comparisons with “systems with any number of parties” (Rae, 1967: 55-6). Rae explains that the “chance that our two voters

will have chosen the same party is equal to the sum of the squared decimal shares of the vote obtained by all parties, [and it] follows that the probability of diadic disagreement, F_e, is the complement of this quantity" (*Ibid.*: 56). Expressed as an equation, the fractionalization index is $F_e = 1 - (\Sigma t_i^2)$, where T_i is equal to a given party's decimal share of the vote. When used to examine parliamentary fractionalization, T_i is equal to a given party's decimal share of seats. The values produced by this index "occupy a continuum, running from non-fractionalization in a perfect one-party system (F_e equal zero) to complete fractionalization—an event never occurring in reality or the formula—defined by the limiting F_e value of unity" (*Ibid.*: 57).

TABLE 3.1

PROPERTIES OF RAE'S FRACTIONALIZATION INDEX

NUMBER	PROPERTY
1	The values range between the limits of zero and one.
2	The values may be treated as components of an interval scale, with a fixed zero point (sometimes called a ratio scale).
3	The values are consistent with the concept of fractionalization.
4	The measure may be applied to any party system, whatever the total number of parties
5	The measure is sensitive to all the data: each party's share is included.
6	The same measure may be used for legislative party systems, by substituting seat shares for vote shares.

Source: Rae, 1967: 58.

Use of Rae's fractionalization index in this thesis is to provide an additional indicator that will demonstrate similar phenomena as observed when calculating the effective number of parties, as both are measures of multipartism. For instance, the fractionalization index runs from one-party rule at zero, to two-partism at 0.5, and to complete fragmentation at one; thus a fractionalization index outcome of 0.5 in a given

jurisdiction would be expected if ENEP calculations produced an outcome of 2. In sum, the higher the fractionalization score, the more parties there are in competition within the party system. Used here, fractionalization is applied to the case of Nova Scotia to provide another point of comparison to jurisdictions across Canada and elsewhere, as well as providing more context on the party system and electoral competition within the province, all of which aides in responding to the primary research question.

Combined Vote Share and Relative Proportions

Lastly, I employ a method inspired by what Rae refers to as the combined vote share of the two strongest parties (1967: 51), which is expressed as $W_e = T_a + T_b$, where T_a is the vote share of the strongest party in terms of votes received, and T_b represents the vote share of the second strongest party. While it appears to provide a "simplistic definition of two-party competition," particularly as it informs the analyst of "the degree to which the two together dominate all comers," it does not inform us how the two main contenders compete with one another (*Ibid*.: 52). Still, for the purposes of this thesis, it will provide some valuable insight into partisan competition in Nova Scotia, as one the questions that arises in this research is how dominant are the two main parties relative to their counterparts, but especially the party that finishes third, as fourth parties are few in number and historically lack electoral strength.

By employing the combined vote method, the proportion of the two strongest parties' vote shares relative to that of the third party can be determined, as opposed to simply adding the vote shares of the two largest electoral parties. The aim here is to see if the third strongest party actually gets stronger over time—lending credence to my

claim that there is a three-party system of late—and, if so, to what degree. To do this, I decimalized the vote shares of the parties finishing first, second, and third. While the final numbers will be rounded to the hundredth position, these figures were used in a spreadsheet which calculated to 15 places after the decimal point for a more accurate reading. It should be noted that, over time, the political parties occupying those slots do change; however, this measure is not meant to look at a specific party so much as to see how the top three contenders fare electorally, relative to the party finishing third. Once the parties' vote shares were decimalized, I divided the first party's share by that of the third; then, I did likewise with the second party's vote share. While redundant, I divided the third party's vote share by itself, which provided the baseline of 1. Above all, the aim of this particular method is to determine the relative proportion of the vote shares of the first and second parties to that of the third party: the question here is for each vote received by the third party, how many votes were received by the first and second parties.

The Next Chapter

Results for each method noted above will be provided and discussed in the following chapter. To be clear, the methods used in this thesis are not the only ones employed in party systems studies, but they have been chosen strategically. At first sight, election returns provide the essential piece of any puzzle pertaining to electoral and party systems, as they are the expressed will of the electorate, they are verifiable, and they have not been altered or forged. Use of Sartori's (2005) method of counting parties can provide us with qualitative information on the number of relevant parties that will guide our expectations when we eventually turn to quantitative measures. As well, methods

like the effective number of parties—devised by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) and revised by Golosov (2010)—and fractionalization have been used in political science for several decades and have been successfully employed in comparative national studies (see Rae, 1967; Laakso and Taagepera, 1979; Gaines, 1997; Gaines, 1999; Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Johnston and Cutler, 2009; Golosov, 2010; Johnston, 2013).

Most importantly, however, is that these methods are being employed at the subnational level to analyze a single case. The thinking here is that these methods could be employed in other subnational jurisdictions either on a case-by-case basis or as the foundation for a comparative cross-jurisdictional analysis of party systems in the Canadian provinces. In this thesis, the aforementioned methods will be employed to track changes within the party system and among electoral competitors in Nova Scotia over time, precisely in the years between the general elections of 1933 and 2017. While election returns are essential to this project, additional information must be brought in to ensure the findings are rigorous, robust, and able to withstand close scrutiny.

Public opinion polling provides us with more data points in between elections occurring over the last quarter-century. These data provide snapshots in time of the political predilections of respondents and, while conducted by a reputable research organization following scientific polling methods, the primary purpose of opinion polls is to provide a general idea of the prevailing political preferences in the province at a given point in time; however, opinion polls do not offer specific answers to questions about party systems. The subjectivity inherent in Sartori's method of counting parties provides us with a framework to temper our expectations as to the number of relevant parties.

Drawn from the literature, the qualitative methods used will provide a stream of information separate and distinct from election returns and quantitative analyses of partisan competition within the province. When employed together, we should have the answers as to how and why a third party in Nova Scotia became a viable governing alternative to the two older and historically dominant political parties.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Results

Recalling that the central research question of this thesis asks how a third party emerged as a credible contender for power, alongside the two traditional parties in Nova Scotia's plurality electoral system, it is in this chapter that the results gleaned from the measures listed in the previous chapter will be reviewed and analyzed to examine the quantifiable changes to Nova Scotia's party system over the last 85 years. It is expected that, over the first six decades under analysis here, the traditional formation of the provincial party system will be apparent, with the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties forming either the government or official opposition, followed by the distant presence of third parties, in particular the CCF and, later, the NSNDP. Furthermore, it is expected that alterations to the traditional pattern will emerge beginning with the 1998 general election, and that those changes will persist thereafter.

The reasoning behind my hypothesis is drawn primarily from two sources, those being the literature and recent political events within the province. In the literature on Nova Scotia politics, which I discuss in chapter 2, a consistent theme throughout is the traditional composition of the party system—which was dominated by the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties—that had persisted since Confederation, and which had endured into the 1990s (see Bellamy, 1976; Carbert, 2016; Hyson, 1973; Jenson, 1976; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003). Moreover, the province's conservative tendency—by conservative, what is meant is not ideology; rather, it is an aversion to change—effectively meant that the results of elections were predictable because of traditional voting habits, particularly within families, and the provincial electorate's willingness to

re-elect governments for three or more terms (see Beck, 1954; Beck, 1978; O'Neill and Erickson, 2003). With respect to the results from the data, two-party dominance is to be expected from the 1930s through the 1960s. Beginning in the 1970s, however, gradual changes in the trendlines should be observed—such as a steady increase in the vote share of third party NSNDP from the 1970s through the 1990s. This would indicate that voters' adherence to traditional and predictable voting patterns had started to change, and that voters were open to—if not immediately willing to support—a third party and its message. While this thesis only looks at elections dating back to 1933, at which time single-member districts were introduced, it is still expected that the patterns of two-party competition and lengthy terms for governments will appear during the earlier decades being reviewed here.

Recent political events have also altered the dynamics of partisan competition in the province. In the last two decades, general elections in Nova Scotia have been more competitive with three, relatively equal parties positioned as the primary participants. Both traditional governing parties have spent time as the third party, for instance, in terms of both seats in the House of Assembly and votes attained at the ballot box, a situation that would have been highly improbable in previous years. Moreover, as the literature demonstrates, leaders matter, especially when it comes to the electoral fortunes of their parties, and the choice of certain leaders has appeared to both help and hinder the major parties over the last 20 years. Armed with the results of recent provincial elections, and mindful of recent political events, the data guided my expectations as it relates to the changing competitive dynamic among Nova Scotia's political parties which, on their face,

suggest that a three-party system is in place. Missing, however, is a stronger sense of the outcomes of Nova Scotia elections in decades past, including how those outcomes affected the composition of the provincial party system over time, as well as an awareness of the dynamics at play in more recent provincial electoral contests.

Taken altogether, the indicators used in this thesis will assist in establishing how and when the NSNDP emerged to be a governing alternative to the historical governing parties in Nova Scotia by pointing to changes in popular support; changes in the location of that support; the presence of viable or 'effective' political parties; and, the growth of the provincial party system from a bipartisan structure to a system with room for three. My hypothesis is that the NSNDP underwent a change in its electoral base in a geographic sense, migrating from its traditional heartland in the industrial towns of Cape Breton County towards the growing metropolitan areas in and around Halifax. This change would have been driven primarily by necessity, as Halifax County has experienced consistent growth in terms of its population as opposed to elsewhere in Nova Scotia, where population levels have been stagnant or declining. Furthermore, the NSNDP would have also been the benefactor of sharp decreases in the level of support for the traditional parties throughout the 1990s, bringing in voters who would not have otherwise voted for them. Keep in mind, these expected changes to partisan competition would have occurred concurrently within a plurality electoral system that experienced few changes, a scenario that Duverger's Law holds should not happen.

Election Returns

Figures 4.01 and 4.02 show the outcomes of Nova Scotia general elections, in

terms of the vote share and number of seats, respectively, from 1933 to 2017 inclusive. At a glance, several important patterns emerge that begin to tell the tale of electoral competition in Nova Scotia over the last eight decades.

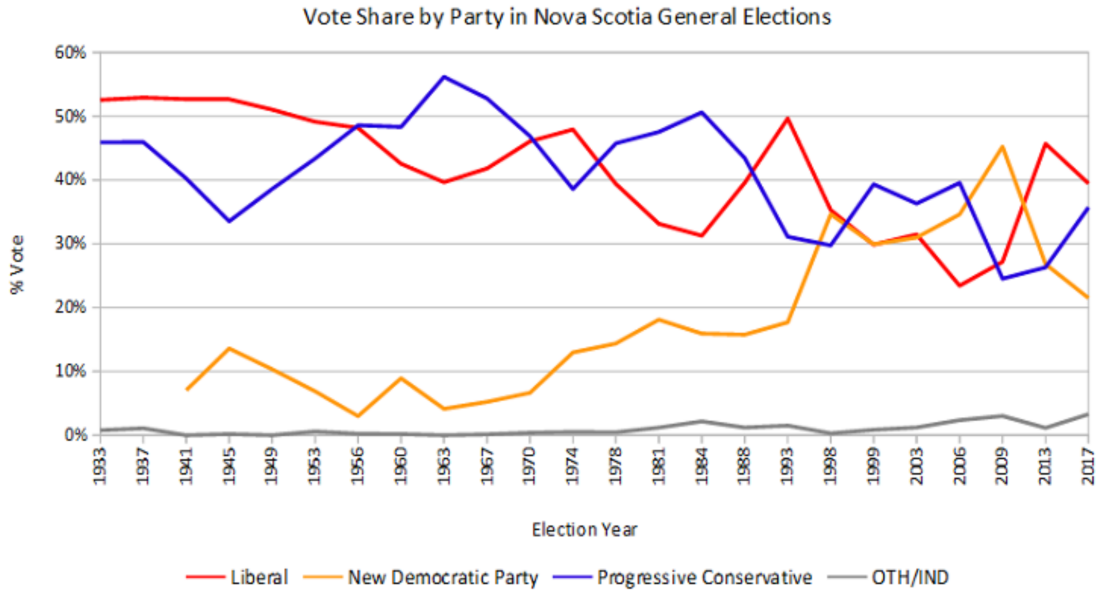

Figure 4.01: Distribution of the popular vote (%) in Nova Scotia elections since 1933

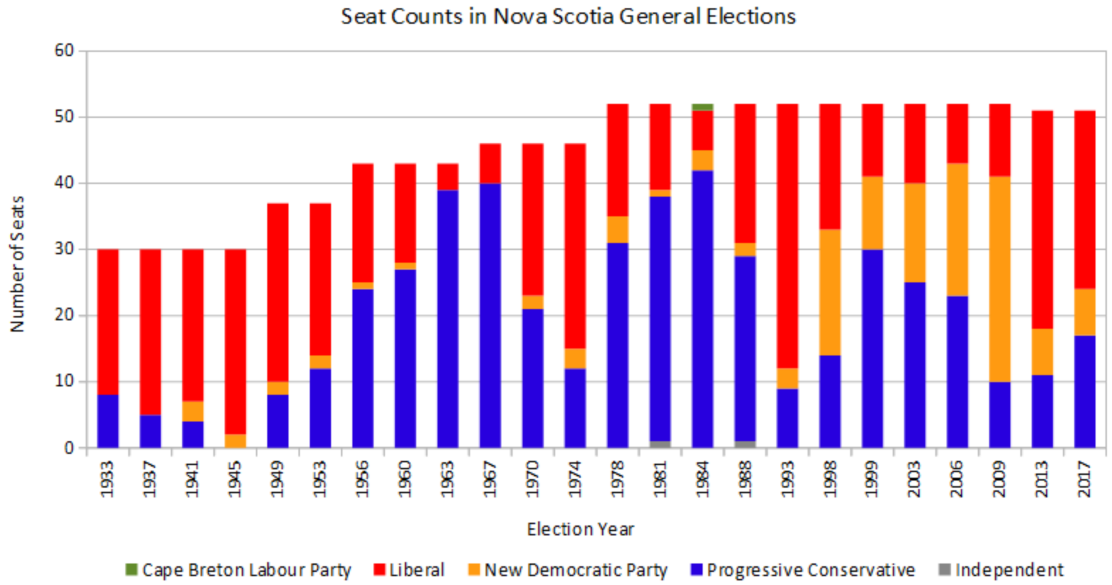

Figure 4.02: Distribution of seats following Nova Scotia general elections since 1933

In chronological order, we see first a period of Liberal predominance over the provincial party system, lasting from 1933 through 1956; however, this was more of a

continuation of that party's long term grip on power, as the Liberals been in government previously for a record 43 years, from 1882 to 1925, during what was an extended period of one-party-dominant provincial politics (see also Carbert, 2016). The data also show a cycle of Conservative decline in the aftermath their election loss and defeat as government in 1933, which was later followed by a gradual rise in popular support after that party's severe loss in the 1945 general election[14], in which no Conservatives were elected and that party was replaced by the two-member CCF caucus as the province's official opposition. Concurrently, the CCF contested its first general election in 1933 but did not breakthrough until 1941, when it won three seats in Industrial Cape Breton and seven percent of the vote provincewide. The party's popular support peaked in 1945 when it reached 13.6 percent, and despite winning one fewer seat than in the election four years prior, it formed the official opposition as the Conservatives were shut out of the House of Assembly. In later years, CCF support would stabilize at less than ten percent across Nova Scotia, as its electoral base was highly concentrated in eastern Cape Breton, where it would win a seat or two at each election. The CCF became the New Democratic party in 1961, and it failed to win a seat in its first two general elections with that name.

