

Alliance is a Britainwide protest party, addressing the same broad appeal from Gaiithness to Cornwall and winning seats at both extremes of Britain. It has also won seats in places in between, such as Bermondsey and Rochdale. The chief Alliance weakness is not its vote, which was only two per cent less than that of Labour, but the evenness with which its vote has been spread. Had the Alliance vote been concentrated like Labour's in a limited number of constituencies, in 1983 it would have won enough seats to deprive the Conservatives of their House of Commons majority.

Discontinuities occur when changes of degree are transformed into changes of kind. A first-past-the-post electoral system is particularly sensitive to small changes in votes across the critical threshold that separates the winning party from the also-ran parties. In the 1983 British general election the Alliance did not cross the threshold at which it would start winning seats in proportion to (or in excess of) its share of the vote. But by finishing second to the Conservatives in most seats won by the governing party, it makes it that much more difficult for Labour to return to office. Labour needs a conventional swing of more than 12 per cent to gain control of government, and Alliance a swing of almost 20 per cent.

The concluding chapter explains why it is misleading today to think in terms of a conventional swing. A shift in votes sufficient to turn the Conservatives out of office at the next general election would require a discontinuity in electoral competition. The 1983 election made some kind of a discontinuity more likely by pushing all three parties nearer to the threshold at which the traditional relationship between winning votes, winning seats, and winning control of government is destabilized.

Because the counting of votes determines how elections are won and lost, any psephological study will inevitably be a book full of tables. In the past two decades the British census has slowly been making more data available about parliamentary constituencies. Concurrently, the development of high-speed computers has made practical the systematic statistical analysis of the importance of a multiplicity of influences upon constituency results. To assist the reader, each table in this book has been designed to concentrate attention upon significant patterns. Details of the individual constituencies that collectively constitute nationwide patterns are placed in Appendix A, so that technically minded readers can examine results more fully. Using a limited number of standard statistical techniques also makes it easier for the reader to comprehend the logic of analysis. Statistics are indispensable in the analysis of elections, but they are no more and no less than a means to the end of understanding electoral competition.

Alternative Approaches to Election Studies

The functions of elections are multiple; voters, politicians and social scientists approach the subject in many different ways (cf. Rose and Mossawir, 1967). This book differs from the series of Nuffield College studies of British general elections produced by David Butler and others (e.g., Butler and Kavanagh, 1984). The Nuffield studies are centralist concentrating upon a few square miles around Parliament. There is no doubting the importance of the politics of Westminster, an importance now magnified by television. In an election, parties plan their campaigns in Westminster, and press conferences there are daily televised to audiences nationwide. Even when party leaders go to Manchester, Newcastle or Cardiff for the day, much of what they do or say is intended to catch the eye of media editors in London. The small world of a few hundred election strategists and those they meet daily is the focus of the Nuffield election studies.

An election is not decided in Westminster; victory goes to the party that can successfully win a majority of 650 seats nationwide. Less than one-sixth of parliamentary constituencies are in the Greater London area; a party that only carried London would suffer a defeat. A party that won every seat south of the Thames from Dover to Land's End but none elsewhere would suffer a landslide defeat greater than Labour's loss in 1983. To win a British general election, a party must mobilize support across a broad territory. This book is about the other half of a British election, the half that consists of the constituencies where voters collectively hold the fate of government in their hands.

The literature of voting studies concentrates upon who votes how and why. It does not ask what effect votes have in determining the composition and control of Parliament. Understanding the motivations of individual voters reveals much about the social psychology of the people of Britain, especially about how they do (or do not) think about politics. But a study of the lifelong process by which attitudes are formed, reinforced and altered does not tell us anything specific about a particular general election. This book thus differs from the series of surveys of British voters produced from 1964 to 1970 under the auspices of David Butler and Donald Stokes (1974) and from 1974 to 1979 by Bo Sarlvik and Ivor Crewe (1983), as well as a variety of studies of British voting by the authors of this volume (see e.g. Rose, 1968; Rose, 1974; Rose, 1980; Kelley, McAllister and Mughan 1983; Kelley and McAllister, 1983).

In order to understand an election outcome, we must study votes cast and seats won as well as the attitudes of voters. In the craft union world of the social sciences, psephology (that is, the study of votes) is sharply differentiated from the study of voters (that is, the people casting ballots). The difference is substantive, and not simply a play on words. In political terms, the question of first importance is not why 25.4 per cent of the electorate voted Alliance and

27.6 per cent voted Labour, but why Alliance won 3.5 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons whereas Labour won 32.0 per cent. Examining the characteristics of individual electors will help us understand how individual votes are cast, but votes are only a means to the end of winning seats in the House of Commons. To understand how an election is won or lost, we must concentrate upon how and why parties win (or fail to win) the seats necessary to control British government.

Rather than directing attention upon what might be—a proportional representation system for electing MPs (Bogdanor, 1981) or a hung Parliament with a minority or coalition government (Butler, 1983)—this book concentrates attention upon what is, an electoral system that normally manufactures a parliamentary majority supporting single-party government. Ironically, the rise of the Alliance has made it easier for a single party to win a majority by lowering the threshold of votes needed to win a seat. The Conservatives' landslide victory in 1983 was achieved with a smaller share of the total vote than that gained by the losing party at every British general election from 1950 to 1964, and in 1970 as well. Advocacy of change in the electoral system or speculation about hypothetical results is useful as a reminder that electoral competition is variable in place and time. The final chapter considers under what psephological circumstances the 1983 British general election would become a major step in electoral discontinuity.

While this book gives full attention to national differences within the United Kingdom, it is profoundly not a book about nationalism in the way in which this term is conventionally used. In effect, it is a book about the British nation. Use of the term Britain emphasizes things that people in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland share in common, particularly participation in a United Kingdom general election. The rise of Nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales in the 1970s stimulated a considerable amount of writing that often threw a distorting light upon the politics of the United Kingdom. To write a book about Scottish Nationalism (Brand, 1978) or Welsh Nationalism (Butt Philip, 1975) is to focus upon only one part of the United Kingdom, and upon a minority party within that nation. Similarly, to write a book about the Scottish political system (Kellas, 1973) is to assume what remains to be proven, namely, that the things differentiating Scotland from England are politically more important than what Scotland and England have in common, such as government by Westminster. It is more accurate to speak about British government in Scotland or British government in Wales, leaving open to empirical investigation whether, and in what ways, politics in one part of the United Kingdom differs from another (cf. Rose, 1982). Only in Northern Ireland can one properly start from the assumption that government and politics are in fundamental respects un-British.

To write about national differences in British politics and leave out England is like writing about Shakespeare and leaving out Hamlet, all the other tragedies, and the comedies as well. To view a British general election principally through the prism of the Welsh or Scottish Nationalists or Provisional Sinn Féin is to let the tail wag the dog. Territorial differences in British politics do not start at the Irish Sea, the Welsh Marches, or the Scottish Border. Examining differences within England leads to questions about cross-national similarities in the way that nations divide. The rediscovery of the North of England by London-based journalists shows that a "two-nations" hypothesis may differentiate English regions. The systematic examination of the territorial dimension in England concentrates attention where attention should focus in an election, where 523 of the 650 seats in Parliament are to be won.

In writing about the United Kingdom, we have had the advantage of eight years of collaboration with colleagues in the Work Group on United Kingdom Politics, an affiliate of the Political Studies Association that brings together academics from its diverse parts to discuss the territorial dimension in government and politics. Given the diversity between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it is valuable to have such meetings to avoid insularity (to which English analysts are peculiarly prone), as well as to curb the hubris of national exceptionalism (What's like us, in braud Scots). The chapters on Mrs. Thatcher's territorial politics written by Jim Bulpitt, on British Labour's territorial policy by Michael Keating, and on Wales by Denis Balsom and J. Barry Jones, are contributed by members of the United Kingdom Politics Work Group.

The preparation of this book was made possible by a grant from the Nuffield Foundation to the Work Group. This grant allowed the first-named author to return from Australia to Britain for a period of months to undertake the great bulk of the statistical work presented here. The Australian National University also provided assistance in preparing this book for the press.

In writing and revising the manuscript, useful comments were received from D.K. Britto, Hugh Bochel, Paul McKee, F.T. Mackie, Edward Page, and Denis Van Mechelen. Within Strathclyde the production of this book was greatly advanced by the assistance of June M. Roberts and Graeme Leonard of the Centre for the Study of Public Policy; The University of Strathclyde Computing Centre and Social Statistics Laboratory especially Mrs. Sarinder Hunjan; and Malcolm McLaren and Pat Fenton of the Printing Unit. The Australian National University gave assistance, and the National Facility for Computing in the Arts of Oxford University made possible the prompt translation of this book from typescript to typeset book.

Part One

The British Dimension

Electoral Competition In Many Dimensions

I

Elections are singular events, yet an election outcome must be examined in many dimensions if it is to be fully understood. We are not only interested in how people vote, but also in the nature of the parties that compete for popular support. Within a single constituency the most important fact is which party wins the right to represent it in Parliament, rather than the number of votes or the percentage of the vote won by particular candidates. When the losing parties collectively secure more than half the vote, as usually happens in Britain and sometimes happens in America, the winning party's position is less secure in the electorate than in Parliament.

To understand an election outcome we must examine at least four dimensions of electoral competition. First of all, we must consider a paradox: how the division of votes can give one party a mandate to exercise the unitary authority of government. Secondly, it is important to comprehend how both territorial differences and differences in social structure can significantly influence election outcomes. Thirdly, the translation of votes into seats is contingent not mechanical in the first-past-the-post electoral systems used throughout the English-speaking world. A share of the vote likely to guarantee victory in one constituency may lead to defeat in another. The final step in a multi-dimensional psephological analysis is to understand the pattern of party competition nationwide: the party that finishes first or second in one seat may be a poor third or fourth elsewhere. A nationwide election campaign can involve a multiplicity of constituency contests between different pairs of competitors.

The Paradox of Division and Unity

Free elections are an expression of political divisions within society, yet they are also meant to unite a country in accepting the legitimacy of the authority of the victor.

Free elections can be held without any division of the electorate. Traditionally, many British MPs were returned unopposed by their constituency, a practice that persisted well into the nineteenth century. This occurred not only where the candidate (or a rich relative or patron) literally owned the votes of the constituency, but also where the candidate was thought to be the appropriate representative for a community. The cost of contesting an election when the expense had to be paid by the candidates not the Crown and electors could be extortionate in their demands was a further inhibition to competition in seats where the result was foregone. When a constituency returned two members, it could differentiate its loyalties by returning two MPs of complementary political outlooks. The number of unopposed returns was consistently high, and the return of MPs unopposed was not ended simply by the passage of the First Reform Act. More than half the members of the House of Commons were returned unopposed in four of the nine elections held after 1832, and the number of unopposed returns never fell below 28 per cent between 1832 and 1885 (Craig, 1981: 158).

The absence of electoral competition in mid-nineteenth century elections is succinctly explained by Hanham (1959: 191): 'general elections were not general'. The electorate was not expected to choose between two parties or leaders competing to control government. Instead, elections were seen as choosing—or, in the case of unopposed returns, legitimating—local representation in a national Parliament. MPs could form cabals or coalitions within Parliament, but these groupings, even if called parties, were not parties organized nationwide as they are today. A House of Commons of 650 members was an assembly of notables; MPs were not the candidates of a nationwide party organization.

The expansion of the franchise and the creation of nationwide party organizations progressed together in late nineteenth century Britain. The creation of nationwide party organizations was a crucial step in the advancement of both electoral divisions and national integration. The creation of party labels meaningful in all parts of Britain turned a collection of local contests into a nationwide competition between parties in which votes in each constituency could be related nationwide to partisan issues and leaders.

The creation of nationwide party organizations also meant a major increase in the number of contested seats. In 1885, the first election after the major 1884 expansion of the franchise, all but six per cent of seats were contested. The exhaustion introduced by that election caused unopposed returns to rise to 33 per cent in 1886. Between 1885 and 1910 the percentage of unopposed returns averaged 21 per cent. Further expansion of the suffrage in 1918 and the rise of the Labour Party made competition at elections general. In 1929, 99 per cent of all seats were contested at the general election, and since 1945 every seat has

normally been contested everywhere in the United Kingdom. Two or more parties offer voters, wherever they live, the opportunity for choice.

While parties seek to maximize their votes, no party is foolish enough to believe that it will win all the votes in a competitive election campaign. In the first-past-the-post electoral system, a party does not need to win half the vote to gain a majority of seats in Parliament, if more than two parties nominate candidates. In the last four British general elections, the victorious party has on average won 40.7 per cent of the votes and in the 12 elections since 1945 the winner's share has averaged 45.2 per cent of the popular vote. The Conservative and Labour parties each target their appeal to particular parts of the electorate. The Liberal Party has been electorally weak because of its appeal to voters without regard to their social characteristics. The Alliance substantially increased its votes in 1983, but this scarcely affected seats won. Appealing equally to all voters produces fewer MPs than appealing selectively to blocs of voters.

The unitary authority of government in Britain is not created by the nationwide competition for votes, but by institutions of parliamentary government. Unlike the United States, where control of government is constitutionally divided between the President and Congress, in Britain party government concentrates control. A party with a majority in the House of Commons, however large or small its share of the vote, constitutes the Cabinet that enjoys all the authority of government.

Social and Territorial Bases of Electoral Competition

Given a nationwide competition for votes, the question then arises: what are the bases of electoral competition? The potential sources of electoral division are great in number. A party can base its appeal for votes on any number of primary group loyalties, such as identification with class, religion, race, region, language, or national identity. Examples of each type of party can be found in Europe (Rose and Urwin, 1969). There have also been unsuccessful attempts to mobilize voters along lines of social divisions not previously important in politics, such as age or sex. Furthermore, new parties can be launched that appeal to voters irrespective of their social characteristics, such as the issue-based Ecology Party. The decline of party allegiances rooted in traditional class or religious visions of society encourages parties to seek votes by invoking "brand loyalty" to party labels. A party can also try to put together ad hoc coalitions of diverse blocs of voters with catchall appeals. Insofar as these appeals are insufficient to maintain electoral support because of lacking a firm anchor in the structure of society, then fluctuations in party support will increase.

Two divisions must occur in every society: the electorate is differentiated along class lines, and territorially as well (Rose and Urwin, 1975: Figure 1). Only a primitive society would be without divisions along lines of occupational class. Only a postage-stamp size city-state such as San Marino would be without territorial divisions, whether these divisions are denominated in terms of nations, regions or parliamentary constituencies. By contrast, many primary social characteristics, such as religion, language and race, can be a source of national unity in societies in which virtually everyone shares the same religion, speaks the same language, and is of the same race. When we say a society is homogeneous, we mean that social divisions are reduced to the ineluctable differences of class and territory. Descriptions of Britain as a homogeneous society do not deny that there are class differences, or claim that Scots, Welsh and Ulstermen (or Yorkshiremen) are just the same as Englishmen. No more is asserted than that Britain is relatively united in terms of language, religion and race.

Concepts and theories of class differences are familiar and pervasive. Society is differentiated in terms of occupations; many other social differences, including education, income, trade union membership, and housing are expected to flow from occupational differences. Collectively, these can be described as the socio-economic divisions of society. In the most deterministic theories of class politics, all other types of social differences are thought to be submerged, explained, or "explained away" by the overwhelming importance of class differences. A review of the social bases of party competition in 15 Western nations shows that class differences are one of the principal influences upon electoral divisions in all but two of the countries (Rose, 1974a: 17).

Britain, like Scandinavian countries, is distinctive because of the pre-eminence of class-related divisions as the principal determinant of party loyalties. In Britain housing and trade union membership appear to be of substantial influences upon voters as well as occupation (cf. Rose, 1982a). Even more than Scandinavian parties, British parties have been competing for the support of an electorate that is "only" divided along socio-economic and territorial lines. By contrast, in many Continental European countries religious differences--between practising Catholics and anti-clericals, between Catholics and Protestants, or both--have been of great historical importance in determining the structure of party competition.

The translation of social divisions into electoral divisions need not lead to political conflict. Notwithstanding the thousands of sociological and ideological treatises written about class conflict, the party systems which have been most inclined to divide voters along class lines--the party systems of Norway, Sweden and Denmark--have been marked by the persistence of "civic" competition, that is, agreement by Socialist and bourgeois parties to differ within limits acceptable to both sides (Berglund and Lindstrom, 1978). In Britain too,

competition for votes along class lines has not led to violent conflict in the streets.

The electoral articulation of class differences can actually promote national integration. Because class differences occur in every constituency, an election can be fought on the same terms from one end of the land to the other. Class is not the only means of uniting blocs of voters nationwide. In Belgium, Catholic and anti-clerical Liberals as well as Socialists parties succeeded for a century in appealing to voters along lines that integrated French-speaking Walloons and Flemish-speaking voters across territorial and linguistic boundaries. In India the Congress Party has succeeded in forging a nationwide parliamentary majority, notwithstanding the multiplicity of territorial, linguistic, caste and class divisions in India's electorate.

In Britain the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties, and now the Alliance, have each sought to be effective agents of national integration by contesting seats throughout the United Kingdom, or, since 1974, everywhere except Northern Ireland. The success of each party is different in England, Scotland and Wales. The important point here is that the very fact of seeking to win seats in all parts of Britain makes each party anxious to stress appeals overriding territorial differences, in order to avoid being labelled as a party of only one of the nations that make up the United Kingdom.

Since the 1960s the importance of class differences in party politics has tended to decline, as have other traditional sources of electoral division such as religion. In the United States, where class voting has never been consistently strong, the Republicans under Ronald Reagan have resurrected an appeal to working-class voters greater than the party had enjoyed for more than half a century. The French Communist Party, traditionally a *parti du combat*, in 1981 joined in government as the weaker coalition partner of French Socialists. In Italy Communist deputies have kept a Christian Democratic government in office as part of a *compromesso storico* (historic compromise). In the Netherlands Catholic and Protestant parties that were traditionally separate pillars of the Dutch party system have now buried their theological differences in a single Christian Democratic appeal.

In Britain the rhetoric of party leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Michael Foot has tended to emphasize class differences, but the realities of social change have done the opposite. Occupation is no longer so closely linked with other social differences. In the past quarter-century the influence of class-related differences upon party preferences has declined by more than half. The Conservatives today draw about half their vote from working-class electors, the Alliance parties draw working-class votes almost exactly in proportion to their size in the electorate, and the Labour Party has contributed, to the decline of class politics in Britain by becoming a failed ghetto party. It is no longer the

party of most working-class voters; in 1983 it failed to win the votes of 64 per cent of the country's manual workers (Rose, 1984).

The decline of class-based voting (or of voting anchored in such contingent social divisions as religion) leaves parties with three different albeit potentially complementary strategies to adopt in competing for votes. One school of electoral studies sees voters casting their ballots principally because of a psychologically grounded party identification. The only social cue necessary to guide a voter is a minimal recollection that this is how he or she (or the voter's parents) have usually voted (see Campbell et al., 1960; Butler and Stokes, 1974). But this view of electoral divisions is difficult to justify. It is static, whereas electoral outcomes increasingly emphasize change. Party identification is not firmly grounded in family loyalties. Only two-fifths of the electorate have clear cues from both parents about how to vote, and even in this group a fraction vote otherwise. Strength of party identification has been declining steadily for two decades. As of 1983, only 26 per cent of the electorate strongly identified with a political party, and only two-thirds identified with either the Conservative or Labour Party (Crewe, 1983: table 3).

Another school of thinking sees parties as issue-based. Social structure and party identification theories do not deny the importance of issues. Rather, they assume (but to a lesser extent demonstrate) that a voter's views about major political issues are formed by their social class (manual workers favouring welfare state spending and the Labour Party; middle-class voters favouring lower taxes and the Conservative Party) or by their party identification (Labour voters disliking the Common Market because the Labour Party has opposed it, and Conservative voters approving it because it is endorsed by the Conservative Party). However, conventional views of class or party determination of issue preferences cannot explain observed contradictions between voters' views on major issues, and their party vote. From 1964 to 1974 much evidence was produced showing that the majority of voters (including Labour voters) tended not to agree with Labour Party positions on many major issues (Rose, 1974b: chapter 11). Yet Labour won four of the five elections in the period. Issue preferences can provide a post hoc basis for predicting how people vote, but it has yet to be shown whether, or to what extent, attitudes about issues are formed independent of party and social loyalties (cf. Sarvick and Crewe, 1983).

The leadership or personality theory of voting behaviour repudiates the significance of social loyalties, party identification and issue preferences. The personality of the leading contenders for office are assumed to be the primary determinant of how people vote, and leaders are regarded as only loosely linked to parties, as is the case in America. Whereas a party cannot change its image at will and a voter cannot easily change class or religion, a shift in party leadership can be made very quickly. A leader-oriented electorate is therefore a volatile

electorate. But such theories leave open the grounds on which voters make assessments of politicians whom they have never met, or only viewed vicariously on television. Surveys consistently show that there is a strong correlation between voters' views about party leaders and their party preferences. Insofar as party preferences persist, this shows that party loyalties do more to shape views of political personalities than the opposite. Nor can the personalities of leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, Michael Foot or Neil Kinnock be divorced from their views about issues.

Another way to fill the vacuum left by the increasingly visible inadequacy of class models of electoral competition today is to see competition occurring along territorial lines. Since the 1960s there has been a resurgence of interest in territorial politics throughout Europe. The phenomenon is variously labelled as a demand for regional devolution, national autonomy, independence, or as a peripheral protest movement. Books have appeared with pessimistic titles such as *The Failure of the State*, (Cornford, 1975) or *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, (Esmann, 1977); optimistic titles, such as *Resolving Nationally Conflicts* (Davison and Gordenker, 1980); or more ambiguously, *Economy, Territory, Identity* (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983). Instead of being seen as a romantic, nineteenth century phenomenon, territorial and nationalist protests have become viewed as normal, and even growing.

The extent to which regional or national differences affect party competition can easily be exaggerated. Books about ethnic differences risk losing all electoral relevance when they concentrate attention upon groups with 50,000 or less people in countries where millions of votes are cast in a national election (cf. Krejci and Velimsky, 1981). Attempts to reduce national protest movements to expressions of cross-regional or cross-national economic and social inequalities are also unsuccessful (cf. Hechter, 1975, with Page, 1978). Regions have registered some measurable influence upon party competition in nine of 15 Western nations, but in none of these countries is regionalism the principal influence upon party competition (Rose, 1974a: 17). Explicitly regional, autonomist or national independence parties enter electoral competition in a number of European countries, but doing so reveals their weakness, not only in national vote totals, but also within their own heartland region (cf. Rose and Urwin, 1975).

Class differences are normally regarded as most important, but even the author of the epigram--'Class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail' (Pulzer, 1967: 98)--would admit that this phrase excepted Northern Ireland, and perhaps Scotland and Wales as well. In the nineteenth century, the territorial concerns of nationalist movements were of central importance. Liberals such as William Gladstone and Woodrow Wilson saw popular choice and national self-determination as two sides of the same coin of democracy. Within the United Kingdom, national differences were

central in the House of Commons from the entry of Irish Nationalists in the 1880s to agitate a single issue, home rule for Ireland, until 1921, when the old United Kingdom was disrupted by the grant of independence to a 26-county Irish Free State.

