

Changed Voting Changed Politics

Lessons of Britain's Experience of PR since 1997

*Final Report of the Independent Commission to
Review Britain's Experience of PR Voting Systems*

ISBN: 1 903903 29 7

First Published April 2003

Copyright © The Constitution Unit

Published by The Constitution Unit
School of Public Policy, UCL
29–30 Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9QU

Phone: 020 7679 4977

Fax: 020 7679 4978

constitution@ucl.ac.uk

www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/

This report is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Changed Voting Changed Politics

Lessons of Britain's Experience of PR since 1997

ic

Co-Chairs:	David Butler, Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford Peter Riddell, Chief Political Commentator, The Times
Vice-Chair:	Professor Robert Hazell, The Constitution Unit, UCL
Members:	Nick Clegg, Liberal Democrat MEP Professor John Curtice, Strathclyde University Chris Bryant, Labour MP (Rhondda Valley) Mark Lazarowicz, Labour MP (Edinburgh North) Jocelyn Davies AM, Plaid Cymru Chief Whip, Welsh Assembly Baroness Gould, Former Labour Party Official Darren Johnson, Green Party Leader, Greater London Assembly Peter Kellner, Chairman, YouGov Graham Mather, Former Conservative MEP Hugh Muir, The Guardian Nicola Sturgeon, Scottish National MSP Andrew Tyrie, Conservative MP (Chichester) Caroline White, BBC
Secretary:	Simon King, The Constitution Unit, UCL
Online Consultation Coordinator:	Mark Rickard, The Hansard Society
	The Commission is based at The Constitution Unit School of Public Policy, University College London 29–30 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9QU phone: 020 7679 4979, fax: 020 7679 4978 web: www.prcommission.org

Members of the Independent Commission	2
Background to the Commission and terms of reference	3
Terms of Reference	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
CHAPTER ONE: OUR TASK: REVIEWING BRITAIN'S EXPERIENCE OF NEW VOTING SYSTEMS	11
Introduction: The Scope and Nature of our Enquiry	11
CHAPTER TWO: THE VOTING SYSTEMS IN THE UK: A QUICK GUIDE	14
CHAPTER THREE: THE CURRENT SYSTEM	15
Issues in this chapter	15
Historical and Political Context	15
Debating the virtues and vices of first-past-the-post	15
Defects of first-past-the-post	17
Conflicting views of representative government	19
Public Understanding and attitudes to first-past-the-post	19
Online Consultation	20
Conclusion	22
CHAPTER FOUR: CRITERIA FOR JUDGING BRITAIN'S EXPERIENCE	24
Issues in this chapter	24
Criteria used by others	25
Our criteria	28

CHAPTER FIVE: FAIRNESS	30
Issues in this chapter	30
Introduction	30
Votes and seats	30
Thresholds	31
Public attitudes to fairness	33
Conclusion	34
CHAPTER SIX: ELECTORAL SYSTEM DESIGN AND VOTER CHOICE	35
Issues in this chapter	35
Introduction	35
Voter choice	36
The Supplementary Vote	38
The Alternative Vote	39
The Single Transferable Vote	40
Voter confusion	41
Party control	44
International Evidence	48
Conclusion	49
CHAPTER SEVEN: PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO DIFFERENT ELECTORAL SYSTEMS	50
Issues in this chapter:	50
Introduction	50
Public Attitudes to Different Systems	50
Variations In Attitudes To Electoral Systems	53
International evidence	58
Factors influencing Public Attitudes to Electoral Systems	58
Evidence From The Online-Consultation	59
Conclusion	60
CHAPTER EIGHT: PARTY COMPETITION AND CAMPAIGNING	61
Issues in this chapter	61
Introduction	61
The effect of different electoral systems on the number of political parties	61
Have new voting systems led to different styles of campaigning?	66

Campaigns under AMS	67
The 1999 European Parliament Campaign	69
Conclusion	69
CHAPTER NINE: PARTY CANDIDATE SELECTION	71
Issues in this chapter	71
Introduction	71
Party centralisation	71
Conclusion	76
CHAPTER TEN: MOBILISATION	78
Issues in this chapter	78
The Decline in Voter Turnout	78
Turnout in Scotland, Wales, London and the European Parliament	80
Conclusion	82
CHAPTER ELEVEN: REPRESENTATION	84
Issues in this chapter	84
Introduction	84
The Different Roles of List and Constituency Representatives under AMS	85
Competition and Tension between Constituency and List Representatives	89
MEPs, Constituency Work and the Electoral System	93
Constituency Service under STV	94
Conclusion	95
CHAPTER TWELVE: THE EFFECT OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM CHANGE ON GOVERNMENT	96
Issues in this chapter	96
Introduction	96
Achievements of the coalition governments in Scotland and Wales	97
The 'new politics' in Scotland and Wales	98
The role of elections	101
The nature of the government outcome	101
The role of elections	102
Coalitions in office	106
Conclusion	109

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	111
Introduction	111
Regional government in England	111
STV for Local Government in Scotland	112
Implications for local government in England and Wales	113
Implications of PR in local government	113
Conclusion	114
CHAPTER FOURTEEN: RELEVANCE FOR WESTMINSTER AND CONCLUSIONS	115
Introduction	115
Fairness and proportionality	117
Fairness and voter choice	117
Voter understanding and voting behaviour	118
Party competition and campaigning	119
Party candidate selection	120
Mobilisation and turnout	120
Representation	120
Government	121
Conclusions- the relevance for Westminster	123
APPENDICES	125
A. UK Elections under Different Systems	125
B. Election Results	127
C. Survey Results - YOUGov	135
D. Survey Results: National Centre for Social Research	151
E. Evidence received	162
F. Academic Advisory Group	163
G. Seminars	163
H. Online Consultation	163

Scope and Nature of the Inquiry

1. The Commission was set up to review the experience of the new proportional voting systems used in the elections for the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Greater London Assembly and for the European Parliament; to consult as widely as possible and to seek the views of voters as well as politicians; to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the new voting systems and report on any implications for Westminster. The aim throughout has been to look at the evidence in order to inform the debate, rather than to take a view on the merits of changing the voting system for the House of Commons.
2. The dominant theme of the report is the extent of change in the British electoral system in recent years. First-past-the-post is no longer the sole, or even the predominant, system. Each of the new bodies set up since 1997 has used a different means of electing its members. Voters in London, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are as likely to use PR systems in elections as first-past-the-post. So there is a large, and growing, volume of evidence.
3. There is no single, ideal electoral system. The choice depends on a range of

different and often conflicting objectives and circumstances, depending upon what we want from our governments, our parliaments and our politicians. The report explains the main types of electoral system and discusses their strengths and weaknesses of each. Finding upon what

6. Unlike these two commissions, we were not asked to recommend an alternative to the existing system, but to review the lessons of new systems. Consequently, we are focussing on analytical criteria: fairness and proportionality; voter choice and understanding; voter attitudes; campaigning and party competition; party candidate selection; mobilisation and turnout; representation; performance in government; implications for regional and local government; and relevance for Westminster.

Fairness

7. Proportionality between the shares of votes cast and seats won is not straightforward and can vary considerably, depending on the size of constituencies; the number of parties in the system and the rules of the electoral system, including minimum thresholds. In particular, the mixed constituency and list systems used in Scotland, Wales and London still produce disproportional results between votes cast and seats won.

Electoral System Design and Voter Choice

8. The closed list systems adopted for the European Parliament elections and for the list candidates in Scotland, Wales and London limit the choice available to voters since the political parties control the selection and ranking of candidates on the list. Open lists would allow voters to choose candidates from within their preferred party. Other systems offer voters a greater chance of expressing a preference, such as the Supplementary Vote used in London and local mayoral elections. The Single Transferable Vote also allows voters such a choice.

Public Attitudes to Different Electoral Systems

9. The public has contradictory attitudes to electoral systems. Public views of first-past-the-post and the alternatives vary depending on how the questions are asked. Surveys have shown that, while more people believe it is more important to have a clear winner than a fair result, at the same time more prefer to have two or more parties in government than just one. There has been no consistent change in views over the last twenty years.
10. The Commission did, however, find evidence that, after the experience of living under an Additional Member System, voters in Scotland and Wales were much more supportive than English voters of such a system. However, this is not an important issue for most voters, and few people have strong pro or anti-reform attitudes.

Party Competition and Campaigning

11. The experience of alternative electoral systems in the UK since 1997 confirms the evidence from overseas that the use of a more proportional method of voting results in a larger number of parties securing seats and playing a significant role in the political system. However, even under first-past-the-post, there are more than two major players at Westminster. The British experience shows, however, that rather than producing a profusion of parties, a proportional system may just encourage a modest increase in the number of minor parties (plus a few independent candidates).
12. The British experience has not so far produced a dramatic change in the nature of election campaigns. Perhaps

Implications for Regional and Local Government

20. The Additional Member System has been proposed for English regional assemblies. Referendums are to be held in the three northern regions in October 2004 on whether to go ahead. The coalition administration in Edinburgh has brought forward legislation to introduce the Single Transferable Vote system for local government in Scotland. This would be the first time a body elected by first-past-the-post has switched to a proportional system.

Relevance for Westminster and Conclusions

21. The changes in the electoral system, and related political behaviour, have been both more extensive and dynamic than is generally recognised. Every new representative body set up since 1997 has used an electoral system different from first-past-the-post. And the process of change is continuing with proportional systems continuing to be adopted, as noted in the preceding paragraph.
22. Changing the electoral system for the House of Commons from first-past-the-post to one of the variants of proportional representation would have far-reaching effects:-

First, there would probably be some increase in the number of smaller parties represented in the Commons, the exact number depending on the precise system used.

Second, coalition or minority governments would be probable, involving a more co-operative and consultative style of politics.

Third, changing the electoral system might, possibly, inspire more confidence

in politicians, given the evidence that voters might welcome the opportunity to express more choice over whom should represent them.

Fourth, a preferential system such as the Single Transferable Vote or open party lists would put a greater focus on individual candidates and encourage greater diversity.

23. The Commission's analysis suggested that the impact of using new electoral systems has not been as dramatic, in either direction, as supporters and opponents of proportional representation have suggested. Other, broader, political factors have often been as important in, for example, increasing the number of women candidates elected to both the new representative bodies and the House of Commons.
24. The question of relevance to Westminster comes down to the issue of the distribution of power. Do we want it concentrated under the winner-take-all system of first-past-the-post, or do we want it spread between parties as is probable under any proportional system?
25. This report is a snapshot of work-in-progress. The conclusions are tentative. The debate is still developing. That does not make electoral reform inevitable for the House of Commons. What has happened in the devolved bodies is not precisely relevant for the Commons. But the broad experience outside Westminster cannot, and should not, be ignored. There are clear lessons which may, and should, dispel many of the claims and charges heard on both sides of the argument. The debate about electoral systems is still open.

Scottish, Welsh and London systems worked in practice and then conclude what may be appropriate for Westminster. Logically, that's likely to be after the next round of elections for Scotland and Wales in 2003'. Nothing happened after these elections, and the timing of the review has slipped. However, in recent debates about PR in both the Commons and the Lords, ministers have specifically referred to the work of this Commission. On December 3, 2003, Christopher Leslie, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, said that: 'Any review we might initiate will wish to draw not only on the Jenkins Report, the Electoral Commission's reports on particular elections and our own views on the experiences of the devolved legislatures, but the findings of the Independent Commission's report'. Lord Falconer of Thoroton, the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, said in an interview with The Times on February 12 that he wanted any review to take account of this report and not just to be internal to Government, but to involve people outside Government.

1.5 Just before our report went to press the Scottish Affairs Committee published its report on Parliamentary constituency boundaries in Scotland (HC 77, 3 February 2004), in which the committee proposed 118 constituency members for the Scottish Parliament (in two-member constituencies) in order to retain the link with Westminster constituencies, and just 11 additional members. On 9 February the Scottish Secretary announced an independent commission to examine the consequences of having four different voting systems in

Scotland, and different constituency boundaries between Westminster and the Scottish Parliament. On the same day the Welsh Secretary announced that he might establish a similar commission to review the electoral arrangements for the Welsh Assembly.

1.6 We have not been able to do justice to these latest developments in our report.

have won around a quarter of the vote, while, in the two most recent general elections, the number of MPs outside the Labour and Conservative parties has increased. Labour has achieved landslide majorities in the Commons on a smaller percentage of the national

1.13 SomterariosrcePRd. Labee tuas , inrppornunite matoedo so. Ebouercentaew it locen systemsdhtas, how ntayh0277 achievedeveloped,he Lawhaanntayh0277 meant achievforer ofr ,servativ, twprasa

2.1 There is a vast literature on electoral systems. Key texts are listed in the bibliography at the end of this report. What follows is a brief description of the systems now in use or under discussion in the UK.

System name	Voters fill in ballot paper by	Seats contested in:	Winning candidates must
Plurality rule (first-past the post)	Marking an X against a single candidate	Current 659 single member Westminster constituencies, local council elections	Get more votes than any other candidate in the constituency. A plurality (but not necessarily a majority)
Multi member plurality rule	Marking as many Xs as there are seats	Many local authorities especially after redistricting	Be among the top candidates in terms of votes
Supplementary vote (SV)	Marking an X against their first preference candidate and, if they want to, against a second preference candidate	London Mayoral elections, 12 local Mayoral elections	Either: get majority (50.1%) support from voters' first preferences. Or: obtain majority support following one or more redistributions of the second preferences of voters backing the bottom candidates Or: be the leading candidate in a two horse race after one or more such redistributions of second and subsequent preferences of voters backing the bottom candidates
Alternative vote (AV)	Marking their ballot paper 1,2,3 etc against their most preferred individual candidates in a single member seat	Not currently used, though in-part proposed by the Jenkins Commission	Get more than 50% of the votes as the second and later preferences of the least successful candidates are counted in turn.
Additional Member System (AMS)	Marking an X against their first preference candidate or party at the local constituency level; and marking an X against their first preference party at regional level	Elections to the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, Greater London Assembly, proposed for English Regional Assemblies	Be the leading candidate in one of the local constituencies. OR elected from the party list at regional level. Regional lists enable parties which are underrepresented in the constituency seats to be more fully represented overall.
List Proportional Representation	Marking an X against one party (or party candidate) only	UK European elections	Be elected from the party list in that constituency. Each party's votes are divided by a series of divisors to produce an average vote. The party with the 'highest average' vote after each stage in the process wins a seat, and its vote is then divided by the next divisor until all the seats have been filled.
Single Transferable Vote (STV)	Marking their ballot paper 1,2,3 etc against their most preferred individual candidates across any party or combination of parties	Northern Ireland Assembly elections, Northern Ireland local elections, proposed for Scottish local elections	Obtain a 'quota' of support so as to qualify for one of the seats in a constituency.

Issues in this chapter

- The historical and political context of first-past-the-post
- The virtues of first-past-the-post
- The defects of first-past-the-post
- Public attitudes to first-past-the-post

Historical and Political Context

- 3.1 The first-past-the-post system is used to elect the House of Commons although its history in the UK goes back to the middle-ages. It was not until 1885 that single member seats became predominant and not until 1950 that they became universal. From 1922 to 1950 there were also 12 university seats, three of which were two member and one three member, all elected on a system of Single Transferable Vote (STV).
- 3.2 There has been a long history of attempts to change the system. In 1867 and 1884 motions to establish proportional representation came before Parliament and in 1910 a Royal Commission recommended the Alternative Vote (AV). The 1917 all party Speaker's Conference unanimously recommended a change to STV in the cities and the large towns, accompanied by the use of the Alternative Vote in the counties. These propositions foundered in a wartime Parliament. In 1931, the second

Labour government promoted a bill for the introduction of the Alternative Vote which was rejected by the House of Lords and was lost with the breakup of that government.

- 3.3 In the 1970s criticism of first-past-the-post became widespread, especially in the wake of the February 1974 general election, when the Conservatives won 226,000 votes more than Labour but won fewer seats; and the Liberals, with 19% of the vote, secured only 2% of the seats. In 1976 a Hansard Society Commission chaired by Lord Blake recommended an Additional Member System (AMS). About 100 Conservative MPs declared themselves in favour of electoral reform, but the party leadership was opposed. Three defeats between 1979 and 1987 led the Labour party to commission the Plant Report, which ended up recommending the majoritarian Supplementary Vote. John Smith, the leader of the Labour party at the time, responded to the Plant report by committing the party to a referendum on the electoral system.
- 3.4 In the 1990s, following John Smith's pledge and talks between leading Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians, Labour's 1997 manifesto included a promise to hold a referendum on the voting system. A Commission was convened under Lord Jenkins to produce an alternative to

Table 3.1. Party composition of governments after elections 1945-1998 (figures in % ages)

	PR	First-past-the-post
Completely changed	12%	41%
Completely unchanged	25%	58%
Partly changed	62%	0%
Probability cabinet change	31%	40%
Average government vote share	54%	45%
Average change government vote share	2.6%	3.1%

Source: Vowles 2000, 23 countries examined

first-past-the-post to be voted on in a referendum. The Commission reported in 1998 and recommended an additional member system known as AV Plus. Nothing was done and Labour's 2001 manifesto only included a pledge to conduct a review after the 2003 Scottish and Welsh elections.

Debating the virtues and vices of first-past-the-post

3.5 Supporters of plurality systems (first-past-the-post) often take the view that the primary purpose of general elections is to choose a government, usually one of two rival political parties. This has been termed the 'majoritarian' view of representation. Accountability is achieved by voters' ability to dismiss a government. Opponents of first-past-the-post often prefer the 'representative' view. They argue that the main purpose of general elections is to produce a parliament that represents the range of public attitudes as fairly as possible, with the consequence that the government reflects a broader range of interests and opinions than is likely under first-past-the-post.

Virtues of first-past-the-post

- 3.6 First-past-the-post is easy to understand and straightforward to operate. All a voter has to do is to mark a single X on a ballot paper against a candidate. Whichever candidate has the most votes wins. The result is simple and avoids the apparent complexities of alternative proportional systems.
- 3.7 First-past-the-post parliaments tend to be dominated by two large parties or blocs, one of which generally enjoys a majority of seats. The system usually releases political parties from having to form coalition governments. It reduces the chances of small extremist parties winning seats and exerting influence. Advocates of first-past-the-post argue that its likelihood of producing single party government also means that the system promotes stable government.
- 3.8 First-past-the-post makes it easier than PR for voters to dismiss unpopular governments - 'throwing the rascals out'¹ - and to replace them with one from the rival political bloc. Under PR, governments are occasionally dismissed as a result of an election but more often as a result of post election bargaining between political party leaders. Table 3.1 (above), compiled by

Jack Vowles, a political scientist from New Zealand illustrates this:

- 3.9 Table 3.1 shows that fewer governments were completely dismissed by the electorate in the PR countries than in the first-past-the-post countries. However, the higher incidence of partial change under PR systems would be taken by advocates to show that the composition of government under PR is more responsive to public opinion than under first-past-the-post. However, the counter argument might be that by enabling voters in effect to choose their government – rather than elect a variety of parties from which a government is subsequently assembled – the governing party can be held to the programme, or manifesto, on which it won power. Coalition governments often require negotiations and compromises. Furthermore, single-party governments usually deny excessive influence to small parties, which, under more proportional systems, are sometimes able to exert a power out of proportion to their public support in order to sustain the coalitions that they join.
- 3.10 As Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, one of the leading academic defenders of first-past-the-post, points out, sometimes a party which does unexpectedly well in a PR election presents a threat to other parties and, for this reason, is ousted from a coalition. On the other hand a party winning only a handful of seats may, for that reason, become an attractive, malleable coalition partner. For example, in 1989, the Norwegian Conservatives lost over a quarter of their electoral support, yet moved from opposition into government. If Westminster were to adopt a PR system, the Liberal Democrats might hold the balance of power and be

assured of an almost constant place in government. Alternatively the party system might change and a different party could assume this role.

- 3.11 Another defence of first-past-the-post that the major parties can offer is that over time they get a roughly proportionate share of power. Between 1945 and 2004 the Conservatives have been in office for 57% of the period and Labour for 43%, not too far from their cumulative share of the two-party vote over sixteen general elections which gives the Conservatives 51% and Labour 49%.
- 3.12 As the Jenkins Commission pointed out, by being a ‘winner takes all’ system, first-past-the-post can encourage parties to broaden their appeal and potentially discourage extremism. At the same time, it offers to unorthodox MPs a degree of independence from excessive party control, provided they can retain the support of their local organisation.²

Defects of first-past-the-post

- 3.13 Under first-past-the-post governments have usually failed to secure a majority of the votes cast. In other words, the party that wins a *plurality* (largest number) of the vote, very seldom wins a *majority* of the vote. In the UK, no governing party has won a majority of the vote since 1935.
- 3.14 Related to this is the tendency for first-past-the-post to develop potentially long periods of bias against one of the two main parties, when translating votes into seats. At certain times it runs in favour of the Conservatives, at other times for Labour. For example, the Conservatives had a majority of 21 seats on a 7.5% lead in 1992 while Labour won a majority of 146 on an

- 8.4% lead in 1945. Thus, the degree to which first-past-the-post exaggerates the lead of the largest party is variable and certainly a safe overall majority cannot be guaranteed. Moreover, there were no less than 5 elections in the 20th century when no party secured an overall majority in the Commons.
- 3.15 First-past-the-post does not always produce a government formed by the plurality winner. In most countries that use first-past-the-post there has been at least one case where the party forming the government came second in the popular vote (Canada in 1979, New Zealand in 1978 and 1981, India in 1991 and Britain in 1951 and in February 1974).
- 3.16 First-past-the-post makes life difficult for third parties with geographically dispersed support. In 1983 the SDP/Liberal Alliance won 25.4% of the vote but just 3.5% of the seats. In 2001, the Liberal Democrats secured 18% of the vote and 8% of seats. (This bias does not occur when support for a party is concentrated in a particular area, as it is for Plaid Cymru and the Ulster parties; their representation more clearly approximates their strength.)
- 3.17 One consequence of first-past-the-post is that a major party may have no representatives from significant areas

aspires to national status from being able to speak for all sections of the electorate. In 1983, Labour held only two seats in southern England outside London; in 1997 the Conservatives won no inner city seats outside London, and had no MPs in Scotland or Wales.

- 3.18 A single-party government may have the clear-cut mandate of the manifesto on which it was elected; but there is little evidence that more than a tiny minority of voters know of, let alone approve, all its manifesto commitments. It is possible for a coalition's negotiated post-election programme for government to command more public support than any one party's single programme.

Conflicting views of representative government

- 3.19 As is made clear in the 1991 Plant Report, commissioned by the Labour party to consider alternative electoral systems for the UK. There is no neutral position. As the report says 'we cannot adjudicate this argument by appealing to an idea of function that is in some sense beyond dispute; rather it is arguable that the different forms of electoral system are grounded in different views of function.'⁵
- 3.20 Given these complexities, it is clear that there can be no single system that meets all desirable criteria and standards.⁶

Public Understanding and attitudes to first-past-the-post

- 3.21 Focus groups convened to test people's reaction to different systems suggested that many citizens were unaware of any defects in first-past-the-post until they were pointed out. The attitude of

surveyed respondents tended to change dramatically when they found out more about the operation of first-past-the-post. Most were converted to some

over whether they thought the system offered a great deal of choice (see Chapter 7 on public support for different electoral systems for more details).

- 3.25 In addition, the survey asked whether people thought that first-past-the-post resulted in good quality people being elected to Parliament. Figure 3.1 below displays the results. It shows that more people were dissatisfied than satisfied with the role of first-past-the-post in producing good quality MPs but that a significant number (45%) had no opinion at all on the matter.
- 3.26 In summary, our survey work is in line with the previous research, which shows that people think very little about electoral systems. Hence there is a significant degree of support for first-past-the-post, which reduces only when the deficiencies of the system are pointed out. A strong public attachment to single member

power -making unpopular; minority parties the power brokers in government. PR also undermines the one-to-one link between representatives and their constituencies, so reducing accountability. PR would thus be extremely unhealthy for our Parliamentary democracy.'

- Theresa May MP, former Chairman of the Conservative Party

'I have had direct experience of PR only twice in my life: once when I lived in Belgium, and the system encouraged an endless series of identical coalition governments, in which the same old corrupt and fraudulent characters flourished from one decade to the next.'

'Then we introduced PR for the Euro-elections, with the result that candidates spend all their time carving up colleagues in the same party, in order to ensure that they are placed high on the list. I say: to hell with PR,

3.29 Another noted:

'Much is made by Theresa May and William Hague, and has been made by others, of the strong, one to one link between MPs and their constituents. And yet the vast majority of electors have no say in the selection of their representatives. first-past-the-post, in which only one person can stand for each party in a constituency, gives the power of selection to the party rather than to the electorate. It is particularly important that any new system should allow the electorate to choose their representatives as individuals and not just according to party affiliation. Systems based on party lists do not allow this, but rather allow parties to use the system to ensure conformity.'

3.30 Other contributors used the MP's comments to attack the cynicism of politicians over first-past-the-post:

'It is quite transparent why Conservatives want to keep a system

encourages more constituents to consult their MP.'

