

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 1999: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

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The Scottish devolution saga, which had involved two referendums, brought about the downfall of a government in 1979 and dominated political debate in Scotland for a generation, entered a new phase on 6 May 1999 when the first elections to the newly-established Parliament were held. The elections attracted attention well beyond Scotland. Partly this was because of their historic significance - they would determine the composition of the first parliament to sit in Scotland for almost three hundred years - but it was also because the electoral system which had been adopted involved, for the first time in Britain (along with the elections to the Welsh National Assembly held on the same day), an element of proportional representation. There was considerable interest, therefore, in how voters would react to an unfamiliar system and in how the system would affect the make-up of the Parliament.

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Electors were asked to cast two votes for the Parliament. The first was to elect a constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) under the familiar first-past-the-post rules. The constituencies defined for UK general elections each returned an MSP except that Orkney and Shetland was split into two thus giving a total of 73 constituency members. In addition, however, the country was divided up into eight regions (the then current Euro constituencies) each of which elected 7 'additional members' or 'top up' MSPs (making 129 MSPs in total). In these areas each party nominated a list of candidates, and electors simply voted for one or other of the lists. The procedure by which top up seats were allocated is cumbersome to describe but not difficult to grasp. Each party's list vote total in the region concerned was first divided by the number of constituency seats that it had already won

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plus 1. The party which now had most votes was awarded the first additional seat, the candidate in highest place on the list who had not already been elected being awarded the seat. That party's original list total was then divided by 2 (number of seats won plus one) and the next additional seat awarded to the party which then had the highest total. This procedure then continued until all seven additional seats were allocated.

This electoral system makes it very difficult for a single party to gain a majority of seats in the Parliament. The better it does in the constituency contests the fewer top up seats will be gained and no party is likely to win 65 of the constituency seats. The system was adopted in order to make the Parliament more representative of Scottish opinion than would be possible under first-past-the-post alone and therefore more widely accepted, although some commentators suggested that the government's motives might also have included the more specific aim of minimizing the chances that the SNP could gain a majority of seats and press for independence. Not unexpectedly, the introduction of a new double-vote system led to problems for returning officers and others administering the elections with some counts being very heavily delayed. On the other hand, it opens up new possibilities for electoral analysts, as will be seen below.

THE OVERALL RESULT

Table 1 shows the result of the elections for Scotland as a whole. As the left hand side of the table shows, if the election had been conducted under the usual rules the result would have been a clear Labour victory. With just under 39 per cent of the votes - a decline of 6.8 points from the 1997 general election - Labour captured 53 of the 73 first-past-the post seats. The Conservative share of votes fell to a yet another new low (15.5% as compared with 17.5% in 1997) and for the second successive election they were unable to win a single first-past-the-post seat in Scotland. The Liberal Democrats increased their vote share from 13.0% to 14.2% and picked up two additional seats (one of which resulted from Orkney and Shetland now constituting two separate constituencies) while the SNP rose from 22.1% to 28.7% but added only one seat to their tally. The 'Other' seat was won by Dennis Canavan, the dissident Labour MP in Falkirk West, who had been denied the opportunity to stand as a Labour candidate but contested the seat as an Independent and won an overwhelming victory with 55.0% of the vote to Labour's 18.8%..

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Table 1
The distribution of votes and seats in Scotland 1999

	Constituencies		Regional Lists		Total Seats
	Share of Votes %	Seats Won	Share of Votes %	Seats Won	
Conservative	15.5	0	15.4	18	18
Labour	38.8	53	33.6	3	56
Lib Dem	14.2	12	12.4	5	17
SNP	28.7	7	27.3	28	35
Others	2.7	1	11.3	2	3

There is clear evidence in the table that many electors who had voted for one of the major parties in the constituency elections switched to minor parties in the list voting. Especially noteworthy is the fact that whereas Labour obtained 38.8% of the constituency votes they fell to 33.6% of the list votes. 'Others' appear to have been the beneficiaries of this switching especially the Green Party (3.6% of list votes), the Socialist Labour Party (2.4%) and the Scottish Socialist Party (2.0%). The topping up process worked as expected with the SNP winning 28 seats, the Conservatives 18, the Liberal Democrats 5 and Labour only 3. In addition, the Scottish Socialist Party picked up a seat in Glasgow and a Green Party candidate was elected in Lothians. As a result, the distribution of seats in the Parliament is much more representative of the distribution of party support among the voters than would have been achieved using only a first-past-the-post system. As a consequence, however, no party has an overall majority and immediately after the election Labour and the Liberal Democrats set about hammering out an agreement that would enable the two to govern Scotland together. A week after the election, a coalition arrangement was agreed with two Liberal Democrats holding cabinet positions.

