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**What explains the divergence between Scottish and English  
electoral behaviour?**

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci zpracovala samostatně a vyznačila v ní veškeré zdroje informací.*

V Praze, 10.ledna 2007

*Jelka Šedivá*  
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## Summary

The objective of my thesis was to explain the specificity of the Scottish electoral behaviour in the context of UK General elections as well as its development under the process of the devolution and consequently in the newly established Scottish parliament elections.

Firstly, I described the development of the Scottish electoral behaviour on the basis of the time and geographical horizons pointing out the increasing regional differences within the UK. Pursuant to the detailed analysis of the electoral divergence of the Scottish behaviour, I infer that its particularity consists in the existence of the different political values in Scottish society which became even more salient in the period of the Conservative government from 1979 to 1997. This development in the Scottish society hence made the successive Labour government accept the Scottish claim for devolution which led to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the first devolved election held on 6 May 1999

Next, I discussed the impact of the process of devolution on the Scottish electorate. Scottish voters demonstrated that they tend to distinguish their vote in the two different polls. The divergence of the electoral performance of the Scottish electorate in the devolved Scottish elections has been undoubtedly amplified by the operation of the different electoral law (Additional Member System) which enabled Scottish voters to refrain from the tactical voting often used under the UK electoral law of the FPTP. The Scottish devolved elections contributed to the creation of the indigenous Scottish party system which reflects the distribution of political tendencies of the Scottish society more precisely than the party system on the UK level.

Last, I refer to the regional parallel within the UK. I describe the development of the electoral behaviour in Wales and its analogy with the Scottish process of devolution.

## Resumé

Cílem mé práce bylo vysvětlit odlišnost volebního chování skotského elektorátu v kontextu všeobecných parlamentních voleb ve Spojeném království a jeho další vývoj v průběhu procesu devoluce a následném založení Skotského parlamentu.

Nejprve jsem popsala posuny v postojích skotské společnosti, jak se vyvíjely v časovém horizontu v rámci skotského prostoru, ale též, jak se měnily v geografické perspektivě, tj. ve vztahu k vývoji celobritského volebního chování, při čemž jsem poukázala na rostoucí regionální rozdíly v rámci Spojeného království. Z detailní analýzy skotského volebního chování, docházím k závěru, že jeho specifičnost spočívá především v existenci odlišných politických hodnot ve skotské společnosti, jež se ještě výrazněji projeví v období Konzervativní vlády (1979 – 1997). Takový vývoj skotské společnosti přiměl následující Labouristickou vládu akceptovat požadavky devoluce pro Skotsko. Proces byl završen založením Skotského parlamentu a konáním prvních voleb do tohoto orgánu 6.května 1999.

Dále jsem se zabývala otázkou vlivu skotské devoluce na volební chování skotského elektorátu. Skotští voliči prokázali, že rozlišují mezi celonárodními všeobecnými volbami a volbami do nově vzniklého Skotského parlamentu. Tato odlišnost ve volebním chování Skotů ve volbách do Skotského parlamentu je navíc umocněna vyrovnávacím smíšeným volebním systémem (AMS), který ve srovnání s relativně většinovým systémem (FPTP) používaným ve volbách do Westminsteru, vykazuje výsledky s větší mírou proporcionality. Volby do Skotského parlamentu tak vedly k vytvoření vlastního skotského stranického systému, který na rozdíl od stranického systému ve Westminsteru věrně odráží rozložení politických sil ve skotské společnosti

Nakonec jsem poukázala na určitou podobnost ve vývoji regionů v rámci Spojeného království. Popsala jsem vývoj volebního chování ve Walesu a jeho podobnost s procesem devoluce ve Skotsku.

Za odborné vedení, názory a cenné rady děkuji PhDr. Tomáši Lebedovi, Ph.D.

## Content

Introduction	1
1. Electoral Behaviour in the UK	2
1.1. From the period of aligned voting (1950 – 1970) to the era of dealignment	6
1.2 Scottish electoral behaviour within the UK General Elections	6
1.2.1 “Shaping new Scotland“. Creation of the Welfare State in a post-war period.	7
1.2.2 Electoral Behaviour in Scotland after 1970	11
2. Regional divergences in the UK General elections after 1970	20
2.1 Regional resemblance in electoral behaviour in the UK General Elections	22
3. After-Devolution Period	27
3.1 Electoral Behaviour of the Scottish electorate in elections to the Scottish Parliament	28
3.2 UK General Elections in Scotland. Continuing process of dealignment in the UK in conjunction with different political attitudes in Scotland and England	36
3.3 How different is the behaviour of the Scottish electorate in UK General Elections compared to the elections to the Scottish Parliament?	44
3.4 Regional parallels in the electoral behaviour in UK general elections as well as in elections to devolved bodies	50
4. Conclusion	54
Bibliography	57

## **Introduction**

In my thesis, I would like to explain the specificity of Scottish electoral behaviour as it has developed within the UK General Elections and its consequent tendencies in the elections to the newly established Scottish parliament in May 1999.

Concerning the development of the Scottish electoral behaviour in the context of the UK general elections, the detailed analysis of this phenomena requires to concentrate on the time as well as the regional perspective. Therefore, my objective is to describe the development of the Scottish electoral behaviour on the basis of two closely interrelated characteristics: the time horizon, e.g. the changes in the Scottish behaviour within Scotland from the post-war period until the last UK general elections in 2005, and the geographical horizon, i.e. development of the Scottish electoral behaviour in relation to the development of the overall British electoral behaviour but also in the context of the emerging regional differences, thus referring to the deepening divergence between electoral behaviour in England on one hand and Scotland and Wales on the other hand.

On the basis of this analysis, I would attempt to draw a conclusion what the most important effects that cause the diversity of the Scottish electoral behaviour from the British electoral behaviour are. It will be discussed whether they are rather results of the gradual development of the character of the electorate in the Great Britain with the different impact on Scotland or they are more likely consequences of the long and specific development of the Scottish society and the distinctiveness of Scottish politics.

Finally, I would like to discuss how the process of the devolution and the consequential introduction of the election to the Scottish Parliament has changed the character of the electoral behaviour of the Scottish electorate in the UK General Elections. Up to what extent, do the voting patterns across the two types of poll (UK General Election under plurality rule and AMS elections to the Scottish Parliament) reflect voters' differentiating between different types of elections- taking into consideration the specific effects of the electoral systems- and up to what extent, this phenomenon is merely a part of the general trend of the accrual of the number of the political parties in the UK General Election, which can potentially transform the British two-party system into a multi-party one.

Discussing the regional specificity of the Scottish electoral behaviour, I would also mention the noticeable analogy with the electoral behaviour in Wales as the electoral behavior

displayed in the elections to the Welsh Assembly shows the similar tendencies as the one to the Scottish Parliament elections, both thus significantly deviating from the electoral behaviour in England.



## 1. Electoral Behaviour in the UK

Many factors are said to influence the voting behaviour, however the extent of their relevant impact on the way people vote might differ significantly. Possibly the most commonly thought influential factor being related to the British electoral behaviour is undoubtedly class. Quoting Pulzer<sup>1</sup>, 'class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail'. Social class, i.e. social-class identity as well as closely related party identifications or loyalties have played key roles in British voting behaviour as long-term factors and have operated to the stability of voters' choices. On the other hand, short-term factors such as electoral issues or events during the election itself, have tendency to alter voters' choices. The importance of these factors and their influence on voting behaviour in Britain have not been, however, constant throughout the modern electoral history. This phenomenon of British voting behaviour will be further discussed in more detailed way in the following chapter.

Another factor which might have distinct impact on the voting behaviour of the British electorate is electoral system for the UK General election. It is generally considered that electoral systems have both, the mechanical and psychological effects<sup>2</sup>. Whereas mechanical effect is direct in a way it encourages different types of party systems, the psychological effect consists in the indirect influence on voters' decisions. The psychological impact of electoral systems reinforces this mechanical effect: under British First Past The Post (FPTP) rules, potential supporters of minor parties are often confronted with a fact that they are 'wasting' their vote, as only one candidate can be elected from any single-member district. The result of this dilemma is that many voters will not express their sincere choice but rather will vote for another candidate (usually from a major party) who they believe has a realistic chance of winning the seat. The overall effect of this is to strengthen larger parties at the expense of smaller ones. However, it would be inaccurate to put "blame" for the "insincere" voters' choice which leads to elimination of third and other parties only on electoral system. As Giovanni Sartori<sup>3</sup> has asserted, voters are not influenced merely by the electoral system but equally by the party system itself. The extent to which party system is structured might have influence on voters' behaviour. Britain is the typical example

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<sup>1</sup> **Pulzer Peter G.J.** (1972) *Political representation and elections in Britain* (London : Allen and Unwin)

<sup>2</sup> **Duverger M.** (1951) *Les Partis Politiques* (Armand Colin, Paris); **Rae D.W.** (1967) *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (Yale University Press, New Haven); **Riker W.H.** (1982) *Liberalism against populism: a confrontation between the theory of democracy and the theory of social choice* (W.H.Freeman, San Francisco); **Sartori G.** (2001) *Srovnávací ústavní inženýrství. Zkoumání struktur, podnětů a výsledků.* (SLON, Praha

<sup>3</sup> **Sartori G.** (2001) *Srovnávací ústavní inženýrství. Zkoumání struktur, podnětů a výsledků.* (SLON, Praha), str. 48-51

of the country with the highly structured party system which is reflected in the relatively high degree of the party identification of voters<sup>4</sup>. This fact means that party system itself has a natural reductive impact on voters' choices.

Evidently, in comparison with mechanical effect, it is much more difficult to measure psychological effect or evaluate actual stimulus that a particular electoral system provides.

### **1.1. From the period of aligned voting (1950 – 1970) to the era of dealignment**

The period between 1950 and 1970 is generally referred to as the period of aligned voting in Great Britain. Most scholars have agreed on the fact that the most important feature of the voting behaviour in this period represented the phenomena of so called class and partisan alignment, which enabled the sustainment of the stable two-party system.

In general, between 1950 and 1970, there existed strong alignment between class and party, which influenced the political party pattern of Great Britain. The classical study by David Butler and Donald Stokes (Butler-Stokes 1969) of the British political behaviour, which divides the British society into categories according to the occupational status and two groups according to the class self-image finds out that there exists the straightforward relationship between the two classes (middle class and working class) and two main political parties (Conservative and Labour Party) which thus leads to the four-fold division of the British electorate. However, the findings showed the strong tie of one party to one class, more precisely the strong support of the middle class to the Conservative party and at the same time strong support of the working class to the Labour party. Furthermore, Butler and Stokes identified that „the higher Labour preference of the lowest non-manual group, can be seen as overwhelmingly linked to their greater tendency to identify themselves with the working class“ (Butler-Stokes 1969, pp67-94). Voters were in particular influenced by long-term factors and their vote was constantly stable, aligned either with the Conservative Party or with the Labour Party.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, government in this period was ruled by one of the two major parties.<sup>6</sup> In addition, as David Denver pointed out „changes in the distribution of votes

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<sup>4</sup> Party system is regarded as structured when political parties are mass-based and well organised rather than based on notable personalities.(see Sartori 2001, p49-50).

<sup>5</sup> Over the 20 years, there was a relative stability of 43-49% of all votes of support for the two major parties, with at the largest an approximate 2,5% swing.

<sup>6</sup> Labour party was holding office from 1950 to 1951 and 1964 to 1970, the Conservative party was in power between 1951 and 1964.

in elections between 1950 and 1970 were remarkably uniform over the country as a whole“ (Denver 1989, pp 120-124).

According to W.L.Miller, Scotland from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century moved slowly towards English norm and in 1951 Scottish voting deviance from England gradually declined with nearly zero difference in 1955, however, since then the gap between Scottish and English voting preferences was increasing to record levels in the 1970s (Miller 1982, p 228).

The period after the 1970s is generally referred to as *The Era of Dealignment*. The characteristic features of this period are: swift and extensive electoral change and the conspicuous high level of electoral volatility as a result of the weakening of previously existing partisan and class alignments and an increase in importance of region and locality thus resulting in the erosion of the two-party system as the nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland became the established features of the political scene (Denver 1989, pp 46-70).

There are many lines of the explanation of the weakening of the partisanship. In his study, David Denver provides four possible reasons for the increasing intensity of support for the parties. First, it is an increased political awareness caused by the rise of the level of the general education. People are no more to a great extent attached emotionally to political parties as they are able to evaluate policies of different parties independently on their belonging to the certain social class (cp. Sarlvik-Crewe 1983; Heath-Jowell-Curtice-Evans-Field-Witherspoon 1991, pp 1-10, 62-85; Butler-Stoke 1974). Second, it is an increased political awareness caused by the rise of the television ownership as well as by more intense and more quality coverage of politics. The way television presents politics and politicians can, up to a certain point, increase the political knowledge and sophistication of the voters and thus can have impact on the overall party commitment of voters. As Denver states „ the style of political television also helps to diminish the strength of partisanship“ (Denver 1989, p 50). Third, it is, simply said, the obvious lack of success of both of the two major political parties while having been in office. As figures in survey on the *approval of government record and satisfactions with Prime Minister and Leader of the Oppositions* shows, there was a lower level of approval from 1966 onwards in comparison with the period 1951-1964 as well as less satisfaction with the performance of political leaders (Denver 1989, pp 51-52). Last explanation chiefly applies to the Labour party and its ideological estrangement to its supporters between 1964 and 1976, who seemed to be less willing to identify with the traditional collectivist values of Labour. Such a discrepancy between the essential party

tenets and the opinions and demands of its supporters has lead evidently to the decline of the identification with the Labour party.

By and large, partisan dealignment had a great impact on the stability of the British party system as voters became more inclined to switch their party support.

The other dealignment, which is closely related to the partisan dealignment, and which influenced the character of party choice and party system refers to a decline in class voting. As Denver states this phenomenon cannot be interpreted as a result of only one cause. In fact, it is an income of many interrelated factors and developments.

The first of such a development is considered to be the „embourgeoisement“ of the working class when the living standard of manual workers were becoming higher so the differences between skilled manual workers and lower manual workers were gradually diminishing. Consequently, the richer the working class became, the less it was willing to vote the Labour party on the basis of the working-class voting.

Second, hand in hand with the development of the working class went changes in the occupational and industrial structure of Britain from the 1960s to the 1980s. In general, there was great shift from manual to non-manual work, which was due to rising social mobility, thus causing that middle class had no more solid Conservative allegiance. Next, there has been a shift from employment in manufacturing to the service sector and overall decentralisation of the traditional industries. All these changes had an impact on the general level of class consciousness and class solidarity which used to help to maintain the class-party relationship.

The third development is partly a result of the former two as well as the growth of female employment. It is a so called cross-class locations, which means that more people have more than one class or live in mixed-classed households. This development has also had influence on the reduction of the potential for class solidarity in electoral behaviour.

Next development represents the result of two new cleavages in society, which replaced the old cleavage based on occupational class<sup>7</sup>. The first one is the public/private sector

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<sup>7</sup>As old cleavages I consider those presented by Lipset and Rokkan (*Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives, 1967*), which became institutionalised in modern societies in the era of nation-state building in the western world. Firstly, the national revolution brought forth one cultural (centre-periphery) and one religious cleavage. Secondly, the industrial revolution resulted in two structural cleavages: One between employers and employess, and one between primary and secondary sectors of the economy. During the last decades, where changes in both the structure and culture of late modern society have influenced political intermediation fundamentally, this model has been challenged. In the 1970s the society saw class and party

cleavage, which corresponds to the sharp growth in public-sector employment in Britain. The second one then relates to sector of consumption, i.e. consumers in the public sector on the one hand and consumers in the private sector on the other hand. According to Dunleavy (1980) these two diverse groups of consumers are in different social locations and have conflicting interests, which are reflected in the different pattern of voting behaviour, e.g. private sector consumers are much more inclined to vote the Conservative Party.