By European standards Britain is distinctive because it has a multiplicity of Nationalist parties, and in the period since the late 1960s Nationalist parties have been successful in securing a foothold in Parliament (McAllister, 1982). Institutionally, the United Kingdom has always been multi-national, reflecting its creation by the incomplete amalgamation of different territories under a common Crown and Parliament (Rose, 1982). But the existence of distinctive institutions of government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland--and thus, by a process of subtraction, for England as well--has been offset by the political unity resulting from the domination of elections by parties competing Britain-wide. In 1964, all 630 seats in the House of Commons were won by parties seeking to represent the whole of the United Kingdom, rather than a single nation or region within it. In 1983, the House of Commons contained MPs for seven different regional parties; the Scottish National Party (SNP); Plaid Cymru (the Welsh Nationalist Party); two Irish nationalist parties, Provisional Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP); and three different Ulster Unionist and Loyalist parties.

The strength of nationalist parties has been variable across time, and also from nation to nation. Table 1.1 illustrates both these contrasts. In 1964, when the aggregate Conservative and Labour Party vote was divided almost evenly, there were notable differences between nations in the strength of each party. The Conservative vote was highest in Northern Ireland, where it was then in alliance with the Ulster Unionist Party, and in England; the Labour share of the vote was highest in Scotland and Wales. In the October 1974 general election, the Nationalist vote reached an unprecedented height. But Nationalist strength varied greatly, for the Scottish National Party won almost three times the share of the vote taken by Plaid Cymru in Wales. By 1983, Scottish and Welsh Nationalists showed a greater degree of parity--but it was an equality of weakness. By contrast, in Northern Ireland the whole of Ulster's vote was given to parties not linked with parties in Great Britain.

The rise of nationalist parties commenced in 1966, when Gerry Fitt was elected as a Republican Labour MP from West Belfast. He was joined in the House of Commons by a Plaid Cymru by-election victor later in the year, and by a Scottish Nationalist in 1967. An outbreak of civil rights demonstrations in Northern Ireland in summer, 1968, brought Northern Ireland into the spotlight at Westminster, and the election of Bernadette Devlin at a 1969 by-election intensified this. An outbreak of rioting and killing in August, 1969, followed by British troops being called into action, confirmed the status of Northern Ireland as a very different part of the United Kingdom from so-called

Table 1.1 THE TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF VOTES BY NATION

	1964	Oct	1983	Change
	1974			1964-83
	(% vote)			
England				
Conservative	44.1	38.9	46.0	+1.9
Labour	43.5	40.1	26.9	-16.6
Liberal/Alliance ^a	12.1	20.2	26.4	+14.3
Wales				
Conservative	29.4	23.9	31.0	+1.6
Labour	57.9	49.5	37.5	-20.4
Liberal/Alliance	7.3	15.5	23.2	+15.9
Plaid Cymru	4.8	10.8	7.8	+3.0
Scotland				
Conservative	40.6	24.7	28.4	-12.2
Labour	48.7	36.3	35.1	-13.6
Liberal/Alliance	7.6	8.3	23.7	+16.1
SNP	2.4	30.4	11.8	+9.4
N. Ireland				
Ulster Unionist Party ^b	63.0	n.a.	n.a.	-63.0
All Unionist/Loyalist	n.a.	62.1	57.1	-5.0
NI Labour/APNI ^c	16.1	6.3	8.0	-8.1
All Irish unity	18.2	29.8	33.2	+15.0

^a Liberal in 1964 and Oct 1974; Liberal/SDP Alliance in 1983.

^b In 1964 the Ulster Unionist Party was allied with the British Conservatives and its votes were included in the Conservatives' total vote. The parties split in 1972.

^c In 1964 NI Labour; 1974 and 1983 Alliance Party of N. Ireland.

Sources: Rose and McAllister (1982: Table 4.1 to 4.4), updated by the authors. Votes for other parties excluded.

"mainland" Britain (Rose, 1971). The defeat of the two Nationalist by-election victors at the 1970 general election was widely interpreted as the end of Nationalist pressures.

The February, 1974 general election result once again put nationalism in Great Britain on the agenda of Parliament. The surprise election of seven Scottish Nationalist and two Welsh Nationalist MPs was striking in itself, and politically crucial in a Parliament where the Labour government lacked an overall majority. In October 1974 the SNP won 11 seats and Plaid Cymru, 3; together, the 14 Nationalist seats were greater than the Labour government's majority. This was an important factor in making devolution to Scotland and Wales a major parliamentary concern. But the resulting devolution Acts were unambiguously rejected in the March 1979 referendum in Wales and ambiguously endorsed in a low-turnout referendum in Scotland. The Scottish Nationalists then helped bring down the Labour government.

The 1979 British general election marked a shift in emphasis in territorial concerns. The Scottish National Party lost nine of its 11 seats, and the Welsh Nationalists saw their vote drop. But in England, territorial divisions were brought into sharp focus by the election of a Conservative government with nearly four-fifths of the seats in the South of England and a Labour opposition claiming two-thirds of the seats in the North of England, as well as two-thirds of the seats in Scotland and Wales. Curtrice and Steed (1982: 297) forecast that the widening gap between North Britain and South Britain was likely to continue, 'producing parliamentary parties that are less likely to aggregate across geographically differentiated interests'. Curtrice and Steed saw territorial conflict between an economically declining North Britain and a relatively prosperous South Britain as increasingly likely.

While many changes were registered in the 1983 election result, there remain some broad similarities in voting patterns across two decades. First of all, Britainwide parties have been dominant throughout. Nationalists win the votes of only a minority of a minority. In Scotland, 88 per cent of the vote went to British parties, and in Wales, 92 per cent. In Northern Ireland, parties seeking to withdraw from the United Kingdom won but one-third of the vote; parties loyal or fervently ultra-loyal to the United Kingdom won two-thirds of the popular vote. In 1983 as in 1964, the Conservatives polled the most votes in England, and Labour polled more votes in Scotland and Wales. The Alliance came third in votes in all three nations. The one great structural shift occurred in Northern Ireland. Because no British party seeks to win votes and seats there, the Irish Sea is now a gulf between party competition in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland.

In no sense was the 1983 election simply a return to the status quo as of 1964. Only one group, the Liberal and Social Democratic Party Alliance, saw its vote change at much the same rate in all parts of Britain. The Labour vote fell in all

parts of the United Kingdom, but it did not fall equally. Labour's vote went down most in Wales and least in Scotland. The Conservative vote differed in the direction as well as the scale of change. In England and Wales the Conservative vote went up slightly from 1964, a good showing given added competition from the Alliance. However, the Conservative vote fell by nearly one-third in Scotland, and it disappeared from electoral competition in Northern Ireland. Nationalist parties, starting from different levels of support in 1964, grew at different rates, rising most in Northern Ireland, where Irish unity candidates have always been relatively strong, and least in Wales, where Welsh Nationalist have always been relatively weak.

The 1983 election reflected very different patterns of party competition from nation to nation within the United Kingdom. In England, Labour and the Alliance were only 0.5 per cent apart in their share of the popular vote. In effect, they compete to finish a poor second, since the Conservatives are nearly 20 per cent ahead of each. In Scotland and Wales, Labour finished first, but its lead over the Conservatives is much reduced. In Wales, Labour was 28.5 per cent ahead of the Conservatives in 1964 in popular vote; in 1983 it was 6.5 per cent ahead. The Labour lead over the Conservatives in popular votes dropped only 1.4 per cent in Scotland, because both major parties saw a substantial decline in Scottish support from 1964 to 1983.

The net result is that the British party system today consists of three very different types of parties, varying in the degree to which their popular vote appears skewed along class or territorial lines (cf. Rose, 1980; McAllister 1982).

1. Class-skewed and territorially skewed vote
Labour Party
2. Territorially skewed but cross-class support
Conservative Party
Scottish National Party
Plaid Cymru
All Northern Ireland parties
3. Not territorially skewed and having cross-class support
Alliance (Liberal Party, Social Democratic Party)

Whereas only one-quarter of the electorate cast their votes for a party whose support was very heavily class-skewed, three-quarters cast their votes for parties whose support was territorially skewed. Both class and territorial differences appear to affect the electoral success of parties today, but they do not affect all parties equally, nor are they of the same importance in all parts of the United Kingdom.

One way to explain the apparent puzzle of very different national patterns of partisanship is to redefine territorial boundaries. This can most readily be done by dividing each nation of the United Kingdom into regions. The regional analysis of voting reveals substantial differences within England. Up to the 1983 general election, the Labour vote in the North of England had been higher than the Conservative vote, and in 1983 it was almost equal to the Conservative vote. By contrast, in the South of England, where Labour has usually run the Conservatives second, Labour dropped to third place in electoral competition in 1983. The Conservatives won more than three times as many votes as Labour in the South of England. Regional analyses of party support in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland show that there can be bigger differences within a nation than between nations, for example between the Welsh-speaking parts of Wales and industrial South Wales, between the Scottish Highlands and industrial Clydeside and in Northern Ireland between constituencies east and west of the River Bann (see Chapters V-VIII).

Disaggregating nations into a number of regions still masks within-region differences. The most populous regions of Britain tend to be heterogeneous, not homogeneous. This is most true of the South-East of England, which encompasses decayed inner-city areas of London, old and new suburbs of owner-occupiers and council house tenants, and rural areas which may mix commuters, light industry, and farming. Every major metropolitan area within the United Kingdom, from London to South Glamorgan, Strathclyde and Greater Belfast, is a combination of disparate social groups. Inner-city areas in different parts of Britain are likely to have more in common with each other than inner-city and suburban areas belonging to the same metropolitan conurbation.

The more territorial parts of the United Kingdom are disaggregated in order to delimit boundaries containing socially and politically homogeneous areas, the more important appears the socio-economic base of electoral competition. The identification of within-nation or within-region or within-conurbation differences is but another way of describing socio-economic similarities among inner-city areas, suburbs, or rural areas throughout Britain. A major task of psephological analysis is to test the relative importance of socio-economic as against territorial influences upon electoral competition in the United Kingdom today.

From Votes to Seats

Elections are about winning seats as well as votes; the party with the most seats in Parliament is deemed the winner of a general election, gaining the right to form a government. Twice in post-war Britain, in 1951 and again in

February 1974, the party winning the greatest share of the popular vote did not win the greatest number of seats in the House of Commons, and thereby lost control of government.

While modern election campaigning is highly centralized, both in terms of party leadership and media coverage, the effects of the campaign are registered nationwide. Since the breaking of the power of the House of Lords in 1911 and the abolition of University seats in 1948, power in Parliament is determined solely by winning territorial constituencies. To win a majority in the House of Commons, a party must win 326 of the 650 constituencies.

Table 1.2 THE TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF SEATS BY NATION

	Seats			Change 1964-83
	1964	Oct 1974	1983	
England				
Conservative	262	253	362	+100
Labour	246	255	148	-98
Liberal/Alliance	3	8	13	+10
Wales				
Conservative	6	8	14	+8
Labour	28	23	20	-8
Liberal/Alliance	2	2	2	0
Plaid Cymru	0	3	2	+2
Scotland				
Conservative	24	16	21	-3
Labour	43	41	41	-2
Liberal/Alliance	4	3	8	+4
SNP	0	11	2	+2
N. Ireland				
Ulster Unionist Party	12	0	0	(-12)
All Unionist/Loyalist	n.a.	10	15	(+15)
NI Labour/APNI	0	0	0	(0)
All Irish Unity	0	2	2	(+2)

Sources: Rose and McAllister (1982: Table 4.2) updated.
Party groupings as in Table 1.1.

Constituencies are not allocated on a United Kingdom basis; they are allocated by four separate sets of Boundary Commissioners for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Hence, there are small but noticeable differences in the number of seats per nation. Whereas in 1983 there was one MP for every 67,201 electors in England and for every 61,778 electors in Northern Ireland, in Wales there was one MP for every 55,628 electors, and in Scotland, one MP for every 53,985 electors. Even more important are the big differences in the number of seats that each party wins (Table 1.2).

In theory, a party's share of the popular vote could be distributed among constituencies in any number of ways. At one extreme, the vote of each party would be virtually the same in every constituency. If that were the case, then at the 1983 election the Conservatives, instead of winning 61 per cent of the seats, would have won 100 per cent of the seats, finishing first in every seat, with Labour trailing well behind in second place, and Alliance third.

At the other extreme, in the first-past-the-post electoral system a party could so concentrate its vote that it would win an absolute majority of seats with only one-quarter of the popular vote. If a party gained one more than half the vote in 326 seats, it would be assured of a parliamentary majority, even if it did not win a single vote in the remaining 324 seats. With 25 per cent of the vote and 50.1 per cent of the seats, it could take 100 per cent of the power of government.

In practice, extreme disproportionality has never occurred in a first-past-the-post election in modern times. A systematic comparative analysis of the degree of disproportionality in electoral systems shows that it is very limited. On average, the median country with a first-past-the-post system departs only 13 per cent from a purely proportional outcome, and a proportional representation system departs only five per cent. Another way of saying this is that first-past-the-post systems tend to be 85 per cent proportional in translating popular votes into seats, and proportional representation systems tend to be 95 per cent proportional (Rose, 1983: Table 8).

The 1983 British general election result was unusual in the degree to which it departed from proportionality (Table 1.3). In 1964, the degree of proportionality between votes and seats was high, 89 per cent. In October 1974, when Nationalists and Liberals were polling well, the degree of proportionality was 81 per cent, and it rose to 85 per cent in 1979. By comparison, in 1983 the index of proportionality fell to 77 per cent. The distribution of votes and seats was close to pure proportionality in the case of the Labour Party, and of Nationalist and Northern Ireland parties. It departed substantially from proportionality in the case of the Conservatives (42.4 per cent of the vote and 61.1 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons), and the Alliance, (25.4 per cent of the popular vote, and 3.5 per cent of Commons' seats).

When the distribution of parliamentary seats by nation is compared with the distribution of popular votes, the distorting effects of the first-past-the-post

Table 1.3 PROPORTIONALITY IN ELECTION OUTCOMES BY NATION

	Oct			Change 1964-83
	1964	1974	1983	
England	87	81	76	-11
Wales	81	86	79	-2
Scotland	88	79	79	-9
N. Ireland	64	80	70	+6
Total, United Kingdom	89	81	77	-12

Sources: Tables 1.1-2. The Index of Proportionality is the sum of the differences between each party's share of seats and votes, divided by two and subtracted from 100.

electoral system are most evident. The degree of distortion differs between nations, and can also differ from election to election. In England, the chief beneficiary of the first-past-the-post system in 1983 was the Conservative Party, but this is not always the case. In Wales and in Scotland, the Labour Party is consistently the chief beneficiary. In all three parts of Britain, the Alliance suffered from the electoral system, but its disadvantage was only half as great in Scotland as in England. Northern Ireland is the only nation of the United Kingdom in which one bloc, the Unionists and Loyalists, can consistently win a majority of the votes as well as a majority of the seats in the House of Commons.

The outcome of a British and, for that matter, almost every first-past-the-post election tends toward proportionality because most constituencies are not a social cross-section of the country. A party that comes second in the nationwide competition for votes comes first in a substantial number of constituencies if two conditions are met: (1) Its appeal to the mass electorate is biased toward particular sub-divisions of the electorate; and (2) the section of the electorate to which it appeals is territorially clustered, rather than being evenly spread across the country. Both the Conservative and Labour parties meet these criteria. As Labour's vote has fallen, it has more and more depended for parliamentary representation upon constituencies with disproportionately large numbers of

working-class voters. The Conservatives have done well in winning seats in the House of Commons by combining an appeal to middle-class voters, who tend to be concentrated in suburban and rural areas, with a substantial working-class vote. Nationalist parties, including Northern Ireland parties, can do relatively well in matching their share of votes to seats because their vote is concentrated in one part of the United Kingdom.

The upsurge of votes for the Alliance in 1983 demonstrates the parliamentary frustration that faces a group that does not appeal to well defined and territorially clustered blocs of voters. The Alliance failure to win many seats in Parliament is not because it finished third in total vote; the disparity in seats between Alliance and Labour is far greater than the disparity in votes. The Alliance's problem is that its vote is spread relatively evenly throughout Great Britain. In 1983 the standard deviation of the Alliance's constituency vote was only 7.4 per cent, compared to much higher levels of dispersion for the Conservatives, 13.2 per cent, and Labour, 15.7 per cent.

Given the potential difference between votes won and seats won, it is important to distinguish carefully between the analysis of voting behaviour and of election outcomes. Evidence about a party's nationwide share of the vote is not per se evidence about its success in winning seats in the House of Commons. To understand that, we must consider both the social sources of a party's vote and the territorial concentration of its electoral support.

Patterns of Competition for Government

Many parties can compete for votes, but only one party can represent a given constituency in Parliament. Parliament remains more or less representative of diverse political outlooks because different parties finish first in different constituencies. A losing party in one place will be a winning party in another constituency.

In a pure two-party system, each of the two parties competing at the polls will finish first in some constituencies and second in others. Because many seats will be held by big margins of votes, competition for government is effectively concentrated in a limited number of marginal seats. In Conservative-held marginal constituencies, a small swing of votes to Labour would make the seat change hands, and with it control of government. In a Labour-held marginal, a small swing to the Conservatives would strengthen the position of a Conservative government.

Party competition in Britain today is impure rather than pure. When three parties compete there are six logically possible combinations of parties that can finish first and second in England. If the Liberals and Social Democrats are treated as separate parties rather than as a single Alliance, then the logically

possible combinations of parties finishing first and second doubles: the number of different patterns increases much more when the Nationalist parties are also taken into account. While only one of these combinations can be valid at any one time in any one place, all of them can be valid when 650 constituencies are examined collectively.

In the 1983 general election, there were 11 different patterns of party competition within Great Britain, that is, constituencies in which there were different pairs of parties finishing first and second. The complexities of Northern Ireland politics add an additional nine patterns of competition for 17 Ulster seats. Collectively, there is now turbulence, because of the multiplicity of patterns of party competition in 1983. Nor is the turbulence confined to peripheral parts of Britain. Within England constituencies collectively display six different patterns of party competition.

When there are multiple patterns of party competition, the identity of the competing parties is contingent not certain in any one constituency. While the Conservatives are indubitably the first party in Britain today, it is not clear which is now the second party. Collectively, third force parties (that is, the Alliance, Nationalists and Northern Ireland parties) were second in 1983 winning 30 per cent of the total vote, as against 28 per cent won by Labour. In terms of seats in the House of Commons, Labour finished second. But in terms of constituency competition, Labour was more likely to finish third rather than second, trailing the Alliance as well as the Conservatives. Labour lost 119 deposits by failing to win one-eighth of the constituency vote, as against the Alliance loss of 11 deposits. The first priority in evaluating any particular constituency contest is to ask: What is the pattern of party competition here?

Whatever the names of the parties finishing first and second, the conventional idea of a seat changing hands by a swing of votes between the two leading parties is no longer true. Swing is appropriate when there are two (and only two) parties contesting a seat. In such a circumstance, the gain of votes by one party must equal the loss of the other party. But when three parties contest a seat, then one party's gain can be obtained in a variety of ways from the two other parties, and one party's loss can benefit either or both competitors. If the leading party has more than half the vote, any three-way exchange of votes is unlikely to threaten the incumbent MP with defeat. However, at the 1983 election less than half of all MPs won an absolute majority of votes in their constituency.

When a party is defending a constituency with less than half the vote, competition for the seat is multi-dimensional. There are several ways in which a seat might be retained or lost besides a conventional swing in votes between the first and second party. A conventional swing could be negated if the leading party compensated for votes lost to the second-place party by gaining votes from the third-place party. Alternatively, a second-place party could take a seat

without the incumbent losing a single vote by attracting sufficient support from the third-place party to pull ahead of an incumbent without an absolute majority. Where a Conservative now holds a seat with a substantial lead over a second-place Alliance candidate, the Conservative could be helped by a revival of Labour fortunes, even if it involved Labour winning some votes from the Conservative. That would make it less likely for the governing party to lose votes to Alliance, now the challenger in most Conservative-held seats.

The competition for votes is turbulent because the very distinctive 1983 general election results are an unstable base for any projection about the next general election. There is a gross disparity between the seats and votes of the two groups of parties contending for the title of Opposition. If the Alliance could concentrate its vote to win seats in proportion to votes, this would threaten both the Conservative and Labour parties. But the Alliance has the psephological misfortune to spread its support evenly. Its lack of a well defined base within the social structure of Britain causes great fluidity in the Alliance vote, which nearly doubled in 1983 from the Liberal total at the previous election. Because the Alliance's support is volatile, it is vulnerable to its vote being halved at the next general election.

The outcome of any one election is half the story of the next election. It is an important half, because it sets the position from which each party starts. Parties do not enter an election campaign as equals, especially when one party is already in government because of a landslide victory. Yet because most seats are held by a minority vote, the governing party could readily lose if the opposition united. Reciprocally, it could retain office if its opponents continue to be divided relatively evenly.

In an era in which parties as well as voters appear to be becoming deligned, future patterns of party competition will be determined by actions of party leaders as well as voters. But these actions occur in the context of an extraordinary 1983 election outcome. The British party system can today be described as a two-party system only by giving that term a radically new definition. There is one whole party, the Conservatives, with upwards of half the vote and more than half the seats. Labour and the Alliance, share more than half the vote but less than half the seats, constituting the two half-parties in the system.

II Common Problems of British Government

Parties divide but problems unite the electorate. The mass of the electorate tends to agree about the concerns to which British government should give priority. Problems of war and peace, inflation, economic growth and unemployment are important nationwide. Politicians too tend to agree about the principal problems facing the country. In a system of free elections, they could hardly do otherwise. Disagreement is about which party's policies or which party's leaders are best qualified to deal with common concerns of the electorate (cf. Rose, 1984).

Cabinet discussions, debates in Parliament, and the activities of Whitehall departments give collective force to the British dimension in the government of the United Kingdom. The problems that command most political attention are problems Britainwide. When divisions occur between spending ministries and Treasury opponents, between MPs favouring free enterprise as against Socialist planning, or within the governing party, the lines of divisions are likely to be functional, not territorial. They usually reflect economic interests found in all parts of Britain, rather than regional interests confined to one part of Britain. Common British concerns are more important than distinctive national concerns in a multi-national United Kingdom. At Westminster the British dimension is consistently more important than the Scottish dimension, the Welsh dimension, the Ulster or Irish dimension, and the rarely articulated but potentially powerful English dimension. In an ever-widening circle of territorial identifications, from the neighbourhood to global concerns, Westminster is the political focal point. It is more central than the regional dimension, and far stronger than the institutions representing the European or the United Nations dimension.

