

**Small Parties, Big Changes:
The Evolution of Minor Parties Elected to the Australian Senate**

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Minor parties, often referred to as small parties, have been the subject of much interest, especially in European political systems where they have often been crucial in forming coalition governments. In recent years, however, there has been growing interest in minor parties in Australia. This was not always the case as it has been the major parties which have been the centre of political attention. This is understandable, since Australia follows the Westminster system where the government is formed by the party (or parties) that wins a majority of seats in the lower house. The Australian parliamentary system, however, has a powerful Senate (Bach 2003). Indeed, the Senate has almost all the powers of the House of Representatives. Furthermore, a bill must be passed by both houses in order to become law. Aside from its structural importance, the Senate is the chamber in which minor parties have won parliamentary representation, sometimes wielding the balance of power and exerting significant influence over the policies of governments.

The following discussion will explore the rise of minor parties in Australia, with particular emphasis on the parties that won seats in the Senate in the post-war period. It will focus on highlighting significant changes to the type of minor party winning Senate representation over the last seven decades, especially in terms of their sources of mobilisation and the role they seek to play in the political debate. I aim to show how newer minor parties are qualitatively different to older minor parties. Minor parties elected from the 1950s to 1983 were the result of major party fragmentation. They had policy platforms but positioned themselves as either opponents or ‘watchdogs’ of the major parties. Minor parties elected from 1984, however, advanced a specific policy agenda linked to broader social movements. This evolution in the type of minor party elected to the Senate has implications for party competition, national government and policy outcomes. In highlighting the changing type of minor party winning Senate representation, I hope to construct an analytical framework to understand the role and power of minor parties in contemporary Australian politics.

This discussion will examine parties in the chronological order in which they were elected to the Senate, starting from 1949 when the voting system of proportional representation was used for the first time to the most recent election in 2016. It draws on information obtained through interviews I conducted with parliamentarians, office-bearers and supporters of minor parties, in addition to official party documents, media reports and academic analyses. In some cases, I use pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity requested by those who generously gave their time and discussed their thoughts and feelings about minor parties in Australia.

The rules of the game

As Duverger (1967) reminds us, the electoral system can shape the party system. This has implications for the ability of minor parties to win Senate contests. Prior to 1949, a ‘winner-takes-all’ system of voting was used to elect senators. From the first federal election in March 1901, which was for the whole Senate, up to and including the half-Senate election in May 1917, the system was ‘multi-senator-plurality’ (McAllister, Mackerras and Boldiston 1997: 68). This resulted in lopsided outcomes in which either the government or opposition parties dominated the chamber.

In 1948 the Chifley Labor government enacted the single transferable vote (STV) method of proportional representation for Senate elections (Farrell and McAllister 2006). This change was to have a significant impact on subsequent Senate elections (Sharman 1999). In 1983 the Hawke government made further changes to the Senate voting system. These reforms, which first applied to the federal election in 1984, also had a profound effect on subsequent Senate contests (Rydon 1986; Sharman 1986). As shown in Table 1, 12 minor parties won Senate representation in 33 years since the reforms, compared to just three minor parties over a similar number of years prior to the reforms. In 2016, the Turnbull government responded to growing calls to reform the Senate electoral system after new minor parties, especially the Motoring Enthusiast Party, were able to claim Senate seats with a very small primary vote. It implemented a system where voters were no longer required to give preferences to all candidates. Instead, voters needed to indicate their first six parties or groups above the line, or at least 12 candidates if voting below the line. The long term impact of these reforms is unclear as the first election using this system was a double dissolution election.

Table 1: Minor parties elected to the Australian Senate since introduction of proportional representation

Minor party	Year first Senate seat won
Democratic Labor Party (DLP)	1955
Liberal Movement	1974
Australian Democrats	1977
Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP)	1984
WA Greens	1990
Australian Greens	1996
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	1998
Family First	2004
'New' DLP	2010
Liberal Democrats Party (LDP)	2013
Palmer United Party (PUP)	2013
Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party (AMEP)	2013
Hinch Justice Party	2016
Nick Xenophon Team	2016
Jacqui Lambie Network	2016

The 'old' minor party type – the 'secessionists'

The Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist), which was later renamed the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) became the first minor party to break the major party monopoly in the Senate. It won its first seat in the chamber in 1955 and was the result of a dispute within the Australian Labor Party (ALP) over the issue of perceived communist influence in its ranks (Reynolds 1974). The DLP positioned itself as an anti-communist force and its hostility towards communism underpinned its policy ethos, especially in the areas of foreign, defence

and public policy (DLP 1965; Lyons 2008). Moreover, the DLP positioned itself as an explicitly anti-Labor party. In fact, the party stated this by describing its purpose as a ‘road block...across the ALP’s path and so deny it the fruits of office’ (DLP 1969: 3-4). Moreover, the party sought to ‘wage a war of attrition against the ALP and so compel it to break its communist connections and again become the acceptable alternative’ party of government (DLP 1969: 3-4).