These results once again proved something of an embarrassment for opinion pollsters. In seven polls conducted by the major polling firms (MORI, ICM, NOP and System Three) after 22 April the average constituency voting intentions were 12% for the Conservatives, 45% for Labour, 10% for the Liberal Democrats and 31% for the SNP. Labour and SNP support was

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clearly overestimated in the polls and Conservative and Liberal Democrat support underestimated. There were similar errors in figures given for voting intentions relating to the regional lists. Even the poll undertaken by ICM for the BBC's election night results programme, which involved some interviewing on the day of the election itself, followed the same pattern putting the Conservatives on 13%, Labour on 42%, the Liberal Democrats on 12% and the SNP on 30%. In general, and not unexpectedly, the polls had difficulty in correctly estimating the level of support for 'Others' especially on the list vote.

VOTING IN CONSTITUENCY CONTESTS

We begin our analysis of voting by looking at the results of the elections in the 73 constituency contests. In this case, interest centres on variations in party performances across the constituencies and regions and on comparing the results in the Scottish Parliament election with those in the general election of 1997. First, we consider regional variations in party support.

In electoral terms, Scotland is not a unity. Rather, party strengths and the pattern of party competition vary markedly in different parts of Scotland. This is illustrated in table 2 which shows the shares of votes obtained by the parties in 1999 in the four cities and in 12 different 'regions' of the country (for details of the composition of these 'regions' see the Appendix). The Conservatives occupy third place or worse in each of the cities and failed to achieve 20% of the votes in any of them. In the more rural areas they are second only in Perthshire and Angus and the Borders. Across the populous central belt, from Fife in the east to Ayrshire in the west, they must be viewed as a minor party, exceeding 20% (just) only in Ayrshire and gaining a derisory 7.7% in Glasgow. The Conservatives have been replaced as Scotland's second party over the past few elections by the SNP which in the 1999 elections was either first or second in terms of popular support in all four cities and in every other area apart from the Highlands and Islands and the Borders. In contrast, there are marked regional variations in Liberal Democrat performance. As can be seen, in these elections they were very weak in Dundee (8.5%) and Glasgow (6.6%) and across much of the central belt, with less than 10% of the vote in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, the Lothians and Central Scotland. On the other hand, the Liberal Democrats have concentrations of support in some areas. They were the most popular party in the Highlands and Islands and the Borders and in second place in North East Scotland. This enabled them to win 10 seats in these areas (the other two victories being in Edinburgh and Fife). In terms of winning first-past-the-post

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seats the Liberal Democrat vote is more effectively distributed than support for the SNP. The latter's share of the vote was more than double that of the Liberal Democrats but was relatively evenly spread across the country. As a consequence they received a poor reward for their overall performance, winning only seven constituency seats when strict proportionality would have given them 21. Despite falling back from their general election performance Labour remains the dominant party in Scotland. There are a few areas of relative weakness - in rural constituencies to the north and east of Perth and in the Borders - but across most of Central Scotland Labour support is very substantial, approaching 50% in Glasgow and Lanarkshire.

Table 2
Party shares of votes in cities/regions 1999 (%)

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	No. of Constits
Aberdeen	15.1	33.9	23.0	27.2	3
Dundee	12.8	40.5	8.5	35.6	2
Edinburgh	19.0	37.3	18.7	23.5	6
Glasgow	7.7	49.7	6.6	28.7	9
Highlands & Islands	12.1	27.5	32.1	26.5	7
North East Scotland	23.1	16.2	24.9	33.8	4
Perth & Angus	28.4	19.4	9.9	42.2	3
Fife	12.2	43.0	16.5	26.7	5
Central Scotland	13.1	36.0	7.2	29.1	4
Lothians	10.6	48.1	9.3	31.2	4
Lanarkshire	10.3	49.8	8.6	29.5	9
Renfrewshire	17.1	41.4	11.9	26.2	5
Dunbartonshire	14.2	46.9	11.2	27.4	3
Ayrshire	20.5	44.9	6.4	28.2	5
Borders	23.1	18.9	38.0	20.0	2
Dumfries & Galloway	28.6	28.9	13.4	29.1	2

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Notes: These 'regions' do not correspond to those used for list voting in the elections. See the Appendix for details. Rows do not total 100 because votes for 'others' are not shown.

Table 3 details changes in party support in 1999 as compared with the 1997 general election. Overall, as noted above, the main changes were a decline in Labour's share of the vote (-6.8%) and an increase in the SNP's share (+6.6%). The Liberal Democrats recorded a small increase in support (+1.2%) while the Conservatives fell even further (-1.9%) from their disastrous showing in 1997. These changes were far from uniform across the country, however.

Table 3
Changes in party shares of votes in cities/regions 1997-99

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	No. of Constits
Aberdeen	-5.5	-9.8	4.1	11.6	3
Dundee	-1.7	-11.9	2.6	10.7	2
Edinburgh	-4.0	-5.0	0.3	8.8	6
Glasgow	-0.7	-10.8	0.2	8.8	9
Highlands & Islands	-1.8	-1.0	0.5	2.9	7
North East Scotland	-5.1	3.6	-0.3	1.8	4
Perth & Angus	-1.5	2.2	1.4	-0.9	3
Fife	-2.3	-4.6	-1.4	8.2	5
Central Scotland	-5.3	-15.7	1.7	5.3	4
Lothians	-2.7	-5.7	1.2	7.5	4
Lanarkshire	-0.2	-10.1	1.9	8.6	9
Renfrewshire	-0.8	-9.4	1.9	6.0	5
Dunbartonshire	-2.8	-5.6	1.9	7.4	3
Ayrshire	1.3	-9.1	1.6	7.5	5
Borders	0.2	-2.6	-0.5	5.6	2
Dumfries &	-0.6	-4.3	4.4	2.4	2

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Galloway

Scotland -2.0 -6.8 1.2 6.6 73

Note: These 'regions' do not correspond to those used for list voting in the elections. See the Appendix for details.