The institutions of British government are profoundly centralist and the authority of the Crown in Parliament is unlimited. But the Union that constitutes the United Kingdom is in no sense uniform. It is an eccentric unitary state, for there are separate ministers in Cabinet for Scotland, Wales, and

V

Divisions within England

Of all the nations of the United Kingdom, England is indubitably the most important, yet the least written about. If one party could sweep the constituencies of England, it would have a permanent majority in the United Kingdom Parliament. Alternatively, if the division of votes and seats within England is very close, then an advantage in Wales, Scotland or even Northern Ireland could be sufficient to keep a party in office for four years. While it is not normal for a government to win enough seats in England to claim a parliamentary majority solely on that basis, no party seeking to form the government will willingly jeopardize its appeal to English voters, who collectively elect more than 80 per cent of the members of the House of Commons.

Is it meaningful to speak of an English vote? To do this implies that electoral competition in England is substantially different from electoral competition in other parts of the United Kingdom. Yet there is no English National Party, as there are Nationalist parties elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The nearest approximation to a Nationalist party in England is a very inadequate approximation, the National Front. The National Front concentrates its efforts almost exclusively in English constituencies. In 1979, when it fought 303 constituencies, 297 were in England; in 1983, when its number of candidates fell to 60, all of these contested English seats. However, the National Front vote is derisory; in 1983 it gained only 0.1 per cent of the total. Moreover, the racialism of the National Front favours an all-white Britain; it does not claim that the English are a separate race from the Scots, the Welsh and the people of Northern Ireland.

To suggest that there is a distinctly English form of party competition because of differences from other nations in the United Kingdom is to put the cart before the horse. England cannot differ greatly from the overall United Kingdom pattern, for its votes largely determine the distribution of votes and seats United Kingdomwide. One speaks of other parts of the United Kingdom deviating from a general pattern, because it is England that sets the pattern.

To speak of an English vote is to imply that the voters of England are homogeneous in their party preferences. This is palpably untrue. In ten of 12 elections since the war, no party has won as much as half the vote in England. When the Conservatives succeeded in doing this in 1955 and 1959, it was not because the party's vote was exceptionally high in England; it was also high in Scotland and in Northern Ireland. Competition for the vote is more even in England than in Wales or Northern Ireland, where one-party dominance has been the rule (cf. Table 1.1).

A quick glance at the map will vitiate any assumption that there is a homogeneous English voting pattern. Calculation of votes and seats for England as a whole masks major differences between Sussex, voting 59 per cent Conservative at the 1983 election and returning 14 Conservative MPs for its 14 constituencies, as against South Yorkshire, 57 per cent Labour and returning 13 Labour MPs as against one Conservative. The outcome of a British general election may be less determined by differences between nations than by divisions within England.

Divisions within England are often interpreted as opposing two nations, a Conservative South of England, and a Labour North of England. Differential shares of the vote have been common for a century. In 1885 the Conservatives won 54 per cent of the vote in South East England, but only 42 per cent in Northern regions. In December 1910 the Conservatives won 57 per cent of the vote in the South East of England, but their vote fell to 42 per cent in parts of the North (Pelling, 1967: 415). Differences evident in 1983 are described by Currice and Steed (1982: 256ff) as reflecting a gradual process of change commencing in 1955, with persisting regional differences in swings cumulatively widening the difference in the regional strength of the parties. Following the 1983 election *The Economist* (18 June 1983) concluded that there are now two two-party systems in England, one in the South involving competition between the Conservatives and Alliance, and another in the North of England involving competition between Labour and the Conservatives.

The invocation of the phrase "two nations" to describe divisions within England is a reminder that territory is not the only basis of political division. Traditionally, the two nations of England have been the rich and the poor or, in contemporary language, the middle class and the working class. These divisions exist within every part of England, and even within the shadow of Parliament. Walking from Westminster to the East End of London, where investigators have often ventured to find the second and poorer nation of England, a traveller can pass through 22 Labour seats before stepping into the first Conservative seat in the suburbs bordering Essex. The importance of such social divisions is obliquely recognized by Currice and Steed, who note an urban-rural division as well as a North-South division within England. *The Economist* reflects the

confusion of territorial and social divisions by referring to Labour as 'a party of the periphery and the inner cities'.

The object of this chapter is to test systematically the relative importance of territorial as against socio-economic explanations of electoral divisions within England today. The first section reviews carefully the alternative models, and the extent to which socio-economic and territorial explanations may be complementary rather than contradictory. The second section uses multivariate statistics to measure the precise importance of a number of different hypothesized influences upon the level of Conservative, Labour and Alliance votes. The concluding section demonstrates the implications for representation in the House of Commons and patterns of party competition.

Territory and Social Structure as Alternative Models

General statements about the importance of socio-economic structure and territory leave many things unclear. Before undertaking statistical analysis, it is important to consider carefully the specific social and territorial influences often said to influence electoral divisions within England.

Discussions of electoral divisions in territorial terms usually imply that there are distinctive political cultures or sub-cultures associated with given areas. People who live in a given place, because they live in a given place, are expected to have certain attitudes and behaviour, differentiating them from people living elsewhere. Just as people who are born or raised in Lancashire will be socialized to support Lancashire at cricket, so people raised in County Durham will be socialized to support Labour at general elections. Territorial differences can persist, since most people living in a region will have been born there. Newcomers to the area will usually arrive in sufficiently small numbers at any one time so that they (or their children) will adapt to local outlooks. Regional differences within England (cf. Allen, 1968) are not derived from physical geography, such as height above sea level or the climate, but from the social consequences of people living together, thereby tending to acquire outlooks in common that also differentiate them from people in other regions.

The basic hypothesis is: *cultural differences between regions cause differences in election outcomes*. The nature and source of these cultural differences is not specified here. The first task is to see whether or to what extent differences exist. This avoids the time-wasting exercise of elaborating theories that lead to predictions of very great regional differences, only to have the theories collapse because the differences hypothesized are far greater than those existing in reality. In the 1970s many writings about Scottish and Welsh Nationalism exhibited just this defect, expatiating upon major historical and cultural

differences between the nations of Britain, while failing to note that these did not produce electoral cleavages in proportion to the described differences.

Defining the boundaries of a politically distinctive area is difficult within England in the absence of national divisions comparable to the differences between England as against Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Parliamentary constituencies are too large to constitute an immediate network of neighbourhood relations (cf. Fitton, 1973), yet a single constituency is too small to constitute a city, let alone a region. Moreover, the frequent redistribution of parliamentary seats because of population movements means that most voters do not have a long-term, let alone lifelong association with a particular constituency. The wholesale re-organization of English local government in the 1970s means that local government is no longer local, that is, conducted in the particular town or place where an individual lives, but rather directed from a county or metropolitan headquarters.

For administrative purposes England is often divided into eight standard regions defined by the Central Statistical Office: the South East (which groups London and the Home Counties), the South West, the East Midlands, the West Midlands, East Anglia, the North West, Yorkshire & Humberside, and the Northern region. The regions are defined for administrative convenience; they are not political units with their own elected assemblies or councils. Nor are these regions standard. Dozens of different sets of regional boundaries are used by different Whitehall departments. Hogwood and Keating (1982: 2) conclude: 'The most striking feature of the English regions in terms of their role in British government is a complete absence of a coherent definition of their boundaries, their size or even of the concept of a region'.

To divide England into two regions only, the North and the South, leaves no room for differentiating intermediate areas, such as the Midlands. Moreover, it overlooks the great contrast between the extreme urbanity of London and the prototypical English countryside in counties around London.

After considering carefully the alternatives of a two-nation division of England, or a quasi-standard set of eight regions, we have concluded that the most appropriate regional boundaries for electoral analysis divide England into four regions: the North of England (grouping together the Northern standard region, Yorkshire & Humberside, and the North West); the Midlands (grouping the East and the West Midlands); London (that is, the Greater London Council area); and the South of England (the South-East minus the GLC, East Anglia, and the South West). The regional location of each constituency is given in Appendix A.

The fourfold classification of English regions has the practical advantage of differentiating the indubitably Southern but industrial Midlands from both the North and the South. It also differentiates London from its contrasting Home Counties hinterland. The basic principle of combining like with like is

respected. Each of the four regions is relatively homogeneous politically: all three of the standard regions joined together in the North are disproportionately Labour, and the South of England standard regions grouped together are disproportionately Conservative. Each region is sufficiently large to permit the use of multivariate statistics with a reasonable degree of confidence.

However regions are defined and whatever the process sustaining distinctive cultural outlooks, we still want to know: What specific influences are likely to make some regions more Conservative and others more Labour? Propositions that assert regional differences do not *ipso facto* explain observed differences. Moreover, to refer simply to regional cultures is to risk using electoral data as evidence of both cause and effect.

A variety of writers, stimulated by a literature about uneven development as between first world and third world nations, have sought to explain regional differences in terms of centre-periphery relations (Orridge, 1981). The basic concept is that every country is differentiated into a central core, which normally enjoys political, economic and cultural hegemony, and peripheral areas. Inequalities between regions are said to cause a political reaction, in which peripheral areas sharply differentiate their party loyalties from the central area. The general hypothesis is: *Different locations on the centre-periphery axis cause differences in election outcomes.*

Within the United Kingdom most discussions of centre-periphery relations have concentrated upon differences between nations, with England identified as central and other nations as peripheral. The result has been inconclusive. Sometimes an attempt is made to differentiate an ahistorical "Celtic twilight" periphery from a "centre" that includes industrial South Wales, and industrial Scotland. This approach is incorrect, in that parts of the so-called Celtic twilight, such as Orkney & Shetland and Berwick, are historically areas of Danish or Norse penetration. A Liberal-held seat such as Berrymontsey, across the river from the Palace of Westminster, can hardly be assigned to the Celtic twilight. Furthermore, there is substantial evidence of political, social and economic divisions within each of the nations of the United Kingdom (see Rose, 1968: Table 7; Rose and McAllister, 1982: chapter 9)

The concept of centre-periphery is spatial in its basic imagery: some parts of a country are said to be distant from the centres of power, money and prestige. But writers on the subject have usually been vague in defining the terms. At its worst, discussions can confuse two very different types of relationships, a superior/subordinate relationship independent of territory, e.g. the East End of London as a peripheral part of Britain, and a territorial relationship, e.g. between cosmopolitan London and the industrial periphery. In this study, we have used distance from London in road miles as our measure of centrality or peripherality. The measure is precise, and clearly differentiates the areas closest

to London from remote parts of the United Kingdom such as Caidness or Fermanagh. It also discriminates areas within England, as between Birmingham (110 miles distant), Manchester (184 miles), Truro (256 miles), and Newcastle upon Tyne (273 miles).

Sooner or later, every discussion of territorial divisions within England begins describing differences in social structure; centre-periphery writings are no exception. For example, the North of England is usually contrasted with the South of England on the grounds that the North is working-class, industrial and urban, whereas the South is said to be middle-class, administrative, and rural or suburban. The co-existence of social structure and territorial divisions within England makes it important to test whether nominally territorial divisions are simply another way of referring to geographically skewed socio-economic characteristics. The North of England may not favour Labour because it has a Northern culture or is distant from London, but because it has a higher proportion of manual workers, and the South of England may favour the Conservatives because it has a higher proportion of middle-class electors.

Party competition in England is normally interpreted as competition between different socio-economic groups. The occupational structure of a constituency is considered far more important than its geographical location. Within London a middle-class constituency of well-to-do people, such as 'The City of London & Westminster South', is expected to vote Conservative, whereas a few stops away on the Underground line, a constituency which is heavily working-class with many council tenants, such as Bethnal Green & Stepney, is expected to be a safe Labour seat. From this perspective, there is hardly such a thing as political geography. In place of a map of constituencies, there is a hierarchy of constituencies ranging from those ranking highest in socio-economic status to those that are lowest. Political divisions within a city, a county, a region or nation follow social structure, not territorial location. The basic hypothesis is: *social structure differences cause differences in election outcome.*

Social structure is a comprehensive term referring to a host of social and economic differences that are often colloquially described as class differences. Class differences are often reduced to a single measure, occupation. But concentrating exclusively upon a manual/non-manual occupational division discards a large amount of information about economic conditions, for example, unemployment, income and the character of an individual's work. It discards information that is relevant to both social status and economic conditions, such as council-house tenancy or owner-occupation, and it also ignores social characteristics that are important in a wide variety of everyday relationships, such as age and sex. Analyses of voting behaviour in Britain in the past quarter-century consistently demonstrate the importance of social and economic influences upon voting; they also show that the influences are

multiple, rather than reducible to the single measure of occupation (see e.g. Rose, 1982a).

The question is not whether social structure influences voting, but rather which particular structural characteristics are of primary importance. The 1981 census employs more than 5,000 different statistical measures to characterize each parliamentary constituency, ranging from details about occupation to age structure and the male/female sex ratio. Given the plethora of census information available, it is necessary to select a limited number of characteristics differentiating constituencies from each other.

Factor analysis is an appropriate statistical technique for identifying commonality among a large number of statistical measures (Kelley and McAllister, 1983). A wide range of different constituency characteristics of potential importance was initially analysed in order to identify those collectively accounting for a high proportion of the variation between constituencies. Those of no statistical consequence were discarded. After a comprehensive analysis of various possible combinations, a solution was reached encompassing 16 measures that produced four factors, each independent of the other, which collectively account for 84 per cent of the variance among the 650 constituencies of the United Kingdom (See Appendix B for details). In the order in which they emerged, the four factors are:

1. *Socio-economic status* (29 per cent of variance). There are both theoretical and practical reasons for exercising care in constructing the principal measure of what is commonly called class differences. To reduce a host of social characteristics to a single measure, whether occupation, housing, or something else, is to presuppose that the measure prescribed is necessarily independent of and antecedent to other social characteristics. But studies of multiple deprivation in Britain consistently emphasize that areas ranking low or high in terms of one important social or economic indicator are likely to have a similar position on a multiplicity of measures.

The factor analysis identified six census measures that effectively constitute a *single* measure of socio-economic status. This factor has three components: an occupation measure of unskilled workers, semi-skilled workers, and professionals and managers; measures of council-house tenants and of owner-occupiers; and the proportion of unemployed in a constituency. The six measures are highly correlated, with an average factor loading of .84. They are also independent of the other three factors, with which their average correlation is .10.

The measure of socio-economic status distinguishes between constituencies relatively high in their proportion of middle-class residents and owner-occupiers and low in unemployed and council tenants (Cheadle and Croydon South rank highest) as against constituencies with a high proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, council tenants, and unemployed, and short

of owner-occupiers or middle-class residents. Liverpool Riverside is the English constituency lowest in socio-economic status. This does not mean that everyone in Croydon South or Cheadle is middle-class, an owner-occupier and in work, nor that everyone who lives in Liverpool Riverside is an unemployed manual worker in a council-house. What it does mean is that in these constituencies the proportions in these categories are at the extreme ends of the scale.

The socio-economic status scale is revealing in what it omits as well as what it includes. Education is not statistically significant in differentiating constituencies from each other, when their other social characteristics are taken into account. Given a history of minimum education for the majority of Britons, middle-class occupations recruit some people with only minimum education. Equally significant, the ownership of one or more than one car, often treated as if it were an indicator of household income, was not significant in differentiating constituencies, after allowing for other influences.

2. *Immigrants* (23 per cent of variance). Immigrant constituencies can be clearly identified by a combination of four highly correlated measures: the proportion of the population born in the New Commonwealth, the proportion born in the Irish Republic, and the proportion of households living in furnished accommodation and/or sharing a bathroom or toilet. Immigrants cluster in constituencies where rented rooms allow people to obtain accommodation quickly and easily; gaining a council house can involve a wait of years, and there are financial barriers to house purchase.

The factor analysis shows that race is not the only element of importance, for Irish as well as New Commonwealth immigrants tend to cluster in the same types of constituencies. Equally important, it shows that not all immigrants living in transient housing are poor. Upper-status Chelsea ranks high in immigrants and bed-sitter accommodation as well as low-status constituencies in London's East End. The London constituency of Brent East ranks highest on the immigrants scale, while a number of North East of England constituencies rank lowest; they attract few immigrants because of high unemployment and lots of council houses.

3. *Elderly* (19 per cent). Constituencies with a high or low proportion of the population retired or over the age of 65 are distinctive in ways cutting across other social characteristics. These constituencies not only include middle-class areas, such as Worthing and Hove in Sussex, but also industrial towns in the North of England, where the departure of young people by default has left a relatively large proportion of elderly residents. Nor do these constituencies represent a single housing group, for some, such as Blackpool, have a high level of transient residents, whereas the retirement havens of the South and some industrial areas in the North can have a high proportion of owner-occupiers. Two constituencies on the South Coast of England rank highest in their proportion of elderly, Eastbourne and Bexhill & Battle; Harlow ranks lowest.

4. *Agriculture* (12 per cent). Agriculture does not readily fit analyses of class which assume an urban, industrial population. Farmers may be wealthy in terms of the land they own or have borrowed money to purchase, but they work with their hands. The environment of agricultural Britain is very different from that of industrial cities, and these differences affect people whether or not they actually live on a farm. Hence, constituencies with a relatively high proportion of the labour force working in agriculture are distinctive in a factor analysis. A large number of urban constituencies cluster at the bottom of this scale, for they are without any agriculture; the most rural constituency in England is Holland with Boston.

Population movement from inner-city areas to suburbs and the surrounding countryside and movement between regions are potentially significant for electoral behaviour. Voters who leave an area in which they are born and bred may also leave behind earlier party loyalties. Constituencies full of new housing estates, whether owner-occupiers, council tenants or New Towns, might be expected to be electorally volatile, or open to the appeal of new parties, such as the Alliance. Population change is also important. In 1983 Boundary Commissioners created new parliamentary constituencies in areas of expanding population and merged constituencies contracting in population. However, the factor analysis showed that population change in a constituency is not part of a general syndrome; it does not correlate strongly with the measures of socio-economic status, age, immigration, or agriculture. Nor is population change sufficiently distinctive to constitute a factor on its own; it does not differentiate constituencies beyond what is achieved by the four factors described above.

Testing the Causes of Divisions

The 1983 election revealed a plenitude of electoral divisions within England. The Conservatives were well ahead with 46 per cent of the vote because more than half the vote was divided among their opponents, with Labour taking 27 per cent, and the Alliance 26 per cent. The mechanics of the electoral system produced a very different allocation of seats: the Conservatives won more than two-thirds of the 523 English seats, Labour more than a quarter, and the Alliance only 13. While the two also-ran parties were nearly even in votes, they differed in their competitive placement. The Alliance finished second in more than half the constituencies of England, and was twice as likely as Labour to finish second to a Conservative winner. Three very different kinds of electoral outcomes thus require explanation: how the parties divide the vote; the division of seats in the House of Commons; and contrasting patterns of party competition. Whereas social structure might be the most important determinant of votes, territorial differences may correlate most with outcomes in terms of seats.

Divisions within England

When examining constituency voting patterns, the first concern is the base vote that each party receives rather than the swing registered between parties since the last election, the normal tool of analysis in Nuffield election studies (cf. Chapter XI). Inferences drawn from characteristics of a constituency as a whole are subject to the ecological fallacy, if projected to the behaviour of a small proportion of individuals whose changes of votes produce a small net swing.

A party's base vote is its share of the total vote in the constituency. It is reasonable to compare the socio-economic status of the total electorate with each party's share of the total vote. Concentrating attention upon the base vote is even more important than usual in 1983, for there is no historic record of how the constituencies voted in 1979, since nine-tenths had their boundaries changed by redistribution. Moreover with three parties fighting nationwide, a constituency swing could be the byproduct of a variety of switches in votes. A party could achieve a swing in its favour, even though its base vote contracted (see Chapter XI).

In a three-party system, it is important to examine the Conservative, Labour and Alliance share of the vote separately. Knowing that the Conservatives won a seat does not tell us the name of the second party, let alone the share of the vote won by the party finishing second. In Chelmsford, which the Conservatives won with 48 per cent of the vote, the Alliance finished a very close second with 47 per cent, and Labour was third with five per cent. In Chorley, which also gave the Conservatives 48 per cent, Labour finished second with 30 per cent of the vote, and the Alliance third with 20 per cent.

Another reason for separately examining each party's vote is that there are good theoretical reasons to expect differences in the extent to which each is determined by social structure and territorial influences. The conventional class equals party model of voting implies that social structure and, *a fortiori*, socio-economic status, ought to determine both the Conservative and Labour share of a constituency's vote. This is consistent with much Labour rhetoric—but inconsistent with the Conservative claim to be a national party appealing to all classes. The Alliance rejects class categories; its supporters argue that Alliance support is derived from a cross-section of the nation, and is not dependent upon the social structure of a constituency. Territorial influences could also differ in their impact upon parties. For example, the weakness of the Labour Party in the South of England need not result in disproportionate Conservative strength. It could reflect disproportionate Alliance strength there.

While the social and territorial characteristics of constituencies may be discussed separately for clarity in exposition, in practice their influence is exercised jointly. The Conservative vote in a constituency may be affected by a constituency ranking high in socio-economic status and being a London

suburb. The Labour vote in a constituency may be affected by a constituency ranking low in socio-economic status and being in the North of England. Given a multiplicity of potential influences upon constituency voting, it is necessary to use multivariate statistics to test the relative importance of each of the six measures of territory and social structure discussed above.

A familiar multivariate statistic, ordinary least squares regression analysis, is employed here to test influences upon votes. It is particularly appropriate because, when assessing the importance of each of the six influences, it controls for the effects of the other five. Regression analysis can thus test whether the apparent relationship between distance from London and Labour voting is a centre-periphery difference, or simply an artifact of a higher proportion of working-class electors in constituencies far from London.

The first point demonstrated is that there is a very good fit, as shown by a high proportion of variance explained (r^2), between a constituency's social structure and territorial characteristics and the share of the vote won by the Conservative and Labour parties. Altogether, the six different influences can explain 78 per cent of the variation in the Conservative vote in a constituency, and 79 per cent of the Labour vote (Table V.1). But the six influences are not of equal importance.

Socio-economic status is by far the most important single influence upon a constituency's vote. It explains 42 per cent of the variation in the Conservative share of the constituency vote, and 39 per cent of the variance in Labour's share of the vote. The impact of socio-economic status upon a party's vote is shown in table V.1 by the b value, the metric partial regression coefficient. This gives the change in the party's share of the vote from the constant, (24.2 per cent in the case of the Conservatives). For each one per cent change in a constituency's position on the socio-economic status scale, the proportion of the Conservative vote changes by 0.37 per cent. In a constituency at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, the Conservative vote is expected to be 24.2 per cent. In a constituency ranking in the 100th percentile on the scale, the expected Conservative vote would be 61.2 per cent (that is, 0.37 x 100 plus the constant of 24.2 per cent) before allowing for the impact of other less influential characteristics of the constituency. The impact of socio-economic status is even stronger upon Labour's vote: -0.46 per cent for every one per cent change in a constituency's ranking on the socio-economic status scale. The minus sign signifies that it should be subtracted from the constant, 55.3 per cent. In a constituency that ranks 10 per cent from the bottom of the socio-economic scale, the Labour vote, all other influences cancelling out, would be 50.7 per cent (that is, -0.46 x 10 plus 55.3 per cent).

