

NONE OF THE ABOVE

THE UK HOUSE OF COMMONS VOTES ON REFORMING THE HOUSE OF
LORDS, FEBRUARY 2003*

Iain McLean[†] and Arthur Spirling[‡]
Nuffield College, Oxford

Abstract

In February 2003, members of the UK House of Commons voted on seven resolutions as to the future of the House of Lords. In quick succession, each possibility for reform was considered and then rejected at division. This paper examines plausible causes of this strange result. *Inter alia*, we reject notions of a voting cycle. We find that myopic and/or strategic voting by MPs *was* salient. We then explore the main voting groups and their party compositions.

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[†]Iain McLean is Professor of Politics, University of Oxford.

[‡]Arthur Spirling is a DPhil student attached to the Department of Politics and International Relations.

1 Introduction

The preamble to the UK's Parliament Act 1911 (1 & 2 Geo. 5 c.13) states that that Act is a temporary measure only:

Whereas it is intended to substitute for the House of Lords as it at present exists a Second Chamber constituted on a popular instead of hereditary basis, but substitution cannot be immediately brought into operation...

Attempts to bring the substitution into operation in 1949 and 1968 failed. The Labour Party's 1997 Manifesto states:

The House of Lords must be reformed. As an initial, self-contained reform, not dependent on further reform in the future, the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords will be ended by statute. This will be the first stage in a process of reform to make the House of Lords more democratic and representative (Labour Party, [13] pp. 32-3).

The first stage of reform was enacted in 1999, although 92 hereditary peers remained. The Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords [3] recommended that the second-stage house should have a small proportion of elected members - its preferred option was 87, elected from regional lists. The subsequent Government White Paper *The House of Lords - Completing the Reform* [4] recommended that 120 (20%) of the members of a future house be elected, but rejected the Royal Commission's proposal that all appointed members should be appointed by an independent Appointments Commission.

This White Paper had a poor reception. The Lord Chancellor's Department, which issued it, later analysed the responses to it. 82% of respondents discussed election; 89% of those 'called for a house that was 50% or more elected'. 17% of respondents discussed the future of the Church of England bishops; 85% of those opposed their continued presence in the House. 12% of respondents discussed the Law Lords; 72% of those thought they should leave the House (Lord Chancellor's Department [5]).

Its parliamentary reception was no better. A large number of MPs signed an Early Day Motion calling for an elected house. The Public Administration Select Committee issued a unanimous report, pointedly entitled *The Second Chamber: Continuing the Reform* [11], which called for a predominantly elected second chamber.

The Government withdrew its White Paper and turned the matter over to a Joint Committee of both houses, comprising twelve MPs and twelve peers. The Joint Committee issued its first report in December 2002, for debate in each House in January and votes in early February 2003. In the run-up to the debate, first the Lord Chancellor (Lord Irvine of Lairg) and then the Prime Minister let

it be known that they opposed a partly elected House of Lords on the grounds that it would be a hybrid of elected and appointed members. This was a new objection, which had not appeared in the Royal Commission Report, nor in either of the Government White Papers. The second of those White Papers, proposing a hybrid upper house (20% elected, the remainder appointed: [4]) had emanated from Lord Irvine's department.

On February 4, 2003, both houses of the UK Parliament voted on a set of seven resolutions put forward by a Joint Committee of Both Houses as to the future of the House of Lords. The seven resolutions all concerned the composition of a reformed upper house. In the order in which they were presented in the Commons, they proposed that the future upper house be:

- wholly appointed;
- wholly elected;
- 20% elected and 80% appointed;
- 40% elected and 60% appointed;
- 50% elected and 50% appointed;
- 80% elected and 20% appointed and
- 60% elected and 40% appointed.

To these seven propositions, the Commons added an eighth, to be determined before any of the seven and formally treated as an amendment to the first of the seven: that the House of Lords be abolished and that the Commons become a unicameral parliament.

After long debates in each house, the two houses voted. The wholly appointed Lords supported a wholly appointed house by a substantial margin, and defeated the six elected options, each by a substantial margin. The outcome in the Commons was less predictable. The amendment to abolish the upper house was defeated by 392 votes to 174. In succession, each of the seven composition resolutions was then also defeated. The proposals for 20%, 40%, 50% elected were defeated without divisions.

Table 1 summarises these results. As there were 595 MPs in the House who voted on at least one of the contested propositions, we determine the vote on the three propositions rejected without divisions as 595/0 against. Table 1 lists the propositions in order of the proportion to be elected, not in the sequential order of voting.

This was a surprising result. Robin Cook, Leader of the House, advised Members to 'go home and sleep on this interesting position' (Commons 04.02.03, col.