Despite an overall decline of 2% the Conservatives actually improved their position in Ayrshire (largely, but not entirely, because of the result in Ayr) and the Borders. Disregarding Central Scotland, where the figures are affected by the unusual circumstances in Falkirk West, their vote declined most sharply in Aberdeen, North East Scotland and Edinburgh. These are areas in which the Conservatives had above average support in 1997 so that they still had votes to lose. Intriguingly, however, the Conservative decline was below average in Perth and Angus - their best region in 1997. Compared with the general election Labour lost 6.8% in Scotland as a whole but the decline reached double figures in Dundee, Glasgow and Lanarkshire. The poor performance in Glasgow may be accounted for by the challenge of the Scottish Socialist party which took 6.7% of the vote (up from 2.7% in 1997) but the Dundee and Lanarkshire figures may reflect public discontent with Labour's running of local government in these areas. At the other end of the scale, Labour improved its position in its weaker areas of Perth and Angus and North East Scotland. The two strongest Liberal Democrat regions are the Borders and North East Scotland but in both, despite a small overall improvement (+1.2%), they slipped back a little as compared with 1997, as they did in Fife. The biggest increases in Liberal Democrat support came at opposite ends of the country - in Dumfries and Galloway and Aberdeen. The SNP advanced by 6.6% but their improvement was markedly greater in the cities, where they are now clearly the major threat to Labour dominance. On the other hand, the SNP vote declined in their strongest area - Perth and Angus - which might indicate that they have hit a ceiling in support beyond which it is difficult to advance.

We turn now to variations in party support at constituency level. In this part of the analysis we have excluded the Falkirk West constituency and have assumed that in Orkney and Shetland the distribution of party support in 1997 and of census characteristics was the same in the separate constituencies as it was in the UK parliamentary constituency.

In broad terms, variations in party strength across constituencies in the Scottish Parliament election were very similar to the kinds of patterns that are seen in general elections. This is illustrated by the fact that there were very strong correlations between the shares of the vote received by the parties in

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the various constituencies in 1997 and 1999. The figures were 0.952 for the Conservatives, 0.959 for Labour, 0.954 for the Liberal Democrats and 0.883 for the SNP (N=72 in all cases). The correlation coefficients tell us that where each party was relatively strong in the general election it was also relatively strong in the Scottish election; where it was relatively weak in 1997 it was also relatively weak in 1999. This familiar geographical structuring of the vote is, of course, in part a product of variations in the social make-up of constituencies but this is far from the whole story.

Table 4
The correlates of party support in constituencies in 1999

	Con	Lab	Lib.Dem	SNP
% Professional and Managerial	0.403	-0.235	0.183	-0.278
% Manual workers	-0.333	0.095	-0.065	0.282
% owner occupiers	0.566	-0.470	0.362	-0.218
% private tenants	0.173	-0.455	0.371	-0.069
% local authority tenants	-0.577	0.617	-0.485	0.223
% young people aged 18-29	-0.421	0.350	-0.226	0.121
% old people aged 75 +	0.288	-0.266	0.176	-0.177
% employed in agriculture	0.412	-0.747	0.594	-0.035
persons per hectare	-0.381	0.399	-0.277	-0.039
% households with no car	-0.575	0.614	-0.458	0.087
% ethnic minority	-0.180	0.185	-0.161	0.036

Note: Coefficients printed in bold are statistically significant, $p < .05$.

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Table 4 shows how the parties' vote shares in 1999 correlate with a variety of social variables. Variations in the level of Conservative support across constituencies are related to the social characteristics of constituencies much as would be anticipated. The more middle class a constituency (% professional and managerial) the bigger the Conservative vote and the more working class a constituency (% manual workers) the smaller their vote. Housing patterns - the percentage of owner occupiers and of council tenants - are even more strongly related to Conservative support, although the percentage of private tenants has no significant effect. Conservative support is also stronger where there are more older people and weakens the more young people there are in a constituency. A simple perusal of election results shows that the Conservatives are generally stronger in rural areas and weaker in more urban areas - and especially weak in inner cities. This is reflected in the coefficients for % employed in agriculture and persons per hectare, the latter being a good measure of the position of constituencies on a rural-urban dimension. The percentage of households with no car is an indicator of the general level of prosperity or poverty in a constituency and, as can be seen, has a strongly negative association with the size of the Conservative vote. On the other hand, the proportion of the population belonging to ethnic minorities does not correlate significantly with Conservative vote share - or, indeed with the level of support for any of the parties. This is because in Scotland ethnic minority voters are concentrated in a very small number of seats - in most their numbers are tiny.