Because constituency outcomes aggregate the behaviour of tens of thousands of voters, the ecological association between socio-economic status and party preferences appears different than in sample surveys of the behaviour of

Table V.1 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND TERRITORIAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN ENGLAND

89

	Conservative vote		Labour vote		Alliance vote	
	% variance explained	b	% variance explained	b	% variance explained	b
Social Structure						
Socio-econ status	.37**	42	-.46**	39	.08**	9
Agriculture	.11**	15	-.16**	17	.06**	8
Immigrants	-.02	2	.04*	4	-.01	2
Elderly	.01	1	-.04*	3	.02	2
Territory						
Miles from London	-.03**	11	.01	4	.00	1
Region ^a	2.8**	7	6.9**	12	3.4**	8
(Constant) r^2	(24.2)	78	(55.3)	79	(18.1)	30

^a South of England for Conservatives and Alliance; Labour, North of England.

*Significant at .05 level

**Significant at .01 level

individuals (see e.g. Miller, 1978: Table 6). Surveys of individual voters emphasize the limited and declining relationship between socio-economic status, typically measured by a single indicator, occupation, and individual party preference. The probability of an individual voting Conservative if middle-class or Labour if working-class was far less than 1.00 in 1983, and has been declining steadily in the past quarter-century (Rose, 1980). But there remains a degree of association between occupational class and party preference, causing a constituency low in socio-economic status to produce a high Labour vote, and a high-ranking constituency a high Conservative vote. This aggregate relationship, though less than a one-to-one fit, has remained high and steady for decades (Miller, 1978: table 9). Of the 100 British constituencies ranking highest in socio-economic status, the Conservatives won 99 and Alliance one in 1983. In the 100 ranking lowest in socio-economic status, Labour won 83 seats, the Conservatives 12, and Alliance 5.

When the vote of one individual is analysed, there must either be a one-to-one fit between class and party, or no fit at all. But when thousands of votes are

analysed, there does not need to be an all-or-nothing fit; the impact (the *b* value) can fall anywhere between 1.00 and 0.0. After taking the constant into account, a change in socio-economic status produces a change in party vote that is substantially more than nil, but less than a one-to-one fit.

Just as a cricket or a baseball team does not need to score all the runs to win a match, so a party does not need to win all the votes to win a seat. The higher the *b* value, the greater the likelihood that social structure can determine whether a party will win sufficient votes to win a seat. In the 1983 election the impact of socio-economic status upon votes was strong enough so that the Conservatives could normally expect more than 50 per cent of the vote, thus guaranteeing the party victory, in the top 30 per cent of constituencies according to socio-economic status. Labour was predicted to get more than 50 per cent of the vote in the bottom 10 per cent of constituencies in socio-economic terms.

Because factor analysis is used to classify constituencies according to a multiplicity of socio-economic characteristics--unemployment and housing as well as occupational class--both the variety and the inter-relationship of socio-economic conditions are reflected here. It is *prima facie* reasonable to say that constituencies that have more middle-class residents, more owner-occupiers and less unemployment are likely to have a higher Conservative vote, and that constituencies with more manual workers, more council tenants, and more unemployment are likely to have a higher Labour vote. That is precisely what Table V.1 demonstrates. The use of a multiplicity of indicators to determine socio-economic status maintains the integrity of class as a single concept. It is here treated as a second-order abstraction referring to a multiplicity of attributes. (For the same approach applied to survey data see the description of ideal-types in Rose, 1980: Table 14).

Alternative strategies of attempting to deal with the multiplicity of characteristics associated with the concept of class have considerable problems. For example, when Franklin and Mughan (1978) apply regression analysis to British voting, they treat socio-economic characteristics as if they were separate and independent of each other. But the factor analysis undertaken here, reinforced by analysis of survey data (see e.g. Rose, 1968 *et seq*) demonstrates that this is emphatically not the case. As Weatherford notes (1980: 461): 'The inclusion of several related components of social class in the same regression equation can lead to mistaken inferences about larger theoretical questions.'

By using a single indicator of class Miller avoids this problem. But the indicator chosen, the proportion of employers and managers in a constituency, is unsuited to explain the total constituency vote, because it averages only 13.3 per cent of a constituency (Miller, 1979: Table 6). A series of inferences about the behaviour of the remaining 87 per cent of the voters is required; Miller does not provide this. Moreover, a realistic model must take into account non-occupational factors in the milieu, since from one-third to one-half of the

electorate lacks a current occupation, being retired, a housewife, a student or unemployed (Miller, 1978: 258). Social relationships also reflect such politically important influences as public or private housing and unemployment. It is best to include these by factor analysis, as is done here.

Although the socio-economic status of a constituency has the strongest impact upon its vote, it is not the only characteristic that is important. The agricultural character of a constituency is significant, even after taking socio-economic status into account. A traveller would never confuse an industrial town or a prosperous suburb with a farming area. The agricultural character of a constituency can explain 15 per cent of the Conservative share of the vote, and 17 per cent of the Labour share of the vote. The *b* values in Table V.1 show that the difference in the Conservative vote between the least and the most agricultural constituency is an 11 per cent advantage to the Conservatives, and a 16 per cent loss to Labour.

An alternative measure of urban-rural difference was also tested, namely, the density of population in a constituency. This distinguishes areas of suburban houses with gardens from city centres as well as from rural areas. However, the distribution of population between compact urban constituencies, suburbs and scattered rural areas has no discernible impact upon the vote (cf. Campbell et al., 1960: chapter 15).

By contrast with socio-economic status and agriculture, the immigrant character of a constituency and the proportion of the elderly in its electorate have virtually no influence on votes *after* the impact of other influences is taken into account (Table V.1). In England the difference in votes between the constituency with the most immigrants and the constituency with the least, controlling for other factors, is a two per cent drop in the Conservative vote, and a four per cent gain in the Labour vote; it is proportionately less in constituencies between these extremes. Where the 11 elderly are most numerous, the Conservative vote is up one per cent and the Labour vote down four per cent, and the constituency with the fewest elderly people registers the reverse.

Whereas socio-economic status accounts for 42 per cent of the variance in the Conservative vote, the immigrant factor accounts for only two per cent, and the elderly for one per cent of the variation. In the case of the Labour vote, a similar pattern emerges: immigrants account for four per cent of the variation in the Labour vote, and the elderly account for three per cent.

The Alliance vote is very different from the Conservative and Labour vote in England, for 70 per cent of the variation in the Alliance vote *cannot* be explained by the social and territorial characteristics of a constituency (Table V.1). Even more striking, the variation in the Alliance vote from constituency to constituency is much less than the variation in the Conservative or Labour vote.

Of the 30 per cent of the variation in the Alliance vote explainable by constituency characteristics, nine per cent is accounted for by socio-economic status. But the impact of status upon the Alliance vote is weak. For every one per cent change in the socio-economic status of a constituency, the Alliance vote alters by less than one-tenth of one per cent; this is one-quarter less than the impact registered by such a change upon the Conservative vote, and less than one-fifth its impact upon the Labour vote. The agricultural character of a constituency is almost as important as socio-economic status in explaining variation in the Alliance vote. But it explains only half as much variance as it does in the Conservative or in the Labour vote. Moreover, the impact of agriculture is also much less; a one per cent rise on the agriculture scale results in only a 0.06 per cent increase in the Alliance vote.

Territorial differences do affect party shares of the vote, but the impact is less than social structure influences. Territorial factors account for 18 per cent of variance explained in the Conservative share of the vote; for 16 per cent of the variance explained in the Labour vote; and for nine per cent in the Alliance vote.

A constituency's location on a centre-periphery axis and its regional location each have some impact upon votes, but their relative significance differs between the Conservative and Labour parties. The Conservative vote in constituencies in the South of England is 2.8 per cent higher than in constituencies in other regions of England, even after allowance is made for the socio-economic status and agricultural character of the constituency. (Because only one region is examined in Table V.1 and it is treated as a nominal variable, the b value of 2.8 per cent is therefore not comparable to other b values in the column). Distance from London has a negative effect upon Conservative voting; for every 100 miles a constituency is distant from London the Conservative vote is likely to be three per cent less than would be expected because of its other characteristics. Thus, in Devon and Cornwall, the advantage of being in the South is offset by the disadvantage of distance from London, and in the North, where most constituencies are more than 200 miles from London, a Conservative candidate will have a distance handicap of six per cent or more of the vote.

The Alliance vote, like the Conservative vote, is boosted in the South of England by 3.4 per cent on average, after controlling for its other characteristics. But within England distance from London does not help or hinder Alliance support. It draws support around Greater London, in Devon and Cornwall, and in Northumberland as well.

The regional effect upon the Labour vote is greater than that upon the vote for other parties. Labour's support in North of England constituencies is increased on average by 6.9 per cent above that predicted by its social structure (Table V.2). This is best interpreted as evidence of a North of England rather

Table V.2 REGIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN ENGLAND

Region ^a	% Conservative vote		% Labour vote		% Alliance vote	
	Act.	Diff. ^b	Act.	Diff.	Act.	Diff.
South	53	+5	16	-7	30	+5
London	43	-3	30	+4	25	0
Midlands	45	-2	31	+2	23	+3
North	38	-3	37	+3	24	+2

^a See Appendix A for the definition of regions.

^b The mean predicted constituency vote for the party, calculated by a regression analysis of the constituency's socio-economic status, agriculture, immigrants and elderly. The predicted votes need not sum to 100.

than a peripheral culture, for distance from London has virtually no impact upon Labour's share of the vote. In East Anglian and South-West of England constituencies distant from London, Labour polls an average or below-average vote.

The best way to measure the extent to which there is a regional effect in all four of the English regions is to compare the vote that a party actually wins in the region with the vote that it would be expected to have on the basis of a regression analysis of its social structure. If regional cultures have no effect, the difference between the actual and estimated share of the vote would be small, caused by more or less random statistical fluctuations. The more a region's actual vote differs from its predicted vote, then the greater the degree of regional effect. Given that regression statistics are much better at determining the Conservative and Labour shares of the vote than the Alliance vote, the method used for testing regional effects ought, if anything, to produce greater differences for Alliance.

In most regions of England there are limited but noteworthy differences between the predicted and the actual share of the vote for each of the three parties. The regional differences do not exceed seven per cent, Labour's shortfall in the unfavourable regional culture of the South of England. The

average difference between the predicted and actual regional vote of the parties is 3.25 per cent. Within this range, the regional culture is most favourable to the Conservatives in the South of England, where the party does five per cent better than would be predicted solely on the basis of social structure. The sub-culture is unfavourable in other regions of England, where the Conservatives get about three per cent less than their expected share of the vote. The Labour Party suffers more loss of votes in the South of England than it gains in the North. Because Alliance's vote is not primarily a reflection of social structure differences, its results in Table V.2, which highlights a South of England advantage, should be treated cautiously.

Constituency Outcomes

When electoral outcomes are defined in terms of winning seats in the House of Commons rather than winning votes in constituencies, regional effects become important. In three of the four regions of England, no party won as much as half the vote and in the North of England the Conservatives came first with as little as 38 per cent of the popular vote. But one party won a majority of the seats in every English region (Table V.3). One-party hegemony was nearly total in the South of England, where the Conservatives won 95 per cent of the 178 seats contested. In London and the Midlands, the Conservatives won more than two-thirds of the seats. In the North of England, Labour won 55 per cent of the region's 162 seats.

The most important feature of regional competition for parliamentary seats is that there is very little competition. Only in the North of England was there

Table. V.3 THE REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN ENGLAND

	Conservative			Total N
	(% seats)			
South of England	95	2	3	178
London	67	31	2	84
Midlands	71	29	0	99
North of England	41	55	4	162
Total England	69	28	2	523

Divisions within England

competition in 1983; the Conservatives were able to win four seats for every five won by Labour. In elections in the 1970s, the Midlands was the highly competitive region, with the Conservatives and Labour each winning a substantial number of seats. The North of England was a Labour stronghold, with Labour taking two-thirds or more of the seats there. The nationwide collapse of the Labour vote in 1983 shifted the locus of competition to the North of England. In the three regions south of a line drawn from Humberside to Merseyside one-party hegemony is currently the rule.

Conventional conceptions of centre-periphery cannot explain the Conservative hegemony. In London, indubitably central in any conception of England or the United Kingdom, the Conservative share of seats and votes was less than in the Midlands. Conservative hegemony is great only in the South of England. If a line is drawn from the mouth of the Thames to just south of Bristol, there is not a single Labour MP south of that line. In geographical terms, Conservative strength in Parliament increases as one moves toward the English Channel, in some places closer to France than to London. From this perspective, an historian could argue that Conservative strength is concentrated in the periphery of the Kingdom of Burgundy.

Regional influence upon parliamentary representation is not a function of regional culture or of social and economic characteristics of the regions; it is primarily a function of the first-past-the-post electoral system. The regional effect upon the Conservative vote averaged three per cent in 1983, but the electoral system manufactured an average difference of 24 per cent between the 1 seats and the votes won by the Conservatives in a region (cf. Tables V.2-3). The average regional effect upon the Labour vote was four per cent in 1983; the mechanics of the electoral system turned this into an average disparity of nine per cent of parliamentary representation. The Alliance vote showed an average regional effect of less than three per cent. The regional effect of the electoral system on Alliance representation averaged 22 per cent.

If Britain were to adopt proportional representation, using regions as the constituencies for allocating seats, then virtually by the whole of the discrepancy between seats and votes reported in Table V.3 would disappear. Instead of each region having hegemonic representation by one party, each region would be represented by a substantial fraction of Labour, Alliance and Conservative MPs. No party could dominate parliamentary representation in any English region.

In the first-past-the-post electoral system, the party that finishes second immediately gains nothing in parliamentary representation. But the party finishing second in a constituency can claim to be the opposition, expecting to benefit when the swing of the pendulum deprives the front-running party of votes. Conventionally, the party finishing third is dismissed. A vote cast for a third-place party is regarded as a wasted vote, in a way that a vote cast for a

second-place party is not, for a favourable swing could make it the winning party in a constituency.

The three-way division of the vote in England in 1983 did not produce the same ordering of parties in every constituency. Had that been the case then the Conservatives would have won all 523 English seats, and Labour would have finished second 523 times. Of the six logically possible patterns of competition, three account for nearly all the constituency outcomes (Table V.4). In 48 per cent of English constituencies, the Conservative candidate finished first and an Alliance candidate second; in 25 per cent of constituencies the pattern of competition was Labour first and Conservative second; and in 22 per cent the pattern was Conservative first and Labour second (Table V.4).

The regional effect upon patterns of party competition is much less marked than the effect upon the distribution of seats. While every constituency by definition has a two-party system, that is, one party finishing first and another finishing second, only in the South of England is there a consistent pattern of competition between two parties. In the South of England, 82 per cent of constituency contests show the same pattern of party competition, Conservatives first and Alliance second. By contrast, in London and the Midlands there is no single pattern. In London 37 per cent of seats show a Conservative-Alliance pattern, 30 per cent a Conservative-Labour pattern,

Table V.4 PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION IN ENGLAND

	South London Midlands North				Total
	(N constituencies)				
Conservatives first					
Alliance second	146	31	36	36	249
Labour second	23	25	34	31	113
Total	169	56	70	67	362
Labour first					
Conservatives second	4	22	29	76	131
Alliance second	0	4	0	13	17
Total	4	26	29	89	148
Alliance first					
Conservatives second	5	0	0	4	9
Labour second	0	2	0	2	4
Total	5	2	0	6	13

and 26 per cent a Labour-Conservative pattern. Similarly, the Midlands has a three-way division in patterns of party competition: 36 per cent have a Conservative-Alliance pattern, 34 per cent a Conservative-Labour pattern, and 29 per cent a Labour-Conservative pattern. In the North of England, there are also diverse patterns of competition; in 47 per cent of the constituencies the order is Labour-Conservative, in 22 per cent Conservative-Alliance, and in 19 per cent Conservative-Labour.

The systematic analysis of the division of votes, seats and patterns of party competition in England emphasizes that the influence of social structure and territory is contingent. It depends upon whether one is seeking to explain the distribution of votes in the mass electorate or seats in the House of Commons. If votes are the focus of attention, then social structure is by far the most important determinant. The social structure of England assures both the Conservatives and Labour a substantial vote. Territory exercises most influence upon electoral outcomes when attention is focussed upon the distribution of parliamentary seats. If attention is directed to party representation in the House of Commons, then regions that are multi-party in terms of votes or patterns of party competition tend to have their parliamentary representation dominated by a single party.

and the numbers employed in the construction industries fell from 67,000 to 53,000 in the same period. The service sector, one of the few growth points in the Welsh economy during the 1970s, shed 41,000 workers drifting down from 563,000 to 522,000 (Welsh Regional Digest of Statistics 1982). The Welsh electorate in June 1983 voted in a political and economic environment markedly different from that in 1979.

Political and Economic Developments, 1979-83

The most obvious consequence of the 1979 referendum was the abrupt removal from the political scene of the devolution issue, which had occupied a central position in Welsh politics since Gwynfor Evans' spectacular by-election victory in July 1966. The Conservative Party's argument, that Wales did not require fundamentally different treatment from the rest of the United Kingdom, appeared to be vindicated. The Labour and Liberal parties, impressed by the scale of the referendum defeat and threatened by the electoral advance of the Conservatives, adopted lower profiles on specifically Welsh issues and prudently dissociated themselves from the devolution policy. Furthermore, the problematic concept of a Welsh dimension in the formulation and presentation of central government policies was rendered more obscure and less certain.

However, the political and administrative *status quo* was not preserved by the referendum vote. During the referendum campaign the Conservatives had consistently argued that the problems of public accountability in Welsh administration could be resolved within the framework of the Westminster Parliament. On 26 June 1979, the day the House of Commons repealed the Wales Act by 191 votes to 8, the Welsh Secretary of State, Nicholas Edwards, announced the government's intention to establish a Select Committee on Welsh Affairs to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Welsh Office and associated public bodies (SO86A, 25 June 1979). After a series of disputes concerning the chairmanship, eventually resolved in favour of the Labour Party, the Committee came into operation in January 1980.

From the outset the Welsh media and public opinion tended to regard the Committee on Welsh Affairs as a substitute for a Welsh assembly. This was partly because of the tone of the debate during the later stages of the referendum campaign but it was also a point of view shared by a majority of the committee including the first chairman Leo Abse, a leading member of the Gang of Six, Labour MPs who had been largely responsible for defeating the devolution proposals in the referendum. A majority of the committee was enthusiastic to disprove the necessity for an elected assembly by exploiting the committee as a lobbyist for the Welsh interest; an option open to the committee only because of

VI **The Faces of Wales**

by

DENIS BALSOM.

*University of Wales
Aberystwyth*

J. BARRY JONES

*University of Wales
Cardiff*

Welsh politics following the 1979 general election was strongly influenced by two factors; the devolution referendum of 1 March 1979 and the secular decline of Wales's traditional basic industries. In the referendum an overwhelming 79 per cent of the voters rejected the Labour Government's proposals. It was not merely a defeat for the nationalists; it also seriously weakened the Welsh political and cultural establishment. With the exception of the Conservatives, all political parties in Wales had supported devolution, together with the vast majority of Welsh religious denominations and most of the notables in the Welsh cultural community. However, on the evidence of the referendum, only the Conservatives had correctly judged the mood of the Welsh electorate; a factor reflected in the resurgence of the Conservative vote from 23.9 per cent in October 1974 to 32.2 per cent in May 1979. This suggested an erosion of the distinctive character of Welsh politics and its progressive acquisition of politico-cultural values of a wider British system (Foulkes *et al.*, 1983:226).

The decline of Wales's industrial base was accelerated by the central tenet of the new Conservative government's economic policy: the attempt to cut back public expenditure. The policy had a disproportionate impact on Wales which in 1979 had approximately 43 per cent of its working population employed in the public sector. The most catastrophic change took place in the Welsh steel industry. On the eve of the 1979 election in Wales, the British Steel Corporation employed 63,000 steel workers; by May 1983 that number had plummeted to 19,000. Manufacturing industries declined from 312,000 to less than 226,000

its impeccable anti-devolution credentials. In order to maximize its role the committee successfully sought a consensual approach. It addressed itself to issues with a distinctly nationalist tone: unemployment persistently and substantially above the United Kingdom average, Welsh-language broadcasting and water in Wales. The committee's intention was not merely to focus the attention of the Welsh public on the Westminster parliamentary process, but also to prevent Plaid Cymru from pre-empting these issues and presenting itself as the sole custodian of the national interest.

The committee's first report published in August 1980 was highly critical of the government's economic policy and warned that there would be 'risks of serious social disorder if there were to be very high and chronic levels of unemployment, particularly among the young' (HC 731, 1980). The report, while not deflecting the government from its policy, proved acutely embarrassing. The committee's recommendations had the unanimous support of all six Conservative members of the committee; an indication of territorial interest taking precedence over partisan loyalties. However, the government rejected all but two of the recommendations (Cmd 8085, 1980). Subsequently the Welsh Committee avoided direct confrontations on substantive policy issues and attempted instead to influence the policy implementation process, suggesting how the programming schedule for Channel 4 Wales might be planned, how the consumer interest in the Welsh-Water Authority might be best protected and advocating an equalization of water rates across the whole of Britain. All were elements in the administration of public policy but none attracted the media publicity and the public interest generated by the Welsh Committee's first report.

The Committee on Welsh Affairs did not become a surrogate for an elected assembly. It failed to maintain the initial high level of public interest nor did it satisfy the, perhaps unrealistic, expectations which some people placed on it. In this situation the committee's intrinsic weaknesses become more apparent: a wide ranging remit which frustrated specialization and membership unrepresentative of the balance of political forces in Wales.

The distinctly Welsh political issues arose from the 1979 election. The Conservative Party, in common with all other parties in Wales, had campaigned with the commitment to establish a separate Welsh-language TV channel in Wales. In September 1979 the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, announced the government's intention not to do so. The decision provoked widespread indignation in Wales. Attacks were made on TV transmitters in England and Wales by militant members of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (Welsh Language Society). A more circumspect Plaid Cymru organized a campaign of non-payment of TV licence fees. In the early summer of 1980 Plaid Cymru's President, Gwynfor Evans, announced his intention to fast to death from October unless the government backed down. There followed a series of

intense negotiations between the government and various Welsh political figures resulting in the government's first U-turn. The Welsh Secretary admitted that the government had lost the middle ground of opinion in Wales and that a Welsh language TV channel would, after all, be established (*Arade*, 14 May 1981). It was an uncompromising defeat for the government and an enormous boost to the morale of nationalist forces in Wales. It also emphasized the potency of extra-parliamentary action for those activists in the nationalist movement who had always regarded the devolution exercise as irrelevant to the real problems of Wales.