Another explanation for the class dealignment, similar to Dunleavy's theory, is suggested by Ivor Crewe. According to him, we can partly interpret the class dealignment as the effect of the increased fragmentation of the working class, which is thus divided between the "traditional" working class (i.e. public sector workers, union members, council tenants living in Scotland or the North) and a "new" working class (i.e. owner-occupiers, private-sector employees, not union members living in the South). The latter is dominant within the working class and tends not to vote for the Labour party in a great extent.

More political explanation offers Mark Franklin (1985). He explains the decline in class voting, especially voting for the Labour, by the very success of the Labour government of 1945-51, which achieved to limit poverty and to establish a modern welfare state. Thus Labour fulfilled its mission to build the new society and became just the one of parties competing for seats. As a result, Labour's appeal to working-class voters declined.

Taking into account the other social characteristics such as age, sex and religion, their influence on party choice has weakened as well. On the other hand, the social influence of region and race has become more important. As surveys clearly show<sup>8</sup>, since the 1970s voters in Scotland, Wales and the North have tended to support more Labours than Conservatives in comparison to the rest of the country. Concerning the race, as a number of ethnic minorities in Great Britain increased after the 1960s, they have gained more political importance. These ethnic minorities, especially of Afro-Caribbean or Asian origin, strongly preferred the Labour party, which can be explained by their rather working class status. Nevertheless, race could still not be regarded as strong predictor of party choice as ethnic minorities represented only the fraction of the society.

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dealignment and at the same time the emergence of new alignments which opened up the new public/private sector cleavage (Dunleavy P.: *Urban Political Analysis: The Politics of Urban Consumption*; London: Macmillan 1980)

<sup>8</sup> see *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data; Research Paper 03/59*

The processes of partisan and class dealignment changed considerably the character of British electorate, which from the 1970s has become more volatile and unpredictable, more inclined to decide according to short-term factors (Denver 1989, pp53-60).<sup>9</sup> The pattern of party support after 1970 saw the decline in shares of votes for two major parties and at the same time an increase in support for the third parties, e.g. Liberals and, from 1983, the Alliance (i.e. The Liberals together with newly formed the Social Democratic party – SDP). In connection with the regional divergences in elections after 1970, nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales gained more influence as well. The new phenomenon in voting behaviour resulting from the decline of strong party identification has emerged. With the loosening of alignment between social-structural characteristics and party choice, since then voting has been shaped more by opinions and current issues which is also the effect of voters' increased awareness and knowledge about politics in general (cp. Heath – Jowell – Curtice 1985).<sup>10</sup>

## **1.2 Scottish electoral behaviour within the UK General Elections**

Scottish society has undergone the same development as its southern neighbour which was reflected in the structure of the Scottish electorate. Until 1970s the British political system was considered to be homogenous in terms of electoral behaviour, i.e. election outcomes as well as in terms of the party system. In 1970s it saw the same process of the class and party dealignment, however, with different electoral consequences for Scotland. Since 1970s Scottish electoral behaviour thus revealed its distinct features and has established “regional” political geographies such as the north-south divide (Brown – McCrone – Paterson, 1998). The development of Scottish electoral behaviour within Britain will be discussed at full length in ensuing chapters.

### **1.2.1 “Shaping new Scotland“. Creation of the Welfare State in a post-war period.**

Between 1950 and 1970, as well as in the whole country, class represented one of the most important influence on the Scottish electoral behaviour. In 1950s there existed no difference

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<sup>9</sup> The different view explaining the nature and importance of dealignment was given by Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice in their study *How Britain Votes* (1985). One of the most interesting argument concerns the redefinition of class based on economic interests of electorate rather than on traditional manual/non-manual dichotomy thus creating their own five-category division of the electorate.

<sup>10</sup> Heath et al. in their study, however, argue against the issue voting in favour of their own conception, i.e. so called „consumer voting“. For more detailed debate on issue voting, see also Rose, R. and McAllister, I. (1986): *Voters begin to choose*, esp. pp 117-147.

between Scotland and England in terms of support for the party. The two-party, both of them British, system had developed in Scotland with the Conservatives having been the strongest party in the 1950s. From the end-of-century point of view this thorough „Britishness“ of the Scotland, its society and politics seems to be hardly understandable. However, the explanation can be found in the more sociological view on the post-war Scotland. As David McCrone suggests, it was the creation of the Welfare State that was understood in Scotland as “an all-British solution to the problem of social and economic reform“(McCrone 2001, p 21). Scotland in the 1950s had undergone the “occupational transition“ which took place also in the rest of the country and essentially changed the character of the social structure of the society (e.g. the growth of white-collar workers, esp. professional employees on the one hand and the decline of the traditional capitalist class on the other hand), furthermore, Scotland was going through the economic transformation and the “managerial revolution“. Also religion played the indispensable role in the creation of the basic class/party cleavage in mid-50s Scotland<sup>11</sup>. In mid 1950s the Church of Scotland reached its highest number of membership, and as the religion mattered significantly in politics in these times, the Conservatives were able to appeal to Protestants as the opposition to the Catholic support for Labour. Such an atmosphere of “shaping a new Scotland“ is a key point for explaining why Scotland accepted the new meaning of “Britishness“. Welfare State was understood to be the mean for helping Scotland to succeed in the social and economic reform and thus Scots deliberately attached themselves to the British state. Even though questions and discussions about Home Rule appeared frequently, the Scottish nationalism was effaced by social and economic issues of the main parties. It was in 1934 when the Scottish National Party (SNP) was formed, however, it did not play the important role in the Scottish politics until the late 1960s, which was the beginning of fall of the British empire together with the politics of the Welfare State (McCrone 2001, pp 14-21).

### **1.2.2 Electoral Behaviour in Scotland after 1970**

Despite the extent changes in the social structure of the Scottish society and the sharp decline in an aligned voting from the 1970s, class voting still play an important role and is relevant

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<sup>11</sup> However, according to Lipset and Rokkan and many others, religion has not played such a significant role in Scottish politics as elsewhere. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was rather the anti-catholic public sense of Scottish society that gave religion the important role in politics. In post-war Scotland Catholics identified more with the Labour party, which, in the comparison with the voting behaviour of Catholics in the rest of Europe, is rather unusual. However, it is explained by the social and economic status of Catholics in Scotland as an immigrant community (Bennie-Brand-Mitchell 1997, pp 7-8).

factor in electoral behaviour in Scotland. However, with overall British trend of social mobility, when traditional working class (particularly manual workers who are council tenants) has declined rapidly and at the same time there has been a growth of the middle class followed by expansion in higher education, occupational changes in the labour market and home ownership. Scotland thus has become an example of a middle-class society. These developments would be normally reflected in the electoral behaviour in terms of the higher vote for the Conservative party. For example, in England in the 1980s similar changes in the social structure of the society lead to an increased support for Conservatives. However, despite this fact, the support for Conservatives in Scotland has dramatically fallen. This paradox can be explained by different factors within the Scottish as well as the political atmosphere in the UK in these times.

One of the possible explanation why Scottish voters have not cast their votes according to their social class status consists in the difference between objective and subjective class identity (Lynch 2001, pp 176-180; McCrone 2001, pp 166-168; Brown-McCrone-Paterson-SurrIDGE 1999). Scots, who are objectively more middle class in terms of their employment, income and housing tend to see themselves as a working class and thus their voting preferences are more favourable for the Labour party (Lynch 2001, p 179). Furthermore, large number of the middle class voting Labour works in public service, which makes them more probable to vote Labour as it is in favour of maintaining the public sector and government services (Bennie-Brand-Mitchell 1997, pp 99-105). Labour Party in Scotland has thus managed to achieve support from both, from the middle class as well as from the working class.

The other reason why social changes in society in the UK have had different impact on Scottish voting behaviour can rest upon the different political values of Scottish electorate. The decline of the Welfare State and the election of the Conservative government in the late 1970s have helped to raise the request for greater autonomy for Scotland. According to Bennie et al., it was just the insisting upon the welfare state that made many Scots support a Scottish parliament (Bennie-Brand-Mitchell 1997, pp 5-6).

The political values and policy preferences in Scotland can be regarded as one of the source of the electoral divergence between Scotland and the rest of Great Britain. According to number of surveys and researches on political attitudes and political culture in Britain, Scotland, in contrast to the rest of the country, is being more socialist, more liberal and less British nationalist (Brown-McCrone-Paterson-SurrIDGE 1999, pp75-78). One of the possible



reason, why the political culture of Scotland varies from that in the rest of Britain can be due to the different political discourse and rhetoric. The existence of Scottish institutions of civil society, influential Scottish media as well as the increasing importance of the fourth – nationalist and socialist - party since the 1970s (the Scottish National Party) have had impact on development of specific and distinctive political culture in Scotland. Another explanation of the differences in values between Scotland and the rest of Great Britain can lie in the different social structure of Scotland. However, the relevant explication can be found rather in a subjective class-identity than the objective one. As I have already mentioned, Scottish people tend to easily identify with the working class despite the fact they belong to a middle class in an objective sense (according to their occupation, income, housing tenure etc). This phenomenon clarifies the fact, why electors of left-wing parties can be found not only among working class but also among middle class. Different surveys have manifested that a middle class person in Scotland tends to be more left-wing than a middle-class person in the rest of Britain. In general, it was proved that Scottish voters are more left-wing in their values than those in the rest of Great Britain. Furthermore, researches have suggested that Scotland's obvious left-wing attitudes are, up to a certain point, caused also by strong feeling of national identity (Brown-McCrone-Paterson-Surridge 1999, pp71-91). Scottish nationalism has become more important factor in Scottish politics from the 1960s as the role of religion as an essential feature of identity and political behaviour has been weakening. The Scottish National Party thus benefited from the „new political atmosphere“ and provided a political alternative in time of the fall of British settlement (McCrone 2001, p25). Since the mid-1970s, the SNP has been winning at least 10 % of the popular vote in Scotland across all social classes, but mostly among skilled manual and routine non-manual workers. Success of the SNP can be partly interpreted by its “classless“ appeal to voters without clear-cut class identity, especially to those socially and geographically mobile. Gradually, particularly since 1974, the SNP has adopted a left-wing policy, and as the crisis of Labourism was progressing, the SNP became the more direct threat to the Labour Party. The policy of the SNP has begun as well to be perceived by voters as much closer to the policy of the Labour party. This development in a position of the SNP on the Scottish political party scene as well as its development in its policy caused that nationalist feeling of „Scottishness“ goes along with left-wing values. Thus the SNP has successfully achieved to link Scottish nationalism to socialism in the value systems of the Scottish public (Brown-McCrone-Paterson-Surridge 1999, p 83).

The policy of the Conservative government in the 1980s seemed to have a particular impact on Scotland. The Conservative attack on the state went strongly against the Scottish political values, which has developed its own social-political agenda different from the one of the southern neighbour. The maximum divergence between English and Scottish Labour/Conservative voting was marked in the general elections of 1987. This represented the final stage of the swing away from Conservatives towards Labour since 1945 in Scotland, excepting the period of the SNP rise between 1966 and 1979. Nevertheless, the move away from the Conservatives has been much more distinctive than the swing to Labour; its electoral success was the result of the great decline of Conservatives in Scotland rather than its popularity (see Brown – McCrone – Paterson, 1998, p 53). By and large, the non-Conservative parties made profit from the strong anti-Conservative feelings in Scotland in the 1970s and 1980s.

As David McCrone stated the SNP appeared to be at the right place at the right time because it represented the alternative to the falling British settlement. Furthermore, it acted as an alternative to both, the Labour and its unsuccessful concept of the state as a guarantee of economic growth, which failed in the 1970s and to the Conservatives with its anti-state project, thus appealing to the new voters as an electoral impetus for change. The SNP has also disrupted the classical left/right dimension of British politics while acquiring the nationalist label.

The success of the SNP in the 1970s can be also associated with party's key appeal to the socially mobile group as well as an increasingly volatile electorate which both became important factors in elections from the late 1960s.

However, the divergence between Scotland and England emerged to be the most distinctive in the period when the Conservatives began uncontrollably lose its support in Scotland just before 1979 and at the same time the Conservatives won the general elections and the government of Mrs Thatcher came to existence. In addition, the newly understood dimension of "Scottishness", which was no more ideologically related to Conservatism, Unionism and Protestantism of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1980s thus started the period of the salient difference of the electoral performances of Scotland and England, which can be, up to a certain point, explained as the reaction to the Conservative Anglo-British nationalism of Mrs Thatcher's government. This new version of the nationalism with new economic and political ideas did not achieve to be successful in Scotland as the nationalism in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was based on Unionism. The new nationalism did not reflect

different political values in Scotland, which have developed since the post-war period of the welfare state. Therefore, the conservative animosity towards state institutions- especially such as the nationalised industries, the education system, local government or the public sector - was in Scotland understood as a threat to the state itself. Conservatism of Mrs Thatcher's government appealed greatly to English voters, however, in Scotland caused the massive upsurge of anti-conservatism, which gradually lead to the process of devolution, the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the first Scottish elections in May 1999 (McCrone 2001, pp 110-122).

## **2. Regional divergences in the UK General elections after 1970**

As it was already mentioned the UK experienced a great societal transformation in 1970s which has caused a decline in aligned voting. These changes proceeded nationwide, however, unlike in the period before 1970s when they were uniform all over the country, they produced greater variations in the electoral behaviour of different regions. In these terms, homogeneity was intensely affected whereas regional differences were highlighted. To put it more precisely, in Britain there have undoubtedly existed strong regional diversities particularly between north and south since ever. However, it is important that these diversities – mainly of religious and class character – have never endangered the political homogeneity or homogeneity in electoral terms before.

Regional divergences became distinctly evident from the perspective of the UK General elections since the period of dealignment and were quite simply referred to as north/south division. Geographically speaking, these different regions have always been Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>12</sup>, however, talking about different electoral behaviour on the UK level, we can recognize only two separate tendencies in electoral behaviour across the country. Either the electoral behaviour has copied the overall UK trend, i.e. the electoral result in a region has recorded same figures as the national electoral result or election returns have markedly varied from the UK standard. From this standpoint, we can see the main voting divergence between Scotland, Wales and North of England on the one hand and South and Central England on the other. Butler and Stroke put it more precisely after conducting a survey in the period between 1963 and 1966 where they talk about two nations with uneven

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<sup>12</sup> In my paper, I will not be discussing Northern Ireland as it is generally recognized as a distinct political unit within Great Britain.

economic performance, i.e. the prosperous and backward parts of the British economy. The division between two nations is following: the South and Midlands of England and by contrast Scotland, Wales and the North of England (Kellas 1989, p 109). In my paper, however, in relation with the UK electoral behaviour, I will focus on regions of Scotland, Wales and England.

The process of dealignment had admittedly impact on the electoral behaviour in the UK which is evidently reflected in the UK election results. From the election in February 1974, three new main trends might be perceived as the most pronounced ones. These are 1) decrease of total share of votes for two main British political parties, e.i. the Conservative Party and the Labour Party; 2) related to the former trend, increase of third and fourth parties and 3) erosion of the concept of uniform party swing, i.e. collapse of "British homogeneity" at the expense of regional divergences. The deepening of the regional diversities may be actually seen as an intrinsic cause of all new electoral trends.

