

# Understanding the 'Pink' vote in Aotearoa

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## Abstract

There is little written on how gay men engage in the electoral process, and this lack of data extends to New Zealand. When speaking to peers about this topic, it was the widely held view that gay men support the Labour Party, as there has been a historic level of support for the queer community from the Labour Party. This study takes a mixed method approach to answer the dual research questions: *which* political parties do gay men in New Zealand vote for, and *why* do they vote for those parties? By using data from the New Zealand Values and Attitudes Survey, and the New Zealand Election Survey, this thesis shows a broad picture of how gay men vote. Interviews in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin are used to expand on this, and to understand why gay men in New Zealand vote, and why they vote the way they do. Three theories of voting predictions are used to analyse this data: proximity theory, social structure theory, and rational choice theory. The results of the interviews and data analysis shows that, despite the assumption that gay men support the Labour Party, the majority of gay men in New Zealand vote for a diverse range of left-wing parties, and vote for parties that most closely align with their own values. Gay men were also driven to vote out of a sense of civic duty. Despite a small sample size, this thesis is a first-step in filling an academic gap in the electoral participation of queer people.

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*I would like to dedicate this body of work to my late grandmother,*

*June Elizabeth (Elliott) James (1937-2019).*

*Your keen sense of wit, compassion, and kindness are virtues which I hope to emulate.*

## List of Abbreviations

AfD: Alternative for Deutschland

CMS: Church Missionary Society

FPP: First Past the Post

LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender<sup>1</sup>

MMP: Mixed-Member Proportional

MP: Member of Parliament

NZ: New Zealand

NZAVS: New Zealand Attitude and Values Study

NZES: New Zealand Election Study

NZHLS: New Zealand Homosexual Law Reform Society

UKIP: United Kingdom Independence Party

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<sup>1</sup> Different countries and communities have different variations of this abbreviation. Most commonly used is LGBT, but can extend to LGBT\*QQIAAP (or some variation), which is: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, Pansexual.

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## Introduction

I was born in 1994, and spent my ‘growing up years’ with Helen Clark as Prime Minister. She was a regular figure on the television, and in conversations around our dinner table. I distinctly remember meeting Helen Clark when I was eight or nine in 2003 when she came to open a new block of classrooms at my primary school. I got to give her flowers: I was barefoot and she was intimidating. I grew into a very aware political child, one who had ambitions of entering politics. When I told adults this, they told me I would both be Prime Minister one day, and that I would fit into the Labour Party.

As I became more politically aware in my early teens, and came out to my friends, family, and the world as a queer man, I saw people in the Labour party who looked and talked like me. This reinforced the social pressure I felt to support the Labour party – they looked like me, they spoke like me, they cared about things I cared about, and my friends, family, and teachers told me that I would be like them.

However, when entering university I discovered that I did not fit well with the Labour party, nor with the Greens, nor with any political party. Instead I was more interested in understanding *how* politics works, and *why* people vote the way they do. I tried to read about queer electoral participation – but it was a very limited field. Questions of who gay men vote for, if there was a transactional approach from parties to the queer community, and why there seemed to be this assumption that gay men supported the Labour party were all left unanswered, as there was no literature investigating it. Thus, the idea of this Masters thesis has been percolating away for seven or eight years.

Two research questions are central to this thesis: which political parties do gay men in New Zealand vote for, and why do they vote for those parties? These questions can be answered, at least in part, by looking at polling of gay voters. This thesis uses data from the New Zealand Attitude and Values Study (NZAVS) and the New Zealand Election Study (NZES) to see how gay men vote. This data is supplemented and expanded on by the data generated from ten interviews and one focus group that I conducted. These qualitative measures enabled me to learn more about *why* gay men support the parties that they do.

Studies on homosexual populations usually focus on health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, or poverty, homelessness, and other social issues (for example, see: Robinson B. A., 2018; Sandford & De Keizer, 2001; Tremblay, 2015). Whilst there is a growing body of evidence about the way in which

queer people engage in politics, this is usually in the domain of activism or non-electoral politics. Therefore this thesis seeks to address a significant gap in the literature that looks at how gay men engage in the *electoral* process.

Investigating voting behaviour of gay men faces many barriers within the social sciences, in particular the ‘invisibility’ of the subjects of the studies. Many models exist to predict how one may vote based on gender, class, income, race, etc., but yet no model exists for those who are queer. This study seeks to go some steps to providing information on why gay men vote, and who they vote for.

In the first chapter, *Government and the Gays*, I provide a brief political history of homosexual men and the state within the New Zealand context. This chapter begins with indigenous conceptions of sexuality, and ends with the modern ‘marriage equality’ context. To understand voting behaviour of the gay community, it is important to understand the historic socio-political context in which gay men find themselves. There is a growing body of literature to suggest that people today still carry the intergenerational/transgenerational trauma that is inherited through their families and friends, and queer people are no different. Years of state-sanctioned abuse and neglect, societal ostracisation, and the AIDS crisis all contribute to the ways that queer people are, act, and think today (Corcione, 2018; Eckstrand & Potter, 2017). It is important to understand New Zealand history, to give some context to the contemporary political beliefs of gay men, whatever they may be.

In the second chapter, *New Zealand’s Electoral Landscape*, I provide background information about New Zealand’s electoral system, constitutional makeup, and information about the 2014 and 2017 elections so that the interviews and data make sense. I should highlight here, as I do later in this thesis, the importance of understanding how and why people vote in the New Zealand context. Parliament is supreme and almost none of its decisions can be overruled or changed by any other branch of government (i.e., by the courts or cabinet). Therefore, who is elected matters a great deal.

The third chapter, *Voting Theory*, provides a theoretical framework for this thesis. The three sets of theories this thesis uses (and tests) are ‘rational choice’ theories, ‘proximity and directional’ theories, and ‘social structure’ theories. Currently, there is no literature that looks at gay men (or queer people in general) as a voting bloc, and applies a theoretical voting lens to explain their electoral actions: these three theory sets are therefore untested in the context of understanding the gay vote. This thesis uses the theories to explain who the participants voted for, and why they did so.

*Queer Men Voting* is the fourth chapter, and provides the reader with some international context to what is happening in this field. There is not a substantial quantity of academic literature on this, so I have pieced together academic literature and news media to give the reader a comprehensive account of the electoral participation of gay men in the United States of America, Canada, Europe, and to a lesser extent, Australia. This is important because politics does not operate in a spatial vacuum, and overseas political trends are often reproduced in New Zealand. By understanding what is happening internationally we also gain insight into what is or is not happening in New Zealand, which in turn gives further insights into the New Zealand political situation.

The fifth chapter, *Methodology*, gives the reader an overview of the mixed-method approach, and the reasons I follow it. There is a body of evidence that shows that using mixed methods is the best way to gather data when working with ‘invisible’ populations, hence the reason this research is using a mixed methods approach. This chapter also runs through the practical steps I took to get the results through quantitative and qualitative means. It concludes with a discussion of the ethical framework within which the research operated. This chapter adds to the small, but growing, field of ethical literature. It will guide future research that engages with queer participants.

The sixth and seventh chapters are the results chapters. The sixth chapter *Results: How They Vote* presents the quantitative results and looks over the background literature about gay men voting in New Zealand, especially the *Lavender Island* study. This is followed by analysis of the New Zealand Attitude and Values Study (NZAVS) and the New Zealand Election Study (NZES). This chapter presents the results of all the literature and offers an overview of the changing trend of voting over time. The seventh chapter, *Results: What They Said*, presents the results from the interviews. This chapter provides thematic analysis of the interviews, and includes the concepts of civic duty as well as the importance of shared values between the voter and the party.

The final chapter, the discussion, expands on the results and applies the three different established voting theories to those findings, and looks at the limitations of those theories in predicting how gay men vote. Some of these include the limitations of rational choice theory in accounting for altruism, and the effects that neoliberalism may have had on social structure theory. There is also a discussion of civic duty, and the chapter concludes by placing the New Zealand results in the international context. It offers a hypothesis that seeks to explain why we have not seen similar trends in New Zealand.

Throughout this thesis I use the term ‘queer’ as an umbrella term for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender, and Intersex (‘LGBTI’) community (Sullivan, 2003). In addition to this, I also use the word queer when exclusively referring to the sexuality of my participants. Queer can also refer

to the theoretical lens that seeks to untangle the heterosexual grip over society, analyse the way in which queers 'are', and more generally, sees the world through a lens that is outside of the prescribed mainstream. As such is the tradition of the word queer, that my interchangeable usage in this thesis is an acceptable form in all of its uses (Browne, 2008; Jagose, 1996; Sullivan, 2003).

The concept of queer is not without its critics. These range from critiques that queer as a term and theoretical framework is "misguided and theoretically suspect" (Walters, 1996, p. 832), reminiscent of schoolboy taunts (Browne, 2008, p. 4), and that it risks misrepresenting all queers into one big happy family (Sullivan, 2003). Bryant Keith Alexander (2018) writes his critique from a perspective of how he and his partner experience the word queer, in particular the loaded way it was used against them. And yet, Alexander writes (2018, p. 276; emphasis in original):

But *queer* is a term that we both resist.  
I even resist the term as I write about in/as *queer* theory.  
I resist the word *queer* even as I now recognize:  
*queer* is a term of resistance,  
*queer* is a term of subversion,  
*queer* is a term of appropriation,  
*queer* as a term of recuperation,  
*queer* as a term of denaturalizing, and  
*queer* as a term of indeterminacy.

It is this contradiction that makes queer theory so *queer* – the contradiction enables us to both park our concerns over the tensions, as well as to explore and embrace them. Annamarie Jagose echoes this when she writes that queer is "always ambiguous, always relational," and that it is "an identity without an essence" (1996, p. 96). This research, though an academic inquiry in nature, also seeks to add to the growing body of research that utilises and normalises the use of the word and framework of queer.

In another queering of this research, I am careful in my distinction in the usage of New Zealand and Aotearoa. It is well documented (see: Barrett, 1997; Kachuk, 1994) that the language we use has an impact upon power structures, either by upholding or transgressing against them. In an effort to decolonise my research – to the extent that someone who grew up, exists within, and is a stakeholder of, a colonised country can – I follow the lead of researchers before me and try to write in such a way that upholds and uplifts the mana whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Thus, in this research, I use Aotearoa when referring in the general sense to the country, and its people, and I use New Zealand when referring explicitly to the settler state and government that occupies Aotearoa. In doing so I seek to normalise 'Aotearoa', and honour those who call for us to do so.

This thesis primarily uses a first person voice, as it does not seem logical to write about this research as if the research was agentive and could direct itself, hence this conscious choice of tone.

Considering my training in the field of political science and strategic studies the phenomena of writing in first person is a unique experience for me. The academic in political science – indeed in most of the social sciences – often takes on the role of the dispassionate observer, which is entrenched through the tradition of academia: from teacher to pupil, supervisor to candidate (Davies, 2012). Therefore this thesis is written in first person in an effort to reflect both sociological practices, and to place myself firmly within the research.

## Chapter One: Government and the Gays

The bodies and sexual practices of gay men have been scrutinised, criminalised, and legislated against by the state in Aotearoa for over 150 years, starting in 1858 and ending in 2013 when the final state-sanctioned barrier (marriage) was removed. The assumption today is that gay men, if they vote, will vote for left-leaning parties which, for the most part, first sought to remove discrimination against gay men. In order to understand the voting behaviour of gay men in Aotearoa it is important to understand the history of homosexuality in Aotearoa, especially in regards to the state's behaviour towards gay communities. The way in which political parties and the government have legislated to suppress (or liberate) gay communities is important in understanding why gay men might support certain parties and not others. This discussion begins before colonial government was first formed; this discussion will look at indigenous social attitudes towards sexuality and how those have also evolved over time to influenced current attitudes. This chapter mostly looks at the criminalisation of male homosexual sexual acts (anal sex, masturbation, mutual masturbation, oral sex, etc), as it was these that were suppressed by the law from 1858 to 1986. Whilst this is not the criminalisation of *being* homosexual, it seems, as Christopher Parkin puts it, “the warped logic of prejudice” to expect homosexuals to abstain from a natural part of their being (1968, p. 6).

There is little recorded literature about the sexuality of Māori pre-colonisation, and all of what we know has been pieced together from mythological stories, art – especially carvings – oral histories, and, early contact stories between settlers and Māori. Much that was written of the sexuality of Māori was produced by early explorers, settlers, and missionaries which viewed sexuality through European eyes and ideals. Further, as Ian Cameron writes, “...we can only see [the Polynesians] through other people's eyes and other people's prejudices; the romanticism of Banks and Commerson, the spiritual arrogance of the missions, or the sexual preoccupation of the seamen, traders, and whalers” (1987, p. 119; as cited by Kerekere, 2017, p. 58).

However, in recent years there has been a discovery and reclamation of the word ‘Takatāpui’ by some academics, community organisations, health providers and the media (see: Aspin, 2017a; Fenaughty, 2006; Kerekere, 2015; Kamm, 2016; Thomas, 2018). Takatāpui is an ancient Māori term and concept which describes diverse sexualities, gender identities, and sex characteristics (Kerekere, 2017, pp. 17-18). Takatāpui translates to “intimate companion of the same sex” (Williams, 1871, p. 147; as cited by Kerekere, 2017, p. 17), and entered the vernacular in the 1980s after it was ‘gifted’ by renowned Māori academics after their investigations into Māori mythology

– namely the complicated relationship between the mythical characters Hinemoa, Tūtanekei and Tiki.<sup>2</sup> In addition to Takatāpui, there is ‘whakawāhine’ and ‘tangata ira tāne’ or ‘like a woman’ and ‘spirit of a man’ which denote indigenous concepts of transness and gender identity.

This rediscovery of the concepts of Takatāpui, whakawāhine, and tangata ira tāne has been informed by, in part, a renaissance of writing and understanding of indigenous sexuality that occurred from the 1970s to the 1990s. Te Awekotuku writes that pre-colonised Māori chose partners of either sex for recreational sexual intercourse without condemnation by their communities, but that having children was a priority and so heterosexual couples would often come together for child-rearing purposes (te Awekotuku, 1996, p. 32; as cited by Kerekere, 2017, p. 60). The 1988 Royal Commission on Social Policy was advised that female and male homosexuality was common in pre-colonial times (Kerekere, 2017, p. 60).

A further example of this fluidity in sexuality is the *Lament for Paka Te Naeroa*, a song first documented by George Grey in 1853. The song is about Papaka Te Naeroa, a young man who died in battle. There is a line in the song that says “Ko te tama i aitia e tērā wahine e tērā tangata,” or ‘a youth who was sexual with that woman, with that man’ (Aspin, 2017b). Later, in the 1920s, this reference was edited out to refer to ‘embraced’ instead of ‘sexual.’

Prior to the Treaty of Waitangi being signed in 1840, there were also instances of homosexual interactions between early colonisers and local Māori. One notable example is the British missionary William Yate who arrived in New Zealand in 1828 to conduct a study of the Māori language and to evangelise the locals on behalf of the Church Missionary Society (‘CMS’) (Binney, 1990; Brickell, 2008). During his tenure in New Zealand, Yate was rumoured to have engaged in mutual masturbation and oral sex with between 50 and 100 young Māori men, which came to the attention of CMS during a stopover in Sydney in 1836 (Brickell, 2008, pp. 26-26). Yate was dismissed from his service from CMS in 1837, but he protested his innocence saying that it was a smear campaign from a rival missionary. Despite a large amount of evidence of sexual acts between Yate and the young men, he was never charged with any crimes because he had not committed sodomy which at the time was the United Kingdom’s only legislatively forbidden sexual act between men.

Following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1840, as explored in the next chapter, New Zealand appropriated all of the legislation and common law of the Parliament of the United Kingdom as of January 14<sup>th</sup> 1840 through the *English Laws Act 1858* (Spiller, Finn, & Boast,

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<sup>2</sup> See Kerekere 2017 pp., 63-43; Mills 2017; and Warbrick (in press); for the full myth and commentary.

1995, p. 76). The passing of this legislation meant that the *Offences Against the Person Act 1828*, a British statute, was incorporated into the young country's law books.<sup>3</sup> The *Offences Against the Person Act 1828* had bundled together many pieces of legislation, including the *Buggery Act 1553* which made it a crime to engage in consensual anal sex – if found guilty a person could be sentenced for a minimum of ten years imprisonment in jail/hard labour and in extreme cases, could receive the death penalty (Dryden, n.d.; “Lord Lansdowne's Act,” 1828).

This legislation was superseded in 1867 when the New Zealand Parliament passed the *Offences against the Person Act 1867* which removed the death penalty and replaced it with a minimum of ten years' penal detention and maximum of life (Brickell, 2008, p. 30). If penetration could not be proved (lawmakers had dropped the requirement for there to be evidence of “emission of seed” and opted for “proof of penetration”), then the accused could face three to ten years in penal detention (Offences against the Person Act 1867). In 1893 the law changed so that any sexual contact, not just anal sex, between two men (regardless of consent) was illegal (Brickell, 2008, p. 38). This was further reinforced with the 1908 Crimes Act.

In 1961 the Crimes Act was updated by the National Government, led by Sir Kenneth Holyoake, which reduced the maximum penalty for sodomy to seven years. However, at this time police pressure and violence against gay men also increased, with an all-time high of in the number of arrests under the Crimes Act, and men reporting increased intimidation and raids on clubs (Brickell, 2008, pp. 267-269).<sup>4</sup> This increase went hand-in-hand with increasingly negative social views of homosexuals at the time which culminated in the murder of Charles Aberhart in 1964. Aberhart was 37 years old when he was beaten to death whilst cruising in a park in Christchurch. Six young people were tried for this crime on manslaughter charges, but despite one admitting to the crime, all six were acquitted. During the trial, the defence lawyer asked a pathologist if Aberhart's genitals showed any signs of disease and questioned a detective about Aberhart's “homosexual past” (Guy, 2002, p. 1; see also Skews-Poole, 2017). This trial, and subsequent acquittal, marked a turning point for church leaders and leading gay activists who come together

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<sup>3</sup> *Offences Against the Person Act 1837* had technically superseded this legislation, however as the new law only repealed some offences that are not pertinent to this study (i.e., removing the death penalty for post-quickening abortions) this study will focus on the 1828 version of the law.

<sup>4</sup> The records of convictions are sparse, but Brickell (2008) did substantial research and found cases from the Dunedin Supreme Court. The following data is from the graph p. 388, but the author has sent me a more comprehensive breakdown of the data. From 1874-1973, there were 1008 convictions for Sodomy or Indecent Assault on a Male, of which 237 of those were in the 1960s. From 1920-1997 there were 5509 convictions for Indecent Assault on a Male, of which nearly half ( $n=2569$ ) were from the 1960s. It is important to note that this data includes consensual sex and non-consensual sex, however it can – in broad terms - paint a picture of an increased police crackdown on gay men's sexual lives after the Second World War.

to put pressure on the government to remove the legislation that forbade intimacy between men (Guy, 2002, p. 66).

In 1967 the New Zealand Homosexual Law Reform Society ('NZHLRS') was created with the aim of decriminalising consensual sexual interactions between men in private. It was modelled on the British Homosexual Law Reform Society which was assisting NZHLRS (Parkin, 1979). In 1968, NZHLRS petitioned Parliament for legislative reform, but this was ignored. In 1969 and in 1971, the Labour Party Conference called for law reform; as did the 1970 National party conference (Parkin, 1979). Despite this, when National MP Venn Young introduced a private member's bill in 1975 which would have decriminalised sexual interactions between consenting men (with a consent age of 20, compared to 16 for heterosexuals) it failed at its second reading (Guy, 2002, pp., 85-87). Labour MP Warren Freer also introduced two law reform initiatives, but neither were submitted to the House as there was strong opposition by Gay Liberation groups (including NZHLRS) at the prospect of the split age of consent proposed in the reform (Guy, 2002, pp., 113-115).

In 1984, the Labour Party became government which gay activists saw as an opportunity to pressure the new government to pass homosexual law reform, as they were more socially liberal than the previous government. In 1985 Fran Wilde, the Labour MP for Wellington Central, submitted a private member's bill which would have decriminalised consensual sexual interactions between men in private with the same age of consent as heterosexuals. Whilst there was considerable push-back from sectors of the public, the bill went through the house and on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1986 the bill passed 49-44 (Guy, 2002). Table 1, below, provides a breakdown of the votes by the parties in Parliament on the bills of Venn Young and Fran Wilde. The table shows Labour Party MPs voting for both of the bills in greater numbers than National and Social Credit MPs.

Bill	For	Against	Abstain <sup>5</sup>
Crimes Amendment Bill 1974	29 20 (LAB) / 9 (NAT)	34 16 (LAB) / 18 (NAT)	24 19 (LAB) / 5 (NAT)
Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986	49 46 (LAB) / 3 (NAT)	44 7 (LAB) / 35 (NAT) <sup>6</sup> / 2 (SC) <sup>7</sup>	2 2 (LAB)

Data sourced from: Hansard, 1975; Hansard, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> These abstentions include the Speaker of the House, who under First Past the Post ordinarily does not vote.

<sup>6</sup> Allegedly, there were several National MPs who voted Nay but would have switched to Aye if the vote got any closer to failing (Guy, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> New Zealand Social Credit Party (now The New Zealand Democratic Party for Social Credit) is a leftist party based on the economic theory of Social Credit.

In 1996, three lesbian couples applied to the High Court to obtain a marriage license, and although the court rejected their application this put the issue of marriage equality on the political agenda (Baker & Elizabeth, 2012; PrideNZ.com, n.d.). In 1999 the Fifth Labour Government was elected and during its second term, in 2004, the government introduced civil union legislation into the House. This proposed that civil unions be open to any person, regardless of their sexuality or gender, and that those in a civil union would “acquire partnership rights, [be] viewed as ‘next of kin’, and [be] considered legal partners for purposes of income tax, support obligations, and social benefits” (Baker & Elizabeth, 2012, p. 633).

The debate around the civil union legislation was substantial from community and church groups on both sides: Destiny Church (a fundamental conservative group) organised a protest in the capital against the introduction of civil unions which 5000 people attended, whilst a pan-denominational group Christians for Civil Unions was set up and lobbied for the passing of the legislation (Davis, 2004; New Zealand Press Association, 2004a). One public opinion poll conducted two months before the vote said that 56 percent of the public agreed with the legislation passing, whilst 36 percent opposed it. The bill passed on a conscience vote 65 to 55 votes on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004 (New Zealand Herald, 2004; New Zealand Press Association, 2004b). Table 2, on the following page, shows a party-by-party breakdown in which we can see that the MPs representing the Labour Party and Green Party voted for the legislation in greater numbers than MPs in National, ACT, New Zealand First, and other minor parties.

In 2012, Labour Party MP Louisa Wall had her Private Member’s Bill drawn from the ballot. The *Marriage (definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill*, allowed people who were in same-sex relationships to marry (“marriage equality”). The bill, and its subsequent readings, drew substantial interest from those in civil society, especially from some organisations on the conservative religious right who said that it would destroy the sanctity of marriage (Collins S., 2013; Right to Life New Zealand, 2013). However, a conscience vote was called, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013 the bill passed with 77 votes for and 44 against (Chapman, 2013). Whilst it was a Labour Party MP who introduced the bill, there was a National-Māori-ACT-United Future coalition government at the time, and many commentators said that it managed to pass with such large numbers because it was supported by John Key, the then-Prime Minister and leader of the National Party (Garner, 2012; Robins, 2012; Thomas B. , 2016).