The process of incremental institutional reforms, characteristic of the development of the Welsh Office during the 1970s, was continued. In anticipation of devolution, plans were advanced for transferring responsibility for negotiating and distributing the Rate Support Grant (RSG) in Wales from the Department of the Environment to the Welsh Office, a responsibility in Scotland already exercised by the Scottish Office. The momentum created was sufficient for this process to be completed despite the referendum. The new procedure, which came into operation in 1980 had two important consequences. It increased Welsh Office control of local authorities, and it separated the Welsh RSG from that of England, permitting territorial comparisons to be drawn. In December 1980 English local authorities complained to the Department of the Environment at the preferential treatment implicit in the Welsh RSG. The evidence appears to support the complaint. In the four years prior to 1981-82 Wales's share of the combined England and Wales RSG was 7.25 per cent. By 1982-83 it had increased to 7.6 per cent, a possible measure of the skill and tenacity with which the Welsh Office has been promoting Wales's case (*Arade*, 12 December 1980).

The Welsh Office has not yet attained the position in Welsh political life enjoyed by the Scottish Office in Scotland. It emerged from the Welsh Affairs Committee's hearings that the British Steel Corporation in December 1979 had neglected to inform the Welsh Secretary of State of the impending run down of the two major steel plants in Wales. They are also doubts as to the level of consultation with the Welsh Office prior to the Home Secretary's decision to renege on the Welsh TV channel commitment. However the Welsh Office has continued to grow both in numbers and importance. Since August 1980 its 2,500 civil servants have occupied a palatial new building in Cathays Park, Cardiff costing £23 million. The convention whereby the two junior ministers are appointed, one from the north and one from the south, one Welsh-speaking and one not, was preserved and reaffirmed after the tragic death of Michael Roberts while speaking in a Welsh debate on the floor of the House of Commons in February 1983. His successor was John Stradling Thomas, also from the south.

The 1979-83 period also witnessed a fundamental shift in the Welsh economy. In four years the Welsh unemployment rate rose from 8.5 per cent in April 1979, to 16.7 per cent in May 1983. The trigger for this change was the decline of steel-making capacity in Wales. The cutback had serious implications for the coal industry in South Wales, and seriously eroded the rate income of three of the eight Welsh county councils.

The Wales TUC assumed the leadership in fighting BSC's proposals. George Wright, the Wales TUC Secretary called for a Welsh general strike but the hesitancy of the British TUC General Council, the opposition of some Welsh Labour MPs and the reluctance of the South Wales miners to endorse a general strike in a pit-head ballot effectively rejected the idea. In April 1980 James Callaghan, the previous Labour Prime Minister and MP for a Cardiff constituency, suggested setting up a Joint Standing Conference to include representatives of Welsh county and district councils, the Wales TUC and the CBI Wales. Initially, because of its heavy Labour bias, the CBI participated only as observers, but early in 1982 the body was formally established as the Welsh Committee for Economic and Industrial Affairs under the Chairmanship of Lord Gledwyn Hughes, a former Labour Welsh Secretary of State. The committee was intended to identify priority problems and to lobby the government to take account of Welsh needs. Thus, within three years of the government's elimination of the Welsh Council in August 1979, as part of its war on quangos, another body seeking to speak for Wales had arisen.

For a time, it appeared that the most effective reaction to the government's economic policies, would be that of the South Wales miners. In February 1981 the publication of the National Coal Board's plans to close seven Welsh pits, threatening 2,800 jobs provoked an all-out strike in the South Wales coalfield, which rapidly spread to other British coalfields. The government conceded, promising to curb imported coal, to sustain investment and agreed additional subsidies to the South Wales coalfield in excess of £30 million. It was however a short lived respite. Two years later in March 1983 when the Ty-Mawr-Lewis Merthyr pit was earmarked for closure a South Wales coalfield strike won little support elsewhere. The plans to reduce the South Wales coalfield by as much as a third had merely been deferred.

The belief that the economic problems in Wales were qualitatively different from the rest of the United Kingdom encouraged the Wales TUC to investigate the possibility of dealing with the job crisis by establishing co-operatives. In January 1981 representatives of the Wales TUC visited Mondragon Co-operative in the Basque area of Northern Spain as part of a £45,000 feasibility study financed by the Welsh Office. As a result the Wales TUC was instrumental in setting up the Wales Worker Co-operative Development and Training Centre in April 1983, funded equally by the Welsh Office and the FFC social fund, with substantial contributions from the Welsh Development

Agency, Mid Wales Development and all the Welsh county councils. It is too soon to measure its impact.

The economic picture was not entirely black. New jobs were attracted to Wales despite the recession. INMOS, a microchip company, established production facilities in Wales with the promise of 2000 jobs. The Welsh Development Agency continued its extensive factory-building programme, including the Ford Motor Company engine plant in Bridgend, where by the end of 1980 the workforce had grown to 1,800. From 1979 to 1983 the WIDA built in excess of 700 factories, for an estimated 10,000 jobs.

Confronted by structural contraction of the Welsh economy, the political parties were curiously quiet. The Conservative Party in Wales could argue the government's policies were vindicated by the party's electoral advances in Wales. Furthermore, consistent with the party's earlier position Welsh Conservatives were reluctant to regard Wales as separate from the rest of the UK or as facing problems distinctly different. However, some Conservatives, members of the Welsh Affairs Committee and the CBI Wales, were apprehensive of the impact of government policies in Wales, and criticized the party's prevailing monetarist philosophy (HC 731, 1980).

The devolution experience had left the Labour Party in some disarray. Following the 1979 general election it set about distancing itself from the devolution policy, a task made easier by the resignation of some pro-devolutionists within the party and the retirement of Emrys Jones, the Welsh Regional Organiser and Secretary, who had been a major architect of the devolution proposals. Devolution ceased to exist as a policy option; it was not even debated in Welsh Labour Conferences. For most party activists it was a painful memory best forgotten. However, the appointment of John Prescott as Labour Party Spokesman on Regional Affairs and devolution was evidence of the PLP's continuing concern - if not commitment. Prescott (1981) noted of Wales:

There is a strong feeling that devolution as previously put forward is less relevant than ever. However it was made clear to us that reform of local government, the advent of unitary authorities and possibility of regional government, would be acceptable in Wales provided that it was undertaken within the context of the UK framework and not one that treated Wales separately.

The Welsh Labour Party acquired an attitude of circumspection, tending to follow initiatives taken by the Wales TUC and subsequently endorsing the stand taken by Labour groups in Welsh local authorities in declaring the whole of Wales a Nuclear Free Zone in March 1982. The Labour Party in Wales was not riven by the activities of the militant tendency as were many parties in England and Scotland. The vast majority of Welsh Labour MPs were on the right of the party and members of the Solidarity Campaign; the Labour Co-

ordinating Committee was able to recruit only one Welsh MP. The activities of the new hard left made relatively little impact on a traditionally working-class and socially conservative party.

The Welsh Liberals had been discomfited by the 1979 general election and Emylyn Hooson, its leader, lost out to the Conservative challenge in Montgomery. However the party's fortunes were revitalized by the defection of three Labour MPs to the SDP. The first, Tom Ellis, Wrexham's Labour MP, announced his intention to break with Labour in January, 1981. Referring to the traditions of Welsh radicalism, he perceptively advocated an alliance with the Liberals, several months before the idea was broached in the rest of Britain. The Alliance in Wales was forged with little rancour and operated with genuine commitment and enthusiasm.

The party most chastened by the referendum and the general election was Plaid Cymru whose vote was reduced to 8 per cent in 1979. In the post mortem that followed the election, a left-right split emerged between the traditionalists, committed to a decentralized community socialism, and the left-wing, grouped around Dafydd Elis Thomas, who emphasized the need to establish a Welsh Socialist State by means of a popular front movement encompassing nationalists and the Welsh labour movement. The picture was further complicated by the emergence of a splinter group, the Welsh Socialist Republicans, which was highly critical of Plaid Cymru's attachment to constitutionalism. A drift to unconstitutional activities in the years following the 1979 election revealed that Plaid Cymru was in danger of losing the initiative within the nationalist movement. By December, 1980 there had been 42 arson attacks on second home holiday cottages owned by English people. Operation Fire - a joint police action, made a sweep throughout Wales on 31 March 1980, detaining or arresting over 50 people. Eventually four were brought to trial and convicted. During 1981 a series of thirteen bomb attacks led to the arrest of seven men on conspiracy charges. Some were held in custody awaiting a trial which was still pending at the time of the general election.

Gwynfor Evans' decision to retire from the position of party president obliged Plaid to choose between a continuation of the traditional nationalism, represented by Dafydd Wigley, and the strident left-wing socialism advocated by Dafydd Elis Thomas. Many in Plaid Cymru were unhappy with Thomas's sympathetic attitude towards the Northern Ireland hunger strikers and deplored his initiative in moving the writ for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election. While Dafydd Wigley's election as President in October 1981 confirmed that Plaid Cymru would remain a broad left nationalist party the debate was not closed.

Confronted by distinctly different problems, all political parties in Wales were equally confused as to their future role and influence in Welsh life. What was clear, however, was that the tragic death of Welsh Guardsmen in Bluff

Cove did not lead to increased questioning of the British connection, as many nationalists had hoped and expected. In fact the very reverse happened and the Conservatives benefited from the Falkland's factor as much in Wales as in England.

Whereas a constant succession of monthly polls subject public opinion in Britain to intense scrutiny, in Wales such polls are infrequent and irregular. Between May, 1979 and May, 1983, the commencement of the election campaign, four national polls were conducted in Wales. The Welsh pattern mirrors the British pattern but in a slightly different fashion (Table VI.1 and Table II.3). In the face of the growth of support for the SDP-Liberal Alliance, and the later post-Falklands Conservative revival, Labour support appeared to wither. Labour entered the 1983 campaign in Wales endorsed by 44 per cent of popular opinion, their lowest share of the vote at a general election in Wales since 1931. The Conservatives at 38 per cent appeared set for a major triumph. Doubt about the solidity of Conservative support, however, had been raised by the impact upon it during the honeymoon era of the newly formed SDP-Liberal Alliance. The HTV poll taken in September, 1981, showed the substantial support for the Alliance was gained almost wholly at the expense of the Conservative Party. The Alliance, then declined in favour during 1982, in line with British trends. The position of Plaid Cymru in the polls remained relatively static confirming a low base level of support.

Table VI.1 PUBLIC OPINION IN WALES, 1979-83

	HTV poll					Marplan	HTV poll		HTV poll
	1979	9/81	9/82	3/83	5/83		1983		
Labour	48	44	41	42	44	44	38	38	
Conservative	33	16	36	36	38	38	31	31	
Alliance/Liberal	11	34 ^b	19	16	14	14	23	23	
Plaid Cymru	8	7	4	5	5	5	8	8	

^a All results adjusted to exclude minor parties, don't know.

^b Question specifically emphasized SDP/Liberal Alliance.

Aside from local elections, which in Wales are unreliable guides to the potential division of opinion at parliamentary elections, there was only one major electoral indicator of opinion during the 1979-83 period: the Gower by-election. This by-election, held on 16 September 1982, was the first to be called in Wales since that at Merthyr Tydfil in March, 1972. The late 1960s and early 1970s had seen a succession of by-elections at which Plaid Cymru had done much to disrupt the traditional pattern of party allegiances in Wales. The Gower by-election was in an area with a relatively high proportion of Welsh-speakers, and presented the Alliance with its first opportunity to launch a challenge in Wales, with an effervescent candidate, Gwynoro Jones. A number of opinion polls were conducted during the campaign. The Alliance gained considerable ground in the last few days, support was drawn from Labour rather than the Conservatives in the proportion of 2 to 1. But Gower never threatened to emulate Hillhead, Crosby or Croydon North West. Labour retained the seat with 44 per cent of the poll, the SDP returned 25 per cent, ahead of the Conservatives with 22 per cent and Plaid Cymru 9 per cent.

The HTV poll of March 1983, the last taken before the date of the election was known, showed Labour at 42 per cent, less popular than before, while the Conservatives were at a high point at 36 per cent. Questions about issues showed that unemployment, predominantly the most important issue for the electorate, was becoming increasingly depoliticized as the electorate despaired of any party's ability to provide a remedy; almost 30 per cent felt that no party was able to deal with the problem. Wales appeared anti-unilateralist, divided on the deployment of Cruise missiles and continuation of membership of the Common Market. The leadership of Margaret Thatcher was widely acclaimed, while that of Michael Foot roundly deprecated, even by half of those intending to vote Labour. This profile of political discontent was broadly in line with that being reported for the remainder of Britain. Wales showed a more British face than had been seen in modern times.

Preparations for the Campaign

The electoral map for much of Wales has remained virtually unchanged for many years. The House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Act 1949 recommended an increase to 36 in the number of MPs returned from Wales; since then further change had been relatively slight. Thirteen Welsh constituencies had remained unaltered for 60 odd-years, notwithstanding a relatively high degree of social and economic change in Wales.

Since the previous electoral review, a major restructuring of Welsh local government had occurred; this had the effect of both exacerbating the boundary problems yet providing the opportunity for their resolution. On the

basis of the old 13-county Wales, grave inequalities in the number of electors had grown up between constituencies; by 1981 the electorate of Merioneth was 27,619 compared with 85,272 in Monmouth. Rule 4 of the Boundary Commission's guidelines (Cmnd 8798) placed a high premium upon respecting county boundaries. After the local government reorganization of 1974, however, this rule was applied only to the eight new counties, leaving the new district authorities available to be divided. The Boundary Commissioners concluded:

It was apparent, however, that our proposals would have to disrupt long-established ties in safe areas and whilst we recognised that they would cause disturbance, we considered that we would be failing in our duty if our recommendations perpetuated the current inequalities of representation (Cmnd 8798, para 12).

Using the wards of the district councils as their building blocks, and working within the framework of the existing number of seats, 36, a quota of seats per county could be established and provisional recommendations were accordingly published on 25 June 1981. Only two seats remained undisturbed, Rhondda and Cardiff West. Initial reaction to these provisional proposals centred upon the Commission's emphasis upon achieving equality in electorates between constituencies.

In our electoral system a reasonable parity of electorate has to be a major consideration ... we had begun by applying that criteria fairly strictly. We emphasised, however, that we were prepared to be flexible and that we would welcome constructive suggestions ... (Cmnd 8798, para. 20).

A meeting with representatives of the parties in Westminster led the Commissioners to note with masterly understatement: 'we were left in no doubt as to their general reactions to our recommendations ...' (Cmnd 8798, para. 20). Although debate arose throughout Wales the focus of discontent fell upon the proposals for Gwynedd, Mid Glamorgan and for Gwent and Powys.

In Gwynedd, population size dictated the allocation of only three seats, causing the Commission to combine Anglesey with Bangor and to create a corridor constituency, Aberconwy and Merionnydd, stretching from Llandudno to Aberdovey. Apart from geographical considerations of size and communications, these recommendations appeared likely to cost Plaid Cymru one of their parliamentary seats. Its opposition was intense. After the public inquiry the Assistant Commissioner advocated allocating four seats to Gwynedd by maintaining Anglesey as one seat (Ynys Môn) leaving Caernarfon unchanged, and dividing the Aberconwy District to form two seats one combined with the tiny Merionnydd. This scheme:

... had the advantage of taking into account not only the special geographical considerations applicable to the country, but also community, linguistic and cultural factors ... these advantages justified the low constituency electorates and recommended ... adoption (Cmnd 8798, para. 88).

Further to some petty quibbles over names this revised scheme was adopted and Wales had a thirty-seventh constituency.

Mid Glamorgan required perhaps the greatest redrawing of constituency boundaries, due to the way the old Glamorgan county had been divided between the new counties of Mid, West and South Glamorgan. Bridgend was to be created out of the old Ognore and Aberavon constituencies, as altered by the new Mid Glamorgan and West Glamorgan boundary. The argument centred upon whether the division of Ognore should be made on an East-West axis, as recommended by the Commission, or on a North-South axis. The location of the highly lucrative Ognore Labour Club, now potentially isolated from the newly proposed Ognore seat, probably did much to fire the controversy. In the end the provisional proposals were largely confirmed. Around Merthyr the Commissioners were accused of being particularly insensitive to the traditional valley pattern of constituencies. Several communities were allocated to constituencies whose centre was 'over the mountain'. In the main these objections were upheld and the proposals revised accordingly.

The principal objection to the proposals for Gwent and Powys was that the Commissioners had been sufficiently influenced by considerations of population size to override their own guide lines of integral counties. In terms of electorates, Powys had a theoretical entitlement to 1.4 seats and Gwent to 5.6 seats. Together they could be allocated seven seats. Furthermore, within Gwent the Commissioners' plans had paid scant heed to existing units:

We had anticipated that the abandonment of the traditional valley pattern in Gwent would provoke comment from the public but the strength of the reaction convinced us that a different approach for Gwent would be necessary. (Cmnd 8798, para 188).

Following the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations, two seats were allocated to Powys and six to Gwent, enabling the traditional valley pattern to be largely retained in Gwent. Wales had gained a thirty-eighth constituency.

The net result of the Boundary Commission's recommendations was to align the new seats with the new counties, leaving only three seats totally unchanged from the previous review. Seven of the new constituencies were coterminous with district boundaries and eighteen districts were not divided between constituencies. Prior to the 1983 election an academic study team attempted to analyze the political effects of the boundary changes and in Wales estimated

that both Labour and Conservatives would have gained a seat (BBC-TTN, 1983).

Notwithstanding the constitutional changes wrought within the Labour party, no Labour candidate was deselected in Wales. The defection of three Labour members to the SDP, Tom Ellis (Wrexham), Jeffrey Thomas (Aberlillery) and Eadnyfed Hudson-Davies (Caerphilly) may have forestalled deselection battles.

The division of seats between the Alliance partners in Wales was aided by the fact that none of the three Labour defectors to the SDP had intended to fight their seats again, all affected by the boundary changes. Eadnyfed Hudson-Davies elected to contest an English home counties seat. Jeffrey Thomas, formerly MP for Aberlillery intended to fight a Cardiff seat and Tom Ellis from Wrexham indicated his intention to stand elsewhere in Clwyd. The Alliance division of seats gave 19 to each party. Using the BBC-TTN notional 1979 results for the new constituencies, the average base figure from which the Alliance had to build was 14.0 per cent for the seats allocated to the Liberals and 8.7 per cent for those assigned to the SDP. However, the Liberal Party had usually polled badly in industrial South Wales, and the SDP hoped to cut into the Labour vote there, as it showed was possible at the Gower by-election.

The biggest intra-party row over nomination came from the unexpected quarter of the Conservative Party. The Boundary Commission recommendations created an additional seat in Clwyd: the existing seats of Denbigh and West Flint were, effectively, re-aligned into three seats, Clwyd North West, Clwyd South West and Delyn, with the former being potentially the safest Conservative prospect. The two sitting Conservative MPs, Sir Anthony Meyer and Geraint Morgan, initially competed against each other for nomination to Clwyd North West; both were outflanked by supporters of Beata Brookes, the MEP for North Wales. As both MPs were somewhat out of step with Thatcherite Conservatism, the hand of Central Office was alleged to have been at work in orchestrating the Brookes nomination campaign. Sir Anthony Meyer resorted to a High Court injunction to have Miss Brookes' nomination overturned and his own assured by a general meeting of the Constituency Association. Legal action was also resorted to by the opponents of Peter Hubbard-Miles, the Conservative candidate, and subsequent new MP for Bridgend. Hubbard-Miles had earlier beaten-off a carpet-bagging intrusion for the nomination from a close associate of Norman Tebbit, an event which precipitated the resignations of all the officers of the local association. Subsequently, allegations of a packed selection conference led to an injunction being taken out against Hubbard-Miles, but the approach of polling day calmed the furore and local Conservatives closed ranks and set about winning the seat.

When nominations closed for the general election four major-party

candidates had been drafted for each of the 38 new constituencies. Plaid Cymru continued to fight all the Welsh seats, even though their prospects in many were known to be minimal.

The Election Campaign

The 1983 campaign, by comparison with those in the 1970s, was deficient in specifically Welsh issues. The demise of devolution and the dominant role of the media and public opinion polls, both of which tended to adopt a metropolitan orientation, contributed to the essential 'Britishness' of the campaign in Wales. The same issues were raised, standardized arguments deployed and, in most cases, similar conclusions reached.

Despite the referendum, a reaffirmation by the Welsh electorate of their intention to remain unambiguously British, the British parties still found it expedient to defer in some way to the elusive concept of the Welsh identity. All three British major party groupings produced separate Welsh Manifestos, although none was quite as extensive as the 28-page document, *The Only Alternative*, produced by Plaid Cymru. Labour's manifesto, *New Hope for Wales*, claimed 'that Wales, with its unique identity and aspirations, has its own special needs and interests'. In surprisingly similar phrasing the *Conservative Manifesto for Wales* asserted 'Wales has its special characteristics and problems,' while the Alliance document, *The Priorities for Wales*, assumed for themselves 'the strongest possible sense of Welsh identity' and proceeded to 'reject the jingoism of Mrs. Thatcher, the isolationism of Michael Foot and the inward-looking nationalism of Plaid Cymru'. The Labour and Conservative manifestos specifically and the Alliance document implicitly emphasized the essential political and economic unity of the United Kingdom. All three manifestos faithfully covered those major policy issues central to the electoral campaign Britainwide.

There were predictable differences between the parties on the vexed question of the Welsh economy. Where Labour argued for increased public investment in the traditional coal and steel industries, a demand echoed in a more muted tone, by the Alliance, the Conservatives emphasized the need to modernize and diversify the Welsh economy, conceding that pits would have to close.

Another specifically Welsh issue to re-emerge was leasehold reform. Both Labour and the Alliance promised to outlaw leaseholds on all new properties but whereas the Alliance argued that a fair price should be established to enable an owner-occupier to purchase the leasehold, Labour emphasized the need for local authorities to be given the right to acquire freeholds. Plaid advocated the complete abolition of the leasehold system. The issue was ignored by the Conservative manifesto. Also ignored by the Conservatives and the Alliance

were the tendentious issues of Welsh water charges and second homes. Both were taken up by Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party. Although there were clear differences in tone and presentation, the positions of the two parties was broadly similar. They deplored the repeal of the 1977 Water Charges Equalisation Act and both wanted an equalization policy to close the gap between water rate charges in England and Wales. Similarly on second homes (that is holiday homes owned by English people) both parties wanted local authorities in areas with high concentrations of second homes, estimated by the Welsh Office at 30,000, to be given first refusal to purchase when such properties appeared on the market.

Devolution was conspicuous by its absence from the manifestos. The only named reference to it appeared in the Conservative manifesto which, recalling that devolution had been overwhelmingly rejected in the referendum by the Welsh people, went on to claim that government had been brought closer to the Welsh people as a result of the enlarged responsibilities of the Welsh Office and improved parliamentary scrutiny of its work. Labour in a section entitled *Democratic Change in Wales* studiously avoided the actual word 'devolution' and reiterated its rejection of 'any policies which could separate Wales in any way from the rest of Britain'. However, Labour did call for an Economic Planning Council for Wales consisting of representatives from the Welsh Office, the TUC, CBI and Welsh local authorities, but carefully refrained from detailing its exact functions.