- 3.34 Finally, some contributors were worried that first-past-the-post helped extremist parties:

'English local government elections under the Simple Majority system have returned British National Party councillors, so first-past-the-post is no antidote to that kind of party. Worse still, members of ethnic minorities in wards with B.N.P. councillors are expected to look to those councillors for 'representation'. At least under a proportional system they would have a choice of a different councillor.'

Conclusion

- 3.35 This chapter has presented and reviewed the current system of first-past-the-post. It has shown how first-past-the-post came about and has charted some of the milestones in attempting to reform the system. The chapter has also presented a short summary of the arguments for and against first-past-the-post.
- 3.36 First-past-the-post contains both advantages and disadvantages. It is simple. It promotes single party and often stable government. It generally punishes extremists. It tends to produce two competing political blocs, one in government and the other aspiring to replace it at the next election. This means that voters are easily able to 'throw the rascals out' in that when a government is perceived to fail they can turn to the rival bloc. In short, first-past-the post provides, what might be called 'removal-van democracy'.
- 3.37 On the other hand, first-past-the-post tends to cause smaller parties, and sometimes large opposition parties, to be severely underrepresented. First-past-the-post parliaments may be good at supplying and sustaining single-party government; but they are often poor at reflecting fairly the full range of public attitudes.
- 3.38 There is no neutral position on first-past-the-post versus PR. Judgements on what is the best voting system depend crucially on judgements about the main purpose of the election and assembly or parliament in question. For this very reason, it is perfectly rational for an individual, party or nation to opt for different systems for different types of election.
- 3.39 When surveyed, members of the public tend not to have definite views about the problems of first-past-the-post. Most are not aware of them until prompted. This is one of the reasons that explain the longevity of first-past-the-post in Britain. Members of the public are comfortable with the status quo and do not view a change in the electoral system as making much of an impact on their lives.

Issues in this chapter

- General criteria
- Criteria used by others
- Our criteria

4.1 As we have already seen over the debate about the current system for electing MPs to the House of Commons, judgements about electoral systems raise a variety of connected issues.

- Some issues concern the **purposes** of different elections: systems that are appropriate for one type of election may be less appropriate for others.
- Some issues concern the **values** to be applied to make judgements: for example, how should we weigh the competing claims of fairness and a decisive outcome?
- Some issues concern the nature, quality and relevance of **empirical** information: what can we learn from the experiences of different systems, used at different times and at different places – and how far can we apply these lessons to Britain in years to come?

4.2 To seek a perfect system that will achieve all legitimate objectives at all times and in all circumstances is to chase a rainbow. In reality, balances

have to be struck among a variety of criteria. In this chapter we identify the issues that emerge from Chapter 3, look at the criteria applied by other recent inquiries into electoral reform, and outline the way we have approached our task in this Commission.

4.3 Issues:

- 1 **Fairness to parties.** How important is it to ensure that parties are represented broadly in proportion to their size? Is it as important to be ‘fair’ to a party with 5% support as to one with 15% or 25% support? Does it matter if the party that attracts the most votes sometimes fails to win the most seats? How important is it to achieve ‘fairness’ – however that is defined – not only overall but within regions (bearing in mind the fate of Labour in southern England in the 1980s, and of the Conservatives in Wales and Scotland since 1997).
- 2 **Stable and effective government.** With the exception of some mayoral elections, British executives are not elected directly but emerge from the council, assembly or parliament. Elections thus serve a dual role. Their direct function is to choose representatives, but their indirect – and, in the eyes of many voters, equally

Commission on the Voting System established by the incoming Labour government in 1997, and in New Zealand, the Royal Commission on the Electoral System set up in 1985.

- 4.5 The Jenkins Commission was asked to take account of four requirements in the terms of reference decided by the Government. These were to

In 1985, the New Zealand Labour government established an independent Royal Commission into the electoral system. The Commission had 5 non-partisan members, and was chaired by a High Court Judge.

The Royal Commission tested FPTP and other voting systems against a number of criteria. The main ones were

1 Fairness between political parties.

When they vote at elections, voters are primarily choosing between alternative party Governments. In the interests of fairness and equality, the number of seats gained by a political party should be proportional to the number of voters who support that party.

2 Effective representation of minority and special interest groups.

Membership of the House should not only be proportional to the level of party support, but should also reflect other significant characteristics of the electorate, such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic class, locality and age. This would help to ensure that parties, candidates and MPs are responsive to significant groups and interests.

3 Effective representation of constituents.

The voting system should encourage close links and accountability between individual MPs

2 **Voter Choice and Understanding (Chapter 6)**

In this chapter we look at the impact that new electoral systems in the UK have had on voter choice. We look at the extent to which the public find the new systems intelligible. We examine the effect of ballot paper design on voting behaviour as well the impact of public information campaigns in helping to increase understanding of the system. Some systems such as STV and SV have improved choice by allowing voters to express preferences. Other systems such as AMS and List-PR using closed lists leave the choice of elected candidates firmly in the hands of political parties. We examine whether this should be changed by moving to a system of more open lists.

3 **Voter Attitudes (Chapter 7)**

We also look at public support and understanding for different types of system as gleaned from specially commissioned surveys.

4 **Campaigning and Party Competition (Chapter 8)**

We look at the effect the new electoral systems have had on party competition and whether they have resulted in more or fewer parties taking part in the political process. We also determine whether the new systems have affected campaign styles and whether the additional member system (AMS) in Scotland and Wales has resulted in different campaign styles for constituency and list MSPs and AMs respectively.

5 **Party Candidate Selection (Chapter 9)**

We look at the effect new electoral systems have had on party candidate selection. We investigate whether there has been a new balance of candidates in terms of gender, race, ability and

experience. We also look at whether the new systems have created an advantage for incumbents.

6 **Mobilisation (Chapter 10)**

We examine whether the new electoral systems have had any impact on citizen participation in elections. We question whether voters feel more inclined to turn out under PR than FPTP, and if not why not?

7 **Representation (Chapter 11)**

We examine how elected representatives behave under the new systems. It looks at the attitudes of the public to single member versus multi member representation. We also look at the difference between constituency and list representatives in Scotland and Wales, the ratio between the two and the work undertaken by the two. We examine the extent to which AMs, MSPs and MEPs perform constituency work, their relationship with MPs and whether the public differentiates between them.

8 **Performance in Government (Chapter 12)**

We look at the effect of the new systems on government. We discuss the accountability of the ruling administrations in Scotland and Wales and the formation and stability of their coalitions. We ask whether coalition government in Scotland is weak government; and whether the new electoral systems have resulted in different styles of governing, legislating and different public policies than would have occurred under FPTP. Finally, we examine the attitudes of politicians and the public towards coalition government.

In the final part of the report we then apply this analysis of how the new voting systems have worked in practice to levels of government, which have

not yet experienced one of the new
voting systems. We start with local

Issues in this chapter

- How to judge if an electoral system is 'fair'
- The principle of proportionality
- How different systems affect proportionality
- Public attitudes to proportionality

Introduction

- 5.1 The notion of 'fairness' means different things to different people. The most familiar electoral definition is the difference between the shares of votes won and shares of seats by each party. Any electoral system must ensure that the reward each party is allocated (share of seats) matches broadly the preferences (share of votes) it attracts.
- 5.2 We explore how far this is the case under different electoral rules. But whether proportionality matters is entirely dependent on one's view of the function of elections, parliament and government. If one takes the view that

scores are much lower, ranging from 6% in Northern Ireland to 14% in the case of the European Parliament contest in 1999. Under PR arrangements, fewer distortions are made to voters' preferences when determining outcomes though the DV scores still show a variation. In the case of AMS, this variation is due to the number of seats that were available as top-ups to compensate for the disproportionalities introduced by the single member constituency ballots.⁸

Public attitudes to fairness

5.14 Respondents to surveys in Scotland and Wales appear to believe the new voting systems there are fairer than the system used for Westminster elections. As shown in Table 5.3, more people believe the devolved electoral systems are fairer than believe they are more unfair. However, the initial experience

Table 5.4 Attitudes to fairness as one quality among others
 'Which of these statements comes closest to your views?'

	Scotland		Wales	
	1999	2003	1999	2003
It is more important that elections should produce a clear winner so that it is voters who decide who forms the government	41%	40%	51%	49%
It is more important that elections should produce a fair result even if this means it is not clear who should form the government	43%	41%	36%	35%
Majority for fairness	+2%	+1%	-15%	-14%

Source: Scottish Parliamentary Election Study 1999; Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2003; Welsh Assembly Election Study 1999; Welsh Life and Times Survey 2003

Conclusion

- 5.16 This chapter has reviewed some of the most common ways of classifying whether an electoral system is 'fair.' One way in which fairness is determined is by looking at the proportionality of the system. Proportionality is dependent on many factors such as constituency size, number of parties in the system and the electoral formula. Due to this, some systems award political parties a closer approximation of seats to votes than others.
- 5.17 Another lesson from this chapter is that the mixed system of PR and first-past-the-post as used in Scotland, Wales and London does not provide a panacea to the problems of disproportionality resulting from first-past-the-post. This is because it is the list vote not the constituency vote

which determines the overall allocation of seat and if there is only a relatively small number of list seats, as there are in Wales, proportionality will be significantly less.

- 5.18 For those that advocate parliament being a mirror of the nation, the choice is between AMS with a large number of top-up seats (50:50, as in Germany), or large district PR. This would increase the chances of minority parties being elected (although locally concentrated minorities can often do better under a single-member-plurality system). Large district PR is generally the most proportional system when distributing seats among parties.

Issues in this chapter

- The degree of choice offered to voters
- The potential for voter confusion
- The scope for party control

Introduction

- 6.1 In this chapter we consider the implications of the new electoral systems for the range of choice offered to the voter. In particular, we examine how the new electoral systems in use across the UK vary on this dimension; what this means for the role of voters in the electoral process; and how voters have reacted to these new systems.
- 6.2 In the previous chapter, we discussed the way in which the electoral system design affects the proportionality of the election result – in which the ‘district magnitude’ and ‘electoral formula’ features of electoral system predominate. In this chapter our principal focus is on ‘ballot structure’, on how the shape and design of a ballot paper can affect the choice given to voters in elections.
- 6.3 The hallmark of representative democracy is that voters choose their representatives. Electoral systems vary in terms of both the nature and the *degree* of choice they give to voters,

and the new UK electoral systems can be ranged along both dimensions.

- 6.4 In the first instance, the *nature* of voter choice relates to whom or what the vote is about. Voters may be asked to decide between individual candidates, as happens under the STV system for electing the members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Alternatively they may be required to choose between separate party lists, the system used since 1999 for electing British members of the European Parliament (MEPs).
- 6.5 The *degree* of voter choice refers to the amount of choice voters are given. Clearly, the degree of choice is always going to be a function of how many

is on the other extreme, in which voters have multiple choices; here voters are able to rank-order as many candidates as they like from as many parties as they like.

- 6.6 Figure 6.1 locates the new electoral systems on these two dimensions of 'degree of choice' and 'nature of choice'.¹⁰ We have already explained where we expect the closed list (European Parliament) and STV (Northern Ireland Assembly) systems to lie on the two dimensions. The supplementary vote (SV) system used for electing the London mayor provides voters with a slightly greater degree of choice, in the sense that they are able

to rank-order two candidates. The additional member system (AMS) used for elections to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh and London assemblies represent a shift in the direction of a more party-based electoral system, in the sense that the list element (like for European Parliament elections) is 'single-choice', so that the voters can not affect the rank-order of the lists of candidates selected by the parties. These AMS systems also reflect a movement in a multi-choice direction, due to the fact that voters are given

6.11 Table 6.2 indicates that voters in Scotland and Wales are indeed somewhat less likely to vote for the party they said was their first choice party on the 'second' (list) vote than they did on the 'first' (constituency) vote. But the difference is not large, and is insufficient to suggest widespread confusion. The one possible exception to this statement might be thought to be in Scotland in 2003 when as many as 25% failed to vote for their first preference party on the second vote. However, this figure was very much the product of the behaviour of those who voted for the Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party, 22% and 44% of whose list vote

the list vote, the equivalent figure for Liberal Democrat and SNP supporters was no less than 14 and 10 points respectively.

- 6.14 We tried to explore this further by examining the party affiliation of ticket splitters. Logically, Labour voters in Scotland and Wales should be most likely to split their ticket since their party seemed assured of winning most of a region's constituency seats and therefore would not be placed in a position to win many list seats. Just 10% of respondents agreed that there was little point in giving Labour both votes; while 63% of Labour supporters said that they thought it better to vote for the party on both ballots. Party loyalty was clearly stronger, even when a second vote for Labour was a superfluous vote.

The Supplementary Vote

- 6.15 The decision to use the Supplementary Vote (SV) to elect the London Mayor was partly based on the (mistaken) assumption that people would express their primary choice on their first preference and with their second preference focus on which of the likely top two candidates they prefer to win. The system was intended to work in a situation dominated by large Labour and Conservative vote blocs, with the Liberal Democrats running a long way behind in third place. Its virtue is its simplicity in that voters just have to place an 'X' beside their two favourite candidates.
- 6.16 However, in the event, both Labour and the Conservatives mishandled their selection process. Labour rejected the most popular candidate, the left-wing

dissident Ken Livingstone and selected Frank Dobson, a government loyalist. The Conservatives first endorsed the millionaire Jeffrey Archer only to sack him later over corruption allegations. The party instead selected the ex-MP Steve Norris. In the end, Ken Livingstone stood and won as an independent candidate with Norris in second place. Dobson came third and the Liberal Democrat candidate fourth. With 11 candidates standing, there was a considerable dispersion in the vote. Just 6.6% of all first round votes went to candidates from small parties though they won 24% of the second round votes.

- 6.17 The greatest proportion of Livingstone supporters (29%) gave their second preference vote to Susan Kramer, the Liberal Democrat candidate, while the Conservative candidate, Steve Norris received a second vote from only one in ten voters. Seventeen percent of first-

supporters on how to vote, suffered from a third of his supporters failing to make use of their second preference at all and 12% repeating their vote. This was far more than the supporters of other candidates who all took steps to campaign for second preferences from different parties.

- 6.19 In an eleven candidate race, Livingstone had a clear lead across first preferences and combined first and second preferences. He won a plurality, (49.3%) of the eligible votes whereas under FPTP he would have attained just 39%. He also won majority backing from all groupings in the electorate except Conservative loyalists and was considered the best candidate on all the main policy issues.
- 6.20 A study of the election argues that, if the major parties are persuaded to signal how their supporters should cast their second preferences, and if voters are more clearly informed that repeat second preferences are wasted votes, then SV should be able to reflect voters' preferences even more successfully.¹⁴

The Alternative Vote

- 6.21 The Alternative Vote is included here because it was recommended by the Jenkins Commission (for constituency seats), and it has been proposed for the House of Commons by senior figures in the Labour Party (Peter Mandelson and Peter Hain). It is more complicated than the supplementary vote in that voters have to assign their preferences 1,2, 3 etc. as opposed to putting X's beside two candidates. Each constituency is still represented by a single MP, but it increases voter choice
- in the sense that voters are able to express preferences. These preferences would ensure that each MP commanded the acquiescence of a majority within his constituency. There would be no more cases, as there are under first-past-the-post of MPs getting elected on as little as 30% of the vote.
- 6.22 However, it must not be forgotten that the alternative vote is a majoritarian system and is therefore associated with the same sort of disproportionalities and paradoxes as first-past-the-post. Depending on one's point of view, this can be seen as being a good thing. As the Jenkins Report notes, 'there is not the slightest reason to think that AV would reduce the stability of government; it might indeed lead to larger parliamentary majorities.'¹⁵
- 6.23 Yet AV is, in many cases, even less proportional, as measured by first preference votes, than first-past-the-post. Simulations presented in Appendix A show that AV would have significantly increased the size of Labour's majority in 1997 and 2001. Even in more 'normal' elections, AV would significantly distort the result. For instance, the Jenkins Report notes that in 1992 the Liberal Democrats would have got only 31 (4.8%) of the seats for 19% of the vote. In Australia, smaller parties such as the Democratic Labour Party and the Democrats have never managed to win a seat under AV though in some cases they have more votes than the UK Liberal Democrats.¹⁵ Furthermore, AV would perpetuate the geographical imbalances of first-past-the-post. Large sections of the country would remain electoral deserts for parties and most existing safe seats would remain that way.

The Single Transferable Vote

- 6.24 One of the reasons that STV was introduced for elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly is that voters can, in principle, cast a preference for members of different parties. In contrast to list-PR systems or FPTP whose ballots help reinforce party divides, candidates under STV can try to make cross-cleavage appeals and thereby bridge religious or racial boundaries. By encouraging parties to form coalitions before as well as after the elections, STV rewards cooperative electoral strategies. In order for parties to attract a greater number of lower preferences, they need to appeal to voters identified with other parties. Hence STV can exert a moderating influence.¹⁷
- 6.25 For instance, a survey of voters after the 1998 Northern Ireland Assembly election showed that STV prevented the narrow 'No' first preference majority within the Unionist bloc of voters from being converted into a narrow 'No' majority among the Unionist legislative bloc.¹⁸ On the Nationalist side, the SDLP informally recommended that voters should transfer their lower order preferences to pro-Agreement parties, despite there being no formal pre-election agreement between party elites.
- 6.26 Yet STV elections held in Northern Ireland reveal sophisticated vote management by parties as well as a high level of communal voting.¹⁹ Sydney Elliot of Queen's University, Belfast, has examined transfers in Northern Irish elections since 1982. He found that the majority of transfers go either to candidates from the same party or to those from either a unionist or nationalist party block. In the district council elections in 1997, a year before the first Assembly elections, the main parties achieved around 80% of transfers to their continuing candidates. For instance, 89% of Sinn Féin transfers went to continuing candidates followed by the SDLP with 85%, the Alliance with 78%, the UUP with 77% and the DUP with 76%.
- 6.27 The District Council elections of 2001 were used by the main parties as a trial run for the 2003 Assembly elections. Party retention of votes was again high and the level of communal voting was evident in the battle between UUP and DUP candidates and SDLP and Sinn Féin candidates. The 2003 Assembly election showed little change in the pattern of transfers. The SDLP transferred more to Sinn Féin than the UUP. Furthermore, 38% of DUP terminal transfers went to the UUP.
- 6.28 In summary, the general pattern in Northern Ireland is that the level of cross community transfers is low, though there were some signs of more transfers between the UUP and the SDLP in 2003. Although STV has the potential to maximise communal choice, Northern Irish parties have been able to use the system to by pass dependence on their rival communities.
- 6.29 Finally, to what extent do voters in the Republic of Ireland (which has used STV since 1922) use their preferences? The answer is quite a bit. The 2002 Irish election study revealed that just 6% cast a minimal ballot, casting just a single preference.²⁰ Most voters cast three to four preferences, depending on the amount of candidates standing in

their constituency. Just under 8% of voters expressed a preference for all available candidates, a practice more common when there were fewer candidates standing. Furthermore, most Irish voters did not confine themselves to voting for a single party. The study shows that 81% voted for at least two parties and 49% for at least three. In all, we can conclude that most Irish voters take care to make full use of the system.

Voter confusion

- 6.30 As electoral systems become more open they inevitably also become more complex, and critics often round on such systems for causing greater confusion. Survey work on samples of British voters suggest, however, that voters are capable of adapting quite successfully to new electoral systems. During the debate over the design of the new electoral system for electing British MEPs in 1998, Patrick Dunleavy and his colleagues carried out a survey in which people were shown mock ballot papers distinguishing between closed and open list systems.²¹ They found that the bulk of the respondents were able to complete the various ballot papers without needing additional explanation. When asked, after having completed the ballot papers, which system they preferred, a narrow majority (51%) preferred the more complex open list system.
- 6.31 The Commission, in association with the National Centre for Social Research, surveyed Scottish and Welsh voters after the 2003 elections. One objective was to investigate whether voters found the ballot papers difficult to complete and whether they understood how votes were translated into seats. The results can be compared with identical questions asked after the 1999 elections.
- 6.32 Respondents were asked whether or not they found the ballot difficult to fill in. Most people had no problem with this, just 11% of both Scottish and Welsh voters found it very or fairly difficult. Nor was there a difference between answers given in 1999 and those given in 2003. As the report on the 1999 elections concluded: 'Most voters appeared to be reasonably confident and knowledgeable about filling in the ballot papers. But the [voter education] campaigns do not appear to have been successful in ensuring that voters were fully aware of the possible consequences of their vote.'²²
- 6.33 However, 21% of Londoners found their ballot difficult to understand, at least in the first elections, held in May 2000.²³ This may reflect one or both of two things: the reduced interest among Londoners in the establishment of the capital's new system of governance (reflected in the low turnouts both in the referendum establishing the system and in the May 2000 elections); and the fact that London voters were asked to perform three functions: elect a Mayor, elect a local assembly member, and choose a party list.
- 6.34 Focus group research also indicates that the design of ballot papers can affect people's understanding of electoral systems. In March 1999, the Constitution Unit organised a series of focus groups at which types of ballot paper were discussed.²⁴ Participants

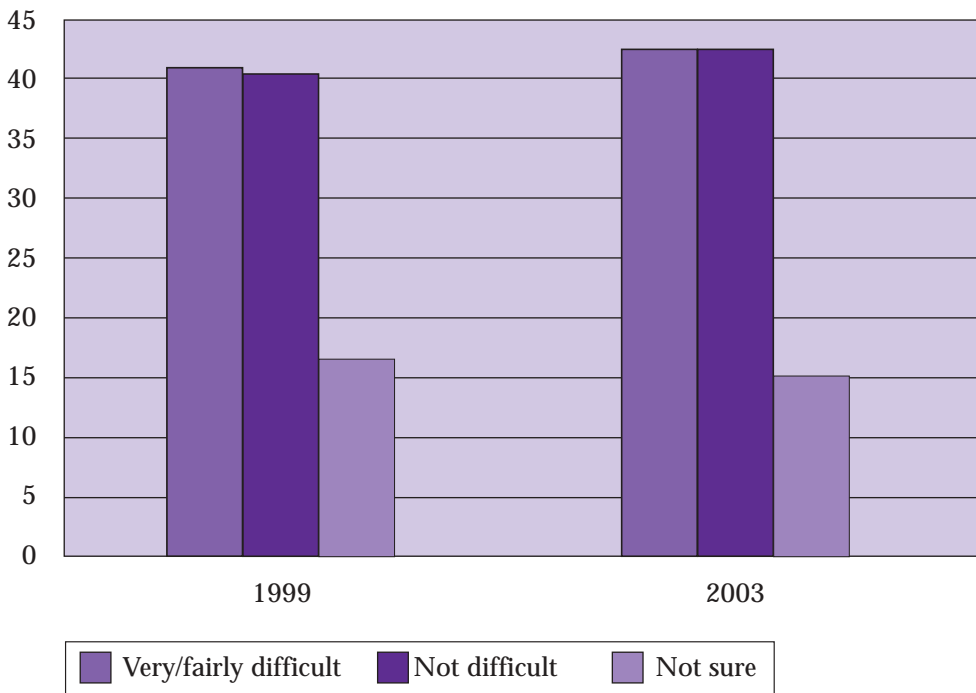
said that they often found ballot papers confusing and would prefer them to be as simple as possible. Most agreed that a brief statement printed at the top of the ballot about the essential features of the electoral system would be useful.

6.35 The survey evidence of voter confusion is supported by the fact that the number of invalid votes is marginally higher at PR elections than Westminster elections. In Scotland in 1999, the total invalid vote was 0.39% as opposed to 0.29% in the 2001 Scottish Westminster elections. In 2003 the number of invalid votes in Scotland increased to 0.82%. In Wales in 2003,

the total invalid vote was higher at 1.37% compared with 0.56% in the Westminster contest. However, there is no difference between the number of invalid list and constituency ballots in either Scotland or Wales. Furthermore, the change in the electoral system for the European elections also resulted in a higher incidence of invalid ballots. The 1994 elections held under first-past-the-post had 0.26% of ballots invalid while the 1999 elections held under PR-List had 0.31% invalid. In Northern Ireland, 1.5% of the votes were invalid in the 2003 Assembly election compared with 1.2% in the 2002 Republic of Ireland election.

F

Difficulty in understanding how seats are worked out (Scotland and Wales)



6.36 These figures are very small and we cannot be sure whether it was the ballot papers themselves that caused the increase in invalid votes or whether it was due to other random factors. Indeed it is possible that much of the increase in Scotland and Wales was the result of voters deliberately spoiling their ballots.

Scotland and Wales with a set of true or false statements. The results show a general lack knowledge about the system. Most respondents were aware

6.37 Our surveys also measured whether people found it difficult to understand how number of seats a party wins is worked out under AMS. Figure 6.2 above shows that under half of all respondents felt they understood the system, but that the same proportion did not understand it. There was no difference between Scottish and Welsh respondents, nor was there much of a difference between 1999 and 2003. There is also no evidence in 1999 that those who do not understand the votes/seats relationship were less likely to vote.

6.38 The survey gave people a 'knowledge quiz' about aspects of the electoral system. The results show, perhaps surprisingly, that knowledge actually declined slightly between 1999 and 2003, though only by 4 percentage points. In particular, respondents were far less sure of the fact that list seats were allocated to make the system more proportional. Why was this the case? One factor may be that the public information campaign was far less intense in 2003 as opposed to 1999. In fact it was barely perceptible and consisted simply of billboards erected by the Electoral Commission to encourage people to turn out.