The table belows shows a party by party breakdown of the votes on the Civil Union Bill and Marriage Equality Bill. Whilst it may appear that fewer Labour MPs voted for the Marriage Amendment Act than the Civil Union Act, this is only because they were in opposition at the time,

and had fewer MPs in Parliament. Proportionally, 88 percent of Labour MPs voted for both bills whilst only 11 percent of National MPs voted for civil unions and 45 percent for marriage equality.

*Table 2: Vote breakdown of Civil Union and marriage equality legislation by party*

Party	Civil Union Act 2004		Marriage (definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013	
	For	Against	For	Against
Labour	45	6	30	4
National	3	24	27	32
NZ First	1	12	0	7
Act	5	4	1	0
Green	9	0	14	0
United Future	0	8	1	0
Progressive	2	0	N/A	
Māori	0	1	3	0
Mana	N/A		1	0
Independent	N/A		0	1
Total Votes	65	55	77	44

Data sourced from Hansard, 2004; Hansard, 2013.

In this chapter I have established that gay men in Aotearoa have gone from having relative sexual freedom pre-colonisation, to criminalised sexual relations, and then a level of liberalisation since the 1980s. This chapter has also shown how the Labour Party has initiated most of the legislation that has ended state-sanctioned discrimination against gay men, and as was stated earlier, is the basis for the assumptions that gay men would support them. Before we can explore which parties gay men support, the centrality of elections and voting in New Zealand’s constitutional arrangement needs to be reflected on – this is done in the next chapter.

## Chapter Two: New Zealand's Electoral Landscape

Fair and free elections with universal suffrage are key tenets of any liberal democracy. However, in New Zealand elections are particularly important because of the unfettered sovereignty that Parliament holds. This chapter explains both the importance of voting and the characteristics of New Zealand's electoral system. It also looks at the 2014 and 2017 elections, as they are the two elections for which there is relevant data. This discussion of Parliament, the electoral system, and the elections is an important foundation for subsequent chapters.

New Zealand has a unique political landscape. It is one of three countries that does not have a formal, enshrined constitution, and it has a unicameral parliament which elects members through a proportional representation system. New Zealand is formally designated a Westminster-style government, and is a constitutional monarchy – the Head of State is the British monarch (currently Queen Elizabeth II). In lieu of a codified and entrenched constitution, New Zealand has a cluster of legislation, norms, and rules which make up the constitution (Hayward, 2015a). The constitution is underpinned by the Treaty of Waitangi (henceforth 'the Treaty'), which is a treaty between the indigenous peoples, Māori, and the British Crown. Further to the Treaty, there is also the Constitution Act 1986, the Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Parliamentary Standing Orders, the Cabinet Manual, and the Letters Patent, amongst others (Hayward, 2015a; Keith, 1990).

New Zealand's constitutional arrangements are important when we consider the role and powers of Parliament. The New Zealand Parliament is supreme, that is that no other part of Government (the Executive, or the Courts) can instruct Parliament what to do, and Parliament holds almost unfettered power (Hayward, 2015b). There are no constitutional safeguards against discriminatory laws that are passed by Parliament, not even the Supreme Court can strike down laws that contravene other laws. In the context of this study, it means that elections are especially important, because the voters put absolute trust in Parliamentarians not to enact harmful legislation. Hayward articulates this well when they write that "... democratic elections and trust in elected representatives sit at the heart of New Zealand's constitution" (2015a, p. 131).

The Treaty of Waitangi is an integral part of New Zealand's constitution and wider political discourse because of the special and unique place it holds. The Treaty was signed in 1840 between representatives of Queen Victoria (and the British Crown) and Māori hapū and iwi.<sup>8</sup> The Treaty

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<sup>8</sup> Iwi is the Māori word for 'tribe' or a loose confederation of hapū. Hapū is sometimes referred to as a subtribe, but is more accurately a grouping of families who share a common ancestor or genealogy. For more on this see Himona, 2013; Taonui, 2005.

and its constitutional significance were overlooked by the government for 130 years until the Māori renaissance began in the early 1970s, because of mass protest action (Hayward, 2015a). This resulted in an interpretation of the Treaty being adapted into law as the ‘Principles of the Treaty.’ Despite these principles, and the Treaty itself, New Zealand still operated under a very British system – Lijphart described New Zealand from 1935-1996 as being more Westminster styled than Westminster itself (Lijphart, 1999). However in 1996 there was a shift away from this, with the introduction of a new electoral system, explored below.

New Zealand ran its elections under a First Past the Post (FPP) system from 1853 to 1996, which was inherited from Great Britain as a consequence of the colonisation and the introduction of their laws when setting up the state. In 1986, the Royal Commission on the Electoral System recommended that New Zealand adopt a proportional system of elections, and in 1992 a non-binding referendum found that 85 percent of New Zealand voters wanted to change the electoral system (New Zealand Parliament, 2016). In 1993, a binding referendum was held, which asked voters if they would prefer MMP over FPP, 54 percent voted for MMP and 46 percent to keep FPP (New Zealand Parliament, 2016). Thus MMP was adopted and the first election occurred in 1996.

New Zealand elects members of Parliament (MPs) to the single-chamber 120-seat Parliament (Arseneau & Roberts, 2015). The electoral system to elect them is described as ‘mixed member’ because there are two types of MPs elected: constituency MPs (from an electorate vote) and list MPs (from a party vote). To facilitate this, electors in New Zealand get two votes: one for a candidate in their local constituency and one for the political party of their choice (Arseneau & Roberts, 2015, pp. 275-276).

The party vote in the general election determines how many of the 120 seats each party will get in Parliament, based on the actual number of votes they receive. However, parties must meet a threshold to receive a seat in Parliament. A party must gain either 5 percent of the total party vote or win an electorate seat. Once the party has met the threshold, the number of seats they get is calculated through the Sainte-Laguë formula which distributes the seats proportionally.<sup>9</sup> Once these seats have been allocated, they are filled first by the party’s electorate MPs, and then by a list that the party puts to the electoral commission. Arseneau and Roberts (2015) explain how the vote distribution worked in the 2014 election: “In 2014 the Sainte-Laguë formula determined that the

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<sup>9</sup> Mathematically, the Sainte-Laguë formula is  $= \frac{V}{2s+1}$ . Where ‘qt’ is the highest 120 numbers, ‘V’ is the total number of votes that the party received, and ‘s’ is the number of seat that have been allocated thus far to that party (Lijphart, 2003, pp. 174-175; see also the New Zealand Electoral Act 1963, Part 6, Section 191 (4A)-(10)).

seven parties that qualified for seats were entitled to the following numbers of seats in a parliament with 120 MPs: National 30; Labour 21; the Green Party 14; New Zealand First 11; the Māori Party 2; ACT 1; and United Future 0. The National Party won 41 electorates and – because it was entitled to 60 seats in parliament based on its party vote – the party was awarded an additional 19 seats from the party list” (p. 278).<sup>10</sup>

It is important to understand the mechanics of MMP, to understand how Parliament became more representative. As MMP allows for minor parties to compete more fairly in elections, it means that minority political opinions and minority groupings can also compete in elections. New Zealand went from a political landscape that was dominated by two political parties under First Past the Post: first the Reform and United Parties, who merged in 1936 to create the National party, which then contested elections against the Labour party (Aimer, 2015a, pp. 204-205). This duopoly remained until 1996 with the introduction of MMP. This plurality is demonstrated in Table 3, below.

*Table 3: Composition of Parliaments over time by party*

Election Year	Number of Parties in Parliament	Parties in Parliament
1996	6	ACT, Alliance, Labour, National, NZ First, United.
1999	7	Alliance, Green, Labour, National, ACT, NZ First, United.
2002	7	Labour, National, NZ First, United Future, ACT, Green, Progressive.
2005	8	Labour, National, Green, NZ First, ACT, Progressive, Māori, United Future.
2008	7	Labour, National, Green, ACT, Progressive, Māori, United Future.
2011	8	Labour, National, Green, NZ First, ACT, Mana, Māori, United Future.
2014	7	Labour, National, Green, NZ First, ACT, Māori, United Future.
2017	5	Labour, National, Green, NZ First, ACT.

Adapted from Arseneau & Roberts, 2015, p. 277 and Electoral Commission, 2017b.

<sup>10</sup> The Māori Party, ACT, and United Future did not meet the 5 percent threshold required (they received 1.32 percent, 0.69 percent, and 0.22 percent, respectively (Electoral Commission, 2014)) but they all won an electorate seat. Therefore the first of the Māori Party’s two seats was filled by the electorate MP, and the second with a list MP. ACT’s one seat was filled with one electorate MP. Because United Future received no seats under the Sainte-Laguë formula, but won an electorate seat then they were given only the one seat that they won. Electorate seats cannot be removed from Parliament, therefore there was an ‘overhang’ whereby there were 121 seats in Parliament (Arseneau & Roberts, 2015, p. 278).

Further to the increased plurality of parties in Parliament, under MMP the demographic makeup of the House has also changed. Under FPP, the number of female MPs in Parliament was low – during the 1980s the number of women in the House rarely went over 5 percent (Parliamentary Service, 2017, p. 9). Under MMP the number of women has increased substantially, with 35 female MPs in 1996 and a record high number in 2017 – 46 or 38 percent of the Parliament (Parliamentary Service, 2017, p. 9). Whilst this is not representative of the proportion of women in society as a whole, it can be seen as a step towards a more representative House of Representatives. Further to this, the representation of Asian, Pasifika, and Māori MPs has also increased significantly (see Figure 8 in Parliamentary Service, 2017). There is no evidence that shows that the number of queer people in Parliament has increased due to MMP or if it is because social attitudes have become more liberal which allows MPs to be more open about their sexuality, but there is substantially more queer people in Parliament now than there was under First Past the Post.

## Political Parties in 2017

It will also be important for the reader to have an understanding of the political parties that have contested and won seats in the recent elections, because they have been discussed in the interviews that I have conducted. Below, I have looked at the historical basis of each party and their broad ideological framework in which they operate. The historical basis of these parties is important when considering their historic support (or lack thereof) to the queer community, and the impact this might have on their levels of support from the community itself.

### *New Zealand Labour Party*

The New Zealand Labour Party (‘the Labour party’) is one of two of New Zealand’s main parties and is New Zealand’s oldest extant party, and was founded in 1916 when a consortium of trade union and socialist groups came together to create a Parliamentary arm to advance their cause (Aimer, 2015b, p. 207). Whilst the Labour party had socialist roots, these became moderated in 1951 with the party embracing ‘social democracy’. The party at that time can be described as an “ideological coalition of socialists and liberals” (Vowles, 1987, p. 223; as cited in Aimer, 2015b, p. 208). Since then the Labour party’s ideology has again shifted: the Fourth Labour Government (1984-1990) introduced substantial neoliberal reforms, and the Fifth Labour Government moderated but did not abandon a neoliberal policy regime, instead opting for a ‘Third Way’ Tony

Blair-style of Labour (Aimer, 2015b, p. 209; Roper, 2015, p. 32). The Sixth Labour Government, elected in 2017, does not appear to have a clear ideological orientation – with some believing that they are mixing a Third Way approach with interventionist elements (Manhire, 2018; Mapp, 2018).

Noteworthy legislation that the Labour party has introduced whilst in government includes the creation and extension of the welfare state, legislation to prohibit nuclear-armed, or powered, naval ships within New Zealand, and legislation to decriminalise sex work. Another piece of noteworthy legislation is the Seabed and Foreshore Act 2003 which moved most of the seabed and foreshore into Crown control and ruled out Māori ownership of the land (Franks & McAloon, 2016; Waitangi Tribunal, 2004).

Perhaps most importantly for this study it was a Labour party MP who sponsored the Homosexual Law Reform Bill, it was the Labour party who legalised civil unions in 2004, and it was a Labour MP's Private Members Bill that legalised same sex marriage in 2013. These pieces of legislation inform the basis of the assumption that gay men will support the Labour party, because they passed legislation that particularly supported them.

### *New Zealand National Party*

The New Zealand National Party (‘the National party’) was formed in 1936 when two parties merged, bringing together a party representing the conservative farmers (The Reform Party) and a party of classic liberals (The United Party of New Zealand) (James, 2015). At the time, the National party was founded on these inherited principles, but also out of opposition to the Labour Party. The National party is still described as liberal-conservative, and can be seen to govern as a “functionalist party,” that is that it “sees governing as an end in itself rather than as a service of an ideology or principles” (James, 2015, p. 221).

The National party has been in government five times (1949-1957, 1960-1972, 1975-1984, 1990-1999, and 2008-2017) and examples of their noteworthy legislation include: abolishing New Zealand’s Legislative Council (or Upper House of Parliament), starting the electoral reform process to replace FPP with MMP, introduced 90-day employment trials, and the Wellington and Washington Declarations which formalised defence arrangements with the United States of America (James, 2017).

National party MPs have not supported the legislation affecting the gay community in as greater numbers as the Labour Party. However, it appears that in a short period of time (from 1984-2013)

there has been a liberalisation of the National party, which can be seen when we assess the number of MPs who have voted for the most recent marriage equality legislation. Venn Young's 1975 law reform bill only managed to garner the support of 28 percent of National MPs, and only 8 percent of National MPs voted for Fran Wilde's successful law reform bill. As discussed above, 11 percent of National MPs supported the Civil Unions Bill, but 46 percent of National MPs voted for the marriage equality legislation. This could be an indicator of an increasingly socially liberal National party, or a reflection that voters are becoming more socially liberal and that National MPs feel that they need to accommodate them, or a mixture of both.

It does not seem that conservative parties would be a natural home for gay voters, as they have historically not been as supportive of legislation that would benefit queer people as left-wing parties. The National party, until recently, would fit that bill: their legislation has been focussed on the economy, the constitution, and on law and order. Whilst simultaneously opposing legislation that would be considered socially liberal, such as homosexual law reform, abortion law reform, and prostitution law reform. However, in relation to this study, it will be interesting to see the extent the effects of this opposition to the legislation has been, and whether the liberalisation that has occurred since the 1980s has managed to draw in gay voters.

### *The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand*

The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand ('the Green party') is a left wing environmentalist party which adheres to four principles: Ecological Wisdom, Social Responsibility, Appropriate Decision-making, and Non-Violence (Ford, 2015). The Green party was officially launched in 1990, and emerged out of the New Zealand Values Party which had faced significant electoral defeat during the 1970s. Then the Greens themselves failed to win any seats, largely because of the First Past the Post electoral system which did not allow for small parties to enter Parliament. Thus, the Green party entered into the 'Alliance,' a political party composed of five small left wing parties, who by grouping together managed to enter Parliament under FPP (Dann C. R., 1999). Following the introduction of MMP at the 1996 election, the relationship between the parties and personalities within the Alliance deteriorated and the Green party went it alone and have remained in Parliament as an independent party since the 1999 election (Ford, 2015).

Whilst being a minor party, the Green party has managed to secure the passing of a substantial amount of legislation, usually through private members bills or through government bills as a

requirement in their confidence and supply arrangements.<sup>11</sup> Some of these include the creation of the Crown agency Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, legislation prohibiting use of unreasonable force when parents discipline children, and the Zero Carbon Bill, which will legislate how much carbon New Zealand can produce with an independent regulatory body (Bramwell, 2017; Cooke, 2018). In 2017, former Green party leader Jeanette Fitzsimons said that the Party had achieved more than 100 items and initiatives which brought about “positive change” through Parliament (Bramwell, 2017). The Green party is currently in government, through a confidence and supply agreement with the Labour party.

The Green party have been vocal supporters of the queer community throughout their history, in both their support for legislation that would benefit the queer community, and also having high-profile queer MPs, such as Jan Logie, who in 2019 suggested that the government should have a ‘Rainbow Ministry’ (Small, 2019). It is interesting then, within the context of this study, if this approach that the Greens have taken has meant that there is a high level of support for them from gay men.

### *New Zealand First*

New Zealand First is a populist, anti-establishment, conservative, nationalist party that was founded by Winston Peters after he was expelled from the National party in 1993 (Joiner, 2015).<sup>12</sup> Prior to the creation of New Zealand First, Peters was the National MP for Hunua from 1979-1981, then the Member for Tauranga from 1984-1993 (Joiner, 2015). Following the 1990 election which the National party won, in part by pledging to end or minimise the neoliberal reforms that the fourth Labour Government had implemented, Peters was elevated to Māori Affairs Minister. Despite collective cabinet responsibility, to which Peters was bound, he spoke out against National’s policy agenda and was expelled. He then created New Zealand First, which has remained in Parliament since 1993 with only a brief spell where the party failed to reach the 5 percent threshold in 2008, but it was returned in 2011 (Joiner, 2015). New Zealand First are currently in Government, in a coalition with Labour party.

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<sup>11</sup> Confidence and supply arrangements are common in Westminster-style governments whereby a minority government works with smaller parties to ensure that their budget is passed every year, in return for legislation that the smaller party wants passed (Paun & Hibben, 2017). Often the smaller party will get some of their top MPs into ministerial roles, either inside or outside of cabinet.

<sup>12</sup> Despite being socially conservative, they are also very critical of neoliberalism and capitalism, with Winston Peters criticising capitalism in his speech where he announced they would be forming a government with the Labour party (Daly, 2017).

When Winston Peters was a National party MP he voted against homosexual law reform at all stages of the legislation, and in the bill's final reading he said that the bible declared that homosexuality was a sin, and said he was voting against it because it would hurt Māori youth in his electorate (Hansard, 1986, p. 2817). All New Zealand First MPs - bar one - voted against Civil Unions in 2005, and all New Zealand First MPs voted against the 2013 marriage equality legislation, instead insisting for a referendum on the topic (Hansard, 2004; Hansard, 2013). It will be interesting then to see if gay men support New Zealand First, considering these positions that the party has had.

### *Minor Parties*

There are only a handful of minor parties that are relevant to this study because they were either mentioned directly by the research participants, or they came up in the data. These are: the ACT party, United Future, and the Māori party. All three of these parties voted for marriage equality, but have a mixed track record on civil union legislation (as shown in Table 3). ACT is a right-wing, economically-libertarian party that has shifted from being socially liberal, to socially conservative, and is now currently in a socially liberal phase once more. ACT is represented in Parliament by one MP, but in its heyday had nine MPs (Electoral Commission, 1999 & 2002; Edwards, 2015). In the context of this research, we might see support from gay men for the ACT party because of the tolerance that libertarianism has towards queer people: that queer people, alongside everyone else, should be free from the paternalistic state who dictates moralistic behaviour. However, it is also possible that the shadow of former leader of the ACT party, John Banks, still looms over the party: before the passing of homosexual law reform, Banks told Parliament that “this day will be remembered as a sad and sickening day for New Zealand” (Banks, 1986; as cited in Moir, 2016).

United Future is a centrist minor party that was led by Peter Dunne for most of time that it was in Parliament. United Future is an amalgamation of Christian right-wing parties, and classic liberal parties. Over time the support that United Future had from the electorate eroded, and is currently not in Parliament (Edwards, 2015). The Māori party is a centrist party that was formed in 2004, when Tariana Turia MP left the Labour party when it passed the Seabed and Foreshore Act, which precluded Māori the right for legal redress to access the seabed and foreshore (Godfery, 2015). The Māori party was at its largest in 2008, when it had had 5 MPs, but as is the trend with many small parties in New Zealand, their support was cannibalised by the larger parties and currently has no Members in the House (Edwards, 2017; Electoral Commission, 2008; Electoral

Commission, 2017b). We might expect gay people who are classic liberals, or who are faith based to support United Future, and Māori gay men to vote for the Māori party.

## 2014 and 2017 Elections

The two elections which form the basis of the NZES and interview data discussed in this thesis are the 2017 and (to a lesser extent) the 2014 general election. In order to give some context to this data, those elections are briefly summarised here.

The 2014 General Election saw the National party re-elected for its third term in office, gaining 60 seats. National were on track to have a majority in Parliament (61 seats in a 120 seat parliament), but following the counting of the special votes they were one seat off from being able to form a government with no coalition partners – if they were to be a majority government, it would have been the first since the introduction of MMP (Radio NZ, 2014). The 2014 election has been described as a “no change” election, that is the overall composition of the Parliament remained similar, with the same Government and governing parties (Levine & Roberts, 2015, p. 339).

The 2017 General Election was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, and resulted in the National party securing the highest portion of votes, but were unable to form a government because they did not outright win 51 percent of the seats. As their former coalition partners United Future and the Māori Party were not re-elected to Parliament, and ACT's one seat would not get them the 61 seats, they were unable to form a government. This began a 26-day negotiation between NZ First and the National party, and NZ First and the Labour party, because whichever party they went with would be able to form government. Ultimately, NZ First decided to throw its support behind the Labour party and its leader Jacinda Ardern, giving them the numbers to form a government if they went into a supply and confidence agreement with the Green party. Thus ended a nine year stint as the government for the National party.

Table 4, below, illustrates the change in the makeup of Parliament between the 2014 and 2017 election. Of note is the substantial Labour gain, which mostly came at the expense of the Green Party.

*Table 4: Share of vote, by party, in the 2014-2017 election*

Party	2014 Election		2017 Election		
	Percentage	Seats	Percentage	Seats	Difference (MPs)
National Party	47.04	60	44.4	56	-4
Labour Party	25.13	32	36.9	46	+12
New Zealand First	8.66	11	7.2	9	-3
Green Party	10.7	14	6.3	8	-6
ACT	0.69	1	0.5	1	No change
Māori Party	1.32	2	1.2	0	-2
United Future	0.22	1	0.1	0	-1

Data adapted from: (Electoral Commission, 2014; Electoral Commission, 2017b)

This chapter has detailed the major political parties in New Zealand, as well as outlining the 2014 and 2017 elections, in order to provide the wider context in which data collection and interviews were conducted. Additionally, this chapter has explored why gay men might support left-wing parties in New Zealand. It is notable that legislation that directly benefits gay men has been promoted by those parties. The next chapter looks at voting theory to see how (and if), we can predict or explain the way that gay men vote.

## Chapter Three: Voting Theory

This chapter discusses the literature that explores why, how, and when people will and do vote. By establishing a strong theoretical framework on these questions it offers useful insights about how we might expect gay men to fit into the established literature. I will offer a deeper level analysis in later chapters when we will see how gay men do not fit into established models of voting.

Broadly speaking, there are many schools of thought that explain why people vote, however the three theories that are most relevant to this investigation are rational choice theory, social structure theory and, proximity and directional theory. This chapter will explore these three theories in that order. It should not be seen as an in-depth review of all the theories of voting, but as an overview to enable the reader to engage in the conversation between voting and gay men.<sup>13</sup> Rational choice theory largely examines why people are motivated to vote, whilst the social structure and proximity and directional theories examine why people vote for certain parties.

### *Rational Choice Theory*

Rational choice theory argues that voting can be seen as a transaction with costs and benefits. It seeks to explain why people vote based on expressing political preferences at the voting booth, and the associated costs in expressing them (Blais, 2000; Evans, 2004). As Evans summarises, “[r]ational choice theory brings to the fore people’s intentions and motives, and it has given an additional and fruitful push to account for human agency and to apply agential explanations” (Evans, 2004, p. 70).