The pattern of support for Labour is almost a mirror image of that for the Conservatives but two differences are worth noting. First, Labour's vote is relatively weakly related to the class composition of constituencies - and, indeed, is not significantly related to the percentage of manual workers. This is because in constituencies with large proportions of manual workers Labour is frequently in contention not with the Conservatives but with the SNP. Secondly, Labour does worse the more private tenants there are. Here, while the coefficient for the Conservative vote is not significant, that for the Liberal Democrats is. This means that while Labour does worse the more private tenants there are it is the Liberal Democrats, not the Conservatives who do better. In general, however, Liberal Democrats and Conservatives tend to do better or worse in the same sorts of constituencies. The significant coefficients for the two parties are all in the same direction, although those for the Liberal Democrats are mostly weaker. The two exceptions are percentage privately renting and percentage employed in agriculture. The distinction between rural and urban areas makes an even bigger difference to the level of Liberal Democrat support than it does to the Conservatives.

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What is striking about SNP support is the fact that it is not structured very strongly at all by these social and economic characteristics of constituencies. Only two coefficients are statistically significant and they indicate relatively weak associations between the size of the SNP vote and the variables measuring the class composition of constituencies. In general, therefore, the party attracts a similar level of support in all types of constituencies. This is a major handicap in trying to win seats under the first-past-the post electoral system but not a problem with a more proportional system.

Changes in party support between the general election and the Scottish election were, of course, greater in individual constituencies than in the regions already discussed. The Conservatives, for example, increased their vote share in 13 constituencies, doing best in Ayr where they rose by 4.2%. On the other hand, they declined by 7% in Stirling. Labour's biggest fall was in Glasgow Baillieston (-18.1%) but they rose by 6.7% in Moray. The Liberal Democrats slumped by 13.4% in North East Fife (a seat which they have held at held at UK level since 1987) but increased by 15.4% in Orkney and 12.4% in Greenock and Inverclyde. Finally, the SNP's best performance was in Baillieston (+15.6%) and their worst in Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (-4.6%).

Changes in vote shares in individual constituencies were related to the local tactical situation, as indicated by the 1997 constituency results. Table 5 shows that the Conservatives did worst in constituencies in which they were in second place in 1997 - whether to Labour (-2.7%), the Liberal Democrats (-2.6%) or the SNP (-2.3%). This is probably because they still had votes to lose in these seats. Where they were out of contention and had, therefore, fewer votes to lose, their decline was smaller. The same reasoning probably explains the fact that Labour lost most heavily where they were in first place in 1997 and actually gained votes in places where they came third in the general election. The most striking feature of the figures for the Liberal Democrats is that they dropped substantially in seats which they held from the Conservatives (-7.4%) but increased significantly in those where Labour were their main rivals (+4.4%). The change in SNP support varied sharply across the different types of constituency. Their increase was greatest in Labour-held seats but their support fell (-2.2%) in seats that they held from the Conservatives. Changes in the 42 seats that Labour held from the SNP in 1997 can be explored in a little more detail. In the 14 with the smallest majorities (below 30%) the Labour vote declined by an average of only 5.5% and the SNP increased by 6.0%; in the 14 seats with the largest Labour majorities (more than 37.5%) the Labour decline was much steeper (-12.7%) and the SNP advance greater (+9.5%). Labour managed to hold on better,

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therefore, where there was even an outside chance that they could lose the seat to the SNP.

The data in table 5 suggest that the parties tended to do worse where they were already strong and this is amply confirmed by correlation analysis. When we relate share of vote in the 1997 election to change in share between 1997 and 1999 we find that the coefficients are -0.277 for the Conservatives, -0.787 for Labour -0.274 for the Liberal Democrats and -0.601 for the SNP. The negative signs mean that the stronger a party was in a constituency in 1997 the greater was its decline in 1999. All of the coefficients are statistically significant but in the case of Labour and the SNP the relationship is particularly strong. Quite why all parties lost most heavily in their stronger areas is difficult to explain. It may be, however, that this is connected to the decline in turnout between the two elections. Non-voters are likely to be less interested in politics and less committed to a party than those who vote regularly. It is plausible to suggest that when they do vote (in a general election) they tend to side disproportionately with the locally dominant party. Whatever the cause of this pattern the clear effect is to make Scottish constituencies more marginal. Whereas only 9 constituencies had majorities under 10% in 1997 there were 19 in 1999 and while 52 had majorities greater than 20% in 1997 this was true of only 18 in 1999.

Table 5
Changes in Party Shares of Votes According to Tactical Situation in Constituency

	Lab/Con	Lab/SNP	Lib Dem/ Con	Lib Dem/ Lab	SNP/Con
Change in:					
% Con	-2.7	-1.3	-2.6	-1.4	-2.3
% Lab	-7.7	-9.0	2.4	-3.2	3.2
% Lib Dem	2.1	1.7	-7.4	4.4	3.2
% SNP	9.0	8.1	6.6	1.6	-2.2
N of seats	12	42	5	5	6

Notes: Figures shown are means. Constituencies are divided according to the parties which were in first and second places in the 1997 general election. Only two constituencies, in which Labour and the Liberal Democrats were in the first two places, are excluded (in addition to Falkirk West).