The Alliance manifesto also avoided mentioning the term. Instead it talked about the maximum decentralization of power and the restoration of real responsibility of local government, sentiments remarkably similar to those expressed by Plaid Cymru. Rather enigmatically the Alliance document proceeded to declare that its ultimate objective was for democratically elected bodies in Wales to take over functions of undemocratic nominated bodies. This was significantly different from the wording employed by the Alliance in their British Manifesto which talked of providing a 'framework for decentralisation to assemblies (our emphasis) in Wales and the English regions'. When questioned about the discrepancy between the two documents, Lord Hooson, the Alliance's Welsh campaign leader, acknowledged: 'We have not yet done sufficient work on this and it is not part of our priorities' (*Western Mail*, 18 May 1983). This was the closest that any political party came to advocating devolution.

Significantly, Plaid Cymru completely ignored devolution and restored national independence to its pre-eminent position. In the introduction to its manifesto sub-titled, *England's Rule of Wales Must End*, Plaid presented the rationale for its electoral campaign:

Wales has never elected a majority of Tory MPs. Yet we suffer Tory government most of the time. Wales has different social values and aspirations to England. Yet

we are forced to suffer English right-wing Tory policies because we are tied to England's apron strings.

The central message of Plaid Cymru's manifesto was thus qualitatively different from the programmes presented by the three British parties.

The predominance of British issues was even more prevalent in the election campaign in Wales. The broad lines of inter-party dispute laid down by the London morning press conferences were faithfully reflected in the interests, concerns and pronouncements of the Welsh media and politicians. Only at the margins did issues arise which, if not unique to Wales, had a particular significance for the Welsh economy or politics.

The question of EEC membership, which made virtually no impact on Britain as a whole, intruded intermittently throughout the Welsh campaign. On 16 May the *Daily Mail* reported that Nissan, a Japanese car firm, intended to scrap plans to establish a car assembly plant in Britain if Labour won because of the party's commitment to leave the EEC. The story touched a raw nerve in Wales, for three Welsh locations were among the eight British sites shortlisted for Nissan development. Later in the same week at the launch of the Alliance Welsh manifesto, Tom Ellis warned that 100,000 jobs were at risk in Wales if Britain left the European Community.

The European issue was sustained during the Welsh campaign because it so obviously discomfited the Labour Party. It also embarrassed Plaid Cymru whose policy shift to accept EEC membership encouraged other parties to condemn the nationalists for placing electoral considerations (the votes of Welsh farmers) before principle. Labour itself, raised the issue later in the campaign. On 1 June Alan Williams, the Labour candidate for Swansea West, announced after a meeting with Ian MacGregor that the British Steel Corporation feared that their plans to modernize the hot strip mill in Port Talbot might be vetoed by the EEC Commission, which was concerned that this would increase Britain's steel-making capacity. The Conservatives hotly denied Labour's interpretation.

Wales figured early in the round-Britain circus of the party leaders. Michael Foot spoke at Cardiff City Hall on 18 May. Amid scenes of great enthusiasm recalling campaigns of the 1950s Michael Foot attacked the Tories on unemployment. He condemned the Tory Welsh Manifesto as a 'wickedly complacent document and pointed to the fact that the number of people working in Wales is the smallest recorded' (*Western Mail*, 19 May 1983). Five days later Mrs. Thatcher spoke in the same building to similar rapturous applause. In her speech she noted that Michael Foot had been unable to stop the closure of Ebbw Vale Steel Works in his own constituency. She went on to condemn Welsh Labour Party leaders for selling Wales short, 'presenting her to the world with an image of dereliction and hopelessness. Some encourage

strikes and disputes, regardless of the jobs they destroyed. The people of Wales have rejected all that' (*South Wales Echo*, 24 May 1983).

Labour's standing in Wales was further compromised by James Callaghan's attack on the Labour Party's unilateralist defence policies, in a speech to constituents in Penarth near Cardiff. Callaghan's multilateralist views were well known, but his decision to repeat his views during the campaign had national consequences, not least the extraordinary 'I'm the leader' declaration made by Michael Foot at Labour's press conference the following day. The reaction in South Wales was immediate and bitter. Ray Davies, Labour's candidate in an adjoining Cardiff constituency, described the Callaghan speech as a 'stab in the back' while Ray Powell from neighbouring Gwynore denounced Callaghan's remarks and declined to share the same platform in a Labour meeting arranged for 3 June in the new - and marginal - Bridgend constituency.

At one time it seemed possible that Plaid Cymru might generate some publicity out of what they described as the 'blatantly unfair carve up' of party political broadcasts; the Alliance was allocated 40 minutes 'TV time compared to Plaid Cymru's 10 minutes. Plaid Cymru's criticisms reflected the difficulties faced by British broadcasting organizations making decisions where territorial differentiations complicate the Britain-wide pattern. Plaid Cymru voiced a similar criticism over the Robin Day *It's Your Call* programme, in which Welsh and Scottish Nationalist leaders were obliged to share a programme, in contrast to the Ecology Party, which had a complete programme. However, after a few days Plaid Cymru quietly let the matter drop.

Not only had many of the geographical names on the political map of Wales altered, after the election their political colour and many of the faces of those who represent them had altered too. With a greater degree of competition existing between the two major parties in Wales the previous certainty of result diminished. Consequently, Wales returned a body of MPs probably more diverse than ever before. The combined effects of SDP defection, new boundaries and electoral change restructured the Welsh parliamentary group. Furthermore, an analysis of the Welsh MPs published shortly after the election (*Western Mail*, 12 July 1983) showed 11 of the 38 to be non-Welsh born. These trends may suggest that Wales is becoming more like England where the local link of MP and community appears weaker, a surprising development when considered alongside increasingly independent Welsh institutional structures, many of which place a high premium upon local origins, and sometimes facility in the Welsh language.

The crucial question arising from the election results is to what extent Wales remains a distinct political entity or has been subsumed within Britain-wide influences.

The BBC-ITN national 1979 results for the new constituencies estimated that the 38 seats in Wales would have divided Conservatives 12, Labour 23 (including the Speaker), Liberals 1 and Plaid Cymru 2. The outcome of the 1983 election, with Wales electing 14 Conservatives, 20 Labour MPs and 2 each from Plaid Cymru and the Liberal-SDP Alliance, showed a change of four seats. The Conservatives lost Montgomery but gained the new constituencies of Bridgend, Cardiff West and Newport West, all of which might have been deemed to have been notional Labour constituencies. Although the Conservatives secured their highest number of seats in Wales this century, their proportion of the poll was lower than that secured in 1979 or 1959. Labour's share of the poll sank to a 60-year low while Plaid Cymru's support remained relatively static at eight per cent. The major change was caused by the newly formed Liberal-SDP Alliance which, in gaining 23.2 per cent of the vote, surpassed the peaks of previous Liberal revivals. The Liberals alone had not secured such a proportion of the poll since 1929, when they won nine seats.

The SDP-Liberal upsurge reduced the majorities of other parties rather than winning seats for the Alliance. Wales has long been an area of relatively low electoral turnover and very large majorities, especially for the Labour Party. The changes introduced by the Boundary Commission altered this, and together with the 1983 shift in votes, transformed the relative marginality of the Welsh constituencies. Ten of the new Welsh constituencies are now highly marginal with majorities of under five per cent, compared with just two after the 1979 election. While Labour still dominates the seats in the super-safe category with majorities over 25 per cent, Dafydd Wigley has made Caernarfon a super-safe seat for Plaid Cymru. The Alliance vote had the effect of reducing Labour majorities; Labour's average majority has declined by ten points from the 1979 results. The net effect has been to increase the number of Labour marginals and of safe Conservative seats, factors of importance at future elections.

A brief examination of the county breakdown of results shows how the face of Welsh politics has been altered. Only in traditional South Wales does Labour retain its dominance; the area of the historic coalfield, now enclosed within Mid and West Glamorgan and Gwent. The new county of South Glamorgan is firmly Conservative, with the Alliance pressing Labour very hard for second place. Rural Wales exhibits genuine multi-party politics with the Conservatives ahead in all four counties. Labour remains relatively strong in Dyfed, due to the West Wales coalfield. Plaid Cymru is virtually equal to the Conservatives in Gwynedd, while the Alliance has a firm foothold in Powys and Clwyd.

The aggregate evidence suggests that the Alliance secured its support almost wholly at the expense of the Labour Party, whereas earlier poll evidence in Wales had suggested that Conservative support might be most vulnerable to the Alliance. A further series of polls conducted by HTV during the campaign

allows some analysis of the patterns of partisan movement, the so-called flow of the vote. These campaign polls showed the steady erosion of Labour support and the gradual advance of the Alliance. In line with national polls, there appeared to have been a small swing away from the Conservatives in the last few days of the campaign.

The data also revealed the relatively high degree of volatility among supporters of all political parties. Within the campaign period of four weeks, considerable shifts occurred. This is not a novel finding, but evidence of a neglected phenomena generally hidden by the mutual balancing of shifts between parties. The polls also showed that the greatest fluctuations were between those formerly having a party preference and those reporting they were Don't Know's. An analysis of the preferences of undecided voters provides evidence suggesting a cycle of indecision and decision. Rather than switch directly between parties, most respondents assume an intermediate Don't Know position, and then finally adopt a new party preference. The evidence suggests that 2.5 former Don't Knows were shifting to the Alliance for each one opting Labour or Conservative. Furthermore, the Labour Party exhibited the greatest degree of doubt, losing the highest proportion of its support to Don't Knows.

The party most susceptible to voter volatility in Wales is the Labour Party. During the life of the panel survey Labour voters had four possible courses of action. Consistent Labour supporters maintained their Labour affiliation throughout; of the original Labour sample, 65 per cent proved to be consistent. Waverers recorded a different preference by the first panel recall but then reverted to the Labour Party, a pattern adopted by a further 15 per cent of the original Labour group. The remaining 20 per cent are made up of early changers who had deserted Labour in the first week of the campaign (19 per cent), and late changers who moved away from Labour immediately prior to the election (one per cent).

By adapting the HTV poll of early May 1983, it is possible to construct a socio-economic profile for each of the main parties (Table 6.2). For the Labour and Conservative parties the most distinctive feature is the class bias of their supporters. Labour attracts the support of nearly half the semi-skilled and unskilled workers, the DE social category, yet only 13 per cent of the AB professional and managerial group. The Conservatives attract the support of some 45 per cent of this latter group, while gaining one-fifth of the DE group. This clear pattern of differentiation is not repeated for sex, age or language. By contrast, support for the Alliance appears remarkably uniform. In Wales as a whole, the Alliance polled 23 per cent of the vote; in each subsection of the electorate, defined by age, sex, class, language and employment, the Alliance maintains a similar proportion of support. Support for Plaid Cymru shows two distinct characteristics, a white-collar bias in social groups AB and C1, and a

Table VI.2 PROFILES OF PARTY SUPPORTERS IN WALES 1983

Total		Sex		Age			Class				Language		Employment		
		M	F	18/34	35/64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Welsh spkr	Non W/spkr	In work	Unem- ployed	
		(% party preference)													
38	Labour	38	37	40	36	39	13	26	41	49	28	41	31	48	
31	Conservative	28	34	32	30	33	45	42	32	20	25	33	36	17	
23	Alliance	25	21	20	26	23	27	22	21	25	23	23	22	27	
8	Plaid Cymru	9	7	8	9	6	15	10	6	7	24	2	11	9	
100	Totals	49	51	31	49	20	10	21	34	35	26	74	36	10	

Source: HTV Poll May 1983, N: 1235, Voting intention weighted to replicate the general election result.

disproportionate strength among the Welsh-speaking population. Overall, it is the division of partisan opinion among the minority who are Welsh-speakers that is the most striking aspect of this analysis. Genuine multi-party politics exists within this section of the Welsh electorate with each party having the support of about one-quarter of the Welsh-speaking population.

Although the Conservatives secured a landslide victory, in Wales Labour retained its overall lead in the vote, winning ten per cent more than Labour's Britainwide total. Labour led in all age groups and among Welsh-speakers and non-Welsh-speakers. Nonetheless, the Conservatives had a clear lead over Labour among middle-class voters. Increasingly, Wales is not a homogeneous political community. Just as the impact of social and economic change has been uneven, so the political behaviour of particular localities has varied.

More than before, distinct political regions are discernible within Wales. Such variation that exists between the pattern of political behaviour of Wales and the rest of Britain is most accurately described by concentration upon the politically distinct parts of Wales. For the purposes of this analysis, Wales comprises three distinct political regions: Y Fro Gymraeg, the Welsh-speaking heartland; Welsh Wales, the classic South Wales former coalfield area; and British Wales, the indistinct remainder of the Principality.

To assess the relative importance of regional divisions, a model of voting behaviour in Wales was developed utilizing the known relationships between party support and aggregate socio-economic measures derived from the census. When the estimates of the party vote produced by this model are compared with the actual pattern of votes in each of the three regions of Wales, the relative significance of regions can be discerned (Table 6.3). In most cases the differences between observed and predicted party votes are small. However, a pattern does emerge: in Y Fro Gymraeg, the Labour vote is depressed, and that

Table VI.3 REGIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN WALES

Region ^a	Con.		Labour		Alliance		Plaid Cymru					
	Act	Prd	Prd	Df	Act	Prd	Df	Act				
Y Fro Gymraeg	31	31	0	19	31	-12	20	15	+5	29	17	+12
Welsh Wales	19	23	-4	54	46	+8	20	18	+2	6	7	-1
British Wales	41	38	+3	29	31	-2	27	19	+8	3	6	-3

(% vote)

^a See Appendix A for the definition of regions.

for Plaid Gymru is higher; in British Wales the Alliance vote is larger than its social composition would have suggested; and in traditional Welsh Wales the Labour vote remains inflated.

When political regions are included in the model alongside elements of social structure in Wales, the relative importance of each characteristic for each party can be calculated (Table 6.4). The results demonstrate that within Wales region can be at least as important as class as an influence on voting. In British Wales the Conservatives added 11.1 per cent to their base vote; in traditional Welsh Wales Labour added 12.5 per cent; and Plaid Gymru benefited by 10.3 per cent in Y Fro Gymraeg. Only the Alliance vote appears unresponsive to regional or any other influences, confirming Alliance's support independent of any particular cleavage or division within society. However, the most important factor in explaining voting behaviour in Wales is the impact size of the Welsh-speaking population upon support for Plaid Gymru. Any geographic dimension in the pattern of Welsh voting will also be highly inter-related with the concept of subjective national identity (Balsom *et al.*, 1982). Although the

Table VI.4 SOCIAL STRUCTURE, TERRITORIAL AND LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN WALES^a

	Con. % var.	Labour % var.	Alliance % var.	Plaid Gymru % var.	b expl'd	
					b	b
Social Structure						
Socio-ec status	.31** 14	-.34** 17	.07 1	-.03 2		
Agriculture	.08 10	-.13* 18	.09 4	-.04 6		
Immigrants	.21* 10	-.24* 12	.13 2	-.09 5		
Elderly	.03 2	.01 1	.06 1	-.10 8		
Territory						
Miles Cardiff	.04 9	-.05 10	.02 2	-.01 2		
Region ^a	11.1** 19	12.5** 23	1.0 2	10.3* 16		
Language						
Welsh-speakers	-.15 11	-.01 1	.23* 7	.41** 37		
(Constant) r ²	(3.0)	75 (59.8)	82 (14.7)	19 (9.2)		76

^a British Wales for Conservatives and Alliance, Welsh Wales for Labour, and Y Fro Gymraeg for Plaid Gymru.

data here does not permit further analysis, it strongly indicates that identity and locale now represent crucial elements in determining voting in Wales.

Further evidence of this territorial dimension within Welsh politics can be gleaned from examining the pattern of party competition in contemporary Wales (Table 6.5). Plaid Gymru's effective challenge is restricted to Y Fro Gymraeg; Labour dominates Welsh Wales, where the Alliance is as credible an opposition as the Conservatives, while in British Wales the Conservatives are dominant with equal opposition from the Alliance and the Labour Party, a situation not dissimilar from that pertaining in Britain as a whole.

The 1983 general election in Wales confirmed the changing pattern suggested by the election of 1979. Welsh identity has always been an elusive concept, complicated by geography, for the central Welsh plateau separates North Wales communities from those in the South. However, the traditional and simplistic categories of a Welsh-speaking agricultural north and an English-speaking industrial south are no longer appropriate for an understandably Welsh politics. Three distinct political areas are emerging in Wales.

Table VI.5 PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION IN WALES

	British Wales		Welsh Wales		Y Fro Gymraeg	Total
	Wales	Wales	Wales	Wales		
Conservatives first						
Labour second	7	0	0	0	0	7
Alliance second	5	0	0	1	1	6
Plaid Gymru second	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total	12	0	0	2	2	14
Labour first						
Alliance second	0	12	0	0	0	12
Conservative second	4	3	1	1	1	8
Total	4	15	1	1	1	20
Alliance first						
Conservatives second	1	0	0	1	1	2
Plaid Gymru Seats						
Conservatives second	0	0	0	2	2	2

The first area, *Y Fro Gymraeg* (the Welsh-speaking heartland), encompasses North West and West Central Wales. Here *Plaid Cymru* is firmly established and to a considerable degree determines the political agenda, the nature and tone of the political agenda and the outcome of elections. Partisanship here is heavily influenced by ethnicity and linguistic considerations which overshadow but never completely eliminate the established British socio-economic determinants. The political debate is largely but not exclusively based on national Welsh criteria. Like all other parts of Wales, *Y Fro Gymraeg* decisively rejected devolution, under the apprehension that its particular regional concerns and interests would be overwhelmed in a Welsh Assembly dominated by the industrial and anglicised south. Thus, *Plaid Cymru's* position in this area is as much dependent upon responding to the needs and demands of local interests as in promoting causes relevant throughout Wales. In 1979, for example, the three *Plaid Cymru* MPs broke ranks with Scottish Nationalists and supported the Labour government in the vote of no confidence after extracting a promise of full compensation for incapacitated slate quarry workers in their constituencies. Similarly, *Plaid's* decision to change its position on membership of the European Community was eased by the realization that it would not weaken their support among the Welsh farming population.

The second area, Welsh Wales, is comprised largely of the industrial valleys of South Wales. This was Labour's Welsh electoral beachhead, from which it spread out to dominate Welsh politics but into which it has now been forced back. Even in this area Labour's dominant position is weakening. Labour partisanship, based on both class and ethnicity, is peculiarly vulnerable on two flanks; to *Plaid Cymru*, which seeks to compete with Labour for the ethnic vote and to the Conservatives, whose appeal is directed to an emerging Welsh middle class and an anglo-immigrant community. Neither party alone can seriously threaten Labour's dominance but in a four party system, elections become a form of Russian roulette in which any one of three parties could emerge as the significant challenger to Labour's position. In this area Labour's position is also threatened by demographic changes which have already resulted in the elimination of two seats in successive Boundary Commission reports.

The emergence of the third area, British Wales, hinted at in the devolution referendum and confirmed by the 1983 general election, includes those parts of Wales adjacent to England. Here the political conflict in 1983 was Conservatives vs Labour vs Alliance, as in the British pattern. Specifically Welsh issues make little impact and ethnic identity is a factor of negligible significance, save in certain affluent middle class Cardiff suburbs, where a Welsh-speaking professional elite is concentrated. Partisanship unambiguously follows from the established British pattern of socio-economic status. The penetration of British political values into this area has proceeded sufficiently

for what was previously an alien phenomenon, the Welsh working class Tory, to become evident.

The prospects for the future of Welsh politics are that the first area will be preserved; that ethnicity with a strong linguistic cultural root will prevail; and that politics will continue to be polarized on the linguistic divide probably to the continuing benefit of *Plaid Cymru*. The second area seems destined to experience continuing social change. The decline of the coal industry and its mining communities, the progressive depopulation of some valleys and the development of others as dormitory areas for Cardiff, Newport and Swansea would further endanger Labour's position. This, together with an erosion of the non-linguistic Welsh ethnic community will probably see the fatal weakening of the once powerful Welsh political stereotype which provided the political environment and the electoral base for Nye Bevan and more recently for Neil Kinnock.

The expectations are that the third area will continue to prosper and to acquire English immigrants and values. The 1981 census revealed that 20.5 per cent of the Welsh population was born outside Wales. In parts of Powys and Clwyd the penetration of English immigrants is more than 30 per cent. This area displays a social character and a cultural accent more akin to the English home counties than either the Welsh industrial valleys or rural uplands. In the course of the 1970s following the building of the Severn Bridge and western extensions of the M4, South East Wales and particularly the southern half of Gwent and South Glamorgan became increasingly integrated, both economically and culturally with the metropolitan area. On British Rail's 125 InterCity express, Cardiff is only one hour 45 minutes down the line from London. The establishment of electronic high technology industries such as INMOS and MITTEL in Newport and Cardiff confirmed that South Wales while on the western extremity is nevertheless part of the M4 surprise corridor. Thus areas of British Wales have not only acquired the English language and values but are ceasing to be part of the political periphery in either industrial or political terms.

However, there is a paradox. As the socio-economic character of Wales changes, a galaxy of Welsh national institutions created during the ferment of the devolution debate in the 1960s and 1970s have established themselves as part of Welsh political life. The Welsh Office, the Welsh Development Agency, the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs, Channel 4 Wales, the Wales TUC, CBI Wales, and the Welsh organizations, conferences and manifestos of the British political parties are but a few examples. The dynamic for continuing institutional reform is already within the system. The extent to which this institutional development counteracts changes in the Welsh socio-economic environment will determine the future pattern of Welsh politics.

In the event, the break did not come. The 1983 edition of *The Scottish Government Yearbook* was a litany of complaints about the decay of things Scottish—and of the inability (or unwillingness) of Scots to force the British government to alter its course of action. Dr. Henry Drucker (1982: 31) considered this a curious case of a dog that didn't bark; he explained the failure of forecast conflict to occur as evidence that 'Scottish party politics since 1979 has been nationalised...opponents aim their fire as part of British armies, ignoring the Scottish front'. An alternative explanation is that Scotland is no exception to the proposition that the predominant influences upon party competition are Britainwide, and that differences of degree should not be treated as differences in kind. In short, the hypothesized sleeping dog of nationalist and socialist Scottish opinion is "the dog that never was".

British Government in Scotland

If a nation is defined as the terminal community with which people identify (Emerson, 1960: 25), then Scots have at least three identities: to their locality, e.g. Glasgow; to Scotland; and to Britain as a whole. There is neither logical nor psychological inconsistency in having a multiplicity of identities; a Scot may be British and also a Glaswegian as well as a Scot. Nominal labels mislead if they are treated as establishing exclusive loyalties.

Constitutionally, all government in Scotland is British, that is, acting under authority conferred by the Crown in Parliament, which since the 1707 Act of Union has been solely at Westminster. But Britain is a Union without uniformity (Rose, 1982: chapter 2). There is a network of separately dominated institutions for conducting some of the Crown's business in Scotland. But nominal distinctions do not create autonomous institutions. The Scottish Office remains a ministry in Cabinet, subject to the collective discipline of British party government. Scottish local authorities differ in the apportionment of functions from England, but they too depend upon the Cabinet for the bulk of their funds, and for all of their statutory powers (cf. Page, 1982).