	Abolish	Zero Elected	20% Elected	40% Elected	50% Elected	60% Elected	80% Elected	All Elected
Aye	174	247	0	0	0	255	283	274
DNV	29	23	0	0	0	22	26	30
No	392	325	595	595	595	318	286	291

Table 1: **Commons Voting on Lords Reform Options.** *Key: DNV = “Did Not Vote”.* *Source: Division Lists in Hansard (Online Version) for 04.02.03.* *Base: all those who cast at least one vote. n = 595*

243[7]). In policy terms, it has induced coma. The Joint Committee has voted to dissolve itself after producing a formal further report in March 2003 (*The Times; Independent; Financial Times*, all 26.02.03). One consequence of this is that the outcome contradicts the wishes of the elected house. The Commons voted against a wholly appointed upper house by 325 to 247 (an absolute majority of those present). But the outcome is that a wholly appointed upper house continues, albeit with the leaven of 92 hereditary peers and a number of law lords and bishops. By defeating eight resolutions to amend the status quo, the Commons was left with the status quo - but the status quo corresponds to one of the eight defeated outcomes, and one of the more decisively defeated at that. This paper explores, in the light of social choice theory, how such a paradoxical outcome can have arisen. It is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces and tests five hypotheses which might account for the paradox. Section 3 identifies and analyses the properties of the main blocs of voting MPs. Section 4 concludes.

2 Five Hypotheses

The format of each composition motion was

That this House approves Option xx (x per cent. elected/100-x per cent. appointed) in the First Report from the Joint Committee on House of Lords Reform (HC 171).-[Mr. Robin Cook.]

MPs could vote for as many of the composition motions as they wished. This was a version of Approval Voting (Brams and Fishburn [2]). The Joint Committee proposed this procedure (p3 [12]) in the hope that each house would vote for at least one composition motion. Their intention was to avoid what actually happened, viz., a house quixotically voting against them all. They reasoned that each Member would see that it was illogical to vote against all proposed compositions, and that at least one must therefore win a majority in each house.

A number of things could have derailed this reasoning and at least one of them must have. We have thought of the following possibilities:

1. A majority-preferred composition of the upper house existed, but was never put to the vote.
2. Some of those who voted for abolition of the upper house then felt entitled, after the defeat of their favourite position, to vote against all the proffered options on composition.
3. No individual MP voted in a *prima facie* illogical way, but the aggregation of votes led to a collectively illogical result. A special case of possibility 3 is:
 - 3.1. There was a majority-rule cycle. If the pairwise preferences of MPs are tabulated, it could be that no option defeated all the others, but that there was a top cycle in which some option A defeated B by a majority, B defeated C by a (different) majority; and C defeated A by an (again different) majority.
4. Groups of MPs voted myopically.
5. Groups of MPs voted strategically.

We next test these hypotheses on the evidence of the debate and the division lists.

Hypothesis 1 *A majority-preferred composition of the upper house existed, but was never put to the vote.*

Some advisers to members of the Joint Committee had recommended the procedure that was used, but with one important modification: that members of each House were to vote on ranges, not on points. The resolutions would then have taken the form *That this House approves Option xx (between x and y per cent, both inclusive, elected) in the First Report from the Joint Committee on House of Lords Reform*. As well as the points 0% and 100%, the resolutions would have named a mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive set of ranges. The idea was that while the resolutions would be mutually exclusive (and jointly exhaustive), the votes would not be mutually exclusive. Members of each House would vote for as many of the options as they approved. If an option was in the intersection set, then it would have the majority approval of both houses.

The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-gley. The Joint Committee recommended point resolutions ('20 per cent'), not range resolutions ('between 20 and 40 per cent, both inclusive'). Its proposals were mutually exclusive but not jointly exhaustive. Thus it is logically possible that there existed a range of compositions that MPs approved of, but which was not put to the vote.

However, there is no evidence in the text of the debate or in any surrounding media coverage for this hypothesis. We have traced no statements, either in the debate or outside it, that some other composition option should have been proposed.¹ Several witnesses have told us that there was confusion as to what those who wished an indirectly elected but not a directly elected upper house should do. Such confusion is considered under Hypothesis 4 below. We reject Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 *Some of those who voted for abolition of the upper house then felt entitled, after the defeat of their favourite position, to vote against all the proffered options on composition.*

The Speaker allowed an amendment in the name of George Howarth (Lab.). This called for a unicameral parliament, and took the form of an amendment to the Joint Committee's Option 1 (all appointed). Some might regard the Speaker's decision as strange, as there is a convention that an amendment that fundamentally alters the meaning of a resolution should not be accepted (Erskine-May[8])². The episode shows that the Speaker may be an important agenda setter.

We entered all the roll-calls on to a spreadsheet (created first in Excel, then transferred to SPSS). The main advantage of this procedure is that it gives access to individual patterns of voting, not merely to the aggregate vote totals. It is essential for the following analysis. Later in this paper we analyse patterns of voting. In this section we present the first analysis of subgroups.

Ten Members displayed the vote pattern consistent with Hypothesis 2. They are:

Davies, rh Denzil	(Llanelli)
Ennis, Jeff	(Barnsley E)
Hinchliffe, David	
Hood, Jimmy	(Clydesdale)
Jones, Helen	(Warrington N)
Kidney, David	
Marshall, David	(Glasgow Shettleston)
Skinner, Dennis	
Smith, Llew	(Blaenau Gwent)
Watts, David	

Nine of these ten are Labour members; one (David Watts) is a Liberal Democrat. This group may be labelled the *Principled Abolitionists*: principled in the

¹Gerald Kaufman MP (Lab.) complained about the absence of the 25% and 75% points, but this was in the context of a broad-brushed attack on the Joint Committee rather than a claim that he would have voted for one of these points (*Hansard*, Commons, 04.02.03, col. 177). No other Commons speaker took up the point.