Table 1 which summarizes the results of sixteen UK general elections from 1945 to 2005, implied that the Conservatives and Labour together acquired approximately 90% of the popular vote in the period between 1945 and 1970 and in the House of Commons they held nearly 98% of seats whereas other parties vote share ranged from 0.1% to the maximum of 11.2%.<sup>13</sup> The development of the electoral trends in the period after 1970 has not been uniform. From 1970 to 1979 it saw a considerable decline in share of votes for two main parties, from 90% in 1970 to mere 75% in February in 1974 (Lynch-Garner 2005, p 536). Nevertheless, for minor parties it meant conversely their vote increase, particularly for the Liberals with the average 19% of vote share since February 1974 which made them an important player in nationwide political arena. Among other minor parties which have improved their positions in their respective nations were assuredly national parties such as the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Welsh Plaid Cymru (PC). In the period from 1979 the two main parties have relatively stabilised their positions and share of votes, although the figures have never again reached the same results as in the period between 1945 and 1970. At the same time the other parties, above all the Liberals as the third strongest party, have retained their stands and have remained serious party competitors.

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<sup>13</sup> There should be pointed out that there also have existed apparent difference in share of the vote between the third strongest party-which has been represented by Liberal Democrats- and other minor parties. From 1945 to 1970 the Liberals share of the vote varied from 2.1% to the maximum share of 11.2% whilst the share of the vote of other minor parties ranged from 0.1% to only 3.4%. The gap between the third strongest party and other minor parties is still evident, however, the figures for these parties have altered.

Both of these trends, i.e. a drop of support for two main parties and an increase of vote for other parties<sup>14</sup> were most detectable in regions of Scotland and Wales where results of the UK General Elections totally disrupted the “homogeneity” thesis based on the fact that the electoral swing is identical all over the country. It was the election in February 1974 that first drew the attention to deep regional differences reflected in the UK general election results.

Comparing the General Election results for whole UK (see Table 1) with those in Scotland (see Table 2), we can observe substantial difference in the support for political parties. The strength of the Labour Party in Scotland has already been discussed and partly explicated by the social structure of constituencies in Scotland. Already in 1970 general election the Labour party gained somewhat greater support in Scotland than the Conservative party (6,5 % more votes), however, on the UK level it fell behind the Conservatives with the loss of 3.4 % votes. Since the previous General election in 1966 there has been an apparent swing from Labour to the Conservatives which prevailed equally in all regions; the deviation from the UK figure did not exceeded 1.8%. Anyway, in Scotland, even though the support of Labour slightly fell in 1970, it still stood its ground as the strongest party in Scotland. In 1970 another trend, which has become evident at large in next election, appeared. It was the growing support for the nationalist party (SNP) which might be the reason of the little ebb in Labour support. Nevertheless, it was just the General Election in February 1974 which meant a breakthrough from the aspect of electoral behaviour in different regions of the UK. UK General election in February 1974 in Scotland saw the continuing decline in votes for the Labour Party as well as for the Conservative Party eventhough the nationwide “swing to Labour“. Both main parties, mainly the Labour Party though, lost some of their votes at the expense of the third and fourth parties. Since February election, the SNP became a serious player in party system in Scotland. In General Election in October 1974 it even improved its performance thus reaching its historical top election result and became the second strongest party in term of notes in Scotland getting ahead of the Conservative Party. In general, the swing to Labour was obvious in both, in the UK as well as in Scotland, where the swing was somewhat more distinct. The following General Election in 1979 recorded the most remarkable scottish electoral “deviation“ from the UK electoral figures. In

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<sup>14</sup> From the 1970s the other parties increased notably its number of votes, however, this fact was not also reflected in the number of obtained seats. This discrepancy between the number of obtained votes and seats won has changed in the 1990s when other parties – particularly the Liberal Democrats – almost quadrapled its number of seats won while receiving the same number of votes as in previous elections.

Table 1 **General Election Results 1945 – 2005 (United Kingdom)**

Share of vote (%)							Seats won					
Year	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	PC/SNP	Others	Total	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	PC/SNP	Others	Total
<b>1945</b>	39.7	47.7	9.0	0.2	3.4	<b>100.0</b>	210	393	12	0	25	<b>640</b>
<b>1950</b>	43.3	46.1	9.1	0.1	1.4	<b>100.0</b>	297	315	9	0	4	<b>625</b>
<b>1951</b>	48.0	48.8	2.6	0.1	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	321	295	6	0	3	<b>625</b>
<b>1955</b>	49.6	46.4	2.7	0.2	1.1	<b>100.0</b>	344	277	6	0	3	<b>630</b>
<b>1959</b>	49.4	43.8	5.9	0.4	0.6%	<b>100.0</b>	365	258	6	0	1	<b>630</b>
<b>1964</b>	43.3	44.1	11.2	0.5	0.9%	<b>100.0</b>	303	317	9	0	1	<b>630</b>
<b>1966</b>	41.9	47.9	8.5	0.7	1.0%	<b>100.0</b>	253	363	12	0	2	<b>630</b>
<b>1970</b>	46.4	43.0	7.5	1.7	1.5	<b>100.0</b>	330	287	6	1	6	<b>630</b>
<b>1974 Feb</b>	37.8	37.2	19.3	2.6	3.2	<b>100.0</b>	297	301	14	9	14	<b>635</b>
<b>1974 Oct</b>	35.7	39.3	18.3	3.4	3.3	<b>100.0</b>	276	319	13	14	13	<b>635</b>
<b>1979</b>	43.9	36.9	13.8	2.0	3.4	<b>100.0</b>	339	268	11	4	13	<b>635</b>
<b>1983</b>	42.4	27.6	25.4	1.5	3.1	<b>100.0</b>	397	209	24	4	17	<b>650</b>
<b>1987</b>	42.2	30.8	22.6	1.7	2.7	<b>100.0</b>	375	229	22	6	18	<b>650</b>
<b>1992</b>	41.9	34.4	17.8	2.3	3.5	<b>100.0</b>	336	271	20	7	17	<b>651</b>
<b>1997</b>	30.7	43.2	16.8	2.5	6.8	<b>100.0</b>	165	418	46	10	20	<b>659</b>
<b>2001</b>	31.7	40.7	18.3	2.5	6.9	<b>100.0</b>	166	412	52	9	20	<b>659</b>
<b>2005</b>	32.3	35.2	22.1	2.1	8.3	<b>100.0</b>	197	355	62	9	22	<b>645</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes National and National Liberal for 1945; includes National Liberal and Conservative 1945-1970

<sup>(b)</sup> Liberal/SDP Alliance 1983-87; Liberal Democrats from 1992

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

Table 2 **General Election Results 1945 – 2005 (Scotland)**

Year	Share of vote (%)						Seats won					
	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	SNP	Others	Total	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	SNP	Others	Total
<b>1945</b>	40.3	47.9	5.6	1.3	4.9	<b>100.0</b>	27	37	0	0	7	<b>71</b>
<b>1950</b>	44.8	46.2	6.6	0.4	2.0	<b>100.0</b>	31	37	2	0	1	<b>71</b>
<b>1951</b>	48.6	47.9	2.7	0.3	0.5	<b>100.0</b>	35	35	1	0	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1955</b>	50.1	46.7	1.9	0.5	0.9	<b>100.0</b>	36	34	1	0	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1959</b>	47.2	46.7	4.1	0.8	1.2	<b>100.0</b>	31	38	1	0	1	<b>71</b>
<b>1964</b>	40.6	48.7	7.6	2.4	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	24	43	4	0	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1966</b>	37.6	49.9	6.8	5.0	0.7	<b>100.0</b>	20	46	5	0	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1970</b>	38.0	44.5	5.5	11.4	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	23	44	3	1	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1974 Feb</b>	32.9	36.6	7.9	21.9	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	21	40	3	7	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1974 Oct</b>	24.7	36.3	8.3	30.4	0.3	<b>100.0</b>	16	41	3	11	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1979</b>	31.4	41.5	9.0	17.3	0.8	<b>100.0</b>	22	44	3	2	0	<b>71</b>
<b>1983</b>	28.4	35.1	24.5	11.8	0.3	<b>100.0</b>	21	41	8	2	0	<b>72</b>
<b>1987</b>	24.0	42.4	19.2	14.0	0.3	<b>100.0</b>	10	50	9	3	0	<b>72</b>
<b>1992</b>	25.6	39.0	13.1	21.5	0.8	<b>100.0</b>	11	49	9	3	0	<b>72</b>
<b>1997</b>	17.5	45.6	13.0	22.1	1.9	<b>100.0</b>	0	56	10	6	0	<b>72</b>
<b>2001</b>	15.6	43.3	16.3	20.1	4.7	<b>100.0</b>	1	55	10	5	1	<b>72</b>
<b>2005</b>	15.8	38.9	22.6	17.7	5.0	<b>100.0</b>	1	40	11	6	1	<b>59</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes National and National Liberal for 1945; includes National Liberal and Conservative 1945-1970

<sup>(b)</sup> Liberal/SDP Alliance 1983-87; Liberal Democrats from 1992

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

both cases there was a clear swing to the Conservative Party, however, on the UK level Conservatives gained votes from the weakening Labour Party whereas in Scotland, Conservatives profited from the downward drop of the SNP (from 30.4 % to 17.3 %). At the same time, the Labour party in Scotland rose from 36.3 % to 41.5 % and confirmed its position as the strongest party in Scotland. The weak position and unpopularity of the Conservative party in Scotland since the 1970s – in spite of its strength in the UK – has been considered as the most obvious feature of the Scottish electoral divergence thus ranking Scotland as an anti-Conservative country.

In the 1983 UK General Election the trend of growing discrepancy between the strength of the two main British parties persisted. On the UK level the Conservative party remained unequivocally the strongest party with 42.4 % leaving behind the Labour party with nearly a half less votes (27.6 %) whereas in Scotland Labour retained its leading place with 35.1 % in front of Conservatives (28.4 %). Nevertheless, although the Labour Party kept its electoral primacy in Scotland, it suffered a great loss of support at the expense of the newly emerged outright coalition between Liberal Democrats and the Social Democratic party (SDP)-the Alliance, which gained 24.5 % of votes in Scotland. It successfully replaced the SNP as the major “third party”, however, unlike the nationalist SNP, the Alliance represented a British political force and its vote in the UK as a whole (25.4 %) resembled its electoral performance in Scotland. The Alliance maintained its position as the third British strongest party also in next UK General Election in 1987. In the UK though it did not take so heavily from Labour like in the previous election. In Scotland it followed the UK election result pattern; the Alliance lost to Labour which firmed up its leadership among other parties (from 35.1 % in 1983 to 42.4 % in 1987) while the Conservative vote in Scotland dropped further from 28.4 % in 1983 to 24.0 % in 1987. The SNP, after reaching its highest (30.4 %) in October 1974, has fallen back with 11.8 % in 1983 and 14.0 % in 1987 behind the Alliance as the fourth strongest party in Scotland.

In the 1992 UK General election the Scottish distinctiveness reflected in the election results became even more evident comparing the electoral strength of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in the UK and in Scotland (see Table 1 and 2). In the UK Conservatives won the election for the fourth time consecutively whilst in Scotland it gained mere 25.6 % of vote, still enough to be the second strongest party in Scotland, however with only 4.5 % difference against the growing SNP (21.5 %). The Labour Party as the second strongest party in the UK has seen a slight growing sway since last election (from 30.8 % in



1983 to 34.4 % in 1992) but it still lagged markedly behind its Scottish offset which had been traditionally the strongest party in Scotland since 1964 General election, which actually didn't have any impact on overall result of Labour in the UK election. Thus the victory of the Labour Party in Scotland was not something new. Nevertheless, there arose a new set-up concerning the third and fourth strongest party in Scotland. In two last UK General elections the third strongest party emerged to be the newly arranged Liberal/SDP Alliance which succeeded on British scale-i.e. its votes were evenly distributed all over the country-while leaving the SNP behind. The SNP got ahead as the strongest third party (in October 1974 it even became the second strongest party in Scotland) in Scotland from 1970 to 1983, however, it remained only regional-based national party without having any influence on the British party system. And in the 1992 election it was just the SNP which has replaced the Alliance as the third strongest party in Scotland with a gain of 21.5 % share of votes. In the overall UK election results it obtained no more than 2.3 % of votes. Injustice of the political system has been therefore strongly perceived in Scotland, especially under the Conservative government which lasted for four electoral periods from 1979 to 1997 even though since February 1974 the Conservative Party would never win in Scotland. This dissatisfaction with the failure to comply with the Scottish electoral results has intensified repeated claim on devolution. Turnover in the following UK General election in 1997 got started far-reaching developments. After 18 years of the Conservative government, the Labour Party became the strongest British party which – being henceforth the strongest political party in Scotland - has considerably promoted the process of devolution (see chapter 2.2). With the Conservative wipeout also on the UK level, Scottish electoral results have partly approached the UK election outcomes. Nevertheless, in Scotland the Conservative Party has suffered much more severe defeat as it has fallen behind the SNP and lost all 11 “Scottish” seats in the House of Commons. The 1997 UK General elections confirmed the newly set-up trends. The Labour Party continued to be the strongest party in region of Scotland but it also remained the strongest political party in the whole UK. Despite this national “strongest party” unity, Scottish wipe out of the Conservative party did not reflect the position of Conservatives on the UK level where they retained its position of the British second strongest party.

Another region, which has demonstrated the divergence in terms of UK electoral results, has been Wales. At the 1945 general election, the Labour Party won a stunning 58.5 % of Welsh vote (in comparison with 48 % for the United Kingdom as a whole, and 47.6 % in Scotland), and from this moment became unambiguously the dominant political force in Wales.

Electoral gains of Labour in Wales have greatly exceeded its gains in the UK elections (see Table 1 and 3). The tradition of the Conservatism had never got firmly established in Wales mainly on the ground of the alienation from the most of the Welsh electorate by religious, linguistic, and other cultural differences. Despite this disadvantaged stance, it has still managed to retain the position of the second strongest party in Wales. Nonetheless, the crucial opposition to Labour has been on the centre-left, represented by either by nationalist or Liberal Democrat, rather than the right (Webb 2005, p 761). The upsurge of Liberal Democrats has copied the all-British developments in the 1970s related to the process of the dealignment. In February 1974 it saw a remarkably growing share of Welsh votes, from 6.8% in 1970 to 16% in February 1974. Following the UK tendencies, Liberal Democrats reached their maximum share of votes in the 1983 General elections in coalition with the SDP and since then Liberal Democrats have played the role of the third strongest party in Wales. At the same time as Liberal Democrats, the Welsh national party Plaid Cymru (PC) has achieved its electoral breakthrough in February 1974 gaining two seats in Westminster. However, as a regional national party it has appealed only to the limited number of Welsh-speaking voters and has never seriously threatened the dominant position of the Labour Party. In general, the primary Welsh difference from the UK in terms of elections, has been the continual strength of the Labour Party since the 1945 UK General Election as well as Welsh lukewarm or almost negative relation to conservatism, the similar to the one noted in Scotland.

Other regions which has displayed a certain extent of divergence in comparison with the UK electoral behaviour are regions in Northern England which entirely corresponds to the notion of a north-south divide. In their electoral performances, these regions have rather resembled regions of Scotland and Wales in a way the Conservatives failed to win support<sup>15</sup>. The Conservatives never obtained more than 40 % of the votes in the three “northern-English” regions of Yorkshire/Humberside, Northwest and North in comparison with the six “southern” regions which were the traditional bastions of the Conservative Party (Johnston-Pattie-Rositter 2005, p 788). This regional Labour-Conservative divergence has become the most salient from 1980s onwards. These voting differences has to be viewed as

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<sup>15</sup> The completely specific region in terms of the party system has always been Northern Ireland which underwent a radical change in the 1970s. Since the 1970s no all-British political party has been present in the Northern Irish party system as Unionism has fragmented. In the 1970s the local party system was formed on the basis of the specific cleavages such as Protestant/Catholic cleavage and Unionist/Nationalist cleavage. In the 1974 UK General elections in Northern Ireland only newly established parties (such as Ulster Unionist Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Social Democratic and Labour party, The Alliance Party) competed there. Sinn Féin and Ulster Popular Unionist firstly participated in General Elections in 1983.