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The question of how the parties' vote shares changed between 1997 and 1999 relative to one another is addressed by the data in table 6. This shows correlation coefficients measuring the association between changes in vote share for each pair of parties (and others). Labour and Conservative changes were negatively related - where one went up (or declined less) the other went down (or declined more). Otherwise changes in the Conservative vote were not significantly related to changes in the other parties' performances. Changes in Labour's share of the vote in constituencies also varied inversely with changes in support for both the Liberal Democrats and the SNP. Labour appears to have suffered in particular at the hands of the SNP but they also lost support where 'others' - in particular left-wing parties - did best. The Liberal Democrats were also disadvantaged by the plethora of parties contesting the elections but the SNP and 'others' tended to move in tandem, suggesting that both were benefiting from a move away from Labour.

Table 6
Correlations between changes in shares of the vote 1997-99

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP
Lab	-0.243	-		
Lib Dem	-0.089	-0.379	-	
SNP	-0.113	-0.682	-0.149	-
Other	-0.085	-0.364	-0.315	0.247

Note: N=72; statistically significant coefficients are printed in bold (p< .05).

Finally in this section it is worth considering the possible effect of the sex of candidates on constituency results. The idea that there should be equal numbers of men and women MSPs was widely canvassed in the discussions which led to the establishment of the new Parliament but legal problems prevented any moves to this effect being included in the relevant legislation. Nonetheless Labour adopted a selection process which involved 'twinning' constituencies with one selecting a man and the other a woman, the aim being to have women candidates in as many winnable seats as men. The Liberal Democrats balked at limiting the freedom of their constituency associations in this way but nonetheless announced that they would make informal arrangements to give women a fair chance of selection. The Conservatives and the SNP did not make any special arrangements.

A very preliminary and simple test of the relative performance of men and women candidates is given in table 7 which shows the mean changes in the

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parties' vote shares according to the sex of the candidate in the 1997 general election and the 1999 election. The Conservatives did slightly better than average in constituencies in which they switched from having a male to a female candidate (-1.0%), and slightly worse where there was a change from female to male (-2.9%). New women SNP candidates also did better than average (+8.0%). On the other hand, the change in vote share for the Liberal Democrats in seats where women replaced men was on average 2.5% worse than it was in those where men contested both elections. Among Labour candidates - Labour having been the party which most enthusiastically espoused improved representation for women - the average change in share of the vote was 8.7% down where women replaced men compared with 5.8% where men contested on both occasions and only 2.3% where a man replaced a woman. This suggests that Labour paid an electoral penalty for its promotion of women but more detailed analysis would be required to confirm the pattern suggested by these raw figures.

Table 7
Change in Share of Votes Related to Sex of Candidates

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP
Male97 - Male99	-1.8 (52)	-5.8 (32)	+2.0 (43)	+6.6 (45)
Male97 - Female99	-1.0 (11)	-8.7 (24)	-0.5 (10)	+8.0 (11)
Female97 - Female99	-2.2 (2)	-5.4 (10)	+0.8 (10)	+6.2 (11)
Female97 - Male99	-2.9 (7)	-2.3 (6)	+0.8 (9)	+7.0 (5)

Note: The figures shown are means. Numbers in brackets indicate the number of cases involved.

LIST VOTING

As explained above, in addition to directly electing an MSP for their constituency, electors were able to cast a vote for a party list with these votes being used to determine the allocation of 56 'top up' seats within eight regions. It is worth noting first that almost all voters made use of their two votes. Across Scotland, just under 3,700 fewer votes were cast in the list election (out of more than 2.3 million) than in the constituency contests. When the changes in individual constituencies are examined, however, it is clear that there is something amiss with the data for the Edinburgh West

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constituency. Here it appears that 2,059 fewer people voted for the party lists as compared with the constituency contest. The next largest reduction was only 802 (Glasgow Anniesland) while the change in the other five Edinburgh constituencies ranged from a decline of 42 to an increase of 101. It seems not unreasonable to conclude that about 2,000 votes somehow got lost in counting the list votes for Edinburgh West. Excluding that constituency, the difference in votes cast in the two types of elections in Scotland as a whole was only 1,633. The number voting for the lists was lower than those voting in the constituency contests in 33 seats, exactly the same in one (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) and higher in 38, with East Kilbride producing the largest increase (172).