Second, we notice a period of increased electoral competition among the parties, beginning in earnest in the mid-1950s and becoming increasingly competitive during the 1970s, with the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties competing for government to the former's advantage, with the third-place NDP gradually rising and consolidating its support with about 15 percent of the provincial electorate. After winning the general

14 The 1945 general election result is aberrational. The Conservatives outpolled the CCF by a significant 20-point margin, but the inefficiency of the Conservative vote produced zero elected members, whereas the CCF's vote, heavily concentrated in eastern Cape Breton County provided that party with two seats and Official Opposition status, a feat that would go unmatched by its successor for another 49 years.

election in 1956, the PCs would spend all but eight of the following 37 years in power. While they lost the 1970 election in a close race to the Liberals, the PCs actually outpolled them by several thousand votes. During this period, only in 1974 did the Conservatives lose an election outright in terms of votes and seats.

The Liberals, meanwhile, entered a period of decline shortly after the 1945 general election, bottoming out in the mid-1960s when it registered between four and six seats and about 40 percent of the vote. The party recovered in the 1970s, holding government under the leadership of Gerald Regan, only to enter into a cycle of steep decline through the mid-1980s. The Liberals returned to power in 1993 with physician and former Dartmouth mayor John Savage as leader and premier, winning a large majority of seats on nearly 50 percent of the popular vote.

For its part, the NSNDP maintained a steady level of support from 1970 through the early 1990s. Following a spike in its share of the popular vote in the 1974 election, the NSNDP consolidated its support which it maintained at between 12 and 18 percent over the course of the following two decades, yet it remained mired in its historical position as the third party, winning only between one and four seats in general elections during this time. Overall, for most of the first 60 years of elections observed here, we can see an otherwise orderly ebb and flow among the two older parties, with both typically alternating between government and opposition after several terms in office.

Beginning in 1998, however, we can clearly see a scramble for popular support among three, closely matched political parties, a sight previously unseen in Nova Scotia. More interesting, it is an enduring pattern that continues to shape the province's electoral

politics. The 1998 provincial general election was the closest in the province's history, with the three parties finishing within about five percentage points of one another in the popular vote, and a nearly even distribution of seats. The three main parties appear to actively compete and jostle for the lead positions, as all have held the roles of government, official opposition, and third party since 1998, and all have maintained their popular support in general elections within a band between 20 and 40 percent of the electorate, the exceptions being the NSNDP and Liberal majority victories in 2009 and 2013, respectively.

What's more, the NSNDP finished second in the popular vote for the first time ever in 1998, and formed the official opposition for the first time since its predecessor, the CCF, managed the feat nearly fifty years prior. A little more than a decade later, the NSNDP would form its first government in Nova Scotia. But this emergence of the historical third party as a viable governing option is just one aspect of the pattern in electoral competition observed over the last 20 years. One important observation is how the NSNDP's electoral base gravitated from the labour heartland of Industrial Cape Breton toward the provincial capital, with its hundreds of thousands of electors and its share of about 40 percent of all seats in the legislature; I will return to this point in more detail at the end of this chapter.

On its face, these election returns begin to tell the story of increased multipartism and growing fractionalization among the provincial electorate. The change from two competitive parties to three took place over decades, was not immediately apparent, and was not predestined to occur. One trend of note in the results for the two long-tenured

parties is the occurrence of a majority in the popular vote: only once since 1970 has any party received over 50 percent of valid votes, which the Conservatives achieved in 1984, a bumper year electorally for conservative parties across North America. (In comparison, the Liberal party has not achieved a majority in the popular vote since the general election of 1949.) In the years since 1970, the third-party NDP have secured their electoral gains to establish a base of support of around 20 percent of the electorate, and while their voters come from an array of backgrounds, this establishment of a critical mass of supporters has had the effect of lowering the ceiling over the other two major parties, to the point that the Conservatives last cracked 40 percent of the popular vote 30 years ago, and the Liberals have only exceed 40 percent in a general election twice in the last 40 years. What this suggests is that the electorate is no longer presented with two viable electoral options, swinging like a pendulum between the two depending on the electoral cycle. Instead, three political parties have a sustainable base of support of at least 20 percent of the provincial electorate, with the remainder being the swing voters who divide their votes and, ultimately, decide elections.

Public Opinion Polling

The purpose of using Corporate Research Associates' public opinion polling here is to supplement election data for the most recent period of elections which have been characterized by multiparty competition, with the goal of filling in the gaps between general elections with an additional indicator of the political preferences of the provincial electorate. To reiterate from the previous chapter, CRA's political opinion polling occurs on a regular basis, once every quarter, thus providing us with four intervals of data per

year.

This data will assist in answering the research question by demonstrating whether the competitive, three-party makeup of the Nova Scotia party system was merely an election campaign period phenomenon, or whether it was a more durable condition that continued between elections and redefined interparty competition across the province. The difference between these two scenarios is important because they exemplify very different situations and outcomes. In the former, a third party benefits from temporary conditions such as the electorate's disaffection and exhaustion with a major party, as was the case with the rises and falls of the Confederation of Regions party in New Brunswick in the early 1990s (Martin, 1998) and the Action démocratique du Québec in the mid-2000s (Bélanger, 2009; see also Allan and Vengroff, 2009). In the latter, something more significant is happening as a new party attains a position of strength within the party system, captures and retains a significant portion of the electorate, and challenges the entrenchment of the established order, as exemplified by the emergence of the Parti Québécois in the 1970s (see Pinard and Hamilton, 1978), or the sudden breakthrough of the Bloc Québécois and Reform parties in the 1993 federal election (see Erickson, 1995). Public opinion polls can help us to see, in the case of the NSNDP, whether their rise was merely an ephemeral blip in the history of party politics in Nova Scotia, or whether it represented a lasting shift in the composition of the provincial party system.

Moreover, in addition to the party preferences, CRA started asking its respondents in 2002 which of the party leaders they preferred to be premier. This provides us with a second indicator on leadership, specifically by gauging the electorate's acceptance of the

party heads as potential provincial leaders, which the literature clearly states is important to voters when they are making up their mind as to how they will mark their ballot (see Bittner, 2010; Bittner, 2018). It should also show how the leader fares in comparison to their party in public opinion, with a nod to the effect of the leader on their party, the thinking here being that a party leader who outperforms their party ought to provide it with an electoral advantage, just as one who underperforms will likely prove to be a hindrance to party candidates at the ballot box. With regard to the research question, leadership polling data will provide insight into the impact the actual party leaders had on their parties electoral performance in recent years.

Figure 4.03 shows the party preferences of those polled by Corporate Research Associates (CRA) from November 1990 through June 2019, and Figure 4.04 shows the leadership preferences of respondents since CRA first asked the question in 2002. Despite some missing data[15] from the 1990s, several patterns are apparent. First and foremost, the three main parties remain in close competition throughout the 2000s, with none exceeding 40 percent support nor falling below 20, and each remaining fairly close to the 30 percent line, which effectively served as the median. Moreover, each of the three parties experienced fluctuations, polling either first, second, or third over the course of the decade, with the Liberals performing slightly better in the first half of the 2000s, and the NSNDP performing better in later years. This result corresponds to anecdotal evidence that Nova Scotia was home to a tight, three-way political battleground. Furthermore, it confirms that the election returns were not simply outliers, as each of the

15 CRA political polling data is missing for the intervals of June and September 1993, and June 1995. Partial data was found for the CRA polls released in March 1994, December 1995, and March 1999.

three parties remained competitive throughout this period both in opinion polling and at the ballot box.

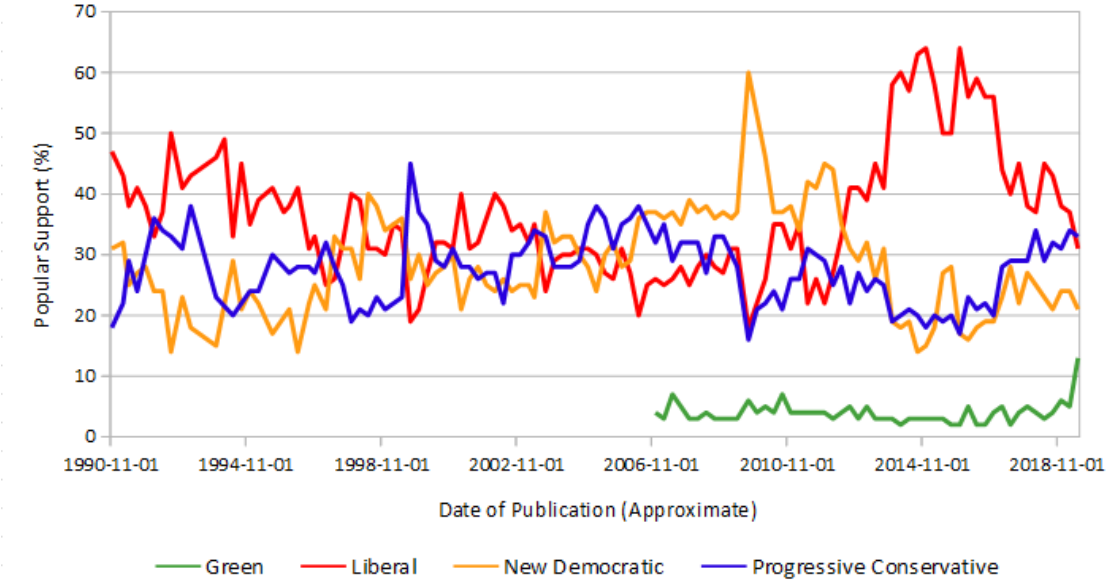

Figure 4.03: CRA Party Preference Polling Data for Nova Scotia, 1990 – 2019

Second, it is clear that there are spikes in support in and around the time that a majority government is formed. This is observed in 1993, 1999, 2009, and 2013, after the election of Liberal, PC, NDP, and Liberal majority governments, respectively. These spikes are typically followed by a decline, with the parties slipping back to their typical polling levels, although the Liberal majority elected in 2013 enjoyed a resurgence around 2015, when their federal counterparts led by Justin Trudeau swept Atlantic Canada on their way to a big majority victory in that year's national election. The NSNDP, too, experienced an uptick in support, also in 2015, around the time that their counterparts in Alberta, led by Rachel Notley, formed an unlikely majority government. Same goes for the Nova Scotia Greens, as their polling numbers experienced an uptick following the breakthrough performance of their Prince Edward Island counterparts in that province's

April 2019 general election. This alludes to the impact of external political events on the preferences of the Nova Scotia electorate, although the trendlines suggest that such influences tend to be ephemeral, and none has coincided with an election so that the affected party could reap the reward. As it pertains to the honeymoon period experienced by majority governments, the polling data appears to suggest that the coalitions of voters that brought each of those parties to power are temporary, as they are likely composed of loyalists, party switchers, and swing voters, the latter two groups being the most susceptible to abandoning the new majority government by the time of the subsequent election.

Thirdly, the lack of impact that the smallest parties have in the provincial political arena is evident both in the election returns and in the polling data. Support for the provincial Green party, which CRA began to track as of that party's founding in 2006, has remained flat between three and six percent over that last dozen years. As previously noted, GPNS support rose above 10 percent in the first CRA poll conducted after the election of eight Green MLAs on Prince Edward Island in the spring of 2019. The Atlantica Party, an upstart right-wing populist group, has barely registered. Other fringe parties, such as the Marijuana and Nova Scotia parties, disbanded in the early 2000s with no lasting influence on the province's electoral politics or its public policy. This further establishes the political environment in Nova Scotia as a highly competitive one for the three main parties, with smaller political entities effectively being squeezed out of the fray.

Overall, this series of public opinion polling data is important because it provides

us with information on the preferences of the provincial electorate, beyond that which is found in election returns. While we may deduce the electorate's preference for premier on the basis of the party of the candidate for which they voted, this is not always a clear-cut process, as some individual candidates are able to draw upon supporters beyond their own political party on the basis of their own personality, popularity, and record in office, for example. CRA's polling, therefore, provides us with indicators of the popular support of the political parties and their respective leaders.

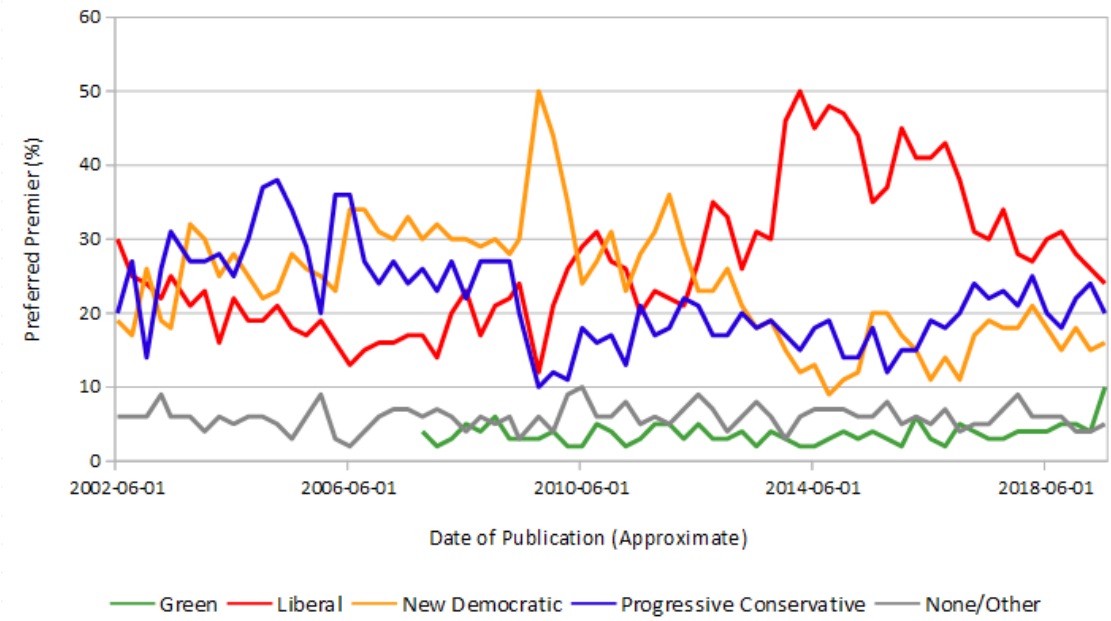

Figure 4.04: CRA Leadership Preference Polling Data for Nova Scotia, 2002 – 2019

Without the polling data from CRA, we would be reliant upon general election data that is typically produced once every several years, whereas CRA conducts its poll of political preferences on a quarterly basis and has done so for thirty years, providing observers with more data to analyze and to supplement election returns. Moreover, CRA's consistent presence in the Nova Scotia marketplace over several decades,

especially with its political preference surveys, implies a measure of trust and confidence in its data that other polling firms simply do not possess, in particular those who gauge public opinion only in the days and weeks immediately preceding an election.