**Table 3 General Election Results 1945 – 2005 (Wales)**

Share of vote (%)							Seats won					
Year	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	PC	Others	Total	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	PC	Others	Total
<b>1945</b>	23.8	58.6	14.9	1.1	1.6	<b>100.0</b>	4	25	6	0	0	<b>35</b>
<b>1950</b>	27.4	58.1	12.6	1.2	0.7	<b>100.0</b>	4	27	5	0	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1951</b>	30.8	60.5	7.6	0.7	0.3	<b>100.0</b>	6	27	3	0	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1955</b>	29.9	57.6	7.3	3.1	2.1	<b>100.0</b>	6	27	3	0	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1959</b>	32.6	56.4	5.3	5.2	0.5	<b>100.0</b>	7	27	2	0	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1964</b>	29.4	57.8	7.3	4.8	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	6	28	2	0	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1966</b>	27.9	60.7	6.3	4.3	0.9	<b>100.0</b>	3	32	1	0	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1970</b>	27.7	51.6	6.8	11.5	2.4	<b>100.0</b>	7	27	1	0	1	<b>36</b>
<b>1974 Feb</b>	25.9	46.8	16.0	10.8	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	8	24	2	2	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1974 Oct</b>	23.9	49.5	15.5	10.8	0.2	<b>100.0</b>	8	23	2	3	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1979</b>	32.2	47.0	10.6	8.1	2.2	<b>100.0</b>	11	21	1	2	1	<b>36</b>
<b>1983</b>	31.0	37.5	23.2	7.8	0.4	<b>100.0</b>	14	20	2	2	0	<b>36</b>
<b>1987</b>	29.5	45.1	17.9	7.3	0.2	<b>100.0</b>	8	24	3	3	0	<b>38</b>
<b>1992</b>	28.6	49.5	12.4	8.9	0.6	<b>100.0</b>	6	27	1	4	0	<b>38</b>
<b>1997</b>	19.6	54.7	12.3	9.9	3.4	<b>100.0</b>	0	34	2	4	0	<b>38</b>
<b>2001</b>	21.0	48.6	13.8	14.3	2.3	<b>100.0</b>	0	34	2	4	0	<b>40</b>
<b>2005</b>	21.4	42.7	18.4	12.6	5.0	<b>100.0</b>	3	29	4	3	1	<b>40</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes National and National Liberal for 1945; includes National Liberal and Conservative 1945-1970

<sup>(b)</sup> Liberal/SDP Alliance 1983-87; Liberal Democrats from 1992

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

the regional divergences within the region of England. Taking into account the regional distinctions within England, it would be thereafter also properly accurate to inquire into the regional differences within the two regions already mentioned above as the different intra-regional voting tendencies are evidently existing in both, in Scotland and in Wales. However, in my paper, there will not be enough space for such a detailed analysis, therefore my objective is to compare the prevailing voting tendencies in three British regions irrespective of the electoral differences within them. Although I am aware of the pronounced north-south division within England, I will use the figures relating to England as a whole. From this view, that is why England might be regarded as the region whose voting behaviour has embodied the same trends which has prevailed on the UK electoral level. This phenomenon will be further contemplated in detail.

## **2.1 Regional resemblance in electoral behaviour in the UK General Elections**

On the basis of the regional divergences of the electoral behaviour in the UK, the eventual similarities of voting behaviour in different regions might be indicated. As it was already discussed in the previous chapter, the regions whose electoral behaviour has mostly deviated from the overall UK election outcomes, have been Scotland and Wales. Parallels between Scottish and Welsh electoral behaviour can be particularly drawn from the 1970s when the process of dealignment has set off new developments in voting behaviour across the UK, nevertheless, having had a different impact on regions.

The two most noticeable identical features of the electoral behaviour in Scotland and Wales have been, firstly, the strong anti-Conservative mood of the electorate and secondly, inspired by the former, the growing popular support for nationalism and national parties.

The strong anti-Conservatism started to be the most obvious during the government of the Conservative party from 1979 to 1997 and partly resulted from the Conservatives' "anti-devolution" stance. Even though, the unpopularity of the Conservative party has been the common feature for Scotland and Wales, its failure in these regions has been rather of the contrasting origin, yet having the same effect. In Scotland, the authentic Conservative tradition existed and the party even endured to be the major electoral force in the first half of the 20th century. During this period, the Liberals represented its most serious challenger, but it was only till the moment of their merger in 1912. The coalition drew its support till 1965 foremost with its unionist aspect. The Scottish Conservatives further reassumed its success in

the postwar era, having been the strongest Scottish party in the three successive elections from 1951 to 1959. Since 1959, however, the electoral performance of the Conservative party in Scotland and in England started to display significant gap which was gradually accruing. This trend became stronger throughout the 1970s and the 1980s together in parallel with growing nationalism. One of the reasons, anti-Conservatism emerged is its persisting unionist attitude while, at the same time, the Scottish nationalism saw its rise. The party that most and in the long term benefited from the Conservative ebb was the Labour Party which due to its official adoption of devolution has become the strongest Scottish party.

In Wales, by contrast to Scotland (cp Tables 2 and 3), the Conservative party was never a fundamental political force. In Welsh politics one-party domination outweighed either under the Liberals or the Labour Party. The latter became a new dominant force in interwar years and since then the total Labour hegemony has never been threatened seriously by the second strongest political force—the Conservative party. The absolute failure of Conservative party to come to power has been explained by its alienation from most of the population by religious, linguistic, and other cultural differences (Jones-Scully 2006, p 117). The character of the Welsh anti-Conservatism has thus resulted from the historical-cultural diversity of the Welsh region whereas the Scottish anti-Conservatism has rather been the one of the political character as it emerged as a reaction to the unionist Conservative policy. Notwithstanding the different roots of the Scottish and Welsh anti-Conservatism, the anti-Conservative mood in both countries has led to the identical developments which were reflected in the growing claims for devolution.

The second common feature of the Scottish and Welsh electoral behaviour is the surge of nationalism in the 1970s. Both, Scotland and Wales, have its indigenous national parties, the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru (PC). They both saw its accrue in the 1970s but they have never been a serious threat to the Labour or Conservative dominance in the UK General elections. The nationalism of Plaid Cymru has been oriented towards the limited group of electorate, in particular the Welsh-speaking voters situated along the country's western coast. Therefore its electoral strength has never got over 15 % (in the 1970s it reached its height of 11.5 % in the 1970 UK general election; more recently its top score of 14.3 % gained in the 2001 UK General election). While the nationalist appeal of Plaid Cymru has stemmed from the social-linguistic cleavage in the Welsh society, nationalism of the SNP has unambiguously had political origins. In fact, the SNP was the first party which benefited from the wipeout of the Conservative Party in Scotland in two UK general elections in 1974.

First, it gained its support because of its social democratic policy – just like Labours and Liberals – which was a reaction to the Conservative government in the period between 1970 and 1974 and second and in addition, it was thanks to its preference for a particular form of a Scottish Parliament. Accordingly it was exactly the conjunction of the socialism and nationalism which evocated the rise of the SNP in the 1970s, having achieved its peak of 30.4 % in the October 1974 UK General election. Its consequent weakening was related to the move of the scottish Labour which successfully assumed the devolutionist platform and hereby took over the SNP place in the scottish political party spectrum. Even though the SNP, after reaching its highpoint in 1974 , has never again managed to receive the same voters' support, it has remained the relevant party in the Scottish poltical arena.

Both, national parties in Scotland and Wales, have eventually never imported menace to the stability of the UK party system, however, they significantly affected the further political developments in their regions being the first serious actors to come up with claims for a form of regional self-government. The “devolution topic“ was likewise adopted by Labour parties in Scotland and Wales which became the most potential political forces in favour of the devolution.

The similar features in the Welsh and Scottish electoral behaviour, in spite of its possibly distinct grounds, have produced identical results. First and foremost, it was the general discontent with the prevailing “Englishness“ in British politics which eventuated in assertions about inequity of the British electoral system. It was just this aversion towards the “Englishness“ that re-opened the debate over the regional goverments.

## **2.2 Scottish UK general electoral tendencies versus electoral behaviour in England and increasing claims for devolution**

The growing difference between the Scottish and the UK electoral performance since the 1970s has endured throughout 1980s and arrived to its limit in 1997. The striking discrepancy in the electoral behaviour has been in particular the one between England on one hand and regions of Scotland and Wales on the other hand. Even though there existed such a regional voting divergence, it was not reflected in the overall UK electoral result. Comparing the UK electoral returns in these three regions with the total return in the UK in the period from 1970 to 1997, we can observe that the electoral result on the UK level has been almost identical with figures for England though completely irrespective of those for

Scotland and Wales (cp Tables 1,2 and 4). This failure to translate popular voting preferences into seats of the UK legislature has spawned the disaffectedness in Scotland and Wales launched against the prevailing “Englishness“ of the UK politics. This “Englishness“ of the British politics was manifested most evidently in the eighteen-year rule of Conservative government (1979 – 1997). At the same time the Conservative Party saw its wipe-out in Scotland where its position was being threatened by both, the Labour Party as well as the accretive SNP. This absolutely adverse development in the Scottish voters’ party support adverted to injustice of the entire UK political system.

For both the major parties, the regional polarization in the vote peaked at the 1987 election; Conservatives gained 24 % in Scotland, whereas in England it was 46.1% and overall, on the UK level the Conservative party won 42.2 %; the Labour party, contrariwise, increased its vote to 42.4 % in Scotland, in England it gained 29.5 % and in the UK Labour slightly improved its vote share to 30.8 % from 27.6 % in 1983. In the 1992 UK general election, the change of government was anticipated in Scotland, however Scottish Conservatives actually better its vote (+ 1.6%) and seats (+ 1) gain, whereas in England as well as on the whole UK level its vote share dropped modestly (see Tables 1,2 and 4). But, despite the slight regain of Conservatives, the assertion that the majority of Scottish voters still casted their ballots for parties in favour of a constitutional change vindicates arguments indicating a “democratic deficit“ in Scotland (Brown 2000, p 659).<sup>16</sup> After the 1992 election, for example, Labour held just four of the 109 seats in the South of England, the Conservatives just six of the 36 seats in the North of England and only eleven of the 72 seats in Scotland. The growing regional polarization in voting patterns has been regarded by some observers as a new political cleavage which might have become more important for parties than the class.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of the 1992 UK General election for Scotland, as it was already implied, consisted not only in the replacement of the Conservative government by its political opponents but also in the constitutional question which was at stake in Scottish politics. Therefore the results of the 1992 UK General election and the continuation of the Conservative government were apprehended by those supporting constitutional change as considerable setback. James Mitchell compared the impact of the 1992 General election to

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<sup>16</sup> Brown explains that the term “democratic deficit“ was applied “by supporters of constitutional change to describe the situation where the Conservative government had a minority of MPs in Scotland and where the majority of voters supported parties who are in favour of constitutional change. The claim that the party had no mandate to rule in Scotland was rejected by the government”.

<sup>17</sup> **R.J. Johnson, C.J. Pattie and J.G. Allsopp**, *A Nation Dividing? The Electoral Map of Great Britain 1979-1987* (London: Longman, 1988); **J.Lewis and A.Townsend (eds)**, *The North-South Divide* (London: Chapman, 1989).

the failed referendum of 1979 as in both cases “though a numeric majority voted for change, the failure to realise expectations was a psychological blow to the opposition parties“.<sup>18</sup>

The 1992 UK general election has its distinctive aftermath in Scotland. The great number of organisations which pursued a constitutional change and were aiming to keep this topic high on the political agenda were established and many others survived to further promote a constitutional issue. Among others, it was The Scottish Constitutional Convention which was set up in 1989 as cross-party and non-party organisation following recommendations by the Campaign for a Scottish parliament (Brown 2000, p 659). Immediately after the 1992 general election it started to launch the final document *Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right* which was an agreed scheme of the main pro-devolution Scottish political parties for the future Scottish Parliament, its powers and functions as well as the electoral system.

The drop in votes for the Conservative party in 1994 in both, the European and the local elections, portended the failure of Conservatives in Scotland but also in the whole UK in the upcoming general elections on 1 May 1997. The results of the 1997 UK General election confirmed the expectation of the Conservative loss and the Conservative government was replaced after 18 years by the Labour government with Tony Blair as the Prime Minister. In Scotland then, Conservatives saw a historical wipe-out when albeit the gain of 17.5 % of the vote, they lost all their seats. Labour, on the other hand, benefited from the electoral system of the first-past-the-post by obtaining 56 seats (77.7 %) with 45.6% of the vote (see Table 2). Although the Labour party was now the strongest political party in all regions of Britain, i.e. England, Scotland and Wales, the factor of various regional voting remained a significant element in the 1997 general election. Comparing the performance of Conservatives and Labour in both, England and Scotland, the regional differences in voters' support were still apparent, particularly in the clear north-south divide. Only three English regions (Southeast, East Anglia and Southwest) sent more Conservative than Labour MPs to Westminster, although at the same time the size of the Labour delegation increased. Labour, on the contrary, prevailed in the five northern English regions plus in Scotland and Wales (Johnston-Pattie-Rositter 2005, p 794). Whereas in Scotland Conservatives achieved mere 17.5 % of the vote and no seat gain, in England it received 33.7 % of vote and 165 seats out of total 529 seats for England. For the Labour Party the support was almost the same in both, England (43.5 %) and Scotland (45.6 %). In Scotland, however, new situation concerning

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<sup>18</sup> J.Mitchell, *The 1992 Election in Scotland in Context*, Parliamentary Affairs, October 1992.



**Table 4 General Election Results 1945 – 2005 (England)**

Share of vote (%)						Seats won				
Year	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	Others	Total	Con <sup>(a)</sup>	Lab	Lib <sup>(b)</sup>	Others	Total
<b>1945</b>	40.3	48.6	9.3	1.9	<b>100.0</b>	167	331	5	7	<b>510</b>
<b>1950</b>	48.8	48.8	2.3	0.1	<b>100.0</b>	271	233	2	0	<b>506</b>
<b>1951</b>	43.7	46.1	9.4	0.8	<b>100.0</b>	252	251	2	1	<b>506</b>
<b>1955</b>	50.3	46.8	2.6	0.3	<b>100.0</b>	292	216	2	1	<b>511</b>
<b>1959</b>	50.0	43.6	6.3	0.1	<b>100.0</b>	315	193	3	0	<b>511</b>
<b>1964</b>	44.0	43.5	12.1	0.4	<b>100.0</b>	261	246	3	1	<b>511</b>
<b>1966</b>	42.7	47.8	9.0	0.5	<b>100.0</b>	219	285	6	1	<b>511</b>
<b>1970</b>	48.3	43.2	7.9	0.5	<b>100.0</b>	292	216	2	1	<b>511</b>
<b>1974 Feb</b>	40.1	37.7	21.3	1.0	<b>100.0</b>	268	237	9	2	<b>516</b>
<b>1974 Oct</b>	38.8	40.1	20.2	1.0	<b>100.0</b>	252	255	8	1	<b>516</b>
<b>1979</b>	47.2	36.7	14.9	1.2	<b>100.0</b>	306	203	7	0	<b>516</b>
<b>1983</b>	46.0	26.9	26.4	0.7	<b>100.0</b>	362	148	13	0	<b>523</b>
<b>1987</b>	46.1	29.5	23.8	0.5	<b>100.0</b>	357	155	10	1	<b>523</b>
<b>1992</b>	45.5	33.9	19.2	1.4	<b>100.0</b>	319	195	10	0	<b>524</b>
<b>1997</b>	33.7	43.5	18.0	4.8	<b>100.0</b>	165	328	34	2	<b>529</b>
<b>2001</b>	35.2	41.4	19.4	3.9	<b>100.0</b>	165	328	34	2	<b>529</b>
<b>2005</b>	35.7	35.5	22.9	5.9	<b>100.0</b>	193	286	47	2	<b>528</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes National and National Liberal for 1945; includes National Liberal and Conservative 1945-1970

<sup>(b)</sup> Liberal/SDP Alliance 1983-87; Liberal Democrats from 1992

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

the composition of the opposition, arose. At the UK level the opposition was undoubtedly the Conservative Party but in Scotland, without having a single Conservative MP, the position was demanded by both, the SNP and the Scottish Liberal Democrats. The situation appeared to be rather ambiguous as the SNP justified its claim on the basis of the largest share of the vote (22.1 %, while Liberal Democrats 13 %) while the Scottish Liberal Democrats on the grounds of the largest share of the seats with 10 MPs (compared to 6 seats of the SNP). This paradoxical disproportion between votes and seats gained ensues from the first-past-the-post electoral system together with the geographical distribution of the party support. Even though the SNP share of votes considerably outnumbered those obtained by the Liberal Democrats, it suffered from the high concentration of support into limited number of constituencies which can be contrasted to the relatively even spread of votes for Liberal Democrats across the country.