²"where it is sought to supercede a question... the proposed amendment should not be confined to a mere negation of the terms of the motion, as the proper method of expressing a contrary opinion is by voting against a motion without seeking to amend it" (1997: 343)

sense that their vote against all the composition options can be rationalised in a way which is harder for the group who voted against all the composition options but did not vote for abolition. The latter group is also ten strong, five Conservative and five Labour:

Atkinson, David (Bour'mth E)	Cons
Goodman, Paul	Cons
Hammond, Philip	Cons
Loughton, Tim	Cons
McIntosh, Miss Anne	Cons
Merron, Gillian	Lab
O'Hara, Edward	Lab
Tipping, Paddy	Lab
Wills, Michael	Lab
Winnick, David	Lab

We have not traced any statement from any of these ten to the effect that he or she preferred a composition option that was not put to the House. They must therefore have been myopic (Hypothesis 4) or strategic (Hypothesis 5) or both.

The Principled Abolitionists may have been myopic and/or strategic, but we have no evidence for either proposition. The most popular composition option (80% elected) was defeated by only three votes. If the Principled Abolitionists had abstained or voted for it, it would have been carried. If they had voted for the 100% elected option it, too, would have been carried.

Hypothesis 2 is therefore partly supported.

Hypothesis 3 *No individual MP voted in a prima facie illogical way, but the aggregation of votes led to a collectively illogical result.*

Figure 1 introduces the discussion of this hypothesis.

Figure 1 simply shows the net support for each proposition (votes in favour minus votes against). As all eight options were defeated, Fig. 1 therefore lies throughout below zero. An important stability condition is known as single-peakedness (Black [1]). If opinion is single peaked - that is, if a graph such as Fig. 1, when repeated for each and every voter individually contains no troughs - then paradoxes of voting (cycles) cannot occur.

The x-axis of Figure 1 is arranged along what might seem a natural ordering, in which abolition of the upper house is the most 'extreme' option in one direction and a fully elected upper house is the most 'extreme' in the other. Arranged like that, it is obviously not single-peaked. The 'intermediate' options of 20%, 40%, and 50% elected are the least popular. If opinion is non-single-peaked in aggregate, then it must contain individuals whose opinions cannot be

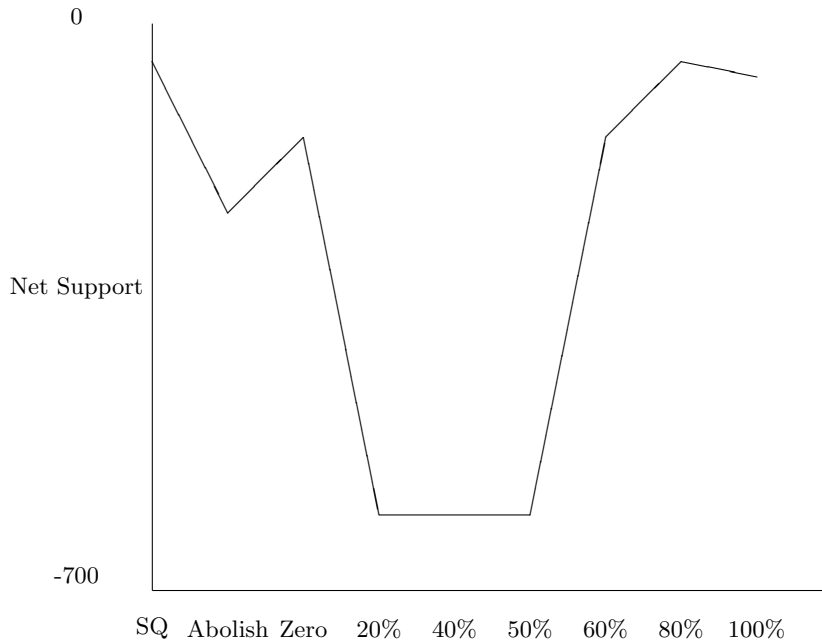


Figure 1: **House of Commons Utility Profile for Lords Reform Options**

represented on a single-peaked graph.

However, ‘extreme’ and ‘intermediate’ in the previous paragraph are imposed conceptions. It is possible that MPs themselves voted according to an ideology, or collection of ideologies, which did not regard an upper house with a relatively small elected component as an intermediate option, but rather as an extreme one. A collective ranking can always be made single-peaked by changing the orderings on the x-axis, as in Fig. 2.

To determine whether individual voting patterns are single-peaked when the options are arranged as in Fig. 2 or in any other permutation requires complex data analysis, to which we return [when?]. A first test, however, is to look directly for cycles. If there is a voting cycle, there cannot be single-peakedness. (The converse is not true: i.e., single-peakedness may fail without there being a voting cycle).