Sartori's Method for Counting Parties

The results of the Sartori count of parties can be found in Figure 4.05. To recap, the Sartori method ultimately provides a count of parties deemed to have an important impact on the direction of partisan competition within a polity through their potential as coalition partners or as governing alternatives, or through the ability of smaller parties to alter to direction and focus of election campaigns among larger governing parties. For the purpose of this thesis, the Sartori method is used to further establish the parameters of the provincial party system in Nova Scotia by providing us with a quantitative measure of the number of parties. Just because a party receives votes, however, does not mean that they are impactful on the nature of electoral competition or on the structure of the party system. Sartori (2005) remarked that post-Cold War communist parties in Europe, for example, despite their ability to attain a sizeable number of votes and seats, were largely ineffective and inconsequential because other parties did not want to form governing coalitions with them, and they could not win elections to govern in their own right. Therefore, the use of the Sartori method in this thesis is meant to establish a baseline for the number of parties within the provincial party system, in particular those which are able to win or be brought into government, or which are able to affect how other parties campaign and present themselves to the electorate, along with the policy positions they are willing to offer.

In executing the Sartori method, one begins by counting the number of parties attaining seats in the House of Assembly, which in Nova Scotia has varied between two and four since 1933, numbers which are indicated by the green bars in the chart above. (Data from the Sartori count can be found in Table 4.6 in the Appendix). Next, one looks at the "coalitional" potential of the seated parties, which has been adapted here to look at parties with the ability to provide confidence and supply to a minority government, as coalition governments are a rarity in Canada and have not occurred in Nova Scotia. One party fit that description in 1970—albeit for a brief time—and two parties were counted as coalitional in 1998, 2003, and 2006.

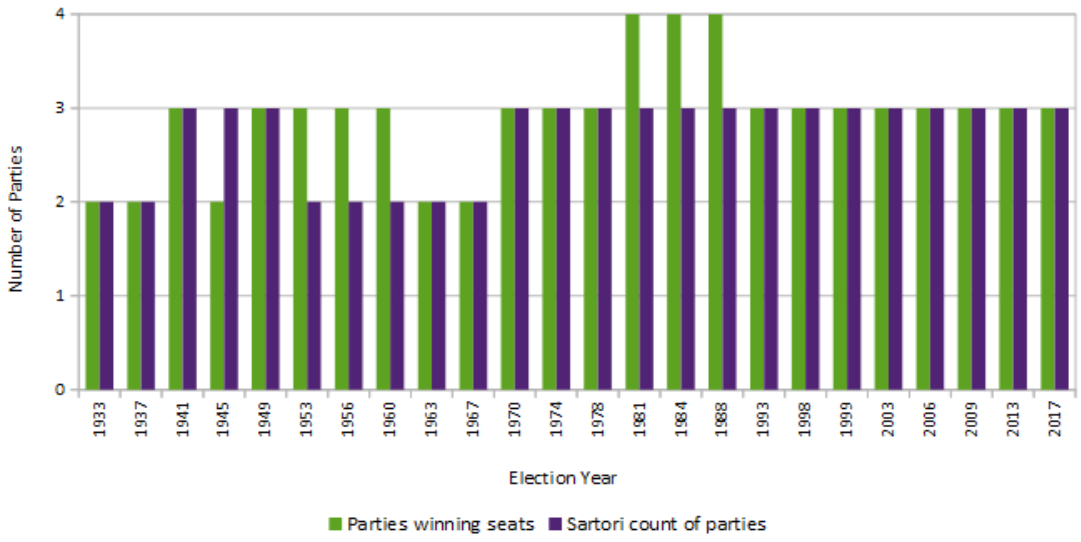

Figure 4.05: Parties with seats and Sartori count of parties in Nova Scotia, 1933 – 2017

During the minority government years of the late 1990s and mid 2000s, each of the three party caucuses were large, in most cases numbering in excess of 10 members each. The 19-seat Liberal minority government elected in 1998 relied on the 14-seat Progressive Conservative caucus for support during its short term in office, and the PCNS

minorities of the mid 2000s relied on both the LPNS and NSNDP for confidence and supply at various points during its time in power, which is why two parties are counted as necessary for confidence and supply because either opposition party could have been called upon to support the government. While the coalitional number is not added to the overall number of parties with seats, thus there is no increase, what it does is reinforce the overall number of parties as relevant entities, as one is in government and the other two parties with seats have coalition potential, which in this instance would be an offer to support the government on a given bill or matter of confidence.

Furthermore, following the 1970 general election, the LPNS and PCNS, the latter of which was the incumbent government, received 23 and 21 seats, respectively, in the 46-seat House of Assembly; with two seats, the NSNDP were thus in a position to provide confidence to either party. The Liberals ultimately formed the government, and later achieved a one-seat majority as a result of a 1971 by-election. The 1970 election was also of historical significance as it was the only time in the province's history that a government was formed by a party that received less votes than a competitor, as the PCNS received several thousand more votes than the LPNS despite coming up short in the seat count.

Sartori's count of parties also determines the number of superfluous parties, or those that are not important to the formation of government nor are they necessary for confidence and supply. Single-issue parties or personality-based political movements are examples of superfluous parties. Additionally, the Sartori count seeks to distinguish a seated party as a relevant one on account of the number of votes it receives or because a

party has the effect of altering "the tactics of party competition" or "the direction of competition of the governing-oriented parties" (Sartori, 2005: 108). In 1945, for example, the Conservative party received a third of all votes cast in that election yet it failed to win a single seat, in part because its support was not concentrated in any particular region of Nova Scotia. In Cape Breton County, two CCF MLAs were elected because that party's support was heavily concentrated in the colliery towns of Glace Bay and New Waterford, both of which comprised the bulk of two separate constituencies. Thus, one relevant party—the Conservative party—is added to the Sartori count of parties in that election despite its failure to win a single seat.

It is interesting to observe that the Sartori count of parties in Nova Scotia has oscillated between two and three relevant parties, with three parties attaining this status in the 1940s and in all general elections since and including 1970. While there is some subjectivity at play when using this method, the Sartori count acknowledges the surge in support for, and subsequent decline of, a third party during the 1940s. The CCF elected its first MLAs in 1941, and became the Official Opposition in 1945 as the Conservatives were shut out. PC MLAs were returned to the House of Assembly in 1949, and the CCF entered a period of decline, a trend they would not begin to reverse until 1970.

Perhaps not as precise as statistical methods at identifying parties on the precipice of government, the Sartori method ultimately provides a count of parties deemed to have an important impact on the direction of partisan competition within a polity. For the purpose of responding to the central research question, the Sartori count demonstrates the persistent presence of a third party with enough legislative representation to have an

important impact on the provincial party system, so much so that it influenced interparty competition at election time, particularly between the governing parties, and it provided minority governments with alternatives when they needed to pass confidence votes. More to the point, the Sartori demonstrates the parameters of the party system in Nova Scotia by establishing the number of political parties that are relevant for governing and for campaigning during elections. Put another way, the Sartori count sets out the capacity of the party system at a given moment in time by deciding upon the number of possible governing parties in addition to smaller parties with the ability to influence the policies and performances of the larger ones.

Effective Number of Electoral Parties

Figures 4.06 and 4.07 show the progression of provincial ENEP scores, average or mean riding ENEP, and the difference between the two in Nova Scotia between 1933 and 2017. To be clear, the former graph shows ENEP as calculated by the Laakso-Taagepera formula, the latter by the Golosov formula. Once again, upon review of the data and the graphs, several trends became apparent. First, corroborating the observations of academics like Beck (1954, 1976, 1978), Bellamy (1976), Carbert (2016), Hyson (1973), and Jenson (1976), Nova Scotia general election results up to 1970 produced an average Golosov ENP of 2.04, and an average Laakso-Taagepera ENP of 2.25. In other words, the "traditional" voting habits of Nova Scotians are supported by ENP scores that suggest the domination of two parties over provincial political competition, inferring that third parties were weak and lacked significant power or representation throughout most of the province's history.

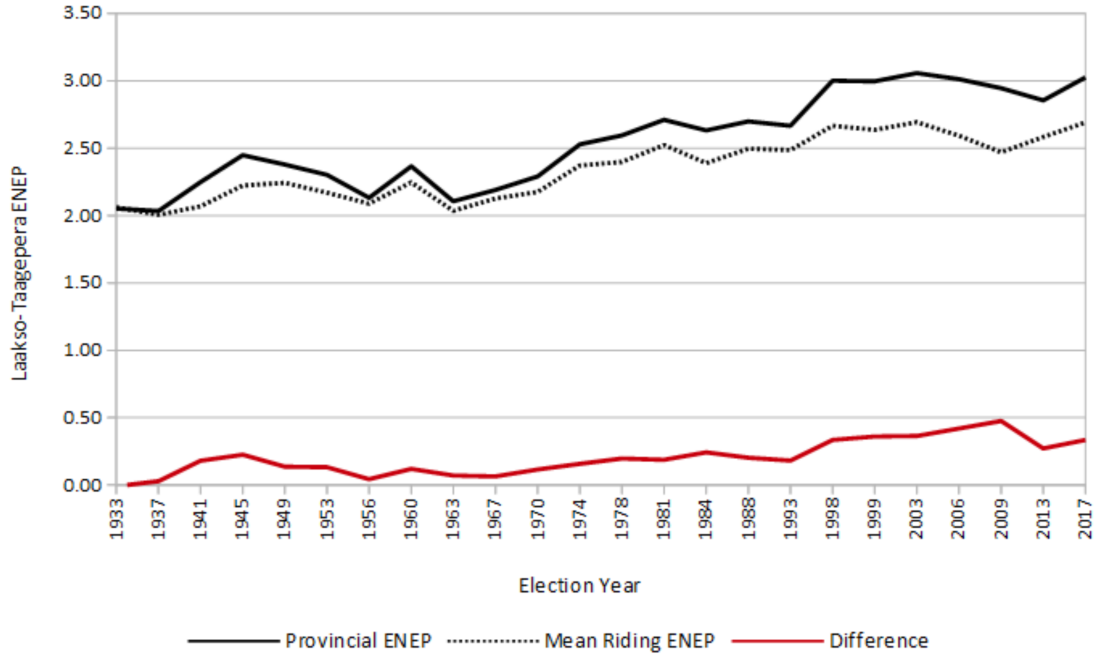

Figure 4.06: Laakso-Taagepera ENEP, Mean Riding ENEP, and the Difference

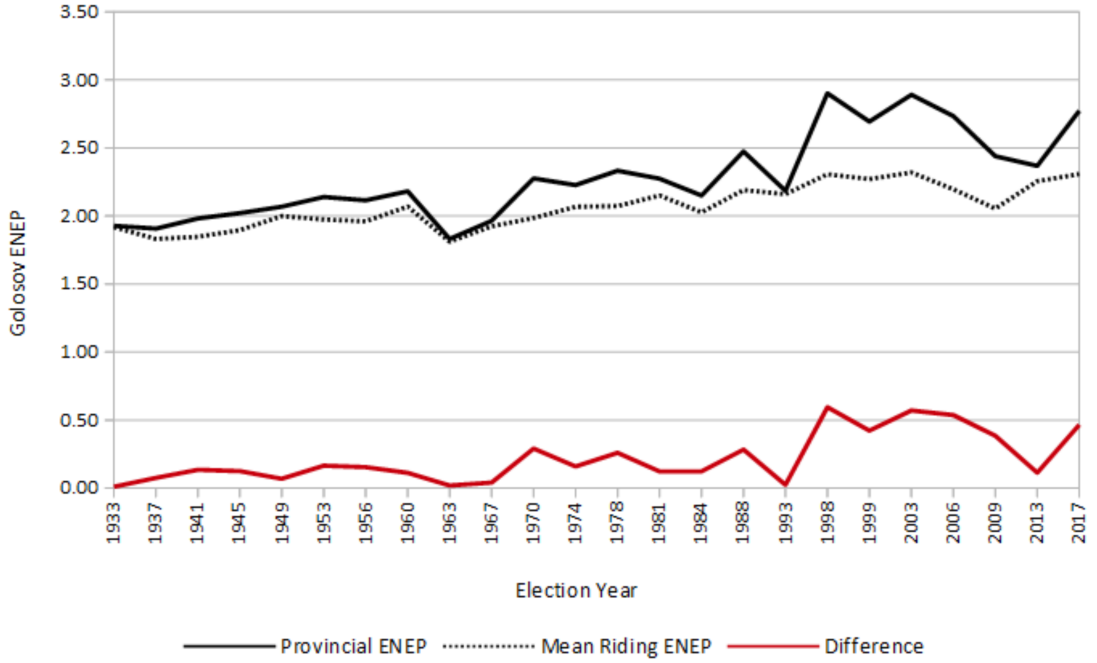

Figure 4.07: Golosov ENEP, Mean Riding ENEP, and the Difference

The second apparent trend is the emergence of a two-party-plus system in general elections between 1974 and 1993. The average provincial ENEP for the period from 1974 to 1993 are 2.27 and 2.64, for the Golosov and Laakso-Taagepera indices

respectively. (The data from which these periodic averages are calculated can be found in Table 4.4 in the Appendix.) This growth for the third party can be seen in Figure 4.06, as the Laakso-Taagepera provincial ENEP crosses and stays above the 2.5 mark. Golosov ENEP, while calculated with a more conservative formula in that it discounts smaller parties to a greater degree, still shows an upward trend in the number of parties during the 1970s and 1980s. Taken together, the data is showing the growth in support for a third party, up to a point where a sizable portion of the electorate routinely votes for them and is able to elect some MLAs. We know from the general election data that a doubling of popular support for the third-place NSNDP can be observed between the elections of 1970 and 1974. Moreover, that growth in support was consolidated and maintained by the party through the five subsequent general elections, averaging just under 16 per cent support in elections between 1974 and 1993, and electing between one and four MLAs each time. Although the NSNDP never seriously challenged for power during this period, they did emerge as a persistent political force which explains why we see heightened provincial ENEP scores for this period.

Thirdly, and most importantly, a spike in provincial ENEP is observed beginning in 1998. For the general election held that year, Laakso-Taagepera ENEP was 3.001, and Golosov ENEP was 2.9. Although there is a greater variation in Golosov figures observed during the period between 1998 and 2017, both indices demonstrate that significant growth in the third party's support has occurred in the five years between the 1993 and 1998 campaigns. Overall, the average provincial ENEP for the most recent period is 2.98 and 2.69 for the Laakso-Taagepera and Golosov formulae, respectively.