Most institutions of government in Scotland are not Scottish; they are either local or Britainwide. Major welfare state services such as education, housing and social services are provided by local authorities; pensions, unemployment benefits and a host of economic policies are the responsibility of ministries implementing policies Britainwide. The conjunction in 1979 of Conservative control of British government and concurrent Labour control of the two largest local authorities in Scotland, Strathclyde and Lothian regions, induced conflict, but it was central-local conflict analogous to that between a Labour-led Greater London Council and Westminster, rather than England vs. Scotland.

VII Scotland: British with a Difference

The 1970s stimulated much confusion about where or how Scotland fit into the United Kingdom: As an integral and undifferentiated part of an indivisible Britain? As a culturally distinctive but politically integrated nation in a multinational state (Rose, 1970) or, in the words of a knowledgeable Frenchman, Jacques Lereux (1983), *as une nation sans état*? As a separate policy network integrated in a larger British political system? (Keating and Midwinter, 1983) As a distinctively Scottish political system? (Kellas, 1973) Or whether, in Miller's (1981: 10) words: 'A Scottish governmental machine has been constructed complete with Prime Minister, subordinate ministers, its own civil service and unlimited responsibilities if not unlimited powers'?

In 1979 Scottish voters collectively rendered a pair of ambiguous verdicts. The referendum vote was so narrowly in favour of devolution that its proponents faced the charge that their case was, to use a Scots law term, Not proven. But unlike Wales, the opponents of devolution in Scotland could not claim that the vote was a rejection of devolution. The May, 1979, general election saw a decline in the vote of the Scottish National Party, but at 17.3 per cent it was higher than the Liberal vote in Britain. The Conservatives gained seats and votes, but Labour comfortably retained its majority of Scottish MPs, albeit a majority manufactured by the electoral system from 41.6 per cent of the vote.

The 1979 Conservative government offered a good test of theories propounded to account for Scotland's distinctiveness in the 1970s. According to those who saw Westminster's legitimacy dependent upon its largesse, the intensification of economic difficulties implied greater political conflict and a boost to nationalism in Scotland. A Conservative majority in Parliament but a Labour majority among Scottish MPs could be used as a rationale for delegitimizing Westminster's authority and encouraging extra-parliamentary protest by Nationalists or socialists wont to make the break with England with Thatcher-style government, or both.

Without intending, the electorate of Glasgow's marginal constituency of Cathcart greatly affected Mrs. Thatcher's choice of a Secretary of State for Scotland in May, 1979, by refusing to return to Parliament Teddy Taylor, the shadow Scottish Secretary of State. In consequence, George Younger was appointed Secretary of State in his stead, a politician with substantial experience of the Scottish Office as a junior minister in the 1970-74 Conservative government, and an individual as emollient as Taylor was a bonny fechter. Younger is a team player, never complaining about rebuffs or boasting of Scottish Office victories, yet free from association with abrasive monetarism.

The motto of Scottish Office ministers through the years has been stated by Malcolm Rifkind (1981: 66), a junior minister from 1979 to 1982.

Insist upon United Kingdom uniformity when we like what our English colleagues are doing and assert the need for distinctive Scottish solutions when we don't like what they are doing. In plain English (if I can be excused that word in this context), we enjoy eating our cake and having it.

But in British government in the 1980s, as Malcolm Rifkind himself was to preach to unwilling Labour councillors in Scotland, the Treasury was less willing to supply the cake, and there was far more careful scrutiny of the distribution of such benefits as the Treasury was willing to provide (Heald, 1983: chapter 10).

The economic issues that dominated the minds of the Cabinet and the electorate during the 1979 Parliament were Britainwide, even worldwide in their origins and significance. Inflation, unemployment, the decline of old industries and slow rates of economic growth were not distinctly Scottish issues. The policies that Mrs. Thatcher pronounced as the most appropriate cure for these remedies were enunciated as general truths universally applicable. Whereas the interventionist government of Edward Heath had encouraged regional policies intended to discriminate to Scotland's benefit, and electoral politics induced Labour governments to attend specially to Scottish concerns, Mrs. Thatcher was egalitarian with a difference: all parts of the United Kingdom (including Scotland) were in principle to be treated equally in the sharing out of the medicine of monetarism. High interest rates prevailed throughout the United Kingdom, and the subsequent fall in inflation was also common throughout the United Kingdom.

The impact of the Conservative measures intended to roll back the state were of greater immediate importance in Scotland than in many other parts of Britain for four reasons. First of all, Scottish levels of unemployment had been consistently higher than in England. The growth of depressed areas in England meant the gradual erosion of selectivity in economic policy, as difficulties became more and more widespread.

Secondly, the conflict between the Conservative government and local authorities was Britainwide, because it was a central part of the government's economic strategy and political philosophy (cf. Chapter III). The controversy reached its height in Scotland, not England, in a confrontation in 1981 between the Labour-controlled Lothian region and the Scottish Office. Under the provisions of the newly adopted Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act, the Secretary of State in 1981 notified Lothian Regional Council that a reduction of £53 million in Rate Support Grant was due because of excessive and unreasonable expenditure by the local authority. Lothian was not only the largest of seven Labour-controlled councils affected, but also the most leftwing; its dominant faction was determined not to act unless compelled to do so. Compulsion was introduced after Lothian's cut was reduced to £30 million (Midwinter, Keating and Taylor, 1983). Divisions within the Labour Party were quietly and effectively underlined by the behaviour of the largest local authority in Scotland and the one most securely Labour, Strathclyde Region. It was not threatened with cuts in its central government grant, nor did it join in the outcry raised by other Labour councils. In 1982, its vote went up three per cent in the local elections.

Throughout Britain the battle between local authorities and their related Cabinet ministries was hotly contested in terms of local democracy vs. Westminster democracy. These divisions were Britainwide, and thus incidentally integrative. Lothian Region did not fight for independence from London; instead, it joined with the Greater London Council in seeking to assert local freedom to determine its rates and local spending itself. Nor could conflict have been created readily on a Scotland vs. England basis, for many Scots were very critical of levels of local authority spending. In Lothian, Region the dominant Labour group lost its majority at the 1982 regional election; its vote dropped by nearly 10 per cent.

Thirdly, cuts in public expenditure threatened employment in the public sector, which in Scotland had been running at 30 per cent of the labour force, higher than any English region except the depressed North, albeit lower than Wales or Northern Ireland (Parry, 1981: 230). While Scottish wage rates remained equal to or greater than British rates, the total number in employment fell as the private sector contracted. Such visible and important public sector employers as the British Steel Corporation were subject to great cuts in employment Britainwide by a Scots-born director, Ian MacGregor, seeking to reduce losses of hundreds of millions of pounds in the face of a surplus of capacity relative to world demand. BSC kept its Lanarkshire works running, albeit at a lower level of employment.

Finally, housing policy is disproportionately important in Scotland, because 54 per cent of Scottish houses are council tenancies, 22 per cent more than the British average. The government's policy of reducing subsidies for the construction of new council housing, combined with the increased cost of servicing debt on existing council housing due to high interest rates, intensified housing cutbacks commenced under the previous Labour government. The Conservative government's 1980 Act giving council tenants the right to buy their house was meant to end quarrelling between the government and Labour local authorities about a policy subject to great ideological dispute. Labour authorities in Scotland complained that the compulsion to sell council houses was another unwarranted attack upon their autonomy.

With a comfortable overall majority, the government's lack of a majority of Scottish MPs was of no consequence in the division lobbies. Eight of the 22 Scottish Conservative MPs held government office, a higher ratio than in the Conservative parliamentary party as a whole. Backbench Scottish Conservative MPs were occupied in attending committee meetings; and their small numbers made their presence important.

The new system of parliamentary committees established a backbench Select Committee on Scotland under a Labour chairman. The Committee was an alternative to devolution, not a stepping-stone to devolution, emphasized its first chairman, Donald Dewar, himself a devolutionist. He saw the committee's role as useful but limited, aiming 'to throw a little light into dark places' (Dewar, 1980: 22). The Committee also generated considerable heat, as Conservatives disagreed about how partisan its role should be, with Iain Spratt pushing to make it a vehicle for attacking the public sector, and others seeking to improve (and sometimes expand) the public sector. The Select Committee did not prosper. Its initial chairman resigned for a position of shadow spokesman on the Labour opposition team. By the end of the Parliament, the *Scotsman's* James Naughtie (1982: 10) could lament that it was 'ineffective and many of the members uninterested'.

The Scottish Grand Committee not only continued its role of scrutinising government measures introduced for technical reasons as separate bills for Scotland, but also gave symbolic evidence of the Conservative government's response to demands for devolution. The Scottish Grand Committee held some meetings in the Crown Office Buildings, Edinburgh, the old Royal High School building remodelled by the previous Labour government to serve as the home of the proposed Scottish Assembly. The gesture was as weak as it was symbolic. The former President of the European Commission, Roy Jenkins, found the Scottish Grand Committee the place where he could address fellow MPs about the problems of Glasgow taxis.

Parties less Ambiguous; Public Opinion more Ambiguous

Harold Wilson's decision to endorse devolution in principle in summer, 1974 had caught all parties, including his own, off balance. Within each party there was disagreement about whether devolution was too much, too little, or not enough of a response to the challenge of the Scottish National Party. In the years that followed some outspoken MPs enunciated a position of principle and stuck to it. Most MPs were pragmatists, shifting ground as judgements changed about how much, if any, devolution was necessary.

The Parliament elected in June, 1979 was doubly free of Nationalist pressures. The fall in the SNP share of the popular vote reduced the party from 11 to two MPs. The substantial Conservative majority meant that the government had no need to sidle along the opposition benches looking for measures it could sponsor to curry favour with MPs whose votes would be needed to win a vote of confidence. Scottish voters were no longer presented with the anomalous picture of all parties advocating changes in forms of government, as happened for a brief period in the mid-1970s. They are now offered a choice.

As the party of government, the Conservatives had little difficulty in unambiguously endorsing the British system of government as it is. The gestures in favour of devolution, made in opposition by Edward Heath in a 1968 declaration at Perth and in the mid-1970s by nervous Scottish Conservative MPs, were abandoned. No follow up was proposed to Sir Alec Douglas-Home's statement during the 1979 referendum campaign that a vote against the 1978 devolution act did not preclude all changes. The inter-party talks held in the first session of the Parliament identified no common ground for change, and there was no need or will for change in the governing party. The Conservatives had for generations campaigned in Scotland as the Unionist Party, instead of or in addition to using the label Conservative.

The Secretary of State, George Younger, justified Conservative policy in forthright terms:

I do not believe that most people in Scotland are any longer interested in this subject as a practical proposition--and this for very sound reasons.

First, the present system gives Scotland a very strong and effective role in United Kingdom affairs. Second, the debates of recent years have highlighted the long-standing fact that Scotland gets a larger expenditure of public money per head of population than either England or Wales. Third, the financing of any Scottish Assembly with executive powers would create more problems for Scotland than it would solve.

Nobody has come up yet with a system of such financing which will not either create an area of perpetual friction between Edinburgh and Westminster or an unacceptable and additional burden on the taxpayers of Scotland. (*Scotsman* , 12 January 1983).

In opposition the Labour Party in Scotland became clearly committed to a Scottish Assembly. There had not been time for this to be done in 1974, and many of the divisions within the party evident in the 1979 referendum campaign dated from Harold Wilson's abrupt endorsement of devolution then. The form of devolution endorsed by the Scottish Council of the Labour Party at Keir Hardie House, Glasgow, and by the Scottish conference was more internally consistent than the 1978 Scotland Act, for it favoured an Assembly with its own fund-raising powers. By going further than the previous government's Act, Keir Hardie House appeared to be endorsing a form of quasi-federalism, or asymmetrical federalism affecting Scotland only. This was because it could only speak for the Labour Party in Scotland. It could not commit the British Labour Party to a scheme for devolution including England and Wales (see chapter IV).

Within the Labour Party in Scotland, the conflict between Labour councils and a Conservative-controlled Scottish Office using central powers to take away rather than hand out money reduced opposition to devolution by councillors, an important bloc in the party. A Scottish Assembly would have made a difference, though it is arguable whether it would have had more money to dispense, have dispensed money differently, or have led a fight about the amount of money available for dispensing on Scotland vs. England lines. Within the Parliamentary Labour Party, a ginger Gang of Four, consisting of George Foulkes, David Marshall, John Maxton and John Home Robertson, began to campaign for 'home rule' for Scotland. George Galloway, a former leftwing chairman of the Scottish Council, spoke of the need for 'a full blown effort at parliamentary disruption by Scottish MPs to render Parliament inoperable, as the struggle for Irish Home Rule almost 80 years ago showed' (*Scotsman* , 8 April 1983). The campaigners for home rule soon (by implication, as soon as Labour lost the 1983 election in Britain) argued that a Parliament in the hands of a party without a majority in Scotland lacked the legitimacy to govern Scotland.

The creation of the Social Democratic Party and the Alliance with the Liberals brought about a spate of policy-making proposals for Scotland, with both David Steel and Roy Jenkins representing Scottish constituencies. The Social Democrats, as a British party--and a party whose initial Scottish supporters included some prominent opponents of devolution such as Lord Wilson of Langside--did not talk lightly of a federal Britain. But the SDP was prepared to accept that Scotland was different, and that Scottish devolution should have a priority not dependent upon the completion of negotiations to carry out the decentralization of government Britainwide.

The Scottish National Party, after being defeated in the 1979 election, entered the 1983 election campaign demoralized. The intervening period had

been devoted to Nationalists fighting each other. Two issues divided the party. The first, in view of the referendum debacle, was the appropriate position to take on further proposals for devolution. Traditionalists who believed in the doctrine of independence or nothing argued that their position had been justified by events. The 1979 SNP conference endorsed the principle of campaigning for independence as the next step forward. Devolution was not on offer in the 1979 Parliament.

The SNP was also divided about the merits of adopting a consciously leftwing programme. The case for moving left was put by the 79 group, which was formed in the wake of the election defeat by a group of prominent SNP members, including Margo MacDonald, ex-MP for Govan, and Stephen Maxwell, formerly the party's publicity officer. The 79 group urged the adoption of policies that would more or less align the SNP with the Labour Party left. Tactically, the 79 group argued that only by adopting these policies could the SNP hope to defeat the Labour Party and thereby win a majority of Scottish seats, deemed the key to securing independence. When Jim Sillars, an ex-Labour MP and founder of the breakaway Scottish Labour Party, joined the SNP, he added his voice to the 79 group. Sillars and Maxwell were elected to national offices of the party.

The traditional leadership of the SNP reacted against a move left, arguing that the SNP could only win a Scottish majority by uniting Scotland in demanding independence, rather than dividing it on class issues. Traditionalists pressed for the explosion of the 79 group, and steps were put in train at the June, 1982, party conference. But weeks before the 1983 election the party's national council voted to re-admit members of the 79 group in hopes of securing unity in the face of a general election. The 79 group had failed to move the party left, or for that matter to demonstrate that the particular policies it advocated were approved by a majority of Scottish voters.

At the popular level the movement of opinion among the Scottish electorate can be charted on a monthly basis throughout the Parliament, thanks to the polls conducted for the *Glasgow Herald* by System Three, an Edinburgh-based firm. The first 18 months of the Parliament showed a pattern similar to that of Britain generally: a Labour advance at the expense of the Conservatives. Since Labour had finished well ahead of the Conservative in the May, 1979, ballot, further advance brought Labour as high as 59 per cent in September, 1980, a 40 per cent lead over the Conservatives. SNP and Liberal support was steady, and very close to the 1979 result, leaving the parties third and fourth (Table VII.1).

The launch of the Social Democratic Party and its subsequent Alliance with the Liberals brought about greater divergences between Scotland and England. During 1981 SNP support rose to a high for the Parliament of 22 per

Table VII.1 POPULAR SUPPORT FOR PARTIES IN SCOTLAND, 1979-83

	Con	Lab	Lib-SDP Alliance	SNP	Party Lead	
					1st/2nd	
(monthly average % support)						
1979						
June-Sept	24	55	8	14	31	Lab/Con
Oct-Dec	26	49	8	16	23	Lab/Con
1980						
Jan-Mar	27	49	9	13	22	Lab/Con
Apr-June	23	53	8	15	30	Lab/Con
Jul-Sept	20	56	8	15	36	Lab/Con
Oct-Nov	19	55	9	15	36	Lab/Con
1981 ^a						
Jan-Mar	17 (14)	49 (38)	11 (28)	19 (19)	30	Lab/SNP
Apr-Jun	17 (13)	52 (45)	10 (24)	18 (17)	34	Lab/SNP
Jul-Sept	17 (15)	51 (43)	11 (25)	18 (18)	33	Lab/SNP
Oct-Dec	15	45	21	18	27	Lab/SNP
1982						
Jan-Mar	19	42	22	17	20	Lab/All
Apr-Jun	25	44	17	15	19	Lab/Con
Jul-Sept	22	45	17	16	23	Lab/Con
Oct-Dec	28	45	14	12	17	Lab/Con
1983						
Jan-Mar	26	48	14	13	22	Lab/Con
April	24	49	15	11	25	Lab/Con

^a From March to August 1981 System Three asked two voting intention questions, the first without a prompt concerning the SDP and the second with. Figures in brackets give the answers to the latter question, combining Liberal and SDP responses. The party lead is calculated from the unbracketed responses.

Source: System Three Polls, conducted for the Glasgow Herald. Figures for combined months are averages.

cent, the Conservative support fell to 14 or 12 per cent, depending upon the measure, and Labour support consistently remained well ahead of the Alliance (Table VII.1). The closest that Alliance came to catching up with Labour was the end of 1981, when Labour's lead over Alliance fell to 13 per cent. A second striking feature of Scottish opinion was that the rise in Alliance support did not detract from SNP support. While Labour remained in front with 49 per cent, third force support for the Alliance and SNP combined was 44 per cent.

Given that the Conservatives finished second in Scotland in 1979, the Conservative revival carried the party much less far than in Britain overall. Conservative support was 19 per cent in Scotland at the time of the Hillhead by-election, immediately before the outbreak of the Falklands War. It rose above 20 per cent in April 1982, and stayed above, but did not go higher than 30 per cent prior to the general election campaign. Because of the four-way division in vote the revival in Conservative support did not reduce Labour's lead. The Conservatives were always at least 15 per cent behind Labour in the System Three polls, a position worse than that at the May 1979 election.

The three by-elections held in Scotland during the Parliament were each so distinctive in time and place that collectively they do not form a pattern. In June, 1980 Labour held Glasgow Central, a very safe seat, on a 43 per cent turnout; the SNP candidate finished second. At Glasgow Hillhead in March, 1982, after one of the longest and most intensive by-election campaigns in the postwar era, the Alliance took the only Conservative seat in Glasgow, but Roy Jenkins returned to Parliament with only 33.4 per cent of the vote, and the SNP candidate drew 11 per cent. Labour won a safe seat at Coatbridge and Airdrie in June, 1982, with the Conservatives finishing a distant second, and the Alliance and SNP candidates losing their deposits.

The volatility of the voters during the 1979 Parliament cannot be explained by attitudes toward the structure of government in Scotland, for the fluctuations were much greater in party preferences than in constitutional preferences (cf. Tables VII.1-2). Opinion polls have asked questions about attitudes toward the preferred form of government in Scotland since 1974, albeit with differences in the phrasing of alternatives between polling organizations. Since the referendum campaign, they have found a high degree of stability in popular opinion. Opinion Research Centre never found a Scottish majority in favour of any of the five alternatives that its interviewers preferred in surveys for the Scotsman. The figures could be interpreted as showing as of April, 1979 that 43 per cent of Scots favoured no change or minimal adaptation without an elected Assembly (options 1 and 2), or that 40 per cent favoured more than devolution, a fully federal Parliament or independence (options 4 and 5).

The MORI poll is politically significant, for the questions used in the 1980s were also used by MORI in conducting unpublished surveys for Harrod

Table VII.2 PUBLIC OPINION OF ALTERNATIVES FOR GOVERNING SCOTLAND

	Opinion Research Centre				
	No change %	Adapt %	Assembly %	Fed. %	Indep'tice %
Mar 1974	21	19	24	16	17
Sept 1974	21	14	17	16	17
Feb 1979	32	13	16	20	14
Apr 1979	35	8	13	28	12
Sept 1979	33	11	13	27	13

MORI (Market & Opinion Research International)

	No change		Change		Indep'tice	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Feb 1974	19		59		19	
Mar 1979	35		42		14	
Nov 1980	29		44		19	
Feb 1981	30		46		25	
May 1981	25		50		25	
Sept 1981	31		46		23	
Nov 1981	26		47		22	
Feb 1982	23		53		19	
Apr 1982	22		45		27	
Nov 1982	26		47		22	
Feb 1983	35		42		14	
June 1983	22		51		23	

(The ORC surveys offered respondents five alternatives; the MORI surveys offered three. For the full text of the questions, see Rose and McAllister, 1982: 116-117).

Source: The Scotsman, Edinburgh; and MORI reports.

Wilson, when the Prime Minister was contemplating devolution as a Labour policy in 1974. The offer of fewer alternatives produced a simpler distribution, with one-quarter or more preferring the status quo, about half 'a Scottish Assembly as part of Britain but with substantial powers', and about one-fifth independence. Interpretation of the results is contentious. Labour supporters could, if they wished, argue that the Labour government's proposals offered substantial powers, but critics could attack the proposals for not offering enough. The impact of Labour's own shift toward promising substantially greater powers for a Scottish Assembly after the 1979 election cannot be measured with the MORI poll, for it does not distinguish between Labour's two proposals.

At a minimum, both the ORC and the MORI polls can be interpreted to show that for nearly a decade a preponderant majority of Scots endorsed statements favouring change in government in Scotland, but there is no agreement about what specifically is being endorsed. Moreover, the 1979 referendum showed that there is no security that polling figures could be used to predict a referendum vote. Recognizing this, John Smith (1981: 46), a major architect of devolution legislation in the 1974-79 Labour government, argued that a new Labour government committed to devolution would have to "front end" the referendum, that is, hold an advisory referendum on a white paper containing devolution proposals and regard the result as 'solid grounds for pressing ahead. It would be ridiculous to stage another referendum after the legislation.'

The Campaign and the Result

The 1983 election campaign in Scotland opened with little expectation or fear in any party. Scottish politicians did not expect to be much affected electorally by the decline of the Labour vote in England. The Conservatives did not expect to win a majority of Scottish votes nor was Labour afraid of a Nationalist or Alliance breakthrough. Survival, and perhaps a few gains, were the aims of these two parties. The apparent certainty of a Conservative victory Britainwide meant that Scottish MPs could not hope to be a decisive bloc in the next Parliament as they had been from 1974 to 1979.

Redistribution changed the boundaries of the great bulk of Scottish constituencies but it did not alter the total vote of the parties. The 1979 election outcome had produced four principal patterns of party competition, albeit in unequal numbers. In two-thirds of the seats Labour and Conservative candidates were the front-running pair; in another 17 seats the SNP finished second to a Conservative or Labour MP, and in seven seats the Liberals were first or second. Marginal seats were relatively few. Continuing population decline in Glasgow as in other major British cities, meant that its parliamentary

representation fell from 15 seats between 1918 and 1970 to 13 in 1974 and 11 in 1983. The initial proposal of the Scottish Boundary Commissioners was to reduce Glasgow representation to 10, but appeals succeeded in increasing the number to 11, thus raising the total number of Scotland's seats in Parliament to 72, one more than at any time before in the modern history of Parliament.