Hypothesis 3.1 *There was a majority-rule cycle.*

If the pairwise preferences of MPs are tabulated, it could be that no option defeated all the others, but that there was a top cycle in which some option A

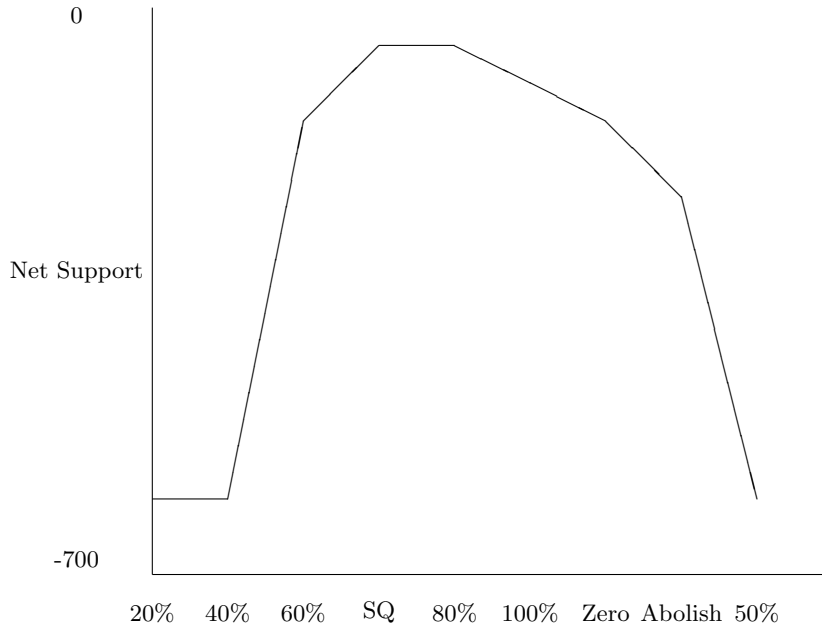


Figure 2: **Achieving Single Peakedness by Altering Reform Option Order**

defeated B by a majority, B defeated C by a (different) majority; and C defeated A by an (again different) majority. Such a possibility could lurk behind the aggregate totals presented in Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2. Only analysis of the individual voting patterns can confirm or exclude it.

The way to test for cycles is by exhaustive pairwise comparison. MPs' revealed preferences on each of the eight options are compared to see whether a cycle exists anywhere in the profile. How this is to be done is obvious where voters are asked to rank eight options. It is more complex in the present case, where they were offered 'binary' choices - Aye or No - on each of eight options.

The choices were really ternary, not binary. An MP could abstain, and some did. There are 659 MPs in total. Of these, 64 took no part at all in the series of votes. These 64 include the Speaker and three deputies, who never vote, and all the Northern Irish nationalist members. Of the remainder, some 64 percent are Labour MPs (with twenty percent Conservatives and three percent Liberal Democrats). Excluding the officers of the House and the NI nationalists, party label has no effect on the decision to abstain from all votes.³

³We also checked whether any control variables were significant for predicting that a Member would abstain from all votes. None of the following proved significant: gender; status (i.e.,

	Abol.	Zero	20%	40%	50%	60%	80%	All	Borda Score	Copeland Score
Abolition		258	399	399	399	257.5	243.5	243.5	2199.5	3
Zero elected	337		432.5	432.5	432.5	295.5	280.5	280	2490.5	4
20% elected	196	162.5		297.5	297.5	159	143	145.5	1401	1
40% elected	196	162.5	297.5		297.5	159	143	145.5	1401	1
50% elected	196	162.5	297.5	297.5		159	143	145.5	1401	1
60% elected	337.5	299.5	436	436	436		281.5	286	2512.5	5
80% elected	351.5	314.5	452	452	452	313.5		305	2640.5	7
All Elected	351.5	315	449.5	449.5	449.5	309	290		2614	6

Table 2: **Dodgson Matrix for House of Lords Reform Options**

After checking for other patterns, with negative results, we deleted the 64 abstainers from our dataset. The remaining 595 comprise all those who cast at least one vote. The votes took place in rapid succession, beginning at 5.00 pm and finishing at 6.03 pm on February 4, 2003. No MP died during the course of the voting, nor have we heard that any was suddenly taken ill. So we infer that all abstentions within our remaining set of 595 Members were deliberate, and we have coded them as intermediate between an Aye and a No vote. As stated above, we have coded the three propositions rejected without divisions as if there was a unanimous vote against each of them.

From the division lists the revealed preferences of each MP over each pair of options can then be calculated. If s/he ranked one above the other in any of the three possible ways (Aye/No; Aye/abstain; abstain/No), s/he is coded as preferring the first to the second. If s/he ranked the two at the same level of preference in any of the three possible ways (Aye/Aye; abstain/abstain; No/No), s/he is coded as indifferent between them. There are eight options, and hence $n(n - 1)/2 = 28$ pairs to consider.

The simplest way to set out these pairwise preferences is in a *Dodgson matrix* (Table 2). The first to propose such a matrix representation was C.L. Dodgson [6], better known as Lewis Carroll, although we have adapted and expanded his notation.

Each of the eight rows, and the first eight columns, of Table 2 represents one minister, frontbencher, Privy Councillor, or none of those); age; seniority; region within GB.

of the options. Each cell in that area therefore gives the number of MPs who preferred the option in its row to the option in its column. Some cells contain fractional numbers because the number of MPs taking part was odd and indifference is coded as 0.5 for each of the options. The cells which compare an option with itself, down the principal diagonal, are blank.