6.39 Later in the survey, respondents were asked about the voting system in

no guarantee that the election result is what the voters intended.'

- 6.42 A further individual expressed concern that politicians would try and take advantage of the complexity of electoral systems to manipulate voters:

'One thing that can be used to put people off PR is the suggestion by its opponents that, in the end, few people actually get what they vote for, and that the outcome of the election is stitched up in those infamous smoke-filled rooms. That's why it's essential that the system we finally adopt - and we will, ultimately - cannot have its legitimacy challenged as some sort of sophisticated attempt to cheat or trick the electorate.'

- 6.43 Yet another thought it ludicrous that the UK electorate would find it difficult to adapt to a new system:

'PR of any kind is of course more 'complicated' than first-past-the-post, but how relevant is this? The Republic of Ireland has long had STV without any difficulty at all, and indeed so has Northern Ireland for the election to the Assembly - and so has Australia for election to the Senate. Are we so much less intelligent than our Irish and Australian cousins that we are unable to write 1,2,3 on a ballot paper? Similar considerations go for AMS and pure list systems which are widely used throughout Europe.'

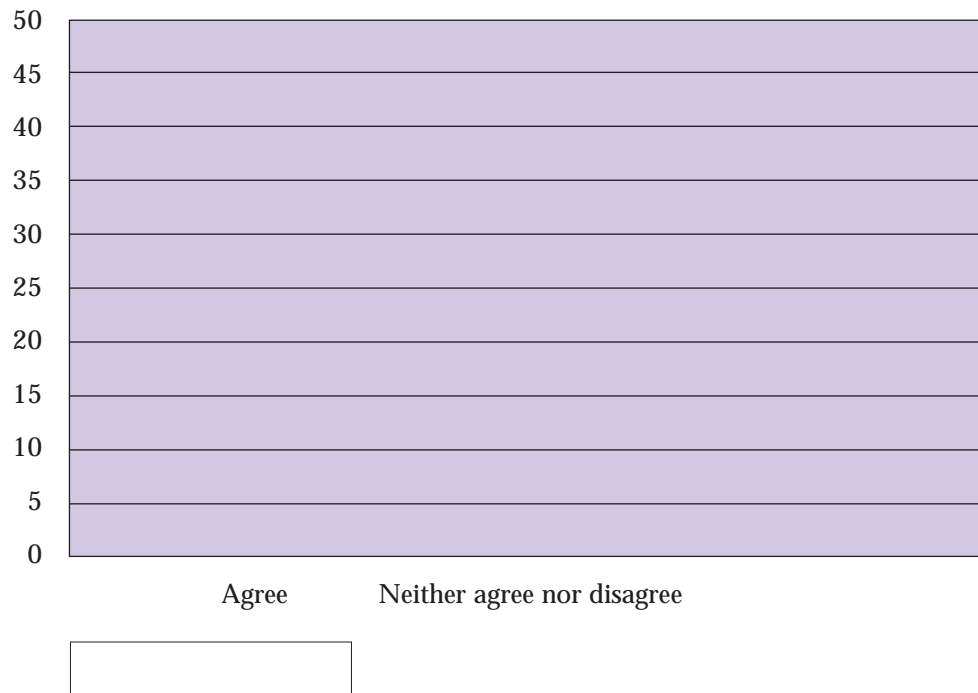
Party control

- 6.44 Movement along the 'nature of choice' dimension (I) in Figure 6.1, from candidate-based to party-based systems, suggests a greater degree of

control by political parties over the fate of candidates. We might expect a reaction by voters to this growing degree of party control over the electoral process.

- 6.45 UK PR elections use 'closed lists' whereby the party decides on the order of candidates to be elected. Political parties tend to like the idea of closed lists since it makes their internal management easier. Parties can use closed lists to maximise the chances of certain candidates being elected. For

“I would prefer to vote for individual candidates on the regional vote”



extent to which Scottish and Welsh voters would like to have been able to vote for an individual candidate on the regional AMS vote rather than for a party list. It indicates that more voters would prefer to have a choice on the regional ballot. Furthermore, there is no difference between answers given in 1999 and answers given in 2003.

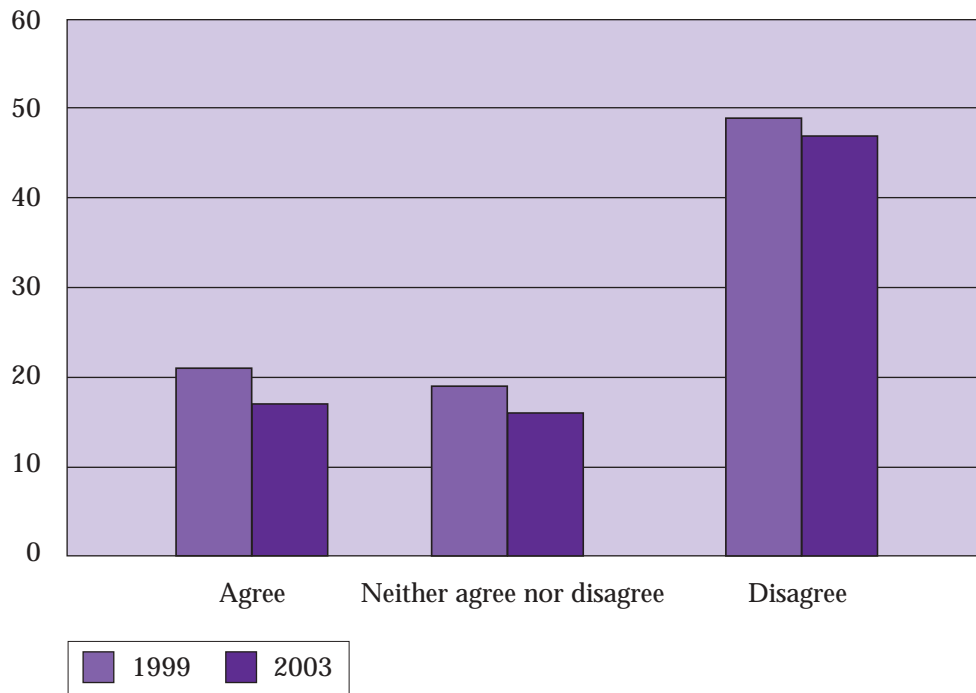
6.48 We should not be surprised that the public opts for open rather than closed lists. In all surveys of this nature, people tend to accept an extra dimension of choice if offered. Yet when the same question is asked in a different way we find that the opinion of voters is entirely consistent. Figure

6.4 shows their views on whether parties, not voters should decide which of the candidates on their regional list get the seats their party has won. This indicates that most voters in Scotland and Wales think that parties should not be able to decide which candidates on the list are awarded seats.

6.49 Furthermore, as Figure 6.5 (below) reveals, the plurality of respondents felt that MSPs and AMs elected under the regional party list would be too much under the control of their party. This chart shows only small differences between the two periods: more people think that list MSPs/AMs are under too much party control in 2003 than in

Figure 6.4. Public Attitudes to Party Control of Lists (Scotland and Wales)

“Parties, not voters should decide which of the candidates on their regional list get the seats their party has won”



Source: Scottish Parliamentary Election Study 1999; Welsh Assembly Election Study 1999; Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2003; Welsh Life and Times Survey 2003.

1999. This is possibly a result of having witnessed the behaviour of list representatives in the first term of the Parliament/Assembly.

6.50 In all, list systems are popular with political parties. They give the greatest amount of control to party headquarters, particularly where closed lists are used. List systems are also popular with electoral reformers because of their greater proportionality. However, our surveys show that citizens would prefer list systems to give them more choice over the actual candidates elected.

International Evidence

6.51 International comparisons suggest that low public knowledge of the workings of the electoral system is not unusual. Similar patterns to those of Scotland and Wales are observed in Germany, which has used AMS for over 50 years. Many German voters do not understand the purpose or significance of their second vote, but despite this, the German system is popular with its electorate.²⁶

6.52 New Zealand provides an example of voter understanding of both ‘old’ and ‘new’ voting systems. Less than half of those interviewed in a 1993 survey

knew that under first-past-the-post 'the winning party may win a greater share of seats in Parliament than its share of votes.'

6.53 In 1992 and 1993, prior to New

survey evidence shows that open lists would be popular with voters.

However, open lists are likely to be less popular with political parties which would lose control over the placement of their candidates.

The fact that only a minority of voters chose to exercise their choice in countries using open lists shows that most are not prepared to pay its price.

6.55 Other electoral systems offer the chance for voters to express preferences between candidates. The Supplementary Vote, as used in the London and local Mayoral elections offers the voter some choice, produces clear winners and is easily understood by the electorate. However it is a majoritarian system and victorious candidates rarely win more than 50% of the vote. The Single Transferable Vote allows voters a complete choice over which candidates are elected by ranking their preferences. By this, they can choose candidates on personal as well as party grounds. STV also permits the possibility that voters for the main parties will have one or more constituency representatives they can approach. The operation of STV in Northern Ireland shows that its impact depends on the political circumstances in which it is used. Both Assembly elections have been dominated by the issue of the Good Friday Agreement. Voters tend to transfer their votes on the basis of tribal loyalties with few Nationalists transferring to Unionists and vice versa.

6.56 It is sometimes forgotten that there is a price attached to both parties and voters in allowing more choice on the ballot paper. For parties, the ability to choose between candidates opens up the prospect of factionalism and intra-party warfare. For voters, the price of choice is complexity and need for greater information about candidates.

Issues in this chapter:

- Public attitudes to the new electoral systems
- Public support for different systems

Introduction

7.1 Any new voting system faces two tests if it is to command active public approval. Do voters understand how it works? And are voters content with the nature of the parliament, assembly or council it is likely to produce? We have seen in the last chapter that voters do not find new electoral systems overly confusing, although the mechanisms are less easily understood than first-past-the-post. We now move on to examine voters' attitudes towards the political consequences of the new electoral systems.

Public Attitudes to Different Systems

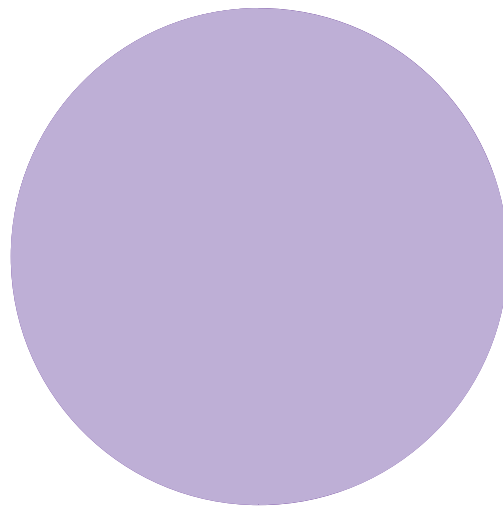
7.2 What do members of the public think about different electoral systems? In order to answer this question, we commissioned three different research exercises during 2003. The first was an on-line consultation facilitated by the Hansard Society. The second was a series of three on-line polls conducted by YouGov. The third was a survey conducted by the National Centre for Social Research as part of the Scottish

Social Attitudes and Welsh Life and Times surveys where people were given self-completion booklets.

7.3 YouGov created a panel of more than 3,000 adults in England, Scotland and Wales, weighted in order to be representative of the general population. They were questioned in April, May and July 2003. The survey conducted in May presented respondents with different systems. For three systems, AMS, Party List-PR and STV, respondents were given an explanation of the system and issued with sample ballot papers to fill out (see Appendix C). A set of detailed questions were asked about AMS and Party List, with respondents required to compare those systems with first-past-the-post. A more limited set of questions was asked about STV and respondents were not asked to compare it with other systems.

7.4 No electoral system emerged as a clear favourite. On first-past-the-post, 85% of respondents found the system easy to understand though they were split over whether it offered a great deal of choice. Respondents were then confronted with a series of statements on first-past-the-post and asked how these statements affected their attitude to the system. When told that first-

past-the-post could result in a



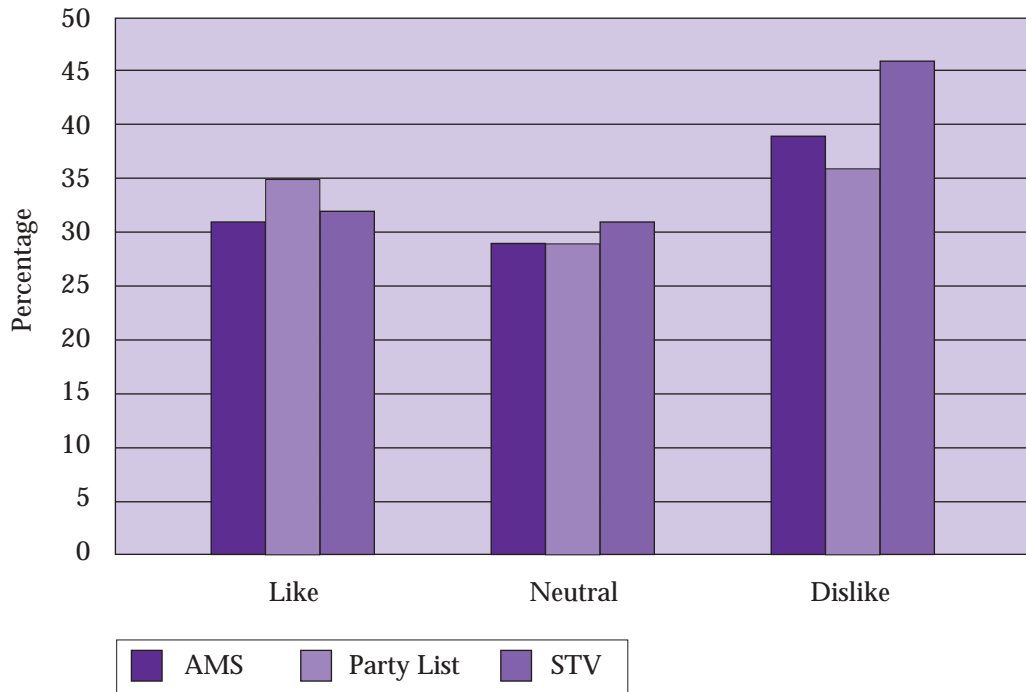
it was a better system, 30% thought it was worse and 33% either did not know or had no opinion. This is shown in figure 7.1.

- 7.7 When it came to AMS, fewer people (43%) found the system as easy to understand as List-PR (58%), though more thought that AMS offered a great deal of choice. As with the list system, respondents were unmoved by arguments for and against, though a bare majority (51%) said that they would prefer to be able to vote for individual candidates on the party list. When asked whether AMS was an improvement on first-past-the-post, 44% responded positively, 7 percentage

points higher than the score for party-list voting. 24% thought AMS worse than first-past-the-post and 32% either did not know or had no opinion. These results are shown in figure 7.2.

- 7.8 At the end of the questions on each system, respondents were asked to say how much they would 'like to vote this way in the future'. A question on STV was included here and the results are shown in figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 Public views on future use of different electoral systems



Source: YouGov/ICPR survey, May 2003, July 2003. N=2698

7.9 The chart shows that about a third of people were neutral on whether they would like to vote in elections using an alternative to first-past-the-post. This indicates the low salience of the subject matter – electoral systems are not at the forefront of people’s minds. Otherwise, more people disliked each system than liked it, with STV being the most disliked.

Variations In Attitudes To Electoral Systems

7.10 Opinion surveys have repeatedly found that people’s attitudes towards first-past-the-post and its alternatives depend on how they are asked. On six occasions the British Social Attitudes

survey has asked the same sample of people two differently worded questions about proportional representation. On each occasion respondents were given two very different sets of answers. When asked simply to say whether Britain should introduce proportional representation so that the number of seats each party gets matches more closely the number of votes it wins, between twice and three times as many supported the idea as opposed it. But when asked to choose between a system that is fairer to smaller parties and one that produces effective government, around 60% opted for the latter and only around 35% the former.

Table 7.1 Trends in Attitudes towards Electoral Reform (1)

Some people say we should change the voting system for general elections to the UK House of Commons to allow smaller political parties to get a fairer share of MPs. Others say that we should keep the voting system for the House of Commons as it is to produce effective government. Which view comes closer to your own ...

Year	83	86	87	90	91	92	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03
	<i>(Percentages)</i>														
Change voting system	39	32	30	34	37	33	37	33	35	32	35	35	39	34	36
Keep it as it is	54	60	64	59	58	60	58	59	60	63	63	59	57	61	60

Source; British Social Attitudes except 1983, 1992: British Election Study

Britain should introduce proportional representation so that the number of MPs in the House of Commons each party gets matches more closely the number of votes each party gets. Which view comes closer to your own ...

Year	92	94	96	97	00	03
Agree	48%	49%	45%	48%	48%	44%

7.11 Not least of the reasons for this is that voters value potentially contradictory characteristics from an electoral system. On the one hand, as the next table shows, the polling conducted for this commission by YouGov found that more people believe that it is more important to have a clear winner than a fair result, but that at the same time more people prefer to have two or more parties in government than just one. Evidently there is no electoral system that can fully satisfy the wishes of the public.

7.12 Nevertheless an important and consistent conclusion emerges from the research that has been undertaken by

England (where apart from London experience of an alternative system has been confined to the low profile European elections). But, as the next table shows, opinion in Scotland and Wales seems to have changed little between 1999 and 2003 – in contrast to the evidence from England. To that extent we again find that the

experience of proportional representation seems to have made little difference.

7.14 However in Scotland at least there is a somewhat more favourable attitude towards the use of an alternative system in elections to the House of Commons, an attitude that was already

evident in 1999. This gap was not however present at the time of the 1997 general election before Scotland had had any experience of proportional representation at all. Previous research has suggested that in fact there was a marked switch in favour of the use of an alternative system at the time of the 1997 referendum, and it appears that the referendum campaign has left a small but permanent mark on public opinion north of the border.²⁹

Evidently, despite its apparent stability, public opinion on electoral systems is potentially subject to change in the heat of a referendum campaign.

7.15 Tables 7.5 and 7.6 imply that attitudes to different electoral systems vary, with fewer people liking party list-PR than AMS. This suggests that the exposure Scottish and Welsh respondents have had to AMS makes them more likely to favour the system. The assumption is

strengthened given that more Scottish and Welsh people were in favour of AMS than English people. There is no difference in attitudes to list-PR between Scotland, Wales and England. This is to be expected given that all three nations would have had similar exposure to the system in the European elections.

7.16 Another question in the final YouGov survey conducted in July 2003 asked respondents which system they would favour in a referendum on the electoral system for the House of Commons. The results show that 55% of Scottish and Welsh respondents said that they would prefer AMS as opposed to 17% of English respondents. These answers clearly suggest that AMS has made a favourable impression on the Scottish and Welsh public.

7.17 Finally, respondents were asked to rate the three electoral systems on which detailed questions had been asked: First-past-the-post, Party List PR and AMS. First-past-the-post came out as the most preferred system with 41% putting it down as their first choice. 29% put AMS as their first choice and 25% party list. STV was not included in the rating.

7.18 Yet other parts of the survey show that if the question is phrased in a different way, people are likely to dismiss first-past-the-post in favour of PR. There is a contradiction between the rating of the different systems as outlined above and those of figures 7.1 and 7.2 where

electoral systems, 62% said that PR should be introduced for House of Commons elections. At the end of the 3rd survey, 33% said that they would vote for first-past-the-post in a referendum and 43% an alternative system. All this emphasises the difficulty of determining views on electoral systems from surveys. YouGov's results serve as a warning against extrapolating from a single question on this issue to general statements of public opinion.

- 7.19 The larger truth is that this is an issue of low importance for most electors. Furthermore, public opinion is not fixed. YouGov questions that tested the strength, and not just the direction, of opinion found that few people hold strong pro or anti-reform attitudes. In the two questions cited in the previous paragraph, just 27% either agreed or disagreed *strongly* about the introduction of PR, while only 28% regarded it as *very* important for the government to have an overall majority. These figures suggest that it is impossible to predict in advance what views the public would hold were a referendum to be held on changing the voting system for the House of Commons. The outcome would depend on the system offered, the political context of the decision and the calibre of the rival campaigns and campaigners.

International evidence

- 7.20 In New Zealand, majority support for AMS remained fairly stable between the 1993 referendum and the first AMS election in 1996. However, support for the system dropped in 1996 and 1997

three times as likely to favour changing the system. Labour supporters are evenly divided on the issue.

7.24 We also found that one of the strongest predictors of attitudes towards electoral system change is the respondent's opinion of coalition government. Those in favour of the concept of coalition government are also in favour of scrapping first-past-the-post.

7.25 Demographic factors such as sex, class and education appear to have no effect on attitudes to electoral system change. Age is statistically significant but shows only a tiny association between being young and supporting electoral system change. These factors are all surpassed by attitudes to coalition government and party affiliation.

Evidence From The Online-Consultation

7.26 The online consultation run by the Hansard Society for the Commission produced hundreds of comments on choice of electoral system in which respondents were self-selected.

7.27 Most contributors to the online forum were in favour of STV and took time to justify their choice. Many recognised that it is difficult to generalise about the effects of different PR systems since they perform different functions

'A closed list system like we now have for European elections scores very well on proportionality of votes to seats, but gives the voter no meaningful choice of who (in terms of one or more particular individuals) they would rather have as their representative. By contrast, Alternative Vote may be the

best option for a single office (e.g. an elected mayor), as it allows the electorate to express their view in a more refined manner using preferences and should therefore result in the winner having got at least some measure of support from over half of the voters, but if it were to be used to elect a multi-member body it would almost certainly be even less proportionate in terms of party representation than First-past-the-post!'

7.28 Many favoured STV precisely because they saw it as a way of retaining an MP-constituency link:

'My own view is that you should have a broadly proportional system, that retains a link between every elected member and a particular constituency,

peoplt one of RepublrponeInylcndhave we wm, that

Mosuplt on.7(.)JTJy aps runche Commisment loistpean elect

t it w tou reroalarepeespon.ost!'

prentatour of ety Wrmrestn ,

'Supporters of PR should stop wasting their time advocating STV which will never be accepted by the Labour Party. The best hope is some variant on the systems that already exist in Scotland and Wales which retain single-member constituencies, although it would probably have a less proportional element, like the Jenkins proposals.'

- 7.31 Those that did not support STV did so on grounds of proportionality:

'The closer a PR electoral system can be to delivering a proportional result at UK-region level, the fairer and more representative it is. Hence my preference for an open list system where the lists are at UK-region level (ie Scotland, Wales, NI, and each England region). The remaining systems all overly favour the constituency-level and therefore I only marginally prefer them to first-past-the-post. They deny representation to parties who have strong but evenly-spread support.'

- 7.32 Only a couple of participants supported AMS, mainly on the grounds that it was familiar:

'AMS has the very great advantage that one can now call it 'tried and tested in a UK context' because of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly experiences.'

Conclusion

- 7.33 A variety of surveys on public attitudes

Issues in this chapter

- The effect of electoral systems on the number of political parties
- How far the new UK electoral systems changed the way parties and candidates campaign

Introduction

8.1 In this chapter we discuss the impact that alternative electoral systems have had on the number of parties and on the way that parties and candidates campaign.

The effect of different electoral systems on the number of political parties

8.2 One of claims commonly made about PR is that, over time, it leads to fragmented party systems. In other words, it is held to increase the number of parties that have a role in the governing of the country. This argument was most famously put forward by the French political scientist, Maurice Duverger, who stated that

- Proportional representation tends to lead to the formation of many independent parties
- The plurality rule (first-past-the-post) tends to produce a two-party system

8.3 Duverger's argument rested on two causal mechanisms. The first is a 'mechanical effect'; because it is more difficult for smaller parties to win seats under first-past-the-post, there are fewer parties in parliament. The second mechanism is a 'psychological effect'; voters will be aware that small parties have little chance in non-PR systems and so will be less likely to vote for them.

8.4 However, Duverger only suggested that his propositions were tendencies, not iron laws. It is certainly possible to think of exceptions. Canada and India, for example, have multiparty systems despite using first-past-the-post. But to assess the validity of the law more systematically, we need a method for counting the number of political parties that are 'effective' players in a country's system of government. Calculating this requires doing more than simply counting the raw number of parties that present candidates at election. Doing this equates a very small party, such as the Natural Law party, with a big party, such as the Conservative party. A more useful method of counting the number of 'effective' parties is to weight each party by its size, where size is determined either by its share of the popular vote or by its share of seats won.

8.5 Two important academic studies by Arend Lijphart and Richard Katz confirm that there is a tendency for there to be an increased number of parliamentary parties (that is where the parties are weighted by the proportion of seats they have won) where a proportional system is in place than where a plurality system is used. But equally those studies also suggest that Duverger's proposition is far from being an iron rule. Thus in a study of elections in 27 advanced democracies held between 1945 and 1990, Lijphart found that on average there were indeed only 2.0 effective parties where a plurality system is used, 2.8 under a majority system (such as the alternative vote) and 3.6 where a proportional system is in place.³² But a study by Katz of a rather larger set of 800 elections held in 30 countries between 1945 and 1985 found that there were on average as many as 2.6 effective parties where first-past-the-post is

used, 2.8 under the alternative vote, and 3.9 with a proportional system.³³ If the figures for the single member countries are examined further it appears that there are two effective parties only in the United States, Jamaica and Botswana. In Canada, New Zealand (before 1996) and the UK the average figure is three.