Only the Laakso-Taagepera index produced ENEP scores at or slightly above three, and it did so over four consecutive elections, only dipping below that threshold in 2009 and 2013 because of the election of large majority governments. These ENEP scores are substantiated by the state of recent political competition in Nova Scotia: between 1998 and 2013, the three main parties each won at least one election, formed the Official Opposition, and sat as the third party in the Legislature. In other words, provincial politics in Nova Scotia have become highly competitive with approximately three effective parties competing in volatile general elections, just as the ENEP trendlines have illustrated.

Riding-level ENEP data also yielded some surprising numbers, with average ENEP riding results exhibiting tendencies similar to the provincial ENEP such as a steady increase over time. Riding ENEP, as Duverger would have suspected, is generally lower than provincial ENEP. Average and median riding ENEP, which is illustrated in Figures 4.08 and 4.09 below, certainly track lower than the provincial ENEP for both indices, yet the two trace a path over time that is similar to the provincial ENEP. In most election years, median riding ENEP was lower than the average, or mean, which lends support to Duverger's claim by demonstrating that, in most cases, ENEP was lower at the riding level than it was at the provincial level. However, pushing back against Duvergerian expectations, the difference between provincial ENEP and the mean riding ENEP is quite narrow, ranging between 0.2 and 0.5 for both indices. What that tells us about electoral competition in Nova Scotia is that the difference between the provincial level ENEP and the average at the riding level is one-half of a party or less, meaning that the heightened

partisan competition across Nova Scotia as a whole is occurring in the ridings, too.

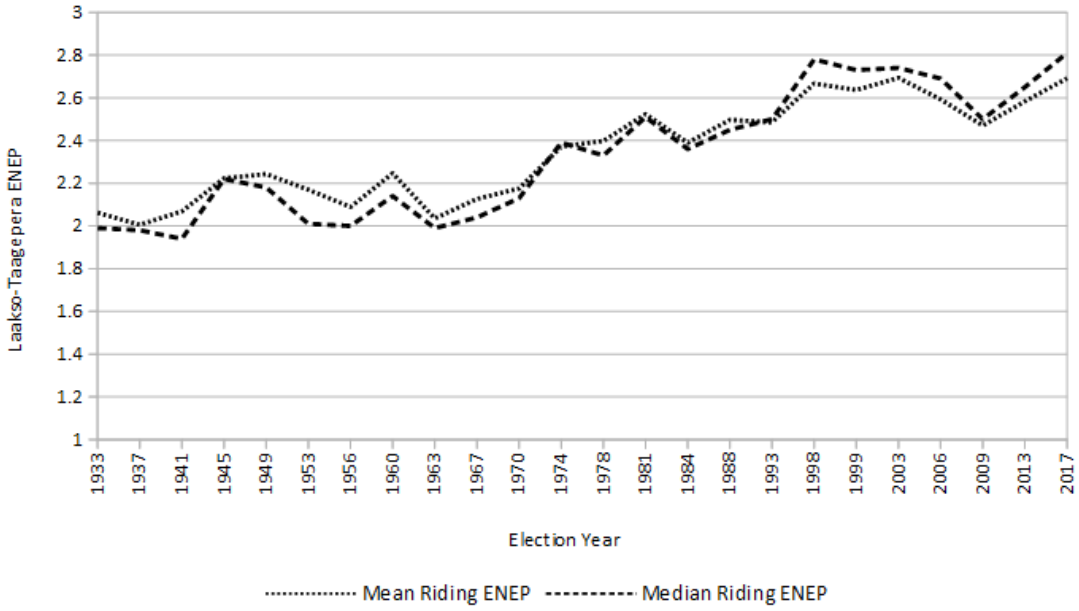

Figure 4.08: Laakso-Taagepera Mean and Median Riding ENEP

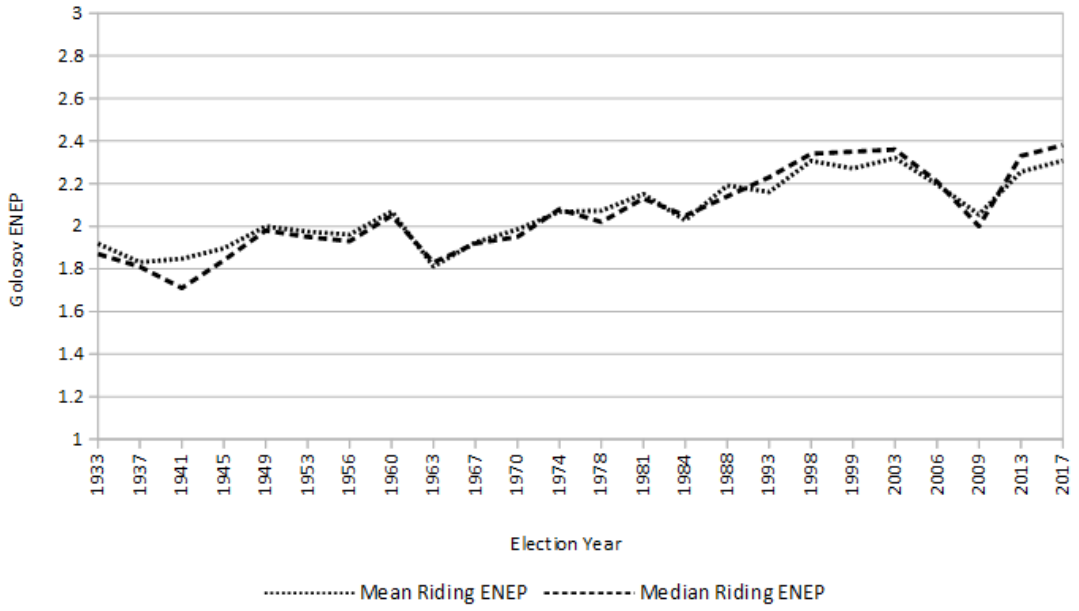

Figure 4.09: Golosov Mean and Median Riding ENEP

Another important finding from riding ENEP is that the median begins to track higher than the mean beginning with the 1998 general election. This indicates that

halfway point between the extremes in riding ENEP outcomes is tracking higher than the average, demonstrating that riding contests are actually more competitive in most cases.

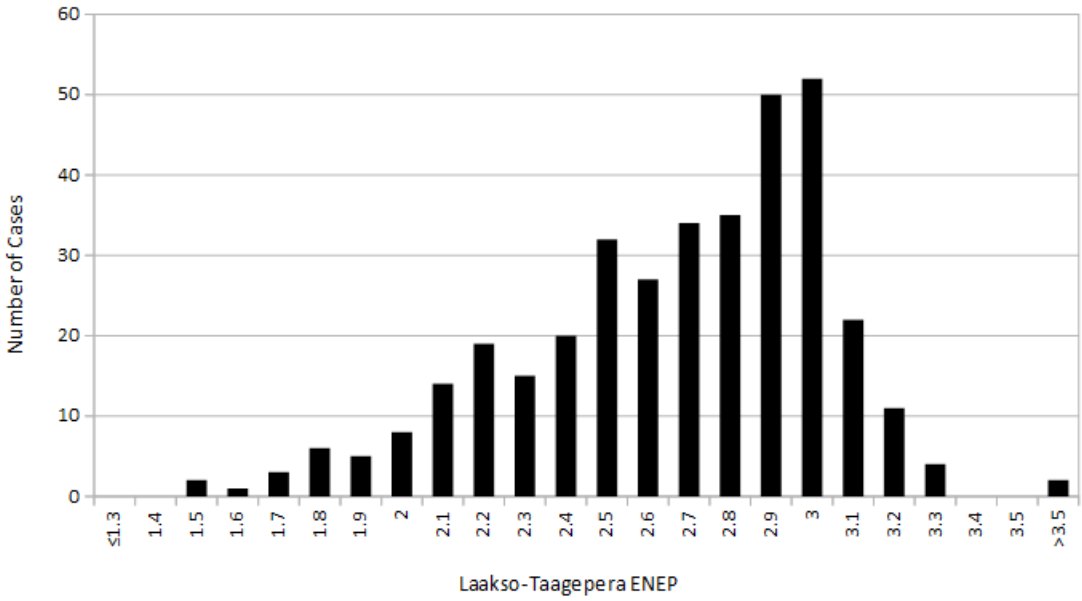

Figure 4.10: Distribution of Laakso-Taagepera Riding ENEP Outcomes, 1998 – 2017

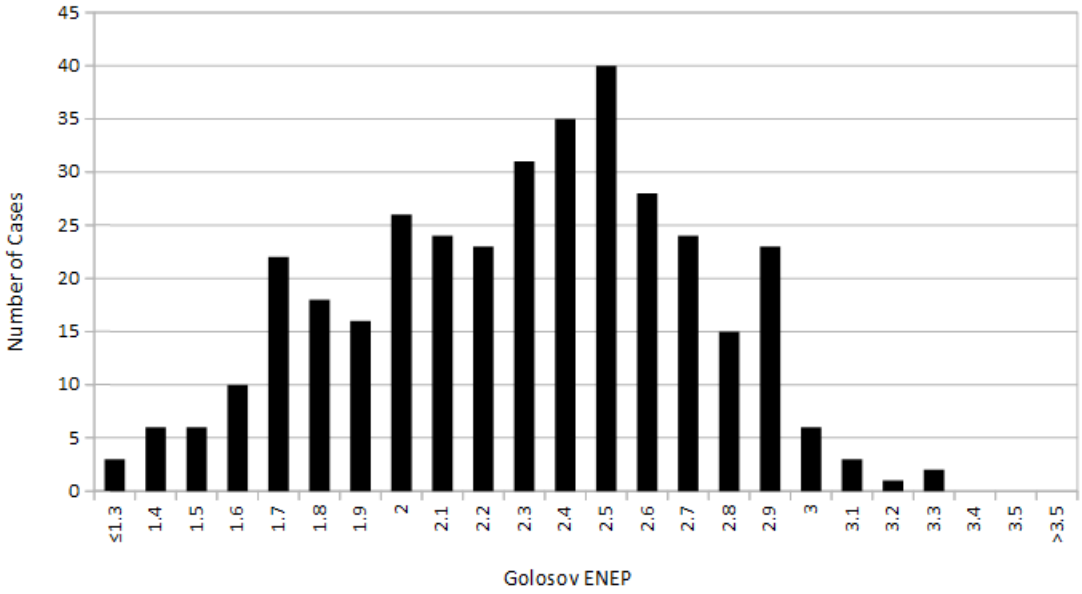

Figure 4.11: Distribution of Golosov Riding ENEP Outcomes, 1998 – 2017

In Figures 4.10 and 4.11, we see the distribution of Laakso-Taagepera and Golosov riding ENEP in general elections from 1998 to 2017, during which time there were 362 general election riding contests. Each position along the *x* axis includes those ridings whose ENEP was greater than the previous interval and less than or equal to the present interval. For example, cases included in the bar at the 2.0 position include those ridings whose ENEP was greater than 1.90 and less than or equal to 2.00, as ENEP was rounded to the hundredth position. In both graphs, there is clearly a tendency toward the higher end of the scale, particularly with Laakso-Taagepera, with the most frequent outcomes occurring between 2.81 and 3, as seen in Figure 4.10. The distribution of Laakso-Taagepera ENEP outcomes tilts leans rightward on the graph with two-thirds of riding ENEP results being greater than 2.51, and one tenth of the same outcomes being greater than 3.01. While the tendency with Golosov is more reserved, as Figure 4.11 illustrates, the trend of higher ENEP outcomes remains the same, with the most frequent riding ENEP outcomes being those between 2.21 and 2.70, and nearly two-thirds of all Golosov outcomes being greater than 2.11.

The more recent riding ENEP outcomes appear more stark when compared to general election riding contests held between 1933 and 1993, which are shown below in Figures 4.12 and 4.13. In contrast with more recent elections, the ENEP outcomes in earlier elections make it obvious that partisan competition was more concentrated among two parties, with ENEP scores between 1.91 and 2 being by far the most commonly occurring. Again, Laakso-Taagepera ENEP outcomes tend to be higher than those calculated using the Golosov formula, with the former suggesting more robust partisan

competition than the latter, with Golosov ENEP suggesting less competitive races.