Therefore, the 56 (28 x 2) non-empty cells may be read as follows, starting with the first row. A total of 258 MPs ranked abolition of the Lords above a continuing Lords with zero elected members. The diagonally opposite cell across the principal diagonal shows that 337 MPs preferred a continuing Lords with zero elected members to abolition of the Lords. Recall that these totals include MPs who ranked the two options at the same level, coded as 0.5 for each. Therefore each pair of diagonally opposite cells adds up to 595.

What about the three options that were rejected without a vote? By construction, all MPs were indifferent among the three, and therefore each cell comparing one with another scores $(595/2) = 297.5$. Their remaining row entries are not zero because in each of those cells, MPs who voted against the option in the column in question are scored as indifferent between that option and each of the three unanimously rejected options. The unanimously rejected options therefore score 0.5 for each MP who voted against one of the other five.

There are two ways of summarizing the information in these 56 cells, and the two rightmost columns of Table 2 represent them. The column headed ‘Borda score’ gives the Borda count of each option. The Borda count measures the average standing of each option. It is the voting system used in the Eurovision Song Contest and in baseball halls of fame. Each voter gives $n - 1$ (here 7) points to his or her favourite option, $n - 2$ to the next-most liked, and so on down to zero for the least liked. Voters indifferent between two or more options give them each the average of the point scores in their range. As Jean-Charles de Borda noticed in his original paper of 1781 (translated in McLean and Urken, pp. 83-9 [10]), the Borda score for each candidate computed in this way is identical to the number of other candidates whom that candidate beats. This identity is extremely important. It means that the Borda count for each option is simply the horizontal sum of the votes for it against each other option.

The column headed ‘Copeland score’ records the number of contests that each option wins, with ties counted at $\frac{1}{2}$. The Copeland score is calculated from the square matrix to its left by comparing each cell entry with its diagonal opposite. If a cell is greater than its diagonal opposite, it scores 1; if smaller, it scores 0; if identical, it scores $\frac{1}{2}$. Again, the scores are summed horizontally to yield a Copeland score for each option.

These two columns show that there are no cycles in the data, except a cycle of indifference among the three unanimously rejected options. An option with a Copeland score of $n - 1$ is the unique Condorcet winner. A Condorcet

winner is an option which beats each of the others in exhaustive pairwise comparison. Therefore the option of an 80% elected House of Lords, with its Copeland score of 7, is the Condorcet winner out of the eight propositions voted on. The Condorcet ranking and the Borda ranking do not always coincide, but in this case they do. Unambiguously therefore, the ranking revealed by the individual preferences is the same as that shown in the aggregate votes. In descending order, that is:

[Status quo]
Elect 80%
Elect all
Elect 60%
Elect zero
Abolition
(Elect 20%, elect 40% and elect 50% - tie for last place)

We can reject Hypothesis 3.1. The illogical outcome is not the product of a voting cycle. But we are not out of the woods of paradox. Each of the eight reform options was rejected in a contest against the status quo. Hence, if the set of options is expanded to include the status quo, it sits on top of all eight other options as the unique Condorcet winner. But the status quo is conceptually indistinguishable from the fourth most popular option (elect zero), which lost to each of three other options in pairwise comparisons.

Hypothesis 4 *Groups of MPs voted myopically*

Hypothesis 5 *Groups of MPs voted strategically*

We discuss these together because they may be ‘observationally equivalent’. That is, Members may have voted in unexpected ways either because they could not say which of two options they preferred, or because they were voting to defeat an earlier option in order to improve the chances of a later one. From the division lists, we cannot tell which might be true.

Myopia is not a term of abuse. MPs voted under conditions of imperfect information, as raised at the start of the debate by the veteran Conservative Sir Patrick Cormack:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As one who is very glad that you have selected that amendment [viz. abolition], I wonder whether you could possibly help those of us who are in a slightly difficult position. If the motion that I favour is not approved, I would rather vote for a unicameral House. Having talked to hon. Members in all parts of the House, I believe that a number of them share the view that, if their own particular preference is not selected, they would rather go unicameral. Would it be possible, therefore, to have that vote at the end of the proceedings, rather than the beginning?

Mr. Speaker: That option is at the beginning, not the end. (*Hansard*, Commons, 04.02.03, col. 152[7])

Given the probable multidimensionality of opinion, the problem was a serious one, and the Speaker would have been wiser to take the abolition resolution at the end of proceedings than at the beginning.

Both the analysis so far and the speeches of many MPs in the debate confirm that opinion was multidimensional, or at least that it did not lie along the obvious quantitative dimension. To understand both myopia and strategic voting, we set out very briefly some of the properties of multidimensionality. (Full discussions are available in Black [1]; Riker [14]; McLean [9]). As stated above, single-peakedness in a single issue dimension guarantees stability. The option most liked by the median voter is the stable majority winner, which any well-behaved choice procedure will choose. Once chosen, it is immune to majority challenge.