However, the most important consequence and the longer-term effects of the 1992 UK general election have been those concerning the question of the Scottish devolution. With the established Labour government the campaign for constitutional change in Scotland was pushed forward to implement some of its manifesto commitments. The newly designated Secretary of State for Scotland – Donald Dewar – supported by the Scottish Office ministerial team and those involved in the campaign for Scottish Parliament, immediately launched on 15 May 1997 a campaign named *Scotland Forward* which has advocated fast proceeding towards a referendum.<sup>19</sup> In July new government published a *White Paper*, a scheme proposing the Scottish Parliament. Due to the cross-party and civic campaign, this time the referendum, held on 11 September 1997, obtained the endorsement of the majority of voters<sup>20</sup> and the way to set up a Scottish Parliament has opened (Brown 2000, pp 547- 550).

As it was proposed by the Convention in the Scotland Act, the Scottish parliament should be of 129 members elected by an additional member system, with 73 to represent constituencies and the additional 56 from party lists based on Scotland's former eight European constituencies. In spite the fact the electoral system was not strictly proportional, it still partly

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<sup>19</sup> In my paper, I will not discuss in detail the process of the referendum as it is not crucial in respect to the main subject of my paper. However, it is necessary to mention the fact that in the 1997 referendum, voters did not decide only for or against the establishment of the Scottish Parliament but also whether the Parliament should have tax-varying powers. In both cases voters agreed.

<sup>20</sup> Scottish voters in the 1997 referendum were asked two questions. First, whether they agree that there should be a Scottish Parliament and second, whether they agree that a Scottish Parliament should have tax-varying powers. The result was Yes-Yes; 74.3% of voters were for a Parliament and 63.5% of voters agreed it should have a tax-varying powers. The turnout was 60.4%.

fulfilled claims for a fairer system which reflected more the distribution of support for the different political parties in Scotland (Brown 2000, p 548).

### **3 After-Devolution Period**

The establishment of the Scottish Parliament as well as Welsh National Assembly and the elections to these devolved bodies introduced the new issues into the electoral politics of the UK, particularly of its regions. As the elections to the Scottish Parliament are held under the different electoral system it is interesting to analyse the impact it might possibly have on the Scottish electorate. Up to what extent, do the voting patterns across the two types of poll (UK General election under the plurality rule – FPTP – and additional member system (AMS) for elections to the Scottish Parliament) reflect voters' differentiating between different types of elections-taking into consideration the specific effects of the electoral systems- and up to what extent, this phenomenon is merely a part of the general trend of the accrual of the number of the political parties in the UK General elections, which can potentially transform the British two-party system into a multi-party one.

One of the primary devolution issue fiddles the electoral competition in the new, multi-levelled situation with the newly arised relationship between electoral process in UK General elections and that in the election to the Scottish Parliament ( alternatively Welsh Assembly). The question of principle thus concerns up to what extent these processes are influencing each other. Do voters decide according to the same criterion in both elections, to Westminster and to devolved bodies, or do they vote differently being aware of the regional specificity?

The two opposite views to this question have generated. The first one implies that Scottish devolution with the establishment of the Scottish parliament enables Scottish citizens to express their distinctive Scottish political will and disengage the Scottish politics from Westminster. It would allow for "Scottish answers to Scottish questions" (Paterson et al. 2001, p 29). The second view, on the other hand, maintains the standpoint that Westminster continues to be the most important institution to be referred to. Elections to devolved bodies are thus merely reflecting the attitudes of voters towards the UK politics represented by statewide parties, irrespective to the regional distinct political features.

Comparing the devolved election to the Scottish Parliament held so far in 1999 and 2003 with the elections at Westminster level in 2001 and 2005, i would attempt to draw a conclusion

about how and to what extent do Scottish voters differentiate between different types of election. Should the devolved election be viewed as “second-order” elections which present voters with null impulse or spur in confrontation with “first order” state-level elections.<sup>21</sup> If so, they should fulfil several prepositions about second order elections -set by Reif and Schmitt- such as lower electoral turnout, the emergence of the new or smaller parties and at the same time the loss of support for the government parties in the first order arena at the expense of opposition parties. Or rather, do the devolved elections constitute the “first-order ” elections for the region of Scotland?

In the following chapters, first, the electoral behaviour of the Scottish electorate in elections to the Scottish Parliament will be analysed. Not only general trends but also the development of voters’ behaviour from the first devolved elections in 1999 to those held in 2003 which might be already viewed in broader electoral context. Consequently, the electoral behaviour in the post-devolution UK General elections in Scotland will be assessed in conjunction with proceeding regional divergences between English and Scottish electoral behavior. Finally, I would compare the results of the devolved elections in both 1999 and 2003 as compared with the 2001 and 2005 UK General Election in Scotland, eventually in Wales, and try to explain conceivable voters’ distinguished voting in the UK and devolved elections in terms of set out key prepositions about second-order elections by Reif and Schmitt. At the same time, I will advert to the regional parallels in the electoral behaviour in the post-devolution UK General elections as well as in the elections to devolved bodies.

### **3.1 Electoral Behaviour of the Scottish electorate in elections to the Scottish Parliament**

The first election to the Scottish Parliament were held on 6 May 1999. Having been conducted two years after the 1997 UK General elections, which saw the downfall of the

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<sup>21</sup> The term “second-order” election was firstly used in broader context by Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt (1980). In their article on the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, they found that these elections tend to be inferior to state-level elections where state-level governments together with seats in the state-level legislature are at stake. According to Reif and Schmitt “second-order” elections are “by-elections, municipal elections, various sorts of regional elections or those to a second chamber and the like” (Reif-Schmitt 1980, p 8).

Conservatives and the formation of the Labour government, the similar trend was anticipated to predominate the Scottish elections even in the greater extent<sup>22</sup>.

The parliament is 129-member institution, elected through the two-vote additional member system. Single-member constituencies elect seventy-three representatives under the first-past-the-post system<sup>23</sup>, with the remaining fifty-six allocated from eight seven-seat regional party lists via modified d'Hondt formula<sup>24</sup>. All single-member constituencies do not overlap the seven-member regional constituencies; they are all within them.

Each voter has two ballots; the first one casts for the candidate in the single-member constituency and via the second one voter elects the seven-member party list. First, party list votes are totalled from each of the constituencies making up the region. These totals are then divided by the number of the seats each party has won – plus one. The party with the highest resulting total elects one Additional Member. The party's divisor is then increased by one (because of its victory) and new figures calculated. Again, the party with the highest total wins a seat. The process is then repeated until all seven Additional Members are elected. The aim of the system is to compensate parties which pile up votes in constituencies but fail to win many MSPs. Under the d'Hondt system, they are much more likely to gain Additional Members. Conversely, parties which do well in constituency elections will do less well in the top-up seats.

Concerning the tactical voting, the first vote for the district representative is usually less important than the second party list vote in providing the total result of an election for the most of parties<sup>25</sup> However, there is some evidence that many Scottish voters do not comprehend the implications of the system; especially there appeared to be the misunderstanding of the key aspects of the difference between the two votes. For example, many voters misapprehended the principle of having two votes. The most common incomprehension was that via two given votes they can show their first and second preferences and therefore some voters sought to get a double representation by voting

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<sup>22</sup> The influence of the UK General Elections on the devolved elections in Scotland and vice versa will be analysed in detail in a subsequent chapter.

<sup>23</sup> 73 Constituencies are based on the former (used till 2001) 72 Parliamentary Constituencies; the original Constituency Orkney and Shetland was split into two separate constituencies

<sup>24</sup> These eight electoral regions are based on the constituencies used for the 1994 European elections

<sup>25</sup> The exception represents the Labour Party The first vote is of the key importance for the Labour as the majority of seats won comes from the first vote in constituencies.

tactically and splitting their votes.<sup>26</sup> However, this technique is mistakenly adopted from the different electoral systems thus causing the unintended consequences in elections run under AMS. Another misinterpretations concern the significance of each vote. Having thought that the number of seats won by each party is decided by the number of first votes parties get, many voters expressed their first vote preference in the same way as in the UK general elections held under the FPTP thus underestimating the effect of the second proportional vote.

Under the form of Additional Member System introduced for the Scottish Parliament, it was highly improbable that any single party would ever obtained an overall majority in the Parliament. Still the Labour Party came out of the elections as the strongest political force with a considerable relief because an extensive advance had been anticipated for the Labour's main rival the SNP. Eventually, majority of seats was distributed between the four major parties in Scotland- Labour Party, SNP, Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats- and one seat gain was achieved by the Scottish Green Party, the Scottish Social Party and a candidate which was ranked among "Others" (see Table 7).

In a single-member constituencies voters tended to prefer the four main established parties (see Table 5). In a number of seats Labour gained the far best result with a gain of 53 seats (38.8 % share of vote). The second highest number of seats won under the FPTP had Liberal Democrats although the party obtained much less votes than the SNP. With only 333,179 (14.2 %) votes, Liberal Democrats received 12 seats whereas the SNP which received the second highest number of votes (672,768; 23,7 %) had to take up with mere 7 seats. This disproportion between the gain of votes and seats ensued from the extent of geographical concentration/dispersion of party support. The SNP support is traditionally very strong in several districts where it gains an outspoken majority of votes while the support for the Labour Democrats never attains such high figures as Nationalists, however, as its support is evenly distributed all over the country, Liberal Democrats have the possibility to compete for the parliamentary seat in more constituencies. The total wipe out in a single-member constituencies saw the Conservative party, which - with the third highest gain of 364,425 votes (15,6%) – did not win any seat. Ultimately the fourth one to achieve a seat in the constituency emerged to be the independent candidate for Falkirk West.

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<sup>26</sup> The tactic of splitting the vote is widely used in local elections in Scotland which are run under the electoral system of single transferable vote (STV). Under this system, the split of vote reflects more than one of voters' preference.

Casting their second ballot, Scottish voters might have expressed their real preferences without having been afraid to waste their votes for minor parties as it happened under the FPTP vote. The second vote for regional party lists fully demonstrated how the new electoral system works in its entirety. Contrary to the general misinterpretation, the second regional list vote demonstrated its significance in a way it compensated gains from the first constituency vote. For example, due to the second vote the Conservative Party, which did not win any seat in the constituency vote despite the acquisition of 15.6 % share of vote (364,425 of votes), obtained 18 top-up as a compensation. In a similar way, the SNP profited from the system increasing the number of its seats to the total of 35 after receiving 28 seats in the regional list vote. In the opposite way, the electoral system compensated earnings of the Labour Party. In the constituency vote it received 38.8 % share of vote and as the strongest party was allocated 53 seats. In the regional party lists vote it was confirmed as the strongest party (33.6 %), however, in consequence of the operation of the AMS compensatory effect Labours won mere three seats. In general, we may see that voters did not entirely realise the proportional effect of the second vote and hence were prone to give precedence to the parties well-established in the Scottish party system. Altogether, via the regional list vote six parties were awarded with a gain of a seat (see Table 6).

The historically first elections to the Scottish Parliament (otherwise also referred to as Holyrood) produced an important reflection of the diversity of political opinion of ordinary Scottish voters. In total, six political parties and one independent candidate were elected to Holyrood (see Table 7) with no party gaining the overall majority. The election campaign was particularly a struggle between the two main rivals for power in Holyrood – Labour and the SNP. The struggle left both parties slightly disappointed as they both expected better outcomes reflecting their performances in the 1997 UK General elections (cp. Table 2 and 7). Having won almost 46% share of votes in the 1997 UK General elections, Labour's drop to an actual position below 40% on both ballots was an unforeseen development. Ultimately the SNP, even though it might have fell short of expectations, in comparison with 1997 it was the only party to have made notable advances in terms of its overall share of vote.

The high irony can be seen in the Conservatives performance. After having suffered an absolute wipe-out in the 1997 UK General elections in Scotland, the Tories were turned back on through a Scottish Parliament elected by proportional representation - both of which the Conservatives bitterly resisted. Actually, the Conservatives managed to be ahead of the Liberal Democrats in both share of the vote and overall number of seats.

**Table 5 The 1999 Scottish Parliament Election – Constituencies**

Parties	Numer of Notes	% Share of Vote	Seats won
Labour	908,346	38.8	53
Scottish National Party	672,768	28.7	7
Conservative	364,425	15.6	0
Liberal Democrat	333,179	14.2	12
Scottish Socialist Party	23,654	1.0	-
Others	8,573	0.4	1
Independent	31,543	1.3	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,342,488</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>73</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

**Table 6 The 1999 Scottish Parliament Election – Regional lists**

Parties	Numer of Notes	% Share of Vote	Seats won
Labour	786,818	33.6	3
Scottish National Party	638,644	27.3	28
Conservative	359,109	15.4	18
Liberal Democrat	290,760	12.4	5
Scottish Green Party	84,023	3.6	1
Scottish Socialist Party	46,716	2.0	1
Independent	41,321	1.8	-
Socialist Labour Party	55,153	2.4	-
ProLife	9,748	0.4	-
Scottish Unionist Party	7,011	0.3	-
Others	19,577	0.8	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,338,914</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>56</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

**Table 7 The 1999 Scottish Parliament Election – Total seats won**

Parties	Numer of Notes	% Share of Vote	Seats won
Labour	1,695,164	36.2	56
Scottish National Party	1,311,412	28.0	35
Conservative	723,534	15.5	18
Liberal Democrat	623,939	13.3	17
Scottish Green Party	84,023	1.8	1
Scottish Socialist Party	70,368	1.5	1
Independent	72,864	1.6	-
Other	100,098	2.1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,681,402</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>129</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*



Much was made of the participation of many of the smaller parties in the 1999 elections and there were high hopes among some of gaining representation. There is no doubt that on the second ballot many Scottish voters decided to break with the old four party choice and a total of 11% voted for other parties and independent candidates, however, on the other hand, many voters still did not fully perceive the significance and the effect of the new electoral system, particularly the proportionality of the second ballot.

It would be therefore of much consequence to analyse the second devolved elections to the Scottish Parliament in wider context comprising the actual overall UK political situation (particularly, the issue of the war in Iraq), the development of the Scottish politics as well as the voters' progress in understanding the electoral system and its implications. After the four-year electoral term the second elections to the Scottish Parliament were held on May 1 in 2003. On the whole, 7 political parties (the same six political parties as in the 1999 elections plus the new Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party) and 3 Independent/Others candidates gained the representation in the Scottish Parliament. Repeatedly, no party achieved to win an overall majority.

In a single-member constituencies, the most successful were again the four main parties, however, there was an evident rise in number of votes for the smaller parties as the two seats were allocated to Independent/Others candidates (see Table 6). The Scottish Socialist Party saw the greatest increase in its share of vote in the constituency ballot; from 1.0% share of vote in 1999 it improved its performance to 6 % gain of votes. However, even though the Socialists won inconsiderable amount of votes (116,013 compared to 23,654 in 1999), it failed to win a single MSP. Conservatives and Liberals also slightly increased their shares of vote in constituencies; Conservatives having gained three seats (+3 seats compared to no seat in 1999) and Liberal Democrats receiving in total 13 seats (+ 1 in comparison with 12 seats in 1999).