The DLP was able to win seats until the 1970 election. It continually opposed Labor in electoral terms and sided with the Coalition in the Senate on questions of policy (Crisp 1970). The party placed greater emphasis on promoting socially conservative moral policies throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s but its principal objective remained as being an anti-Labor party (Lyons 2008). After failing to win seats following the 1970s election, however, the DLP disintegrated. The party re-formed in Victoria in the 1980s and, as will be discussed later, returned to the Senate in 2010, albeit with a different source of mobilisation and *raison d’etre*.

While the DLP was in the Senate, the Liberal Reform Group emerged in 1966. The group later became the Australia Party and was made up of ‘disillusioned Liberals’ (Everingham 2009: 113) who were united by their opposition to the Vietnam War, as well as to the DLP’s presence in the Senate. The Australia Party gained significant attention in the political debate, but was unable to win a Senate seat at a general election (Everingham 2009).

The next minor party that did win Senate representation was the Liberal Movement which was the result of a split within the Liberal and Country League (LCL) in South Australia. It was led by the South Australian LCL Premier Steele Hall, who had sought to modernise the operation and policy agenda of the LCL (Hall 1973). Hall had also embarked on a campaign to reform the state’s malapportioned electoral system, which had served the interests of his party. Hall’s changes to the electoral system contributed to the LCL’s state election loss in 1970, so his position as leader became untenable. He resigned from the party but created the Liberal Movement as a faction within the LCL in order to pursue a ‘centrist’ program in opposition to the LCL’s socially conservative policies (Jaensch and Bullock 1978). This caused a split and Hall and his supporters left the LCL and formally set up the Liberal Movement Party (Sugita 1995). Hall stood as the lead Senate candidate in South Australia at the 1975 double dissolution election and won the party’s first seat in federal parliament

(Jaensch and Bullock 1978). He promised to keep the major parties accountable while pursuing ‘middle-of-the-road’ policies. This approach caused *The Australian* newspaper to label him a ‘fence-sitting enigma’ (Cummins 1974: 9).

While Hall returned to the Liberal Party in 1976, the Liberal Movement’s brief presence in the Senate had a longer lasting legacy on the role minor parties could play in the chamber. It demonstrated how a ‘centrist’ party could act as an intermediary between the major parties in the Senate. Indeed, the Liberal Movement set the template for the next minor party to have a significant presence in the Senate: the Australian Democrats.

The Australian Democrats:

The Australian Democrats refined the Liberal Movement’s idea of being a ‘watchdog’. This was most explicitly declared with the party’s mantra – coined before the 1980 election – to ‘keep the bastards honest’. The rise of the Democrats resulted from the combining of three manifestations of fragmentation of the Liberal Party: The Australia Party, the Liberal Movement and Don Chipp. Chipp, who resigned from the Liberal Party after serving as a sitting member in the House of Representatives from 1960, had built a public profile as a proponent of ‘centrist’ policies, especially during his time as minister for customs (Warhurst [1977] 1997).

The onset of the constitutional crisis played a crucial role in the emergence of the Democrats. The crisis occurred as the result of a battle in the Senate between the major parties – the ALP and the Liberal-Country Coalition – that eschewed concerns for constitutional conventions as both sides sought to secure executive power (Bach 2003). In the aftermath of the crisis, in which Prime Minister Gough Whitlam had been dismissed by the Governor General Sir John Kerr, there was growing interest in alternatives to the major-party dominance of the parliament and this revived interest in a centrist party (Sugita 1995).

By 1976, Chipp had begun to lay the groundwork for a new party, and in 1977 he officially launched the Australian Democrats. Fragments of the Australia Party, Liberal Movement and some Liberal Party members, who shared similar ‘disenchanted’ views to Chipp, either joined the party or offered support (Sugita 1995). The Democrats also incorporated broad policy pillars which reflected the ideals of particular social movements, especially in environmental

and socially progressive policies (see Jaensch 1993). In the early years of the Democrats' existence, however, the party focused on positioning itself as a 'watchdog' and 'umpire' of the major parties in the Senate (interviews with Lyn Allison 2005 and Meg Lees 2005). The party did this most effectively when it held the balance of power in the chamber as well as in Senate Committees where it could carefully scrutinise the decisions of major parties.