8.6 These findings are confirmed by an analysis of the outcome of the most recent election held in every democracy prior to June 2000, compiled by Pippa Norris and summarised in table 8.1.³⁴ On average no fewer than 4.7 parties actually secured at least one seat where first-past-the-post is used, while this rises to 9.6 where a party list system is in place. And even if we confine our attention to those parties that win at least 3% of all of the seats, the figure comes to 3.0 where first-past-the-post is used compared with 4.8 under a party list system.

Table 8.1: Electoral systems and party systems

	Mean number of parliamentary parties (with at least one seat)	Mean number of relevant parliamentary parties (with over 3% of seats)	Number of countries
Majoritarian	5.2	3.3	83
Alternative Vote	9.0	3.0	1
2nd Ballot	6.0	3.2	23
First-past-the-post	4.7	3.0	49
Proportional	9.5	4.7	61
STV	5.0	2.5	2
Party List	9.6	4.8	59

Note: The data includes the results for 1,263 parties contesting the latest elections to the lower house of parliament from 1995 to June 2000. Parliamentary parties are defined as those winning at least one seat in the lower house. The results of the elections were calculated by Pippa Norris of Harvard University from Elections Around the World. www.ogora.stm.it/elections/alllinks.htm.

Table 8.2: Parties in UK Elections

	Mean number of parliamentary parties (with at least one seat)	Mean number of relevant parliamentary parties (with over 3% of seats)	Number of elections
Majoritarian			
First-past-the-post	10.5	3	2 (97 & 01)
Proportional			
AMS (Scotland)	6.5	5	2 (99 & 03)
AMS (Wales)	4	4	2 (99 & 03)
AMS (London)	4	4	1 (00)
Party List (Europe)	10	4	1 (99)
STV (NI)	8	5.5	2 (98 & 03)

Source: Norris 2003

8.9 In short, on average there are more ‘effective’ parties where a proportional system is in place rather than where first-past-the-post is employed. But use of the latter is no guarantee that there are no more than two such parties. Equally rather than producing a lot more parties, use of proportional representation is typically associated with between one and two more parties. Of course, a country may choose a proportional system because it has a larger number of parties in the first place, rather than the larger number of parties being caused by the electoral system.

8.10 Recent experience in the United Kingdom is line with these expectations. There are more than two parties in elections to the House of Commons, but between one and two more where alternative electoral systems have been used. This difference is not simply the result of alternative systems being kinder to smaller parties in the allocation of seats, but also

because people vote for a wider array of parties where a proportional system is in place.

8.11 On average no less than 10.5 parties have managed to secure at least one seat in elections to the House of Commons at the last two general elections. This figure is in fact only matched by the outcome of the 1999 European Parliament elections, and is heavily inflated by the fact that four or five separate parties win seats in Northern Ireland. In practice just three parties have won at least 3% of the seats, while, as table 8.2 shows, that figure has typically been four or five in recent elections held under alternative systems.

8.12 There have been a little over two effective *parliamentary parties* at recent elections to the House of Commons, but, as table 8.3 shows, between three and four in elections held under alternative systems. Only in the case of STV in Northern Ireland has the figure been higher than four.

8.13 As indicated, the increase in the number of effective political parties has not simply arisen because alternative electoral systems have rewarded smaller parties with a larger number of seats. People have also voted for a larger number of parties, albeit that there have also been more than two effective electoral parties in House of Commons elections too. As table 8.4 shows, there have on average been 3.2 effective *electoral* parties in recent elections to the House of Commons, compared with between four and five in elections held under alternative systems. Again the use of STV in Northern Ireland is an exception, but again too there is a relatively large number of effective electoral parties (4.7) in first-past-the-post elections in the province as well. (In contrast note that the equivalent figures for Commons elections in Scotland, Wales and London are at, 3.6, 3.1, and 2.9 respectively, not substantially different from the UK wide figure).

8.14 We should of course bear in mind that the propensity of voters to spread their votes across a wider range of parties in European and devolved elections may not simply be the result of alternative electoral systems. Voters may also be inclined to vote differently because they are voting for different institutions. It has commonly been argued that voters are more inclined to vote for smaller parties in European elections because they are regarded as less important second order contests.³⁵ There were for example already 3.6 effective electoral parties in the 1994 European elections held under first-past-the-post. The same may also be true for some voters in devolved elections for which there is certainly evidence that voters are more inclined to vote for nationalist parties because they are thought more likely to uphold the interests of Scotland and Wales.

do so well in the constituency contests that they have little chance of winning list seats, rendering a list vote for such a party of little value. In contrast smaller parties may hope to persuade voters to vote for them on the second vote where they have a better chance of winning a seat.

- 8.20 Under a closed party list system with a limited number of electoral districts, such as that used in European elections, we might expect that there is less focus on candidates and more on parties, and at the same time more centralisation of campaigns.³⁹

Campaigns under AMS

- 8.21 It should be noted that none of the election campaigns that have been held under AMS have been as intense as an election to the House of Commons. In part this was the result of circumstance. The 1999 Scottish and Welsh elections coincided with the outbreak of hostilities in Kosovo; the 2003 campaigns began in the midst of war in Iraq. But it also reflects the perceived status and importance of the institutions. In particular, the 2000 election to the Greater London Assembly was overshadowed by the coincident election for the London Mayor. We should thus not overestimate the importance of these campaigns.
- 8.22 It is far from clear that the introduction of AMS has reduced the tendency for parties to concentrate on marginal seats. In part this may be because, thanks to the relative paucity of list seats, parties can win a disproportionate share of seats by doing well in marginal constituencies. Indeed

the SNP in particular paid especial attention to marginal constituencies in their 2003 campaign, in the hope of reducing the advantage that Labour gained from doing disproportionately well in marginal seats.

'We set up a call-centre in May 2000 to target voters in key marginal constituencies such as Dundee. We were also conscious of using the Scottish Parliament campaign in conjunction with the local election campaign. Leaflets featured candidates for both elections.' – An SNP official

- 8.23 The Scottish elections have offered a significantly wider range of ideological alternatives with the emergence of the Scottish Socialist Party and the Greens, who both significantly strengthened their position in 2003. The established parties offered a more limited range of policy positions, and the ideological divide narrowed in 2003 compared with 1999. Thus in 1999 the SNP promised to add a penny to income tax, thereby putting the party at sharp odds with Labour, but they withdrew that policy in 2003. The Liberal Democrats were also less insistent on the need to use the Scottish Parliament's 'tartan tax' powers in 2003 than they had been in 1999. In 1999 the SNP said that it would regard a majority of seats as a mandate for independence; in 2003 it was only considered a mandate to hold a referendum on independence. The 2003 election was marked by all four main parties offering rather similar packages of more police, more nurses and more teachers. Although the Conservatives did attempt to profit from disillusion with what the parliament had achieved in its first four

years, only the newer parties, the SSP and the Greens, offered a radically different menu.

- 8.24 In similar vein Plaid Cymru tried to widen its appeal in the 1999 campaign by appearing to drop its demand for independence in the next four years, a proposal that was eventually modified to mean that no such demand would be made for the next four years.⁴⁰ Otherwise in both elections the proposals of the main parties in Wales were notable for their commitments to more spending on health and education, including proposals to introduce free prescriptions.
- 8.25 One possible explanation is that the bodies that were being elected have limited powers. For example, the amount that the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly have to spend is largely or wholly determined by the UK government, though in Scotland there is a limited (though so far unused) power to vary the basic rate of income tax. In these circumstances we should perhaps not be surprised that the parties put similar emphasis on their spending plans.
- 8.26 With the exception of Labour in Scotland, and the Greens who did not contest any constituencies, most candidates standing on a party list also stood in a constituency (and vice-versa). There was thus little reason to believe that constituency candidates and list candidates would campaign differently, and we have uncovered no evidence that they did so. Indeed the interchangeability of the two types of candidates for most parties is demonstrated by this comment from the SNP.

'We see no problem with allowing candidates to stand in both constituency and list contests since it provides a second chance for really good candidates.' - An SNP official

- 8.27 Smaller parties did attempt to exploit the tactical opportunities afforded to them by the second vote. In Scotland the Greens used the campaign slogan, 'Vote Green 2nd', with its double-entendre, on its campaign posters in both 1999 and 2003. In Wales the party distributed leaflets encouraging voters to split their tickets. Meanwhile in 2003 the Scottish Socialist Party distributed leaflets showing a peach cut in half with the message 'give your peach vote to the SSP', a reference to the colour of the list-ballot paper. Equally in both Scotland and Wales, the Liberal Democrats attempted to persuade Labour voters to give them their second vote on the grounds that in most regions a list vote for Labour would not help get anyone elected.

'We attempted to convince voters, through leaflets, that a Labour vote was a wasted vote. This targeting was focused particularly in the Valleys.' - A Liberal Democrat official

- 8.28 The larger parties in contrast tried to discourage voters from splitting their tickets. In particular Labour tried to persuade people to give all their votes to the party and to ignore the tactical incentives to do otherwise. But Plaid Cymru also eschewed a strategy of targeting second votes because to do so would seem to admit that the party had no chance of winning.

'We [Plaid Cymru] didn't attempt to exploit AMS in this manner. Our

pattern was to present Plaid as an alternative government and not a party to simply pass one's second vote. Many in Plaid thought that voters perceived the 2nd vote as an 'inferior' vote and that it was demeaning for the party to campaign for it' – A Plaid Cymru official

8.29 As we might expect, the personality and attributes of individual candidates did matter in these elections. In 1999 those candidates who had already made a name for themselves performed better than their less well known counterparts,⁴¹ while Labour MP Dennis Canavan secured election as an Independent constituency MSP. In 2003 not only was Mr Canavan re-elected but two further independents won constituency contests, one in Scotland and one in Wales. Moreover, the ability of independents to secure election has not been confined to the constituency contests. In 1999 Mr Canavan in fact won on the list as well as in his constituency as did John Marek in Wales in 2003, while in Scotland, Margo Macdonald, a former SNP MSP, won election as an Independent on the Lothians regional list.

The 1999 European Parliament Campaign

8.30 Like its predecessors the 1999 European Parliament election campaign seemed almost a non-event and like the 1999 Scottish and Welsh elections was also overshadowed by the Kosovo war. Neither the media nor the national political parties appeared to have been much interested. So once again the importance of the campaign and the lessons that might apply to elections to the House of Commons should not be exaggerated.

8.31 In most cases the amount of money that each party spent in each region was proportionate to its share of the electorate. The only notable exceptions were in Wales where Labour spent a relatively high amount and the Greens exceptionally little. It thus seems that party campaigning was spread relatively evenly across the country as we would expect.

8.32 There was considerable differentiation between the parties on their attitudes towards Europe though there is no reason to believe that this differentiation was any greater than in the subsequent 2001 general election held under first-past-the-post. The Liberal Democrat manifesto demanded a rapid referendum on joining the Euro, a written European constitution and a strengthened European

into the Euro, a strengthened European Parliament, and EU enlargement.

- 8.34 Contrary to what might have been expected there was evidence to show that voters used the list vote to express a preference for an individual candidate. Three deselected Labour candidates who decided to stand as independents each managed to win a significant proportion of the vote. It is not however clear that political parties appreciated the extent to which they could attempt to win votes by stressing the names of the persons at the top of their party lists.

Conclusion

- 8.35 The new voting systems have led to a small increase in the effective number of political parties, in term of seats won and votes cast. This is exemplified in the 'rainbow' Scottish Parliament, which effectively has six political parties since the 2003 elections. But typically the effective number of political parties has increased by just one or two by comparison with Westminster. There has not so far been a proliferation of minor parties in the devolved assemblies, or amongst the UK MEPs elected to the European Parliament. And Westminster itself is no longer a two party system: the effective number of political parties in the House of Commons is three. Extrapolating from the experience of the devolved assemblies, the introduction of PR for Westminster might increase this to four or five.

- 8.36 The new voting systems have not seen much development in the way election campaigns are fought. The use of the

regional party list system in the European elections encouraged the parties to spread their campaigning more evenly across the country, rather than focusing their energies on marginal seats. But in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly elections key marginal constituencies were targeted in 2003, because a party which does well in single member constituencies can win a disproportionate overall number of seats. Smaller parties with little hope of winning constituencies focused their campaigns on winning list votes. The profile of individual candidates can still make a difference, in winning both constituency and list seats.

Issues in this chapter

- The impact of electoral systems on candidate selection
- Methods of candidate selection
- Positive discrimination in candidate selection

Introduction

9.1 Proportional electoral systems are often believed to have both negative and positive consequences for the way candidates are selected by political parties. The detrimental one is giving the central arms of the parties too much control over which candidates are chosen. The more benign is to promote the selection of candidates that are more representative in the sense that they reflect the social, age and class balance of the wider electorate. This chapter examines what evidence can be brought to bear from Britain's proportional electoral systems on these two issues.

Party centralisation

9.2 It is easy to see why proportional electoral systems might create suspicion that they promote the power of the central parties. Under a first-past-the-post system based on individual constituencies, local party branches and their members select a candidate to

represent them at election time. The move to the larger districts usually required by proportional arrangements makes this process more difficult. The districts cover numerous constituencies and several candidates have to be picked. In this situation, the concern is that party officials may increase their role in selecting candidates at the expense of local members. This concern is particularly acute in the case of 'closed' party lists (where voters may not select any particular candidate, but only a party slate of candidates and discussed in chapter 6). In such situations - and 'closed' lists are used in the Scottish, Welsh and European Parliament elections - it is easier for party officials to try to insert their preferred candidates onto the list, safe in the knowledge that local voters cannot undo that decision.

9.3 Looking first at the procedures used by the parties to select their candidates in three of the contests that use proportional voting arrangements: Scotland, Wales and the European Parliament: Is there any evidence that these contests have seen greater party centralisation of candidate selection?

9.4 Table 9.1 shows that there are similarities and differences in the way the parties select their candidates. All

the parties use a central body as the first step in drawing up a list of prospective candidates. Most parties involve local members in the selection of constituency candidates, by a vote at candidate hustings. When it comes to list candidates, however, the selection and ordering of candidates is often conducted by party committees, usually comprising figures drawn from the central and local parties. Labour uses such an arrangement for its list candidates for Scottish, Welsh and European Parliament elections. The Conservatives do likewise in Scotland (but not for Welsh and European elections). The Liberal Democrats select list candidates for all contests via a membership ballot. In the case of Labour, then, there is evidence that candidate selection in larger districts was accompanied by a centralising process. However, neither the SNP, Plaid Cymru nor the Greens centralised the selection of their list candidates, instead making arrangements for members to select and order the candidates via regional conferences or regional postal ballots.

9.5 A common experience is that the central party usually has at least an initial role in helping to vet aspiring candidates for placement on a panel. However, this arrangement is used for Westminster elections as well as for contests involving proportional representation. The initial role of the central parties is partly about 'weeding out' potentially weak candidates – thus reflecting a 'professionalisation' of candidates – and not simply the exploitation of new electoral rules to ensure that favoured candidates get selected (or non-favoured candidates blackballed). One aspect of this

professionalisation is the move to a more representative candidate base, in particular the presence of more female candidates. A particular reason why parties have adopted a more centralised approach to vetting is to ensure that shortlists contain a higher proportion of female candidates. It is widely believed that the more autonomy local parties have over candidate selection, the lower will be the proportion of female candidates.

9.6 A widespread belief is that proportional voting rules tend to increase the proportion of women elected. The reason is that, in electoral districts for which parties offer 'slates' of candidates, there is an incentive for the parties to present themselves as representative of the electorate and to offer a more 'balanced ticket'.

9.7 The evidence from the various elections held in Britain under proportional electoral arrangements appears to bear out this theory. While fewer than 10% of candidates were women in 1997, this rose to 15% in 2001 and 20% in 2005. The proportion of women elected in 2005 was 20%, compared with 15% in 2001 and 10% in 1997. This is a significant increase, particularly in light of the fact that the proportion of women in the electorate has remained relatively stable over this period.

Y,85T73.t by loContheok that tndia suggontesaons

Table 9.2 Gender representativeness in recent British elections

	% women
House of Commons	
(1997) (FPTP)	18%
(2001) (FPTP)	18%
Scottish Parliament (1999)	
- constituency	40%
- list	32%
Scottish Parliament (2003)	
- constituency	42%
- list	36%
Welsh Assembly (1999)	
- constituency	47%
- list	25%
Welsh Assembly (2003)	
- constituency	50%
- list	40%
Greater London Assembly (2000)	
- constituency	36%
- list	45%
European Parliament	
(1994) (FPTP)	18%
(1999) (PR List)	25%
Curtice and Steed, 2000; Russell et al, 2002	

reason for this was that Labour, which won a plurality of seats in both elections, adopted a positive discrimination strategy for constituency seats, whereby neighbouring constituencies were ‘twinned’, with one selecting a male candidate and the other a female one (see Table 9.3). Labour had adopted a similar approach with all-women shortlists for

selections for House of Commons constituencies elected under first-past-the-post. Given Labour’s dominance in the constituency part of the ballot, this strategy ensured that a high proportion of women were elected to the new assemblies. However, in the London elections in 2000, a greater proportion of women members derived from the list, and not the constituency, section of the ballot (in spite of the fact that Labour used twinning arrangements for constituency contests).

9.9 Overall, the parties have responded fitfully to the new electoral rules by ensuring more women get elected. The gains that were made are due mainly to new arrangements at the constituency level and a more general desire to ensure the selection of more women for Westminster seats also. As we can see from Table 9.3, only the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru used the opportunity of multi-member districts to introduce rules for gender balance.

9.10 There is some evidence of public support for the parties offering representative candidate slates. In 1999, surveys conducted immediately after the Scottish and Welsh elections asked voters whether they believed the parties should offer equal numbers of men and women candidates. In Scotland, 41% agreed or strongly agreed with this proposition, while only 18% disagreed; in Wales, the equivalent figures were 45% and 17%. By 2003, the attraction of gender equality appears to have waned somewhat. In Scotland, 36% wanted to see a gender balance among candidates, while 22% disagreed. In Wales, the figures were 37% and 18%.

Issues in this chapter

- The effect of electoral systems on turnout
- Low turnout in UK PR elections
- Factors influencing turnout

The Decline in Voter Turnout

10.1 This chapter looks at the impact of PR on voter participation in elections. A new electoral system is often judged by the extent to which it increases turnout relative to the previous system. One of the reasons that first-past-the-post is taken to decrease turnout is due to people's conception of the 'wasted

vote.' Under majoritarian systems of which first-past-the-post is one, supporters of small parties (such as the Greens) with geographic support dispersed widely but thinly across the

constituency, are said to increase the opportunities for minor parties with dispersed support to secure representation with only a modest share of the vote, this increases the incentives for their supporters to participate.

10.2 One way to judge the influence of PR on turnout is to compare majoritarian (first-past-the-post) elections with PR elections. Table 10.1 compares 164 countries using different electoral systems around the world in the 1990's. It also gives details for specific systems such as first-past-the-post, the alternative vote, party list PR and the single transferable vote.⁴³ The results indicate that average turnout was highest among nations using proportional representation, namely party list and the single transferable vote electoral systems.⁴⁴ In contrast voting participation was lower among the different types of majoritarian and combined systems, with turnout across

all UK elections is falling, the highest turnout is in elections to Westminster under first-past-the-post (and in elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly). The next highest turnout is for the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, then local authorities and lastly the European Parliament. As this rank ordering suggests, one of the main determinants of turnout may be the public's perception of the importance of the body being elected as well as specific features such as closeness of contest and party position on important issues.⁴⁵ Turnout could therefore be higher for an election to the House of Commons under PR than now. It is impossible to predict.

10.6 The importance of an election varies with the type of legislature being elected. European elections and now devolved Scottish, Welsh and London elections are often said to be 'second-order' in character. This means that most electors consider the European, devolved Scottish, Welsh and London political arenas to be less important than the national one. Participation in such elections will, on average, be lower than national elections, as voters are less motivated to turn out.

10.7 Public perceptions of the importance of particular elections are a powerful factor in explaining low levels of UK turnout. The 1997 British Elections Survey (BES) saw a dramatic decline in the number of respondents who believed that they could influence the political system. The survey showed that the smaller the difference perceived between the two major parties, the more likely voters were to abstain.⁴⁶ The same trend can be seen

in 2001. Turnout was 10% higher in marginal than in safe seats.⁴⁷

10.8 Turnout can also reflect voters' view of how close the election will be. In 2001, for example, Labour maintained a clear lead in the opinion polls throughout the entire campaign and Labour voters may have abstained on the grounds that their party was going to win anyway. Conservative voters, on the other hand, may have felt a need to participate in order to prevent a further erosion of the party vote. In addition, those who are committed to political parties are more likely to vote. In addition, party membership as well as the strength of party attachment in the UK is declining. This too helps reduce turnout at elections.⁴⁸

10.9 Alienation and apathy can also play their part. If people think that politics matters and that governments deliver on their promises and there are clear alternatives on offer, people might be more inclined to participate. In general the character of elections determines turnout more than the character of society.

Turnout in Scotland, Wales, London and the European Parliament

10.10 Reports compiled by The Electoral Commission indicate that several factors can help explain the low

Commons. In Wales especially, focus groups convened by The Electoral Commission showed that many people cited the belief that the Assembly was a waste of time as a reason for not voting. In Scotland, those who thought that the outcome of the Scottish Parliament election had declined in importance were less likely to vote than those who thought the outcome important.

10.12 In the case of European elections, there is more evidence that people don't vote because they see the European Parliament as being 'second-order' (or even 'third order') in character. Indeed, in all EU countries save those such as Belgium and Luxembourg that have compulsory voting, turnout is lower in European elections than in national elections, as table 10.3 (below) shows.

10.13 It is difficult to identify a precise relationship between the electoral system and turnout at the European Parliament elections. The most likely explanation is that poor turnout was related to the low importance of the election for many people. A report from The Electoral Commission compares turnout at European Parliament elections across the UK.⁵⁰ It shows that in Northern Ireland, where STV is employed, turnout has been some 20-30 points higher than on the mainland. The same is true for the Republic of Ireland, which also uses STV. In 1999, turnout there was 25 points higher than the UK mainland average. It is therefore possible that the range of choice offered by STV encourages more people to vote.

Table 10.3 Turnout in National and European elections

	Average Parl (1990's)	Average EU (1979-99)
Austria	83.8	49.0
Belgium	91.5	91.0
Denmark	84.3	49.8
Finland	67.4	30.1
France	68.5	53.2
Germany	79.9	58.0
Greece	79.7	74.6
Ireland	67.3	54.8
Italy	85.5	79.3
Luxembourg	87.8	87.5
Netherlands	76.0	44.3
Portugal	65.2	42.3
Sweden	85.4	38.3
Spain	77.6	59.4
UK	74.7	32.2
EU	78.3	57.7

Source: International IDEA
http://www.idea.int/voter_turnout/voter_turnout_pop9.html

10.14 The 34% turnout at the 2000 London elections was notably low. Neither PR nor the return of London-wide local government succeeded in raising turnout. In general elections, London has seen the biggest decline: twenty percentage points since 1992. Turnout at local elections in London peaked in 1990 but is now 15 percentage points lower. Of the four devolution referendums, the turnout in London was the lowest.

10.15 The reasons for the poor turnout in London were the same as in Scotland, Wales and Europe: scepticism about the impact of voting per se, a lack of interest in the outcome and a poor public profile of London political

parties. This was a reflection of the trend also seen in London Borough elections where the turnout in 1998 was just 35%, almost the same number who voted in the 2000 Mayoral and Assembly election.

10.16 There is another possible explanation for the low turnout in London in 2000. That is simple confusion. Londoners were being asked to vote using two new systems, SV for the mayor and AMS for the London Assembly. They did not have the benefit of the

voting participation is maximized in elections using PR. Yet she also finds that PR needs to be combined with small electoral districts, regular but relatively infrequent national contests and competitive party systems. Furthermore, people's social background, and cultural attitudes also remain important predictors of turnout. Therefore, rule-based incentives and cultural habits need to be combined when trying to understand patterns of political participation.

10.21 Research into low turnout also shows that the task of mobilising the electorate to participate in 'second order' elections is formidable. Neither high-minded appeals to civic duty nor changes to the electoral system have much effect. There is some evidence that many people under the age of 60 now see voting as a transaction and expect something tangible in return. It is possible that changing voting methods might help. The UK government has conducted pilot schemes using internet, mobile phone and all-postal voting procedures which were evaluated for The Electoral Commission. So far, none bar postal voting has had any significant effect in increasing turnout. However, the only way of guaranteeing an increase in turnout is for the electorate to be convinced of the benefits of using their vote and the dangers of not doing so. The low turnout in UK PR elections probably has less to do with the electoral systems and more to do with other factors, such as voter apathy, lack of identification with political parties, confusion and lack of interest in the outcome of the election.

Issues in this chapter

- Do constituency and list members elected under AMS perform similar or different roles?
- How much competition is there between constituency and list members in providing a service to constituents?
- What impact has the use of a regional party list system had upon the work of MEPs?
- Constituency work under STV.

