

Tactical voting and ticket splitting:

**how rigidly defined are
'nationalist' and 'unionist'
voters in Northern Ireland?**

But first...

...picking over the entrails of last week

The big picture

- DUP: vote up by 4.5%, gain 6 seats
- UUP: vote down by 7.8%, lose 9 seats
- Unionist vote down 2.5%, lose 4 seats

- SDLP: vote down by 1.8%, lose 2 seats
- SF: vote up by 2.7%, gain 4 seats
- Nationalist vote up by 2.1%, gain 2 seats

How much is your vote worth?

- UUP got 2 more seats than SDLP despite 2000 fewer votes
- Quotas in constituencies where SDLP won a seat but UUP didn't: 5863 (Foyle), 4828 (West Belfast)
- Quotas in constituencies where UUP won a seat but SDLP didn't: 5146 (Strangford), 4387 (North Down), 4233 (East Belfast), 4292 (East Antrim)

Impact of turnout

- Average turnout in constituencies where SF won 0 seats (North Down, East Antrim, Strangford, East Belfast): **55.4%**
- Average turnout in constituencies where SF won 3 or more seats (West Belfast, Newry and Armagh, West Tyrone, Mid Ulster): **70.7%**

The smaller parties

- Alliance: vote up by 1.5%, gain 1 seat
- Greens: vote up by 1.4%, gain 1 seat
- Ind (Deeny): vote down 0.3%, retain 1 seat

- PUP: vote halved to 0.6%, retain 1 seat
- UKUP: vote up by 0.7%, lose 1 seat

The dissidents' failure

- Highest vote for Unionist dissidents:
 - Newry and Armagh (5.9%)
 - North Down (5.9%)
 - North Belfast (5.6%)
- Highest vote for Republican dissidents:
 - Newry and Armagh (4.4%)
 - Foyle (4.4%)

Surge of the centre

- Alliance vote up 9.9% in East Belfast, 6.7% in South Belfast
- UUP vote down 11.1% in East Belfast, 8.7% in South Belfast
- Total Unionist vote down 11.3% in East Belfast, 7.9% in South Belfast

Greens rising

- 1998 Assembly: 710 votes (0.1%)
- 2003 Assembly: 2688 votes (0.4%)
- 2007 Assembly: 11985 votes (1.7%)
- (quadrupling every time?)

It's not what you have,
it's what you do with it

- West Tyrone: SDLP 1.02 quotas, no seat
- East Belfast: UUP 1.54 quotas, 1 seat
- North Belfast: DUP 2.62 quotas, 2 seats

- On the other hand:
- West Belfast: SF 4.89 quotas, 5 seats

Coat-tails

- 16 of 18 MPs were candidates
- Transfer to party colleagues very strong:
- Adams 87%, Durkan/Murphy 85%,
Dodds/Wilson 84%, Gildernew 83%,
Donaldson/Robinson 82%, Campbell 80%
- But McDonnell (South Belfast) “only” 70%
(however, figures difficult to read)

SF transfers to Unionists

- E L'dy 3%, E Antrim 2%, Strangford 2%, E Belfast 1%, N Antrim 1%, S Antrim 1%, S Down 1%
- But very few west of the Bann
- and none at all in West Belfast