Accounting for the early minor parties

A common feature of the three parties elected to the Senate from 1955 to 1983 is that they were created as a result of major-party fragmentation. Parties that have emerged in this way are not unique to Australia. Studies in European systems, for example, highlighted how new minor parties emerged after disputes over policy or personality within larger parties. In classifying these parties, Australian scholars have argued they be thought of 'secessionist' parties (Jaensch and Mathieson 1998: 27; Richmond 1978: 331; see also Smith 2005). An important feature of these parties in the Australian case is the role they sought to play in the political system. They had policies: the DLP advocated socially conservative policies, while the Liberal Movement and Democrats advocated socially progressive goals. Nonetheless, they mainly used their position in the political system either to frustrate and block the ALP from gaining government (in the case of the DLP) or to act as centrist 'watchdogs' of the major parties (in the case of the Liberal Movement and Democrats). The next wave of minor parties that won Senate representation rejected this approach of focussing on major parties. Rather, they sought to advance their own policy agenda in parliament.

Furthermore, the rise of these newer minor parties coincided with changes to the electoral system brought about by the Hawke government in 1983. These reforms, which were first used in the 1984 election, included expanding the number of senators from each state from 10 to 12. This was because the government sought to increase the size of the House of Representatives from 125 to 148 members and thus triggered the 'nexus' provision in section 24 of the Constitution. The increase in the number of senators to be elected for each state reduced the percentage of the vote needed to achieve a quota from 9.1 per cent in full Senate elections to 7.7 per cent. In a general election, a quota fell from 16.6% to 14.4 per cent. The significance of this reform was that it reduced the electoral task confronting minor parties (Bowler and Donovan 2012). A Group Ticket Vote (GTV) was also implemented. The government described this as a much simpler method of voting for the Senate. By simply

indicating their first preference, voters would have their preferences distributed by the Australian Electoral Commission in accordance with the voting ticket lodged by their preferred party (Sawer 2004). The rate of GTV is especially high (between 98 and 99 per cent) for electors voting for the major parties. The introduction of the GTV meant that ‘wheeling and dealing’ of preferences would be a crucial feature of Senate contests (Mayer 1980: 345). The Hawke reforms also introduced election funding which allowed candidates to receive funding if they won at least 4 per cent of the primary vote. This measure was designed to encourage new minor parties to stand for election, as the state would effectively subsidise their campaigns if they won enough votes.

The rise of a new type of minor party: Issues-oriented parties from the Left

The changes to the electoral system coincided with the election of the first of the new type of minor party in 1984: the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP). The NDP emerged from community opposition to uranium mining and concerns about Australia’s foreign policy, especially Australia’s relationship with the United States (Quigley 1986). The NDP began to mobilise when the ALP overturned its policies on nuclear issues at the party’s federal conference in July 1984 (P.L.R 1984). Concerned about Labor’s policy direction, a small group of people based in Canberra created the NDP. The nascent party agreed to have only three policies: banning nuclear weapons in Australian territory; prohibiting foreign bases in Australia; and halting the mining and export of uranium (interview with Denborough 2007).

Within a few months, the party gained thousands of members, including the rock star Peter Garrett, and had a presence in all Australian jurisdictions. Concerned that the new party would diminish its own electoral performance, the ALP in NSW used the GTV system to run a ‘put the NDP last’ campaign. While Peter Garrett, who was the NDP’s lead Senate candidate in NSW, won almost 10 per cent of the primary vote, the party missed out on winning a seat because of Labor’s tactics. In Western Australia, however, the NDP was not seen as much of a threat by the major parties and was able to win Senate representation on the back of ALP preferences.

Despite its success, the NDP soon split over internal disputes concerning its operation and organisation (Vallentine 2007). The party was able to win a seat in NSW in the double-dissolution election in 1987, even though it won just 1.5 per cent of the state’s primary vote.

On this occasion, the NDP was able to benefit from the halving of the quota as well as the fact that the ALP did not deprive the party of crucial preferences.

The emergence of the NDP marked an important change in the type of minor party elected to the Senate. The source of the NDP's mobilisation was different to that of earlier minor parties. Rather than emerge as the direct result of major party fragmentation, the NDP sought to advance a specific policy agenda and had clear links to the broader peace, disarmament and anti-nuclear movements. The NDP was also the precursor of subsequent 'green' parties.

Following the demise of the NDP in the late 1980s, a new party, the Vallentine Peace Group, was created in Western Australia. It was led by Jo Vallentine, who had won the Western Australia Senate seat for the NDP in 1984. The Vallentine Peace Group was clearly a continuation of the NDP in Western Australia, given that the bulk of its membership consisted of former NDP members (Vallentine 2007). Vallentine stood as the lead Senate candidate for the new party at the 1987 election and was returned to parliament after winning almost 5 per cent of the primary vote, and 'wheeling and dealing' preferences effectively.