Introduction

- 11.1 Advocates of first-past-the-post argue that single member districts have two key merits. First, all MPs are individually accountable to a clearly defined body of voters and not just to their own party's supporters. Secondly, MPs have a strong incentive to take up the problems of individual constituents and to represent the interests of their constituents as a whole, because some MPs depend for re-election in part on their popularity in their constituency. The electoral system therefore fosters a strong tradition of 'constituency service' through which public representatives act as intermediaries between citizens and the state bureaucracy.
- 11.2 It is impossible to introduce proportional representation without

having multi-member constituencies. The Additional Member System (AMS) is often seen as a means of reconciling this apparent conflict. Because AMS combines single member districts with a system of multi-member top-up seats, it is said to provide the 'best of both worlds.' A significant proportion of elected representatives are elected to represent single member constituencies while the additional list members help ensure a greater degree of proportionality.

- 11.3 A closed regional party list form of representation, such as that used in the 1999 European elections, offers no such compromise. A number of MEPs are elected collectively to represent a large region. We might anticipate therefore that MEPs have been less likely to engage in constituency service activities since the new system was introduced, although it should be borne in mind that even under first-past-the-post the typical MEP had to represent no fewer than half a million electors.
- 11.4 Under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) all representatives are elected in multi-member constituencies. But because voters vote for individual candidates rather than party lists, individual candidates' chances of being

casework. In addition, list MPs are frequently asked to carry out geographically orientated constituency work especially by people who, for whatever reason, are reluctant to approach their constituency MP.⁵⁴ Moreover, list MPs are not necessarily averse to this sort of constituency work. Many list MPs in New Zealand who were previously constituency MPs are keen to regain a constituency-level seat and regard engaging in high levels of constituency work as a way of achieving that goal.

- 11.10 One consequence of the introduction of AMS in New Zealand is that although single member districts have been retained, they are much larger than were constituencies under first-past-the-post. This has resulted in a higher caseload for constituency MPs even though voters might have a choice of MPs offering a constituency service if they are willing to approach a list member.
- 11.11 In Germany there is less of a tradition of constituency service. However, all parliamentary parties see to it that deputies are assigned to constituency service regardless of the tier from which they are elected. Candidates who have lost a constituency contest tend to keep an office there. At the same time, there is some slight evidence that constituency MPs have more contact with citizens than list MPs and that more constituency MPs want to represent all citizens of the constituency than list MPs. Nonetheless, the difference is slight.⁵⁵
- 11.12 There is some evidence in the UK that the two types of representative do perform somewhat different roles.

Thomas Lundberg surveyed MSPs and AMs in 2001.⁵⁶ He found that list members spent more time than constituency members in contact with interest groups (through meetings, letters, and phone calls), whereas constituency members spent more time helping citizens who had problems with government agencies. Furthermore, list members spent more time than did constituency members in serving on parliamentary committees.

- 11.13 A useful comment indicating how list members might approach their job rather differently has been provided by Delyth Evans, a former Labour list AM:

'I was able to take a regional view and look at things in a slightly more strategic way than a constituency Member who was focusing entirely on things that were going on in their constituency. So when I was talking about rural issues or transport issues, I was able to take a strategic view across my region.' – Delyth Evans (Labour's only List AM 2000-2003) to the Richard Commission.

- 11.14 In 2002, the Constitution Unit, thanks to funding from the ESRC and the Leverhulme Trust, carried out a similar survey of MSPs and AMs. It asked them to estimate how much time they spent on various activities ranging from attending debates to promoting business within the constituency. The results are shown in table 11.1 below.
- 11.15 We can see that constituency MSPs/AMs report spending more time than do list MSPs/AMs on individual casework and dealing with both local interest groups and delegations. In

Table 11.1. Time Spent on Various Activities, List and Constituency MSPs/AMs (average hours)

Scotland/Wales		
Average Hours Spent:	Constituency	List
Attending debates	2.7	2.6
Committee work	2.5	2.4
Lobbying/developing policy	1.9	2.2
Dealing with representatives of national UK organisations	1.3	1.2
Casework for individual constituents	3.7	3.1
Dealing with local interest groups	2.4	2.0
Attending non party meetings	2.2	2.7
Promoting business in the constituency	1.7	1.3
N	39	41

Source: Constitution Unit/ESRC/Leverhulme Survey. N=80

contrast, list representatives say they spend more time than do constituency representatives on working on party committees, policy development, and in attending other non-party meetings. Even so, dealing with casework for individual constituents was the single most time-consuming activity for both kinds of representative, and in many respects the results seem more remarkable for the similarity of the role apparently performed by the two kinds of representative.

11.16 This similarity indicates that constituency and list representatives can easily be in competition with each other. Many list members carry out constituency service functions not welcomed by constituency members. This seems to more the case in Scotland than in Wales, but taking both countries together Lundberg found that 49% of constituency members thought that they were being shadowed by a list member, while 33% of list members admitted to the practice.

11.17 The Constitution Unit survey also asked a variety of questions about the constituency casework undertaken by elected representatives. For instance, each member was asked to estimate the number of communications (letters/emails/phone calls) received from individual constituents per week as well as the number of constituency surgeries they held per month. The following table displays the results.

Table 11.2 Average no. of Communications and Surgeries held per month

	Constituency members	List members
Communications	91	73
Surgeries	6	5

Source: Constitution Unit/ESRC/Leverhulme Survey. N=80

11.18 List members do indeed receive fewer communications from individual constituents per month than do constituency members despite representing a far larger area. On thCtions

MSPs/AMs under AMS is significantly less than that provided by MPs elected by first-past-the-post.

11.21 So it appears that there are some differences between the roles performed by constituency and list members. The former are more likely to be in contact with individual constituents, the latter spend more time in party and policy work. But these are no more than differences of degree. Rather than performing clearly divergent and different roles, it appears that there is plenty of room for competition and tension between constituency and list members. It is the degree to which there is tension between the two kinds of member that we now investigate in more detail.

Competition and Tension between Constituency and List Representatives

11.22 The potential for tension between constituency and list members was revealed in Scotland soon after the parliament was up and running. It was suggested by the Labour-led Scottish Executive, nearly all of whose MSPs were elected in constituency contests, that list MSPs should receive a lower allowance for the maintenance of a constituency office than constituency MSPs.⁵⁷ This was vigorously opposed by Conservative and SNP members, most of whom had been elected as list MSPs.

11.23 In July 1999 an all-party group formulated a code of conduct for both types of member. This asserted that constituency and list MSPs were of equal status but insisted that members should deal only with matters relating to the area in which they had been

elected. Moreover, regional members were forbidden to duplicate the work of constituency members and were required to notify the constituency MSP when individual cases were taken up. MSPs were also instructed not to misrepresent the basis on which they were elected or the area they served and were required to indicate on all stationery the name of the constituency or region in which they had been elected. MSPs were also encouraged to contact one another where they were involved or planning to be involved in a major local issue.

11.24 However, a recent Constitution Unit survey has shown that many MSPs do not view these guidelines as adequate.⁵⁸ Constituency members, who reported having to deal with large caseloads, alleged that regional members target particular constituencies rather than serving the whole region. They believed that regional MSPs did hardly any public-service work and focused their activity on campaigning while cherry picking selected issues. Some constituency MSPs alleged that regional members paid only lip service to the guidelines and attempted to shadow constituency MSPs in the hope of taking their seats. Moreover, constituency members felt that the guidelines were not enforced properly, despite frequently making complaints to the presiding officer, and noted that no regional members had been called to account for misbehaviour.

11.25 Lundberg also found similar views amongst constituency members. One said:

'The party list members divide up the individual constituencies amongst

themselves and shadow two or three each. This has the effect of 'politicising' constituency work. Instead of representing all constituents equally, you are portrayed as representing only those who support you. This is unnecessary and divisive.' - A constituency MSP.

11.26 But this is not a universal view. One constituency member said of the activity of list MSPs

'I am quite relaxed about it. They have to cover much wider areas in terms of their representation, so I am confident that they will not be able to give the attention to detail which I can, with an office in the constituency. In time, I believe voters will gravitate to a representative of the party for which they voted, when seeking to have a complaint dealt with.' - A constituency MSP

11.27 List members denied many of the allegations made against them. They insisted that most of their casework came from the area in which they lived and that they did not target their

Table 11.3 Percentage of List Candidates Contesting Constituency Seats 2003

Party	Scotland	Wales
Conservative	97%	100%
Labour	15%	85%
Liberal Democrat	51%	63%
Scottish Nationalist	86%	-
Plaid Cymru	-	50%
Scottish Socialist	58%	-
Green	0%	0%
UK Independence	0%	40%

Source: Calculated from data supplied by The Electoral Commission

11.32 As a result, most people elected as list members have fought and lost a constituency contest. No less than 88% of list members elected in Scotland in 2003, and 85% of those elected in Wales had also fought a constituency seat. This reflected the likelihood of winning in a constituency or list.

11.33 However, the practice of barring individuals from standing as both constituency and list candidates can itself introduce its own tensions. Such a ban would provide a disincentive for

list candidates to work on behalf of their party's constituency candidates because the greater the success of the latter, the less their own chances of being elected. In Scotland, many Labour list candidates who were not contesting simultaneous constituency contests told our Commission that they privately hoped their party colleague would lose the election. Equally, a Welsh Conservative list candidate in 2003 privately encouraged people to vote against his party in the constituency contests in order to maximise his own chances on the list

11.34 AMS provides scope for tension between constituency and list representatives, and especially so in respect of their right to serve the interests of individual constituents. This tension can also spill over into public perceptions of the electoral process. The different experience of Scotland and Wales, however, suggests that this tension is not an inevitable consequence of the system. Much depends on the degree to which constituency and list representatives come from different parties, and the degree to which constituency

Wales

Parties with Constituency and List AMs

1999

2003

Scotland	Parties with Constituency and List MSPs	
	1999	2003
Glasgow	No Party	No party
Highlands and Islands	SNP (2 list, 2 constituency)	SNP (2 list, 2 constituency)
	LAB (1 list, 1 constituency)	
	LAB (2 list, 1 constituency)	
Lothians	LIB DEM (1 con, 1 list)	Conserv (1 list, 1 constituency)
	No party	
Central	No party	No party
Mid and Fife	SNP (3 list, 1 constituency)	SNP (2 list, 3 constituency)
	LIB (1 list, 1 constituency)	
North East	SNP (4 list, 2 constituency)	LAB (2 list, 2 constituency)
	SNP (1 list, 4 constituency)	
South	No party	Conserv (2 list, 2 constituency)
West	No party	No party

representatives find the resulting competition unacceptable.

11.35 It should be noted that not every party in Scotland and Wales has both types of member, as tables 11.4 and 11.5 indicate.

11.36 The tables show that in Wales it is predominately Plaid Cymru that has both constituency and list members in the same region. In Scotland it is predominantly the SNP, although Labour and the Conservatives had both types in two regions in 2003. With such a small number of case studies of dual representation, it is impossible to conduct a meaningful statistical analysis of the attitudes of constituency to list members from the same party.

11.37 However, we might note that one tension about the position of list members that has arisen in New Zealand has not so far at least arisen in Scotland or Wales. This is the problem

of ‘party hopping’. In 1998, nine list MPs defected from the New Zealand First party. This raised questions about the continued right of these MPS to sit in parliament, given they had been elected as part of that party’s national list. In order to put a stop to this practice, the New Zealand government introduced the *Electoral (Integrity) Amendment Bill* in December 1999. The Bill proposed that any list MP who resigned from the party for which he/she was elected, must also quit parliament. Despite opposition from non-government parties, the Bill eventually became law in December 2001. Since the passing of the Act, no MP has attempted to defect to a different party.

11.38 Two SNP list MSPs resigned the party whip and became Independents during the course of the 1999-2003 parliament. This did not, however, lead to widespread calls for their resignation. Indeed, one of those MSPs,

Margo MacDonald, subsequently secured election as an independent in 2003. It is debatable whether a decision by someone elected in a single member constituency to change parties raises as much difficulty as does such a decision by a list representative and indeed we might note that the New Zealand legislation referred to above applies to both constituency and list MPs.

11.39 In Scotland and in Wales tension is greatest between Labour members, overwhelmingly elected to represent constituents, and the opposition members, mainly elected on a list. It is exemplified in Wales where, since 2003, all 30 Labour AMs are constituency members. In 1999-2000 Labour had to suppress their dislike of list members, especially when their Leader and First Minister, Alun Michael, was himself elected on the list. Since 2003 they have had no such inhibitions, and widespread denigration of list members. Labour members would pointedly refer to themselves as directly elected members, in contrast to the list members who failed to get elected in constituencies. These constant reminders of the different status of Labour and opposition

casework undertaken since the change of electoral system in 1999; for many the amount may have declined. The large size of the regions used in European elections appears to have caused particular difficulty, a difficulty that is only partly alleviated by MEPs from the same party collaborating with each other. Instead MEPs appear to have taken on the role of ambassador for their region. As to what the public thinks about how well they are represented in the European Parliament we alas know relatively little.

Constituency Service under STV

11.49 Under STV candidates often take great pains to emphasise their personal qualities since they cannot use a party label to distinguish themselves from rival same-party candidates. STV in the Republic of Ireland has resulted increasingly in the election of a number of single issue or independent candidates. These candidates tend to campaign on local matters and achieve a high personal profile. The 'bailiwicking' of constituencies by parties tends to be more common in rural than in urban areas. This is due to local communities and social networking in rural areas giving particular candidates a high personal profile. Parties in urban areas are less able to 'manage' the vote in such a manner due to the smaller geographical areas and less voter awareness of where different candidates come from.

11.50 Because of this, STV encourages candidates, particularly in rural areas, to campaign on the basis of personal characteristics often in discreet opposition to party colleagues. They regard constituency work as very

important. Irish MPs perform more constituency work than their counterparts from other countries, regarding it as vital for electoral purposes.⁶²

11.51 The proposition that STV is an inherent cause of increased constituency work in Ireland should be treated with caution. The proposition does not seem to hold in an examination of countries that likewise have electoral systems in which voters rank candidates of the same party. The assumption is that the candidate-orientated nature of STV encourages MPs to compete through providing services for their constituents. However, Denmark, which has a preferential party list system provides a counter example. Studies of Danish MP's show that there is a fairly low degree of constituency casework and that Danish parliamentarians do not see constituency work as taking up excessive amounts of time.⁶³ Similarly in Switzerland which has an electoral system allowing a write-in ballot which allows voters to strike out candidate names on ballots and insert alternatives, MPs are not burdened by constituency work.⁶⁴ In fact, in a study of Swiss Federal MPs, respondents found it difficult to even understand why the author was asking about the extent of constituency solicitations. One MP reported it at 'about 40 cases a year'. Finally, in Tasmania - a province that uses a similar form of STV to Ireland there is no direct evidence of the electoral system being a causal mechanism for increased constituency service.⁶⁵

Conclusion

11.52 Representatives elected under AMS or STV are likely to provide as much constituency service as are those elected under first-past-the-post. In the case of MEPs, the large size of the electoral regions appears to make it difficult for MEPs to undertake constituency casework.

11.53 The amount of time elected representatives spend on constituency casework and the degree to which the public come into contact with elected politicians under any political system, should not be exaggerated. Moreover, elected politicians certainly perform other important roles.

11.54 Any system of multi-member representation offers both opportunities for co-operation and the potential for tension between politicians elected for the same area. While perceptions of party and personal interest undoubtedly play a role, the degree to which either occurs appears to vary substantially from one party to another and from one country to another and thus neither outcome can be considered inevitable.

Issues in this chapter

- The effect of electoral systems on the conduct of government
- Coalition government in Scotland and Wales
- Achievements of the coalition governments
- Public attitudes to coalition government

Introduction

12.1 In this chapter, we consider the implications of the new electoral systems in Scotland and Wales for government. We examine the way the new systems have produced executives consisting of more than one party in a power sharing arrangement, and what those coalition governments have achieved. Coalition governments are rare in the UK; not since World War II has Britain been governed by a formal power sharing executive. But one consequence of any proportional electoral system is that no single party is likely to gain an overall majority of seats. In such a situation, the largest party can consider operating on its own as a minority administration. The alternative is to share power with one or more other parties in a majority coalition. The public in Britain is not used to such arrangements (neither are politicians) the only similar situation at

Figure 12.1 Different public policies in Scotland 1999–2003⁶⁸

- Free long term personal care for the elderly
- Abolition of up-front tuition fees for students in higher education, replaced by graduate contributions
- Three year settlement for teachers pay and conditions
- Less restrictive Freedom of Information Act
- Abolition of fox hunting, by Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002
- ‘One stop shop’ for Public Sector Ombudsman
- Protection of the property and welfare of adults with mental incapacity through law reform
- Abolition of the ban on ‘promoting homosexuality’ in schools by repeal of Section 2A of Local Government Act (equivalent of ‘Section 28’ in England and Wales)

continuous compromises with opposition parties to secure passage of its measures. The precarious nature of the arrangements was made obvious in February 2000, when the legislature passed a motion of no confidence in the First Secretary, Alun Michael. Michael's successor, Rhodri Morgan, aware of the weakness of the minority administration, made overtures to the Liberal Democrats, with a formal majority-status coalition being formed in October 2000. Following the 2003 elections, however, Wales saw its third type of government, with Labour again reverting to a single party administration, albeit this time on a wafer thin majority (30 out of 59 seats).

12.4 We consider these experiences, and in particular the coalitions in Scotland (1999-present) and Wales (2000-2003). The government in Scotland has been stable, and the transition to a majority administration in Wales in 2000 made it easier for a clear legislative programme to be introduced. While civil servants in both areas were initially concerned at the prospect of power sharing executives, their

misgivings soon disappeared, and there is little impression that the coalitions hindered the policy process.⁶⁷

Achievements of the coalition governments in Scotland and Wales

12.5 Most of the chapter presents the data on public attitudes to the coalitions in Scotland and Wales. The public will judge coalitions by the way in which they govern and by their results. This opening section briefly presents information on these aspects, the information on which the Scots and Welsh will have formed a favourable or unfavourable impression of what coalition governments can deliver. First we summarise what they have delivered, and then say a little about their different style of governing, and different relationship with the assembly.

12.7 Figure 12.1 summarises the main policy outputs of the coalition government in Scotland in its first term. It is a statement of achievements, not failings: these are things highlighted by the coalition partners. But taken on those terms,

two things are worth noting about the list. One is the influence of the Liberal Democrats in sustaining or promoting new policies, putting pressure on their Labour coalition partners. This is a different set of outputs than would have resulted from a Labour majority government. The Liberal Democrats were the driving force behind the new Scottish policy on tuition fees, which they insisted upon as their price of entry into the coalition. On free long term care the Liberal Democrats were part of the broader coalition of support in the Scottish Parliament (with the SNP and the Conservatives) for full implementation of the Sutherland report. The less restrictive Freedom of Information Act was thanks to Jim Wallace, Liberal Democrat leader and Justice Minister in the first term.

12.8 The second thing worth noting about the list is how many of these measures have been introduced in advance of the UK government, rather than Scotland lagging behind. It is true that in other respects Scotland has lagged behind the UK, by declining to follow some of the New Labour public service reforms (such as more choice and competition in schools, foundation hospitals) introduced south of the border. But on certain policy items Scotland has moved faster than the UK. This is of interest to those who fear that coalition must inevitably result in policy blockage and stagnation, because the Scottish experience appears to suggest the contrary. It was of course part of the purpose of devolution that Scotland should be free of the Westminster legislative logjam.

12.9 The last four items in Figure 12.1 all show how the coalition government in

Scotland has introduced legislation ahead of Westminster. Scotland has banned fox hunting (though with flawed legislation) and abolished the ban on promoting homosexuality in schools ('section 28') three years ahead of Westminster. On these first two items, Westminster moved more slowly because of opposition in the House of Lords; but the same does not apply to the next two. Scotland implemented the Law Commission proposals on adults with mental incapacity in 2000, at least four years ahead of Westminster which considered the Draft Mental Incapacity Bill in 2003. And Scotland has introduced a 'one stop shop' for the Public Services Ombudsman, while similar proposals in Whitehall still lie on the shelf. On the biggest decision of all, free long term care for the elderly, the Scottish coalition has taken a bold (some would say reckless) decision where Westminster still fears to tread.

12.10 Wales has fewer big policy items. In part this reflects the Assembly's lack of legislative power and its smaller per capita budget, which allows less room for manoeuvre, and in part the lesser policy making capacity in Wales. After little distinctive in the first year, different policies really began to emerge with the formation of the coalition government led by Rhodri Morgan in October 2000. Not all the items in figure 12.2 are a result of coalition, but, as in Scotland, the partnership agreement with the Liberal Democrats was a spur to policy innovation. And as in Scotland, the coalition does not appear to have been a brake on bold new policies: although the Liberal Democrats objected at the time, they did not succeed in stopping

Figure 12.2 Different public policies in Wales in the Assembly's first term⁶⁹

- UK's first Children's Commissioner
- Creation of 22 local health boards, to work alongside Wales' 22 local authorities
- Free medical prescriptions for those under 25 and over 60, and freezing of all other prescription charges
- Education and Learning Wales (ELWa), new body to oversee post 16 education and training; and Careers Wales, to provide careers advice and guidance to all ages
- Means tested learning grants for people in further and higher education
- Abolition of school league tables; piloting a new Welsh Baccalaureate in 19 schools and colleges
- Six weeks free home care for the elderly after discharge from hospital
- Finance Wales established as a 'user-friendly' bank for small business.

Figure 12.3 Power sharing in the Scottish Parliament⁷⁰

The 'new politics' in Scotland is illustrated by the way the Parliament plans its weekly business, scrutinises legislation, and engages with the public. The weekly business is brokered in the Parliamentary Bureau, chaired by the Presiding Officer, and attended by representatives of six parties (Labour, Lib Dems, SNP, Conservatives, Greens and Socialists) who can vote in accordance with their representation in the Parliament. This contrasts with the way the business is planned at Westminster bilaterally between the two main parties, to the exclusion of the minor parties (and the Speaker).

Legislation is scrutinised by expert subject committees, for whom legislative scrutiny is a heavy part of their workload. At Westminster the public have no opportunity to make any direct input into the legislative process, except on the small minority of bills which are published in draft and then subject to pre-legislative scrutiny. In the Scottish Parliament extensive efforts are made to ensure the public are engaged. As part of the Stage 1 procedure on a bill the lead committee enquires into the adequacy of the consultations so far, and may invite further representations from interested parties. A systematic study of legislative amendments in the first term concluded that although the Executive still dominates the legislative process, the domination is less than at Westminster, and expectations of power sharing between the Executive and Parliament are being realised.⁷¹

Finally, in terms of public engagement, the committees of the Scottish Parliament are more active in stimulating and facilitating public involvement in their work than their counterparts at Westminster. This can be seen, for example, in their websites and use of on-line consultation; in their use of reporters, to extend the committees' reach; and in their willingness to travel outside Edinburgh.

the decision by the Labour Health Minister to replace five health authorities with 22 new health boards, a decision which has since attracted considerable controversy.

The 'new politics' in Scotland and Wales

12.11 The common characteristic of all three devolved assemblies is that, thanks to being elected by proportional representation, no single party had an overall majority in their first term. This creates a very different atmosphere from the domination of single party government at Westminster, whether it is the dominance of Mrs Thatcher in the 1980s or the supremacy of New Labour after 1997. Coalition governments have to accommodate the views of the coalition partners, including their backbenches, and have to listen more carefully to other strands of opinion within the assembly.

12.12 This is most clearly evident in the Scottish Parliament, which from the start was determined to be different from Westminster. The Consultative Steering Group which advised on the Standing Orders in 1998 adopted four key principles of sharing the power; accountability; access and participation; and equal opportunities. At the end of the first four-year term, the Procedures Committee reviewed the Parliament's performance against these founding principles, and confirmed their adoption as the Parliament's principles.

12.13 Of course not all the innovations of the Scottish Parliament can be attributed to PR. Its founders were determined to break from the

Westminster mould, and had the advantage of starting with a relatively clean sheet. Furthermore, there was along history of Labour co-operation with the Liberal Democrats, especially on constitutional issues. This meant that both parties were bound together in supporting devolution as well as being used to working together. A better test case to illustrate the effects of PR is the New Zealand parliament, because this switched to PR in 1996 after over a century of being elected by first-past-the-post. New Zealand had been a classic, majoritarian Westminster parliament, and the changes since 1996 can mostly be ascribed to the introduction of PR. The main changes are summarised in Figure 12.4.

Public attitudes to coalition in Scotland and Wales

12.14 Enough has been said to give a flavour of the different style, and different policy outcomes of coalition governments. What has been the reaction of the public in Scotland and Wales to coalitions, and did their attitudes change in the light of their experience of coalition governments in the first term of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly? In both 1999 and 2003 a public attitude survey was conducted immediately after the devolution elections. One question asked about the preferred form of government, contrasting single party and coalition executives (Table 12.1). Not only did more people in Scotland (1999 and 2003) and Wales (2003, although not 1999) prefer coalition over single party government, but this group has also increased in size since 1999. In other words, the experience

New Zealand was a classic, winner-takes-all majoritarian system, with an executive dominated parliament. Following two referendums in the early 1990s, New Zealand

of coalition appears to have convinced some supporters of single party rule of the benefits of power-sharing.