Rational choice theory is predicated on the belief that humans will act rationally to improve their happiness (or utility) when faced with a decision, whilst also factoring in the costs that are associated with making that decision. Rationality, as defined by Downs, is when a person moves towards attaining their “goals in a way which, to the best of [their] knowledge, uses the least possible input of scarce resources per unit of valued output” (Downs, 1957, p. 5).

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<sup>13</sup> It should be noted to the reader that whilst these three theories are the most relevant to this investigation, none of the literature suggests that these theories have ever been used to explain how sexual minorities vote. Thus, this thesis is contributing to the wider literature in a two-part way – not just exploring voting behaviour of gay men, but also commentary on how voting theory deals with Queer people. In undertaking this research, there has been a significant barrier of Queer people being forgotten or ignored by voting research – it is my hope that this research will go some way in exposing these gaps, and hopefully to fill them.

Therefore, it is said that people will undertake this cost/benefit analysis when deciding whether or not to vote. Some of the benefits, or utility, that come from voting are a fulfilment of civic duty or electing a party that has policies that will directly benefit the voter, or a group of people that the voter cares about (Aldrich J. , 1993, p. 251; Evans, 2004, p. 73). Some of the costs that are associated with voting are opportunity costs, that is what the voter could have been doing if not voting, and real costs, that is the cost of the petrol to go to the voting station, taking time off work, etc (Blais, *To Vote or Not To Vote*, 2000, p. 2).

The origins of rational choice theory is deeply rooted in economic thought. In particular, Anthony Downs' 1957 book *An Economic Theory of Democracy* changed the way in which people thought about voting. Downs' work has been highly influential in political science, and he was one of the first political scientists to write about the left/right political axis in the context of a scale in which political parties could be placed (Evans, 1996, pp. 7-8) Downs' theory was elaborated on by Riker and Ordeshook in 1968 who are credited to have improved the formulae involved in determining the costs and benefits of voting, including adding a value to quantify the idea of citizen's duty within the equation (Feddersen, 2004; Ordeshook, 2006, p. 679; Riker & Ordeshook, 1968).

Mueller (2003) covers many different ways that academics have subsequently advanced rational choice theory. One of these is the *minimax-regret strategist* as expressed by Ferejohn and Fiorina (1974). The *minimax-regret strategist* says that it is not the expected utility that drives people to vote, but instead the potential regret of abstaining and their preferred side losing by one vote (Ferejohn & Fiorina, 1974; Mueller, 2003, p. 307). However, Mueller finds this argument to be contrary to the evidence, and supposes that the sense of civic duty and the costs of voting is far more important than the possibility of regret of not voting (Mueller, 2003, pp. 308-320).

There is an innate paradox in rational choice theory which arises when we try to weigh the costs and benefits of voting, notably that the sum of utility gained from voting is often lower than the costs of voting. For example, in elections with a large population it is highly unlikely that a voter will cast the vote that determines the election. Thus, there can be little utility gained from casting a vote which does not change anything. The paradox lies in the fact that many people do still vote, thinking that it is unlikely that their vote will change anything (Blais, *To Vote or Not To Vote*, 2000, pp. 2-10).

Within the context of this study, this particular theory of voting may be useful in explaining voting behaviour of my research participants. If participants were to indicate that they vote for a party that is best for them, or a party that would advance their particular interest, this may indicate that they are performing a utility calculation (even if it unbeknownst to them). This is particularly

useful when we also consider social structure theory, mentioned below, because rational choice theory puts a significant onus on an individual, and not the community. Considering then the significant role that community plays, or has played, in many gay people's lives, rational choice theory raises some interesting questions for party choice for gay men.

Further to this, it is interesting to consider how rational choice theory treats the relationship between the voter and the state. Queer people have a different relationship with the state than the heterosexual populace, considering that they have been subject to state-sanctioned discrimination. Queer people may not consider the state in a neutral manner, but rather as a historic oppressor. The literature surveyed does not appear to suggest that rational choice theory accounts for this non-neutral position that queer people may have towards the state. This is another element of rational choice theory that will be explored through the interviews.

### *Proximity and Directional Theories*

The proximity theory of voting is an issues-based theory that suggests people will vote for or support a party which most aligns with their stance on an issue. Evans identifies that issues that drive voters might not be policy related, but instead may also be related to the likeability of the personality of the candidate, wanting to send a message to the 'political elite' by voting for an extremist candidate, or the competency of managing the economy (Evans, 2004, p. 93). When a voter's stance on an important issue is close to a party's position on the same issue, we might say that the voter is 'close' to the party – hence the name 'proximity.'

Proximity theory falls into the wider umbrella of spatial theory of voting, which was first written about by Anthony Downs in 1957 in *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (the same book which Downs popularised rational choice theory), and has been developed by numerous authors since (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989, p. 93).<sup>14</sup> The three main tenets underlying spatial theory, as outlined by George Rabinowitz and Stuart Elaine Macdonald, are "(1) each voter can be represented by a point in some hypothetical space such that the point reflects the person's ideal set of policies, (2) the policy position of each candidate can be represented by a point in the same space, and (3) a voter chooses the candidate whose policy position is closest to his or her own" (1989, p. 93).

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<sup>14</sup> Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) cite the following studies as being key texts in developing Spatial Theory of voting: Davis and Hinich 1966; Davis, Hinich, and Ordeshook 1970; Enelow and Hinich 1982, 1984; Hinich and Pollard 1981 (p. 93).

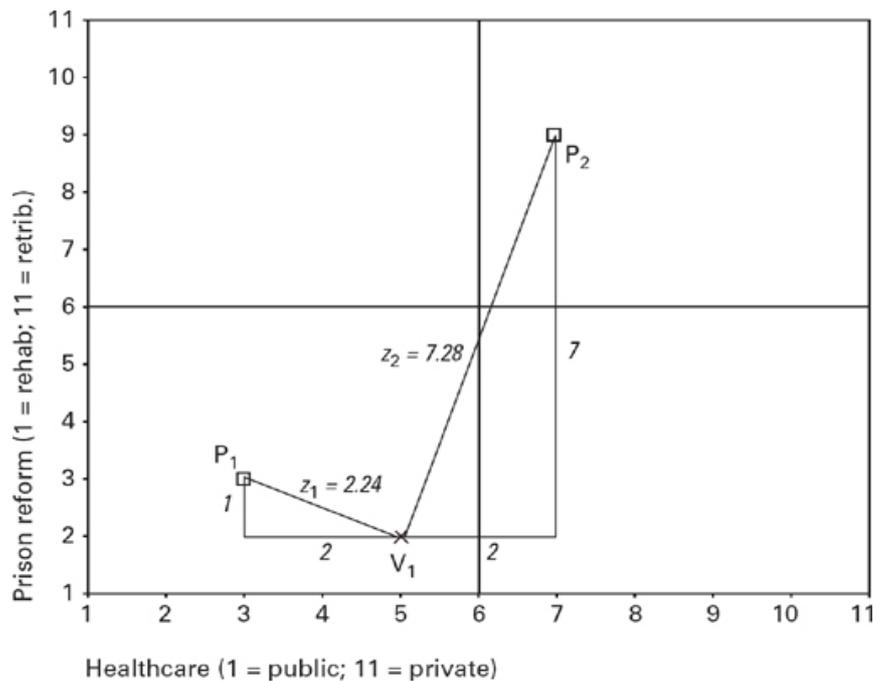


Image 1: Two Dimensional Political Chart showing the distance between a hypothetical voter and two parties. Image Credit: (Evans, 2004, p. 101)

Specifically, proximity theory tells us that we can calculate the distance between a voter's issues and the position of parties, and it is likely that the voter will vote for the party with the least distance between them. One way to do this is by using a two dimensional political chart and plotting how people feel about an issue using a 1-11 scale, and then match that against a political party's position on the same issues. Evans writes that "the most intuitively appealing" way to calculate the distance between voter and party is "[measuring the] Euclidean distance using Pythagoras' Theorem. Simply, the distance between two points is the square root of the sum of the squared lengths of a right-angled triangle where the distance to be estimated forms the hypotenuse. Algebraically:  $z = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$ " (Evans, 2004, p. 98).

Image 1, above, is an example taken from Evans (2004), and shows an imaginary voter (V<sub>1</sub>) who feels that the health care should be subsidised by more publicly run, and who believes strongly that prison reform should focus on rehabilitation and not retribution. P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub> are two parties who both have positions on the two topics. The distance between V<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>1</sub> is less than the distance between V<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub> therefore, all things remaining equal, V<sub>1</sub> will vote for P<sub>1</sub>.

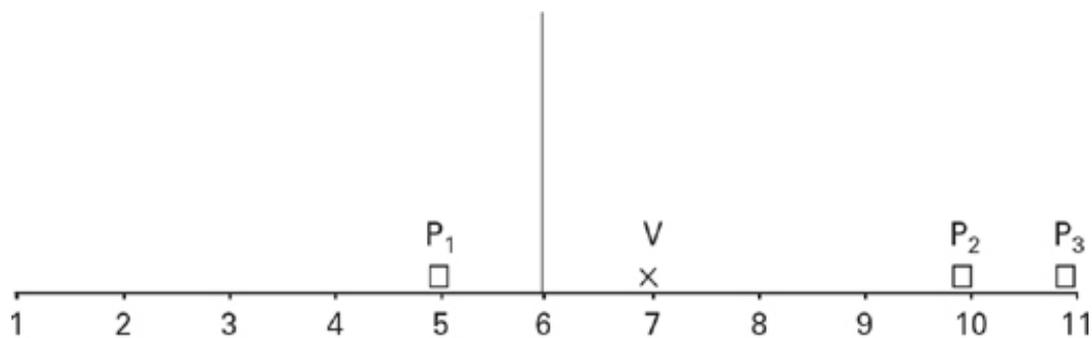
Directional theory offers a critique of proximity theory, and comes from within the school of spatial theories to which both theories belong. Directional theory grew in the 1980s as it became apparent that proximity theory did not do enough to address the cognitive or social biases that humans have (Evans, 2004, pp. 104-107; Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989, p. 94). Whilst academics who wrote about directional theory thought that the data that proximity theorists were using was

correct, they did not believe that there was a correct interpretation of the data (Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989, p. 94).

Rabinowitz and Macdonald, for instance, write that when a voter considers what party they will vote for, as determined by their stance on issues, the intensity of their feelings towards the issue must be accounted for because the knowledge on particular policy stances are likely to be low (1989, pp. 95-95). Evans writes that instead of performing a calculation based on policy bundles, voters perform a two-step psychological calculation:

1. “On which ‘side of the fence’ am I situated as regards this dimension?”
2. How strongly do I feel about this issue?” (2004, p. 107)

This calculation that a voter makes means that when choosing a party to vote for, they have considered which ‘side of the fence’ (i.e. left or right) they, and the party, are on. Voters have also consider how strongly they feel about an issue. Then, Evans writes, voters will vote for parties that are on their side of the fence and have a clear position on the issues that the voter feels strongly about. The below image and example (from Evans, 2004, pp. 108-109) shows three parties ( $P_1$ ,  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$ ) placed on a left-right scale, and a hypothetical voter placed slightly right of centre. Proximity theory tells us that  $V$  is likely to vote for  $P_1$  because it is the closest to the voter. However, directional theory says that there is a cognitive hurdle for  $V$  in voting for  $P_1$  because it is past a self-imposed ideological cut off in so much that it is on the left side of the spectrum. In this instance,  $V$  is more likely to choose  $P_3$  because it offers a clearer position on the issue to the voter than  $P_2$  and is on the ‘correct’ side of the political spectrum.



**Left-Right self-placement (1 = Left; 11 = Right)**

*Image 2: Two Dimensional Political Chart showing the distance between a hypothetical voter and two parties. Image Credit: (Evans, 2004, p. 101)*

Directional theory itself is not without its critics: studies conducted by Kramer found that there was a strong mathematical relationship between the two models, with similar empirical evidence

generated from both (Kramer & Rattinger, 1997, p. 2). Another study found that directional theory did not provide substantial benefits in predicting votes, instead a mixture of both proximity and directional theories was the most accurate way to predicate voting behaviour (Merrill, 1995). This combination is used and praised by Iversen in his research of political leadership and voting in Western Europe (Iversen, 1994).

If the proximity and directional theories of predicting voting hold true for this thesis, and the assumption that gay men support the Labour party (or other-left wing parties), then we might see gay men aligning themselves with the National party, but not voting for them as they are on the right side of the divide. Similarly, we might see the participants identifying with very centrist issues, but the Labour party might be 'too' far left for the self-imposed ideological cut-off.

The application of proximity theory to this study of gay voters is in determining the extent to which gay men identify their place in relation to the party they *did* vote for, as opposed to the parties that they did *not* vote for. For example, we may see participants saying that they feel ideologically close to a party, or that the values that a party has may be similar ideologically to theirs. The results of this will be discussed later.

### *Social Structure Theory*

Social structure voting theory seeks to explain how a person's identity, both individually and as member of a group, impacts the way in which they vote. Social structure theory interprets voting not as a decision-making process, but instead an expression of pre-determined political values which we learn from our positions and interactions within society (Evans, 2004, p. 43). The groups in society to which we might belong are also called social cleavages, as explored below.

Early pioneers of social structure theories were Berelson et al (1954) who developed three theories about ways in which voters may transfer or uphold political views within their social cleavages:

1. *Differentiation*: Those who share common characteristics or identities also share a common interest in how government policy affects them; and
2. *Transmission*: There is an intergenerational passing on of political views from parents or guardians to the child. This transmission of values will often stay with the child for life, who subsequently passes them onto their own children; and
3. *Contact*: Those who must remain in contact with their own group to reinforce the political perspective within the social cleavage. Contact with outside groups may

destabilise the political perspective of the individual(s) (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954, pp. 73-75).

This theory of voting behaviour appears to be perhaps the most pertinent to this study because gay men have shared lived experience and therefore would fit into the above differentiation category of political views. For example, gay men have a shared identity in being gay, and may have similar experiences of homophobia, or depending on their age, might know what life was like when homosexuality was still criminalised. This shared, lived, experience of being gay creates a social cleavage who have a common interest in how homophobic government policy affects them. Peter M. Nardi (1992) wrote that “The friendships formed by a shared marginal identity, thus take on powerful political dimensions as they organize around a stigmatized status to confront the dominant culture in solidarity” (pp. 115-116). However, when we consider the complexity of identity and the socio-political context of belonging to many different cleavages, it can be difficult to determine to which grouping voters may feel an allegiance.

In *American Voter*, Campbell et al (1960) classified spheres of influence as primary and secondary. The primary sphere is relating to an individual’s family, friends, co-workers and neighbours. The primary sphere of influence is said to be the most influential on your political opinion and who you vote for. In comparison, your secondary sphere of influence consists of things such as race, class, and gender. There are many such published examples of this – one notable case study is detailed by Evans (2004) about voters in France. The ideology of a French parent will likely predict the way their child votes, regardless of the child’s own ideological preferences (Evans, *Voters & Voting: An Introduction*, 2004, p. 46). This speaks to the way political preferences are transferred through family structures.

However, this particular theory relating to a focus on familial voting intentions becomes complicated when we attempt to analyse queer families. Whilst attitudes about deviances from the heterosexual norms are becoming more accepted by the general public, the historical attitudes have left a longstanding impact on the notion of family for many in the queer community. Queer people – especially young people - are at an increased risk of being homeless compared to heterosexual people, there is an insecurity in living and working conditions, and historically there were not many options for those who were unduly punished for their sexuality by society (Hertzog, 1996, pp. 24-25; Seaton, 2017; Spero, 2017). Thus arose the idea of ‘chosen family’; when queer people could not live or connect with their biological families, they made their own. This concept has been explored in some length by Kath Weston’s *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gay, Kinship* which suggests that in the absence of biological family, queer people will replace the meaningful connections that

they had (or would be expected to have) with their families, for a familial relationship with their queer friends (Weston, 2005, pp. 116-117; see also Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986). The consequences of these chosen families is political values may not be imbibed through the normal parent-child relationship, because this relationship might not exist.

One application of social structure theory that has been applied often is the investigation of class as a social cleavage for voters. Alan D. Robinson wrote about class voting within the New Zealand in 1967, and suggested that “Preliminary evidence suggests that there is a high political distinctiveness of the professionals, businessmen, and farmers who vote mainly for the National Party; and of ‘blue-collar’ workers, both skilled and unskilled, who vote mainly for the Labour Party” (Robinson, 1967, p. 96). Robinson follows this with the results of a survey conducted in 1962 in the Palmerston North electorate which showed that 100 percent of those who identified as ‘Upper Middle Class’ voted for the National Party, and that 63 percent of those who identified as ‘Working Class’ voted for the New Zealand Labour Party (Robinson, 1967, p. 98). This illustrates that there was a class distinction in terms of voting, at least within a limited New Zealand context.

As a more contemporary piece of writing on the topic – considering Robinson’s work is over 50 years old – we can look to Martin Elff and Sigrid Rossteutscher (2011) who looked at the role of class and religion of who voters supported within the German electoral system post-reunification. By utilising voting figures from 1994 to 2009, the authors established a list of coefficients on how likely members of different classes and religious denominations are to vote for parties, compared to the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Elff & Rossteutscher, 2011, pp. 116-117). Elff and Rossteutscher found that, within the German context, voters within some classes or religious cleavages are substantially more likely to support a certain party. For example, manual workers are far more likely than the self-employed to vote for the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Elff & Rossteutscher, 2011, p. 117). Furthermore, the more often a person attends church the more likely they are to support the Christian Democratic Union over the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and Catholics are more likely to vote for the Christian Democratic Union than Protestants, whether or not they go to church (Elff & Rossteutscher, 2011, p. 118).

An interesting perspective in the narrative of the class voting is the election of President Trump in 2016. In *Trump Voters and the White Working Class* Morgan and Lee write that 28 percent of those who voted for Trump in 2016 either voted for Obama or were non-voters in the 2012 election (Morgan & Lee, 2018, p. 240). Those who switched from Obama to Trump were disproportionately white and working class, and those who switched from nonvoters to Trump

were disproportionately white (Morgan & Lee, 2018, p. 240). Many left-wing and labour-related news outlets said that the Democratic Party must wrestle the working class vote from the Republicans if they want to win in the future (Foer, 2017; Klain, 2018; Teixeira, 2018; Zweig, 2017)

Whilst there may be many instances of class being used as a means of electoral analysis – both historically and in the current climate, class is increasingly seen by some as an obsolete social cleavage when investigating electoral participation. Ronald Inglehart wrote that there has been a shift towards postmodern values within industrial countries that has “brought a shift from political cleavages based on social class conflict towards cleavages based on cultural issues and quality of life concerns” (Inglehart, 1997, p. 237).

Further to this claim around postmodernism eroding the social cleavages which used to play an important role in elections, Elff and Rossteutscher make a further contribution to this literature. The authors say that there has been an eroding of the relationship between parties and voters, with parties no longer mobilising their historical voting base to win elections. And with voters no longer feeling like they belong in one particular cleavage in society, which can be attributed to the long-term process of individualisation in society (Elff & Rossteutscher, 2011, p. 107).

Herein lies a problem with applying social structure theories of voting to queer people. As with members of certain classes or other social cleavages, the queer community is not a homogenous group whose members are confined to one geographical region, class, or education level.

Therefore, when conducting this investigation using interviews it will be useful to see if gay people believe themselves to be a part of a social cleavage, and look at the ramifications that has on how political values are transmitted. For instance, do gay men feel like they are part of a community? Does this sense of community translate to a shared electoral vote? Do they feel that their family’s political views affect their own? How does the complexity of one’s identity across different cleavages affect the way gay men vote?

## *Conclusion*

This chapter has provided an overview of rational choice, proximity, and social structure theories of voting. I have demonstrated that there is a distinct gap in the voting theory literature when it comes to predicting how gay men vote. I have also shown how interview responses will fit into each of the theories. The next chapter provides a brief overview of the existing literature about how queer people, especially gay men, vote in other countries.

## Chapter Four: Queer Men Voting

Little peer-reviewed literature exists about how gay men vote, but by drawing together the existing peer-reviewed publications and articles published in the news media it is possible to get a holistic view about the electoral political participation of gay men in general. This chapter analyses evidence from the United States of America, Canada, some European countries, and Australia, and shows that in North America there is a strong preference for left-wing parties, and in Europe it is more divided.

### *United States of America*

Leading up to the 1992 Presidential Election between George Bush Snr. and Bill Clinton, gay rights were a large part of the discussion about the social policies of the Republicans and Democrats. One reason for this was Bush's decision to keep all discriminatory policies in his policy platform, including the indiscriminate ban on queer people serving in the military and keeping marriage between men and women. During Bush's tenure, the LGBT Republican group was not allowed to present at the GOP conference, the only openly-gay staffer on Bush's campaign was forced to step down because of pressure from the religious right, and President Bush said that same-sex parenting was "abnormal" (Hertzog, 1996, p. 3).

Clinton ran a different campaign in 1992: he appointed an HIV-positive man as his environmental advisor, promised more money for HIV/AIDS research, and promised to repeal the ban on queer people serving in the military if he was elected (Hertzog, 1996, p. 4; Proctor, 2016, p. 152). These two vastly different campaigns were an early signal of the approach that the two major parties in America would take towards queer issues, and the subsequent support each party would get from the queer community.

Perrella, Brown and Kay investigated the links between the queer community and the two major political parties in the United States in their 2012 study *Voting Behaviour among the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Electorate*. They found that in 2003 the queer community was leaning towards Green and independent candidates more than ever before (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012). Further, they found that a majority of the LGBT respondents who participated in a 2007 online poll showed that between 83 percent and 88 percent of participants identified with the Democratic Party. However, another survey showed that there may not be much party loyalty, as between a quarter and third of the queer community voted Republican in the presidential and mid-terms in

the 1990s, which was again repeated in the 2010 US midterm elections (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012).

In 2007, the *Los Angeles Times* published the results of poll of 12,000 self-identifying gay men, and 10,000 lesbians. The survey showed that 92.5 percent of gay men voted in the 2004 presidential election, and nearly 84 percent in the 2006 midterm election (Frederick, 2007). Whilst the survey does not say who the men voted for it is a strong indicator that turnout is considerably higher than the heterosexual community, considering that only 61 percent of the general population voted in 2004, and approximately 40 percent voted in 2006 (Frederick, 2007). This high voter turnout could be as a result of a strong, community led push to register and turn out the vote in the 1990s and early 2000s. One such example is the 1996 'Promote the Vote' movement, co-ordinated by National Association of Lesbian & Gay Community Centres which aimed to register and mobilise over 190,000 gay and lesbians voters in the November elections of that year (Stilp, 1996).

Exit polls after the 2008 United States presidential election show that Obama did markedly worse than his Democratic predecessor John Kerry had done in the 2004 presidential election, with the lesbian and gay community voting 70 percent for Obama and 77 percent for Kerry (Silver, 2008). However, in 2012, Obama became more popular to the American queer public: a sample of 6566 people, of whom 6515 were queer, 5862 voted for Obama and only 411 voted for his Republican rival Mitt Romney (Community Marketing Inc, 2012). Obama's popularity with the queer community was credited by some as giving him the edge in a tight election (Cohen, 2012). This popularity could be explained by the plethora of equality legislation Obama pushed through, and executive orders signed. These included legislation prohibiting employment discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, allowing openly queer people to serve in the military, and ending the ban on people with HIV entering the United States, amongst others (Appelbaum & Shear, 2016; Lee, 2010; Zeleny, 2009).