One of the arguments frequently used by proponents of proportional representation is that it minimises 'wasted' votes. Under first-past-the-post everyone who opts for a losing candidate could be said to have wasted their vote as it does not result in their views being represented in the legislature. Even votes which are cast for a winner but only serve to increase the majority beyond a single vote can be viewed as 'wasted' in that they were not required to elect the candidate concerned. The system adopted for the Scottish election was only partly proportional, however, and was not designed to make all votes count. The fact that victories in the constituency contests were taken into account before allocating seats to the list candidates meant that a party which won a lot of constituencies would have little chance of obtaining a top up seat no matter how many list votes it had. There was, therefore, plenty of scope for tactical or strategic voting as far as the lists were concerned. If a voter was sure that his or her favoured party would win enough constituency seats to make it unlikely that they would secure more via the lists, then the rational voter would choose another party in the list voting in order to give it a chance of securing list seats or to prevent his or her least favoured party winning seats. In Glasgow, for example, Labour was more or less certain to win at least nine of the ten constituencies and unlikely, therefore, to qualify for a list seat. To maximise the efficiency of their list votes the strategy of Labour voters would be to give them to the party they preferred second. Nonetheless, all the major parties urged their supporters to vote for them twice, even though this would be a rational strategy only in areas where voters were uncertain whether their party would win constituency seats. One further salient fact about the electoral system is that it offers small parties the chance to win seats. While they may not be strong enough to win a constituency there was always the possibility that aggregated across a number of constituencies their vote might be enough to claim a list seat.

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Table 8 shows the difference between the results of the constituency and list voting in the regions used to allocate additional member seats in the Parliament. As far as the major parties are concerned, the figures suggest that most voters chose the same party in both the constituency and list contests. There are ups and downs between the two votes but no evidence of massive defections or huge increases. The figures can also be interpreted as showing that at least some voters made the kind of rational calculation described in the previous paragraph. Since the Conservatives could not be sure of winning constituency seats anywhere their supporters should have stuck with them in the list vote and, as can be seen, their support barely changed in all regions. The Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, would have been expected to win a majority of constituency seats in the Highlands and Islands and to have had a good chance of winning some in North East Scotland. In both regions, as would be expected on the rational voting hypothesis, their list vote was clearly down on their constituency vote while in other areas they retained the great bulk of their constituency vote, as they needed to. Changes in the SNP

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Table 8
Differences Between Constituency and List Votes for Parties (Regions)

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP
Central Scotland	-0.4	-7.3	-0.4	-2.1
Glasgow	+0.2	-5.4	-0.9	-2.4
Highlands & Islands	+0.6	-1.9	-6.8	-0.8
Lothians	-0.1	-10.0	-1.3	-1.1
Mid Scotland & Fife	0	-3.0	-0.1	-2.8
North East Scotland	+0.4	-0.7	-3.7	-0.7
South of Scotland	-1.2	-5.9	-2.7	-0.4
West of Scotland	-0.7	-5.0	-0.3	-1.0
Scotland	-0.1	-5.2	-1.8	-1.4
	Soc Lab	SSP	Green	Others
Central Scotland	+1.9	+1.4	+1.8	+5.0
Glasgow	+1.5	+1.0	+4.0	+2.1
Highlands & Islands	+1.4	+0.9	+3.8	+2.9
Lothians	+3.3	+0.9	+6.9	+1.4
Mid Scotland & Fife	+1.4	+1.0	+3.9	-0.4
North East Scotland	+1.2	+0.3	+2.8	+0.4
South of Scotland	+4.4	+1.0	+3.0	+1.8
West of Scotland	+1.4	+1.3	+2.6	+1.5
Scotland	+2.2	+1.0	+3.6	+1.8

Note: SSP = Scottish Socialist Party; Soc Lab = Socialist Labour Party. The Green Party did not contest any constituency seats and so all of their list votes count as an increase.

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vote do not conform so clearly to the expected pattern, however. While their biggest drop was in Mid Scotland and Fife, where they already held two seats, they lost hardly any support in North East Scotland where they also held two seats. The decline in Labour support in the list voting was much the largest of all the parties. This is not surprising as Labour would be expected to take almost all constituency seats in almost all regions. However the smallest declines are in the regions where they had the smallest proportions of UK MPs - Highlands and Islands and North East Scotland - again consistent with rational voting. It is impossible to be sure, however, that these patterns were produced by some voters working out how to cast their votes most effectively. It may be, on the other hand, that some voters mistakenly believed that they were required to vote for a different party in the list contests (the list vote was frequently described in the media as a second vote) and the data are also consistent with that interpretation (although this would imply that Labour voters were more prone to making this mistake).

It is also impossible to be precise about the extent and nature of switching between constituency and list votes from the election results alone since they allow us to describe only the net effects of movements between parties. Some switching from Labour to the SNP, for example, may have been cancelled out by switching in the opposite direction. Nonetheless, the figures suggest that the bulk of voters who switched parties in their list vote appear to have opted for the Greens (who contested no constituencies) and one of the parties to the left of Labour, with the Socialist Labour Party improving by more than the Scottish Socialist Party in every region. The sharp increase in 'other' votes in Central Scotland indicates support for the stand taken by Dennis Canavan across constituencies other than his own.

We can explore this question in a little more detail by examining the difference between list and constituency votes in individual constituencies. First we can obtain an estimate of the minimum number of voters who must have switched parties. This is done by summing the changes in each party's actual votes and dividing by two (to take account of the fact that defectors from one party are also recruits to another). This shows that, on average and excluding Edinburgh West, at least 11.6% of voters switched. The largest figures are in Orkney (24.5%) - which may suggest a personal vote for Jim Wallace in the constituency contest - and in Falkirk East (23.3%) and West (20.8%) - which reflects Dennis Canavan's candidacy. The smallest figure is for Dundee West (5.6%). It must be emphasised, however, that these are minimum figures only and that the true amount of switching was undoubtedly much greater.