12.15 Overall, then, there is little in the early experience of coalition government in Scotland and Wales to suggest that power sharing is a less effective form of administration than a single party ruling alone. But what of other, more specific, claims about the merits and drawbacks of coalition government? In particular, what about the numerous criticisms of power sharing executives? Disraeli once said that 'England does not love coalitions'. Is there any evidence that the coalitions in Scotland and Wales possess glaring deficiencies? To answer this, we consider a number of specific objections to coalition government:

The role of elections

1. At election time, voters do not know what their votes will mean for government formation, since parties tend to engage in post-election 'horse trading' before an outcome is reached.
2. If voters wish to apportion blame to a government at election time, it is more difficult for them to do so if the government comprises two or more parties (since which party is to be blamed for any particular outcome?).

The nature of the government outcome

3. Coalitions give disproportionate power to small parties, who can 'hold to ransom' the larger partner(s) to get what they want.
4. Coalitions are unstable, and more likely to collapse than single party governments. They are also less dynamic, since policy making takes longer and involves more compromises

than with a single party government.

5. If coalitions are not unstable, it makes it very difficult to electors to evict them and the same parties stay in government for a long time.

The role of elections

12.16 At Westminster elections, people who support the Conservative Party know what their vote will mean for the outcome; if the Conservatives gain a plurality of votes, they will probably form a government. Moreover, because of the way the electoral system allocates seats, the vote winner gains a substantial 'bonus', giving it a majority of legislative seats. Parties in this position are thus able to govern by themselves; except in rare circumstances, they do not require the support of any other party to get their measures through the Commons.⁷³ The consequences for the relationship between voters and governments are twofold. First, people know that if they vote for a particular party because of its policies, and if that party wins the election, then those policies are likely to be introduced by the government. There is thus a direct link between the choices voters make and the decisions taken in their name by governments. This is called the 'mandate' form of accountability. Second, since parties are able to govern alone, with no need to share power with another party, voters know which party to blame or reward for whatever the government does. Thus, at election time, if a voter is dissatisfied with the policies of a particular administration, he or she can identify the party responsible for these policies, and try to vote them out of office. This is called the 'sanction' form of

case in Wales. Perhaps this reflects the likelihood of the coalition being renewed in Scotland in 2003, whereas in Wales, voters were more uncertain about the likely outcome. If voters feel they can predict the outcome of a 'hung' parliament, they appear less likely to seek the parties' assistance than if the outcome is less clear.

12.20 But if the new electoral system in Scotland and Wales deprived voters of some control over which government gets chosen, might it have restored some control in other ways? The new system allows people two votes which,

responsibility', with voters being clear which party is responsible for which policy output.⁷⁷ Surely this becomes more difficult if more than one party is in office, as is the case with coalitions? This is undoubtedly true, since coalition involves concessions between the partners, which muddies, rather than clarifies, responsibility. Yet coalitions can provide voters with at least some clarity, provided two conditions are met. The first is that a particular party habitually controls a particular portfolio, so that voters can identify a policy output in that portfolio with the party. The second is that the coalition partners control the ministries they hold by themselves, so that any decisions in a particular field can be labelled as one partner's or the other's. However, even if these conditions are met, this only helps voters to indicate approval of one of the coalition partners, not necessarily to eject the other party from office (in other west European countries, it is not common for a party in coalition to see its vote share decline between elections and yet to remain in government).⁷⁸

12.23 How far has the coalition in Scotland helped voters to clarify responsibility in these ways? When it comes to the longevity of portfolios, voters have been helped somewhat by the fact that the junior partner - the Liberal Democrats - have consistently held the Rural Affairs ministry since 1999, while they also held the Justice ministry throughout the first term (although this portfolio was re-allocated to Labour after the 2003 election). Also muddying the waters is the fact that the partners do not tend to control discrete ministries, but rather share responsibility. Thus, junior ministers from one party are often

located in ministries headed by the coalition partner (this was true also of the coalition in Wales between 2000-2003). Such an arrangement may aid the coordination of the coalition, but does little to help voters identify which party is responsible for which policy decisions.

12.24 Perhaps clarity of responsibility is of little concern to voters. As with the mandate role of elections, we tested attitudes towards the capacity of elections to confer sanctions on governments. The results (Table 12.5) suggest that, while three or four voters in ten believe elections should allow for sanctions to be imposed on governments, a greater number believe the representation of viewpoints is a more important goal. In Wales at least, there has been a shift to the latter goal since 1999; perhaps the experience of coalition there has encouraged voters to downplay the risk or relative importance of a lack of clarity. Our surveys suggest that more people are concerned about the weakness of mandates in a coalition situation than with the difficulty of imposing sanctions.

12.25 Overall, it may be that under the coalition conditions usual in proportional systems, elections are less likely to perform (or to easily perform) the functions of conferring mandates or imposing sanctions that commentators claim are possible under first-past-the-post. But we have uncovered little evidence that this is a source of great discontent to voters. It is true that significant proportions in both Scotland and Wales continue to believe that the primary function of elections should be to allow voters to exert

TABLE 12.5: Public views on elections as 'sanctions'

'All parties should have told us before polling day who they would prefer to work with in a coalition government'	SCOTLAND		WALES	
	1999	2003	1999	2003
It is better to have just one party in government so that it is very clear who should be blamed if things go wrong	33%	31%	41%	37%
It is better to have two or more parties in government so that more people's views are represented	55%	54%	47%	48%
Balance in favour of sanctions	-22%	-23%	-6%	-11%

Source: Scottish Parliament Election Survey 1999, Scottish Social Attitudes 2003, Welsh Assembly Election Study 1999, Welsh Life and Times Survey 2003.

direct control over the formation and termination of governments. But significant proportions prefer to see that elections secure a more representative outcome. Moreover, there is some evidence that, the more voters observe of coalitions, the less likely those voters are to be concerned that elections provide for conditions of mandates and sanctions.

Coalitions in office

12.26 Having dealt with elections, we now turn to the actual operation of coalitions. In particular, we explore two key issues: the (disproportional) power of small parties, and the instability and ineffectiveness of coalitions. What evidence can we glean from Scotland and Wales that sheds light on these matters?

12.27 Have the coalitions in Scotland and Wales provided small parties with

disproportionate power when it comes to the formation and operation of the government? Put colloquially, is the government 'dog' being wagged by the small party 'tail'? When it comes to the allocation of ministries, it is a pattern across countries that the junior partner tends to win a slightly higher proportion of posts than its share of government seats.⁷⁹ Thus, in Wales in 2000, while the Liberal Democrats contributed 18% of total government seats, they gained 22% of the portfolios (two cabinet posts). In Scotland in 1999, the Liberal Democrats gained 20% of the portfolios (two posts), although their seat share was 23%. In 2003, although the Liberal Democrats gained the same number of seats as in 1999 (17 seats), their share of total government seats increased (to 25%), since the seats won by Labour fell. The party was thus in a strong position to seek - and receive - an extra

TABLE 12.6: Public views on the power of small parties

‘The new voting system used in elections to the Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly gives too much power to smaller parties’	SCOTLAND		WALES	
	1999	2003	1999	2003
Strongly agree/Agree	16%	17%	16%	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	28%	26%	33%	30%
Strongly disagree/Disagree	44%	37%	35%	29%
Balance of concern about small parties	+28%	+20%	+19%	+13%

Source: Scottish Parliament Election Survey 1999, Scottish Social Attitudes 2003, Welsh Assembly Election Study 1999, Welsh Life and Times Survey 2003.

portfolio, boosting its share of ministers to 27%. The Liberal Democrats also gained three of the eight junior ministries in 2003, so that their total share of government seats was almost one third (32%). Even this can be justified on the basis that the party had retained its popularity while the senior partner - Labour - had slipped since 1999. In other words, the allocation of posts was responsive, not only to the absolute share of government seats held by the junior partner, but also to its relative position since the previous election.

12.28 So there is little evidence here of the tail wagging the dog. What about the decisions taken by the government? Most substantial decisions by a coalition government are prefigured in the agreement that is usually signed at the outset by the contracting partners, rather than being decided ad hoc. Given that the junior partners in the Scottish and Welsh coalitions involved themselves in all business of the executive, not simply those areas on which they had a particular interest, there is little the senior partner can do without the junior's agreement.

However, given that there is substantial policy commonality between Labour and the Liberal Democrats in Scotland and Wales, it has not been that difficult for the partners in both areas to reach compromises. Certainly, the public in both areas do not perceive coalition government to have overly benefitted the smaller parties, although maybe the experience of coalition has swung some voters towards this view (Table 12.6).

12.29 Finally, what does the experience in Scotland and Wales suggest about the stability and overall effectiveness of coalitions as forms of government? In spite of the novelty of the arrangements, the coalitions appear to have been stable, with no evidence that the executives in Edinburgh and Cardiff were ever close to being brought down by internal feuds (their stability was helped by the fact that no alternative majority coalitions were feasible). Indeed, the move to a coalition in Wales in 2000 brought with it greater stability, along with an increased policy dynamism, although this is largely attributable to the majority status that the coalition enjoyed, rather than to its multi-party

nature. Civil servants in both areas, many of whom served a single party administration prior to devolution, admitted to some early nervousness about the demands and constraints of a power sharing executive. But their experience of the coalitions in action have dispelled these doubts. Not only have officials adapted to serving two political masters rather than one, but there is also little residual belief that coalitions are less proactive than are single party governments in bringing forward policy measures.⁸⁰

12.30 In terms of processes and outcomes, then, the experience of those close to the administrations in Scotland and Wales is broadly favourable. This confidence is also shared by the public, most of whom do not believe that governments under proportional representation will be unstable (Table 12.7). In spite of the turnover in First Ministers during the first term of the Scottish Parliament, and the changes in First Secretary and form of government during the Welsh Assembly's first term, the proportion of those believing in the likelihood of unstable government has not increased between 1999 and 2003.

12.31 In contrast to attitudes towards electoral systems themselves, attitudes towards one of the possible consequences of changing the electoral system, coalition government, have changed from year to year across Britain as a whole. It appears that attitudes are influenced by the perceived success or otherwise of the incumbent government. Up to and including the 1992 general election there was increasing support for single party government. But, as the time in office of the unpopular Major administration increased, the country's mood changed to being marginally in favour of coalition government. And while opinion switched back towards single-party government immediately after the election of Tony Blair's government, opinion appears to have moved once more marginally in favour of coalitions. This is illustrated in table 12.8 below.

12.32 In contrast to England, people in Scotland and Wales have of course had experience of coalition government. It appears that this experience has certainly not put people off coalition government. In 1997 opinion in Scotland appears to have been slightly more opposed to coalitions than that in England; now if anything it appears to be slightly more in favour. And while opinion in Wales appears to be slightly

Introduction

13.1 Regional and local government do not lie directly within our terms of reference. Our main focus is on the

North East. As in the GLA, there will be a 5% threshold to try to exclude extremist parties (see chapter 5).

- 13.4 Turnout may be low, reflecting the public's views about the importance of regional assemblies rather than a dislike of the electoral system. Turnout in the first GLA elections in 2000 was 36%. But the referendums taking place in October 2004 to decide on regional assemblies will be conducted using all-postal ballots. The experience of using postal ballots in local government elections suggests that postal ballots push turnout very substantially.
- 13.5 The limited functions and low 'visibility' of regional assemblies should help to minimise conflict between constituency and additional members. In Scotland and Wales competition has occurred mainly over constituency casework, with claims of additional members carpet-bagging on the territory of the constituency member. Members of regional assemblies will not have a lot of constituency casework. Casework is as likely to come from firms and NGOs, who may have a regional rather than a constituency base, and so be appropriate for representation by list members representing the whole region.
- 13.6 The Government proposes that regional assemblies have an executive of six members, with the remainder being backbenchers scrutinising the executive. The Greater London Assembly has found it very difficult to develop an effective scrutiny role, and Regional Assemblies may experience similar difficulties. With fewer than 30 members it will be very difficult to run enough scrutiny committees to monitor

the work of the executive, and to carry out 'general scrutiny' on matters such as finance, audit, and standards: especially if the backbenchers work three days a week, as the White Paper proposed.⁸¹ But this is not a function of the electoral system. It is a weakness imposed by the small size of the Assembly.

- 13.7 Finally, will Regional Assemblies attract more women, ethnic minorities, and people new to politics, or will they simply provide 'jobs for the boys'? In the first GLA elections 90% of those elected had prior political experience, 75% as local government councillors.⁸² 44% were women, and 12% from the ethnic minorities. This is not a function of the electoral system, but of the candidate selection procedures run by the political parties.

STV for Local Government in Scotland

- 13.8 The Scottish Executive has considered the use of PR for local government stemming from the first Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition agreement in 1999. In the first term of the Scottish Parliament this was referred to an expert committee, the Kerley committee, which investigated what a change in the electoral system for local government should comprise. The Kerley committee recommended STV, and the second Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition formed in 2003 introduced a bill to change the law in time for the next local government elections, in 2007.
- 13.9 The Scottish Bill was introduced largely because of the demands of the Liberal Democrats as a condition for serving in coalition. STV should reduce the

number of councils where a single party is in control, such as Glasgow, but would probably still leave between a fifth and a quarter of Scottish local authorities under single party control.⁸³ STV is used in local government elections in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. If it has the same effects in Scotland, different candidates from the same parties will compete against each other, and councillors should become more responsive to constituency concerns. The Scottish plan is for three or four member wards, which will produce only limited proportionality. Multi-member wards may be harder to accept in rural areas, where some single member wards are already geographically extensive.

under its Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition formed in 2000. The issue was also referred to an expert committee, chaired by Professor Eric Sunderland. As in Scotland, the committee recommended STV as best suited to the needs of local government in Wales, using three to five member wards.⁸⁴ But when Labour found they could govern without the Liberal Democrats after the 2003 Welsh Assembly elections, they announced that they would not pursue the recommendations of the Sunderland Commission. Most Labour councillors in Wales are opposed, and the issue will only reappear on the agenda if Labour once again need the support of the Liberal Democrats in Wales.

Implications for local government in England and Wales

13.10 Wales had a similar commitment to introduce PR for local government

13.11 In England the UK Government has set its face against electoral reform for local government. Although PR featured in early drafts of the 1998 Green Paper, *Modernising Local*

In 1998 the Constitution Unit conducted a literature survey to assess the likely impact of PR in local government.⁸⁵ The main conclusions were as follows.

Compared to first-past-the-post, PR will increase party competition and opposition representation in local government and will reduce the incidence of one-party councils.

- PR is likely to make councillors more responsive to the needs of their electorate.
- The presence of opposition members in significant numbers, and the increased possibility that the ruling party could lose office, may incentivise councillors to take their electorate more seriously.
- Although a higher proportion of those elected at local level are women, they are still significantly under-represented. PR will not necessarily increase the representation of

Introduction

14.1 The previous chapters in this report have examined the experience of the new electoral systems created since 1997. This chapter will discuss what relevance this evidence has for Westminster, and particularly the House of Commons. The changes in the electoral system, and related political behaviour, have been more extensive than is generally recognised. Every new representative body set up since 1997 has been elected using an electoral system other than first-past-the-post. This does not just apply to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but also to those parts of England with elected mayors. Moreover, every adult in the UK now has the opportunity to vote under a form of PR at the European Parliament elections, albeit that this opportunity was only exercised by one in four in 1999. Many voters, particularly in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London, now

a direct link with the increased scrutiny of Parliaments over executives made possible by PR. In other words, PR is also viewed as a means by which overweening executive power can be properly checked.

- 14.3 It is neither possible nor sensible to reach firm conclusions on which particular electoral system is best: whether Additional Member System, PR-list, Single Transferable vote, Alternative Vote, Supplementary Vote or First-Past-the Post. Some systems are thought to be associated more with stable governments, while others are thought to be better at promoting the representation of smaller parties - though there is no simple choice to produce a better quality of democracy or better decisions. The pluses and minuses of various systems have to be balanced against the merits of securing consent for government. Well-established, even if imperfect, systems may do this better.
- 14.4 A system which suits devolved legislatures in Scotland or Wales, or the European Parliament, is not necessarily relevant for Westminster. The Greater London Assembly was designed as a deliberative assembly to hold the Mayor to account and to approve budgets, while the results of the elections for the European Parliament have only an indirect impact on the

Labour leader and First Minister, and has approved very controversial legislation such as the abolition of up-front tuition fees for higher education, the introduction of land rights for crofters and the abolition of fox hunting. On the other hand, the experience with PR in the UK since 1997 has contradicted the claims of its advocates that its introduction will necessarily increase turnout. Other factors not absolutely connected with PR have so far been more important in Britain. Moreover, there is little evidence that the use of AMS has persuaded the parties to appeal to all voters in every constituency rather than just marginal ones since campaign styles in Scotland and Wales have not changed substantially.

- 14.7 At the beginning of the report, we set out a number of ways of looking at alternative electoral systems: fairness and proportionality; fairness and voter choice; voter understanding and behaviour; party competition and campaigning; candidate selection; voter mobilisation and turnout; representation; and impact on government.

Fairness and proportionality

- 14.8 There are several ways in which rules for allocating seats can be judged 'fair'. The most common is how they translate votes into seats, with varying degrees of proportionality between the share of votes and the share of seats in the legislature. This in turn reflects many factors such as constituency size, the number of parties and the electoral system. Because varying systems are used in the UK, the levels of proportionality vary. Of all the systems

illustrated, STV in Northern Ireland is the most proportional, followed by the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the European Parliament, the Greater London Assembly, and, finally, the House of Commons.

- 14.9 The implications for Westminster obviously depend on the system used. As noted in the simulations in appendix A, the results differ widely depending on which electoral system is used. AV is supposed to ensure that each MP is elected on at least 50 per cent of the overall vote in his or her constituency, but does not automatically do so if there are insufficient transferable votes (that is if not enough voters have marked other preferences after their first choice). Moreover, across the country, AV can produce a hugely disproportionate result: for instance, giving Labour even more MPs in 1997. The impact of STV and AMS is not clear-cut. In the case of STV, the degree of proportionality is related to the number of members in a constituency, while the impact depends on particular circumstances of the time and the second and third preferences of voters. For AMS, the key is the balance between constituency and top-up list members.
- 14.10 The calculations in Appendix B show that although STV as implemented in Northern Ireland was more proportional than any of the AMS systems that have been used in Great Britain, this does not necessarily mean that STV would produce the most proportional outcome in a House of Commons election. Rather, AMS could well be the more proportional so long as it contained a sufficiently large

elections in 1999. This indicates both a failure of public information and a decline in interest.

14.14 The Commission's surveys asked several questions about which system voters might favour. Most people are neutral. This is not surprising since most voters, understandably and probably fortunately, tend not to think about electoral systems regularly, if at all. Their level of interest is low. Most respondents were not aware of the debate about the first-past-the-post and other electoral systems until prompted. Members of the public are comfortable with the status quo and do not view a change in the electoral system as making much impact on their lives. However, after prompting and discussion, most people expressed a preference for a PR system, though this does not provide firm pointers for Westminster.

14.15 Survey work for the Commission showed that 43 per cent of those questioned would vote for an alternative electoral system for the House of Commons. A third said they would vote to retain FPTP and just under a quarter said they did not know or would not vote. In addition, well over half said they thought parties being awarded the same share of seats as of votes was much more important than a clear winner in the House of Commons. But these answers have to be treated with considerable caution since the questions are largely hypothetical without little relation to people's immediate experience. Much depends on how the question is asked: in particular, which of the many criteria in the debate are highlighted in the question.

14.16 When asked about their preferred choice of alternative system, more people opted for AMS, though they were not offered the alternative of STV. Public attitudes to electoral system are governed by peoples' direct experiences, their attitude to coalition government and their party affiliation. These survey replies, particularly from England, should not be over-interpreted since most people do not have firm or well-developed views unless prompted. There is broad sympathy for some form of PR and for the idea of coalition government. But these opinions are broad rather than deep. They are not strongly held and could easily shift away from PR if electoral reform moved to the front of the political stage and was fully debated in the media and by politicians.

14.17 Any change in the voting system for Westminster would unquestionably be debated at length- probably requiring a referendum. So voters would be inundated with information about how the systems would work as well as claim and counter-claim about the impact of any change.

14.18 There is a potential problem about the number of systems being faced by electors at various levels. Londoners will use three different electoral systems in the election of the mayor, the Greater London Assembly and the European Parliament in June 2004. The multiplicity of systems explains the decision of the Scotland Office in February 2004 to establish a commission to examine 'the consequences of having four different systems in Scotland'. The Secretary of State for Wales has said he is awaiting

the report of the Richard Commission before deciding to set up an additional review like the Scottish one. The multiplicity of electoral systems at local, regional and sub-national level has no direct relevance to the different factors affecting the election of a national Parliament and choice of central Government.

Party competition and campaigning

14.19 More parties have been represented in the new devolved bodies elected under PR than in councils and legislatures elected under first-past-the-post. The number of parties is related to the proportionality of the system, but this is not a static process since the number of parties, and the number of seats won by smaller groups, rose in the 2003 election in Scotland, compared with 1999. In the Scottish Parliament, there are now four large, and three small parties or groups. But this growth in the number of parties represented, as opposed to putting forward candidates, has not happened in Wales. So particular local circumstances have mattered as much as the existence of PR in determining the extent of a multi-party system among those elected, as opposed to those standing as candidates

14.20 However, support for the third and smaller parties has been rising at Westminster under FPTP, as well as in the devolved bodies elected under PR. The Liberal Democrats, in particular, have succeeded in the 1997 and 2001 elections in substantially increasing their number of MPs at Westminster despite taking a lower share of the national vote than when the old SDP/Liberal Alliance only won half as

many Commons seats in the 1980s. The two party dominance of Westminster politics began to recede in the 1970s. At present, one in eight MPs come from outside the Conservative and Labour ranks, and a total of nine parties are represented, ignoring an Independent, though six of these are Scottish and Welsh Nationalist or from Northern Ireland. Two or three more parties would probably be represented under most forms of PR- Green, UK Independence and Scottish Socialist. But the key change would be the increased representation of the Liberal Democrats and an increased likelihood, depending on exactly what system is used, that no single party would have an overall majority.

Party candidate selection

14.21 The arrival of the new devolved bodies has been accompanied by an increase in the number of women candidates. The Labour Party, in particular, has introduced several measures of positive discrimination for the selection of candidates. However, this policy was taken before the introduction of PR and reflected a general, national build-up in pressures towards the use of all-women short-lists, adopted by Labour for parliamentary selections for the Commons in the mid-1990s. As important was the fact that the new bodies were initially elected as a whole on one date, with no incumbents by definition, so the increased prominence and activism of women made its full impact. The change in the electoral system has been a subsidiary factor, compared with changes in rules in Labour.

14.29 Most MEPs have seen a decline in their constituency work since the transition to PR in 1999 and many feel uncomfortable with the size of their regions. The main difference is between older and new MEPs. Older MEPs, elected under the previous FPTP method, tend to dislike the new system, feeling that it has changed their representational role for the worse. New MEPs are more positive about the PR-list system and have adapted to its consequences.

14.30 For many members of the House of Commons, the potential dilution of the link with their voters (and the relationship is often expressed in possessive terms) is a central objection to most forms of PR. As noted earlier, this was a crucial factor in the Jenkins recommendations, which would have retained a high number of single member constituencies. STV would require constituencies up to five or more times the current size, while AMS would, depending on the formula used, mean increases of anything from a third up to a doubling. While existing members of the Commons fear a weakening in the constituency link, our surveys of Scotland and Wales suggest that this need not be the case. Only about 10 per cent of people ever contact an elected representative directly. Among those who do so, the overwhelming majority contact their constituency MSP/AM rather than their list MSP/AM. This implies that voters

14.34 The coalition governments in Scotland and Wales have shown themselves as effective and efficient in policy making and implementation as single party governments. They have had to negotiate more to win consent for their policies, because with narrow majorities, they cannot take the assembly for granted. But the evidence shows that coalition need not necessarily result in policy blockage and stagnation. The coalition governments in both countries have introduced significantly different public policies, and on certain subjects the Scottish coalition has managed to legislate faster than Westminster. Public attitude surveys in 2003 show a reasonably positive response: if anything, people in Scotland and Wales have warmed slightly to coalition government in the light of their experience.

14.35 One of the most striking features of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly has been the greater role of committees, both in scrutiny and policy formation. This has not meant that politics is any less partisan than at Westminster: far from it. But the structures have altered the behaviour, and opportunities, of representatives. Consultation is built into the system.