This result spectacularly fails to hold good if there is more than one issue dimension. Sir Patrick's dilemma is inevitable in any series of binary or ternary votes in multidimensional issue space. Whatever motion is taken first, some Members' preferences will inevitably depend on the outcome of votes not yet taken. Introducing the abolitionist amendment, George Howarth (Lab.) denied that it was a 'cynical spoiling tactic' and highlighted the multidimensionality of the issue:

I can, however, give some information about my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Kilfoyle) and me. His first preference is for abolition, but failing that, he favours a wholly elected second Chamber. Similarly, I favour abolition, but because of the problems posed by a rival Chamber, which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister referred to last week, and because of the inevitable inconsistencies of a hybrid Chamber, my second preference is for an appointed Chamber or for the interesting and novel suggestion of an indirectly elected second Chamber. I suspect that each of my hon. Friends who supports abolition has individual reasons for doing so and for adhering to whatever second preferences they may have. (*Hansard*, Commons, 04.02.03, col. 167).

Another group uncertain how to vote were those MPs who professed to prefer an indirectly elected upper house to either one that was directly elected or one that was appointed. Robin Cook, Leader of the House, attempted to give a clear steer for those Members:

If colleagues wish to have an indirectly elected Chamber or a partly indirectly elected Chamber, they are opting for an elected Chamber

and should vote tonight for one of the elected options. If they vote for an appointed Chamber, they will be ruling out elections, whether direct or indirect (*Hansard*, Commons, 04.02.03, col. 153 [7]).

The Minister closing the debate, Ben Bradshaw, repeated this advice (*Hansard* [7], Commons, Col. 220). However, an MP has claimed that “it was put about on the day that those wanting indirect election should vote for an ALL APPOINTED Lords” (interview, MP (Lab.)). The signs are that Labour Whips were briefing Labour MPs in a way that contradicted the Leader of the house’s recommendation. Thirteen out of the 15 Government Whips voted in a bloc in favour of a zero-elected house and against all three elected proportion.

The Labour Members who stated, either in public or in private, that they wanted an indirectly elected Lords and were stymied because it was not on the agenda may have been simply seeking a fig-leaf to cover their abandoning of their party’s manifesto commitment to a more representative and democratic upper house. Alternatively, they may have faced a genuine dilemma. The dilemma was the same as Sir Patrick Cormack’s, although their preferences were different.

Another group facing a severe dilemma were MPs who favoured one of the elected options but not all three equally. A majority of those who voted favoured at least one of the three elected options. If they could have co-ordinated their preferences on any one of them, it would have been carried. But as the votes were taken in sequence, it was not known until near the end that ‘80% elected’ had been defeated. By then it may have been too late for those MPs - scattered across parties as they were - to coordinate their votes on ‘60% elected’, the only elected option remaining.

The difference between myopic voting and strategic voting is as follows. With myopic voting, an MP wishes to vote for the more preferred option in each binary vote; but, because the outcome of later votes is unknown, s/he cannot say for sure which option s/he truly prefers in an earlier vote. With strategic voting, an MP does not vote for the more preferred option in some binary vote, in order to protect a yet more favoured option. Consider a Conservative Member whose favourite option was ‘80% elected’, the position of the party front bench, and who preferred an all-elected to an all-appointed house. The vote on ‘all elected’ came before the vote on ‘80% elected’. Although such a Member preferred ‘all elected’ to the status quo, s/he might nevertheless rationally vote against ‘all elected’ in the hope of concentrating the ‘democratic’ vote on the 80% elected option. If so, it was a strategic move that failed.

A looser, but also important, sense in which there may have been strategic voting is the following. Labour MPs faced a conflict of loyalty between their manifesto and their leader. One possible way to resolve the conflict would be to vote for 60% and/or for 100% elected - in loyalty to the manifesto - but not for 80% elected, which had the announced support of the Conservative leadership.

If, as in fact happened, the other two elected options were defeated, such a Member would have voted consistently with the Labour manifesto but without obstructing the Prime Minister’s preferences.

Therefore Hypotheses 4 and 5 are supported. Coordination difficulties and inherent problems of multidimensionality made it very difficult for several groups of Members to decide how to vote in the sequence of votes. We cannot distinguish between the two hypotheses without exhaustively interviewing Members, and even then we would not be certain to get the required information.

3 An Analysis of the Main Voting Blocks

This section analyses the main blocs of MPs who voted by their party composition and status in the House. As there were five divisions, and three positions are possible on any division, there are $3^5 = 243$ possible groups. With a total of 659 MPs, of whom 595 cast at least one vote, we must expect many of the possible combinations to comprise small numbers of MPs. If all combinations were equally probable, each voting combination would on average attract 2.46 MPs. Luckily, most (though not all) MPs who voted can be classed into quite a small number of the 242 possible voting groups and clusters of groups⁴. We first label the main groups, whose relationship is summarized in the Venn diagram (Figure 3). A summary description of the groups is in Table 3.

The DNV (Did not Vote) group comprises 64 MPs. As already noted, they include all the officers of the House and all the Northern Ireland nationalist Members. After excluding those groups, the remainder are not significantly different from the House as a whole by gender, party, age, time in the House, or frontbench status.

Abolitionists are the 174 Members who voted in favour of abolishing the Lords. Just over ninety percent of them were from the Labour party: thus being Labour is a highly significant predictor for this group. On later votes, these government MPs split almost evenly on an all appointed house (majority in favour), but majority rejected the 60 percent, 80 percent and all elected options.