By 1990 the WA Greens had been created by melding the Vallentine Peace Group with other green groups and parties in the state (Vallentine 2007). The WA Greens went on to win Senate seats in the federal election of 1990, with Jo Vallentine as the lead candidate, and again in 1993 following Vallentine's resignation, with a policy platform linked to the peace, disarmament and environmental movements (Bennett 2008).

The Australian Greens joined the WA Greens in the Senate in 1996 when Bob Brown won the party's first Senate seat in Tasmania. The origins of the Australian Greens can be traced back to the United Tasmanian Group, the first 'green' party in the world (Holloway 1986). The Australian Greens was a separate entity to the WA Greens and was linked to various conservation movements (Norman 2004). The party's platform was concerned with protecting natural resources, and it promoted a suite of socially progressive policies (Miragliotta 2006). In 2003 the WA Greens was incorporated into the confederation of the Australian Greens, and the party consolidated its position in the Senate in subsequent elections.

Issues-Oriented Minor Parties from the Right: One Nation and Family First

The election of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party to the Senate in 1998 was a significant development, as minor parties elected since 1984 had been from what would be considered the left of the political spectrum. One Nation, on the other hand, was from the political right. The party was built around Pauline Hanson, whom the Liberal Party had dis-endorsed in 1996 following comments she made about race and immigration (Gordon 2003). Hanson attracted significant support as an 'anti-system' politician and quickly created a party which posed a significant electoral challenge to the major parties, especially the John Howard-led Coalition government (Bean 2000; Goot and Watson 2001).

One Nation Party corresponded to the populist-right party type (Hainsworth 2000). Like other populist-right politicians, Hanson presented seemingly simple proposals to deal with complex policy issues. Moreover, Hanson was a charismatic figure and her core message resonated with sections of the electorate that felt disenchanted with the policies of the major parties (Balson 2005; see also Goot and Watson 2001). One Nation, however, won its only Senate seat in Queensland in the 1998 election when it secured more than a quota in its own right. The party could have won seats in other states as well, had the major parties not used the GTV to put One Nation last in their preferences. When the party left the Senate in 2004, it had all but collapsed and Hanson was looking like a spent force.¹

Hanson, however, kept chipping away. She contested subsequent elections, not always as a One Nation candidate, and remained a prominent figure in the political debate by regularly appearing in the media as a commentator. By 2016, Hanson had rejoined One Nation and mounted a modest campaign of 27 candidates. Placing emphasis on themes she had campaigned on 20 years ago, Hanson also called for a ban on Muslim immigration to Australia as well as a royal commission into Islam. In the Senate contest, the party won a national primary vote of 4.3 per cent. In Queensland, Hanson returned to parliament after winning 9.2 per cent of the primary vote which equated to 1.2 quota. In Western Australia, the One Nation Party won 4 per cent of the primary which equated to 0.52 of a quota which was a similar result to NSW. One Nation ended up winning Senate seats in Western Australia and NSW thanks to the flow of preferences.

¹ Hanson was expelled from her party in 2002 and had been convicted and jailed for electoral fraud in 2003. The Queensland Court of Appeal later quashed her conviction.

Family First, another party from the political right, won Senate representation for the first time in 2004. The party advanced a socially conservative policy agenda and had links to Assembly of God churches, which led to debates about whether it was a ‘religious party’ (Manning and Warhurst 2005: 263). It promoted the concept of the ‘nuclear’ family and opposed laws that would give same-sex couples access to IVF treatment and adoption. The party also promoted ideas it believed would strengthen the country’s ‘values’. For example, it opposed euthanasia and pornography. Moreover, Family First had a deep suspicion of the Australian Greens and its suite of socially progressive policies, especially concerning gender, identity and harm minimisation approaches for drug users.

Family First was able to win its Victorian Senate seat, even though it won just 1.9 per cent of the primary vote, thanks to Labor Party preferences. The party, however, could not consolidate its position in the 2007 and 2010 elections, primarily as it was deprived of major party preferences. Family First was, however, able to return to the Senate in 2013. The focal point of the party was Bob Day who was the lead Senate candidate in South Australia. He directed a more centralised approach to campaigning and discouraged candidates from communicating directly with the media. Instead, candidates were instructed to direct inquiries to the party’s website. Candidates were also advised to avoid media appearances so that they would not overshadow the public profile of the wider party. Despite winning just 4 per cent of the state-wide primary vote, Bob Day was able to win a Senate seat as a result of shrewd preference wheeling and dealing. This was highlighted by the fact that the Greens had directed preferences to Family First. This was primarily due to the Greens seeking to safeguard its own electoral prospects than supporting Family First. Bob Day was returned in the 2016 double dissolution election.