Eventually in 2003 elections, the voters realized the relevance of the second vote based on the proportional representation, and were more disposed to endorse smaller parties without apprehension to waste their vote. However, not only voters but also parties themselves, tried to make the best of the regional list vote. Therefore, in the second Scottish Elections the smaller parties (especially Scottish Greens, Scottish Socialists and others) placed considerable emphasis on the magnitude of the second ballot and finally, by means of this vote, won almost 23 % of it contrary to 10 % of the first ballot (see Table 9). In 1999 elections, smaller parties had received about 11 % share of vote for the second ballot and

**Table 8 The 2003 Scottish Parliament Election – Constituencies**

Parties	Numer of Notes	% Share of Vote	Seats won
Labour	663,585	34.5	46
Scottish National Party	455,772	23.7	9
Conservative	318,279	16.6	3
Liberal Democrat	294,347	15.3	13
Scottish Socialist Party	116,013	6.0	-
Others	39,171	2.0	1
Independent	34,452	1.8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,921,619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>73</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

**Table 9 The 2003 Scottish Parliament Election – Regional lists**

Parties	Numer of Notes	% Share of Vote	Seats won
Labour	561,879	29.4	4
Scottish National Party	399,659	20.9	18
Conservative	296,929	15.6	15
Liberal Democrat	225,810	11.8	4
Scottish Green Party	132,138	6.9	7
Scottish Socialist Party	128,126	6.7	6
Independent	31,942	1.7	1
Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party	28,966	1.5	1
Pensioners Party (Scotland)	28,655	1.5	-
Socialist Labour Party	21,657	1.1	-
United Kingdom Independence Party	11,969	0.6	-
People's Alliance	7,718	0.4	-
ProLife	6,759	0.4	-
Scottish Unionist Party	6,113	0.3	-
Others	20,274	1.1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,908,594</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>56</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

Table 10 The 2003 Scottish Parliament Election – Total seats won

Parties	Numer of Notes	% Share of Vote	Seats won
Labour	1,225,464	32.0	50
Scottish National Party	855,431	22.3	27
Conservative	615,208	16.1	18
Liberal Democrat	520,157	13.6	17
Scottish Green Party	132,138	3.4	7
Scottish Socialist Party	244,139	6.4	6
Independent	66,394	1.7	2
Other	171,282	4.5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,830,213</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>129</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

scarcely 3 % of the constituency vote. Accordingly, two new parties – Independent and Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party – were elected to Holyrood with gain of one seat just only owing to the regional top up. At the same time, the number of votes for the main four parties drop, which was furthermore intensified by the compensatory effect of the mixed electoral system as these parties won most seats in the constituency votes (see Tables 8 and 10).

By and large, despite these unprofitable developments for the main parties, the Labour Party succeeded in winning the most seats but not an overall majority, with 50 seats (down six on 1999 figures). SNP obtained 27 seats (down eight) having lost ground to those on the left, Conservatives 18 and Liberal Democrats 17 (both gaining the same number of seats as in 1999), the Scottish Socialists received six MSPs (a gain of five), the Scottish Greens seven (an increase of six), the Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party won one seat for the first time and independents/others saw a three seats gain, thus having in total four seats (see Table 10).

The two rounds of devolved elections to the recently established Scottish Parliament created the new distinct Scottish party system. Political parties dominating the UK parliament in Westminster also more or less prevailed the Scottish elections, however the extent of the voters' support for these parties has not shown the same figures as for Westminster elections. As it was expected, the Labour Party confirmed its staunch standing in Scotland whereas the Tories suffered crushing failure and became the principal opposition force. The SNP replaced the Conservatives as the second strongest party doing much better than in the UK General elections, undoubtedly on account of its nationalist appeal. The Liberal Democrats steadily profited from the Scottish political system and became governmental party

after having retained enough seats to create a coalition with the strongest Labour Party. The explicit leftist tendencies can be seen as a distinctive feature of the Scottish politics. For example, in the 2003 Scottish elections, the SNP lost some of its support at the expense of the Socialists and the Greens. Not only the wider range of political parties having been regularly elected to the Scottish Parliament, but also specific interrelations between them, advert to the formation of the party system different from the party system on Westminster level. Whereas in Westminster the executive is formed exclusively by one party, in Holyrood the parliamentary parties create coalition governments.

### **3.2 UK General Elections in Scotland. Continuing process of dealignment in the UK in conjunction with different political attitudes in Scotland and England**

The first post-devolution UK General Election was held on 7 June 2001. The fact it was the first general election after the establishment of the devolved bodies in Scotland and Wales and first devolved elections in 1999, raised several questions about the prospective development of the voting behaviour of the British electorate. One of the concerns was whether the trend of the different regional voting would further advance in even more pronounced extent or reversely, the regional distinctions would tend to weaken as result of the regional devolved elections. The former tendency seemed to slightly prevail.

The 2001 UK General Election (see Table 1) confirmed the leading position of the Labour Party, even though its share of votes fell by 2.5 percentage points (from 43.2 % in 1997 to 40.7 % in 2001) with the Conservative, as the second strongest party, share increasing by 1.0 points (from 30.7 % in 1997 to 31.7 % in 2001) and the Liberal Democrats' increasing by 1.5 % (from 16.8 % in 1997 to 18.3 % in 2001). Even though the Liberal Democrats did not reach its best historical result in number of votes (24.5 % in 1983 as Liberal/SDP Alliance), it gained the record-breaking profit of 52 seats.

As for the 2001 general election result in Scotland, Labour maintained its position with a 43.4 % share of vote which was an appreciable Scottish contribution to a clear, second-term Labour majority (see Table 2). The main regional divergence was again that in the Conservative performance. With the gain of 15.6 % share of vote, it was overtaken by Liberal Democrats and fell to be only the fourth strongest party in Scotland. However, despite the fell of votes by 1.9 % (from 17.5 % in 1997 to 15.6 % in 2001), it reclaimed at least one seat in Westminster as Scottish Tories had no representation in London after their wipe-out in

the 1997 UK General election in Scotland. The support for the Conservative Party recorded the greatest divergence in the electoral behaviour of the Scottish and English voters. Whereas the endorsement for the Labour Party was almost identical in both regions (with traditionally slightly higher Scottish support), the Conservative party in England has sustained as the second strongest party since its loss in the 1997 UK General election; in 2001 it received 35.2 % share of vote compared to the already stated 15.6 % votes in Scotland.

The second strongest party in Scotland thus reminded the SNP although its share of vote fell by 2.0 %. With the profit 20.1 % share of vote (compared to 22.1 % in 1997), the SNP received 5 seats losing one to the Tories. Liberal Democrats, as it was already mentioned, replaced the Conservative Party with the third highest number of votes and became the only main party in Scotland to gain share (from 13.0 % in 1997 to 16.3 % in 2001). However, its vote growth by 3,6% did not produce benefits in the form of extra seats in Westminster. The number of seats for Scottish Liberal Democrats thus remained again ten seats. In England, the support for the Liberal Democrats attained the similar figures as in Scotland. It also increased its vote share (from 18.0 % in 1997 to 19.4 %) which was reflected in the gain of six seats; having thus 40 English seats in Westminster. Compared to Scotland, the Liberal Democrats in England did not record such a sizable surge in preferences in the 2001 election. This might be explained by its continuously steadier gains in England where the Liberal Democrats have the average support of about 20 % share of votes for the last forty years.

The 2001 general election did not see any fundamental change in the Scottish politics with the intent that general elections in Scotland have been four-party contests since 1974 with Labour winning over a half of all seats. The Liberal Democrats finally managed to discomfit the Conservatives, pushing them into the fourth place in both, number of votes and number of seats for the first time. However, the more important contest, contrary to the Labour-Conservative competitions at UK level, persisted to be the one between the Labour Party and the SNP. As it had been generally presumed, the SNP performance in the general election was less of the success than its recent achievement in the first 1999 Scottish election. Therefore the Labour's sustainment of the lead over the nationalists was not really surprising. The SNP, in addition, suffered a loss of one seat at the expense of the Conservative candidate. This rather disappointing result of the SNP might be partly explained by the party's emphasis to succeed in the Scottish elections and that is the reason why the party had faced up the difficulty in motivating some of its supporters and activists for a Westminster contest.

The main divergence between the Scottish and English voting behaviour in the 2001 UK General election still lied in the strenght of support for the Conservative party.

The successive general election in 2005 in Scotland was influenced by new factors. The general election were held two years after the second election to Scottish Parliament in 2003 which extended the spectrum of the political parties represented in Holyrood with two new, uniquely Scottish parties, the Scottish Socialist Party and Scottish Green Party. But most importantly, 2005 was the first election to be conducted in Scotland's 59 new constituencies, which had been reduced from the original 72 constituencies in the previous election in order to level the number of the Scottish electorate per constituency with the English one. Consequently, this makes it very complicated to compare the 2005 election result with former general elections. Therefore, when comparing the electoral result of 2001 and 2005 UK general election in Scotland, I will work with the model notional results of the 2001 UK election developed by Denver et al (2004) which is used in the SPICe Briefing paper<sup>27</sup>. The 2001 notional results were calculated as if the election had been fought on the basis of the new boundaries.

At the national level of the 2005 UK general election, the Labour Party remained the strongest party in Westminster even though its vote fell by 5.5 % vote share. It won 355 of the 645 seats contested, which is 47 less compared to the notional 2001 gain of 402 seats. The gain of 35.2% share of vote is the lowest share of vote for a winning party in Westminster electoral history. The Conservatives, as the second strongest party, received the support of 32.3 % share of vote which was 0.6 % points than at previous general election in 2001. The profit of 197 seats in total improved Tories' representation in Westminster gaining 33 more seats. There has been an evident progressive tendency of a drop in votes and for the two strongest parties, Labour and the Conservatives, and at the same time there emerged to be the enhanced occurrence of the minor parties in British party system (Webb 2005, p. 757). This trend of the fragmentation of the UK party system has lead several authors to impugn the existence of the two-party system and instead refer to a "two-and-a-half party system in the national legislative arena and a clear multi-party system in the national electorate" (Webb 2005, p.758). The principal reason for such a finding has been induced by the electoral performance of the Liberal Democrats which won more than a fifth of the popular vote – 22.1% of the vote, up 3.8 % points and 62 seats; that is eleven more compared to the notional 2001 result.

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<sup>27</sup> **Herbert S., Burnside R., Wakefield S.** (2005)UK Election 2005 in Scotland, SPICe briefing, 05/28; [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

However, comprehension of the UK party system as the “two-and-a-half” system is absolutely misguided taken into the account Jean Blondel’s typology of party systems.<sup>28</sup> Blondel’s typology is based on the combination of the criterion of number of parties with the criterion of the party’s size. In a “two-and-a-half” party system there occurs, beside the two big parties, also the third smaller party which usually lies in the centre of the party spectrum. The third party is small electorally as well as parliamentary, nevertheless this party is very strong in terms of its influence on the operation of the party system. In case that none of the two parties is able to form a government, the third small party becomes the indispensable force for the formation of the government. Even though the share of vote for Liberal Democrats has been relatively high in last UK General elections and the number of its seats in Westminster has been significantly increasing, they can not be classified as the third small party in a “two-and-a-half” party system as they lack the necessary strength which would enable them to influence the government formation in Westminster. Even though UK General elections has seen the increased support for minor parties and the drop in share of votes for the two main parties, its party system remains explicitly bipartisan.

Other parties made a gain of three seats (with 10.4 % of the UK vote) compared to their 2001 notional return of 28 seats. Among the other parties, Plaid Cymru lost one seat; in total gaining three seats in Westminster and the SNP, despite the drop in the share of vote, achieved to poll six seats, a notional profit of two.

As it was already adverted to, the 2005 General election in Scotland was conducted on the basis of new boundaries, which were reduced to 59 seats instead of original 72. Accordingly, the comparison with 2001 general election outcomes has to be grounded on the notional 2001 results which are presented in Table 11.

The 2005 UK General Election in Scotland results recorded a number of similarities with the Britain-wide electoral shifts and at the same time showed some regional distinctness. Labour party retained its leadership position, even though its vote fell from 2001 notional 43.3 % to mere 38.9 % vote share in 2005. However, compared with the Labour’s performance in the rest of Britain, the support for the Labour Party in Scotland decreased in lesser extent. Concerning the Conservative party, it retained its one seat from the 2001 general election but from the 2001 notional result view, it meant a seat gained from Labour, though with only 0.2 % profit of votes compared to the last election. Otherwise the Conservatives have seen

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<sup>28</sup> Novák M (1997) *Systémy politických stran. Úvod do jejich srovnávacího studia*. Sociologické nakladatelství, Praha.

a continuous decline in number of votes since its wipeout in the 1997 UK General election. For the second time consecutively Tories ended up in failure to be only the fourth strongest party in Scotland.

The Liberal Democrats were the only one to markedly better their electoral performance as in Scotland they obtained the second highest share of vote as well as seats and got ahead the SNP. Paradoxically, despite the considerable increase of votes for the Liberal Democrats (a gain of 6.3 % votes compared to the 2001 notional result; see Table 11), the party was rewarded by mere two extra seats compared to the notional 2001 seat gain; compared to the 2001 actual gain it was even only one seat gain. In comparison with the party's achievement south of the border, where the party saw the four point rise, we can say that Scotland has relatively been the Liberal Democrats stronghold within the scope of 2005 UK General election.

The SNP fell to retain its position as the second strongest party in Scotland having been overtaken also in number of votes by the Liberal Democrats. Nonetheless, despite the 2.5 % drop of the SNP's votes compared to notional 2001 share of vote, the nationalists managed to increase the number of the won seats (+ 2 seats compared to notional 2001 seat gain) at the expense of the Labour Party.

The Scottish Socialist Party was somehow expected to gain more support after its successful performance in the 2003 Scottish election. However, in the 2005 Socialists even lost 1.1 % of its vote compared to its 2001 notional result (see Table 11). For another uniquely Scottish political party-The Scottish Green Party – was the 2005 UK General election the first Britain-wide contest. Although it only stood for election in 19 constituencies, its performance – the average gain of 3.4 % of the vote – indicated that the Scottish Greens might establish itself in the Scottish party system after the next Scottish Parliamentary election.

The 2005 UK General Election has produced so far the most pronounced discrepancy between the voting behaviour of the Scottish and English electorate. Traditionally, the greatest difference appeared to be the one in the gains of the Conservative Party. In Scotland, the Conservative Party – for the second time in a row – ended up as the fourth strongest party with the mere 15.8 % share of the vote while in England, with the electoral support of 35.7 % number of votes, the performance of the Conservatives was their best all over the UK. England then was the only region where the Tories even managed to win over the Labour Party and became the English strongest political force. The difference in share of



votes was almost striking 20 % points. The share of votes for the Labour Party fell in both regions; in Scotland by 4.4 % points and in England by 5.9 % points. The performance of the Labours has shown out the similar figures in both regions, however their positions in the party system of the respective region were not the same. As it was already stated, in England the Labour Party failed to retain its position as the strongest party having been slightly overtaken by the Conservatives (the difference in the share of votes between the Conservatives and the Labour comprised only 0.2 % points). In Scotland, on the other hand, despite of the decline in the share of votes – which was anyway lesser than the one in England, the Labour Party still remained unambiguously the strongest Scottish party. The electoral support for the Liberal Democrats moved upwards in both regions compared to the previous UK general election in 2001. In Scotland, the Liberal Democrats increased its share of votes by 6.3 % points compared to 3.5 % points in England, and eventually even became the second strongest party in Scotland after having discomfited the SNP. In England, the standing of the Liberal Democrats was the identical with the one on the UK level, i.e. it hold the position of the third strongest political party. The divergence of the electoral behaviour between England and Scotland is further accentuated by the existence of the relatively strong and well established nationalist party in Scotland, the SNP, which has been a serious political actor in general elections from the 1970s in Scotland. Such a parallel nationalist political party, however, has not occurred let alone succeeded in England.