Democrats are a large group that includes all those MPs who (1) did *not* vote in favour of an all appointed Lords and (2) *did* vote in favour of at least one option that would include an elected portion of the upper house. They number 319, i.e., an absolute majority of those present and voting. If all Democrats had supported any one of the three elected options, it would have been carried.

A subset of Democrats comprises those whose voting pattern was identical to that of the Liberal Democrat leader, Charles Kennedy. This pattern was ‘no’

⁴The 243rd group is the group who cast no votes, i.e., those defined as DNV.

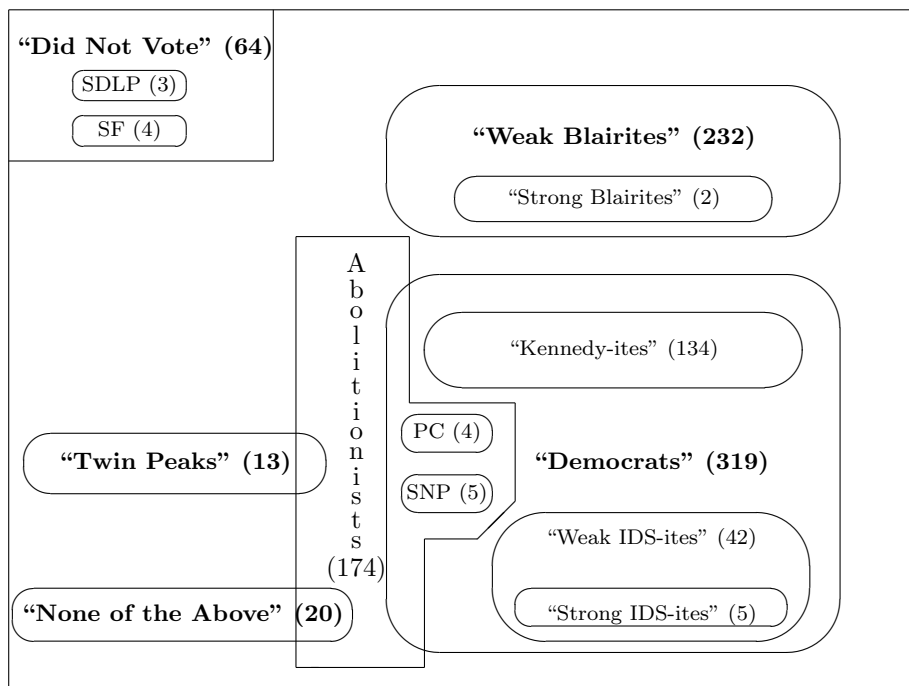


Figure 3: Venn Diagram Showing Voting Groups

Group	Number	Comments
Democrats	319	Anti-appointment, pro-elected elements
Weak Blairites	232	Did not contradict Prime Minister
Abolitionists	174	Ninety percent of group were Labour MPs
Strong Kennedy-ites	134	Favoured Lords with elected element
DNVs	64	MPs who [D]id [N]ot [V]ote in any of the divisions
Weak IDS-ites	42	Opposed abolition, opposed large scale appointment
Twinpeaks	13	Wanted <i>all</i> -appointed or <i>all</i> -elected Lords
Strong IDS-ites	5	All five in shadow cabinet
Strong Blairites	2	

Table 3: **Summary Description of Groups**

to abolition, ‘no’ to a fully appointed Lords, but in favour of the 60%, 80% and fully elected options. This was the largest single group out of the 243 possible groups, numbering 134 (including Kennedy himself).

Another subset of the Democrats are the Welsh Nationalists (4 Plaid Cymru MPs) and the Scottish Nationalists (5 SNP members). Both these nationalist groupings voted to abolish the Lords.

Weak Blairites comprise those whose voting pattern was consistent with that of the Prime Minister, who voted for an all-appointed House and abstained on all the other divisions. An MP is defined as a weak Blairite if his/her voting pattern does not contradict the Prime Minister’s. In other words, a weak Blairite voted in favour of an all-appointed house and rejected, or abstained on, all three elected options. They numbered 232. A strong Blairite exactly mimicked the Prime Minister’s voting pattern (including his abstention on abolition). There was in fact only one other strong Blairite in the House, viz., the Rt Hon Helen Liddell. This grouping of 2 is less than 2.46, and is therefore smaller than would have occurred by chance.

Weak Duncan-Smithites are those that did not contradict the voting pattern of Iain Duncan Smith, the Tory leader. Thus defined, a weak IDS-ite rejected the abolition of the Lords, an all-appointed Lords and a 60 percent elected second chamber. They voted in favour of an 80 percent elected chamber then abstained from the vote on a fully elected house. Alternatively they abstained from any (or all) of the above votes. A strong IDS-ite mimicked Duncan-Smith’s

Party	All voting MPs %	Democrats %	Kennedy-ites %	Weak Blairite %
Labour	63.2	55.8	52.2	72.4
Conservatives	24.4	25.4	20.9	24.1
Liberal Democrats	8.9	15.4	26.1	1.3
Others	3.5	3.4	0.8	2.2
n	595	319	134	232

Table 4: **Relative Party Composition of the Three Main Subgroups**

voting pattern exactly. There were 42 weak IDS-ites, and 5 strong ones (including Duncan-Smith himself). The former group was comprised of 5 Labour MPs, 5 Liberal Democrats and 32 Conservatives. The latter group were all shadow cabinet members, namely MPs Ancram, Cash, Jenkin and Robathan.