A party back from the dead: the ‘new’ DLP

As One Nation and Family First were in a state of rebuilding, the Democratic Labor Party won a Victorian Senate seat in 2010. Returning to the upper house 40 years after leaving the chamber was a remarkable feat by the party that many considered to be dead in Australian politics. But the ‘new’ DLP was qualitatively different to the party of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The party had shifted its position in the political system. It no longer sought to act as a roadblock to Labor, nor did it seek to rail against the threat of communism. The primary

focus of the reconstituted DLP was to advance issues that were closely associated with socially conservative movements. While the DLP had sought to highlight its socially conservative moral credentials, especially in the 1972 election, in 2010 it advanced issues that were closely aligned to broad social movements. These included the ‘right to life’ movement, with which it had significantly strengthened its links during its reformative period (Lillebuen 2010; Warhurst 2008). The party also opposed pornography, the use of IVF by single women and lesbians, euthanasia, fertility control and same-sex marriage. It supported a ‘zero tolerance’ policy on illicit drugs and stem cell research. Even though the party won just 2.3 per cent of the state-wide primary vote, its ability to ‘wheel and deal’ preferences delivered a Senate seat. Using the GTV to its advantage, of course, was not available to the DLP in its earlier incarnation.

More ‘Issues-Oriented’ Minor Parties from the Right: Liberal Democrats, the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party and the Palmer United Party

The 2013 election was significant for the minor party system as an unprecedented number of new parties won representation. The Liberal Democrats Party (LDP), the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party (AMEP) and the Palmer United Party (PUP) all won seats for the first time. These parties resembled right-populist parties, especially because of their distinctive organisational arrangements and policy platforms.

The LDP had emerged in the ACT in 2001 but began a more sophisticated approach to elections when former vet David Leyonhjelm became the party’s treasurer and registered officer. Leyonhjelm had a long history in politics having been a former member of the Labor party in the 1970s and the Liberal Party in the 1980s. He was also chairman of the Shooters Party in NSW in the early 2000s. Leyonhjelm was integral to restructuring the party. The party’s first electoral forays in the ACT were disastrous and the party experienced difficulty with the Australian Electoral Commission when it sought to become a national party. The AEC argued the party’s name was too similar to the Australian Democrats and the Liberal Party. Leyonhjelm and the National Executive agreed to change the party’s name to the Liberal and Democracy Party. By 2010 the party had changed its name to the Liberal Democrats and, despite objections from the Liberal Party and Australian Democrats, the AEC allowed the party to use this name in future elections.

The Liberal Democrats principles were based on classical liberalism and advanced notions of free trade, freedom of choice and the winding back of the welfare state. As a result, the party supported policies such as euthanasia, the use of cannabis and same-sex marriage. It also promoted the right of all citizens to own firearms as well as ending prosecutions for victimless crimes, which it described as illegal but which did not threaten the rights of anyone else. These included 'crimes' such as abortion, public nudity and the consumption of pornography (Liberal Democrats Party 2013).

The party's 2013 campaign was built on a sophisticated approach to using the GVT. The party was able to attract preferences from a range of minor parties through preference wheeling and dealing. Moreover, Leyonhjelm had set up the Outdoor Recreation Party (Stop the Greens) as well as having a role in setting up the Smokers Rights Party (see Crook 2013). The aim of these parties was to direct preferences to the LDP. These two parties won a combined primary vote of 0.4 per cent in NSW and assisted the LDP in winning Senate representation. Leyonhjelm built a high public profile while in the Senate and championed the goal of small government and reducing government intervention in social policy.

The Palmer United Party (PUP) was created just before the 2013 election. The party was created by businessman Clive Palmer who had a lengthy history in Coalition politics. He was Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen's media spokesman in the 1980s and was involved with the 'Joh for Canberra' campaign in 1987. A life member of the Queensland Liberal National Party (LNP), Palmer's advance towards a parliamentary career began in 2012 when he sought to become the LNP's candidate in the seat of Lilley in order to stand against then-Treasurer Wayne Swan. Within a few weeks, Palmer decided that he could not support the Coalition's asylum seeker policy and withdrew from the contest. He also became highly critical of the Queensland LNP state government about economic policies and the influence of lobbyists on government policy. He subsequently resigned from the LNP.