**Table 11 The 2005 General Election Results in Scotland compared to the 2001 General Election *Notional* Results in Scotland**

	Seats won		Share of Vote		
	2001 (Notional)	2005	2001 (Notional)	2005	Change
Conservative	0	1	15.6	15.8	+0.2
Labour	45	40	43.3	38.9	-4.4
LibDem	9	11	16.4	22.6	+6.3
SNP	4	6	20.1	17.7	-2.5
SSP	0	0	3.0	1.9	-1.1
Other (incl. Speaker)	1	1	1.6	3.1	+1.5

By and large, the main feature of the divergence of the English and Scottish electoral behaviour in the 2005 UK General election has consisted in the completely adverse display of the support for the Conservative Party, together with the existence of the uniquely Scottish party, the SNP and at the same time the non-existence of the similar English party.

The regional diversities are continually well accentuated in the UK General election even in the after-devolution period. Comparing the voting behaviour of the English and Scottish electorate, the differences in the voters' party preferences are clearly evident and even ever-increasing. It is both, a sign of the progressive process of dealignment as well as the reflection of the different regional political attitudes on the UK level.

The process of dealignment, which started to be significant in the 1970s, has still had a great impact on the British party system. Since the 1970s the British electorate has disengaged from its class and partisan alignments as well as it happened to be more "nation-conscious". As a result, the British voters became more volatile with tendency to decide, who to vote according to short-term factors. The latter mentioned – new issue cleavages – appeared to be more evident in the British elections. Elections are increasingly decided on the basis of the main current issues dominating the political scene combined with the traditional political attitudes flowing also from the national background. The new political issues have been particularly concerned with all aspects of the European Union; various "moral-values" issues; environmentalism, Scottish and Welsh nationalism; race, ethnicity and immigration concerns; and last but not least the "foreign affair" issues (Dunleavy 2005, p 510). This development went along with a persistent drop in the degree of the voter loyalties to and disappointment with the two long-established main parties. In pursuance of these changes a number of minor parties came to an existence attempting to reflect actual voters' moods often concentrating on current issues in the British politics. The process of dealignment in the UK has always been emphasised by the regional distinctions, especially those related to the different political attitudes of the Scottish (as much of Welsh) voters on the one hand and the English voters on the other hand, which were discussed earlier in the paper. Therewithal, the accrual of the minor parties was also evoked by the emergence of the new parties in the devolved elections. Having relatively succeeded in the devolved electional contest, the regional parties were trying to seek support in the general elections (as a typical example might be considered the Scottish Socialist Party). Whereas, in Scotland (as well as in Wales) all parties has been set up on the regional grounds – regarded as exclusively Scottish, in England there has not been any equivalent historical progress as the English nationalism and the regional aspect have never assumed such an importance to establish the uniquely traditional English party system. Even though the English nationalism has started to grow stronger in the reaction to the process of the devolution, it has not had the crucial influence on political attitudes of

English electorate. Thus new minor political parties competing for England in last UK General elections were in most cases appealing to the British electorate.

The last 2005 UK General election has just witnessed the growth of the minor parties, which went hand in hand with protest voting against the major parties. Even though voters were making their decisions on the basis of the traditional electoral topics such as health service, tax/services, education or economy (see British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services 2005; House of Commons Library data), the war in Iraq represents the top issue for media as well as for political parties. Therefore all main established parties had to take a stand towards the war in Iraq as it was the kind of the current short-term issue voters were expected by media and politicians to make decision about. In addition, this topic has also entailed the rise of new single-issue political parties (for example Peace Party) or already relatively established minor parties adopted as their focal point the war in Iraq (for example Respect: The Unity Coalition, Green Party of England and Wales, Scottish Green Party and others). Other topics, though less important from voters' view, were the relationship with the European Union, immigration, asylum-seekers and refugees, law and order. To set an example, in the 2005 general election these were the main subjects in manifestos of the British National Party or the UK Independence Party which were both already well known parties from previous general elections. Except for minor parties based on the limited number of electoral issues, there were traditionally many regional parties. On the whole, the number of minor parties participating in the 2005 UK General election reached an all-time high of approximately 50 parties.

Taking into consideration that all these issues will not probably disappear from the political agenda of British politics as well as the uniquely national party systems of Scotland and Wales will continue to operate, the number of minor parties in next UK General elections will most likely not decline. Even though, in the 2005 UK General election minor parties gained in total 10.4% share of votes (i.e. 31 seats in Westminster), their representation in London is greatly distorted by the operation of the electoral system of the FPTP, which has been increasingly criticized particularly by the minor parties. Under the FPTP the breakthrough of minor parties to Westminster seems to be highly improbable, however, minor parties have managed to be acknowledged as the indispensable part of UK General elections (Webb 2005, pp 774-775).

### **3.3 How different is the behaviour of the Scottish electorate in UK General Elections compared to the elections to the Scottish Parliament?**

Having rendered account of the electoral behaviour of the Scottish voters in both, elections to the Scottish Parliament and in UK General Elections, I would now compare performances of the Scottish electorate in these two distinct political arenas. Does the performance of the Scottish electorate in the Scottish Parliament elections simply mirror their preferences which are being expressed in General elections or do Scottish voters vote in the way reflecting the context of devolution; e.g. the respective regional politics?

To evaluate the changes in the Scottish electoral behaviour from the UK level to the sub-national level, I will scan the latest results of the elections to the House of Commons in Scottish subunit between 2001 and 2005 compared with results from the devolved elections in the Scottish Parliament held in 1999 and 2003 (see Tables 2, 7, 10).

One of the main difference concerns surely the number of parties elected. In devolved elections to the Scottish body the party system resulted to be much larger with the vote more evenly distributed than the party system ensuing from General elections. In devolved elections in Scotland additional parties managed to gain the representation and overall electoral results were much more balanced on the basis of the proportion between the gained share of votes and seat percentage awarded, which means that the level of disproportionality was scaled down substantially, however, at the expense of the greater fractionalisation of the party system at the both the elective and parliamentary levels. This significant development was a result of the introduction of the proportional AMS electoral law in the devolved setting, which has had the indispensable psychological effect on Scottish voters. Under the new voting system Scottish voters realised they do not have to resort to the strategic voting (which they commonly used in General elections) to avoid wasting votes on parties that will not receive representation in parliament. Consequently, having understood that a prospect of a wasted vote is less likely under the kind of PR system used in devolved elections, Scottish voters expressed their political preferences openly – refraining from the tactical voting – which eventuated in the more than double size larger party system (particularly after the 2003 Scottish election) compared to the party system originated from elections for the House of Commons. This development to the multiparty politics in Scottish parliament might suggest that it was the implementation of the electoral rules which has shaped the new party system, however at the same time, it might be argued that the devolution has simply changed the context and politicized cleavages that were theretofore comprised in the wider context of

British politics. In the devolved context, these conflicts/cleavages do not have anymore the secondary status and are becoming the principle saliences for the region which eventuates in the greater number of political parties. Consequently voters cast their voice on issues relevant to Scottish politics. To confirm the assertion about the controversy of the electoral behaviour of Scottish voters in different political arenas, an evaluating comparison can be proceeded. Seeing that under the electoral law to the Scottish parliament – the Additional Member System – the both are incorporated, plurality aspects and proportional elements. By their first vote, Scottish voters elect a representative in the single-member plurality districts just like in the UK General Election. Therefore, due to this fact, we can compare the single-member districts in the devolved elections with the results from House of Commons elections and specify what caused the accrual of political parties; whether it is the consequence of the recently adopted electoral system or the result of the changed political context which entailed new relevant once eliminated cleavages. In case it is the electoral system which increased the number of political parties, then the electoral results in the single-member constituencies in the devolved system will be almost the same as those for UK elections; if responsibility lies with cleavages, a kind of evidence is expected to be reflected in the results from the devolved single-member districts (Bohrer – Krutz 2005, pp 661 – 663). I will compare the effective number of parliamentary parties in both elections (i.e. the number of parties which gain a representation in a legislative body); in the Scottish elections in 1999 and 2003 compared to the average figure of the latest UK elections in 1997 and 2005 For the calculation I applied the formula of Laakso and Taagapera where the  $E_v = 1 / \sum s_i^2$ , where  $s_i$  is the seat share gained by each party.<sup>29</sup>

The effective number of parliamentary parties in AMS single-member vote in the 1999 Scottish election was 1.77 and in the following election in 2003 it increased to 2.24; thus the average figure of the effective number of parliamentary parties in Scottish elections is 2.01. The average figure for UK General elections in Scotland in the period of 1997 to 2005 is 1.69.

Confronting the average figures of the effective number of parliamentary parties, the increase of the number of parties in Scotland has been affirmed. Even though the figure is not distinctively higher, it indicates that the grow of the political parties elected to the Scottish

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<sup>29</sup> Consequently, for instance, the calculation of the *effective number of parliamentary parties* for the 2003 Scottish parliamentary election is as follows:  $E_v = 1 / \sum (0.63^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.04^2 + 0.18^2 + 0.14^2)$ , which is approximately 2.2 . The calculation stems from the percentage seat share of each party. Hereby are calculated effective numbers of parliamentary parties in all elections.

parliament is not necessarily merely the result of the electoral formula but also it might be considered as the outcome of the cleavage pattern which appeared after the change in venue; i.e. the shift from the national to the sub-national level. This move produced the new, different issues, particularly those of nationalist parties.<sup>30</sup>

The operation of AMS electoral system is, however, much more evident in the overall devolved outcome, hereby approving the strong relation between the electoral formulas and the number of parties in party system. Including the results of PR list seats vote, the effective number of parliamentary parties in the overall Scottish devolved elections increases to 3.79. Not only did the number of political parties in the devolved party system increased but also the composition of the party system changed as a result of Scottish voters' reflection of the new electoral context with its own issues, which used to be marginalized at the national level. Hence the partly different distribution of support for the political parties is another distinction in the behaviour of the Scottish electorate in Scottish elections compared to UK General elections. At the subnational level, Scottish voters generally and logically support more "Scottish" parties compared to the General elections. The role of the SNP was thus reinforced thanks to the devolved elections after which it emerged as the second strongest party. As it was already mentioned, Scottish voters also tend to distribute their votes much evenly in contrast to the General elections (which is, in addition, markedly intensified by the electoral law) and thereby the winning party has only a little chance to gain an absolute majority of votes. As in General elections in Scotland, the winner of the devolved elections was the Labour party. However, its gains were not as high as those in UK General elections (taking into account the devolved arrangements) which caused the end of dominance for the Labour Party which was reduced to less than a majority of the seats in the new parliament. The support for the Conservative party in the Scottish devolved elections remained relatively the same as in the General elections in the Scottish subunit. In both cases, in contrary to its nationwide performance in UK elections, Conservatives slipped to third or even fourth position behind the SNP, actually behind the Liberal Democrats. Scottish voters thus only expressed anew their attitudes towards the Conservative Party, which under the operation of the devolved electoral system attained the position of the opposition party. The strong

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<sup>30</sup> As for Wales, the increase of the effective number of parliamentary parties was more outward ; the average figure of the effective number of parliamentary parties in the UK elections in Wales in the period from 1997 to 2005 is 1.32 whereas the same figure for Welsh National Assembly Elections in 1999 is 1.95 and in 2003 1.71, the average figure 1.83. The greater difference between the figures displays that in Wales the cleavage pattern was the important factor in increasing the number of parties. Contrary to Scotland, beside the nationalist cleavage, there was a relevant socio-linguistic cleavage.

position of the nationalist party and at the same time some weakening of the established all-British parties in the devolved setting are the most distinctive features contrasting the overall UK results. This emerged to be the new prevailing cleavage in the devolved system, the center-periphery cleavage (Lipset – Rokkan, 1976), whose main issue regards the extent of autonomy for Scotland. Each party thus took a stand towards a devolution and this issue became another specific and important topic for devolved elections. This implies that Scottish voters in the elections to the Scottish parliament decide who to vote on the basis of the different electoral issues than they do in the UK General elections and hereby the electoral behaviour of the Scottish voters reflects the type of elections.

In general terms, Scottish electorate vote differently to the Scottish devolved parliament and to the House of Commons. Under the AMS electoral law they tend to distribute their votes more evenly as they do not face the threat of wasting their votes markedly like under the national electoral system of the FPTP. At the same time the devolved electoral system itself facilitates to shape the larger party system, both at the elective and parliamentary levels. Other factors which conduced to the distinct party system were the change of venue and in particular different cleavage structure (e.g. the most relevant center-periphery cleavage) which produced the new electoral issues for voters participating in the devolved elections. These facts corroborate the view that the Scottish devolution with the establishment of the Scottish parliament enables Scottish citizens to pronounce their specific political will.

The sub-state elections such as the devolved elections to the Scottish parliament are often equated to the second-order elections as they *prima facie* bear similar features (see above Reif-Schmitt prepositions about SOE).

Since the devolved elections in Scotland are viewed as sub-state elections, there appeared a question whether it is entitling to identify them tacitly as second-order elections. Reif and Schmitt propound the three crucial features which should be typical of second order elections: firstly, the turnout in second order elections will be lower as less is at stake; secondly, voters tend to vote smaller or new parties corresponding to their ingenuous preferences, which they would not vote for in the first order arena by reason of wasting their vote; and last but not least, at midterm there will be a decline in support for the government parties from the first order arena while opposition parties win a greater support. The last proposition incorporates some principles of electoral cycles literature, particularly known from the US electoral politics. One of the explanations relates to the reduced turnout adverting to a fact that the opposition supporters are more resolved to express their disfavour for the government parties

than government supporters to voice their satisfaction. Another explanation, stated by Reif and Schmitt, points out that some government supporters might “vote for the opposition in secondary elections in order to apply pressure on the government, although not fundamentally changing their party allegiance“. Voters thus “punish“ their preferred party, being aware that they will vote again for it “when it really matters“ (Reif-Schmitt 1980, pp 9-10). The theory of first/ second order elections has been most frequently applied to the European election results, but only few analysis have been conducted to the other kinds of second-order elections. Having analysed Scottish devolved elections in detail, I would now discuss how far “second order“ they really are in relation to UK General elections in terms of the three defined propositions, i.e. turnout, performances of small parties and state-level government popularity. Do Scottish devolved elections fit to the pattern of subordination of the sub-state arena to the statewide one or have they adopted their own distinctive dynamics which detach them from the statewide electoral politics? Although this was already partly answered by comparison of Scottish voters’ electoral behaviour in the two types of elections, i will now focus on other features indicative of the character of devolved elections.

First proposition about second-order elections put forward by Reif and Schmitt refers to the electoral turnout. In second-order elections, it is expected it to be lower. This did happen. Electoral participation in Scotland fell to 59 % for the Scottish parliament poll in 1999 and to 49 % in 2003, compared with 71.3 % in the 1997 UK general election, 58.2 % at the 2001 general election and 60.6 % in 2005.