Voters are people

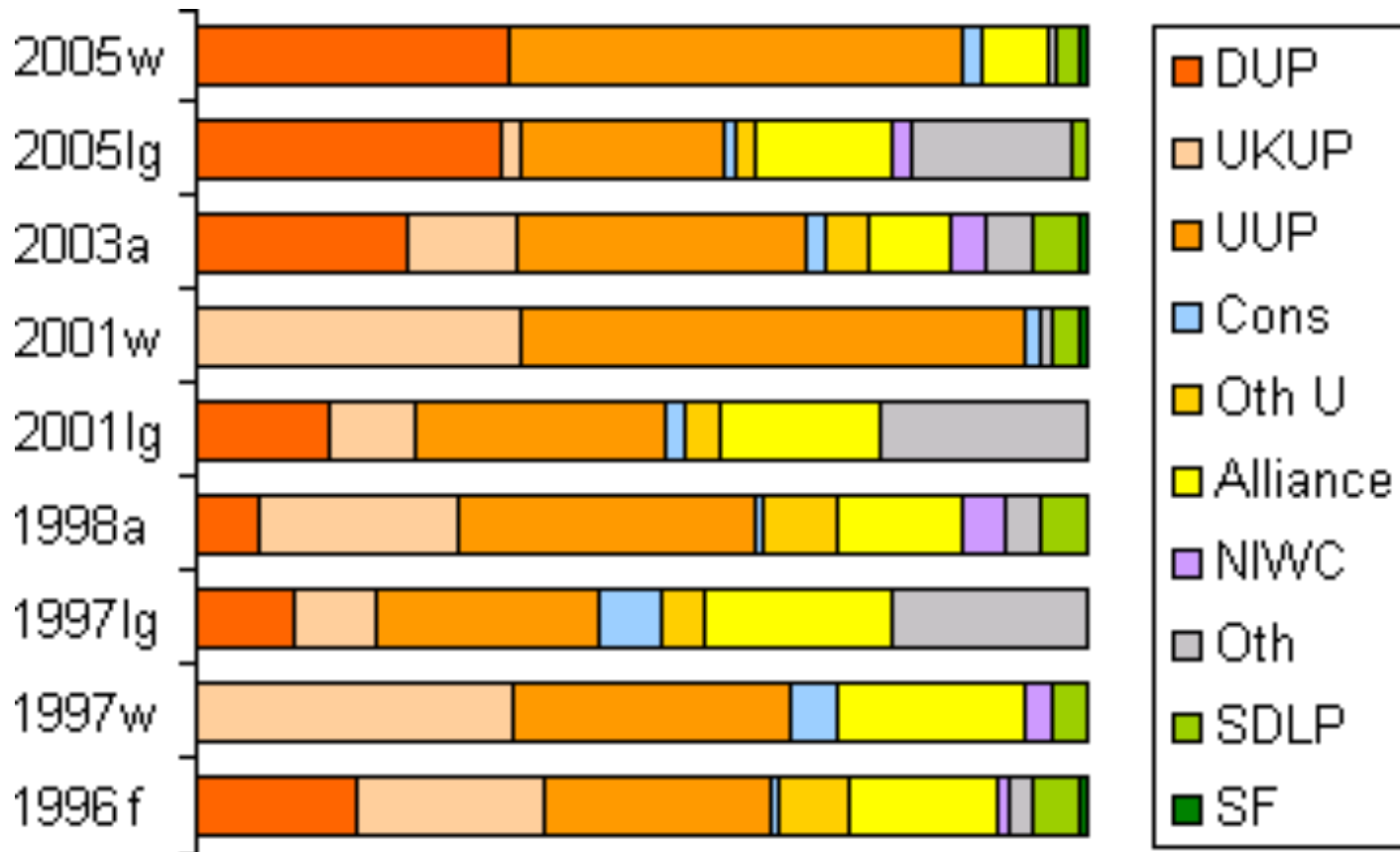
- What is a “Unionist”?
- What is a “Nationalist”?
- What are the centre ground voters?
 - Non-existent?
 - Suffering from false consciousness?
 - Crypto-Unionists?