Freed from the constraints of party discipline, Palmer became a regular contributor to the political debate and often appeared in the media. With apparent support for his innovative proposals to solve policy problems, especially from his home state of Queensland, Palmer began to build momentum as a political force. He built a high public profile and presented himself as an anti-system figure. He created his new party with the aim to 'take away the game from professional politicians who say the same thing' (Jones, 2013). As leader of his

new Palmer United Party, he branded the establish parties as being boring as they had the same broad social and economic policies. Central to Palmer's new party were policies that sought to reduce income tax to stimulate the economy and reduce the size of government. Concurrently, the PUP advocated policies to increase the aged pension and change the offshore processing of asylum seekers as it wasted taxpayer funds. Palmer's core message resonated with sections of the electorate that felt disenchanted with the policies of the major parties. He also reportedly funded the PUP's federal campaign which cost \$12 million. So well-resourced was the party that it reportedly outspent Labor in advertising in the final week of the campaign. It contested every lower house seat and fielded candidates in every state and territory. It won a national primary vote in the lower house of 5.5 per cent which made it the fourth best performing party behind the major parties and the Greens. Moreover, Palmer won the Coalition-held lower house seat of Fairfax which was a remarkable result for a new party.

The party also claimed Senate seats in Western Australia, Tasmania and Queensland after attracting a national vote of 4.9 per cent at the general election. Its best result was in Queensland where it won 9.9 per cent of the primary vote. The party also benefited from Greens preferences as the party believed the PUP's asylum seeker policy was more humane than the major parties policies. While Palmer attracted much media attention, the PUP quickly disintegrated and the party failed to consolidate its position in the Senate at the 2016 election.

Like the PUP, the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party (AMEP) also emerged just before the 2013 election. Unlike the PUP, the party had limited resources and a very low public profile during the campaign. The party was concerned with advancing a broad range of social and economic goals that supported 'average Australians'. For example, the party was committed to protecting notions of mateship and community while also seeking to lower taxation. The party's views on the role of government gave some further insight into its overall position in the political debate. The party aimed for smaller government with minimal interference on social and economic issues. An underlying sense that the major parties had abandoned average Australians was also apparent in the AMEP's policy outlook. Indeed, the party stated that it arose in response to the 'rights and civil liberties of everyday Australians being eroded at an alarming rate' and promised to 'bring focus back to the notion that the Government is there for the people; not, as it increasingly appears, the other way around (AMEP 2013). The party also sought to safeguard the 'Australian way of life' from the policies of 'irresponsible'

minorities (AMEP 2013; Ewart 2013). The party, therefore, was mobilised by motoring enthusiasts but also sought to attract those who were unsatisfied with the policies of the established parties. The AMEP won just 0.5 per cent of the primary vote in the Senate in Victoria but its candidate, Ricky Muir, was able to win a seat. This was primarily due to the sophisticated preference deals suggested by political consultant Glenn Druery. Indeed, in 2013 Druery, who advised interested minor parties how to best maximise their electoral prospects, met with what he called the ‘minor party alliance’ which comprised new minor parties that were unsure about how to best organise their preference flows. By following Druery’s advice, the AMEP was able to attract preferences from a range of minor parties and help it claim its seat in the Senate.

The 2016 entrants: The Xenophon Team, Jacqui Lambie Network and Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party

The 2016 double dissolution election resulted in the most diverse range of parties entering the Senate in the post war era. Joining the major parties and the Greens were the Liberal Democrats, Family First and Pauline Hanson’s One Nation all of which had previous representation in the chamber. Three new forces also won representation. The Xenophon Team was created by Nick Xenophon who had a long history in South Australian politics. First elected to the South Australian Legislative Council in 1997, he built a high public profile as an anti-pokies campaigner. Following his election to the Senate in 2007, Xenophon built a national profile as an independent senator who used his position in parliament to advance issues, especially concerning gambling. He also sought to use his position to influence public policy such as the Rudd government’s economic stimulus package and water policy concerning the Murray Darling Basin. Unaligned with either major party, Xenophon forged a role as being a media-active independent senator advocating common sense solutions to policy problems. In 2016 he launched the Xenophon Team which won three Senate seats, all in South Australia, as well as one the lower house seat of Mayo. In 2016 Xenophon launched a new party SA Best with the view to run candidates at the 2018 South Australian state election.

In a similar way, Jacqui Lambie also sought to leverage her high public profile she had built in Tasmania. Elected in 2013 as a PUP candidate, Lambie built a profile as being a forthright politician concerned about her state as well as the ‘average Australian’. She resigned from the

PUP in 2014 and remained as an independent. She created the Jacqui Lambie Network prior to the 2016 election and gained much media attention for her support for the death penalty for foreign fighters and reintroducing national service. Lambie also gained much attention for her views on Islam, Sharia Law and a view to ban the wearing of the burqa. Lambie had also gained a reputation as being a strong critic of the broad economic policies of the major parties and had argued they had lost touch with ordinary citizens. In 2016 her views clearly resonated with sections of the electorate as she won 8.3 per cent of the primary vote, well above the level needed for a quota in the double dissolution election.