There is little academic work about how queer people voted in the 2016 US presidential election, however there is journalistic work and exit polls which allow us to construct a picture of how queer people participated in the election. Arwa Mahdawi writes in the guardian that Donald Trump has a small but vocal group of queer backers, and that the LGBT 'Log Cabin' Republicans had an increase in membership after Donald Trump became a nominee and then President (Mahdawi, 2017). The Pew Research Centre's 'American Trends Panel' canvasses people's thoughts and feelings towards different politicians and policies by letting them rank a subject from 0 (very cold) to 100 (very warm). The 2016 American Trends Panel, conducted before the election, showed that 89 percent of LGB voters gave Trump a rating of 'cold,' and 54 percent gave him a score of 0 out

of 100 (Kiley & Maniam, 2016). Conversely, 61 percent of LGB voters rated Hillary Clinton warm, including 36 percent of whom ranked her very warm (Kiley & Maniam, 2016).

The New York Times published an exit poll of 24,537 voters leaving 350 voting places on Election Day, which shows that 14 percent of queer Americans voted for Trump, and 78 percent for Hillary Clinton (Huang, Jacoby, Strickland, & Lai, 2016). This is a swing of 10 points for the Democrats, based on the 2012 election.

There is the popular political adage that ‘A man who has not been a liberal before 25 has no heart, If he remains one after 25 he has no head’ does not seem to hold true for the queer community within the American context, as Robert Bailey explores in their book *Gay Politics, Urban Politics* (1999). Using the 1992 Voter Research and Surveys data, Bailey points out that “self-identified lesbians and gay men were more liberal than the non-gay sample in every single age cohort” (Bailey, 1999, p. 103). Further to this, the queer people under 50 who were sampled were much more likely to be registered Democrats, and across all age brackets queer people were less likely to be Republicans (Bailey, 1999, p. 103).

Perrella, Brown, and Kay posit several hypotheses for the queer support for the Democrats, which can also be analogous to the Labour party in the New Zealand context. They suggest that the Democratic Party has a history of using the political process as a means of fighting human rights, equality and social benefits. Further, with the increased party polarisation of issues, the stance which the Democratic Party has taken tends to be more in line with the overall stance that LGBT community has, especially, the authors note, the Democratic Party’s stance on homosexual rights. The authors of this study suggest that distinctive partisan difference and ideological divide between the Republicans and the Democrats means that the community is closer ideologically to the Democrats, and thus votes for them (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012). This appears to fit within the proximity theory of voting.

Perrella, Brown, and Kay also suggest that the predisposition that the queer community has towards the Democratic Party is because of a general collective left-wing ideology that exists amongst queer people. This study cites that the queer community tends to be more progressive on positions such as the environment, the role of government, and the Iraq War (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012, p. 92). One explanation for this collective ideology is that by labelling yourself as queer or LGBT, which is a politicised act, one is declaring one’s views about acceptance of minority groups and of wider societal norms. Therefore, the act of labelling yourself as queer or LGBT is in fact labelling themselves as left wing (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012). But, this explanation hypothesised does not account for those who identify as gay, but are also Republicans.

Another similar hypothesis for the collective ideology that Perrella, Brown and Kay offer is that of the ‘conversion’ idea. This hypothesis states that when a ‘straight’ person experiences self-realisation that they are not straight, and accept that they are queer, they gain new insight into their assumptions about society and greater sympathy for marginalised groups. This self-realisation tends to make them left wing (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012). Further to this, the authors claim that there is an embedded political culture amongst queer people. Since, historically, the queer community has been – at times – a radical community, these views and values have become ingrained in the community (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012).

Both the collective ideology and conversion ideas that Perrella, Brown and Kay detail are useful to consider in the context of Aotearoa. If the collective ideology hypothesis is true, then by identifying as queer or as a member of the LGBT community, voters would vote for left-wing parties such as Labour or the Greens because of a worldview that is innate to your identity. In terms of the ‘conversion’ hypothesis, there has been a strong culture of left-wing activism in queer circles in Aotearoa (see: x x x x). Therefore this left-wing activism *may* be embedded in the political culture of queer people Aotearoa.

### *Canada*

If we shift now to the Canadian context, Perrella, Brown and Kay note that there are difficulties in comparing the American and Canadian situations, as the polarisation of moral issues by parties does not necessarily apply to the Canadian political climate. This is because the Canadian electoral system uses a Proportional Representation system which removes the monopoly that parties can have on certain issues within a two-party system (such as abortion, immigration, etc.). Nevertheless, the authors note that whilst there is not the level of polarisation, there still exists a continuum in which the political parties can be placed and that those on the right of the continuum tend to be less gay-friendly than those on the left (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012, p. 93).

In 2006 there was an online survey done by Ipsos Reid on the Canadian Election Day. There were 35,000 respondents to the survey, and 1300 of those respondents indicated that they were a member of the LGBT community (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012, p. 93). There are some barriers to this research, in terms of the participants of the survey. The difficulty in opt-in surveys is that the participants might not be entirely representative of wider demographics in society. However, the authors used two strategies to overcome this sample bias. First, they compared the Ipsos participants to those who participated in the Canadian Election Study results. They pooled the

surveys together, and tested against a series of regression models based on common variables. They found that there were few discrepancies between the two, making the authors confident that sampling biases in the Ipsos were modest – at least to the benchmark of the Canadian Election Study (Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012).

The authors’ second strategy was to create demographic profiles of those who participated in the Canadian Election Study and compare those against the Ipsos participants to reveal they were similar demographics and voting behaviour, thus making an acceptable profile of the Canadian electorate. The authors of the study were satisfied that the results, tabled below, of the Ipsos poll were acceptable (adapted from: Perrella, Brown, & Kay, 2012, p. 98).

Table 5: 2006 Canadian Election Breakdown by Sexuality				
Vote Distribution				
	Outside Quebec		Quebec	
	LGBT	Others	LGBT	Others
Conservatives	10.00 percent	43.70 percent	8.20 percent	26.30 percent
Liberals	47.90 percent	31.40 percent	15.30 percent	14.90 percent
New Democratic Party	42.20 percent	24.90 percent	15.30 percent	8.70 percent
Bloc Quebecois	--	--	61.20 percent	50.10 percent
Number	823	24528	379	8079

Table 5 shows that both within and outside of Quebec, queer people supported the left wing New Democratic Party and the centrist Liberals more than the general population did, and voted far less for the Conservatives. Interestingly, within Quebec, queer people overwhelmingly supported the centre-left Quebecois-nationalist ‘Bloc Quebecois,’ more than any other party and more than the heterosexual population.

The relatively high-support for the Liberals in the 2006 election from queer people may be because of the passing of same-sex marriage laws in 2005, under a Liberal government (Smith, 2015, p. 49). This support comes despite the Liberals voting overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution introduced to the House of Commons by the Conservatives in 1999 to reaffirm that marriage is a union between a man and a woman (Lunman & Taber, 2018; Makarenko, 2007; Tuns, 2005). In addition to this, the Liberals passed a clause in the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act* that explicitly states that act does not affect the meaning of the word ‘marriage,’ which is “the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others” (Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act 2000, p. 3; see also Copley, 2018).

There are several hypotheses that might be able to explain away this tension. For example, it might suggest that voters do not care about what a party has done in the past, as long as it is advocating the morally correct policy now. Or, that other policies that the Liberal party are running on are more important to queer voters than their historical homophobia. As there is no literature to answer these questions, they must stay as hypotheses. The hypotheses are also interesting in the context of this study: will gay men in Aotearoa forgive the National party for their historical homophobia? If the gay men have not forgiven them, will National's policies be able to sway voters over? These will be discussed later in this thesis.

## Europe

Canvassing the literature on queer voting in Europe, as with North America, presents a host of challenges. Little peer reviewed work exists, and in many cases the literature is not readily available in English. Often what is reported and written on is queer right-wing engagement, which is perhaps telling in and of itself: as gay people being right-wing is newsworthy then there must be a widely-held assumption of gay people being left-wing – otherwise it would not make the news.

The European political climate is one of ongoing polarisation as evidenced by Brexit, the rise of Nationalism in many countries, ongoing immigration from Syria and the Middle East, and Russia destabilising the region. There appears to be a trend of right-wing parties capitalising on the European instability to market their agenda towards gay men. The following is a brief canvassing of this position.

In the most recent French national election, the nationalist National Rally (formerly the National Front), led by Marine Le Pen, broadened its support amongst the queer community by appealing to the French homosexual voting base by portraying her party as protecting the interests of the community (Feder & Buet, 2017). For example, the National Rally has opposed the 'Islamification' of France and the threat it opposes to secular values – values which are believed to protect minority groups such as gay men (Feder & Buet, 2017). In Bordeaux, five gay men were murdered over a two month period, with the blame being put on Bordeaux's Muslim community (Halliburton, 2015, p. 22). The result of this was a level of xenophobia and islamophobia projected by some in the queer community towards the Muslim and Arab community (Halliburton, 2015, p. 22).

The National Rally also has gay men in positions of influence within the party, increasing their visibility amongst the queer constituency. Notable is the former Vice President of the National

Rally, Florian Philippot, who was outed in December 2014 by a tabloid newspaper (The Times, 2014). Further to this Sebastien Chenu, a high profile conservative homosexual politician, has recently joined the National Rally and became a Member of Parliament representing the party (The Times, 2014, p. 36).

There is further evidence of Marine Le Pen's support as is shown by a poll undertaken by the dating-app Hornet. Hornet ran a poll of French users which shows that 63.5 percent of survey participants were intending to vote for Macron, whilst 36.5 percent were intending to vote for Le Pen. An age breakdown of this survey showed that the 18-29 age category exceeded 40 percent support for Le Pen, and 49 percent of the 25 year old respondents were intending to vote for Le Pen (Hornet, 2017).

This support for Le Pen is interesting as it appears that, to some extent, the gay supporters are voting against their own interests in so much that Le Pen has promised in the past to abolish same sex marriage. This offers an interesting perspective into voting intentions and electoral participation. In particular when considering Rational Choice Theory, it could be that when French gay men are deciding who to vote for, conceptions of safety provide a higher utility than conceptions of equality.

The Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) party is a far right populist party in Germany, which won 92 seats in the Bundestag in the 2017 election – the first time since World War Two that a nationalist party has won any seats (Connolly, 2017). The AfD opposes same-sex marriage, and does not want sexuality to be taught to children – calling it 'early sexualisation' (Luyken, 2017). Despite this, in 2017 Weidel was elected to be co-leader of the AfD, even though she is a lesbian. When asked if there was a contradiction with her sexuality and the party's position of opposing same-sex marriage Weidel was quoted as saying: "The legal situation is very clear. For gay couples there is civil partnership which entails equal rights on tax and inheritance"; in her view civil partnerships are equal to marriages (Luyken, 2017).

The head of AfD's LGBTQ group, Alex Tassis, said that whilst the AfD officially opposes marriage equality, they frame it as a "luxury problem" when compared to the perceived Islamisation of Germany and the threatening of 'German Values' (Rogers, 2017). This appears to be a similar approach to overcoming the contradiction in values that the French National Rally supporters expressed, and the party played on. Further evidence of this approach is a billboard in Berlin which the AfD paid for which depicts a homosexual couple with the text "My partner and I don't want to get to meet Muslim immigrants who believe that our love is a deadly sin" (Rogers, 2017).

CNN reported about a gay German man who started to support the AfD after being ignored by local prosecutors and the mayor's office. 'Karsten P' and his partner were attacked by two men who were identified as Muslim extremists, and before their capture by the police they escaped to Syria (Shuber, Schmidt, & Vonberg, 2017). The same article cites a 2016 survey from the gay magazine 'MEN' which showed that 17 percent of respondents supported the AfD, which when contrasted to the 12.6 percent of the vote the AfD received on election day, may suggest a stronger level of support from queer men than from the general population (Shuber, Schmidt, & Vonberg, 2017).

Patrick Wielowiejski, a PhD candidate studying queer AfD members, said that the AfD's support from homosexuals comes from the groundwork laid by 80s and 90s gay liberation activists who pursued an assimilationist agenda. As gay liberation activists secured themselves as a minority group in society, it enabled them to feel part of the German national identity (even if it is a minority part), thus allowing gay people to buy into nationalist movement as they felt they were part of the nation (and would defend their position) (Rogers, 2017).

In the 2015 election in the United Kingdom it appeared that the three major parties, Labour, Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats, were all courting the queer vote by advocating and promising policies that would benefit the queer community (Adams, 2015). Labour was pledging to tackle an internationalist stance on reducing global inequalities for queer people, amongst other things (McCormick, 2015; see also The Labour Party, 2015, p. 101). The Conservatives were pledging to ban conversion therapy, and were championing the same sex marriage legislation that passed while the Conservatives were in government – even though 133 Conservative MPs (a majority) voted against it (McCormick, 2015). The Liberal Democrats were promising to extend the ability for British embassies to administer same-sex marriages, even if one of the partners was not British (Wright, 2015). Further to this effort in courting the gay vote, Labour, Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats all attended a debate at the London South Bank University on LGBT rights (London South Bank University, 2015).

Leading up to the 2015 election, the Conservatives and Labour party had their highest support levels from the queer community since the Pink News website had started conducting surveys, and were both on 26 percent (Rhoden-Paul, 2015). In the 2017 election, the Conservatives had increased their support again to 32 percent, but had lost their competitiveness with the Labour party which was sitting on 44 percent (Butterworth, 2017).<sup>15</sup> One theory for the Conservatives not

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted to the reader that these surveys do not meet a high rigour of scientific testing. The survey is opt-in, based on website visits. The inclusion of the survey data should only serve as a broad indicator of trends.

increasing as much as Labour did with the queer electorate could be Theresa May's tenure as leader and Prime Minister. May voted against the repeal of the homophobic Section 28 legislation, against gay adoption, and missed votes on the Gender Recognition Act 2004 – legislation that would have enabled trans people to legally change their gender to suit their preferences (Abraham, 2017). The gain in popularity made by Labour and the Conservatives ultimately came at the demise of minor parties, including the Greens and the Liberal Democrats.

Peter Whittle, a United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) candidate, said that gay men are more likely to be right wing, are involved in politics at a disproportionately higher rate than heterosexuals, and that lesbians are more likely to be left wing because of women's liberation struggle (Stone, 2015). However, the aforementioned 2017 survey conducted by Pink News found that 0 percent of the respondents were going to vote for UKIP (Butterworth, 2017).

### *Australia*

In Australia there is little evidence to show how queer people participate in the electoral systems, but in his book *Pink Ink* (2016) Bill Calder explored the relationship between queer people, queer media and political parties. Calder writes that in 1970s Australia there was not much of a consideration of a queer voting block by political parties, and instead the extent to which queer people would be involved in establishment politics would often be in a semi-satirical way. One example is David Widdup's 1972 run for the federal seat of Lowe in New South Wales against the sitting Prime Minister Billy McMahon in which Widdup ran as a CAMP candidate with the slogan "I've got my eyes on Billy's seat" (Calder, 2016, p. 129; see also Hallett, 2017). Another gay candidate was Peter Blazey in 1978 who ran for the New South Wales' Earwood electorate under the slogan: "Put a Poofster in Parliament" (Calder, 2016, p. 129). Both campaigns were unsuccessful.

In the 2014 Victoria State Election, the Australian Green party used the gay dating/sex app Grindr to advertise Sam Hibbins, their candidate for the Prahran electorate (Cook, 2014). The seat of Prahran is multicultural and diverse, and the Australian Greens were trying to tap into this market by using Grindr as an avenue to get gay voters to election events, and to vote for them. Sam Hibbins went on to win the seat, with a slim majority over the Liberal party candidate. Hibbins' use of Grindr as an electioneering tool took hold with two queer candidates (one Labor and one Independent candidate) using it in the New South Wales State Election (Carney, 2015).

Whilst not explicitly about who queer people vote for, there is interesting data available from Williams and Sawyer's chapter in *Double Disillusion: The 2016 Australian Federal Election (2018)* about queer people standing as candidates in the 2016 election. There were a record number of openly queer candidates, with at least six independents or minor party candidates, six for the Liberals, seven for Labor, and 23 for the Greens (Williams & Sawyer, 2018, p. 646). After the 2016 election, there were four queer politicians in the House of Representatives, and four in the Senate, making the queer total 3 percent and 5 percent in each house, respectively (Williams & Sawyer, 2018, p. 647). It is difficult to extrapolate this information into how queer people vote, however on a surface level we may be able to interpret this as showing the different levels of commitment the different parties have to chasing the queer vote.

## Conclusion

This chapter canvassed the literature on how queer men vote which has emerged from the United States of America, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, and to a lesser extent, Australia. We can observe that in North America there seems to be a trend of left or left-of-centre parties still having a large share of the vote among queer voters, despite narratives to the contrary. In continental Europe there appears to be growing electoral support for right or far-right parties, as evidenced in France and Germany. In Australia there is no meaningful data on how gay men vote, but there is evidence to show that left or left-of-centre parties actively chase the vote of gay men. It will be interesting to see if these international trends are also occurring in Aotearoa, a question I explore in the following chapters.

## Chapter Five: Methodology

This study has utilised a mixed method approach to answer my research questions: which political parties do gay men in New Zealand vote for, and why do they vote for those parties? In the first section of this chapter I will explore and justify the mixed method approach taken by this research. Then I will provide a breakdown of the quantitative and qualitative approaches used in the research before discussing the research framework and as the ethical challenges and choices that arose as I undertook this research.

### Methodological Approach

I used a mixed method approach to answering my research questions, running both quantitative and qualitative lines of inquiry. The reasons I used mixed methods is twofold: it is the most appropriate to answer the research questions, and the evidence appears to show that it is the best approach to researching queer communities.

Tashakkori and Teddlie suggest that the researcher will choose the method most suitable to answer the research questions, thus my choice of both of quantitative and qualitative analysis (1998, p. 21). My first research question is best answered by using large scale surveys, whilst the second research question is better answered by more intimate interviews. Following from this, mixed methodologies enables a more comprehensive answer to the research questions posed then the use of a single approach. This is echoed by Brewer and Hunter who write that using mixed methods enables researchers to “attack a research problem with an arsenal of methods that have nonoverlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strengths” (2006, p. 4).

Further, using a mixed methods approach also allows researchers to engage with communities whose members are traditionally ‘invisible’ subjects of research, and to a higher level than using quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Invisible subjects are those whom research and researchers have traditionally not investigated, or indeed face ethical, social, or political barriers to researching, therefore are underreported in scholarly work (Trau, Härtel, & Härtel, 2012). Research suggests that qualitative research, whilst not guaranteeing engagement with invisible communities, allows participants to engage in a more meaningful way than some other methods (Hash & Cramer, 2003; Liamputtong, 2007; Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, 2010; Fenge & Jones, 2012). Given

this ability to interact with invisible communities, it has long been the tool of those who research queer communities (Browne, 2008; Browne, 2010).

Having said this, quantitative methods also offer a way in which queer people can engage in research in ethical and affirming ways, as Browne does in her 2008 study *Selling My Queer Soul or Queering Quantitative Research?*. Browne writes that when she administered a survey at the Pride festival in Brighton & Hove in the United Kingdom, she had an opportunity to engage in the process of creating and recreating the survey. The questions were responsive to a steering committee which helped guide the questions, and in doing so, they queered the survey process. An example of queered questions that Browne used is asking participants to identify their sexuality as well as identifying the gender of the people they have sex with as two separate questions, when they would ordinarily be posed as the same question (Browne, 2008, p. 6). This reflects both the complexity of queer identities, and is informed by decades of research with men who have sex with men, but do not identify as gay.

In this way, queered quantitative research has the ability to reach invisible communities. Quantitative research, in the form of surveys, offers the anonymity that many participants seek. We can even allegorise anonymous surveys as gloryholes in a public bathroom, or indeed a dark room in a sex club. There is an anonymised transmission of substance, provided the conditions are adequate. Those who would not engage in focus groups or interviews, for fear of outing themselves, can engage in surveys from the safety of their own closet.

My research has a convergent parallel design: both the quantitative and qualitative stages ran concurrently, but were independent of each other, and I merged the data at the end to answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The convergent parallel design method was originally conceptualised as the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods to produce results; one method informed the other in either conception or design but over time the two have evolved into the convergent parallel framework (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Morse, 1991). John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark (2011) write that the purpose of convergent design is to “bring together the different strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses” of qualitative and quantitative methods (p. 77). This echoes my choice of mixed methods, to attack the research questions with the best arsenal of methodical tools available.

Below, I explore the two quantitative and qualitative approaches taken, before concluding with some remarks about the ethical concerns of this research process, and steps to mitigate these concerns.

## Quantitative Approach

The quantitative arm of this research uses the data from the New Zealand Attitude and Values Study (NZAVS), and the New Zealand Election Study (NZES). Below, I will give background information about the two studies and the data.

The NZAVS is a longitudinal study of “social attitudes, personality and health outcomes” of people who reside in Aotearoa (The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study, n.d.). NZAVS began in 2009, and is continuing for another ten years. NZAVS is a university-led research project. Data from NZAVS has been used in reports about public perception of euthanasia in New Zealand (Dutt, et al., 2016), experiences of material deprivation in New Zealand (Newton, et al., 2016), and the rates of cyberbullying of men and women in New Zealand (Steiner-Fox, et al., 2016). One of the contributing academics to the NZAVS, Greaves, has published data about queer people, but otherwise the data has largely not been analysed in a way which puts queer people in the centre of the research (see: Greaves, et al., 2017a; Greaves, et al., 2017c).

The New Zealand Election Study (NZES) is a comprehensive postal, telephone and internet survey which explores how voters responded to parties, party leaders, and how they voted. The NZES began in its modern form in 1990 following the election, and has continued every three years since (Vowles, 2000). The NZES takes a mixed method approach to getting participants to engage with the survey, with the initial survey being posted out, followed by reminder letters, telephone calls for those who do not respond, and since 2005 the selected participants can complete the survey through the internet (Vowles, 2015).<sup>16</sup>

The New Zealand Election Study will be used within my research to provide a detailed profile of the gay voter within New Zealand. For the first time since the modern survey began, the 2017 NZES asked participants to identify their sexuality. This has enabled this research to create a detailed profile of the gay voter. When used in conjunction with the *Lavender Islands* study, a comprehensive health study of the queer population which also looked at voting, and the data from the NZAVS we can see a general trend of voting behaviour emerge.

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<sup>16</sup> For more information about the New Zealand Election Study, the reader should visit <http://www.nzes.org/>. The website has a directory of all the data from the studies from 1990-2014, and from 2019 the 2017 data will also be available.