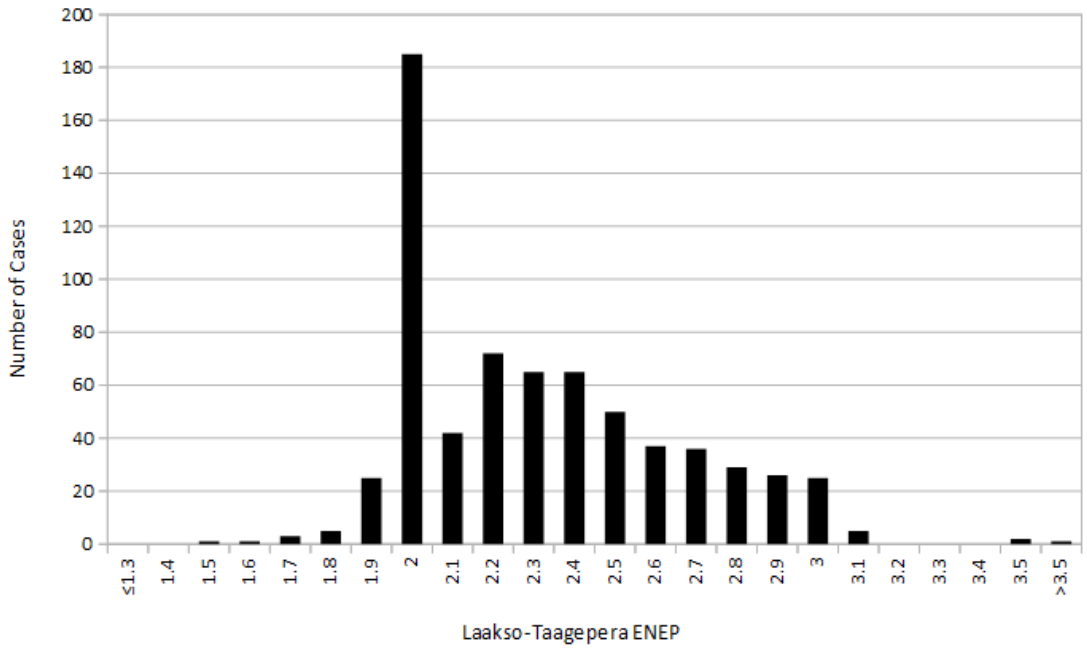

Figure 4.12: Laakso-Taagepera Riding ENEP Outcomes, 1933 – 1993

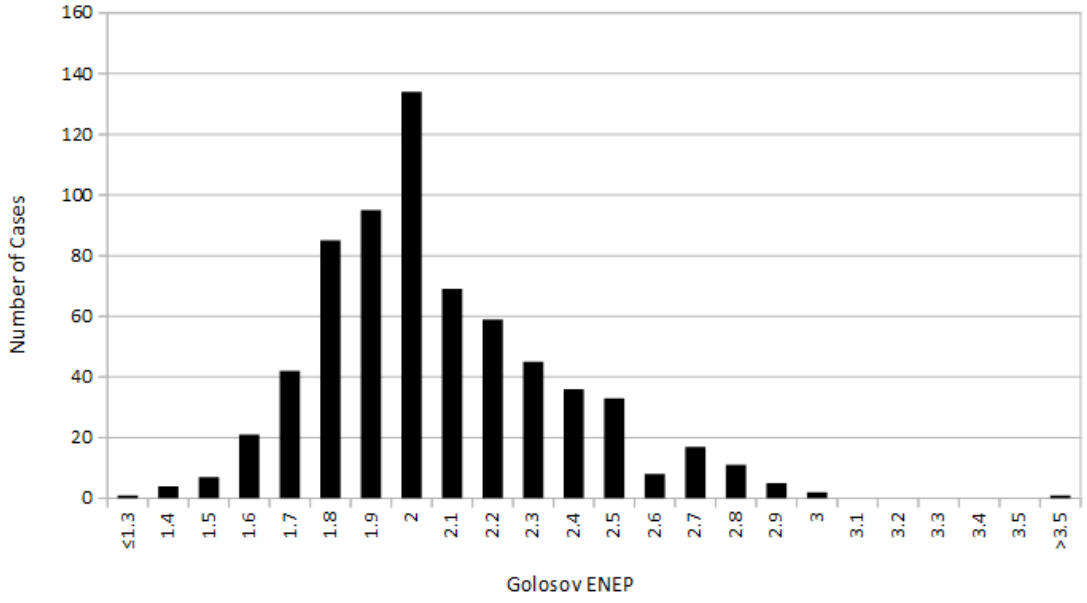

Figure 4.13: Golosov Riding ENEP Outcomes, 1933 – 1993

As Duverger claimed that plurality elections tend to come down to two choices,

he would have a strong case to make if he were discussing Nova Scotia general election contests up to the 1990s, as the previous graphs all demonstrate. That said, it is plain to see that the nature of riding-level competition has significantly changed during the post-1998 period relative to earlier general elections. Tripartisan competition is much more common over the last two decades than at any other point in Nova Scotia's electoral history. Even the spread of the outcomes shows the range of competition that is happening across the province. Whereas during earlier eras a safe assumption was that the two primary contenders in a given riding were the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, since 1998 those two parties have had to contend with a stronger and more relevant challenge from New Democratic candidates. The competitive dynamic in those ridings where ENEP is lower has also changed: along with the Liberal-PC contests that have traditionally occurred, there are now numerous ridings where the primary competitors are LPNS and NSNDP candidates, or NSNDP and PCNS candidates. Even as the number of 'effective' parties in the ridings has steadily grown, in those ridings where there has not been increase in ENEP, the nature of competition has changed.

If one were to make a cautious observation about what riding ENEP data after 1998 reveals, reflecting here on the Golosov index, then it appears that something akin to a two-party-plus system is happening at the riding level with median riding ENEP sitting at 2.3 over the last seven elections, reaching a peak of 2.38 in 2017. This is in stark contrast to the traditional two-party system of decades past, as evidenced by the median riding ENEP during earlier election years which hewed much closer to two. More boldly, relying on information from the Laakso-Taagepera index, which is the standard ENP

measure in the political science literature, one observes at the riding level something that lies between a two-and-a-half and a three-party system. These figures go against the notion that, at the riding level, the number of parties would be winnowed down to two, as Duverger believed. On the contrary, the Laakso-Taagepera numbers suggest that, as is found at the provincial level, competition in the ridings is much more robust than would typically be expected.

Rae's Fractionalization Index

Succinctly, fractionalization measures the likelihood that any two voters will have chosen to vote for different parties at an election. With no fractionalization ($F_e = 0$), all voters would be casting ballots for the same party; conversely, under conditions of hyperfractionalization ($F_e = 1$), all voters would be voting for separate parties. The difference in F_e between 0.0 and 0.5 indicates the gap between one-party domination and two-party competition. The difference in F_e between 0.5 and 0.67 would indicate the distance between two-party and three-party competition. Therefore, an F_e outcome of 0.33 is a less significant indicator of the state of partisan competition than an F_e outcome of 0.67, even as both are the same distance (0.17) away from an F_e of 0.5, which is the baseline measure for a two-party system.

As Rae notes, fractionalization is limited by the number of parties in competition (1967: 54). Across the 24 general elections under examination here, the number of participating parties has ranged from a low of three[16] to a high of six[17]. That said, the data shown in Figure 4.14 illustrates the trend in fractionalization of votes and seats over time,

16 Only three parties contested the general elections of 1937, 1941, 1949, and 1963.

17 There were six parties counted as participants in the general elections of 2003 and 2017. It must be noted that independent candidates were counted here as a party group for analytical purposes when, in reality, only five registered political parties contested these two general elections.

and the results are revealing. With regard to seats, we can easily pick out the oscillations between large majority governments—when the line craters towards the low end of the index—and closer, more evenly apportioned seat outcomes. When it comes to periods of majority government, we can see that large majority governments in the 1940s and the 1960s would cause the F_p outcome to dip below 0.2, whereas later majority governments —those elected between 1974 and 1993—would cause the F_p outcome to dip to slightly below 0.4. More to the point, of the four elections that have resulted in majority governments since 1998, none of these outcomes has caused F_p to dip below 0.5, and the actual F_p outcomes have remained closer to 0.6 during this time. In other words, majority legislatures in much of the 20th century resulted in seat distributions that heavily favoured the government, whereas closer to the 21st century, majority governments in Nova Scotia faced a more equitable match in the size of the opposition caucuses.

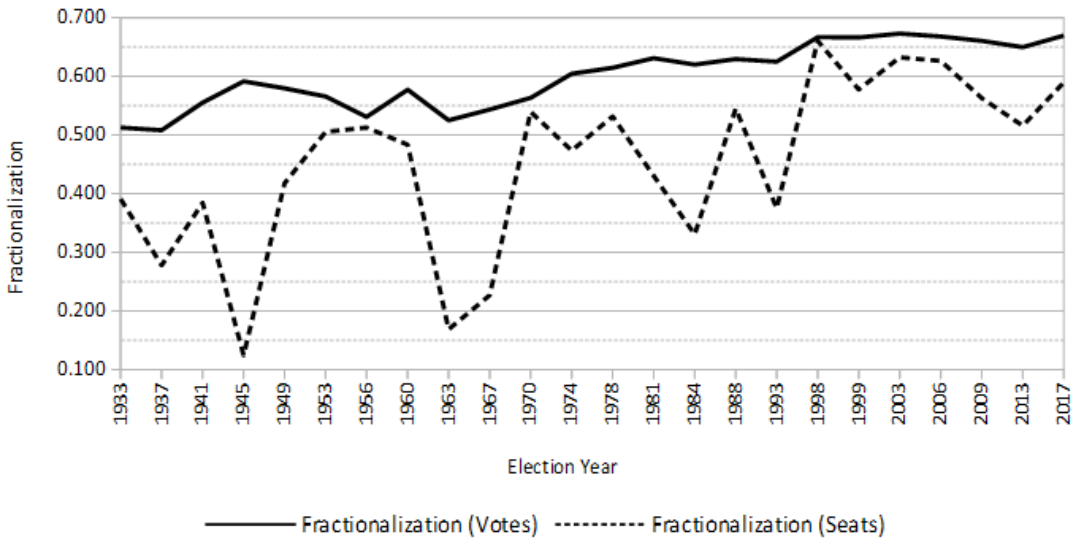

Figure 4.14: Fractionalization of Votes and Seats in Nova Scotia, 1933 – 2017

If we shift our gaze to the final segments of both lines—resulting from elections

happening after 1998—we see that both F_e and F_p remain within the range between 0.5 and 0.67 which reflects the increased electoral and partisan competition, as well as the more evenly distributed legislatures that have been elected over the last two decades in Nova Scotia. During the most recent majority governments for instance, the opposition party caucuses have been more evenly matched relative to one another, and when combined, they more equitably match the majority government caucus which they both face (see Table 4.5 in the Appendix for data). Simply put, when looking at fractionalization of seats in the most recent era, we are seeing a period reflective of two- to three-party parliamentary competition.

The breakdown of votes in plurality elections are not always reflected in the seat count, and that is no different here. Notwithstanding the mounting evidence that, in terms of votes, Nova Scotia has been in a three-party system for the better part of two decades, the seat count—and calculations based off same—is not exactly the same; however, as seat counts and related measures track lower than votes and vote-based measures, it is evident that they both display similar trends and tendencies. Essentially, elections in Nova Scotia have grown more competitive over time; have incorporated at least one additional 'effective' party; and, have experienced three distinct periods or eras that were defined by the level of competition therein, all of which is clear from the outcomes produced by Rae's fractionalization index.

Combined Vote Share and Relative Proportions

Figure 4.15 shows the combined vote share for the first- and second-place parties as a percentage of valid votes cast in Nova Scotia general elections since 1933. As with

previous measures, three distinct time periods visibly emerge from the data. First, from 1933 through 1970, the combined vote for the two largest parties—throughout this period, the two were the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties—ranged from a low of 86.22 percent in 1945 to a high of 98.48 percent in 1933, and over this period, the combined vote total was generally at or very near to the 90 percent interval. From 1974 through 1993, we see the combined vote share decline to a point where it consistently ranged in the low to mid 80s, indicating that the two strongest electoral parties—again, these were the LPNS and PCNS—had ceded some ground to third parties, with this support largely finding its way to the NSNDP.

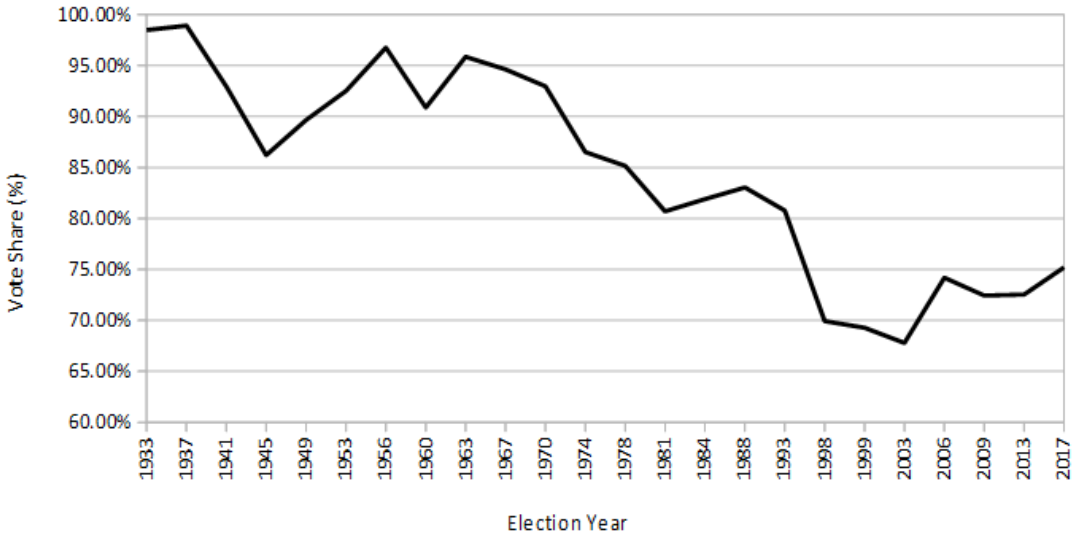

Figure 4.15: Combined Vote Share for 1st and 2nd Parties in Nova Scotia Elections

After 1998, the combined vote share again declines notably in the range of two-thirds to three-quarters of the popular vote. Unlike in previous years, however, the two largest electoral parties alternated throughout this latter period: the Liberal vote was counted here five times, as were the votes received by the New Democrats; votes

received by the Progressive Conservatives were considered on four occasions. As the general decline in the combined vote share of the two largest parties indicates, and supplemented by the alternation in partisan competition in the period after 1998, there was a corresponding rise in support for a third party. If one were to add the combined vote share for the three largest parties after 1998, one would find numbers similar to those of the combined share of the two largest parties in the 1930s, which gives credence to the point that the decline in the two-party combined vote was matched closely by a corresponding rise in the vote for a *single* third party.

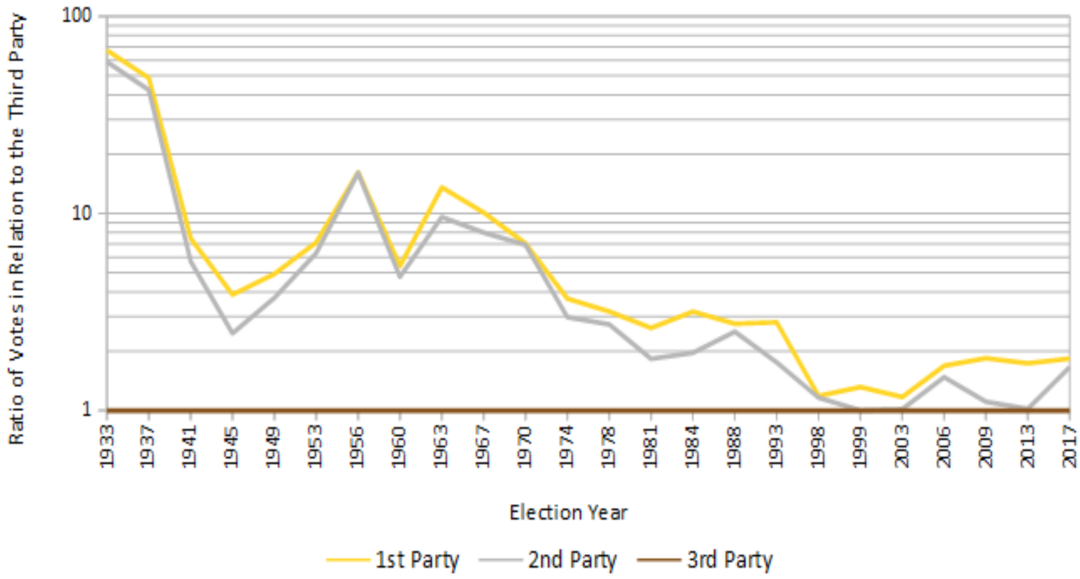

Figure 4.16: Ratio of Votes for the Top Two Parties in Relation to the Third Party

Finally, the proportion of the votes of the first and second parties is measured relative to that of the third, the results of which can be seen in Figure 4.16 above. For this, the third party's vote is set at a constant of one, in effect determining how many votes the two largest electoral parties received for every one cast for the third party.