The third new minor party to win representation was Derryn Hinch's Justice Party which was created prior to the 2016 election. The party was created by Derryn Hinch who had developed a very high public profile having worked as a journalist and media personality, so much so that he was known as the 'human headline' for much of his career. The party was concerned with being tough on crime, especially sexual abuse of minors, as well as seeking to reform parole and bail processes. Hinch had several convictions, and had served a prison sentence, for breaching suppression orders by revealing details of alleged criminals. Hinch became the oldest federal parliamentarian to ever be elected at the age of 72 after winning 6 per cent of the primary vote in Victoria.

Evolution of parties elected to the Senate?

The minor parties elected to the Senate from 1955 to 1983 were created as a result of fragmentation of the major parties. They were important because they demonstrated that minor parties could win seats and play a role in the Senate, which was otherwise dominated by the major parties. From 1984, however, there was a shift in the type of minor party elected to the upper house. These parties were mobilised around specific policy demands, rather than created from major party fragmentation. They also sought to bring about policy change, rather than oppose an established party or to act as an intermediary in parliament. These parties highlighted perceived policy shortcomings and promised to address them if elected (Carmines and Stimson 1993). The emergence of minor parties advancing a specific policy agenda is not a uniquely Australian phenomenon and has been observed in other liberal democracies (see Carmines and Stimson 1993).

In some European systems, for example, there have been a range of new minor parties that have emerged with the goal of getting ‘other parties to pay attention to the issues that it would like to see dominate electoral competition’ (Green-Pedersen 2007:609). These issues were often on the margins of the political debates and were significantly different to the approach of established major parties that tended to converge on broad economic and public policy. Moreover, the policy demands of these new minor parties were also closely associated with those of various new social movements. Thus, minor parties elected to the Australian Senate since 1984 can be thought of as ‘movement’ parties.

How can we account for the rise of these parties in the Australian Senate, especially since 1984? Research shows us that new social movements became significant drivers of political debate in liberal democracies, especially since the 1970s (see Feher and Heller 1984; Marsh 1995). In some cases, new social movements underpinned the emergence of political parties when they felt that issues considered important were neglected by the established parties and that electoral thresholds were low (see Muller-Rommel 1985; Kitschelt 1988; Kitschelt 2006; Poguntke 2006). In Australia, similar to the European cases, the changing political debate and electoral system has contributed to the rise of ‘movement’ parties since 1984. Table 2 highlights that new social movements played a key role in mobilising ‘movement’ parties, especially when they felt the issues they considered important were not being effectively dealt with by the major parties.

Table 2: Analytical summary of the changing type of minor party elected to the Senate

Party	Year first elected to Senate	Source of mobilisation	Primary political objective	Type of minor party
DLP	1955	Major party fragmentation	Block ALP from regaining government	Secessionist
Liberal Movement	1974	Major party fragmentation	Act as intermediary between major parties	Secessionist
Australian Democrats	1977	Major party fragmentation	Act as intermediary between major parties	Secessionist
Nuclear Disarmament Party	1984	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Vallentine Peace Group	1987	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
WA Greens	1990	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Australian Greens	1996	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
One Nation	1998	New social	Advance specific	Movement

		movements	policy agenda	
Family First	2004	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
'New' DLP	2010	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Liberal Democrats Party (LDP)	2013	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Palmer United Party (PUP)	2013	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party (AMEP)	2013	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Hinch Justice Party	2016	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Nick Xenophon Team	2016	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement
Jacqui Lambie Network	2016	New social movements	Advance specific policy agenda	Movement

As shown in table 2, the peace and disarmament groups underpinned the emergence of the NDP at a time when the major parties were seen to be ineffective in dealing with issues concerning nuclear disarmament. When the NDP disintegrated, the movement contributed to the rise of the Vallentine Peace Group and the WA Greens (Vallentine 2007).

The Australian Greens, meanwhile, had strong links to the broader conservation groups that emerged in the 1960s (see Miragliotta 2006). Unlike the peace and disarmament groups, however, the conservation movement had more success in persuading the Hawke Labor government in particular to take its conservation agenda seriously and enact policy (Lohrey 2002, 30). This meant that the conservation movement had less need to spawn a political party as it already had the opportunity to influence government decisions throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. This changed when Paul Keating replaced Bob Hawke as prime minister and reduced the scope of the movement to influence government policy (see Economou 1999, 71). With less influence on government decisions, elements of the conservation movement contributed to the rise of the Australian Greens (see Norman 2004). The Australian Greens, however, consolidated its position as being seen to be more than just an 'environment party' especially when it advanced anti-war and socially progressive policies during the Howard government era (see Miragliotta 2006; Bennett 2008).