The 2017 New Zealand Election Study had 3455 participants, of which 42.2 percent were male, 55.5 percent were female, 0.3 percent were gender diverse and a further 1.9 percent did not fill out the gender section (New Zealand Election Study, 2017). Table 6 (below) details the sexuality of the participants of the New Zealand Election Study. Of all the participants, only 1.4 percent ( $n=48$ ) identified as gay or lesbian, whilst 89.6 percent identified as straight ( $n=3095$ ). This is a small dataset, however it is still useful to this study in conjunction with the other data, and the interviews.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Heterosexual or 'straight'	3095	89.6	95.2	95.2
	2. Gay or lesbian	48	1.4	1.5	96.6
	3. Bisexual, bicurious, pansexual, or open	79	2.3	2.4	99.1
	4. Asexual	30	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	3252	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	203	5.9		
Total		3455	100.0		

It is important to note that there is a discrepancy between the NZES, and the results of the general election. For example, in the 2017 election, the National party received 44.4 percent of the total vote, but in the New Zealand Election Study, 36.2 percent of all respondents who answered the question about which party they voted for in the 2017 election, indicated that they voted for the National Party. This is nearly a 10 percent disparity between the survey and the election results. In Table 7, below, I have detailed the actual results and the NZES results.

Party	NZES Results	2017 Election Results
National Party	36.2 percent	44.4 percent
Labour Party	34.8 percent	36.9 percent
New Zealand First Party	6.9 percent	7.2 percent
Green Party	7.6 percent	6.3 percent
ACT New Zealand	0.4 percent	0.5 percent
The Opportunities Party	3.1 percent	2.4 percent
Māori Party	2.5 percent	1.2 percent
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party	0.1 percent	0.3 percent
Conservative	0.1 percent	0.2 percent
MANA	0.2 percent	0.1 percent
Ban 1080	0.1 percent	0.1 percent
Did not fill out this question	7.1 percent	N/A

As Table 7 shows, there are discrepancies between the actual election results, and the NZES data. Whilst the data is still useful for my study despite these discrepancies, we can go some way in explaining them away. Firstly, 7.1 percent of those who participated in the NZES did not answer the question about who they voted for. If they did answer the question, we may have seen a redistribution of the votes which would better reflect the 2017 election. Further to this, it would not be uncontroversial to claim that National would have picked up some, if not many, of the votes as I believe the ‘shy Tory’ phenomenon could have been a factor in this.

The ‘shy Tory’ factor is a polling error, first discovered during the British General Election in 1992, when there was a substantial discrepancy between those who said they were going to vote for the Conservative Party and the final results on Election Day (Singh, 2015). In the lead up the election, polling was showing that the results would either be a hung parliament, or a slim Labour majority – after the election the Conservatives had a 12-seat majority. Most of this difference was people responding ‘Don’t Know’ or ‘Won’t Say’ and then voting for the Conservatives; there was little evidence of party switching close to the Election Day (Jowell, Hedges, Lynn, Farrant, & Heath, 1993, pp. 245-249). The ‘shy Tory’ hypothesis is, therefore, that some people are reluctant to say they vote Conservative because of the social backlash they may receive. Instead, they indicate ‘don’t know’ or ‘won’t say’ (Sturgis, et al., 2016).

Considering then, as only one gay men responded to the question of ‘who did you vote for in the 2017 election’ by leaving it blank, we can assume that this is will not be a significant barrier in

analysis based on the NZES data. Further, as I will explore later, the gay male vote mirrors very closely the actual election results.

Secondly, 22.8 percent of those who participated in the NZES identified as Māori which is significantly higher than the 2015 population estimate of 15.5 percent (New Zealand Election Study, 2017; Ministry of Health, 2018). Since Māori don't vote for the National Party as much as they vote for the Labour or Māori Party, this may go some way in explaining some of the difference between the survey results and Election Day results. Further to this, 19.2 percent of the gay male NZES respondents identified that their primary ethnicity was Māori. Whilst this is higher than the national average, it is still lower than the average of all the NZES respondents, which may aid further in contributing to a more proportional sample.

### Qualitative Approach

My qualitative approach involved undertaking semi-structured interviews, accompanied by an individual survey with the participant. This interview enabled me to understand the participant's voting behaviour, whilst the survey that accompanied it offered a quantitative approach to gathering additional information, including how the participant felt on certain issues.

A significant barrier to conducting this research was the recruitment of participants in Dunedin for the interviews. Dunedin is a student town, with tertiary students making up one fifth of the entire population of the small city (Elder, 2013; Morris, 2018). As a student town, there is a level of embedded 'lad culture' amongst its inhabitants, as has been documented in numerous other university towns (Jackson, Dempster, & Pollard, 2014; Phipps & Young, 2015; Reisz, 2014). Lad culture can be seen as an expression of hegemonic masculinity, which is characterised by men asserting their dominance through displays of physicality, violence, aggression, misogyny, and homophobia (Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2012; Phipps & Young, 2015).

The link between laddism and a barrier to recruiting participants is the closet and a culture of homophobia that seems to be pervasive in Dunedin. When recruiting participants via social media on a local Facebook group, the majority of the comments were straight lads, tagging each other in what appeared to be jest, with the implication that participating would make them gay, which was either funny and shameful – or both. I have attached a screenshot of a small section of the

comments as Image 3, with their last names blurred to protect their identities. My belief that laddism played a barrier in my recruitment was further highlighted in a conversation with one of my participants who is based in Dunedin. In a conversation with the participant, I mentioned that I was struggling to recruit participants, and he said that he was not surprised; that even his boyfriend would never participate in a study like this, because it is not what gay men in Dunedin do. This suggests that there is an expectation that gay men must act like the lads and uphold the hegemonic masculinity that pervades Dunedin society.

Initially, my research had planned to utilise focus groups, as there is substantial literature that suggests that focus groups produces good results when researching queer people and/or sensitive topics (Alessi, Sapiro, Kahn, & Craig, 2017; Goldey, Posh, Bell, & Anders, 2016).

Further, focus groups are less time consuming than individual interviews, which is beneficial for those researchers who are short on time. However, after conducting my first semi-structured focus groups, I realised that this was not the most suitable method of inquiry for my research, as the contrasting political opinions within the group created an environment which was antithetical to open, honest, and frank discussions about politics. Too much time was spent on debating the others' political opinions, and not enough time generating data which I could use in my research. As an aside, this is perhaps reflective of the current political environment that we find ourselves in. In the age of increased political polarisation, it appears that the ability to have civil and constructive group discussions about politics is diminishing (for more on this, see Kousser, 2018 and McCoy, 2018).

After the first focus group, therefore, I moved to using semi-structured interviews, which took the form of responsive interviews or extended conversations. The purpose of having an extended



Image 3: Dunedin locals 'tagging' their friends in a recruitment post

conversation was to make the participant feel comfortable, as talking about politics can still be seen as a taboo. I largely used the guidelines for responsible interviewing that Rubin & Rubin propose: being empathic, being conversational, being semi-structured, and linking the questions together (2005, pp. 108-128). This interview produced better quality data than the focus group, and also felt more respectful and comfortable for the participants.

I have attached my interview questions and prompts as Appendix One. These demonstrate that I loosely based the questions around the voting theory explored above, and also the key overarching research questions.<sup>17</sup> Testing the applicability of voting theory required certain prompts: for example, testing the social structure voting theory required questions to be asked about the voting habits of the participants family and friends to determine what level, if any, these people in their lives influenced the participants' own voting behaviour and political beliefs.

My interviews ran for no longer than fifty minutes; much of the literature appears to suggest that for best results semi-structured interviews should run between 30 minutes and one or two hours (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Jamshed, 2014). Further to this, I was hesitant to have the interviews longer than fifty minutes, as research fatigue is something that weighs heavily on my mind. Queer people often report experiencing research fatigue as they participate in many different research projects due to a growing academic focus on who they are (Glick, Theall, Andrinopoulos, & Kendall, 2018; Scherrer & Woodford, 2013).

I largely recruited my participants through social media. I was at first hesitant about the recruitment ability that social media facilitates; in particular I had concerns about sampling bias and an echo chamber in which I would only recruit one certain type of participant. There is evidence to suggest that sampling bias can be a barrier to recruiting participants through Facebook, and that echo chambers on social media can increase the partisanship of a voter by not exposing them to different political perspectives (Arigo, Pagoto, Carter-Harris, Lillie, & Nebeker, 2018; Bail, et al., 2018). However, these concerns seemed to be unfounded, as I had a wide variety of participants get in touch with me, including the elderly, and those who held a diverse range of political opinions.

My recruitment process started with identifying Facebook groups in which to post my study. I was looking for groups that had many members, had a variety of people in them, and were not political. I did so to mitigate the above concerns about sampling bias and echo chamber. I initially identified the following groups:

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<sup>17</sup> As they were semi-structured, sometimes not all questions were asked, and indeed sometimes questions that I had not anticipated came up.

- Gay Wellington – a Facebook group for queer people in Wellington;
- Bears New Zealand – a Facebook group for those who identify as bears in New Zealand;
- UniQ Otago – the Facebook group for queer people on the University of Otago campus;
- Dunedin News – the largest Facebook group for the Dunedin area.

Then, once I had been accepted into these groups, I posted the following message (or a variant thereof):

Kia ora! If you're gay, and are enrolled to vote in New Zealand (or have voted!), I want to talk to you!

I'm currently doing an MA at Otago, looking at the voting behaviour of gay men. If you've got an hour spare, and want to chat about politics and voting, please flick me a message on here, or email me at Joshua.James@otago.ac.nz

We can conduct the interview over skype, or I'll be in [the area] sometime soon!

The response to this message was substantial, I had 20 people message me wanting to participate. If I had not received such a response, I would have found other methods to recruit. In addition to this response, a journalist from the *Otago Daily Times*, a regional newspaper in Dunedin, got in touch wanting to run an article on my study. Once this was published I had another 15 people wanting to participate in my study, some of whom ended up participating in this research.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the emails and Facebook messages I got were from people in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin. Therefore, I held the interviews in these locations. I had some hesitations about only targeting urban areas, as in New Zealand there is a divide in political opinion along rural and urban lines (Edmeades, 2017; Mitchell, 2017). Considering the migratory patterns that are evident amongst large parts of the queer community, which is that queer people will often move from rural environments to urban city centres (Aldrich R. , 2004; Wimark, 2014), I felt that I would still be able to recruit some of those who had experienced rural life and that it would not impact substantially on my findings. I still managed to have a diverse range of people, as explored in the results section. Notwithstanding this, I had no farmers or rural people in my study which is a potential oversight of this study, but one that can be balanced with the quantitative aspect of inquiry as this is a more random sample.

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<sup>18</sup> To read the full newspaper article see McPhee, 2018.

## Theoretical Ethics, Ethical Challenges, and Queer Ethics

Researchers who use quantitative or mixed methods are more likely to encounter situations where ethical dilemmas may arise because of the higher social contact they have with people. Therefore, it was important for me to have a robust ethical framework in place before, during and after this research process (LeCompte & Schensul, 2015). In addition to quantitative or mixed methods inquiries being a higher-risk research method, researchers who engage in quantitative research have a substantial moral obligation to their participants, as "... it is the researchers' story that ultimately is disseminated and published" and also "[since the] written or published word survives long after projects are done, they form a lasting portrait of a community that colors all subsequent portrayals and influences how that community is viewed by others" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2015, p. 263).

Ethical considerations are especially important when considering researching with vulnerable or marginalised people. Queer people, whilst having some legislative and societal victories, are still subject to "ongoing marginalisations and discriminations that can only be accounted for through a consideration of gender and sexual difference, once again illustrating the dissonances between legislative and media discourses and the materialities of everyday lives" (Browne & Nash, 2013, p. 203; see also Suen, 2015). Therefore, considering the relationship between queer people and a researcher from the academy, I had to be especially vigilant in constructing an ethical framework to undertake this research within.

A central tenet of this research is both informed consent and process consent.<sup>19</sup> Israel defines a basic level of informed consent as two related activities: a potential participant must comprehend the research and their role within it, and then agree to voluntarily participate (Israel, 2015, p. 79). Process consent is the obtaining of informed consent before, during, and after the research is being done. One autoethnographer, Carolyn Ellis (2007), writes that process consent is "checking at each stage to make sure participants still want to be part of the project" (as cited in Tolich, 2016, p. 595).

In my own research, participants had to formally acknowledge that they gave informed consent, through the signing of a waiver. But, I considered that the bare minimum of my ethical obligations. I encouraged my participants to ask questions about my research, and gave them a period of months to withdraw their narratives from my research. I gave them information about the research project beforehand, and shared some insights that I had learned after, if they were interested. To

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<sup>19</sup> Personally, I believe that informed consent is a misnomer since consent *cannot* be given without one being informed. Without being informed (or indeed, having the ability to be informed) you are not consenting. However, due to the prominence that informed consent has in methodologies and ethics literature, I will continue to use this term. For more on this, see: Freedman, 1975; Kottow, 2004; Israel, 2015.

me, the principles of informed and process consent is about incorporating the participant into the research journey. Once submitting this thesis, all participants will receive a copy.

Part of this informed consent process for me, was the removal of economic coercion. It is often considered ethical to give participants a gift (either monetary, or a voucher of some sort) as a gesture to say thank you for participating in the research that you are conducting. In Aotearoa this is often called a *koha*, or a gift which underpins the act of reciprocity between researcher and participant (Edwards, McManus, & McCreanor, 2005; Jones, Crengle, & McCreanor, 2006). It is a physical manifestation that runs parallel to the exchange of knowledge and ideas between the researcher and participant.

However, bearing in mind the above discussion around research fatigue for queer people, I also recognise that many queer people suffer financial hardships. There is a growing body of evidence to show there is a substantial income gap between queer and heterosexual people, in part fuelled by insecure work conditions, zero hour contracts, profession types, and blatant or institutional discrimination (Cerf, 2016; Allen, 2017; Schneider & Auten, 2017). I was hesitant then to advertise that I was giving a \$20 New World voucher as a *koha* (gift) as I did not want people who were financially insecure to feel as if they had to participate in the study in order to get the grocery voucher. The implications of this are that the participants are not freely consenting, but are under some sort of economic coercion. Ultimately, the way I came to terms with this was to give the participant the grocery voucher when they first entered the room. Participants were under no obligation to continue on with the study, and could have indeed walked out after receiving it without participating – but none did.<sup>20</sup> This gifting of the *koha* before the research was underway also built rapport with my participants, and I hope enabled them to feel less pressured into it.

A further effort I made to reduce the power imbalance between myself as a researcher and the participant was to practice self-disclosure. Self-disclosure involves the researcher sharing “ideas, attitudes and/or experiences concerning matters that might relate to the interview topic in order to encourage respondents to be more forthcoming” (Reinharz & Chase, 2002, p. 227: see also Liamputtong, 2007, pp. 72-74). Self-disclosure has been seen by conventional research as ‘contamination,’ which perhaps reflects the positivist approach undertaken by the academy in the Western World (Steinmetz, 2005; Liamputtong, 2007). However, self-disclosure levels the playing field and builds rapport between interviewer and interviewee. Liamputtong writes that this is especially important when researching queer people, as the queer participants want to know how

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<sup>20</sup> In two circumstances, I had to supply the grocery vouchers after the research was undertaken. One was because of an administrative error, and the other was because a participant who did not want a *koha* changed their mind.

their intimate details are being used (2007, p. 73). In the context of my own research, my interviews opened with a statement about how as a gay man I was interested in the politics of my queer friends, and also about the many assumptions I had faced about the way in which gay men should participate in politics. I felt that this self-disclosure not only made my participants feel more comfortable, but also enabled them to understand *why* the research was being undertaken.

From the outset of this research, I wanted all of my participants' names to be anonymised. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, there is an administrative ease for all participants being given pseudonyms. You do not have to recall who wants a pseudonym, and who does not. Instead, you just give all participants one. I also wanted to be open about the participants' demographical information, as it is an important element of predicting voting behaviour. Having demographical information, in addition to their names would have not felt right with me, even if the participants were consenting to using their real names. The publishing of this thesis, with names and demographical information, may pose as a privacy risk even if the participants were unaware of this. To requote LeCompte & Schensul, "[The] written or published word survives long after projects are done" (2015, p. 263).

Further, providing blanket anonymity to my participants meant that those who did wish to remain anonymous would not feel pressured to use their real name. The inherent power imbalance between researcher and subject means that participants may be less willing to identify their true preference. I have experienced this myself in the past, when I felt pressured to give my real name in research. Recognising this power imbalance, and taking steps to reduce the impact it has is an important part of my own ethical framework as a researcher.

An ethical challenge arose when recruiting participants through social media, in that some of them tried to 'friend' me on Facebook. Whilst building rapport with the research participants is important, I think that having a professional boundary between one's personal life and the participant is important. Although some guidelines about the use of social media to recruit participants has been developed, it is still an emerging field and does not offer any clear guidance on the matter (Fileborn, 2015; Gelinis, et al., 2017; Lunnay, Borlagdan, McNaughton, & Ward, 2014). Therefore, I went with my intuition and decided that being a good researcher does not mean sacrificing my own privacy.

## Conclusion

This chapter has covered the quantitative and qualitative research methods used in this thesis.. The NZES and NZAVS provide the quantitative arm of the research, which frames the qualitative arm of the research (the interviews). The literature suggests that a mixed-methods approach to research with marginalised or ‘invisible’ subjects provides the best result, which is why I have taken a mixed-methods approach. Numerous ethical challenges arise when researching with queer people, however I have addressed these by developing a strong theoretical framework and situating myself in the research.

## Chapter Six: How Gay Men Vote

There is the significant barrier to exploring how gay men in New Zealand vote because of the lack of literature on the topic. In order to make up for this gap in the literature, this chapter will use data from the New Zealand Election Study, the New Zealand Attitude and Values Study, and other literature (in particular, the *Lavender Islands* study) in order to answer my research questions. This chapter analyses the data from the three aforementioned studies, and brings them together in order to get a broad picture of how gay men vote in New Zealand.

### Background literature

*Lavender Islands* (2007) canvassed queer people in New Zealand during April to July 2004 on a range of issues in the efforts to create a national profile of the queer community – including the political views of the participants. There were 2,269 respondents to the survey, of which 45.2 percent identified as men, 54.4 percent identified as women and 0.2 percent identified as trans or intersex (Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007, p. 231). Only 2.9 percent of the participants of the survey did not identify as homosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer or transgender (Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007, p. 234).

Of those surveyed, 92.5 percent were enrolled to vote, and 92.4 percent voted in the 2002 election (Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007, p. 243). In comparison, the overall turnout rate of the general population for the same election was 77 percent (Parliamentary Library, 2002). This could suggest that the queer population were engaged with the 2002 election at higher rates than the general population – this would be in line with international trends, as explored in earlier chapters. *Lavender Islands* also surveyed who the participants voted for in the 2002 election, the results of which have been tabled below with the overall vote from the general population.

Before exploring the results of this survey, it is important to provide the reader with some context about the 2002 election, as it was the election that happened prior to the survey being conducted. It was an early election that pitted an incumbent Labour government, and a small cohort of minor left or left-of-centre parties, against the National party and numerous other right and right of centre parties (New Zealand National Party, 2002). In the lead up to the election, buoyed by a weak opposition and a disintegration of coalition left-wing parties, it was expected that the Labour party could achieve a majority government. However, due to several political obstacles including a genetic engineering scandal, the Prime Minister calling a journalist a “sanctimonious little creep”

and the Greens “goths and anarcho-feminists,” the hope of a single party government was dashed (Levine & Roberts, 2003, p. 23; The Sydney Morning Herald, 2002).

Table 8 (below) shows that both the general and queer voters had a clear preference for the Labour party over any other parties, but the queer voters overwhelmingly supported the Labour party. The support for the Green party from the queer voters was over double the national average, while the support for the National party from the queer voters was less than half the national average.

	Queer voters	General Population
New Zealand Labour Party	53 percent	41.26 percent
Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand	14.7 percent	7 percent
New Zealand National Party	8.2 percent	20.93 percent
ACT New Zealand	4.1 percent	7.14 percent
United Future	0.9 percent	6.69 percent
New Zealand First	0.7 percent	10.38 percent
Progressive	0.4 percent	1.70 percent
Did not vote	6.9 percent	23 percent
Another party/could not remember/did not respond to this question	11.1 percent	N/A

*Lavender Islands* also looked at how loyal the survey participants were to the parties that they voted for. On a scale of 1-7, where 1 indicated ‘not loyal,’ and 7 meant ‘very loyal’ the mean for the participants was 5.37. Most ( $n=2028$ ) of the participants were “likely to vote for this party again” (Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007, p. 234).

## New Zealand Attitude and Values Study

The New Zealand Attitude and Values Study (NZAVS) data used in this survey was gathered during the 2013/2014 period, and relates to the 2014 New Zealand Generation Election. There

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<sup>21</sup>The Queer data is taken from Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007, p. 243, and the general population data from Parliamentary Library, 2002, p. 2. There is a significant limitation to the data in the *Lavender Islands*, in so much that the authors only detailed the support that the New Zealand Labour Party, the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the New Zealand National Party got from the Queer voters. However, in correspondence with one of the authors of *Lavender Islands*, the Henrickson said that for the other parties the results were not significant, thus they were not included in the study. However, Henrickson has supplied the unpublished data, this enabling me to paint a wider picture of the LGBT voting situation.

were 18,261 respondents to the 2013/2014 NZAVS survey, of which 3.4 percent ( $n=621$ ) identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGBs) (Greaves, N.D; see also Greaves, et al., 2017a, p. 1330). The NZAVS study found that the LGBs were 1.7 times more likely to vote for the Labour party in 2013/2014 and 2.6 times more likely to vote for the Greens than the National party (Greaves, et al., 2017b p. 170).

If we isolate this data and just look at the gay men, of which there were 204 respondents (1.12 percent of all respondents) we can see that 60 voted for Labour, 51 for National, and 46 for the Greens. The results are detailed in Table Nine below.

	Count	As a percent	General Population
National Party	51	25 percent	47.04 percent
Labour Party	60	29.4 percent	25.13 percent
Green Party	46	22.5 percent	10.70 percent
ACT	0	0 percent	0.69 percent
Māori Party	4	2 percent	1.32 percent
United Future	0	0 percent	0.22 percent
New Zealand First	12	5.9 percent	8.66 percent
Internet/Mana	6	2.9 percent	1.42 percent
Conservative	1	0.5 percent	3.97 percent
Other	0	0 percent	0.86 percent
Unsure	1	0.5 percent	
Stated refusal to answer	0	0 percent	
Unreported	7	3.4 percent	
Did not vote	16	7.8 percent	
Total	204	100 percent	

Source: (Electoral Commission, 2014; New Zealand Attitude and Values Study, 2014)

Table 9 shows a clear preference for the left of centre parties, Labour and the Greens, over the centre-right National party and nationalist New Zealand First. There is a noteworthy difference between the NZAVS data and the *Lavender Islands* data inasmuch that there appears to be a slight shift away from the Labour party and a slight trend towards the National party. Because the *Lavender Island* looks at queer people more broadly, and not specifically at gay people as the NZAVS does it would be incorrect to make direct comparisons between the two. However, it can still be useful for painting a broader trend. Below, I look at the New Zealand Election Study, before looking at all three datasets to inform the wider picture in which my interviews sit.