Additionally, these figures do not correspond directly to a particular party, as the three main parties have finished first, second, and third in elections during the period being measured. The third party line in Figure 4.16, for example, does not correspond directly with results for the NSNDP; rather, the third party line matches with the results of the party that received the third largest number of votes in a particular election.

The three different patterns of competition are again noticeable here, with the data for first period from 1933 through 1970 looking rather volatile as it appears the graph above; however, we know from our earlier look at election data that this swing comes from the third-place party growing its vote share from about one percent to about ten percent over five general elections, before receding back to the lower single digits over the six subsequent general elections. Otherwise, this period is marked by the closeness of the first and second parties to each other, and the gaping distance between them and the third place finisher, which implies that the top two parties were competing with one another and were unfazed by any challenge coming from elsewhere.

The second period from the 1970s through the 1990s shows a more competitive electoral landscape, albeit one where the two largest parties are able to attain two to four votes for every one received by the third party. The vote of the third party nearly doubled between the general elections of 1970 and 1974, and those gains were consolidated with repeated vote shares in the mid-teens recorded for it over six election cycles. While the two largest parties still received the lion's share of the vote, by this point in time, their rate of vote collection relative to the third party was not as significant as it had been historically. This signals a heightened level of competition, though with the primary

parties still some distance ahead of their third place counterpart, the data reveals that the period from the 1970s through the mid 1990s was marked by a two-party-plus system.

In 1998, there was a significant increase in the support for the third-place party, and along with it became a series of very competitive elections. In the seven general elections since 1998, the first and second parties received more than a single vote but less than two votes per vote received by the third party. As seen in Figure 4.16, the parties have never been closer to each other in terms of their ability to amass votes. This means that subtle shifts in the whims of the electorate could have had significant impacts on election outcomes. For the first time in Nova Scotia, a third party could conceivably be elected to government—as was the case with the PCNS when they went from third party in 1998 to a majority government in 1999. Overall, the last two decades have clearly shown a tendency toward increased competition among the three largest parties in Nova Scotia, with no one party coming to dominate the period, and with all parties experiencing boom and bust cycles. Still, the electoral booms experienced recently by the parties have been less potent—in terms of margins of victory and seats won by the governing parties—and the busts have been less austere, with the parties finishing third typically able to win at least a half-dozen seats with between a fifth and a quarter of the popular vote. Altogether, the data are clearly testifying to the presence of a three-party system in Nova Scotia that has been in place for a little more than twenty years.

Discussion

Reflecting of the data above, several themes materialize. From CRA's polling data, it appears that the consistency of tripartisan competitiveness over the last two

decades endures between elections. This is important because it shows that the support received by the NSNDP at the ballot box was not simply the product of a good campaign or a surge in support over several weeks during an election period. Rather, the polling data reveals that the NSNDP maintained a competitive position relative to its two primary rivals by consolidating the support it received and sustaining it between elections. Moreover, as reflected in the leadership data, having a popular leader helped the NSNDP maintain its competitiveness and helped to position it as a viable governing alternative: the party formed the official opposition from 1999 through 2009, its leader was the preferred choice for premier among poll respondents, and, when voters were looking for change in the late 2000s, the conditions were in place for the NSNDP to take full advantage of the moment.

Descriptively, we see some critical components of the NSNDP's breakthrough as a competitive entity. First, in the initial years in the polling series, roughly between 1990 and 1995, the party's support fluctuated between 15 and 30 percent, and while that did not lead to a breakthrough in 1993, it showed that the party had more than a token presence in the province, something that had already been indicated in the election returns. Moreover, after the change from a Conservative to a Liberal government in 1993, and as the Liberal government's popularity began to decline shortly thereafter, the primary beneficiary of that decline was actually the NSNDP. This reflects a point made by Pinard (1975) that, when a newly elected government experiences a sudden decline in its fortunes, the electorate, rather than returning to a previous and still unpopular governing party, will entertain an alternative in the third party. As the CRA data shows, the NSNDP

was able to exploit the vulnerability of the LPNS and PCNS in the mid-1990s by adding new supporters and consolidating its electoral gains, which positioned the party on an equal footing with the traditional governing parties for the first time. In hindsight, the 1998 election appears less like a sudden breakthrough for the NSNDP, and more like the realization of a pre-existing trend in Nova Scotia's electoral politics. Its emergence in 1998 was a critical step in the NSNDP's trajectory from an also-ran to a government-in-waiting, which was then followed up over the subsequent decade by its tenure as official opposition and the experience that brings to the party, its leader, and its MLAs; by making and securing its gains over several elections, as confirmed by the polling data; and, by having a leader whose popularity helped to entrench it, in the minds of voters, as a legitimate governing alternative.

Speaking of leaders, the most significant change for the NSNDP was actually its selection of Alexa McDonough as leader in 1980, which marked the first time a woman had been chosen to lead a major political party in Canada. She was also her party's first leader to hail from outside Cape Breton. In 1981, McDonough's first provincial election as leader, the party lost all of its seats in Cape Breton—former NSNDP MLA Paul MacEwan was re-elected as an independent—after hitting a high water mark of four members in 1978. The distribution of votes and seats in Cape Breton County are shown below in Figures 4.17 and 4.18, respectively. Despite the setback in the party's traditional territory, McDonough won in her Halifax area riding, which represented the first time the party won a seat on the mainland. To demonstrate McDonough's impact on her party's performance, particularly as a Halifax-based leader, the distribution of votes and seats in

Halifax County are illustrated in Figures 4.19 and 4.20, respectively, which show a marked increase in NSNDP support in the county in McDonough's first election as leader, as well as her party's first seat in the area.

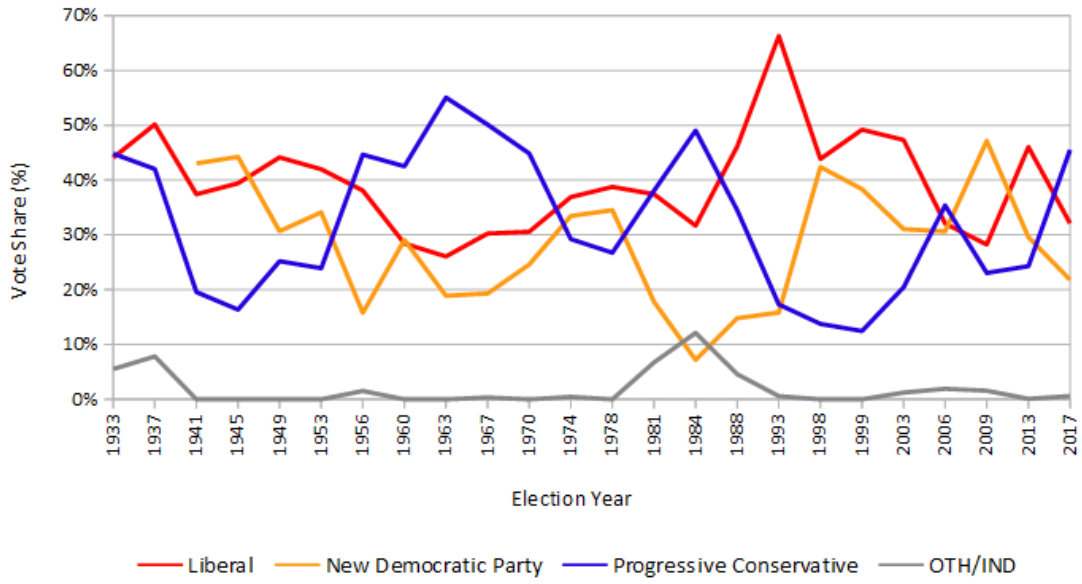

Figure 4.17: Distribution of the popular vote (%) in Cape Breton County since 1933

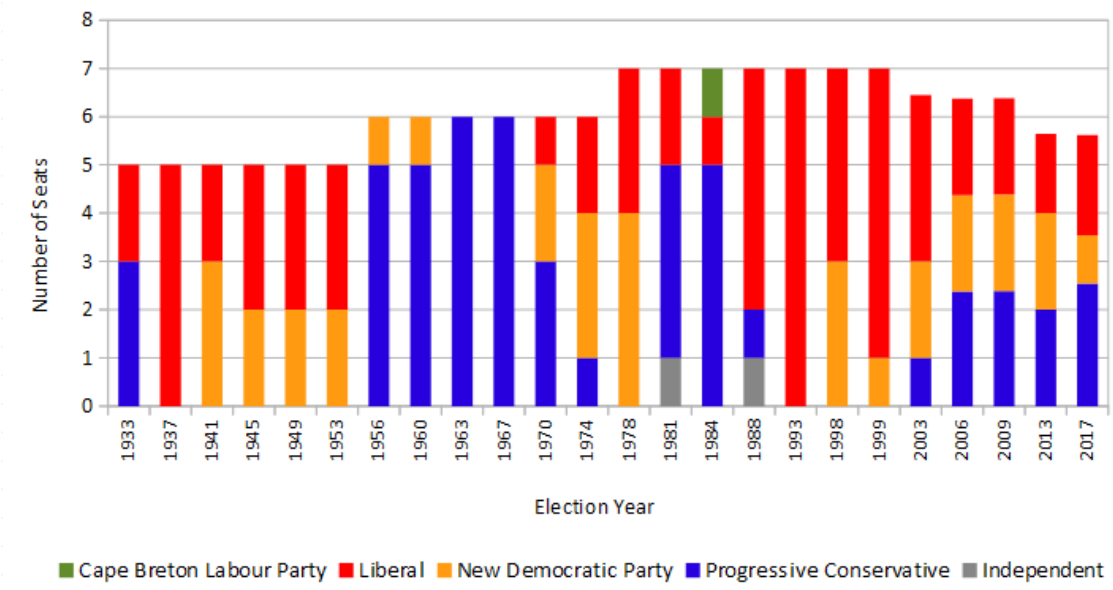

Figure 4.18: Distribution of seats within Cape Breton County since 1933

During her 14-year tenure as leader, the McDonough-led NSNDP elected several

members from the Halifax and Sackville areas, as well as an MLA in Kings County, situated about an hour's drive from Halifax. The party enjoyed a small breakthrough in and around Halifax, laying down markers for the party's future pathway to power, but it would remain shut out of Cape Breton for the entirety of McDonough's leadership.

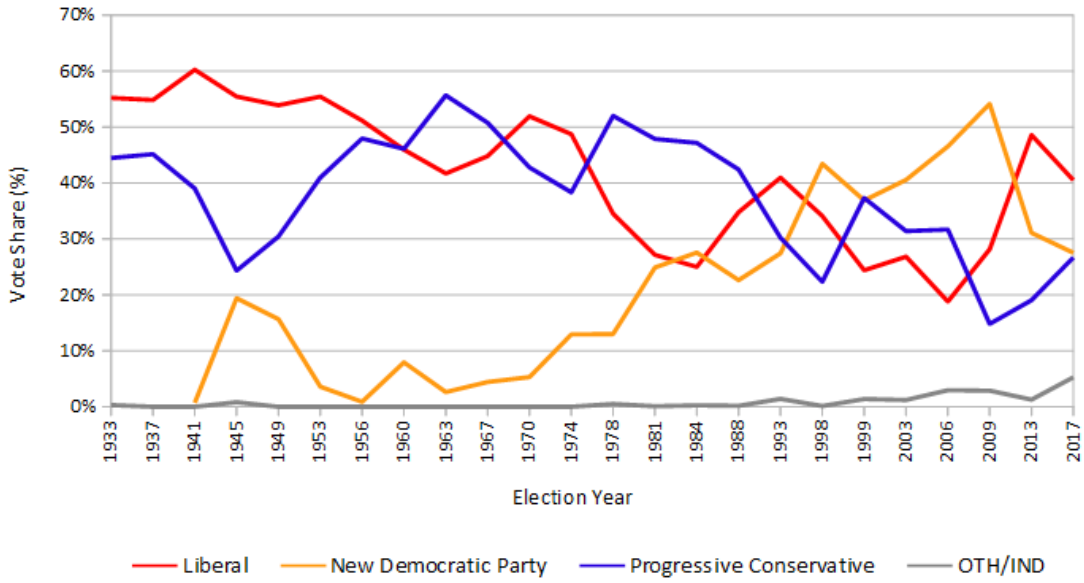

Figure 4.19: Distribution of the popular vote (%) in Halifax County since 1933

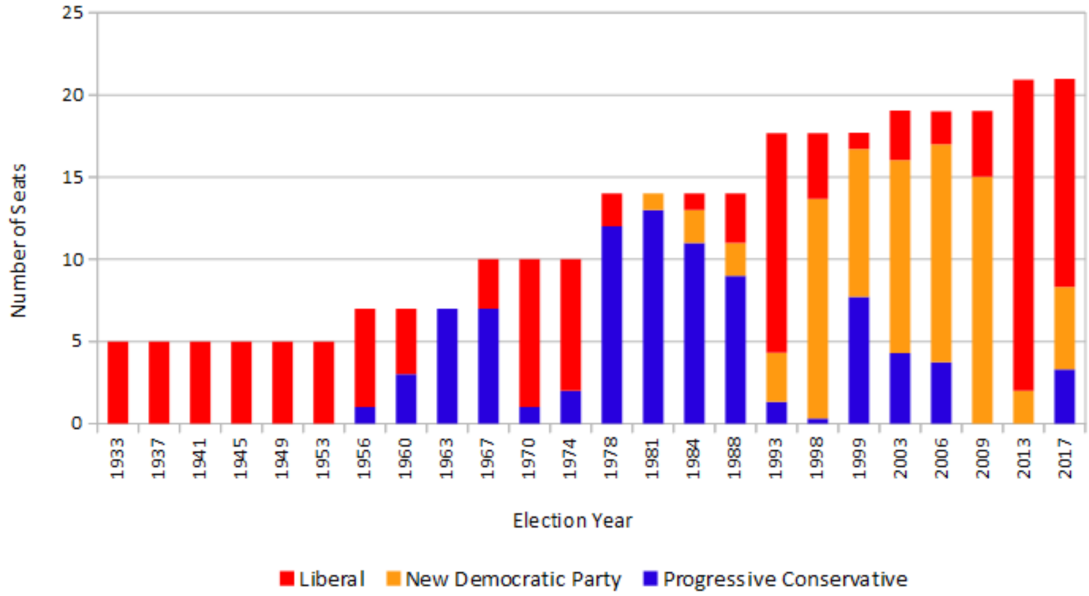

Figure 4.20: Distribution of seats within Halifax County since 1933

The importance of the geographical shift in the NSNDP's electoral base—indeed, the overall importance of Halifax County in provincial elections—is made starkly clear in Figure 4.21, which shows the number of registered electors in each county over time. Even into the 1940s, the electoral weight of Halifax County was similar to that of Cape Breton County, with both being home to about 60,000 voters each. In the years following the end of the Second World War, however, the number of electors in Halifax County began to grow at a rate faster than any other county in Nova Scotia, a rate that accelerated in the mid- to late-1960s and thereafter[18]. By comparison, the number of electors in the other counties either remained stagnant or increased at gradual rates[17] (for population data, see Storring, 2015). It is crystal clear, then, that for any party to be competitive in Nova Scotia, it would need to attract a significant number of voters and win a number of contests in the Halifax region if electoral success provincewide is to be achieved.