One Nation's emergence was also an example of a broad social movement precipitating the creation of a political party as a vehicle to attempt to influence the political debate (Ward 2000, 101). The groups that underpinned One Nation were concerned with economic, indigenous and immigration policies of successive governments (Stokes 2000, 26-32). Family First was also the result of elements of a social movement developing a political party. The party attracted voters who held socially conservative views on issues such as same-sex relationships and the idea of what constituted a 'family' in addition to a deep suspicion about the policies of the Australian Greens. The DLP's return to the Senate in 2010 also highlighted the change that has occurred in the type of minor party being elected to the Senate. The reconstituted DLP was far more concerned with advancing a specific policy agenda with links to socially conservative groups than it was about stopping Labor from winning government.

The rise of the Palmer United Party was similar to One Nation in that a charismatic leader acted as the lightning rod to a broader movement concerned about the economic policies of the major parties. The Motoring Enthusiast Party and the Liberal Democrats, both elected in 2013, also had links to broad movements concerned about the role and size of government. The Hinch Justice Party, Xenophon Team and Lambie Network were also bolstered by links to groups and movements such as those concerned about gambling, justice and the role and power of 'ordinary' Australians in influencing national policy decisions. The electoral fortunes of these three parties were also enhanced as they had leaders with high public profiles. Moreover, they were confronted by lower electoral thresholds in 2016 as it was a double dissolution election.

The emergence of 'movement' parties was so significant that one previously 'secessionist' party – the Australian Democrats – could no longer maintain Senate representation though it did seek to evolve in the face of electoral challenges. The emergence of the NDP in 1984 served as a warning to the Democrats as to how it could lose electoral representation to a party with specific policy goals. Indeed, the party's leaders after Chipp sometimes sought to modify its role as an 'intermediary' by responding to changes in the political debate. They were aided by the fact that the party was not beholden to any social movement or interest group. For example, Janine Haines sought to emphasise the party's environmental policies, while Janet Powel emphasised the party's peace and disarmament credentials. Subsequent

leaders also placed emphasis on various issues they felt were important and that would resonate with voters (see Economou and Ghazarian 2008).

The Democrats' ability to modify its policy focus led some commentators to describe the party as 'the chameleons of politics' (O'Reilly 1988, 46). The Democrats demonstrated how a 'secessionist' party could be seen as trying to evolve into a 'movement' party, though it faced significant challenges in doing so. In particular, concerns about the policy focus of various leaders led to internal disputes which often destabilised the party and eventually contributed to its demise (see Economou and Ghazarian 2008). Compared to 'secessionist' parties like the Democrats, 'movement' parties are not equipped to be 'political chameleons' as they are mobilised by social movements with the aim of achieving specific policy goals. Another problem for Australian Democrats was that its rules forbade it, to a large extent, from 'wheeling and dealing' preferences. This, coupled with the party's internal problems meant that it could not resist the rise of the 'movement' parties (also see Charnock 2009).

Furthermore, reforms to the Senate voting system in 1984 created a more conducive environment for 'movement' parties to emerge. The introduction of election funding has been an important reform as it promised to offset the costs of election campaigns for 'movement' parties, thus reducing the financial barriers confronting nascent parties (see Ghazarian 2006, 63). The introduction of the GTV also provided 'movement' parties with an opportunity to significantly influence the policy debate, especially as they could 'wheel and deal' preferences with the major parties. The GTV, however, has been a double-edged sword for 'movement' parties. Beneficial preference deals allowed Family First and the reconstituted DLP to win Senate representation in 2004 and 2010, respectively. But the GTV disadvantaged other 'movement' parties such as the NDP in 1984 and One Nation in 1998 when major parties deprived these parties of preferences and stopped them from winning Senate representation. While the Hawke reforms reduced the electoral barriers confronting 'movement' parties, the tactical decisions of the major parties, especially on the question of where they direct preferences, still have a significant impact on the representational outcome of Senate contests.

Conclusion

There has been a change in the type of minor party elected to the Australian Senate. The first parties were the result of major party fragmentation and sought to act as opponents or

‘watchdogs’ of the major parties. The minor parties elected since 1984, however, were part of the constellation of ‘movement’ parties. Mobilised to pursue specific policy agendas, these parties had closer links than their predecessors to the goals pursued by social movements. The return of the DLP to the Senate in 2010, and the continued election of new minor parties to the Senate crystallised the change in the type of minor party elected to the Australian upper house. Rather than focus on the major parties, these modern minor parties sought to advance specific policy goals while drawing on support from broad groups in society.

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