## New Zealand Election Study

Of the 3455 participants of the New Zealand Election Study, 26 indicated that they identified both as a man, and as gay - about 0.75 percent of all respondents. Estimates of gay populations vary substantially depending on the location, the way in which sexuality is measured, and the methodology employed in measuring the population (Greaves L. M., et al., 2017a, pp. 1326-1327). The 2013/2014 NZAVS measured that 230 of its 18,261 participants identified as gay men - 1.26 percent of its total sample (Greaves L. M., et al., 2017a, p. 1330). Another New Zealand study found that of its 12,992 participants, 57 of those identified as gay men – 0.44 percent of its total sample (Wells, McGee, & Beautrais, 2011a, p. 159).<sup>22</sup> Therefore the reader should not be dissatisfied with the relevantly small sample size of the NZES data.

To the question “If you cast a party vote, for which party did you vote in the 2017 General Election” a majority ( $n=12$ ) indicated that they had party voted for the National party, and seven indicated they had voted for the Labour party. One person did not reply to the question. The full results are detailed below in Table Ten.

Party	Number	Percent	General Population
Green Party	4	16 percent	6.3 percent
Labour Party	7	28 percent	36.9 percent
National Party	12	48 percent	44.4 percent
New Zealand First	2	8 percent	7.2 percent

Table 10 indicates a clear preference for the National party, which was a higher share of the vote than the general population. Similarly, the Greens, and New Zealand First also had a higher share of the votes from the gay male voters, than the general population. Interestingly, this data appears to show that the Labour party has had a drop in support when compared to the NZAVS 2013/2014 data.

All gay participants said that they had voted in the 2017 election, which on a surface level is a very high turnout – especially when we consider that general voter turnout was only 79.8 percent in the 2017 election (Electoral Commission, 2017). Although the sample size is too small to be

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<sup>22</sup> The article by Wells, McGee, & Beautrais is a good exemplar of the difficulty of estimating gay populations. Treharne, Brickell, and Chinn responded to the article with a letter to the editor raising issues with the methodology, aim, and language of the article and study. In return, Wells, McGee, & Beautrais responded in another letter to the editor, defending their article and study. For further reading, see Treharne, Brickell, & Chinn, 2011 and Wells, McGee, & Beautrais, 2011b.

significant, it appears to fit into the wider trend as shown in the NZAVS and the international examples.

## All together now

By looking at all of the above data, we gain a wider overview of voting behaviour of gay men: that there is left-wing majority of gay voters, but an emerging trend towards the National party. There are some issues with comparing the data, as the *Lavender Islands* study does not break down the respondents by sexuality and gender, that is that women, gender minorities, bisexual people, etc, are also included in the data. With that in mind, in Table Eleven (below) I have compared the 2002 data, 2014 data, and 2017 data. The reader should note the far right columns, which show the difference in votes between the gay male voters in 2014 and 2017.

Party/Response	2002 Election	2014 Election	2017 Election
	Queer voters	Gay Voters	Gay Voters
New Zealand Labour Party	53 percent	29.40 percent	28.00 percent
Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand	14.70 percent	22.50 percent	16.00 percent
New Zealand National Party	8.20 percent	25.00 percent	48.00 percent
ACT New Zealand	4.10 percent	0.00 percent	0.00 percent
United Future	0.90 percent	0.00 percent	0.00 percent
New Zealand First	0.70 percent	5.90 percent	8.00 percent
Internet Mana	N/A	2.90 percent	N/A
Conservative Party	N/A	0.50 percent	0.00 percent
Māori Party	N/A	2.00 percent	0.00 percent
Progressive	0.40 percent	N/A	N/A
Did not vote	6.90 percent	7.80 percent	0.00 percent
Other Parties	N/A	0.00 percent	0.00 percent
Source:	(Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007)	(New Zealand Attitude and Values Study, 2014)	(New Zealand Election Study, 2017)

In this chapter, the data from the New Zealand Attitude and Values Study and the New Zealand Election Study, in conjunction with data from the Lavender Islands study, show that a majority of participants voted for left-wing participants in all of the surveys canvassed but there was a slight

shift of voters to the National party. The results are further discussed in Chapter Eight: Discussion, in particular, in relation to how this fits into the established voting theory. The next chapter presents the results of the qualitative research.

## Chapter Seven: What They Said

This chapter, which provides breakdown of the research participants, their voting behaviour, and their political views, is organised thematically in order to explore what motivates the participants to vote, and why they support the political parties they do. I had 13 participants, ageing from 19-72, located in three different regions: Auckland, Dunedin, and Wellington. They had varied incomes, jobs, and relationship statuses. I have detailed their demographic information in Table 12 below, including their pseudonyms.

Pseudonym	Age	Relation Status	Occupation	Location	Income Bracket	Tribe	Ethnic Group/Nationality
Ryan	26	Dating	Public Transport Planner	Auckland	60k-79k	None	Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Walter		Single	Retail/Photography	Auckland	40k-59k	Bear, Daddy	Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Corey	26	De Facto Relationship	Mediator	Auckland	80k-99k	None	Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Alex	54	Married	Lecturer	Auckland	100k+	Bear	Canadian
Carl	72	Single	Retired	Kapiti	40k-59k	Geek	European
Noah	70	Married	Counsellor	Wellington	20-39k		Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Troye	24	Relationship	Comms Adviser	Wellington	60-79k	Masc	Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Liam	27	Single	Retail	Dunedin	20-39k	None	Dutch/Pākehā
William	24	Relationship	Student	Dunedin	>20k	Masc	Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Richard			Student	Dunedin		Leather	White
Jackson	48	Single	Accountant	Dunedin	60-79k	Jock	Samoan, New Zealander
David	56	De Facto Relationship	Relationship Manager	Wellington	100k+	Bear, Leather, Daddy	Pākehā/ NZ Euro
Simon	48		Manager	Auckland	40k-59k		Pākehā/ NZ Euro

Largely, the participants were centre-left or left-wing with two notable exceptions – Richard and Troye. Richard did not vote in either the 2017 or 2014 elections because he was too young at the time, but if he could have voted, he would have voted for the ACT party, whilst Troye supports the National party. In the 2014 election, four of the participants voted for the Green party and five for the Labour party, and in the 2017 election five voted for the Greens, and five voted for Labour. I have provided a full table of who the participants voted for below.

Party	2014 Election	2017 Election
Green	4	5
Labour	5	5
National	1	1
United Future	1	0
Spoiled	1	1
Did not vote	1	1

In New Zealand, age and wealth can be predictive factors in which party one might vote for. For example, Green and National voters tend to be wealthier than New Zealand First or Labour voters, and New Zealand First voters tend to be older than National voters, whilst Green voters are often younger than National voters (Greaves, et al., 2017b). However the two oldest participants of this research, aged 72 and 70, were a liberal democrat and a Marxist Leninist respectively. In addition, the two participants who had the largest incomes both voted for Labour. Whilst the sample size is too small to make conclusive statements, this is an interesting observation. The participants were asked how loyal they were to the party they voted for on a scale where 1 = not loyal, and 7 = very loyal. Their answers are on the following page, in Table 14.

Table 14: Participants' level of loyalty to the party they voted for

Pseudonym	Age	Income Bracket	Ethnic Group/Nationality	Party Vote	Loyalty
Corey	26	80k-99k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Green	3
Noah	70	20-39k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Spoiled Ballot	4
Ryan	26	60k-79k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Green	5
Troye	24	60-79k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	National	5
Liam	27	20-39k	Dutch/Pākehā	Green	5
Simon	48	40k-59k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Green	5
Walter		40k-59k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Labour	6
Alex	54	100k+	Canadian	Labour	6
Carl	72	40k-59k	European	Green	6
David	56	100k+	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Labour	6
William	24	>20k	Pākehā/ NZ Euro	Labour	7
Richard			White	Act	7
Jackson	48	60-79k	Samoan, New Zealander	Labour	7

There do not appear to be any trends that we can observe from the loyalty rates when broken down by age, income, ethnicity, etc. When asked how loyal the participants felt, there was a variety of answers. For example, Simon said that he did not feel loyal to the Greens (despite indicating marginal loyalty on the survey) because of their decision to support immigrants who have allegedly killed gays and lesbians in their own countries. He cites the Green party's support for Ahmed Zaoui and their ongoing support for the Gaza Strip as two cases in particular that has caused him to be less loyal to the Green Party.<sup>23</sup> Centre-right Troye said that he feels a "sort of" loyalty to the National Party, but he sees lots of illiberal traits in the National Party since going into opposition, but it does not challenge his loyalty enough to make him vote for someone else.

Jackson identified that he feels loyal to Labour, and that they are his first preference is Labour but their policies and leader are factors which might make him re-consider that loyalty. William said that he feels very loyal to the Labour party, and that he is a member. Richard agreed with William statement, saying "I'm the same. Very loyal. I'm a member as well."

<sup>23</sup> Ahmed Zaoui is a former Algerian MP, and after the 1991 Algerian coup fled for Europe. In 2002 Zaoui arrived in New Zealand claiming asylum. He has been linked to terror cells, with a French court convicting him *in absentia* in 2001 of being involved in a terrorist organization, and has many death sentences handed down by the Algerian government *in absentia* for being involved and leading terrorist organizations (Manning, Ryan, & Small, 2004). Despite the participant's claim that Zaoui was involved (even to a lesser extent) in the murder or persecution of gays and lesbians, this researcher could not verify these claims in any literature. However, here is evidence that there is state-sanctioned abuse of gays and lesbians by Palestinian Authority and Hamas (Kagan & Ben-Dor, 2008).

Liam said that he has no loyalty to the Green party, but he cares about them and votes for them because he's "really passionate about their policies and issues." But, he continues "if they turned around tomorrow and started dog whistling about stupid shit I would be okay, I guess I won't support you anymore and I might look at another party." Corey said that gets less loyal as he gets older, saying that whilst the Green party has good values and ideas they lack the ability to implement them and the ability to follow through.

The survey component of my research revealed that there was a high level of agreement amongst the participants on many topics. For example, to the statement 'It is important for the government to act on climate change' 77 percent ( $n=10$ ) of my participants 'strongly agreed,' and the remaining 3 said that they 'agreed.' This indicates the importance of the issue of climate change, and suggests that the issue transcends traditional party lines. To the statement 'when businesses do well, everyone does well' there was more of a mixed response from my participants: 38 percent ( $n=5$ ) of participants neither agreed nor disagreed, whereas 15 percent ( $n=2$ ) strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed – a perfect split across the participants.

On another economic statement, 'We should decrease income tax rates in New Zealand' there was again a mixed field. The sole ACT supporter, Richard, strongly supported the statement – the only one to do so – which is consistent with the ACT's libertarian views. Only 23 percent ( $n=3$ ) agreed with the statement, whilst 54 percent ( $n=7$ ) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Interestingly, one of the Labour supporters agreed with the statement, but they were also one of the two Labour supporters to earn over \$100,000.

However, none of the participants listed LGBT or queer issues as an election issue. I asked the participants if they thought that 'gay issues' were still an important issue on the ballot box. Some participants agreed, saying that it was an important issue, but others thought that it was a lesser issue. For example, Walter agreed that there was some legislative changes needed to bring equality to the queer community, however he is more concerned about wealth inequalities, citing the increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness and sleeping in cars in New Zealand. Ryan said that it gay rights are not an issue on the ballot box, because homosexual law reform was passed, and "gay marriage was legalised." Ryan instead said that it is important that those who want to roll back or repeal these pieces of legislation are kept out of office.

In contrast to this, Alex said that:

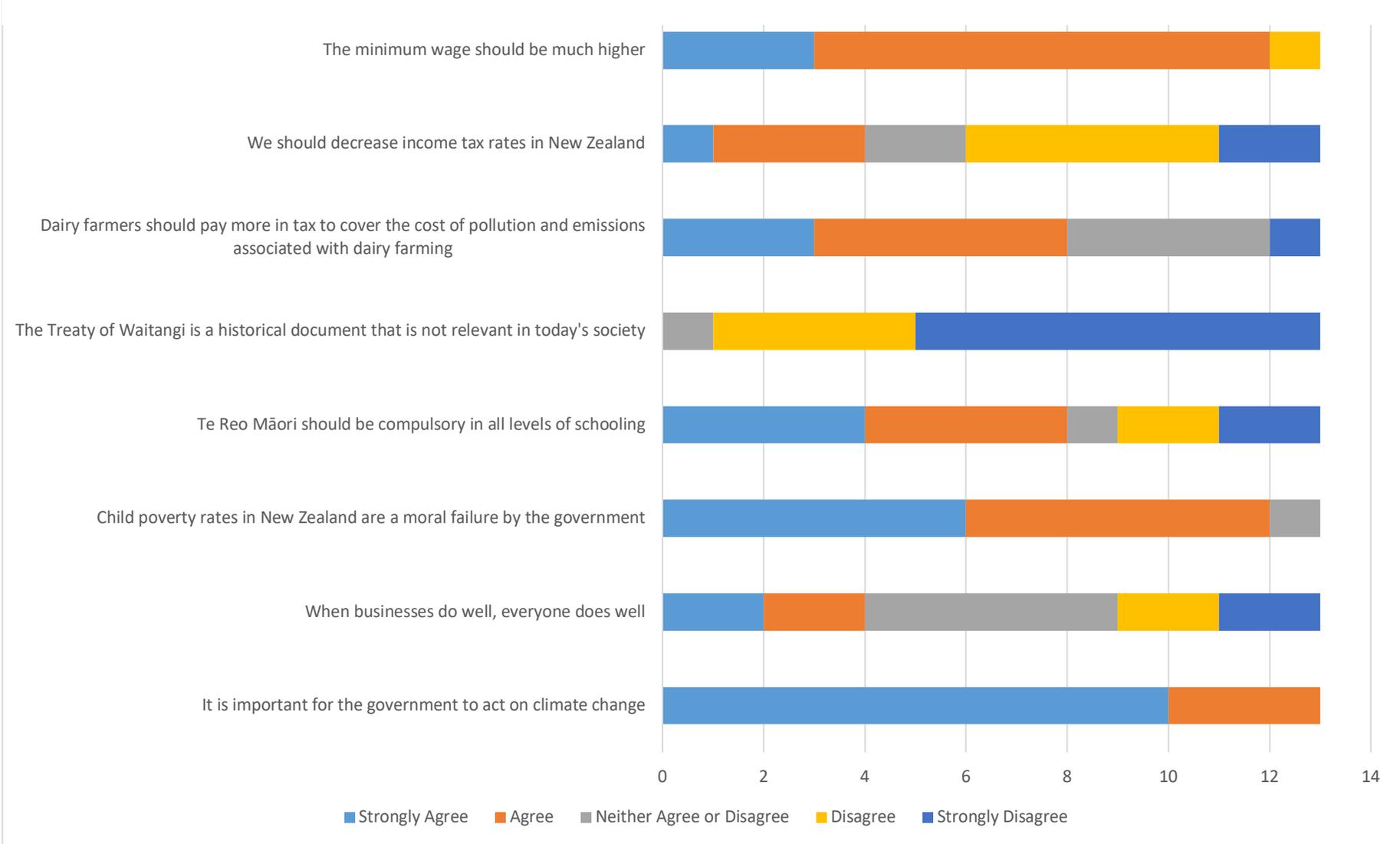
Yeah... I prefer to focus on queer rights, specifically trans issues. We're nowhere near where we need to be. Also marriage equality has not erased homophobia. I still feel less safe holding hands on K-Road than I do on Queen Street... I think there is the legal process – the judicial process – and then there's the actual fact of what society says about you.

When asked if there's still a need or desire to push for gay rights in New Zealand, Simon said:

There is a need to safeguard against the dismantling of civil rights for gays and lesbians. There's a subtle distinction, but there no such thing as gay rights. There's civil rights for gays and lesbians. There's a need to safeguard of the dismantling of civil rights, around discrimination in certain areas of society, around health discrimination, so there's a need to safeguard against it ... I'm struggling to think about what other unequal civil rights there are, that might come out for gays and lesbians that we're missing out on. I can't think anything apart from Trans men and Trans women, so support them in achieving civil rights.

Troye expressed similar sentiments to Alex and Simon, saying that whilst he can see why it could be easy to see all of the battles as being won, there's still some changes that need to be need, even if they are not solely legislative ones. Troye continues on to say that we need to have a lot of political discussions around the rights of Trans people, and that social acceptance has not quite arrived yet for Trans people. All responses to the issue based questions can be found in Graph 1, below.

Graph 1: Responses to Issue Based Questions



In the survey, I also asked the participants what their top three election issues were for the 2017 general election. In Table 15, below, I have tabled their top three issues, and juxtaposed them with the party they voted for.

Party Vote	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3
Act	Housing	Economy	Immigration
Green	Transport	Housing	Social Issues
Green	Child Poverty	Refugee Quota	Environment
Green	Human rights	Health	Seniors
Green	Poverty	Healthcare	Climate Change
Green	Environment/Climate Change	Poverty	Housing
Labour	Homeless and Street People	Inequality	Mental health
Labour	Climate change	Housing	Decolonisation
Labour	Mental Health	Housing	Child Poverty
Labour	Health	Education	Affordable Housing
Labour	Housing	Income disparity/equity issues	Education
National	Economy/tax	Attitudes towards migration/migrants	Housing
Spoiled Ballot	Class Struggle		

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who voted for the Green party prioritised the environment or climate change more than those who voted for other parties. Housing was a priority for the seven of the thirteen participants, perhaps reflecting that housing was a hot-button election issue. No participants listed LGBT issues in their top three issues, which will be explored later in this chapter. Noah, the participant who spoiled his ballot, only listed one election issue and that was class struggle – reflecting his views as a Marxist Leninist.

As mentioned earlier, voters in New Zealand get two votes: a vote for their local member of Parliament, and a party vote. Most of the participants split their vote between a party and a candidate from another party. Those who did are listed on the following page, in Table 16:

Table 16: Participants who split their vote		
Pseudonym	Party Vote	Electorate Vote
Ryan	Green	Labour
Corey	Green	Labour
Carl	Green	Labour
Liam	Green	Labour
William	Labour	Labour
Richard*	Act	Labour
Simon	Green	National
*Signals intention only		

When asked why they split their vote, most said that it was either for strategic purposes, or that it was simply a by-product of having a pluralist/majoritarian voting method in the electoral seats (as opposed to Single-Transferable-Voting). For example, Simon lives in Epsom which is held by the sole ACT MP. He said that he votes for the National candidate, despite giving his party vote to the Green party because:

Epsom is where you have to engage in tactical voting, which is where you have the ACT Party candidate, the Labour Party candidate, the Green Party candidate, and the National Party candidate. The National Party candidate doesn't actually run a campaign at all: zero publicity. And the ACT Party candidate runs a campaign. And then there's the convention where National Party voters will vote for ACT Party candidate to get the ACT Party in Parliament. So that there's a support party for the National Party in Parliament... And so, ever since ACT has been in Epsom, I've always tactically voted for the National MP in order to counter the vote for the ACT Party candidate.

Corey also lives in Epsom, and similar to Simon, gave his party vote to the Green Party but gave his electorate vote to the Labour party justifying it by saying that it was a strategic vote to try and unseat the ACT MP in Epsom. Ryan thought that "electorate voting is still First-Past-The-Post, and the Greens-candidate would never win." Therefore Ryan gave his electorate vote to the Labour party, despite giving his party vote to the Greens. Ryan added that the pluralist nature of electorate votes "frustrates him" because he felt that he was forced to vote for a party that he did not want to, as he believed his candidate stood no chance.

Richard said that despite the fact he would have voted for the ACT party if he was able to, he would have given his party vote to the Labour party candidate, Clare Curran, for his electorate. He did so because:

I really cared very little about it, and the ACT representative weren't great. And Clare Curran is a nice lady and I know her. Pretty much it. Not a fan of Labour or National, but she's a nice lady ... so voting against her wasn't a big deal.

## Why do they vote like that?

When asked why my participants voted for the party they did, all 12 participants who voted (or in the case of Richard, intended to vote) answered with questions that can either be fully or partially labelled as falling within the bounds of proximity theory. Table 17, below, shows the participant, the party they voted for, and the theory or theories it fits into.

Participant	Party Vote	Party Vote Theory
Ryan	Green	Proximity
Walter	Labour	Proximity
Corey	Green	Proximity
Alex	Labour	Proximity
Carl	Green	Proximity
Noah	Spoiled Ballot	Proximity
Troye	National	Proximity
Liam	Green	Proximity
William	Labour	Proximity
Richard	Act	Proximity
Jackson	Labour	Proximity/Social Structure Theory
David	Labour	Proximity
Simon	Green	Proximity/Rational Choice

Proximity theory, as explored earlier in this thesis, says that voters are likely to vote for a party when they are ideologically ‘close’ to them which many of the participants said they did. For example, when I asked Ryan why he gave his party vote to the Green party he said: “I think they align most with my values. Particularly those about transport, they have the best transport policies.” Troye said that:

I’ve always felt that the National Party aligned with my own views economically, on things like the approach to business to tax to the redistribution of wealth, the rights and obligations [we have as citizens] and the balance of the welfare state.

Liam, William and David all expressed similar reasons for supporting their respective parties. William said that he has always been aligned with the Labour party’s values, Richard said that ACT were the closest ideologically to him, and despite him not agreeing with all of the policies, they had more policies that they agreed with. David said that “I’ve always been a Labour voter, and I think the values of the Labour party are important, and yeah, that’s why I voted Labour.” Corey said that he did not necessarily vote for the Greens because of the policies they will bring with them, but because of the similar values that they share and that the Greens would bring those values into a Labour or coalition government.

Alex immigrated to New Zealand, and when settling on a party to support he said “I was looking for someone that my values would transfer to, and it was between Labour and Greens but ultimately landed on Labour simply because there was a bit more pragmatism.” This is a clear demonstration of the directional theory in play, whereby the Green party were past his self-imposed ideological cut off and the next closest party was the Labour party.

Jackson’s response had elements of both social structure theory (where political values and voting behaviour are transmitted through societal networks), and proximity theory. When asked why he voted for the Labour party, he said:

I’ve always voted Labour to be honest. I think too because I’m kind of more about social policy, and I’m from a working-class family, too. I guess my parents have always voted Labour. Not just because of that. I’m more for the people sort of person. Yeah, that’s why I voted Labour.

Jackson’s response indicates that he feels ideologically close to the Labour party, and that his family’s (his social structure) preference for the Labour party has also impacted on the way that he votes. Simon gave a similar response to Jackson, insomuch that there was a mixed proximity/rational choice answer when asked why he voted for the Greens. His response:

Despite my misgivings, they’re still the best party in terms of the environment, basically. So they’re the best party in terms of climate change, in terms of the environments, in terms of understanding the health of the oceans and waterways. They’re the best party, they have the best policies in terms of that. The other reason is because the Green Party [will come up with] policies and other parties will steal them. They’re the factory of ideas. And I know that the Green Party does this as a strategy quite deliberately.

The first half of Simon’s answer aligns itself with proximity theory because he identifies it as the best party on climate change – they are similar in their ideologies. However, the second half of his answer indicates a level of strategic voting which fits into the rational choice realms of voting theory. This is because he is not voting for the party *just* for ideological reasons, but because Simon gains utility from other parties adopting policies that the Greens comes up with.