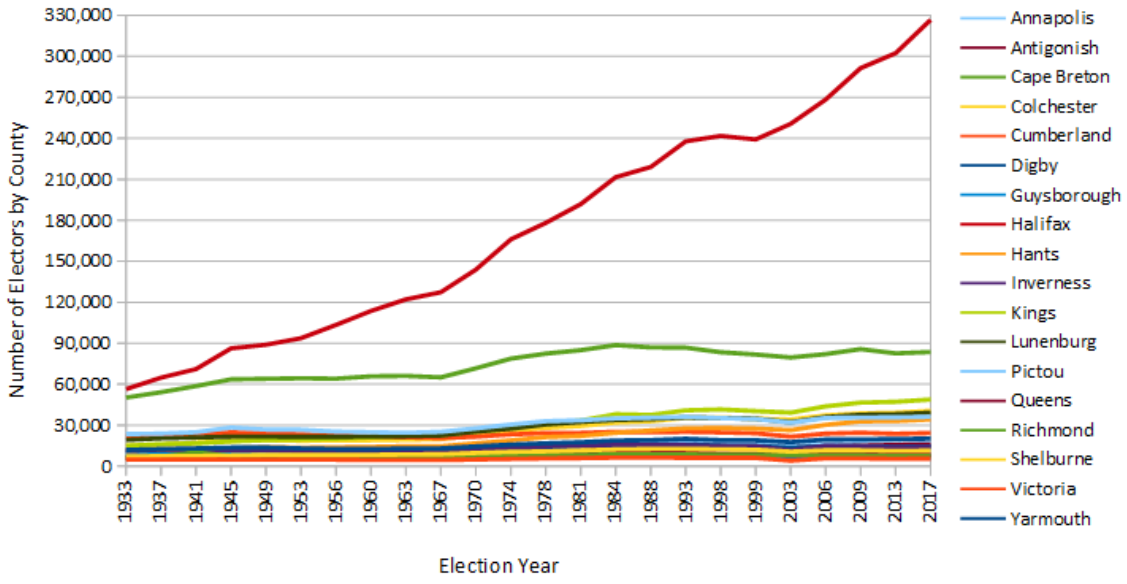

Figure 4.21: Number of electors by county since 1933

18 I collected and organized elector data from each of the published Election Reports from 1933 to 2017, which are available online from ENS at https://electionsnovascotia.ca/election-data/past-results.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Let us return to the central research question in this thesis, that being how the historically third-place NSNDP emerged as a viable governing alternative alongside Nova Scotia's two traditional parties, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives. It is clear from the data presented in the previous chapter that the dynamics of partisan competition in the province experienced a definitive change in the late 1990s, with the general election of 1998 serving as the pivotal event in which certain trends were realized. Among these trends were the gradual rise in popular support for the NSNDP, which began in the early 1970s provincewide (see Figure 4.01) and, more importantly, in the 1980s in the Halifax area (see Figure 4.19), which is home to two-fifths of all voters and two-fifths of the seats in the House of Assembly. Prior to this, the NSNDP drew a disproportionate amount of its votes—and all of its seats—from the industrial communities of eastern Cape Breton County, an area whose population level has either been stagnant or in decline since the mid-20th century (for electors, see Figure 4.21). The industries that once dominated places like Sydney (steel), Glace Bay, and New Waterford (coal) have long disappeared, as have the forces of labour that powered the NSNDP and its predecessor, the CCF, to electoral victory in the county's constituencies.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the geographic shift in the NSNDP's base of support because it involved more than moving from one region to another; it also entailed a shift in the demographic of the party's voters. Halifax is home to many public servants in both the provincial and federal governments, being that it is both a provincial capital and a regional hub for federal services. There are several universities and

institutions of higher learning within Halifax, which have a strong research and development capacity; and, Halifax has a booming private sector in areas such as aerospace, oil and gas, retail, shipbuilding, and transportation. Many of the individuals who work in the Halifax region are younger, urban, progressive professionals, and it is to these people that the NSNDP turned for support from the 1980s onward. Indeed, the present electoral dynamic in the Halifax Regional Municipality[19] is not unlike those of other major urban centres across Canada, like Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, or Vancouver, in which inner city ridings typically elect left-leaning candidates from parties like the Liberals or New Democrats; where suburban areas are often hotly contested races featuring multiple parties and candidates; and, where exurban districts tilt heavily towards candidates with a conservative inclination. Whether or not NSNDP strategists were aware of Halifax's increasing sophistication as a result of its metropolitanization is beside the point; what matters is that the party was well positioned at a time and in a place it needed to be in order to take advantage of the growing number of voters who would be receptive to a left-wing alternative to the two traditional parties, a move that began the process of growing the NSNDP beyond a small, regionally-isolated caucus of two to four members.

In parliamentary systems with single-member plurality elections, leaders matter, and that point is also driven home in the data. As a party, the NSNDP has tended to flourish in areas from which it drew its leaders, and for most of the 20th century, that meant success in eastern Cape Breton. In an election year in which the Liberals were

19 In 1995, the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, and all towns and communities within Halifax County, with the exception of First Nations reserves, amalgamated to form a single-tier regional municipality.

electorally dominant, for instance, the regional strength of the CCF in 1945 allowed it to claim victory in two ridings, form the official opposition, and stop the LPNS from winning 100 percent of the seats. As long as the CCF and later the NSNDP remained the voice of Cape Breton coal miners and steel workers, it could be assured with some modest legislative representation; however, that also meant that party candidates elsewhere in Nova Scotia were virtually assured of defeat.

The election of Alexa McDonough to the party leadership in 1980 changed all that. She took the helm of the NSNDP at a time in which it had been embroiled in infighting among the Cape Breton and mainland wings of the party, specifically involving MLA Paul MacEwan, his labelling of mainland NDP members as "ayatollahs" and "Trotskyites," and his eventual expulsion from party ranks (Yaffe, 1980a; Yaffe, 1980b; Harris, 1981). She led the party into the 1981 general election, and although she had the distinctions of winning the NSNDP's first seat in mainland Nova Scotia and being the first female party leader in the province's history, the party was routed in its traditional Cape Breton heartland, as Figures 4.17 and 4.18 illustrate, and the McDonough-led party would never win a seat there. Conversely, with McDonough at the helm, the NSNDP would go on to overperform in Halifax County, beating the party's provincial popular vote by about 10 percent in each general election with her as leader. Moreover, the party would add a second Halifax-area seat in 1984 and, in a 1991 by-election, future party leader Robert Chisholm—who was NSNDP leader during its 1998 breakthrough—would be elected to replace the former PCNS premier John Buchanan in the riding of Halifax Atlantic. Following the 1998 election, the New Democrats came to dominate vote-rich

Halifax, taking a plurality of both votes and seats in the region for 15 years until the first NSNDP government was defeated in 2013. Even at present, with the party still recovering from its defeat six years ago and mired in third place, it still draws the bulk of its support, and all but one of its seats[20], from Halifax County.

While it was said upon her resignation as party leader that her "attempt to realign Nova Scotia politics was not overwhelmingly successful" (Sheppard, 1994), in hindsight, McDonough's tenure as party leader clearly set the stage for the party's breakthrough just a few years later, during both the federal election of 1997—in which the McDonough-led federal NDP won six of 11 seats in Nova Scotia—and the provincial election of 1998, when her successor, Robert Chisholm, led the party to a 19-seat tie with the governing Liberals. One of McDonough's signature issues, that of patronage, an issue she fought passionately against in a province that had grown accustomed to changing significant parts of the public service alongside changes of government, had come to a head in the 1990s and created an opening for the party to campaign on its track record on the issue (see also MacLeod, 2006; Aucoin and Goodyear-Grant, 2002; Pond, 2008; Spafford, 1981; Henderson, 2008). Furthermore, the NSNDP was fortunate to be in a position where it was neither of the two traditional parties. As Pinard (1975) theorized, the electorate in a two-party system, having recently defeated one of the traditional parties and having quickly soured on the other, instead turned to the third party as the only reasonable alternative. While McDonough may not have seen the realignment of the

20 In the 2017 general election, the NSNDP won two seats outside of the Halifax area. The party lost one of those two MLAs when Lenore Zann, who represented the Truro area, announced in June 2019 that she was seeking a federal Liberal nomination for the 2019 federal election (see Prentiss, 2019). That same month, the NSNDP lost a by-election in Sackville to the PCNS candidate, Steve Craig, in a seat it had held for 34 consecutive years (Laroche, 2019).

provincial political landscape during her time as NSNDP leader, she certainly positioned the party to take advantage of the situation that confronted it in the mid- to late-1990s, opening up Nova Scotia's party system into a more competitive one and positioning the NSNDP as a governing alternative to the two old-line parties.

McDonough was held in high regard by the provincial electorate, and while her personal popularity failed to translate into a larger number of seats, she cemented the party's image as a strong voice of government scrutiny (Sheppard, 1994; Laxer, 1995). Moreover, the party benefited from a couple of popular leaders who helped consolidate the party's support base in Halifax and increase its presence elsewhere in the province. Robert Chisholm, who succeeded McDonough in 1996, proved to be a genial and well-liked leader of the party (see DeMont, 1999), and he led the NSNDP to its two best results—in 1998 and 1999—in its history up to that point. Chisholm stepped down from the party leadership in 2000, shortly after the 1999 election during which the revelation of a past drunk driving conviction scuttled his chances at leading the NSNDP to its first victory. Still, under Chisholm's leadership, the NSNDP cemented its position of strength in the Halifax area and retained the position of official opposition. After Helen MacDonald's brief run as party leader from 2000 to 2001, Darrell Dexter—who was first elected as an MLA during the party's 1998 breakthrough—was chosen as party leader, and his down-to-earth demeanor endeared him to the province's electorate (see Kimber, 2009). Indeed, CRA polling data shows (see Figure 4.04) that Dexter was routinely one of the most popular political party leaders in the province during the years he helmed the NSNDP, a trend that doubtless helped the party as it sought to be elected to government.

Ultimately, in June 2009, Dexter led the party to power for the first and only time in its history.

To recap, in response to the central research question of how the NSNDP emerged as a viable governing alternative to the two traditional parties, one has to consider several factors which, taken together, linked up to form a pathway to power. First off, the party has maintained a consistent presence on the Nova Scotia political scene since the 1930s, first as the CCF and later as the NSNDP. Over that time, it was able to elect MLAs to the House of Assembly, beginning in the 1940s in the industrial towns of Cape Breton before the party's base of support shifted to the mainland, specifically the Halifax area, around the start of the 1980s. Having elected MLAs, even in a caucus of two to four members, brought to the party a measure of consistency, familiarity, and legitimacy that no other small party in Nova Scotia could claim. Moreover, with popular leaders—McDonough, Chisholm, and Dexter are among the most popular leaders of any party the province has seen over the last four decades—the party was able to capitalize by entrenching its support in its strongholds in the Halifax region and by reaching out to other parts of Nova Scotia where the party had always been an afterthought. Most importantly, however, the NSNDP benefitted from being in the right place at the right time. In the mid-1990s, after the electorate had soured on the traditional parties of government in relatively quick succession, the NSNDP—a known entity with a long history and presence at the provincial level, with a popular leader, and with a base of support in the province's most populated region—was in position to take in disillusioned voters who were searching for something different yet something new. By appealing to and engaging with voters in the

provincial capital, where a plurality of the electorate resides; by choosing leaders who proved popular with electors, in whom Nova Scotians could see a potential premier; and, by capitalizing on political events, in particular the misfortunes of the old-line parties, the NSNDP was able to evolve from a perennial also-ran and the historical third-party into an entity that could legitimately compete to take up the mantle of power.

A Comment on Duverger's Law

The theory underpinning Duverger's Law goes that plurality electoral systems lead to the development of two-party systems, as electors are wont to vote for victorious parties and candidates. It is important to note that Duverger, when he first published his theory in the early 1950s, was developing his theory based upon observations of elections primarily in the United Kingdom and the United States. In the United Kingdom during the post-war years, for instance, the Labour party had solidified its position as one of Britain's two parties, occupying the left wing of the political spectrum as the primary opponent to the Conservatives (see Quinn, 2012). Concurrently in the United States, Democratic and Republican candidates have faced virtually no challenge to their positions as the two dominant parties within the American party system, one which has endured since the 19th century (see Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Hirano and Snyder, Jr., 2007). It is not hard to see why Duverger came to see plurality elections as the catalyst for two-partism, as the dynamics he observed were as close to pure two-partism as one could get.

Times have changed, however, and so has partisan competition. In *Political Parties*, Duverger (1955) remarks that Canadian elections have experienced a modicum

of multipartism, with the CCF and Social Credit parties able to win seats while the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties win governments. He chalked the successes of those third parties up to regionalism, and he is not wrong in this respect: regional cleavages play a crucial role in explaining the dynamic of electoral competition in Nova Scotia, in particular how the wants and needs of voters in heavily populated Halifax, for example, contrast with the wants and needs of voters who live in the remainder of mainland Nova Scotia as well as on Cape Breton Island. Simply put, voters who live in different regions have different, sometimes competing interests, and this has a tendency to show up in election results. That said, geography only partially explains the dynamic. What if voters are simply willing to vote for whom they want, as opposed to whom they think has the best chance of winning? The data shown here, specifically the effective number of parties data (see Figures 4.06 through 4.11), points to an electorate that will vote for parties and candidates that they want, as both provincial and riding level ENP demonstrate similar trends by increasing towards three effective parties.

The tendency towards three parties is most surprising when it comes at the riding level, as in plurality elections there can be but a single victor yet the electorate seems quite comfortable dividing their votes among three parties, including two that will necessarily lose. It is hard to say exactly why voters choose to do this, but one may deduce that, in close contests where three parties have a viable shot at winning the seat, there is little incentive for an elector to vote strategically for another party when one's preferred option could possibly win. Looking at ENP at the riding level over the last 20 years, as Figures 4.10 and 4.11 illustrate, it is clear that electors are going with their first

preferences, whatever the consequences in their district, as the clear majority of cases, using the Laakso-Taagepera standard, exceed 2.5 effective parties, with a plurality occurring near or above three effective parties in the constituencies. Contrast this with the previous six decades of riding-level electoral contests in Nova Scotia, as shown in Figures 4.12 and 4.13, where the dominant tendency was two-partism, as Duverger would have expected. Moreover, the last two decades of provincial elections have produced outcomes where the first-place party receives less than two votes for every vote received by the third party (see Figure 4.16) whereas, in past elections, the first-place party would have received several times as many votes as the party finishing third. All this indicates that the three main parties are, at the provincial level, finishing much more closely together at the end of election campaigns that they had been historically; and, at the riding level, the three parties are able to pull their vote and be competitive in a growing number of three-way races.