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Table 9 shows how the changes in the parties' vote shares were related to one another. Changes in the Conservative vote share were negatively associated with changes in the Liberal Democrat vote (- 0.242). Where the Conservative share went up, the Liberal Democrat share went down and vice versa. The Labour vote was related to changes in Liberal Democrat support in the same way but even more strongly (0.466). This is not surprising since a coalition between the two was widely touted as the most likely outcome of the election. It is also not surprising that the Socialist Labour Party appears to have benefited from Labour defections (-0.382) although the coefficient for Labour and the SSP just fails to achieve statistical significance. There were also significant associations between the size of the decline in Labour's list vote and the increases obtained by 'Others' and the Green Party. The strongest association of all relates to the Liberal Democrats and the SNP (-0.501) suggesting that these two parties were in competition for 'second' votes. In some constituencies the SNP benefited and the Liberal Democrat vote fell away while in others it was the Liberal Democrats who received these votes rather than the SNP. The SNP also did less well where 'Others' garnered a significant proportion of list votes (notably in the constituencies in Central Scotland where Dennis Canavan was on the list)

Table 9
Correlations Between Changes in Constituency and List Share of Votes for Parties (Constituencies)

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Soc Lab	SSP	Green
Lab	0.000						
Lib Dem	-0.242	-0.466					
SNP	0.050	0.067	-0.501				
Soc Lab	-0.091	-0.382	0.187	0.062			
SSP	-0.073	-0.229	0.026	-0.093	0.073		
Green	0.171	-0.293	-0.058	-0.054	0.003	0.046	
Others	-0.191	-0.400	-0.087	-0.304	-0.112	0.051	-0.104

Notes: Edinburgh West is omitted from this analysis. N = 72. Significant coefficients are printed in bold.

Table 10
Turnout and Turnout Change 1997-99

	Turnout	Change 97-99
Aberdeen	53.0	-16.8
Dundee	53.8	-14.8
Edinburgh	62.0	-9.7
Glasgow	47.5	-14.1
Highlands & Islands	62.7	-8.1
North East Scotland	57.0	-13.5
Perth & Angus	60.2	-13.2
Fife	56.9	-12.7
Central Scotland	64.1	-12.1
Lothians	61.7	-11.9
Lanarkshire	58.8	-13.2
Renfrewshire	61.4	-11.5
Dunbartonshire	64.3	-11.6
Ayrshire	62.0	-13.7
Borders	62.1	-13.2
Dumfries & Galloway	63.5	-15.8
Scotland	58.8	-12.6

Note: these 'regions' do not correspond to those used for list voting in the elections. See footnote to table 2 for details

TURNOUT

In the immediate aftermath of the election there was much media comment on the turnout which, at 58.8%, was 12.6% down on the 1997 general election and 1.6% lower than in the 1997 referendum. Although there was wet weather across much of Scotland until the early afternoon of polling day the size of the turnout was interpreted as indicating that voters were apathetic about the new Parliament. In fact, it would be unrealistic to expect turnout in the election to be close to general election levels. In all political systems turnout is higher in elections for the national legislature than in those for

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subordinate institutions and although the Scottish Parliament has considerable powers it is certainly subordinate to the UK Parliament. On the other hand, the Scottish Parliament is more important than local councils and it would have been surprising if turnout in the election had fallen to local government election levels. Bad weather notwithstanding, therefore, it is not surprising to find that the turnout was almost exactly half way between what is normal in general and local elections.

Table 10 shows that turnout was notably lower in Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow than elsewhere. The highest regional turnout was in Central Scotland (the Stirling and Falkirk area). The figures for change show that turnout declined in every area but the fall was particularly steep in Aberdeen and Dumfries and Galloway. On the other hand, the decline was well below the average in the Highlands and Islands.

Turnout in constituencies ranged from 40.6% in Glasgow Shettleston to 67.7% in Stirling. It was less than 50% in six constituencies, all in Glasgow. The pattern across constituencies was very similar to that seen in the 1997 general election - the correlation between the two being very strong at 0.897. Table 11 shows how constituency turnouts are related to the marginality of the constituency (100 minus the difference in the share of votes received by the two leading parties) and a number of social variables.

Turnout was higher in seats that were more marginal in the 1997 election - possibly because the parties put in a stronger campaign effort in areas perceived to be marginal. It was also higher in more middle-class and lower in more working-class constituencies. Housing structure is strongly related to turnout. The more owner occupiers there are the higher is the turnout while larger numbers of private or council tenants are associated with lower turnouts. Lower turnouts are also found in constituencies which have more young people, are in deprived urban areas (% with no car and persons per hectare) and have larger numbers of ethnic minority voters. On the other hand, it is higher in rural areas (% in agriculture).