When asked *why* participants vote in general, the overwhelming response was because of a sense of civic duty or pride. For example, Alex expressed that it was important to vote because he feels that it is an individual’s “civic responsibility,” and that this responsibility was instilled him in by his parents, notably his mother who “if you don’t vote, shut up. You can’t complain if you don’t vote.” He added, “And who doesn’t like to complain?” Like Alex, Simon thought it was his civic duty to vote. His mother always took him along to general elections where they’d go to the school hall to vote, and he and his brother would wait and she would tell him what they were doing. Troye said that he views voting as a civic duty, saying that:

Democracy belongs to the people who turn up. And I guess turning up isn't limited just to voting, but if you care at all you've got to at least express it at the one time you have the chance to allocate power.

Jackson expressed a similar sentiment to Alex, where he said if you want to make a change or feel strongly about something then voting is the best way to do that, and that you shouldn't complain if you don't vote. When asked why he votes, David said:

There was a wonderful quote in the paper last week, about the suffragette movement and how somebody said 'all the raindrops fall on the dry earth, making it fertile' so all the raindrops, all the votes, make a difference.... Over the years, we're talking about hundreds of years, people didn't have the vote. People fought for the vote. And so it's fundamental. It's a really important thing. That's why I vote.

Richard expressed a slightly dissenting opinion than the other participants, saying that he voted to represent his opinions. He, unlike the other participants, did not allude to civic duty, more so that it was just a natural expression of his opinions.

Noah's justification for not voting appears to fit in quite well within the Proximity Theory established earlier in this thesis. If we were to place Noah on a one dimensional political matrix, he would be on the far left of the scale with all other parliamentary parties to his right. Even the closest, the Green party, would be too far past his ideological cut-off - evidenced by his principled refusal to vote.

## Links between sexuality and voting

Many of my participants identified a link between their sexuality and their political opinions as expressed by their voting behaviour. Simon, for example, noted that he and his brother grew up in the same home environment, yet he turned out to be left of centre, and yet his brother had a prominently economic world view and is to the "right of Attila the Hun." Simon theorises that this difference in world view relates to the fact he is gay, saying that:

You grow up, come out of the closet, have all these battles, have all these emotional journeys, etc. So you realise the world isn't so black and white.... And because of that you are much more aware of political positions that acknowledge the complexity of the modern world.

This is not dissimilar to the experience of another participant, Ryan. He said that his political awakening came during the 2008 election, and that he developed his views when studying political science and writing for the university magazine, but he was sure that his being gay had "something" to do with his liberal views and social values.

Alex said that he comes from a “very right-wing” family, and he said that being queer was a big part of why his values diverged from those of his family. He spoke of the subsequent struggle that came with that divergence. He points out that those in family who did not hold right-wing views were people who all had their different struggles, ranging from education, joblessness, and health problems.

Noah believes the right to vote is important, and ‘votes’ at every election. However, he votes by spoiling his ballot. He does this because he believes he has an ideological imperative to do so, and that there is no party in New Zealand that advances the class struggle. I asked Noah why he decides to spoil his ballot instead of voting for a compromise candidate, he responded with:

There are two different schools of thought in the far left, and the more frequent one is to go for the lesser evil. So, for example, in the United States, many leftists would vote for the Democratic party which is - as far as people of my persuasion are concerned - simply the lesser party of capitalism... These are both parties of imperialism, both parties will lead wars, take over the world, bomb the shit out of different countries.

When I questioned Noah about the relationship between his political beliefs and his sexuality, and if there was any level of symbiosis between the two, Noah used Karl Marx to explain their relationship. Noah said it was “impossible to be gay” growing up in the in the 1960s, and that if you were gay so many opportunities for life were cut off. He said:

You couldn’t hope to be openly gay and have a career, the kind of career that I was brought up to expect that I should have. I came from a middle-class kind of family: my father was a doctor, and I had uncles who were lawyers, and people like that... And to be openly gay would have been impossible... I went to a private school, I was top of my class, and to be gay to was spend your life as a clerk somewhere.

It was this sense of alienation from his ambitions because of his identity, coupled with the growing student power movement and class mobilisation against the Vietnamese war, that meant when he stumbled across Marxist and Trotskyist ideas, he found he could adequately express his alienation in political terms:

And so that’s the level at which my politics and my gayness have a connection, but is a very abstract level of connection really. I was alienated from society; my alienation led to a politics which expressed my alienation.

Further to this, Noah described that he ‘votes’ on the basis of political program, which comes through Marxist analysis, and that is gayness is a substrata of this. When considering the relationships between sexuality, identity and politics, this is an interesting answer. Noah’s sexuality

both informs and predicates his political views – his sexuality led to the realisation of his alienation and class struggle, and yet it is also subservient to his identity as a Marxist.

## Lasting effects of historic legislation

Carl, who is British, said that a lot of queer people will not forgive or forget that the Conservative party in Britain legislated Section 28, and that even though they have apologised and have lots of gay MPs that the legislation was so disgraceful that they will never be able to support them again.<sup>24</sup> David, who is also British, said that the section 28 legislation happened at the same time as the AIDS crisis, and felt like it was the “beginnings of Nazi Germany. They’re going to come get us and arrest us. It wasn’t nice.”

When discussing Homosexual Law Reform, civil unions, and ‘marriage equality,’ I asked my participants if the fact that it was the Labour party who passed the legislation was a significant factor in either their support for the party, or the wider support they appear to get from the community. When I asked Ryan, a Greens supporter, if it had made him like the Labour party more he said that it had, but it would not make him more likely to vote for the Labour party as the Greens had supported the latter legislation anyway. Noah was involved in the Homosexual Law Reform campaign, and said that it did not change his perception of the Labour party as he “knew what we could expect from the Labour party.”

Simon said that he was “14 or 15” during Homosexual Law Reform, but that he could remember homophobes “frothing” from the mouth, some of whom belonged to the Labour party. However, he said that there was an expectation that the Labour party would pass the legislation, as opposed to the National party, because they were more sympathetic to gay men. When asked who was behind the legislation for ‘Marriage Equality’ Corey said Louisa Wall had some level of responsibility for it passing, but it was mostly the public who were responsible, as they had created a public pressure for its passing.

Troye is a National party supporter and at times has been a member (though he did not disclose if he still was at the time of the interview), and I asked him how he reconciled National’s stance on homosexual law reform, with his political beliefs. Troye acknowledged that it was hard for him to reconcile, considering “some of the MPs who were there at the time and spoke against it in

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<sup>24</sup> Section 28 was legislation passed in 1988 by the Conservative Government, led by Margaret Thatcher. Section 28 prohibited any local authorities (including schools, libraries, etc.) from teaching or otherwise promoting homosexuality (Ayto & Crofton, 2011).

really hateful terms have only recently stopped being MPs.” However, Troye said he has reconciled it saying that it had “happened before he was born” and that the National party would not have changed to be more socially progressive if it was devoid of gay people, or gay allies. Further, Troye – who identifies as a classic liberal – heavily identifies with the socially liberal arm of the National party, and that whilst there may be a small number of MPs who were “on the right side of history” it was a long running tradition of the National party.

Some of the participants said that they were either too young, or simply did not know enough to say if what parties have done in the past influenced their current political outlook. Walter said that he was so young during Homosexual Law Reform that he “probably” was not aware that he was gay, and did not know who brought the legislation to Parliament, only knowing that it was a conscience vote. One participant, Jackson who is a Labour voter, said that “maybe” Labour’s position on Homosexual Law Reform had influenced him to support the Labour party because he said that it felt like they were taking a stand and saying they do support the gay community, however was unsure who was behind the ‘marriage equality’ legislation.

Alex said that in Canada, whilst it was the Liberal party who decriminalised same sex relations, it did not change his perception of the Liberals because they often campaigned as a centre-left party, but governed as a centre-right party. When asked about who should get the credit for ‘Marriage Equality’ in the New Zealand context, he said:

Not the Labour party, and I get really mad at them for taking credit. It was Louisa Wall, and she worked with people in other parties as well. But she was the one who did the Private Member’s Bill when Labour refused to stick its head up on this. And people in Rainbow Labour all the time talk about ‘we brought marriage equality to New Zealand.’ You fucking didn’t. You voted for it in the end, and one of the reasons I think why they voted for it quite frankly is that John Key said that he would. So, they thought okay, we’re not going to lose any political capital supporting this. And a few Labour people still didn’t accept it.

## On Assumptions

I asked all the participants if there was a perception that all gay men supported one party, and if there was, which party did gay men vote for? There was a mixed response to this question. For example, Alex said that there are a lot of closet National supporters amongst gay men. These National supporters, he claims, often have substantial property portfolios which makes them more likely to support the National party as they are less likely to introduce a capital gains tax, or otherwise pass such a policy that would negatively affect their property values. Alex elaborates that

there is a social sanction imposed by the queer community on those who are openly right-wing. When asked if we can roundly say that gay men in New Zealand support one party in particular, Alex replied:

Probably 20 years ago you could have said yes. And I think now that the vote is more spread out, but I'd say Labour still has a plurality of the vote, followed by the Greens. I mean, there are even some weird queer people who vote for ACT.

This appears to be consistent with the empirical data that I explored earlier. The Labour party held a monopoly of the queer voters in New Zealand, but that support has slowly ebbed away to other parties.

Jackson did not know if overall gay men supported one political party, but he said that most of his gay friends supported the National party, which could be attributed to the fact that he is an accountant. By contrast, Carl hoped that gay men would support parties that advanced LGBT rights, but was yet to meet a single gay man that would admit to voting for New Zealand First. Ryan said that he didn't think that any left-wing party had a monopoly on gay voters, saying that:

I don't think that gay men all vote for the left wing parties. I remember the first few of my friends I spoke to about voting who did vote for right wing parties, I thought 'Ew, why would you do that?' I'd never consider that they would.

Noah thought that there is the perception that gay people support the Labour party more, because the Labour party had "worked the turf better and more thoroughly." Noah expressed surprise whenever "politically bright queers" support the National party but in the same breath, realised that it was perhaps naïve of him to be surprised about it.

Corey thought that there is a view that gay men are left-leaning, and said that it could be because left-wing parties prioritise values of diversity and equality more so than the National party. Citing the National party's involvement in the marriage equality legislation, Corey thought that "some individuals ... were against it, and I think most if not all were National party members."

Troye is right-of-centre, and he believed that there was a perception that gay men were more likely to support the Labour party or more generally be left-wing. When probed why he thought that, he responded "Probably because it's true? ... And probably because it's really easy to look at the National party and see a party that's been really homophobic over the course of its history."

Like Troye, Richard said that he thought that there was a perception that gay men were left-wing, but that ran counter to his own experience whereby most of the gay men he knew supported the National party. Richard went even further, detailing that he often gets told that he is wrong for

being a “strong right-wing gay conservative” because so many people believe that gay men are left-wing.

## On Community

The participants were asked if they felt a sense of queer community, and if they had a group of queer friends who held similar political views to them. Mostly, the participants either recognised a queer community, but did not feel active, or did not feel that one existed at all. Further, there was no general consensus that they had a group of gay friends, or indeed if they shared similar political views. Their responses are detailed below.

Richard, Liam, William, and Walter all indicated that that they do not feel part of a gay community, with Richard saying:

I don't believe in gay pride or things like that. I think they're a little bit over the top, and I don't see the need for them in this point of time because I would say gay people in New Zealand are treated incredibly fairly in comparison to any time in history past 15 years ago... and the rallies and marches I think are a little bit over the top, and unnecessary. And I feel like gay clubs are fine, but what I've found is that a lot of them tend to focus on sexuality and nothing else... And then, with my friends, I don't have a lot of gay friends.

However, Liam indicated that he did not feel that he was part of a *gay* community, rather he was part of a *queer* community and that people often joke with him that he has ‘token’ straight friends. William said that he did not attend gay events, and nor did he have gay friends but this was by accident rather than by design.

Troye said that there was a gay community in Wellington but he personally had a group of gay friends, some of whom had similar politics to him, but most of whom had been involved in politics. He (and his friends) could see the good in different political beliefs. David also agreed that there was a gay community in Wellington whose members probably represented a range of political beliefs.

Carl said that there is a rainbow group near his town that he goes to, but there was a less of a community now than there used to be. He says that the rainbow group includes people who he does not talk about politics with because of their right-wing views on Māori and the Treaty, and that they have emigrated here from the United Kingdom and do not bother to learn about the history of the indigenous peoples.

Jackson said that he did not feel a sense of gay community in Dunedin, and that people still need to rely on things like Grindr [a popular dating app], and that the Dunedin gay community is a bit

“fractured,” especially for people of his age (48). Simon expressed that he was a “semi-retired gay” and that he does not feel a sense of community. Simon went on to say that this could be because of less discrimination in society, and that a lot of men Simon’s age (48) and older “pine for the old days when it was a little bit more closeted, and furtive, and secretive. Because there was a real sense of danger, a sense of community, of bonding, under those circumstances.” Simon adds that he probably would not want to go back to those days, because it was also highly stressful.

Alex said that he “absolutely” does feel a sense of gay community in Auckland, and that his social circle is almost exclusively queer people. And at 54, it is very much a social thing, and that “hanging out” with other queer people requires less social transaction as they already have similar worldviews. However, when asked if they all had similar left-wing views, he said that there is diversity but that if he questions others he risks a “social sanction.”

Ryan said that he feels a sense of gay community in Auckland, but that he is not active in it. Unlike most of the other participants, Ryan said that his group of friends all share similar politics, and that it is a “gay urban planners group. It’s very political. Not just about domestic politics but international [politics also].”

## Costs and Barriers to Voting

Participants were asked if there were any costs, barriers, or downsides to voting, and if they thought that their vote still made a difference despite these negatives.

Walter thought the biggest downside to voting was that nothing ever changes and the parties are all just “flavours of each other.” He has always thought his vote makes a difference but also recognises that it probably does not. Despite this, Walter still votes at every election because he would “rather do it and be disappointed, than not do it and still be disappointed.” Corey said that there is a time cost to voting, and that is why personality politics comes into it – people would rather vote because of the likeability of someone, rather than spend the time understanding their policy positions.

Simon said that there was no cost to voting, and that voting makes a difference. Simon cited his prior experience as a local body politician in two recent elections (not ones that he was involved in) which came down to ten votes difference between two candidates. It was this situation that made him realise that your vote makes a difference. Ryan expressed a similar view that voting makes a difference because New Zealand elections operate in a proportionate system, whereby “a

few votes can mean the difference of an additional Greens MP, or Labour MP... and then you see some people win their seats in Parliament by a few votes.” Ryan also argued that whilst he personally experiences no costs to voting, because his work allows him time off to vote, others might not be in that position.<sup>25</sup> Similar claims about ease of voting were made by several others – with some, like David, noting that as an able-bodied man, it made it easy for him to go and vote. When David was asked if voting makes a difference, he quipped “I mean it got rid of National didn’t it. So that made a difference.”

Jackson, an accountant, acknowledged that there is a time cost, which might dissuade people from voting. However this time cost was not a barrier for him, as “it’s worth doing.” Jackson thought that voting makes a difference, and that more people should vote, so that the end result can be an “actual reflection of what the consensus is over New Zealand and what people are wanting.” Carl expressed a similar time cost during the MMP referendum, but overall he feels empowered under a proportional system because there will always be somebody that he supports in Parliament. But, Carl continued, this was unique to New Zealand, for if he still lived in Britain then he would have to live under first past the post and it is unlikely that his views would not be as represented as they are now.

Alex echoed a similar sentiment in his interview – that the New Zealand electoral system is very flexible, and facilitates high levels of engagement compared to other countries, which he says negates any costs to voting. Alex thought that voting makes a difference, but that his party vote mattered more than his constituency vote because he lives in Auckland and not in a rural seat where he could unseat a National MP.

## Relationship between identity and voting

I asked the participants whether or not they vote as gay men specifically when they enter the voting booth. There was a mixed response. For example, Troye said that he didn’t think he votes as a gay man, but,

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<sup>25</sup> Under Section 162 of the Electoral Act 1993, employers must give time off for employees to vote, if they have not had a reasonable chance to do so before they started. The Electoral Commission states that: “Any employee who has not had a reasonable opportunity to vote on election day before starting work, must be allowed to leave her or his work for the purpose of voting no later than 3pm for the remainder of the day. An employer cannot make deductions from the employee’s remuneration for the time taken off” (Electoral Commission, 2017c).

...having said that I don't think I've ever felt that my rights or interests were massively on the line in a big way at an election time. And I think I would feel differently about it whatever gay issue of the day was dominating the election discussion, I think it would shape ... the way I vote.

David agreed with Troye, saying that it depends on the issues that were on table, and what issues are being debated around the time of the election. David continued, saying that the act of demonstrating at a queer event, or protesting for a homosexual cause that you support, is when you are acting as a gay man, but in the voting booth, you're just there to vote. Jackson was unsure, saying that he thinks he goes into the voting booth and votes Labour, and that's it. He then said "Or maybe I do? Underlying that?"

Simon said that when he goes into the voting booth it is solely to exercise his democratic right and do his civic duty. Ryan said that he "votes as himself. As myself but not for myself." Walter agreed saying "I don't know. I don't really think about that when I'm voting. Like I said, it tends to be more left-wing what I'm interested in, but that doesn't denote sexual orientation or anything."

Alex was perhaps the most vocal on this, saying

I used to, when we had so few protections as queer people. I absolutely [voted as a gay man]. And it was usually a very easy process. There is one party, and okay now there is two, and now all of them are okay... Also, as I've gotten older, paradoxically my sense of queer identity is nothing but stronger.

## To Conclude

I interviewed 13 gay men for the qualitative phase of this research. The participants were mostly left or centre-left in their political views, with three notable outliers: a classic liberal, a gay conservative, and a Marxist. The participants were mostly loyal to the party they voted for, with eleven indicating that they were either loyal or very loyal. No participants identified queer or gay rights as an election issue when unprompted through the survey. However when asked specifically, the general consensus is that there is some ways to go until trans people have equal rights, that are no remaining legislative struggles for gay people – only societal ones.

Just over half of the participants split their vote between their party vote and their electorate vote, and most gave the answer that it was a strategic vote to get rid of a member of Parliament that they did not like or to reduce a particular party's chance of forming government. Only one participant identified a personal connection to the candidate which made him split his vote.

When asked why they voted for the party they did, all gave answers that fit within the boundaries of proximity theory, suggesting that these participants are value based voters who support parties who are ideologically closest to them. When asked why the participants vote in general, two key themes emerged: voting is a civic duty, and you cannot complain if you don't vote.

Some of the participants identified a clear link between their sexuality and their political views, but most identified that the past actions of a political party made them like them more – if not outright wanting to support them more. There was also wide consensus that gay men are assumed to be left-wing, even though this assumption ran contrary to their own personal experience. The participants were split on whether or not they voted as gay men, or whether it made sense to think about identity and the act of voting in that way.

The next chapter will look at how my own research results fit into the established literature of gay men voting, theories of voting, and how New Zealand fits into the international context.

## Chapter Eight: Discussion

So far this thesis has established how gay men have been treated by the state in New Zealand, New Zealand's political environment, three different school of voting theory (rational choice, social structure and, proximity and directional), and explored how gay men vote in the international context. We have learned that in Aotearoa gay men support left-wing parties more than right-wing parties, but there appears to be a slight shift in support towards the National party. We have also learned that the gay men interviewed for this research were driven to vote for reasons of civic pride, and that there seems to be a prevailing assumption made by society that gay men are all, or all *should* be, left-wing.

This chapter is separated into three parts. The first looks at the left-wing majority among my participants and synthesises my results with what has been happening in the socio-political sphere of Aotearoa. The second part of this chapter examines how the results of this research fits into the voting theories canvassed earlier, including the ways altruism can be considered under the umbrella of rational choice, and the prominence of proximity and direction theory in the results. In the last part of chapter I look at how gay men in Aotearoa have not followed the political path of queer continental Europeans in supporting the right or far-right, and offers some hypotheses to explain this.

### Left Wing Majority

The answer to the first research question: “which political parties do gay men in New Zealand vote for?” is not a simple answer. Left-wing parties have the majority of support from those who I interviewed and who participated in the data collection, but no party has a clear majority.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data show that the Labour party does not have the widespread support it once did: gay men have substantially diversified the parties that they support. If we were to say that a single party is a ‘winner’ of this research, it would be the National party. But gay voters have not so much abandoned the Labour party, instead they have ‘discovered’ the National party over the past nearly 20 years.

To remind the reader, in the 2002 *Lavender Island* data (which included both male and female queer people) the Labour party had a majority of the vote: 53 percent. The National party was on 8.2 percent of the vote. The results of the General Election had the Labour party on 41.26 percent and the National party on 20.93 percent of the vote. This shows significantly higher support from

the queer community for the Labour party than from the heterosexual community, and vice-versa for the National party.

In the 2014 NZAVS the Labour party had 29.40 percent support from gay men surveyed, and in the 2017 election NZES data the party had 28 percent support from gay men surveyed. Labour's actual share of the vote in the general elections was 25.13 percent in 2014, and 36.89 percent in 2017. The National party had 25 percent support in the 2014 NZAVS, and 48 percent support in the 2017 NZES – its actual share of the vote was 47.04 percent and 44.45 percent in the 2014 and 2017 elections. The Green party went from a 22 percent of the share of the vote in the NZAVS data, to 16 percent in the NZES data – in the general elections, it was 10.7 percent in 2014, to 6.3 percent in 2017. These figures show that the Labour party has had a minor dip in support from the gay voters, whilst the National party appear to have gained support. Below I will explore why some of these trends may have occurred.

Firstly, when looking at the data from 2002 and 2014, it is important to recognise the difference in data type. The *Lavender Islands* study included queer women as well as queer men, therefore there will be a level of inconsistency when compared to the latter two studies which only look at men. There is evidence to show that women in Aotearoa are more likely to be left wing (Greaves, et al., 2017b), which could be partially used to explain the substantial drop-off of Labour supporters in the 2002 data and the 2014 data.

After controlling for the gender discrepancies between the earlier *Lavender Islands* and the later NZAVS and NZES, one hypothesis for the decline in support could be that queer voters no longer identify with the values of the Labour party in numbers that they used to. Most of my participants indicated that they were values voters, inasmuch as they support a party based on how closely it aligns with their own values.

The Labour party's values over the past 17 years have not fundamentally shifted. If we look at the history of the Labour party from 2002 to now, we can see that they have firmly remained a 'Third Way' Labour party.<sup>26</sup> From Helen Clark's government, to the current Labour-led coalition government, the fundamental ideology and value of the party has not changed. Therefore if it is not the Labour party's values changing, it must be that either the values that the voters hold are

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<sup>26</sup> We can define Third Way Labourism as the drive to "combine social justice (Old Left aims) with economic efficiency and a hard-headed realism (New Right objectives). The welfare state ought not be abandoned, but it needed to give way to the 'workfare state'. The Third Way set out to create wealth and, at the same time, achieve social justice" (Nolan, 2010, p. 100). Third Way comes after Second Way Labourism, or a neoliberal Labour (such as the Fourth Labour Government in New Zealand). First Way Labour is a traditional "social democracy" form of Labourism which was common in the immediate post-war era.

changing, or they can find their values expressed in other political parties. One might claim that voters are ‘shopping’ for parties that have the closest values to their own.

The rise in support of the National party might be explained by the lack of choice of parties on the right of the political spectrum; the only electorally viable party is the National party, and to a lesser extent, ACT. Therefore, it is not so much that there is a dramatic shift to the right from the community, instead that most of the support is galvanised behind one party, as voting for other right-wing parties may lead to a ‘wasted’ vote if the party does not enter Parliament.