The second proposition analyses whether voters cast their votes primarily on the basis of consideration about the first order electoral arena (the typical example would be the greater amount of protest votes in local or European elections in case of general dissatisfaction with a national-level government). As it was already stated and proved by electoral outcomes, Scottish voters appeared to comprehend Westminster and Scottish parliament elections as constituting different electoral arenas. With the different electoral law as well as the newly emerged cleavages in Scottish politics, Scottish voters made their voting decisions mostly according to “what was going on in Scotland“. Devolution also introduced new sub-state institutions which took over extensive legislative competencies from Westminster in crucial areas like education, culture, public order and regional development. Logically, topics from these political spheres became the most relevant to be “at stake“ in Scottish parliament elections. Generally, Scottish voters spread their votes among the greater number of political parties, displaying the greater support than in UK elections particularly to the indigenous SNP



as well as other exclusively Scottish parties (e.g. SSP, Scottish Green Party) but at the same time they still support all-British political parties which have established respective regional wings with its own specific “Scottish agenda“.

The last of the preposition – a general anti-government trend – is closely connected with the previous point. It comes out of a premise that most of second order elections proceed in the midterm period for a national government, when governments are said to be the least-favoured. Consequently, the support for the governing parties will drop as voters tend to seize their opportunity to cast a protest vote, also due to the lesser importance of the election where voters are not really concerned about the actual outcome. This voters’ tendency has been observed in elections to the European Parliament (see for example Oppenhuis et al, 1996) which record a sizable level of protest voting . But is this trend valid also for the regional elections in Scotland? This preposition has been already partly superseded by the fact that Scottish voters do decide about their votes on the basis of “Scottish issues“ and do not embrace Scottish elections as the protest-vote elections against politics of Westminster. A kind of protest vote might be seen in the Scottish anti-conservatism, which was however apparent on a long-term basis in UK General elections in the Scottish sub-unit. Since the Conservative party is not the governing party anymore, its weak performance in Scottish devolved elections does not fit the pattern of the protest vote. In addition, the governing Labour party is generally popular in Scotland (even more than south of the border) and notwithstanding the fact it did not manage to gain the majority in the parliament (which was rather the effect of the electoral law), it has remained the strongest Scottish party for the both electoral terms. The decrease in its support (compared to its performance in General elections in Scotland) may be ascribed to voters’ “voting with the heart“- i.e. voting according to a voter’s genuine preference, non-strategically, whereto contributed PR electoral laws – who backed up other parties, in particular the SNP and Liberal Democrats. Nevertheless the emergence of new parties alone does not anticipate a substantial anti-government protest vote as it has been proposed by second-order elections theories.

Observing the principle implications of the second order elections theories on the example of Scottish parliament elections, it would be incorrect to label it straightaway as a “second order“ contest. Whereas some features set out by second order elections theory are evidently present in Scottish electoral arena – a lower turnout, a partly different party choice compared to the Westminster elections – there is a clear lack of other second order elections related traits , particularly anti – government stands. Conversely, Scottish voters have, above all,

displayed their understanding of Westminster and regional devolved elections as constituting different political arenas and hence Scottish parliament elections were primarily decided on grounds of Scottish, not a British, electoral topics. In any case, for Scottish voters there was not “less at stake“ in Scottish elections as it is anticipated in one of the second order elections proposition. In this respect, second order elections theories failed to provide a satisfactory explanation of elections to devolved institutions in Scotland as well as in Wales as they have proved to adopt their own dynamics diverging from the one in EP elections.

Some analysis seeking a more adequate explanation for the devolved elections than the one provided by the second order elections theories thus use a term *multi-level voting* (see e.g. Jeffrey-Hough 2001) to describe the characteristic features of electoral competition in regions. Multi-level voting comprises some of the second order implications (e.g. lower turnout), but at the same time it put the accent on other aspects such as relationship between the Westminster political arena and the one of devolved bodies. This encompasses parties’ performances at different electoral levels or electoral behaviour of voters in the two distinct polls. However, as the understanding of electoral behaviour in devolved UK still represents the relatively recent subject and further research and analysis have to be accomplished, it would be inconsiderate to draw any definite conclusions about the character and dynamics of the devolved elections in the UK.

### **3.4 Regional parallels in the electoral behaviour in UK general elections as well as in elections to devolved bodies**

As it was already suggested, Wales is viewed as a region which has displayed similar divergences in electoral behaviour in the same way like Scotland. The resemblance of electoral performances of Welsh and Scottish voters became the most apparent particularly in the period of devolution when two respective features emerged in their extent: nationalism and anti-conservatism. Even though these features have different grounds, their operation lead to the same developments, that is the establishment of democratic devolution resulting in the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales. However, unlike the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales did not gain the right to raise taxes and it introduced different electoral arrangements which generate less proportional results thanks to a proportion between the constituency representatives and those from regional party lists. Welsh Assembly consists of forty constituency members and another twenty elected from five

regional lists. As in Scotland, regional representatives are allocated via d'Hondt formula in order to attain greater proportionality (Jones-Scully 2006).

First, I will discuss the similarities of Welsh and Scottish electoral behaviour in UK General elections after establishment of devolved bodies in both regions; i.e. the fact whether the electoral behaviour of Welsh voters change in UK General elections in a crucial way in the new context of multi-level voting.

Generally speaking, the Labour party has admittedly retained its dominant position henceforth in the after-devolution period. Concerning performances of other parties in Wales in General elections, there was a noticeable accrual of support for the Welsh national party Plaid Cymru. In 2001 it even became the third strongest party with a gain of 14.3 % thus getting ahead of Liberal Democrats – traditionally the third strongest party in Wales in General elections. However, in the last General election in 2005 Liberal Democrats recorded a great increase in voters' support (an accrual from 13.8 % in 2001 to 18.4 % in 2005) and became again the third strongest party leaving behind Plaid Cymru. The second strongest party has remained the Conservative Party though its share of vote dropped markedly particularly from the 1992 General elections.

Two common features of the Welsh and Scottish electoral behaviour, nationalism and anti-conservatism, have thus remained in existence in the after-devolution period and even became more pronounced in respective regions. There were few slight differences in the electoral behaviour of Welsh and Scottish electorate in General elections, however, in the overall outcome they have not caused the different development of politics in these two regions. The position of the national party was much stronger in Scotland where the SNP has traditionally appealed to all voters cross the whole society whereas the Welsh Plaid Cymru has been oriented particularly to the limited Welsh-speaking group of the electorate. Therefore, the SNP in comparison with Plaid Cymru, has tended to gain a greater support and in the first General election after devolution in 2001 it actually obtained the second highest share of vote. The other difference concern the position of the Conservative party. In both regions, the support for the Conservative Party has – after the establishment of devolved bodies – fallen considerably. In Scotland the failure of the Conservative Party seems to be a gradual trend which started in the period of the Conservative government in the 1980s whereas in Wales the Conservative party was always weak and has remained even weaker after the devolution progress. Eventually, the Conservative party in Scotland became the fourth strongest party with a gain of 15.8 % share of vote in the 2005 General election

compared to the gain of the 21.4 % share of vote in Wales in the same election. Notwithstanding these slight differences, the overall tendency of the Welsh and Scottish electoral behaviour after devolution is similar and at the same time diverse from the all UK electoral trends: in both regions the Labour Party has a prevalent position (its position is much outright than at the UK level) while the national parties detract relatively voters' support for the Conservative party. Consequently, it seems that the establishment of the devolved bodies has also influenced the electoral behaviour of the Welsh and Scottish voters in General elections. Even though both national parties have logically been more successful in the regional elections, the rise in their support was partly reflected also in after-devolution General elections.

The inaugural elections to the Welsh National Assembly and to the Scottish Parliament held simultaneously in May 1999 represent the unique opportunity to compare both elections in terms of the voting behaviour of the Welsh and Scottish voters who have hitherto displayed similar voting tendencies. Elections to devolved bodies thus might reveal in detail parallels as well as diversities in Welsh and Scottish electoral behaviour to the full also thanks to the electoral system used in devolved elections. Since the Scottish case was already analysed, I would now discuss elections and related issues in Wales.

In the first devolved election in Wales in May 1999 (see Table 12), the strongest party – according to the general anticipation – was the Labour Party with the gain of 36,5 % share of vote. However, having a hegemonic position in Wales for most of the twentieth century, the first National Assembly election in Wales meant a shock for the Labour party in Wales as its dominant position was baffled by the Welsh national party Plaid Cymru. It was just Plaid Cymru which saw the best election performance as it obtained far more votes, and much higher share of votes (29.5 %), than in any electoral contest before. The first devolved election in Wales proved that one of its first consequence was an electoral rise of Welsh

Table 12 **National Assembly for Wales elections in 1999 and 2003**

	Number of Votes		Share of Vote (%)		Change (%)	Seats won		Change
	1999	2003	1999	2003		1999	2003	
Labour Party	746,328	651,173	36.5	38.3	+1.8	28	30	+2
Plaid Cymru	602,620	347,836	29.5	20.5	- 9.0	17	12	-5
Conservative Party	330,339	332,157	16.2	19.5	+3.3	9	11	+2
Liberal Democrats	265,865	228,233	13.0	13.4	+0.4	6	6	
Other	99,930	140,556	4.9	8.3	+3.4	0	1	+1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,045,082</b>	<b>1,699,955</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>-</b>

Sources: *British Electoral Facts, Parliamentary Research Services; House of Commons Library data*

nationalism. Paradoxically, one of the aim of the process of devolution was to moderate the manifestation of nationalism in Scotland. The electoral outcome of the first devolved election in Scotland is very similar to the one in Wales, however, in Scotland the success of the SNP did not come as such a shock (due to its position before the devolved election) as it did in Wales. Similarly, the Conservative Party in both, Scotland and Wales, ended up as the third strongest party behind the adequate national party, either Plaid Cymru or the SNP, with almost same gain of vote share followed by the fourth strongest Liberal Democrats.

The second devolved elections in Wales has brought a new development concerning positions of the two strongest party (see Table 12). In fact the final results of the 2003 election to National Assembly for Wales were again identical even though progress of voting behaviour had diverse tendencies. In both regions, it was repeatedly the Labour Party which obtained the highest share of vote. In Wales, compared to the first devolved election in 1999, the Labour party improved its position of the leading party (38.3 %) which was also significantly sustained by the drop of Plaid Cymru by 9 % of the vote share compared to its gains in 1999. Conversely, in Scotland the Labour Party lost 4.2 % of vote share as against in 1999; nevertheless it remained the strongest party in the Scottish Parliament whereas the SNP, analogous to Plaid Cymru, fell by almost 6 % of the vote share. Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in Wales as well as in Scotland retained their positions, both increasing slightly their shares of votes. What appeared to be the new trend in 2003 devolved elections common to both regions was the emergence of “other“ parties which successfully enticed away support from the two strongest party; in Wales particularly from Plaid Cymru, in Scotland from the Labour party together with the SNP.

Analysing electoral outcomes of devolved elections to the National Assembly for Wales, we can conclude that there exists obvious parallel with the electoral behaviour of Scottish voters to their Scottish Parliament. Although tendencies of the respective electorate might draw apart in the course of time, some common features in Welsh and Scottish electoral behaviour are traceable after the two devolved elections held simultaneously in 1999 and 2003. These are the highest support for the Labour party (though lesser than in General Elections), generally strong performance of national parties (considerably better than in General Elections) and lastly, the weak position of the Conservative party (again particularly compared to its UK position).

#### **4. Conclusion**

As it was already stated in the introduction, the aim of my thesis was to explain specific features of the Scottish electoral behaviour in the context of UK General elections as well as its development under the process of the devolution and consequently in the newly established Scottish parliament elections.

Undoubtedly, the voting behaviour of the Scottish electorate has always distinguish from the overall British electoral tendencies. The extent of its distinctness, however, has been changing in the course of time reflecting its relations to UK governments as well as its respective development.

Describing the development of the Scottish society and its electoral attitudes in time horizon as well as in the wider context of the United Kingdom, the electoral divergence of the Scottish behaviour seems to have its origing in the existence of the different political values, in particular those such as the different perception of the role of the state in Scottish society. These different political values began to be more salient when the politics of the UK government fell to maintain the post-war welfare state, which appealed to all nations of the country and thus, at the same time, made the "Unionism" appeal more acceptable for them. Scotland, despite the fact it saw the same development in the social structure in the period of the dealignment as the rest of the country, which caused the extension of the middle class to the detriment of the working class, has retained more leftist, socialist and collectivist in political values in contrast to the rest of the United Kingdom. The great electoral divergence, which emerged in the 1970s with the electoral success of the Scottish National Party (SNP) should be hence understood primarily not as the appeal for the extreme nationalism or

the demand for the Scottish independence but it should be rather seen as the consequence of the different Scottish values, which do not fit into the Anglo-British scheme of the conservatism and nationalism of the 1980s. The SNP gained its success because it represented the alternative to the traditional all-British parties, which has been losing its popularity in the course of time. Scotland simply wanted to draw upon the post-war tradition of the welfare state with the strong state position and its established institutions. Therefore, the most distinctive electoral results are those of the 1980s, when the Conservatives with its strongly anti-state programme were dominantly winning General elections whereas in Scotland the strongest party appeared to be the Labour Party, which managed to adopt the party programme which was able to compete with the similar leftist standpoints of the SNP.

At the moment when the performance of the Scottish electorate diverted the most from the overall UK figures, the claims for some kind of constitutional change became more accentuated in Scotland. The Labour party reflecting the general mood of the Scottish electorate adopted to its programme the right of devolution for Scotland while the SNP moved towards the claim for the Scottish independence. Despite the fact that the implementation of the devolution was not actually initiated until the victory of the Labour Party in the 1997 General election, it has to be seen as the culmination of the constant development of the Scottish electorate and its relation to the UK politics.

Next, I discussed the impact of the process of devolution on the Scottish electorate. Scottish voters do evidently make difference between their vote in General elections and the vote to the Scottish Parliament. The principle of the different performance of the Scottish electorate in Scottish Parliament election has stemmed from various foundations. Undoubtedly, one of the most conclusive influence has had the mixed electoral system of Additional Member, strictly speaking, its psychological effect on voters who under the operation of the AMS have tended to vote "from heart" in contrast to the tactical voting under the FPTP in General elections. As a result, the party system of Scotland comprises the greater number of parties compared to the UK party system. Not only the size of the Scottish party system but also its constitution varies from the UK level. In general, indigenous Scottish political parties were those to profit the most from the elections to the newly established Scottish Parliament together with the – in Scotland – traditionally strong Labour Party. At the same time there appeared a new trend also in the UK politics. It was a growing number of minor parties competing in UK General level. However, in contrast to the Scottish parliament elections

where under AMS more parties managed to become parliamentary parties, in Westminster – even though the number of electoral parties increased significantly, the number of parliamentary parties remained unchanged due to the reducing effect of the FPTP electoral system.

Devolved elections to Scottish Parliament obviously demonstrated that they are the first order elections for the Scottish electorate as they confronted Scottish voters with issues which were explicitly Scottish within the UK scope. Beside traditional all-British political parties which accommodated their programmes to the Scottish political scene and the established national party (SNP), the number of new indigenous Scottish political parties began to operate in Scotland. Even though the Labour Party retained its position of the strongest Scottish party, its share of votes won in devolved elections substantially dropped just at the moment new Scottish parties managed to break through. This development was in evidence particularly in the 2003 Scottish parliament election.

Discussing the regional specificity of the Scottish electoral behaviour, I also referred to the regional parallel with the electoral behaviour of Welsh voters. In the period of the devolution Wales was the region which – together with Scotland – mostly deviated from the overall UK electoral results. It recorded same features as the Scottish electoral behaviour, i.e. the strong anti-conservatism and nationalism which was reflected in the growing support for national party (in Wales Plaid Cymru). Even though the origin of the nationalism in these two regions has different roots, it has led to the identical development in both respective regions. Similar to Scotland, the democratic devolution in Wales ended in the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales which, however, compared to the Scottish Parliament, is weaker in its competence. Elections to the National Assembly for Wales proceeded at one time with devolved elections in Scotland. Generally, the Welsh electorate has shown the similar electoral tendencies as voters in Scotland, such as, on one hand, the strong support for the Labour Party and national parties and the weak position of the Conservative party on the other.



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