14.36 Similarly, at Westminster, most changes to the electoral system would be more likely to produce coalitions than would first-past-the-post: the exceptions are AV, SV and, in some cases, the Jenkins hybrid scheme. Coalition governments at Westminster would be welcomed, at least in theory, by the public. The ICPR/You Gov surveys asked people whether they thought it was better to have just one

party in government or to have more than one. A majority of people thought it would be better to have two or more parties in the government, so that more people's views could be represented. A third, 34 per cent, favoured one party in government, against more than a half, 56 per cent, wanting two or more parties, with 10 per cent don't know. This tallies with surveys carried out in Scotland and Wales since 1999, where nearly a half have supported the concept of coalition government, as against a fifth that did not. Again, a caveat has to be entered since the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly are completely different institutions to the House of Commons and, for English voters, these are largely hypothetical questions about which most people have thought little. Broad sympathy for the general idea of coalition government in theory is not the same as firm support in practice, parti5a(tb that motr cot- publie')73.9(e)]TJT*long- str which(party theyweant on govers)TjT*-0.0002 Tc0 Tv

14.76

formatiot of coalitioys as th Frehe

necessarily beuinsnabe,e een thought theeprestures an gnatorial governments areovely different from thste fcking a stnation. Thsr are

dealing with challenging foreign policy
problems, and in tackling tricky public

of political support at the top of the Blair Government- indeed widespread opposition to the whole idea of PR- and to the lack of interest among the electorate than to any serious discussion of the report's strengths or weaknesses outside the world of electoral specialists.

14.45 The Commission's analysis suggests that the impact of using new electoral systems has not been as dramatic, in either direction, as supporters and opponents of PR have suggested. It is important to distinguish between the creation of devolved bodies and the use of PR, as well as wider, political and cultural factors. Many of the changes in political behaviour, such as the selection of more women candidates, have had little to do with PR as such. But, in general, the new bodies elected under PR have produced stable, if not always popular, government; increased the number of parties represented; increased proportionality and maintained links between constituents and their elected representatives. Devolution has not produced an adverse public reaction and is now broadly accepted in Scotland, Wales and London.

14.46 The question of relevance to Westminster comes down to the issue of the distribution of power. Do we want it concentrated under the winner-take-all system of first-past-the post, or do we want it spread between parties as is probable under PR?

14.47 Inevitably, this report is a snapshot of work-in-progress. The conclusions are tentative after just two elections in Scotland and Wales, and one (before June 2004) in London and, under PR,

for the European Parliament. Moreover, within a few years, assemblies in up to three regions in England could be elected on the basis of PR. If an elected element is introduced into the House or Lords, it could be by a regional list form of PR. This might be the most important example of all, since the nature of elections for the second chamber could powerfully influence the debate over the Commons. The adoption of a regional list system for the election of a substantial minority of the Lords might strengthen, rather than weaken, the case for continuing to elect the Commons on the familiar first-past-the-post system to produce single party majority governments.

14.48 The debate is developing, not static, as every new body created since 1997 has used electoral systems other than first-past-the-post. That does not make PR inevitable, or automatically desirable, for the House of Commons. What has happened with the devolved bodies is not precisely relevant for the Commons. But the broad and still developing experience with PR outside Westminster cannot be ignored. There are clear lessons which may, and should, dispel many of the charges often heard on either side of the argument about PR. The debate about electoral systems is still open.

Voting Method	Lab	Con	LibDem	SNP/PC	Others	DV score (%)	Lab majority
Supplementary Vote (SV)	436	110	84	10	19	23.5	+213
Alternative Vote (AV)	436	110	84	10	19	23.5	+213
Actual election (FPTP)	419	165	46	10	19	21	+179
AMS (90:10)	378	181	70	11	19	14.4	+97
STV	342	144	131	24	8	13.5	+35
AMS (83:17)	354	190	82	14	8	10.8	+60

National Assembly for Wales, May 2003							
Party	first-past- the-post Votes	Seats	List Votes	Total Seats	% List Votes	% Seats	%S- %V
Labour	340,515	30	310,658	30	36.6	50.0	13.4
Plaid Cymru	180,185	5	167,653	12	19.7	20.0	0.3
Conservative	169,432	1	162,725	11	19.2	18.3	-0.8
Lib Dem	120,220	3	108,013	6	12.7	10.0	-2.7
Marek	8,749	1	11,008	1	1.3	1.7	0.4
Green	0	0	30,028	0	3.5	0.0	-3.5
UKIP	19,975	0	29,427	0	3.5	0.0	-3.5
Socialist Labour	410	0	10,358	0	1.2	0.0	-1.2
Ind Wales	0	0	6,466	0	0.8	0.0	-0.8
Others	11,099	0	13,216	0	1.6	0.0	-1.6
Total	850,405	40	849,522	60	100		

Disproportionality: 14.1% (Loosmore-Hanby); 10.4% (Least Squares)
Turnout: 38%

Scottish Parliament, May 1999							
Party	first-past- the-post Votes	Seats	List Votes	Total Seats	% List Votes	% Seats	%S- %V
Labour	38.7	53	786,618	56	33.6	43.4	9.8
SNP	28.7	7	638,644	35	27.3	27.1	-0.2
Conservative	15.5	0	359,109	18	15.4	14.0	-1.4
Lib Dem	14.2	12	290,760	17	12.4	13.2	0.7
Green	0.0	0	84,024	1	3.6	0.8	-2.8
Socialist Labour	0.2	0	55,232	0	2.4	0.0	-2.4
Scottish Socialist	1.0	0	46,635	1	2.0	0.8	-1.2
Falkirk West	0.7	1	27,700	1	1.2	0.0	-2.1
Others	0.6	0	49,989	0	2.1	0.0	-2.1
Total	100	71	2,338,911	129	100	100	

Disproportionality: 10.5% (Loosmore-Hanby); 7.5% (Least Squares)
Turnout: 58%

Scottish Parliament, May 2003							
Party	first-past-the-post Votes	Seats	List Votes	Total Seats	% List Votes	% Seats	%S-%V
Labour	633,983	46	561,379	50	29.3	38.8	9.5
SNP	455,736	9	399,659	27	20.9	20.9	0.1
Conservative	318,279	3	296,929	18	15.5	14.0	-1.5
Lib Dem	294,347	13	225,774	17	11.8	13.2	1.4
Green	0	0	132,138	7	6.9	5.4	-1.5
Scottish Socialist	118,764	0	128,026	6	6.7	4.7	-2.0
Senior Citizens	1,597	0	28,996	1	1.5	0.8	-0.7
PP	0	0	28,655	0	1.5	0.0	-1.5
MacDonald (Ind)	0	0	27,144	1	1.4	0.8	-0.6
Socialist Labour	0	0	21,657	0	1.1	0.0	-1.1
UKIP	0	0	11,969	0	0.6	0.0	-0.6
Canavan (Ind)	14,703	1	0	1	0.0	0.8	0.8
Turner (Ind)	10,988	1	0	1	0.0	0.8	0.8
Others	38,589	0	53,530	0	2.8	0.0	-2.8
Total	1916986	73	1915856	129	100	100	

Disproportionality: 12.5% (Loosmore-Hanby); 7.3% (Least Squares)
Turnout: 49%

London Assembly, May 2000							
Party	first-past-the-post Votes	Seats	List Votes	Total Seats	% List Votes	% Seats	%S-%V
Labour	31.6	6	502874	9	30.3	36.0	5.7
Conservative	33.2	8	481053	9	29.0	36.0	7.0
Lib Dem	18.9	0	245555	4	14.8	16.0	1.2
Green	10.2	0	183910	3	11.1	12.0	0.9
Christian Alliance		0	55192	0	3.3	0.0	-3.3
BNP		0	47670	0	2.9	0.0	-2.9
UKIP		0	34054	0	2.1	0.0	-2.1
London Socialist	2.9	0	27073	0	1.6	0.0	-1.6
Ind		0	22862	0	1.4	0.0	-1.4
Pro-Tube		0	17401	0	1.0	0.0	-1.0
Soc. Lab		0	13690	0	0.8	0.0	-0.8
Pro-motorist		0	13248	0	0.8	0.0	-0.8
Others	3.1	0	15048	0	0.9	0.0	-0.9
Total	100	14	1659630	25			

Disproportionality: 14.8% (Loosmore-Hanby); 7.6% (Least Squares)
Turnout: 36%

European Parliamentary Elections, June 1999					
Party	Votes	Seats	%Votes	%Seats	%S-%V
Conservative	357,8217	36	35.8	42.9	7.1
Labour	280,3821	29	28.0	34.5	6.5
Lib Dem	126,6549	10	12.7	11.9	-0.8
UKIP	696,057	3	7.0	3.6	-3.4
Green	625,378	2	6.3	2.4	-3.9
SNP	268,528	2	2.7	2.4	-0.3
Plaid Cymru	185,235	2	1.9	2.4	0.5
Pro-Euro Con	138,097	0	1.4	0.0	-1.4
BNP	102,647	0	1.0	0.0	-1.0
Liberal	93,051	0	0.9	0.0	-0.9
Socialist Lab	86,749	0	0.9	0.0	-0.9
Others	157,944	0	1.6	0.0	-1.6
Total	10,002,273	84	100	100	

Disproportionality: 14.1% (Loosmore-Hanby); 7.9% (Least Squares)
Turnout: 24%

Northern Ireland Assembly Election June 1998				
Party	1st Pref votes	% 1st pref.Vote	%Seats	% S-%V
SDLP	177,963	22.0	24	2.2
UUP	172,225	21.3	28	4.6
DUP	146,917	18.1	20	0.4
Sinn Fein	142,858	17.6	18	-0.9
Alliance	52,636	6.5	6	-0.9
UK Unionist	36,541	4.5	5	-0.1
PUP	20,634	2.5	2	-0.6
NI Women	13,019	1.6	2	0.3
Ulster Democratic	8,651	1.1	0	-1.1
Others	38,801	4.8	3	-2
Total	810,245	100	100	

Disproportionality: 6.0% (Loosmore-Hanby); 2.6% (Least Squares)
Turnout: 68%

Appendix C: Survey Results - YOUGov

YouGov created an online panel, containing a representative sample of more than 3,300 electors throughout Great Britain. The panel was first questioned in March 2003, before the campaigns for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly; in May 2003, after the elections, and again in July 2003. In each case, the raw data was weighted to reflect the demographic, social and political profile of Great Britain as a whole.

YouGov Surveys for PR Commission

Wave 1 results

Sample Size: 3339

Fieldwork: 8-11 April 2003

All figures are percentages

How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the UK?

Very satisfied	12
Fairly satisfied	62
Not very satisfied	20
Not at all satisfied	4
Don't know	2

Which of these opinions about different forms of government is closest to your own?

Democracy is the best form of government, whatever the circumstances may be	82
In certain cases a dictatorship can be positive	9
For someone like me, it wouldn't make any difference	5
Don't know	4

a) Would you say these days too many MPs are women, too few, or is the number about right?

b) Would you say these days too many MPs are from Britain's black and Asian communities, too few, or is the number about right?

c) Would you say these days too many MPs are Independent and belong to none of the political parties, too few, or is the number about right?

	Too many	Too few	About right
Women MPs	7	43	37
Black and Asian MPs	10	38	36
Independent MPs	9	36	31

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Most Members of Parliament are out of touch with the rest of the country...	77	21	3
I feel I have a pretty good understanding of the main issues facing the UK...	79	18	4
People like me don't have any say about what the government does...	77	23	1
My vote really counts in elections...	53	44	3
The first-past-the-post electoral system results in good quality people being elected to Parliament.	24	20	9

Wave 2 results
 Sample Size: 2705
 Fieldwork 16-21 May 2003

When you vote, what do you feel you are doing? Please rate the options below in order of importance to you.

	Most important	2nd most important	3rd	4th
Saying which party you want to run the country	55	17	11	11
Saying which party you want to represent you	30	39	17	9
Giving your say about which person you want to represent you in Parliament	25	18	27	19
Thinking of a particular individual you want to represent your constituency	12	16	22	32
Stopping a particular person or party from winning	10	11	13	10

When there is a conflict between what your MP feels is best and what he or she thinks the people in his/her constituency want, do you think he/she should follow his/her own conscience or follow what the people want?

Follow his/her own conscience	11
Follow the views of his/her constituency	53
Depends on the issue	34
Don't know	2

If you had to choose, do you think your MP should be primarily concerned with looking after the needs and interests of his/her own constituency, or do you feel that he/she should be primarily concerned with looking after the needs and interests of the nation as a whole

Should primarily look after the needs of his/her own constituency	67
Should primarily look after the needs of the whole nation as a whole	30
Don't know	3

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't know
'I am presented with a good choice of candidates on the ballot paper.'	37	29	33	2
'I sometimes feel that I am voting for the best of a bad bunch.'	69	15	14	1

The first-past-the-post system is the method used in Britain to elect MPs to the House of Commons. In Britain, the country is divided into 659 separate constituencies, each electing one MP. In order to vote, you simply put an X beside the name of the candidate you support. The candidate who gets the most votes wins, regardless of whether they have more than 50% support or not. A typical ballot paper looks like this (example shown)

Do you agree or disagree with then following statements...

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't know
'The first-past-the-post system is easy to understand.'	85	6	7	2
'The first-past-the-post system offers a great deal of choice.'	38	33	25	4

Countrywide, more people might actually vote against a party than for it, but that party might still end up winning an election and going into Government.

How does this information affect your attitude to first-past-the-post?

A lot more in favour	2
Somewhat more in favour	6
Neither more in favour nor against	42
Somewhat more against	34
A lot more against	11
Don't know	5

Is it important to you that the party which goes into Government has an overall majority of the vote, or not?

Very important	23
Fairly important	52
Not very important	18
Not important at all	3
Don't know	4

The next system is known as a 'party list' system. It is currently used in the UK to elect members of the European Parliament.

In this system, you simply choose your preferred party. You have no direct say as to which individual candidates you elect.

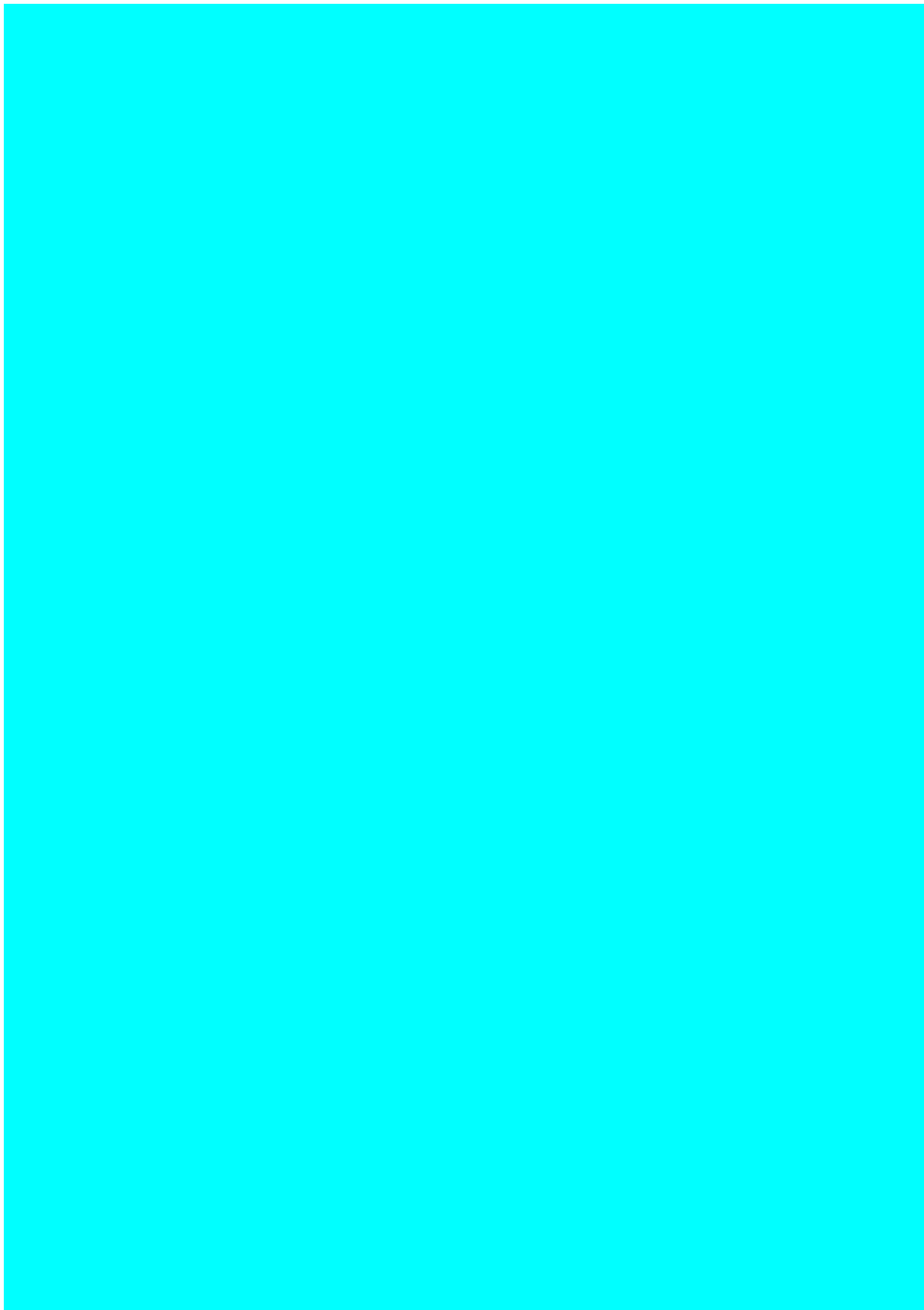
For example, in a hypothetical voting area, there are 10MPs. Each party draws up a list of up to 10 candidates.

The number of seats won by each party depends on its total vote. The person the party most wants to be an MP is at the top of the list.

Everyone has one vote, which you can give to one party. A typical ballot paper could look like this (example shown)

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't know
'The party list system is easy to understand.'	58	14	26	3
'The party list system offers a great deal of choice.'	44	25	28	4
'I would prefer to be able to vote for individual candidates rather than for a party list.'	57	21	19	3



The additional member system provides more opportunity for the voter to vote for small parties or minority groups that currently might not be that well represented.

How does this information affect your attitude to this system of voting?

A lot more in favour	5
Somewhat more in favour	31
Neither more in favour nor against	44
Somewhat more against	12
A lot more against	4
Don't know	6

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't know
I would prefer to be able to vote for individual candidates rather than for a party list.	51	28	17	4
This voting system seems to be an improvement on the traditional first-past-the-post system.	44	27	24	5

On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'would DISLIKE voting this way a lot' and 7 means 'would LIKE voting this way a lot', how much would you like to vote this way in the future?

1	9
2	10
3	14
4	22
5	19
6	13
7	6
Don't know	7

Out of the 3 electoral systems reviewed here, first-past-the-post, party list and the additional member system, which do you prefer? Please say which system would be your first choice, which would be your second and which would be your third. (please tick one box in each column)

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
My first choice would be...			
First-past-the-post system	41	28	26
Party list system	25	31	34
Additional member system	29	32	28
Don't know	6	9	12

How far do you agree or disagree that the UK should introduce proportional representation so that the number of MPs each party gets in the House of Commons matches more closely the number of votes each party gets?

Agree strongly	20
Tend to agree	42
Neither agree nor disagree	15
Tend to disagree	11
Disagree strongly	7
Don't know	5

Do you think future elections to the Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly should...

	Scottish parliament	Welsh Assembly
Continue to be held under the present system	42	41
Be held under a different system of proportional representation	32	35
Use the traditional British system of first-past-the-post	18	14
Don't know	8	10

In the election on May 1, people used a two-ballot electoral system to elect the Scottish Parliament / Welsh Assembly. Some people say that filling in the ballot papers is very difficult. Others say that it is not difficult. How difficult do you think it is?

Very difficult	2
Fairly difficult	12
Fairly easy	46
Very easy	37
Don't know	4

Wave 3 results

Sample Size: 2436

Fieldwork: 15th - 21st July 2003

As you may know, MPs must weigh several considerations when deciding how to cast their votes in the parliament. The next questions will ask how you think MPs should decide how to cast their votes in the parliament.

If there is a conflict between what an MP believes is the best policy and the policy preferences of their constituents, should the MP base their vote on their own personal judgment or their constituents' preferences?

Own judgment	18
Constituents' preferences	76
Don't know	7

If an MP perceives a conflict between the policies advocated by their party and the policy preferences of their constituents, which should be more influential on the MP's vote in the parliament:

Party position	10
Constituent preferences	83
Don't know	8

(Following questions in italics related only to Scottish and Welsh electors; n = 317)

When you voted in the recent Scottish Parliament or Welsh Assembly elections, to what extent were you aware that you had two votes, one for a constituency representative and one for a regional representative?

Highly aware	61
Mostly Aware	23
Not aware	4
Did not vote	11
Don't know	1

And thinking of this 'first' or 'constituency' vote, which one of the following reasons comes closest to the main reason you voted for the party you chose?

I always vote that way	17
I thought it was the best party	59
I really preferred another party but it had no chance of winning in this constituency	6
Other	9
Don't know	10

(Full GB sample) People have different views about how their area should be best represented in a parliament. Which of these statements comes closest to your views?

I would rather have one member of parliament for the area I live in	64
I would rather have several members of parliament, possibly from different parties, but covering a larger area	26
Don't know	10

Of the three possible influences on the voting decisions of MPs, which should be the most influential on a MP's parliamentary voting decisions: the MP's party, the MP's personal preferences, or the MP's constituent preferences?

Which of these influences should have the most influence on a MP's parliamentary voting decisions? And which should have the least influence?

	Most influence	Least influence
Party position	9	32
Personal preferences	12	58
Constituent preferences	79	10

In the House of Commons, what do you think matters more: that an election should produce a clear winner with more than half the seats, or that the election should ensure that the parties get the same share of seats as the share of their votes.

Clear winner with more than half the seats	39
Same share of seats as their share of votes	51
Don't know	10

If a referendum were held today on the electoral system for the House of Commons, would you vote to retain first-past-the-post or would you vote to replace it with an alternative electoral system?

Vote to retain first-past-the-post	33
Vote for an alternative system	43
Would not vote	6
Don't know	18

(If alternative system) What type of electoral system would that be?

STV	14
AMS (as used for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly)	23
Other type of PR system	21
Don't know	43

Appendix D: Survey Results: National Centre for Social Research

Survey work undertaken by the National Centre for Social Research

This document provides the final set of results of the survey work undertaken in behalf of the Independent Commission on Proportional Representation in Scotland and Wales in the period immediately after the 2003 elections. It also compares these results with the results of similar work undertaken after the 1999 elections.

The data come from the Scottish Social Attitudes survey and the Welsh Life and Times Survey.

The Scottish Centre for Social Research (formerly the National Centre for Social Research Scotland) interviewed face to face a random sample of 1,508 adults aged 18+ resident in Scotland between May and October 2003. This represented a 59% response rate. The sample was drawn from the postcode address file, with a single respondent chosen for interview by a random selection method at each successfully contacted address. The data have been weighted to compensate for unequal selection probabilities and a deliberate oversampling of respondents in rural areas. Most of the questions reported here appeared in a self-completion booklet that was completed by 1,327 of the original 1,508 respondents.

The National Centre for Social Research interviewed face to face a random sample of 988 adults aged 18+ resident in Wales between May and July 2003. This represented a 64% response rate. The sample was drawn from the postcode address file, with a single respondent chosen for interview by a random selection method at each successfully contacted address. The data have been weighted to compensate for unequal selection probabilities. Most of the questions appeared in a self-completion booklet that was completed by 797 of the original 988 respondents.

For details of the survey work conducted in 1999 see John Curtice, Ben Seyd, Alison Park and Katharine Thomson, 'Wise after the event?' Voter attitudes to PR following the 1999 Scottish and Welsh elections' London: Constitution Unit, 2000.

In certain tables and charts in the report, a summary figure for Scotland and Wales is stated. This was

produced by averaging the figures for both elections in each jurisdiction.

Complexity

Some people say that filling in the ballot papers is very difficult. Others say that it is not at all difficult. How difficult do you think it is filling in the ballot papers for the Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly election?

1999	Scotland %	Wales %
Very difficult	1	

Knowledge Quiz

1. You are allowed to vote for the same party on the first and second vote (TRUE)
2. People are given two votes so that they can show their first and second preferences (FALSE)
3. No candidate who stands in a constituency contest can be elected as a regional party list member (FALSE)
4. Regional party list seats are allocated to try to make sure each party has as fair a share of seats as is possible (TRUE)
5. The number of seats won by each party is decided by the number of first votes they get (FALSE)
6. Unless a party wins at least 5% of the second vote, it is unlikely to win any regional party list seats (TRUE).

Table3: Correct Answers to Knowledge Quiz

	% correct	
	Scotland	Wales
1999		
Allowed to vote for same party	78	63
List seats allocated to make fair share	63	63
Need 5% to win list seats	43	35
No constituency candidate elected on list	31	23
No. of seats decided by 1st votes	30	21
Show 1st and 2nd preferences	26	22
2003		
Allowed to vote for same party	64	62
List seats allocated to make fair share	48	43
Need 5% to win list seats	33	30
No constituency candidate elected on list	24	23
No. of seats decided by 1st votes	42	23
Show 1st and 2nd preferences	25	31

Devolved PR

Table 4

How much do you agree/disagree that the Scottish Parliament [Welsh Assembly] should be elected using PR?		
	Scotland	Wales
1999		
Strongly Agree / Agree	66%	58%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23%	26%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	9%	14%
2003		
Strongly Agree / Agree	59%	57%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28%	27%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	11%	13%

Westminster PR

How much do you agree/disagree that the UK should introduce PR so that the number of MPs each party gets in the House of Commons matches more closely the number of votes each party gets?