Back to 2005

- Simultaneous elections for Westminster and local councils
- All big 4 parties contesting almost all seats (in previous elections, “tactical voting” sometimes began and ended with the parties’ nominations)

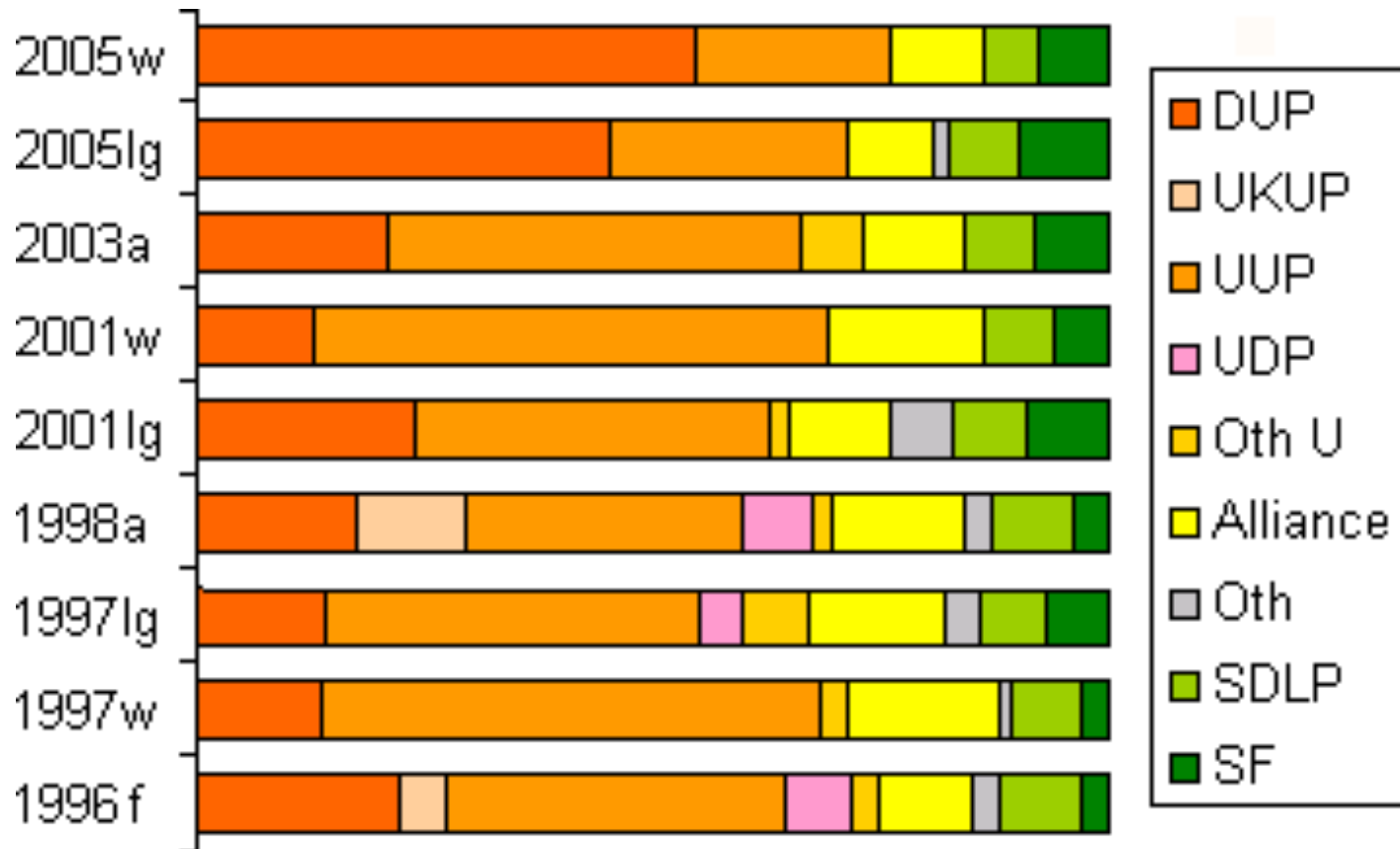
Tactical votes for UUP, #1

- North Down



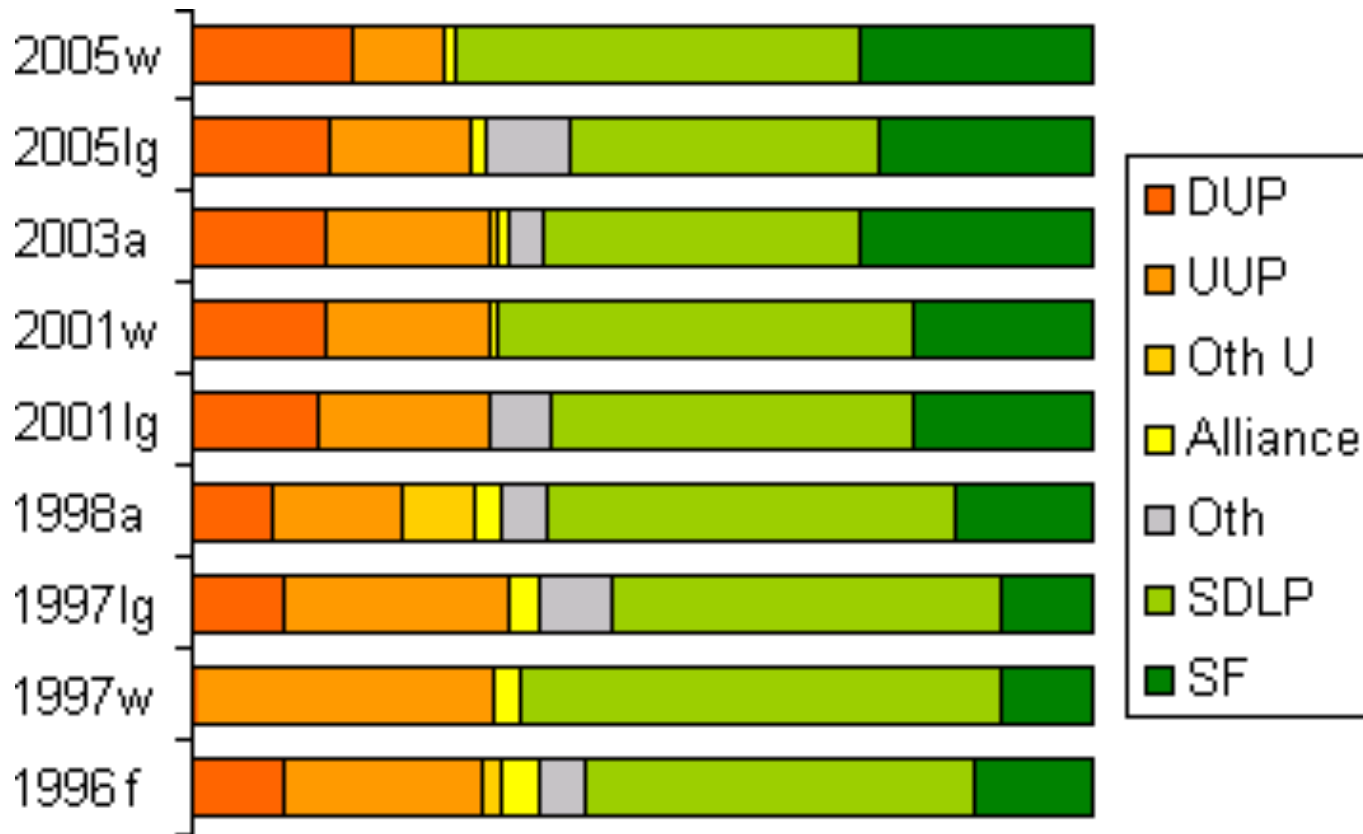
Tactical votes for UUP, #2

- Lagan Valley



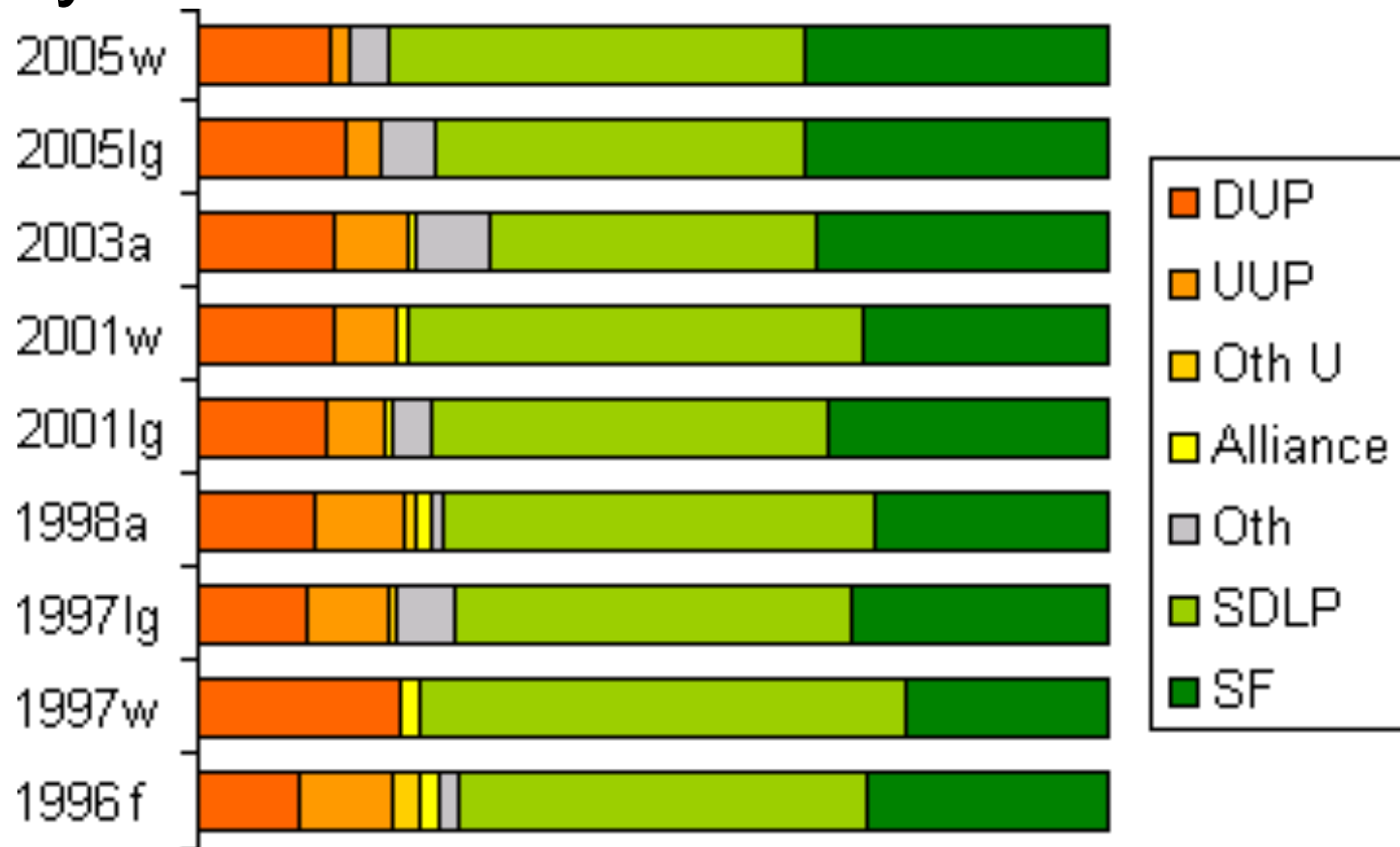