The rise in support for the National party could also be explained by the increasing liberalisation of social policy that is now a core part of their policy program. From opposing homosexual law reform to actively supporting marriage equality laws in 29 years is a substantial policy evolution (which also perhaps reflects society’s evolution on these matters). This liberalisation can attract those, who like my participant Troye, are socially liberal but economically conservative (or classically liberal). Even if socially liberal policy is not part of a party’s formal policy programme, having enough members of Parliament who are socially liberal can signal that the party is a broad-enough church to attract those voters who are on the fence.

My research also shows that young voters are also marginally less loyal to the party they voted for than older people. When we consider the electoral reform in New Zealand from first past the post to mixed member proportional representation in 1994, it would make sense that there is a psychological impact on voters in terms of loyalty. For example, those who are raised under a system that is proportional may be less loyal because they have been raised in a system that fosters a multi-party environment. There is no literature around this, and thus it is simply a hypothesis, however this is a potential future area of inquiry.

## Queered Voting Theory

My second research question, why do gay men support the parties that they do, is best answered in relation to proximity theory. To remind the reader, the proximity theory of voting says that when a voter feels that their ideology is close to that of a party they will vote for that party. In the interviews and surveys, all of my participants identified that the party they support is closest to their own values. This is interesting in its own right: most participants did not recognise that their friends, family, or socio-political community influenced who they voted for (as social-structure

theory might predict), nor did they vote purely out of self-interest (as rational choice theory might predict). Instead, most talked about how *closely* they felt a party matched their own values.

The support for the National party in the NZES data can be viewed in relation to directional theory. Directional theory, as explained in the second chapter of this thesis, is where voters will support a party that is closest to their political ideology as long as the party does not cross an intellectual boundary of ‘too left’ or ‘too right.’ On the left of the spectrum in New Zealand politics, there are multiple parties which cater to different ideological boundaries, but to the right there are only National and ACT. There are fringe parties on the far right, such as the New Conservatives (whose presence is explored later in this chapter), however, it appears that these latter parties are past a self-imposed ideological boundary for those who are right-wing. This may go some way in explaining the strong showing of support for the National party in the 2017 NZES data, because centre-right voters have not moved to more extreme right-wing options.

### Effects of Historic Legislation

I have also shown that anti-gay historic legislation has not tainted voters’ views of the parties to any great degree, especially younger voters. Whilst the older participants held more vivid memories of ongoing government oppression, most of the young participants have never experienced this. Using proximity theory, we might hypothesise that voters would move either closer or further away from a party based on their historic actions, but this seems to not be the case. The answer, I think, can be found in the response around identity of the voter. Most expressed that they did not vote as gay men, and that their sexuality was not a factor in their voting behaviour. Therefore, when predicting how gay men vote, it is important to understand the extent to which their sexuality/identity as a gay man influences their vote. In understanding this, we can place the voter closer or further away from parties who have passed homophobic legislation in the past, thus increasing our ability to predict who they might vote for.

### Strategic Voting

The participants reflected three elements of voting behaviour relevant to rational choice theory: strategic voting, altruistic voting, and feelings of civic duty. To remind the reader, rational choice theories of voting say that voters will perform a utility calculation when deciding both to vote, and who to vote for. As can be seen in the results, most participants identified minimal or no costs,

and most felt that it was worth it, and that their vote made a difference. This is despite the fact that not one of their individual votes would have made any difference in the election – even if all their votes were in the same electorate, for the same party, the results of the election would not have changed. Herein lies the paradox that goes hand-in-hand with rational choice theories. And yet, we can still find some glimmers of rational choice. For example, one may consider strategic or tactical voting as a rational choice calculation.

Strategic voting, according to some, can only be explained by rational choice (Fisher, 2004). Fisher explains how a strategic voter can be seen through rational choice: “In formal rational choice models voters are assumed to be short-term instrumentally rational and those for whom it is utility-maximizing to vote for a party other than the preferred party are said to be [strategic] voters” (2004, p. 153). Participants who lived in the Epsom electorate said that they did this: they gave their party vote to their preferred party, the Greens, but gave their electorate vote to a different party’s candidate in hoping to unseat the current Member of Parliament. One of the two Epsom-based participants gave their electorate candidate to National, whilst the other gave it to the Labour candidate. The participants did so in the hope that would cause David Seymour, the Epsom MP and sole ACT MP, to lose his seat because it would have made it harder for the National party to form a coalition government, which was the participants overall aim (as demonstrated by them voting for the Green party).

### Rational Choice as Altruism

Rational choice, as a predominately economic school of thought, does not usually stray into the realm of altruism. However, there is an emerging school of thought within rational choice theory that states that voting altruistically is indeed a form of rational choice (see: Blais, 2015; Edlin, Gelman, & Kaplan, 2007; Fowler, 2006; Jankowski, 2002). Edlin, Gelman, and Kaplan write that in a large election, the probability of any single person’s vote being the decisive vote is small, but the “social benefits at stake are large,” therefore the expected utility from voting to those have a social preference can still be substantial (2007, p. 293).

Applying this altruism-as-rational choice framework to this research, many participants felt that they were not voting just for themselves, but for others too. One participant’s answers in particular springs to mind: Walter said that he felt that nothing ever changed, and that the political parties in New Zealand are all varieties of the same flavour. From this, one might expect that it would not be rational for him to vote, as there is minimal utility involved. However, in the interview, Walter

also said that he was deeply concerned for the homeless, and about wealth inequality, which are the motivators for him to vote. This shows that even when faced with a situation where there is no self-centred utility to be gained by voting, that people will still vote for altruistic reasons.

### Emphasis on Civic Duties

To answer the question of why the participants felt the need to vote, the strongest link between all the participants was a sense of civic duty. Participants expressed that it was their duty to vote, as part of their role in the state. This fits into two theoretical frameworks worth mentioning: the first is rational choice theories. Where rational choice theory says that it is irrational to vote because the likelihood of your vote making any difference, civic duty says that it is rational because of the utility one gets from exercising one's role within democracy.

Goldfarb and Sigelman believe that by adding civic duty into the rational choice equation, we can partially solve the “paradox that ate rational choice theory” (2010, p. 294). Downs (the original thinker behind rational choice theory, as explored earlier in this thesis) went some way to convey the duty of voting into the formula: “Voting is a necessary prerequisite for democracy; hence democracy is in one sense a reward for voting. We call the part of this reward the citizen receives at the election [their] long-run participation value” (1957, p. 270). And yet, Downs did not go to any length to formalise this into his economic theory of voting. As Goldfarb and Sigelman ask: “This, however, is an unsatisfactory account, for it rests on a logic that Downs himself had already rejected ... If it is conceded that one's vote will not influence the outcome of the election, how can it seriously be argued that one's vote will decisively influence the long-term viability of democracy?” (2010, p. 277). Therefore, Goldfarb and Sigelman argue that civic duty does not have a utility pay-off, instead not fulfilling one's need for civic duty adds a utility-cost, which is a motivator to avoid such a cost.

It is interesting to consider that being queer may amplify this effect of a utility-cost that is specific *only* to queer people. ‘Sexual citizenship’ and ‘Queer citizenship’ are emerging fields of scholarship, which investigate the role that sexuality and gender identity play in narratives of citizenship and nationalism (see Richardson, 2017, for a detailed review of existing literature over time). If we consider that queer people were outsiders in their own nation-state before homosexual law reform, civil unions, and marriage equality, then we may consider that these law changes enabled queer

people to be part of the state and attained citizenship.<sup>27</sup> With this newly found citizenship, it is possible that the potential cost of civic duty that Goldfarb and Sigelman would be amplified, therefore driving queer people to vote. In addition to this, it is interesting to think of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ queer citizens. Ammaturo makes the distinction between the two as: “a good queer citizen (tax payer, married, child-rearing, patriot, productive) and a bad queer citizen (polyamorous, kinky, HIV-positive, with an ambiguous gender presentation, or at the margins of societal institutions)” (2017, p. 95). It is interesting then to think about how this desire to be a good queer citizen motivates queer people to vote.

### Assimilation and Neoliberalism on the Community

This study has shown the minimal impact that belonging to a social cleavage plays in terms of voter behaviour. Most of the participants identified that they do feel a strong sense of community, but there was no consensus about the political leanings of that group. Most participants went even further, indicating that their gay friend groups do not have a communal politics. This is unexpected, considering the historic role of community in the queer community, and the political hegemony that the Labour party had within that social grouping.

When considering just how few participants gave answers that were in line with social structure theory, one might hypothesise about the fundamental erosion of social cleavages, namely the queer social cleavage, due to the process of neoliberal reforms and assimilation of the community.

Neoliberalism can be described both in a theoretical sociological lens and in an economical public policy sense. Springer (2015, p. 6) says that “Neoliberalism is more than a state form or particular set of policies, and elsewhere I have argued that it is politically important to consider neoliberalism as a discourse through which a political economic form of power-knowledge is constructed.” Both of these aspects of neoliberalism are important to this thesis, especially to the question of the erosion of social cleavages.

Margaret Thatcher once famously declared that “there is no such thing as society” which in essence sums up the theoretical lens of neoliberalism (Thatcher, 1987: as cited in Brittan, 2013). Neoliberalism as understood through a sociological lens puts an emphasis on the individual: the

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<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that “queer people have attained citizenship” is a sweeping statement. A statement that can only be broadly applied in some countries, and also depends on the definition of *Queer*. It could be said that in New Zealand, Transgender people do not enjoy equal rights of citizenship, as the wait for gender-affirming surgery was over 50 years through the public health system as there was a cap on how many people could receive this surgery each year (Coughlan, 2018). Whilst this cap has now been lifted, there is a significant backlog of cases.

individual's role in the economy, in society, and in politics. Matthew Eagleton-Pierce (2016) writes that a key tenet of neoliberalism is individualism, and that the individual tends to have ontological priority over the collective. Neoliberalism takes the conception of the individual further than liberalism does: neoliberalism integrates the individual with the consumer, and makes competition and choice a key sociological condition in which the individual/consumer lives in.

Neoliberalism as a public policy is underpinned by free market economics, and often involves the wholesale transfer of services from the state to the private sector. These services include areas of crime, drugs, economic development, education and transportation (England & Ward, 2016). Neoliberal economics is the “intermeshing” of the state and the private sector, whereby the private sector reaps the profit whilst the state carries all the risk (Hendriske & Sidaway, 2010, p. 2039). A prominent example of this is the financial crisis of the 2008 when the American state had to bail out banks who had failed to self-regulate, to the cost of the American taxpayer of \$700 billion (Springer, 2015).

The effects of decades of aggressively neoliberal policies has been that the values which citizens hold are “privatized ethics of responsibility, charity, [and] atonement” (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p. 554 as cited in Hindman, 2019, p. 54). This had led to a fundamental erosion of social cohesion and social cleavages. Forrest and Kearns (2001) write that the cause of this erosion is the “breakdown of Keynesian capitalism, an end to the progressive recruitment of households to the traditional middle classes and the lifestyles and living standards associated with such status, growing inequality and social fragmentation and a perceived decline of shared moral values” (p. 2127). What they are describing, in effect, is neoliberal public policy. This erosion of social cohesion means that traditional social cleavages no longer have the electoral importance they once did: neoliberalism has increasingly focused society's mind eye on the individual and the individual alone, not on an individual and the community to which they might belong.

Neoliberal reforms began in New Zealand in 1984 with the election of the Fourth Labour Government, and have continued to this day. Under the Fourth Labour Government a goods and service tax (GST) was introduced, top tax rates were significantly lowered, and the market as a tool for social change was made prominent (an early precursor to third-way labourism, perhaps) (Wilkinson & Dickson, 1989; Marcetic, 2017). Subsequent governments have continued this neoliberal legislative agenda, some of which include the significant sales of state-owned assets, anti-union legislation, and reducing ‘benefit dependency’ (Kelsey, 1995; Roper, 2005; Jutel, 2007; Frankel, 2016; Espiner, 2017).

The corrosive effect that neoliberalism has had on social cleavages has been examined to some extent when looking at the voting habits of the working-class community, as signalled earlier in this thesis. Globally, there has been a lessening of the importance of class cleavages in terms of electoral behaviour (Gauja, 2010, p. 39; Best, 2011). In Britain, there has been a substantial decrease in class voting since the early 1990s (Goldthorpe, 1999; Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015), and there has been a substantial decline in New Zealand of class voting since 1963 - with a sharp drop between 1984 to 2002 (Van Veen, 2017; Vowles, Coffe, & Curtin, 2017). There is evidence that there is a general upswing of class voting from 2002 to 2014, but still only to 1984 levels (Vowles, Coffe, & Curtin, 2017).

In the context of this study, neoliberalism has eroded the social cleavage of queer voters through the process of assimilation. During the push for civil rights for queer people in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a thunderous response from the religious right, who focussed their criticisms on the depravity of the 'homosexual lifestyle' (Fetner, 2008; Rymel, 2017). To counteract this campaign waged by the religious right, some gay liberation leaders encouraged queer people to act in a more 'civilised' way (read: heterosexual) and abandon the life of cruising for sex in public places, bathhouses, and other sexually liberating acts (Hindman, 2019). This had led to the "new homonormativity" of gay neoliberal conduct, or as Duggan (2002) describes "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, whilst promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (as cited in Hindman, 2019, p. 61).<sup>28</sup> Examples of this assimilationist neoliberal policies are the push for same-sex marriage, the corporate sponsorship of pride events, and companies like 'Rainbow Tick' which seek to capitalise on the minority status of the queer community by offering diversity training. It is interesting then, to link this to the idea of 'Sexual/Queer citizenship' mentioned earlier in this chapter, as it could be that the queer citizenship is indeed queer *neoliberal* citizenship. It is possible that the queer community have been brought into the nation-state, but at the same time, the community has been eroded through the economic policy and position of the nation-state.

Since social structure theory is predicated on the transmission of political values through social cleavages, it then follows that these social cleavages – in this instance, the queer community – are

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<sup>28</sup> Hindman notes that the AIDS crises accelerated this neoliberal assimilation, because it pushed sexually deviant behavior further into the closet, and gave the neoliberals a more moral claim.

no longer as important to voting theory as they once were because of this dual neoliberal/assimilation effect. This has been shown by my own research whereby the participants did not indicate that they voted as a community, or even have a large group of queer friends who had similar politics.

## New Zealand in the International Context

Earlier in this thesis, we saw that there has been a rise in the support for right and far-right parties in continental Europe. But in this research, I have found that there has not been any rise in the far-right parties in New Zealand looking for the gay vote, or any support for them. The rise of the far-right in Europe has been associated with the increasing levels of immigration from the Middle East, notably that of refugees and asylum seekers (Steinmayr, 2016; Davis & Deole, 2017). As has been explored earlier in this thesis, these far-right parties have been vying for the queer vote by peddling a xenophobic message that the rise of immigration constitutes a threat to liberal values that allow queer people freedom. One explanation for this vacuum in attention to the queer community by far-right parties in New Zealand, is that New Zealand has low levels of refugee resettlement and immigration.

For context, New Zealand lifted its refugee quota from 750 to 1000 refugees in July 2018, and is set to increase to 1500 by 2020 (Bennett, 2018). Since World War Two, New Zealand has resettled 35,000 people fleeing from conflict or natural disasters (Immigration New Zealand, n.d.). If we compare New Zealand's refugee quote to other industrialised countries, such as Germany, France, or Canada, there is a significant gap. For example, in 2017 Germany and France resettled 3000 refugees each, whilst Canada resettled 23,000 and the United States resettled 33,000 (Connor & Krogstad, 2018). To further contextualise this, in 2017 Canada resettled 725 refugees per one million residents, Australia resettled 618 per one million residents, Norway resettled 528 per million, the United States resettled 102 refugees per million residents, and New Zealand resettled 208 per million residents (Immigration New Zealand, 2018).

Further, New Zealand has a relatively centrist political landscape in which far right (or far-left) parties do not prosper. For context on just how little support far-right parties in Aotearoa gather, the only party that could be defined as far-right is the Conservatives (recently rebranded the New Conservatives) who received 6,253 votes, or 0.2 percent of the national vote in the 2017 election, which is less than the Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis party with 8,075 votes, or 0.3 percent of the national vote (Electoral Commission, 2017b).

My only right-wing participant, Richard, did not support a far-right party, instead opting for the libertarian ACT party. This, I believe, is not merely just a sign of strategic voting (where it was more likely that ACT would get in over the Conservatives), but instead the far-right flavour of conservatism in New Zealand is not hugely popular – even amongst conservatives.

At the time of writing this chapter, but after the interviews had taken place, there is a new far-right party emerging, that is overtly trying to vie for the queer vote: Coalition NZ. Coalition NZ is a political party formed by Brian and Hannah Tamaki, leaders of the Pentecostal ‘Destiny’s Church.’ Destiny Church have become well-known for its conservative stance on social issues, and their often outspoken self-ordained Bishop Brian Tamaki. In 2003, Destiny’s Church first launched its political gambit, with the Destiny New Zealand political party which received 0.62 percent of the national vote – the highest of the political parties that did not enter Parliament, but was ultimately deregistered in 2007 (Taylor, 2003; Electoral Commission, 2005; Cooke, 2019). In May 2019, Brian Tamaki announced that he would again form a political party, but there was severe backlash from many because of his comments in the past attacking queer people – including large protests about civil union legislation, and saying that ‘homosexuals and murderers’ were responsible for the 2016 fatal Kaikoura earthquake (McConnell, 2016). However, on 1 June 2019 Tamaki led an event in his church in which he apologised for years of mistreatment against the queer community. Two queer community stallwarts, Jacqueline Grant ONZM and James Laverty, were at the event to accept the apology (Weekes, 2019). Furthermore, Coalition NZ has an openly gay media spokesperson (Gray, 2019), which seems to imply a genuine attempt to courting the gay vote. It is still too early to see the impact Coalition NZ may have on the New Zealand political climate, as there has been no polling done. It will however be interesting to watch whether the party manages to capture some (or any) of the gay vote.

## Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results of my research in three groupings: the left-wing majority, the implications of theory, and how it fits into the international context. Both arms of the research, i.e., the quantitative and qualitative approaches, have shown that there was a left-wing majority. However, these left-wing voters have diversified to not just the Labour party, but also the Greens and New Zealand First. There is also a rising level of support for the National party. This thesis avoids speculation, but suggests that this could be explained because there has been a fracturing of parties on the left, and an increasing liberal National party. This chapter has also looked at how

the three voting theories, rational choice, social structure and, proximity and directional theory, can be applied to the results. Most of the responses from the interviews lined up with the proximity theory of voting, as the participants expressed that they voted for parties that were ideologically close to them.

In addition to showing that that civic duty motivated the participants to vote, I have also looked at how little social structure played in either motivating the participants to vote, or informing them on who to vote for. Lastly, this chapter places the results within the international context: there is no evidence to suggest that there has been a rise in right, or far-right, gay voters in New Zealand. This is hypothesized to be because of New Zealand's largely centrist political landscape, in addition to relatively low numbers of immigration and refugee resettlement.

## Conclusions

This thesis asked two related research questions: which political parties do gay men in New Zealand vote for, and why do they vote for those parties? This study helps to fill three distinct holes in the current literature about politics, voting, queer studies, and wider academic fields. The first intellectual gap that it helps to fill is in regards to New Zealand politics. In the New Zealand context, as discussed throughout this thesis, Parliament has such an important and is institutionally powerful, therefore there needs to be studies about how queer people (indeed, all minorities), act and interact with the electoral system. The second hole that this thesis helps to fill is that it gives a voice to a group of people who are not often researched in relation to electoral politics. As queer people are often 'invisible' in traditional research, it is important that their voices and stories are told. This is even more significant when we look at voting theory, which aims to predict how people vote. The third and last gap this research fills is an uncomfortable gap between political science and gender studies. Political science is deeply rooted in Western Epistemology, whereas gender studies has had the ability to be an intellectual 'pick'n'mix' in which researchers can use methods which closely suit the research topics. It is hoped that this research will offer a queered political science that future researchers can emulate.

To answer the first question, which political parties do gay men in New Zealand vote for, the results of this study indicate that gay men are still largely a left-voting cohort, but that there is a growing number of National party voters. The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study, the New Zealand Election Study, and the interviews conducted for this thesis, all show a general left-leaning block of voters.

To answer the second question, why do gay men vote for these parties, through the interviews it would appear that gay men vote for parties that espouse similar values to their own, and fit broadly into proximity theory of voting. They are not 'self-interested' voters, nor do they vote in a way to get policies implemented that would benefit them. Through the interviews, we can ascertain that sexuality does not play a substantial role in deciding who to vote for. As some participants allude to, though, their sexuality may impact on their value system, and thus who they vote for. Further to this, the overwhelming reason that the participants gave for why they voted was for reasons relating to civic duty: simply, gay men felt it was their civic duty to vote.

This research has two key limitations, both of which are linked to constraints of time and money and a traditional under-researching of this area. For example, the New Zealand Election Study has only included sexuality in one of its cycles, and the sample size is small. This means that there is

no data available that is over many elections from one source. The sample size from the NZAVS is also small, as is the number of people I interviewed. These limitations may have been able to have been adverted if I had more time to work around them, and the funds to do so. Furthermore, and related to sample size, my interviews were largely homogenous in terms of ethnicity and nationality: The interviews did not include any Māori voices. This is a significant oversight of this research. It was not for want of trying, as I had screened for Māori voices when potential participants had got in touch, however no Māori gay men were forthcoming. This is perhaps a reflection of my recruitment methodology. Further research should build on this, and actively search for takatāpui voices to amplify and hear.

Further research should seek to overcome these two barriers; a bigger and more representative sample size would ensure the results are more robust. Further work is needed in this area. There should be research on the political engagement of lesbians, and more generally, queer people of all shades of queer. If homosexual men are 'invisible' subjects, than homosexual women, bisexual people, asexual people, transgender people, and other queer folk are indeed *more* invisible because of the power structures that enable research on men. Further research should also be focused on queer people within voting theory. Voting theory, as explored in this thesis, has not traditionally looked at how or why queer people vote. This, in essence, ignore a substantial block of the population.

## Appendix One

Who did you vote for the in the 2017 election? Why?

Did you split your vote between electorate and party vote? Why or why not? Have you ever considered splitting your vote?

How loyal do you feel to the party that you voted for in the 2017 election?

Thinking ahead to the 2020 election, have you decided who you will vote for?

Why do you vote?

Do you enjoy voting?

Thinking about when you were growing up, did your family ever talk about how they voted?

Do you think that influenced your own personal habits?

Aside from your family, what else do you think has influenced the way you vote?

Do you think that there's a perception that gay men support one political party?

Why do you think it exists?

Do you feel a sense of community, in terms of a gay or queer community, in your town?

Do you think this community shares a similar political view as you?

Do you think that gay rights are still an important issue on the ballot box?

Do you see any costs to voting? Are they worth it?

Thinking about same sex marriage, who do you attribute that to? Thinking about homosexual law reform, who do you attribute that to?

Do these pieces of legislation have any ongoing influence on your political stance?

When you enter the voting booth, who do you vote as? Do you vote as a gay man, or as a [insert characteristic here]?

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