Local Election Voting

The new way of voting [i.e. that used in elections for the Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly] should be used in future local council elections in Scotland [Wales]

1999

	Scotland	Wales
Strongly Agree / Agree	53%	45%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%	21%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	14%	17%
Can't Choose	10%	15%

2003

	Scotland	Wales
Strongly Agree / Agree	40%	39%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27%	22%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	13%	6.8(e5s9BTree)8 ref

The Positives and Negatives of Reform

Table 11

The new voting system [the voting system used in Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly elections] is much fairer than the one usually used at elections

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly / Agree	54%	39%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23%	31%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	9%	12%
2003	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly / Agree	36%	30%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	33%	31%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	9%	12%

Table 12

There is more point voting under the new system {under the voting system used in Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly elections} because every vote counts

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	62%	54%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%	21%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	6%	9%
2003	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	47%	39%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27%	24%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	8%	10%

The new voting system {...} gives too much power to small parties

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly	12%	
Agree strongly/Agree	47%	39%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	41.8(23%)-1385d	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	47%	39%

Table 14

People have different views about how their area should best be represented in a parliament. Which of these statements comes closest to your views?

	Scotland	Wales
I would rather have one member of parliament for the area I live in	63%	61%
I would rather have several members of parliament, possibly from different parties, but covering a larger area	23%	24%
	Scotland	Wales
I would rather have one member of parliament for the area I live in	59%	63%
I would rather have several members of parliament, possibly from different parties, but covering a larger area	24%	22%

Open and Closed Lists

Table 15

I would have preferred to have been able to vote for individual candidates on the regional vote rather than for a party list

	Scotland	Wales
1999		
Agree strongly / Agree	43%	44%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28%	27%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	17%	14%
2003		
Agree strongly / Agree	41%	45%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	25%	23%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	13%	11%

Table 16

Parties, not voters, should decide which of the candidates on their regional list get the seats their party has won

	Scotland	Wales
1999		
Agree strongly/Agree	23%	19%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19%	18%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	47%	51%
2003		
Agree strongly/Agree	16%	16%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19%	32%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	48%	46%

Table 20

Which do you think would be generally be better for Britain nowadays?

1999	Scotland	Wales
To have a government at Westminster formed by one political party on its own?	42%	55%
To have a government at Westminster formed by two political parties together - in coalition?	48%	41%
2003	Scotland	Wales
To have a government at Westminster formed by one political party on its own?	42%	46%
To have a government at Westminster formed by two political parties together - in coalition?	47%	44%

Table 21

Having a government made up of two parties rather than one is better as it means that more people are represented

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	50%	43%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17%	18%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	21%	23%
2003	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	48%	46%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19%	16%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	21%	26%

Table 22

Governments should only be made up of parties that win at least half the votes in an election

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	44%	44%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19%	19%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	23%	21%
2003	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	38%	43%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24%	18%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	24%	22%

Table 23

The new voting system will lead to unstable government

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly / Agree	14%	16%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28%	29%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	43%	36%
2003	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly / Agree	10%	13%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29%	27%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	37%	31%

Table 24

All parties should have told us before polling day who they would prefer to work with in a coalition government

1999	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	53%	41%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%	27%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	14%	16%
2003	Scotland	Wales
Agree strongly/Agree	45%	44%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%	19%
Disagree strongly/Disagree	16%	14%

Purpose of Elections

Table 25

Which of these statements comes closest to your views?

1999	Scotland	Wales
It is more important that elections should produce a clear winner so that it is voters who decide who forms the government	41%	51%
It is more important that elections should produce a fair result even if this means it is not clear who should form the government	43%	36%
2003	Scotland	Wales
It is more important that elections should produce a clear winner so that it is voters who decide who forms the government	39%	49%
It is more important that elections should produce a fair result even if this means it is not clear who should form the government	43%	35%

Table 27

WALES 2003

There are different kinds of politicians people can contact if they need help. First of all, over the last four years, have you ever contacted a Member of the National Assembly of Wales for your area?

Yes 7%
 No 93%
 (Don't know) *

IF 'yes' Ask:

b. Was that ... READ OUT ...

...the local AM for your constituency, 5%
 one of the list AMs for your region, 1%
 both, 1%
 or, are you not sure? 1%

ASK ALL

D16. And over the last four years, have you ever contacted the Member of Parliament who represents your area in the House of Commons?

Yes 12%
 No 88%

D17. And over the last four years, have you ever contacted the local councillor for your area?

Yes 24%
 No 76%
 (Don't know) *

Table 28

2003

Who best able to help on problem with?

	Government Benefit		NHS Treatment	
	Scotland	Wales	Scotland	Wales
MP	24%	38%	20%	34%
MSP/AM	33%	21%	37%	24%
Both equally	37%	36%	38%	36%

The National Centre for Social Research interviewed a random sample of 4,432 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain south of the Caledonian canal. This represented a response rate of 59%. 3,710 of the interviews were conducted in England. The sample was drawn from the postcode address file, with a single respondent chosen for interview by a random selection method at each successfully contacted address. The data have been weighted to compensate for unequal selection probabilities. The questions reported here were asked of a one quarter sample comprising 1,160 respondents of whom 975 were resident in England.

Table 29

1997	Scotland	Wales	England
Single	56	-	52
Coalition	35	-	41
1999	Scotland	Wales	England
Single	43	57	-
Coalition	48	40	-
2003	Scotland	Wales	England
Single	42	46	44
Coalition	47	44	50
1997	Scotland	Wales	England
Change voting	33	-	36
Keep as is	60	-	60
1999	Scotland	Wales	England
Change voting	39	37	35
Keep as is	53	57	63
2003			
Change voting	39	32	36
Keep as is	52	60	60

Appendix E: Evidence received

A number of individuals and institutions wrote to the Commission with views on electoral reform.

1. Mr Bob Granville
2. Mr Stephen Roberts
3. Mr George Avery
4. Mr Alex Metcalfe
5. Mr Dane Clouston
6. Councillor Andrew Burns
7. Mr Chris Howells
8. Mr David Oliver
9. Mr Derek Knights
10. Mr Trevor Stearn
11. Mr John Martin
12. Mr John McCut
13. Mrs Margaret Goudie
14. Mr Neil Thompson
15. Mr Nick Trier
16. Mr Peter Jubb
17. Mr Richard Lyesgreen
18. Mr Rob Lacey
19. Mr Tim Malburn
20. Mr Tim Pilkington
21. Mr Trevor Stearn
22. Mrs Sheila Howe
23. Mr Alex Cross
24. Mr Colin Beveridge
25. Mr Ahron Nathan
26. Mr Hugh Armitage
27. Mr Ralph Hill
28. Mrs Jane Buchanan
29. Mrs Joan Davis
30. Mr Roderick Clarke
31. Cllr Marcelle Lloyd—Hayes
32. Mr. Philip Kestelman
33. Assembly Secretariat, Greater London Authority
34. Make Votes Count in South London
35. The Electoral Reform Society
36. Independent Group, Local Government Association

Appendix F: Academic Advisory Group

The Commission was fortunate to have a strong group of academic advisors. They corresponded with the Commission over its life-cycle, read drafts of the text and met at a one day seminar in Nuffield College, Oxford in July 2003. The members of this panel were:

1. Mr Chris Ballinger, Queens College, Oxford
2. Professor Vernon Bogdanor, Brasenose College Oxford
3. Dr. Adrian Blau, Merton College, Oxford
4. Professor Patrick Dunleavy, London School of Economics
5. Dr. Geoffrey Evans, Nuffield College, Oxford
6. Professor Ron Johnston, University of Bristol
7. Professor Anthony King, University of Essex
8. Dr. Michael Gallagher, Trinity College, Dublin
9. Dr. Bill Hartas, University of Newcastle
10. Professor David Farrell, University of Manchester
11. Professor Helen Margetts, University College London
12. Dr. Clive Payne, Nuffield College Oxford

Appendix G: Seminars

The Commission held a number of seminars in 2002 and 2003 to gauge opinion on the effect of the new electoral systems. Seminars were held in Cardiff and Edinburgh in November 2002, in the European Parliament Office in London in January 2003 and in University College London in February 2003. In addition, the chairs and secretariat made a number of fact finding visits to Scotland and Wales.

Appendix H: Online Consultation

In July 2003, the Commission engaged the Hansard Society to run an on-line consultation exercise. This involved members of the public registering with a website and responding to discussion points about electoral systems. The consultation period lasted two weeks and was moderated by Mark Rickard of the Hansard Society. The consultation drew over 150 respondents, many of whom having also participated in the YouGov surveys. Discussion was wide-ranging and extensive.

Heath, Anthony and Bridget Taylor (1999) 'New

- Lundberg, Thomas (2002) 'Putting a Human Face on Proportional Representation: Early Experiences in Scotland and Wales', *Representation* 38 pp.271-283
- Ma, Ngok and Chi-keung Choy (2003) 'The Impact of Electoral Rule Change on Party Campaign Strategy: Hong Kong as a Case Study', *Party Politics* 9: 347-367
- Mackie, Tom And Richard Rose (1987) *International Almanac Of Electoral History*. Glasgow, Scotland: Center For The Study Of Public Policy, University Of Strathclyde
- Marsh, Michael (1985) 'The Voters Decide? Preferential Voting in European List Systems', *European Journal of Political Research*, 13 pp.365-78
- Marsh, Michael (2003) 'Party wrapped, candidate centred: new evidence on electoral behaviour under STV', *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, August 28 2003*
- McLean, Iain (1980) *Elections* (2nd ed), London: Longman
- Mclean, Iain (1991) 'Forms of Representation and Systems of Voting', in David Held (ed.), *Political Theory Today*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Miller, Raymond (1998) 'Coalition Government: The People's Choice?' in Vowles, J., P. Aimer, S. Banducci and J. Karp (eds) *Voters' victory? New Zealand's first election under PR*, Auckland: Auckland University Press
- Mitchell, Paul (2000) 'Transcending an Ethnic Party System? The Impact of Consociational Governance on Electoral Dynamics and the Party System' in R. Wilford (ed) *Aspects of the Belfast Agreement*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Mulgan, Geoff, and Wilkinson, H. (1997) 'Freedom's Children and the Rise of Generational Politics', in Geoff Mulgan (ed), *Life after Politics: New Thinking for the Twenty First Century*, London: Fontana Press
- Norris, Pippa (1995) 'Introduction: The Politics of Electoral Reform', *International Political Science Review* 16 pp.3-8.
- Norris, Pippa (1996) 'Legislative Recruitment', in Laurence LeDuc, Richard Niemi and Pippa Norris (eds) *Comparing Democracies*, London: Sage
- Norris, Pippa (1997) 'Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems', *International Political Science Review* 18, No. 3 p. 297.
- Norris, Pippa (2003) *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behaviour*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Pattie, Charles and Johnston, Ron (2001) 'A low turnout landslide: Abstention at the British General Election of 1997', *Political Studies*, 49, 286-305.
- Pinto-Duschinsky, Michael (1999) 'Send the Rascals Packing: Defects of Proportional Representation and the Virtues of the Westminster Model', *Representation* 36 pp.113-138
- Plant, Raymond (1991) *The Plant Report: A working party on Electoral Reform*, London: The Guardian
- Powell, G. Bingham (2000) *Elections As A Tool Of Democracy: Majoritarian And Proportional Visions*, New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press
- Rae, Douglas W (1971) *The Political Consequences Of Electoral Laws*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press
- Reif, K and H. Schmitt (1980) 'Nine second-order elections' *European Journal of Political Research*, 8, pp. 3-44
- Reynolds, Andrew and Ben Reilly (1997) *The International Idea Handbook Of Electoral System Design*, Stockholm, Sweden: International Institute For Democracy And Electoral Assistance
- Royal Commission On The Electoral System (1986). *Report Of The Royal Commission On The Electoral System: Towards A Better Democracy*, Wellington, New Zealand: V.R. Ward, Government Printer
- Sandford, Mark and Paul McQuail (2001) *Unexplored Territory: Elected Regional Assemblies in England*, London, The Constitution Unit
- Schoen, Harald (1999) 'Split Voting in German Federal Elections 1953—90: An Example of Sophisticated Balloting', *Electoral Studies* 18: 473-496

Seyd, Ben (2002) *Coalition Government in Britain: Lessons from Overseas*, London: The Constitution Unit

Seyd, Ben (2004) *Coalition Governance in Scotland and Wales*, London: The Constitution Unit, forthcoming

Shaw, E. (1994) *The Labour Party since 1979: Crisis and Transformation*. London: Routledge

Shugart, Matthew (2001) 'Electoral 'Efficiency' and the Move to Mixed-Member Systems', *Electoral Studies*. 20 pp. 173-93

Sinclair, David (1998) *A panacea for local government? The role of PR*. London: The Constitution Unit

Sunderland, Lord (2002) *Improving Local Democracy in Wales*, The Sunderland Report on Local government electoral arrangements in Wales

Taagepera, Rein And Matthew Soberg Shugart (1989) *Seats And Votes: The Effects And Determinants Of Electoral Systems*, New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

Vowles, Jack (2000) Evaluating Electoral System Change: the Case of New Zealand. Paper prepared for presentation at the International Political Science Association Conference, Quebec City, August 1-5.

Vowles, Jack, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci., Peter Aimer (2001) *Proportional Representation on Trial*, Auckland: Auckland University Press

Whiteley, Paul, Harold Clarke, David Sanders and Martha Stewart (2001) 'Turnout' *Parliamentary Affairs*, 54, 775-788.

Winetrobe, Barry (2001) *Realising the Vision: A Parliament with a Purpose – An Audit of the First Year of the Scottish Parliament*, London: The Constitution Unit

Wood, David and Gary Young (1997) 'Comparing Constituency Activity by Junior Legislators in Great Britain and Ireland' *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 22 pp.217-232

Wood, David., Valerie Heitshusen and Gary Young, (2001) 'MP Constituency Activity in Westminster-Style Parliaments: The Cases of Australia, Canada and New

1 Pinto-Duschinsky, Michael (1999) 'Send the Rascals Packing: Defects of Proportional Representation and the Virtues of the Westminster Model' *Representation* 36 pp.113-138

2 The Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System p.5

3 Johnston, Ron, Charles Pattie, David Rossiter and Danny Dorling (2003) Fifty Years of Bias in the UK 's Electoral System
<http://www.apsanet.org/~elections/resources/johnson.html>

4 Johnston, Ron, Charles Pattie, David Rossiter and Danny Dorling (2003) Fifty Years of Bias in the UK 's Electoral System
<http://www.apsanet.org/~elections/resources/johnson.html>

5 Lord Plant (1991) *The Plant Report: A working party on Electoral Reform* London: The Guardian

6 This point has been demonstrated mathematically in a theorem proved by Kenneth Arrow, a Harvard economist. See Arrow, Kenneth (1951) *Social Choice and Individual Values*, New York:Wiley

7 Farrell, David and Michael. Gallagher (1998) *Submission to the Independent Commission on the Voting System*, London: McDougall Trust

8 Lijphart, Arend (1986) *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of 27 Democracies 1945-1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

9 The wording of this question was slightly different in 2003 asking people whether they thought that 'The new voting system [the voting system used in Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly elections] is much fairer than the one usually used at elections. The fact that the

question was amended in this way shows that a decline in support for PR may be a reaction to the Scottish Parliament or National Assembly for Wales rather than the electoral system itself.

10 For more systematic analysis of how electoral systems can be distinguished in terms of ballot structure, see inter alia: Matthew Shugart, 'Electoral 'Efficiency' and the Move to Mixed-Member Systems', *Electoral Studies*. 20 (2001): 173-93; David Farrell and Ian McAllister, 'Voter Satisfaction and Electoral Systems: Does Preferential Voting in Candidate-Centred Systems Make a Difference?', paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, 2003.

11 Indeed, voting in AMS systems in this combination – constituency vote for larger parties and list votes for smaller parties – is the most rational way for strategically using a vote. For discussion, see Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Bernhard Wessels, 'The Political Consequences of Germany's Mixed-Member System: Personalization at the Grass Roots?', in Matthew Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (eds), *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

12 Dunleavy, Patrick, Helen Margetts and Simon Bastow (2004) 'Freed from Constraint: Political Alignments in the 2000 London Elections' *Electoral Studies* (Forthcoming)

13 Dunleavy, Patrick, Helen Margetts and Simon Bastow (2004) 'Freed from Constraint: Political Alignments in the 2000 London Elections' *Electoral Studies* (Forthcoming)

14 Dunleavy, Patrick, Helen Margetts and Simon Bastow (2004) 'Freed from Constraint: Political Alignments in the 2000 London Elections' *Electoral Studies* (Forthcoming)

- 15 Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System (1999) p.25
- 16 Farrell, David (2001) *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*. London: Palgrave p.63
- 17 Mitchell, Paul (2000) 'Transcending an Ethnic Party System? The Impact of Consociational Governance on Electoral Dynamics and the Party System' in R. Wilford (ed.) *Aspects of the Belfast Agreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- 18 Evans, Geoffrey and Brendan O'Leary (2000) 'Northern Irish Voters and the British Irish Agreement: Foundations of a Stable Consociational Settlement?' *The Political Quarterly* pp.78-101
- 19 Elliott, Sydney (2003) 'North vote sees over 80 percent of transfers stay within main parties' *Irish Times* 03 December 2003, www.ireland.com
- 20 Marsh, Michael (2003) 'Party wrapped, candidate centred: new evidence on electoral behaviour under STV' *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, August 28 2003*
- 21 Patrick Dunleavy, Helen Margetts and Stuart Weir (1998) 'Open or Closed List Voting for the European Parliament Elections 1999: The State of the Nation Report' *Paper to the Constitution Unit/Nuffield College Seminar on Regional Lists, Oxford 20 February 1998*.
- 22 Curtice, John, Ben Seyd, Alison Park and Katherine Thomson (2000) 'Wise after the Event? Attitudes to Voting Reform Following the 1999 Scottish and Welsh Elections' CREST/Constitution Unit, 2000
- 23 Seyd, Ben (2001) 'Voter attitude to the new electoral systems' in Philip Cowley, John Curtice, Stephen Lochore and Ben Seyd. *What we Already Know: Lessons on Voting Reform from Britain's First PR Elections*. London: Constitution Unit
- 24 Hedges, Alan and Clarissa White (1999) 'New Electoral Systems: What Voters Need to Know' London: The Constitution Unit
- 25 Marsh, Michael (1985) 'The Voters Decide? Preferential Voting in European List Systems', *European Journal of Political Research*, 13 pp.365-78
- 26 Schoen, Harald, (1999) 'Split Voting in German Federal Elections 1953—90: an Example of Sophisticated Balloting' *Electoral Studies* 18: 473-496;
- Jesse, Eckhard. 1988. 'Split-voting in the Federal Republic of Germany: An Analysis of the Federal Elections from 1953 to 1987', *Electoral Studies* 7, 2, 109-124.
- 27 Vowles, Jack (2000) Evaluating Electoral System Change: the Case of New Zealand. Paper prepared for presentation at the International Political Science Association Conference, Quebec City, August 1-5.
- 28 Vowles, Jack, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci., Peter Aimer (2001) 'Public Opinion, Public Knowledge and the Electoral System' in Vowles et. al. (eds). *Proportional Representation on Trial*. Auckland: Auckland University Press
- 29 Curtice, John, Ben Seyd, Alison Park and Katherine Thomson (2000) 'Wise after the Event? Attitudes to Voting Reform Following the 1999 Scottish and Welsh Elections' CREST/Constitution Unit, 2000
- 30 Karp, Jeffrey and Shaun Bowler (2001) 'Coalition Government and Satisfaction with Democracy: An Analysis of New Zealand's Reaction to Proportional Representation' *European Journal of Political Research*, 40 pp 57-59
- 31 Miller, Raymond (1998) 'Coalition Government: The People's Choice?' in Vowles, J., P. Aimer., S. Banducci and J. Karp (eds). *Voters' victory? New Zealand's first election under PR*. Auckland: Auckland University Press
- 32 Lijphart, Arend (1995) *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of 27 Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- 33 Katz, Richard (1997) *Democracy and Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- 34 Norris, Pippa (2003) *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behaviour* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- 35 Reif, K and H. Schmitt (1980) 'Nine second-order elections', in: *European Journal of Political Research*, 8, 3-44

36 Danemark, David (1996) 'Thinking Ahead to Mixed-Member Proportional Representation: Party Strategies and Electoral Campaigning under New Zealand's New Electoral Law', *Party Politics* 2: 409-20

37 Katz, Richard (1980) *A Theory of Parties and Electoral Systems*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press

38 Farrell, David (1996) 'Campaign Strategies and Tactics', in Lawrence LeDuc, Richard Neimi and Pippa Norris (eds)

58 Bradbury, Jonathan, Oonagh Gay, Robert Hazell and James Mitchell (2003) 'Local Representation in a Devolved Scotland and Wales: Guidance for Constituency and Regional Members, Lessons from the First Term' *ESRC Devolution and Democracy Series*

59 It might be noted that in making this objection Hain and Steel overlook the fact that in House of Commons elections an individual can currently stand for election in more than one constituency, be defeated in one but be successful in another.

60 David Farrell and Roger Scully (2003) 'Life Under List: British MEPs' Attitudes to Electoral Reform' *Paper presented to annual meeting of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (EPOP) meeting, Cardiff, September 2003*

61 David Farrell and Roger Scully (2003) 'Life Under List: British MEPs' Attitudes to Electoral Reform' *Paper presented to annual meeting of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (EPOP) meeting, Cardiff, September 2003*

62 Wood, D and Gary Young (1997) 'Comparing Constituency Activity by Junior Legislators in Great Britain and Ireland' *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 22 pp.217-232

63 Thomas, A. (1985) p.218. However the 1994 European Representation Study of members of the European Parliament seems to present different conclusions. MEP's were asked to rate the importance of casework defined as 'helping individuals with particular problems' from (1) 'not very important' to (7) 'very important'. Surprisingly Britain emerged as the country where casework was regarded as being most important (ranking it at 5.5). In countries using PR the hierarchy was Germany (5.3), Ireland (4.8) and Denmark (4.4). However, the issue of casework was not specifically defined in this survey.

64 Hughes, C. (1985) 'The Relationship of the Citizen to his Member of Parliament in the Swiss System of Government' in Vernon Bogdanor (ed) *Representatives of the People?* Aldershot: Gower pp. 224 -236.

65 STV in Tasmania (known locally as the Hare-Clark system) differs from the Irish system in that the elector must indicate at least three preferences on the ballot sheet. Candidates are also grouped by party on the ballot. Finally there are no by-elections. Instead, the ballot papers of the departing candidate are re-

examined and the transfers are re-allocated. See Rydon, J. (1985) in Vernon Bogdanor (ed) *Representatives of the People?* Aldershot: Gower. pp. 86 -102.

66 The Lib-Lab Pact in 1977-78 involved the Liberals supporting the Labour government, rather than being brought into government. The Pact was thus a means by which a single party minority administration gained legislative support, and not an example of a formal coalition

67 Seyd, Ben (2004) *Coalition Governance in Scotland and Wales*, London: The Constitution Unit, forthcoming

68 Hazell, Robert (2003) 'The Devolution Scorecard as the Devolved Assemblies head for the Polls' in Hazell, Robert (ed) *The State of the Nations 2003: The Third Year of Devolution in the UK*, Imprint Academic, p 290. The list was supplied by the Constitution Unit's devolution monitoring partners in Scotland.

69 *Ibid*, p 291.

70 Winetrobe, Barry (2001) *Realising the Vision: A Parliament with a Purpose* meet itoW Carfaw Scotlaemi n0.000, p

76 Curtice, John and Michael Steed (2000) 'And Now for the Commons? Lessons from Britain's First Experience with Proportional Representation', in Philip Cowley et al, eds, *British Elections and Parties Review*, vol 10, 193-215, London: Frank Cass.

77 Powell, George Bingham (2000) *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

78 Seyd, Ben (2002) *Coalition Governance*, op cit; also *Coalition Government in Britain: Lessons from Overseas*, London: The Constitution Unit. op cit, pp30-31.

79 Laver, Michael and Norman Schofield (1990) *Multi-Party Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

80 Seyd, Ben (2002) *Coalition Governance*, op cit.

81 *Your Region, Your Choice* (Cm 5511, May 2002) para 7.24.

82 Sandford, Mark and McQuail, Paul (2001) *Unexplored Territory: Elected Regional Assemblies in England*, London, The Constitution Unit, July 2001, p 107 Table 8.6. 75 per cent of the first elected members of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly also had prior political experience.

83 Adonis, Andrew (1998) *Voting in Proportion: Electoral Reform for Scotland's Councils*, Edinburgh, Scottish Council Foundation.

84 *Improving Local Democracy in Wales*, the Sunderland Report on Local government electoral arrangements in Wales, 2002.

85 Sinclair, David (1998) *A panacea for local government? The role of PR*. London: The Constitution Unit

86 Mclean, Iain (1991) 'Forms of Representation and Systems of Voting', in David Held (ed.),



The Constitution Unit

The Constitution Unit
School of Public Policy, UCL
29–30 Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9QU

£20

ISBN: 1 903903 29 7