The decline in turnout as compared with the general election was greatest in Aberdeen North (-19.8%) and smallest in Orkney (-7.0%) and Shetland (-5.2%). It was almost exactly the same in seats won by Labour and the SNP at the general election (-12.8% and -12.9% respectively) but slightly less in Liberal Democrat seats (-10.4%). There was no significant relationship between turnout change and the level of Conservative or SNP support in the general election but the decline was greater the stronger Labour was in 1997 (correlation coefficient = -0.248) and was less where the Liberal Democrats

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were stronger (0.349). Perhaps surprisingly, changes in turnout were not systematically related to changes in the parties' shares of constituency votes from the general election, except in the case of the SNP. The larger the decline in turnout the better the SNP performance (correlation coefficient - 0.370) suggesting that in broad terms it was supporters of other parties who were more inclined to stay away from the polls.

Table 11
Correlates of Scottish Constituency Turnouts 1999

Marginality in 1997	0.566
% Professional and Managerial	0.282
% Manual workers	-0.270
% owner occupiers	0.678
% private tenants	-0.322
% local authority tenants	-0.456
% young people aged 18-29	-0.541
% old people aged 75 +	-0.075
% employed in agriculture	0.273
persons per hectare	-0.667
% households with no car	-0.725
% ethnic minority	-0.451

Notes: N = 73. Statistically significant coefficients are printed in bold ($p < .05$).

CONCLUSION

As is customary, all parties claimed some success in the first Scottish Parliament elections. They were able to do this because they used different criteria to determine what counts as success. In fact all had a mixture of success and disappointment. The Conservatives put themselves back on the political map by winning some representation in the Parliament and their performance in terms of votes was not as bad as opinion polls had suggested. On the other hand, their vote declined even further as compared with the catastrophic result in the 1997 general election and they once again failed to win a first-past-the-post seat. Labour also saw its support slip significantly (at a time when UK-wide opinion polls suggested that they were riding high). They had the consolation of winning most seats in the Parliament and retaining almost all of the seats won in their general election triumph. The

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Liberal Democrats slightly strengthened their position in both share of the vote and constituencies won and certainly did better than the polls suggested they would. On the other hand, they remain the fourth party in Scotland in terms both of popularity among the voters and seats in the Parliament. The SNP saw its vote increase and emerged from the election with a sizeable number of MSPs. Compared to expectations, however, this was a disappointment. Throughout 1998, according to opinion polls, the SNP had been running Labour very close. In the first few months of 1999 their support slipped away, however, and it ebbed further during the campaign. Whether this was due to leader Alex Salmond's controversial remarks about the 'unpardonable folly' of NATO's bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, or the party's policy of not lowering income tax rates in line with the rest of the UK, has been hotly debated but it is not a question that can be resolved here.

The election of May 1999 ushered in a new style of politics in Scotland. In the first place, women will play a more prominent part in the Parliament than they do in the House of Commons. A total of 49 women were elected - 28 Labour, 16 SNP, 3 Liberal Democrats and 2 Conservatives - so that they comprise 38% of the members. Perhaps more importantly, the electoral system ensured that no party could govern on its own and within a week of the election an agreement had been reached between Labour and the Liberal Democrats that they would work together in a coalition. It remains to be seen, however, how the new politics will work in practice and whether the Scottish Parliament will fulfil the high hopes and expectations of those who struggled long and hard to achieve devolution.

APPENDIX

The composition of the Scottish 'regions' used in various tables in the text, in terms of constituencies, is as follows.

Aberdeen: Aberdeen Central, North and South

Dundee: Dundee East and West

Edinburgh: Edinburgh Central, East & Musselburgh, North & Leith, Pentlands, South, West

Glasgow: Glasgow Anniesland, Baillieston, Cathcart, Govan, Kelvin, Maryhill, Pollok, Shettleston, Springburn

Highlands & Islands: Argyll & Bute, Caithness Sutherland and Easter Ross, Inverness East Nairn and Lochaber, Orkney, Shetland, Ross Skye and Inverness West, Western Isles

North East Scotland: Aberdeenshire West & Kincardine, Banff & Buchan, Gordon, Moray

Perth & Angus: Angus, Perth, Tayside North

Fife: Dunfermline East and West, Fife Central, North East Fife, Kirkcaldy

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Central Scotland: Falkirk East and West, Ochil, Stirling

Lothians: East Lothian, Linlithgow, Livingston, Midlothian

Lanarkshire: Airdrie & Shotts, Clydesdale, Coatbridge & Chryston, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth, East Kilbride, Glasgow Rutherglen, Hamilton North & Bellshill, Hamilton South, Motherwell & Wishaw

Renfrewshire: Eastwood, Greenock & Inverclyde, Paisley North and South, Renfrewshire West

Dunbartonshire: Clydebank & Milngavie, Dunbarton, Strathkelvin & Bearsden

Ayrshire: Ayr, Carrick Cumnock and Doon Valley, Cunninghame North and South, Kilmarnock and Loudoun

Borders: Roxburgh and Berwickshire, Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale

Dumfries & Galloway: Dumfries, Galloway & Upper Nithsdale

May 1999