Tactical Votes for SDLP, #1

- South Down

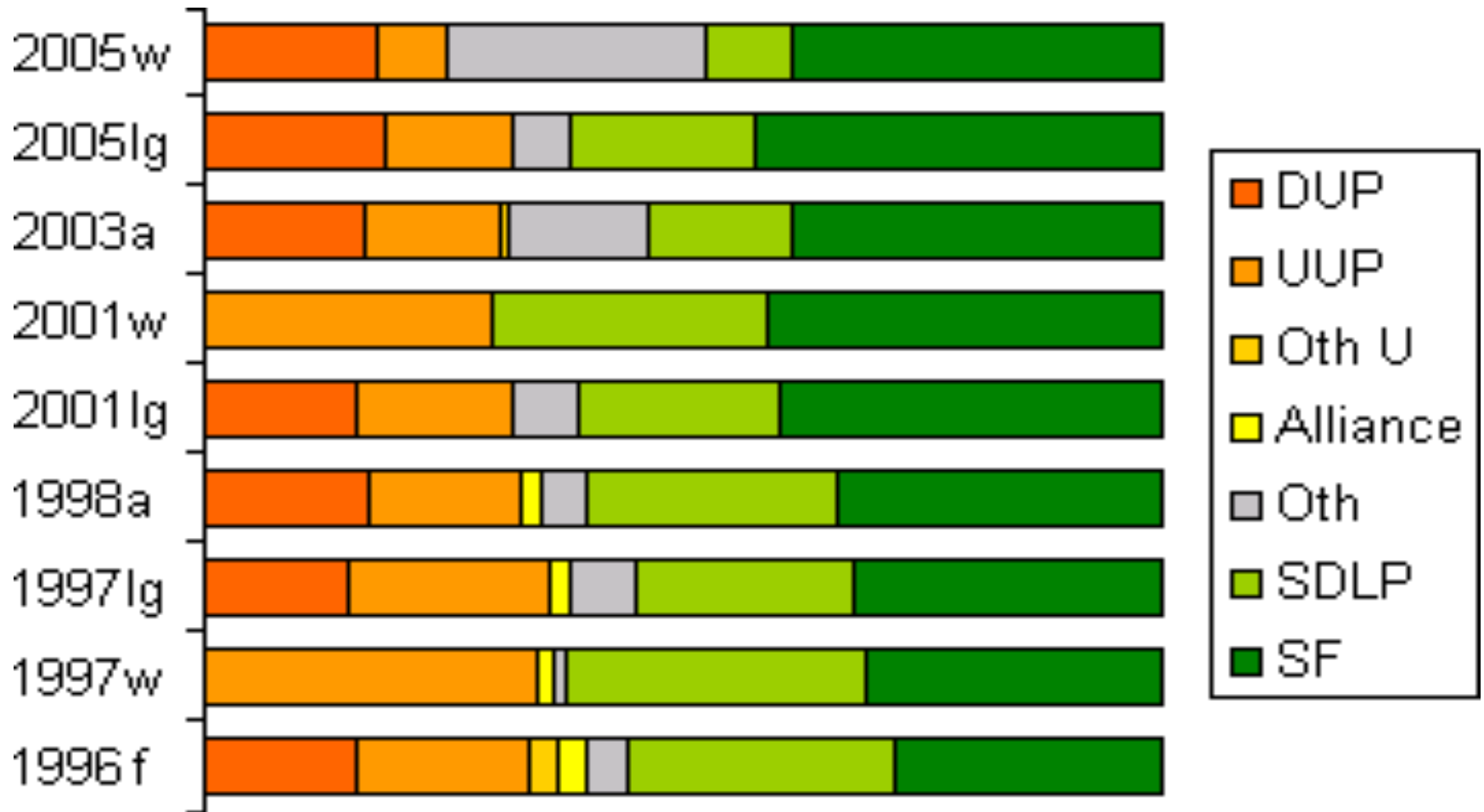


Tactical votes for SDLP, #2

- Foyle



Ticket-splitting in West Tyrone



The case against essentialism

- Can people who split their tickets be justly described as nationalists or unionists?
- Can a system which forces choice of identity itself be just?
- But to what extent does voting behaviour reflect identity and belief anyway?