Twinpeaks describe those MPs who voted in favour of an all appointed house, and in favour of an all elected house, yet did not vote for at least one composite option in between. There were thirteen MPs in this group, five of which, as noted above, were DUP members, one was a Tory and the others were from the Labour party. All these individuals, in fact, voted to reject the ‘hybrid’ elected and appointed options. The Twinpeaks’ preferences contributed to the non-single peakedness of the overall outcome.

What background factors led an MP to be in one or other of these main groups? Table 4 compares the party make-up of the 595 MPs who cast a vote with the party make-up of each of our three big groups: weak Blairites, Democrats, and Kennedyites.

Table 4 shows that Conservative members are represented in each of the three big groups at about the same proportion as they are in the house as a whole. The case is quite different with both Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Labour members are less likely to be Democrats or Kennedyites, and more likely to be weak Blairites, than would be predicted from their strength in the House. Liberal Democrat members are much more likely to be Democrats or Kennedyites, and much less likely to be weak Blairites, than would be predicted from their strength in the House.

4 Discussion

How then did the Commons come to vote against all eight options put up to it, leading itself into the contradiction of voting for the status quo by voting

against the status quo? And what predisposed groups of Members to join the various groups?

Those we have labeled the “Democrats” comprised more than half of those voting. They all voted for at least one of the elected options and against an all-appointed house. Democrats are thus those whose votes were consistent with the Labour Party’s 1997 Manifesto, the Wakeham Report, the Irvine White Paper, and the Public Administration Committee report. The biggest single group are the Kennedy clones: those MPs who exactly shared the vote profile of the Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy. This group of 134 Members supported 60%, 80%, and 100% elected. They are therefore the group closest to the Labour Party manifesto and the Public Administration Committee report, although they are disproportionately a non-Labour group of Members. The Kennedy clones are a much larger group than another subset of the Democrats, the Duncan Smith clones, who numbered 5.

If the Democrats had all voted like Kennedy clones, the House would have voted for a more representative and democratic Upper House. Their internal divisions meant that groups of non-Democrats helped to produce the outcome. The largest group of non-Democrats are the Weak Blairites, those whose voting pattern did not contradict the Prime Minister’s. Most of these were Labour Members. The Prime Minister had only one clone, however, namely the Rt. Hon. Helen Liddell (Lab.)

We have excluded two *a priori* possible explanations of the paradox that the House voted for the status quo by voting against the status quo. It did not arise because some magic point should have been proposed but was not. Nor did it arise because of anything paradoxical in the aggregation of individual votes to a group judgment. Specifically, voting was not cyclical; and the pairwise ordering of the outcomes is well-behaved using either of the two criteria (Condorcet and Borda) for a well-behaved ranking function. Three possibilities remain, and any or all of them must be true:

1. None-of-the-above abolitionists voted against all the composition options after the option of abolition had been defeated. If this group had felt able only to abstain on the composition options, one of them (80% elected) would have been carried.
2. Groups of MPs voted strategically. One such group is likely to be a set of Labour MPs who may have voted strategically to fudge their otherwise stark choice between their manifesto and their leader’s abandonment of that manifesto. However, they were probably not the only strategic voters.
3. MPs were genuinely unable to decide how to vote on a proposition when their evaluation of the outcomes depended on the outcome of a vote not yet taken.

Effects 1 and 2 would have been mitigated if the Joint Committee had proposed votes over ranges rather than votes over points, and if the Speaker had not controversially allowed abolition to be proposed as an amendment to the all-appointed option, in apparent defiance of Erskine May. This decision of Speaker Martin's may come to rank with Speaker Lowther's decision in 1913 to disallow the female suffrage amendments to the Franchise Bill (McLean, pp. 109-12 [9]) as a piece of creative agenda shaping. Likewise, Lord Chancellor Irvine's sudden discovery, which he had not yet made in his earlier White Paper, that a hybrid upper house was intolerable may prove to have been a great agenda-shaping moment.

Effect 3 on the other hand is ineradicable. Whenever a multidimensional issue is broken into a number of pairwise choices, Sir Patrick Cormack's nightmare may come true (see, generally, Riker [14]).

Table 4 and Fig 3 show that most parties varied systematically. Most of the minor parties voted en bloc. The Irish nationalists kept out altogether. The DUP voted en bloc for the Twin Peaks profile. Four of the five Ulster Unionists were weak Blairites. The Scottish and Welsh Nationalists were all Democrats. The Conservatives split into Weak Blairites and Democrats in the same proportion as the house as a whole. Labour members were more likely than average to be weak Blairites, and less likely to be Democrats. Liberal Democrats were much more likely than average to be Democrats, and much less likely than average to be weak Blairites. Of the three big parties, it is the one whose leader said in the John Smith Memorial Lecture in February 1996, 'We have always favoured an elected second chamber' whose MPs were least likely to vote for any elected element in the second chamber.

After 92 years, the preamble of the 1911 Parliament Act remains unfulfilled. Substitution cannot be immediately brought into operation.

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