What's Next for Nova Scotia

As I do not possess a crystal ball, nor am I endowed with the ability to see into the future, I will not endeavor to predict the outcomes of future Nova Scotia general elections. There are some interesting trends in opinion polling that could reveal clues as to how future electoral contests will unfold. First, a question: will Nova Scotia's three-party system endure? It stands to reason that it should as none of the major parties seems at risk of extinction. Recent CRA polling shows that the three parties are clustered within 10 to 15 points of one another (see Figure 4.03), with the PCs showing some slight momentum in the last several months as newly minted leader Tim Houston hits his stride.

The Liberals, led by premier Stephen McNeil, have faced turbulence of late as his government confronts persistent problems in health care delivery, particularly as it pertains to recruitment of doctors and delivery of services in areas beyond Halifax. The NSNDP, meanwhile, are still rebuilding in the aftermath of the party's defeat in 2013, with Gary Burrill's steady yet stagnant leadership having brought little momentum to a party that once seemed to have it in spades. Additionally, the Green party has hit a historically high level in opinion polling in Nova Scotia just as their counterparts in neighbouring New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island experience some considerable electoral success. Still, this thesis has taken the long view on the dynamics of electoral competition and the tendencies of the provincial electorate in Nova Scotia, which leads one to reasonably presume that any changes to the same are likely to be incremental, and that the popularity of minor parties is likely to be anemic and ephemeral.

It is important, though, not to put too much stock in opinion polling as a means of predicting future election outcomes. There have been a number of recent election outcomes—the 2011 Orange Wave that swept across Quebec; Christy Clark's surprise 2013 re-election in British Columbia; Rachel Notley's stunning 2015 victory in Alberta; Donald Trump's election to the American presidency in 2016; the surge in Labour support during the 2017 United Kingdom general election—that would have seemed highly unlikely or virtually impossible had the tendencies in pre-election polling held throughout the campaign period. Electoral politics is highly dependent upon events that ultimately shape the decisions of the electorate, and events during the campaign period—when voters, especially those who do not follow politics regularly, tune into politics more

closely—are critical for establishing those opinions. A poor (or positive) debate performance, for instance, or the revelation of some sordid secret can derail the most well-laid of campaign plans, as can the emergence of an event that emphasizes the poignancy of a public policy issue, or any number of other occurrences that arise during the election period. So, what will be the outcome of the 2021 election in Nova Scotia? Nobody knows the answer to that question with any degree of certainty. Public opinion polling can give us an idea of how the parties are faring in the eyes of the electorate, but there is a reason why pollsters ask respondents for their political preference 'if an election were held today.' People change their minds, and events happen all the time that change the trajectory of politics. We will just have to wait and see what happens next.

Other Cases of Interest

While Nova Scotia is an interesting case study in the development of multiparty competition within the confines of a plurality electoral system, there are others that merit closer analysis and study. As previously mentioned, the neighbouring Maritime provinces are experiencing the emergence of new parties in the form of the People's Alliance in New Brunswick, and the Greens in both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The outcome of the 2019 election on the Island, for example, bears some striking resemblance to the outcome of Nova Scotia's election in 1998, from three parties finishing within six percentage points of one another in the popular vote; to the breakthrough of a third party and its attainment of official opposition status; to calls for cooperation and setting aside partisan squabbles to make minority government work and to avoid a snap election (see Madill, 1998; Campbell, 2019a; Campbell, 2019b).

However, unlike in Nova Scotia where the NSNDP had maintained a persistent presence for decades, the PEI Greens contested their first general election in 2007, a mere twelve years ago. New Brunswick's Greens are even more 'green', having only contested their first general election in 2010. With some convincing parallels and some important differences among them, the recent dynamics of electoral competition in the Maritime provinces present some case studies that are worth a closer look, especially if one were to use the analytical tools employed in this thesis.

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Appendix

TABLE 4.1

NOVA SCOTIA PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

Year	LPNS			NSNDP			PCNS			Other			Independent			Valid Votes
	S	V	%	S	V	%	S	V	%	S	V	%	S	V	%	
1933	22	166,170	52.6		2,336	0.7	8	145,107	45.9		2,469	0.8		–		316,082
1937	25	165,397	52.9		–		5	143,670	46		3,396	1.1		–		312,463
1941	23	138,915	52.7	3	18,583	7.1	4	106,133	40.3		–			–		263,631
1945	28	153,503	52.7	2	39,637	13.6		97,744	33.5		–			530	0.2	291,414
1949	27	174,966	51.1	2	35,449	10.3	8	132,325	38.6		–			–		342,740
1953	23	169,927	49.1	2	23,830	6.9	12	149,979	43.4		–			2,065	0.6	345,801
1956	18	159,656	48.2	1	9,932	3	24	161,016	48.6		–			812	0.3	331,416
1960	15	147,951	42.6	1	31,036	8.9	27	168,023	48.3		–			650	0.2	347,660
1963	4	134,923	39.7		14,076	4.1	39	191,128	56.2		–			–		340,127
1967	6	142,945	41.8		17,873	5.2	40	180,498	52.8		–			498	0.2	341,814
1970	23	174,943	46.1	2	25,259	6.7	21	177,987	46.9		–			1,464	0.4	379,653
1974	31	206,648	47.9	3	55,902	13	12	166,388	38.6		–			2,220	0.5	431,158
1978	17	175,218	39.4	4	63,979	14.4	31	203,500	45.8		–			2,008	0.5	444,705
1981	13	139,604	33.2	1	76,289	18.1	37	200,228	47.6		–		1	5,002	1.2	421,123
1984	6	129,310	31.3	3	65,876	15.9	42	209,298	50.6	1	8,322	2.0		630	0.2	413,436
1988	21	186,007	39.6	2	74,038	15.8	28	204,150	43.5		–		1	5,638	1.2	469,833
1993	40	243,298	49.7	3	86,743	17.7	9	152,383	31.1		1,647	0.3		5,758	1.2	489,829
1998	19	158,380	35.3	19	155,361	34.6	14	133,540	29.8		–			1,325	0.3	448,606
1999	11	129,108	29.9	11	129,384	29.9	30	169,984	39.3		3,039	0.7		605	0.1	432,120
2003	12	128,417	31.5	15	126,479	31	25	148,182	36.3		3,245	0.8		1,694	0.4	408,017
2006	9	94,872	23.4	20	140,128	34.6	23	160,119	39.6		9,411	2.3		153	0.0	404,683
2009	11	112,160	27.2	31	186,556	45.2	10	101,203	24.5		9,636	2.3		2,796	0.7	412,351
2013	33	190,112	45.7	7	111,622	26.8	11	109,452	26.3		3,528	0.9		1,238	0.3	415,952
2017	27	158,383	39.5	7	86,299	21.5	17	143,354	35.7		12,759	3.2		447	0.1	401,242

Headings: S – Seats won; V – Votes received; % – Share of the popular vote

Source: Nova Scotia. Elections Nova Scotia. 2018. *Summary of Results, 1867 – 2017*. Halifax, NS: Elections Nova Scotia. https://www.electionsnovascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Elections1867to2017.pdf (accessed July 30, 2019).

TABLE 4.2

EFFECTIVE NUMBER OF PARTIES IN NOVA SCOTIA

ELECTION DATE	ENEP		ENPP	
	Golosov	Laakso-Taagepera	Golosov	Laakso-Taagepera
22 August 1933	1.93	2.05	1.36	1.64
29 June 1937	1.91	2.03	1.2	1.38
28 October 1941	1.98	2.25	1.34	1.62
23 October 1945	2.02	2.45	1.07	1.14
9 June 1949	2.07	2.38	1.4	1.72
26 May 1953	2.14	2.3	1.66	2.02
30 October 1956	2.12	2.13	1.82	2.05
7 June 1960	2.18	2.37	1.62	1.94
8 October 1963	1.83	2.11	1.1	1.2
30 May 1967	1.97	2.19	1.15	1.29
13 October 1970	2.28	2.29	2.07	2.17
2 April 1974	2.23	2.53	1.53	1.9
19 September 1978	2.33	2.59	1.75	2.14
6 October 1981	2.27	2.71	1.43	1.76
6 November 1984	2.15	2.63	1.26	1.49
6 September 1988	2.47	2.7	1.94	2.2
25 May 1993	2.18	2.67	1.32	1.6
24 March 1998	2.9	3	2.82	2.95
27 July 1999	2.69	3	1.85	2.37
5 August 2003	2.89	3.03	2.23	2.72
13 June 2006	2.73	3.01	2.4	2.68
9 June 2009	2.44	2.95	1.78	2.29
8 October 2013	2.37	2.86	1.62	2.07
30 May 2017	2.77	3.03	2.01	2.44

TABLE 4.3

EFFECTIVE NUMBER OF ELECTORAL PARTIES IN PROVINCIAL RIDINGS

ELECTION YEAR	GOLOSOV INDEX			LAAKSO-TAAGEPERA INDEX		
	Average	Median	Deviation	Average	Median	Deviation
1933	1.92	1.87	0.24	2.06	1.99	0.23
1937	1.83	1.81	0.18	2.01	1.98	0.19
1941	1.85	1.71	0.34	2.07	1.94	0.34
1945	1.9	1.84	0.32	2.22	2.22	0.34
1949	2	1.98	0.28	2.24	2.18	0.33
1953	1.97	1.95	0.2	2.17	2.01	0.27
1956	1.96	1.93	0.23	2.09	2	0.3
1960	2.07	2.05	0.22	2.25	2.14	0.26
1963	1.81	1.83	0.15	2.04	1.99	0.17
1967	1.92	1.92	0.19	2.13	2.04	0.21
1970	1.99	1.95	0.18	2.18	2.13	0.22
1974	2.07	2.08	0.25	2.37	2.39	0.23
1978	2.07	2.02	0.26	2.4	2.33	0.24
1981	2.15	2.13	0.3	2.52	2.51	0.26
1984	2.03	2.05	0.29	2.39	2.36	0.27
1988	2.19	2.14	0.34	2.5	2.45	0.29
1993	2.16	2.23	0.5	2.49	2.5	0.47
1998	2.31	2.34	0.36	2.67	2.78	0.3
1999	2.27	2.35	0.41	2.64	2.73	0.37
2003	2.32	2.36	0.4	2.69	2.74	0.33
2006	2.2	2.21	0.39	2.59	2.69	0.35
2009	2.05	2	0.43	2.47	2.5	0.42
2013	2.26	2.33	0.45	2.58	2.65	0.42
2017	2.31	2.38	0.43	2.69	2.81	0.4

TABLE 4.4

EFFECTIVE NUMBER OF ELECTORAL PARTIES IN PROVINCIAL RIDINGS (3 ERAS)

ELECTION YEARS	GOLOSOV INDEX			LAAKSO-TAAGEPERA INDEX		
	Average	Median	Deviation	Average	Median	Deviation
1933-1970	1.94	1.92	0.24	2.13	2	0.27
1974-1993	2.11	2.08	0.34	2.45	2.4	0.31
1998-2017	2.24	2.3	0.42	2.62	2.69	0.37

TABLE 4.5

RAE'S FRACTIONALIZATION INDEX FOR NOVA SCOTIA

ELECTION YEAR	VOTES (F_e)	SEATS (F_p)
1933	0.513	0.391
1937	0.508	0.278
1941	0.555	0.384
1945	0.592	0.124
1949	0.580	0.418
1953	0.566	0.550
1956	0.531	0.513
1960	0.577	0.484
1963	0.525	0.169
1967	0.544	0.227
1970	0.563	0.540
1974	0.605	0.474
1978	0.615	0.532
1981	0.631	0.430
1984	0.620	0.331
1988	0.629	0.545
1993	0.625	0.375
1998	0.667	0.661
1999	0.666	0.578
2003	0.673	0.632
2006	0.668	0.626
2009	0.661	0.563
2013	0.650	0.516
2017	0.669	0.590

TABLE 4.6					
SARTORI COUNT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NOVA SCOTIA					
ELECTION	SEATS	CONFIDENCE	SUPERFLUOUS	RELEVANCE	TOTAL
1933	2				2
1937	2				2
1941	3			1	3
1945	2			1	3
1949	3			1	3
1953	3			-1	2
1956	3			-1	2
1960	3			-1	2
1963	2				2
1967	2				2
1970	3	1			3
1974	3			1	3
1978	3			1	3
1981	4		-1		3
1984	4		-1		3
1988	4		-1		3
1993	3			1	3
1998	3	2			3
1999	3			1	3
2003	3	2			3
2006	3	2			3
2009	3			1	3
2013	3			1	3
2017	3			1	3

TABLE 4.7	
COMBINED VOTE SHARE OF TWO LARGEST PARTIES	
ELECTION	COMBINED VOTE (%)
1933	98.48
1937	98.91
1941	92.95
1945	86.22
1949	89.66
1953	92.51
1956	96.76
1960	90.89
1963	95.86
1967	94.63
1970	92.96
1974	86.52
1978	85.16
1981	80.7
1984	81.9
1988	83.04
1993	80.78
1998	69.94
1999	69.28
2003	67.79
2006	74.19
2009	72.44
2013	72.54
2017	75.2

TABLE 4.8

VOTE SHARES AND PROPORTION OF VOTES RELATIVE TO THE THIRD PARTY

ELECTION YEAR	VOTE SHARE (%)			RELATIVE PROPORTION		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
1933	52.57	45.91	0.78	67.3	58.77	1
1937	52.93	45.98	1.09	48.7	42.31	1
1941	52.69	40.26	7.05	7.48	5.71	1
1945	52.68	33.54	13.6	3.87	2.47	1
1949	51.05	38.61	10.34	4.94	3.73	1
1953	49.14	43.37	6.89	7.13	6.29	1
1956	48.58	48.17	3	16.21	16.07	1
1960	48.33	42.56	8.93	5.41	4.77	1
1963	56.19	39.67	4.14	13.58	9.59	1
1967	52.81	41.82	5.23	10.1	8	1
1970	46.88	46.08	6.65	7.05	6.93	1
1974	47.93	38.59	12.97	3.7	2.98	1
1978	45.76	39.4	14.39	3.18	2.74	1
1981	47.55	33.15	18.12	2.62	1.83	1
1984	50.62	31.28	15.93	3.18	1.96	1
1988	43.45	39.59	15.76	2.76	2.51	1
1993	49.67	31.11	17.71	2.8	1.76	1
1998	35.3	34.63	29.77	1.19	1.16	1
1999	39.34	29.94	29.88	1.32	1	1
2003	36.32	31.47	31	1.17	1.02	1
2006	39.57	34.63	23.44	1.69	1.48	1
2009	45.24	27.2	24.54	1.84	1.11	1
2013	45.71	26.84	26.31	1.74	1.02	1
2017	39.47	35.73	21.51	1.84	1.66	1