The BBC-ITN (1983:236) analysis of the new constituency boundaries reckoned that the net effect of redistribution was an increase of one in Conservative representation in the Commons. But changes in individual constituencies were forced by the reduction in seats in older centres of population, and the creation of new seats in response to population growth. Ian Sproat, who had won Aberdeen South on its old boundaries by 1.5 per cent, renounced the opportunity to stand for re-election, though the BBC-ITN calculation showed the Conservative lead was virtually unaltered at 1.3 per cent. Sproat was finally adopted for the new constituency of Roxburgh and Berwickshire, which the BBC-ITN reckoned was virtually a dead heat between Conservatives and Liberals as of 1979. Sproat's move was of no avail; he lost his new seat by 10.7 per cent to a Liberal, while his successor held Aberdeen South for the Conservatives by 9.1 per cent.

Three of the four party manifestos issued in Scotland could differ little in the substance of their proposals from party headquarters version issued in London (cf. Chapters II-IV). The Conservative manifesto made no mention of the word devolution. Its reference 'to consider further changes to improve the government of Scotland within the United Kingdom' was contained in a brief section headed *The Supremacy of Parliament*. Labour's manifesto pledged a Scottish Assembly intended 'to give more power to Scotland. At the same time, we shall retain the benefits that come from our links with the rest of the United Kingdom'.

Only the Scottish National Party could be distinctive; this was made evident in the title of its manifesto, *Choose Scotland—the Challenge of Independence*. The commitment to independence was spelled out clearly at the beginning of the manifesto, and the document concluded with a quotation from the preamble of the American Declaration of Independence of 1776. The bulk of the SNP manifesto concentrated upon pragmatic justifications for independence, starting with the argument that successive London governments ruined the Scottish economy, with unemployment rising under both Labour and Conservative governments.

In downplaying devolution the British parties were simply following the declared preferences of the Scottish electorate. Economic concerns, not political institutions, came first with the electorate in Scotland as elsewhere in Britain (cf. Table II.2). When MORI asked Scottish voters during the campaign to say

which party had the best policy on devolution, the largest single group, 37 per cent, said they didn't know. Of the rest, 23 per cent rated the SNP best, albeit it favoured independence; 16 per cent Labour; 13 per cent the Conservatives; and 9 per cent the Alliance (MORI, 1983: 93). The broad scatter of answers illustrated the low level of knowledge and interest in the issue in Scotland.

During the election campaign no distinctively Scottish issues were brought forward to distract attention from issues common Britainwide. The Scottish National Party took cognizance of the Britainwide campaign, but only to urge Scots, in the words of the party leader, Gordon Wilson, to use 'blackmail' to bring economic concessions from a Thatcher government at Westminster by voting for the SNP (*Scotsman* 18 May 1983). A gaffe by Peter Shore came too late in the day for it to be publicised. At Labour's Transport House press conference the day before the election he pointed to a diagram of North Sea oil revenues and declared: 'Here is the wasted wealth of England'.

Two sets of opinion polls were published during the campaign, MORI in the *Scotsman* and *Scottish Daily Express*, and System Three in the *Glasgow Herald* (cf. Table VII.3). Given that the 1979 election result had produced an overall seven per cent Conservative lead in Britain as against a 10 per cent Labour lead in Scotland, the Scotland-only polls were bound to appear different, if only recording no change from 1979. The campaign polls tended to indicate Labour maintaining or even increasing its lead over the Conservatives in Scotland, exactly the opposite of the position reported by polls Britainwide.

Table VII.3 CAMPAIGN POLLS IN SCOTLAND

Firm, fieldwork dates	Con				Labour			
	%	Lab	ALL	SNP	%	Lead	%	
System Three, 13-17 May, <u>Herald</u>	32	44	12	12		12		12
MORI, 24-25 May, <u>Scotsman</u>	34	39	19	7		5		5
MORI, 4 June, <u>Express</u>	28	38	22	12		10		10
System Three, 4-5 June, <u>Herald</u>	26	40	23	12		14		14
MORI, 7-8 June <u>Scotsman</u>	27	41	20	11		14		14
Actual result	28.4	35.1	24.5	11.8		6.7		6.7

Two interpretations of the campaign polls are possible. The first is that the tendency to overestimate the Labour vote as against the final result reflected the fact that the sampling points in Scottish surveys tend to over-represent the more accessible Central-belt constituencies, where Labour does well, as against the Highland constituencies, extremely difficult of access, where Labour's support is very weak. This would also account for the underestimation of the vote for the other parties. The other possibility is that there was a late swing away from Labour in Scotland. A Gallup Poll taken for the BBC in Scotland on election day found 37 per cent of its respondents Labour, as against 29 per cent Conservative, 25 per cent Alliance, and nine per cent SNP. This suggests that Scottish polls tend to over-represent the Labour vote by about two per cent because of the structure of their sample, and that there was a late swing in Scotland away from Labour to other parties.

The election result in Scotland occasioned little surprise. The distribution of seats—41 Labour, 21 Conservative, 8 Alliance, and 2 SNP—left Labour the dominant party in parliamentary representation, as it had been for two decades. Labour was down three seats by comparison with 1979, but the same as in the October 1974 election. The Conservatives were also down one seat from 1979. The Alliance gain of five seats was a better showing than the Liberals had achieved at any general election in Scotland since 1929, and better than the February, 1974 showing which launched the SNP as a major force in politics in Scotland.

The distribution of the popular vote in Scotland showed a very different picture from the distribution of seats. Labour's share of the vote, 35.1 per cent, was its lowest in Scotland since 1931. If the Alliance and the SNP vote is added together to measure the strength of third force protest against the Conservative-Labour duopoly, then the third force takes the biggest portion of the vote in Scotland, 36.3 per cent. A Labour dismissal of the Conservative claim to represent Scotland because it was not supported by 72 per cent of the voters could be countered by rejecting Labour's claim to speak for Scotland on the ground that it was not supported by 65 per cent of the voters. The 24.5 per cent poll by the Alliance, combined with the SNP vote, meant that the two established parties together took only 63.5 per cent of the vote in Scotland, compared to 68.5 per cent in Wales, and 72.9 per cent in England.

The election outcome showed that Scotland was British—but British with a difference. It was British because 88 per cent of the total vote went to parties contesting the election Britainwide. But it was different because Labour finished first rather than the Conservatives. It was also different because the Alliance was stronger in Scotland. In 1983 the proportion of the third force vote going to an explicitly British party was twice as great as that going to an

explicitly Scottish party. The 1983 result supports Denis Van Mechelen's (1982: 4) conclusion from analysing third-party voting in the 1970s: 'Scottish voters turned to the SNP in 1974 as much to express their British concerns as their peculiarly Scottish ones'.

In Scottish constituencies as in English constituencies, socio-economic status was an important influence determining the vote for the Conservatives. Labour and, at a much lower level, the Alliance (cf. Table VII.4 and V.1). Agriculture is a much stronger influence too, for Scotland is not only a land of heavy industry and vast council housing estates, but also of rolling hills, Highlands and open countryside. All other conditions remaining equal, as the socio-economic status of the constituency rises by 10 points on the scale, Labour's vote is likely to fall by 4.1 per cent, as a constituency's agricultural status rises by 10 per cent, Labour's vote falls by 2.7 per cent. Since rural constituencies tend to be higher on both scales, Labour's vote is doubly depressed outside the Central

Table VII.4 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND TERRITORIAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN SCOTLAND

	Conservative vote		Labour vote		Alliance vote		SNP vote	
	b	% var	b	% var	b	% var	b	% var
		expl		expl		expl		expl
Social Structure								
Socio-ec status	.31**	26	-.41**	38	.11	5	-.05	2
Agriculture	.15**	20	-.27**	39	.06	5	.01	1
Immigrants	-.11	4	.06	3	.10	2	-.11	3
Elderly	.01	1	.01	0	-.06	2	.05	2
Territory								
Miles Edinb th	-.08**	20	.01	2	.02	3	.02	2
Region ^a	5.0*	8	2.1	4	4.7	4	9.7*	9
(Constant) r ²	(19.7)	79	(51.4)	86	(19.1)	21	(9.0)	19

^a North of Scotland for Conservatives and SNP; Central Industrial belt for Labour; Lothian and Borders for Alliance.

Industrial belt of Scotland. Another distinctive feature of Scottish social structure is shown by the positive effect of immigration upon the Alliance vote. Given the low proportion of Commonwealth immigrants in Scotland, this may be interpreted as the effect of universities, for university constituencies tend to be high on transient accommodation and to attract as students a disproportionate number of Scotland's immigrants from the New Commonwealth.

The divisions within Scotland are territorial as well as functional. Even after controlling for the effect of socio-economic status and agriculture, there remains a significant portion of the variance in the vote that can be explained by regional differences. Region makes the biggest impact on the SNP. While its vote most nearly approximates a cross-section of Scotland (that is, the lowest proportion of variance is explained by social structure), it adds 9.7 per cent to its vote in North of Scotland constituencies. The regional boost for the Alliance is in the Lothians and Borders, where its vote is 4.7 per cent higher than would be predicted by other constituency characteristics. By contrast, 80 per cent of the Labour vote is determined by social structure, as against six per cent determined by territorial influences.

The Conservative vote is affected by cross-cutting territorial influences. *Ceteris paribus*, the Conservative vote goes up by 5.0 per cent in North of Scotland constituencies. But the greater the distance from Edinburgh, the less the Conservative vote; the *b* value of .08 in Table VII.4 appears small until one calculates that this represents the loss of 4.0 of the vote by a 50-mile move from Edinburgh. This reflects the poor showing of the Conservatives in Clyde-side constituencies, to the west of Edinburgh, even after allowance is made for differences in socio-economic status between Glasgow and Edinburgh. It also means that in North of Scotland constituencies the Conservative vote is boosted by a regional effect and the agricultural character of the constituencies, but substantially reduced insofar as the constituencies are distant from Edinburgh.

Whereas Nationalists argue that Scotland is united against England, regional divisions in the 1983 vote show that Scotland is internally far more divided than England (cf. Table VII.5 and V.2). There are substantial differences in the vote for each party from region to region within Scotland, and these differences cannot be explained simply in terms of social structure. In the North of Scotland, the Labour Party polls 16 per cent less than would be expected because of the social structure, and the Conservatives 10 per cent better. In the Central Industrial belt, Labour enjoys an eight per cent advantage beyond that accounted for by social structure. In the Lothians and Borders, both the Alliance and the Conservative Party benefit from a regional effect. The strength of the regional effect in Scotland is particularly striking because of the absence of the language divisions, which in Wales can produce *prima facie* differences in culture (cf. Tables VII.4-5 and VI.3-4).

Table VII.5 REGIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN SCOTLAND

139

	Con. vote		Labour vote		Alliance vote		SNP vote	
	Act	Prd Df	Act	Prd Df	Act	Prd Df	Act	Prd Df
	(% vote)							
North	35	25 +10	16	32 -16	29	21 +8	21	26 -5
Central								
Industrial	24	29 -5	44	36 +8	22	23 -1	10	14 -4
Lothian & Borders	33	28 +5	29	35 -6	29	25 +4	9	14 -5

Notes: a See Appendix A for the definition of regions.

Union without Uniformity

Comparing the election outcome in Scotland and England shows there is no uniformity. In 1983, Labour secured a vote 8.2 per cent higher in Scotland than in England, the Conservatives 17.6 per cent worse than in England, and the Alliance, 1.9 per cent below its English level. The differences were greater than in any postwar British general election, but they were differences within the Union of England and Scotland. The vote for parties upholding the Union has been rising since October 1974, when it was 70 per cent, to 83 per cent in 1979 and 88 per cent in 1983.

The scale of the Scottish National Party setback is shown by the fact that it lost its deposits in 53 of the 72 seats it fought. This was a higher proportion of SNP lost deposits than at any previous election. In 1970, when the party's share of the vote in Scotland was slightly lower than in 1983, the SNP lost 43 deposits. In addition to winning two seats, the SNP came second in only seven constituencies. At least for the 1983 Parliament, it is an also-ran party in Scotland.

The absence of uniformity in patterns of party competition is far greater in Scotland than in England (cf. Table VII.4 and V.4). Nine different patterns of party competition occur; the most common, a Labour victor facing a challenge from a Conservative, is found in less than one-third of all Scottish constituencies. The second most common, a Labour MP with an Alliance challenger, occurs in more than one-quarter of all seats. Competition between the Labour Party and the Alliance is also significant. Whereas 96 per cent of the constituencies in England have competition between Conservative and

Alliance or Conservative and Labour, in Scotland these two categories of constituencies account for only 60 per cent of seats (Table VII.6).

The contrast between a sweeping Conservative victory at Westminster and Labour maintaining a hegemony of seats but not of votes in Scotland is often interpreted as a 'failure' of the Conservatives to maintain a competitive position in Scotland. In fact, it would more accurately be described as a failure of Labour to maintain a competitive position in the South of England. Whereas the Conservatives managed to win 29 per cent of the 72 seats in Scotland in 1983, Labour won only two per cent of the 169 seats in the South of England. When the Greater London area is included, Labour's strength rises but a little. Labour won only 11 per cent of the 262 seats in London and the South of England. The Conservatives won a larger share of seats and votes in Scotland than Labour won in England.

Table VII.6 PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION IN SCOTLAND

	Lothian				Total
	Borders	Central Indus.	North		
	(N constituencies)				
Conservatives first					
Alliance second	4	4	2	10	
Labour second	1	3	1	5	
SNP second	1	0	5	6	
Total	6	7	8	21	
Labour first					
Conservatives second	3	18	0	21	
Alliance second	3	15	1	19	
SNP second	0	1	0	1	
Total	6	34	1	41	
Alliance first					
Conservatives second	2	0	5	7	
Labour second	0	1	0	1	
Total	2	1	5	8	
SNP first					
Labour second	0	1	1	2	
Total	14	43	15	72	

The effect of Labour's weakness in England is to give Scottish Labour MPs a disproportionately large voice in the Parliamentary Labour Party. After Labour's worst election defeat in nearly half a century, Scotland contributes almost one-fifth of the Labour MPs. But the presence of so many Scottish representatives at the highest levels of Labour policymaking today is a sign of Labour's weakness in Britain. If Labour MPs representing Scottish constituencies are to take office in a British Labour government, then they will necessarily find their weight diluted by the election of an additional 120 Labour MPs representing English constituencies, with only a handful of additional Labour MPs from Scotland.

The Alliance too has its parliamentary representation tilted toward Scotland, for more than one-third of Alliance MPs represent Scottish constituencies. In Scotland the Alliance benefited by an uneven distribution of its vote. The Alliance vote was higher in the North of Scotland and lower in the Central Industrial belt. In this way, the Alliance could take advantage of the fact that in four-party competition a lower share of the popular vote is required to win a seat. While the Alliance can claim to speak for all parts of Britain, it cannot claim to speak equally in Parliament for all parts of Scotland. Seven of its eight Scottish seats are rural constituencies, and the other, Glasgow Hillhead, is even more deviant, having previously been the sole Conservative seat in Glasgow.

Within Scotland, the politicians showed no uniformity in interpreting the election outcome, and a few showed little commitment to the Union. The Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, totally rejected suggestions from Labour MPs that the government should take steps to introduce changes in government in Scotland. In response to questions from Labour MPs favouring home rule or devolution he said:

There is no sign that the people of Scotland have any desire for a further layer of government, with extra taxes on the Scots to pay for it ...

We consider that the present arrangements for government in Scotland are working well, and we do not envisage any changes at the moment (House of Commons Debates Vol. 45, Col. 87d, 13 July 1983).

The Scottish National Party's annual conference in late September 1983 faced both ways on the next steps for the party. The Parliamentary leader, Donald Stewart, MP for the Western Isles, argued: 'I don't accept that we must lower our sights to make the party more acceptable to the people ... We should say that we have a fixed aim of independence without any qualification whatsoever' (*Scotman*, 1 October 1983). But the party chairman and fellow MP, Gordon Wilson, secured acceptance of devolution as a half-way house to independence, when the conference overwhelmingly voted 'not to obstruct' any steps to devolve legislative and economic powers to Scotland.

Predictably, Labour MPs disagree about the implications of the party's contrasting strength in seats in England and Scotland. The disparity in outcome in the two ends of Britain was sufficient for a former Scottish opponent of devolution, Robin Cook, to announce that he no longer upheld 'the concept of a centralised state on the basis that it gave us alternate bouts of Labour and Conservative rule'. Instead, Cook came out for federal government in the United Kingdom, implicitly writing off England to permanent dominance by the Conservatives in exchange for Labour's long-term hegemony in Scotland (*Scotsman*, 4 July 1983). Collectively, Labour MPs from Scotland are not so ready to abandon their half-way endorsement of devolution. The response of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party has been negative to calls for extra-parliamentary protest and joint action with non-Labour groups interested in promoting devolution. Power at Westminster, not opting out to Edinburgh, remains the principal concern of Labour MPs in Scotland, as it is of nearly all MPs Britainwide.

VIII Northern Ireland: The Importance of Being (or not Being) British

In Northern Ireland, the basic political cleavage concerns the Province's constitutional status, not class as in the rest of the United Kingdom. The organization of the political parties around the union has led to two distinct party systems. On the Protestant side, there are parties which compete solely for the vote of their own community, on a platform of continued union with Britain. Similarly, on the Catholic side the political parties compete for their own community's vote by espousing Irish unity. Despite the existence of the bi-confessional Alliance Party, which has a small but consistent following, these two party systems are distinct from one another, insofar as parties originating in one community neither expect nor attempt to win electoral support from voters of the other community. Party competition within each community thus takes place on the basis of which party provides the best means of securing the community's particular constitutional goal, union with Britain or Irish unity (For introductions, see Arthur, 1980; McAllister, 1983 and Rose, 1976).

Northern Ireland is also unique in that its political system demonstrates what a full commitment to the union produces. The two major Unionist parties, the Official Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, both support the retention of the British link to the exclusion of all other non-related issues, notably those in the socio-economic field. While the Official Unionists embody this aim in a demand for the full integration of Northern Ireland with Britain (although a significant minority favour the return of a majority rule Stormont Parliament) the Democratic Unionists demand the gradual return of devolution through the medium of the Northern Ireland Assembly elected in October 1982.

Until 1982 the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) was the unchallenged party representing of the Catholic community. It was formed in 1970 to articulate Catholic political demands within the context of Northern Ireland, the legitimacy of which the old Nationalist Party refused to recognize (McAllister, 1977). By contrast, the SDLP relegated Irish unity to consent to fourth in its list of priorities. However, three factors - the collapse of the power sharing Executive after a Protestant general strike in May 1974, the failure of the 1975-76 Constitutional Convention, and the political vacuum in the late 1970s - forced it to adopt more traditional nationalist aims. In 1977 a policy document declared that 'attempts to solve the problem in a purely British context have failed and will continue to fail' (SDLP, 1977:3). In 1978 the party conference voted for British withdrawal. A similar motion had been narrowly defeated at the 1977 annual conference, with 12 of the party's 17 elected representatives to the Constitutional Convention voting in favour of withdrawal.

The gradual shift in SDLP thinking, plus the radicalization of Catholic opinion caused by the IRA hunger strikes in 1981, provided the background for the electoral challenge of Sinn Fein, the political counterpart of the Provisional IRA. Sinn Fein represents the extreme manifestation of nationalism, insofar as it is the political expression of a movement committed to using physical force to achieve Irish unity. Similarly, the Alliance Party represents the extreme manifestation of political moderation in Northern Ireland, insofar as it is the furthest point voters of either community can go without crossing the sectarian divide.

Within each confessional system, the 1983 general election in Northern Ireland was seen as a major test of political support. Protestants regarded it as indicative of the two Unionist parties' ability to find agreed candidates in the six constituencies where a divided Protestant vote could allow an Irish unity candidate to win the seat. The competition between the SDLP and Sinn Fein made the election a test of the extent to which the SDLP had ceased to be the sole political voice of the Catholic community. From the perspective of the British government's Northern Ireland policy, the Sinn Fein challenge to the SDLP was the most serious threat. Since the early 1970s attempt to institutionalize power-sharing, British government policy had assumed two things. Firstly, it assumed the existence of the SDLP as the sole political group empowered to negotiate on behalf of the Catholic community and to deliver Catholic consent for any settlement. Secondly, it assumed that any governmental structures that were created in Northern Ireland would involve some form of power-sharing between Protestants and Catholics, and that the SDLP would be prepared to participate in such an arrangement. With the intervention of Sinn Fein, these twin tenets of British policy were cast in doubt.

The Assembly and the Hunger Strikes

The years spanning the general elections of 1979 and 1983 underline the consequences of political organization around the union. The period was significant for two factors. Firstly, the British government renewed attempts to seek agreement between the Northern Ireland political parties, following the failure of the 1973-74 Assembly and the 1975-76 Constitutional Convention. Secondly, a series of hunger strikes by IRA prisoners in the Maze prison, in which ten strikers starved themselves to death, radicalized Catholic political opinion. The two events proved to be a watershed in Catholic politics. The attempt to achieve political agreement through an elected Assembly produced an abstentionist SDLP, a style of politics the SDLP had previously rejected. Although the hunger strikers were effectively defeated by the British government, the sympathy that was generated within the Catholic community provided the mass base from which Sinn Fein was able to mobilize a sizeable vote, culminating in the election of Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein vice president, in West Belfast in the 1983 general election.

The British government's attempts to return devolution to Northern Ireland began shortly after the Conservative government took up office in 1979. The 1979 Conservative manifesto had aimed to restore political accountability to the Province, and 'to establish one or more elected regional councils with a wide range of powers over local services' (Conservative Party, 1979). By contrast, the 1979 Labour manifesto had committed the party to continuing direct rule. However, this appeared to be contradicted by a National Executive Committee statement to the 1981 annual conference, which suggested that Labour should campaign for 'unity between the two parts of Ireland, based on agreement and consent' (Labour Party, 1981:11).

In November 1979 the Conservative government's attempts to restore devolution began with the publication of a White Paper, *The Government of Northern Ireland: A White Paper for a Conference*, which set out the scope of a proposed conference to find areas of agreement between the parties, and the conditions under which powers would be transferred to an Assembly. Of the four parties invited to the conference, the Official Unionists and the SDLP refused to attend. The SDLP refused on the ground that it wished to have bilateral talks with the Northern Ireland secretary, Humphrey Atkins. The party's non-participation in the talks led the leader of the party and one of its six founder members, Gerry Fitt, to resign. Between January and March 1980 the conference held 34 half-day sessions. In July 1980 a further White Paper, *The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion*, appeared, setting out a series of ideas for a locally elected administration, and two alternatives for the composition of an executive. Concomitantly, the British government sought closer links with the Irish

Republic. In December 1980 Mrs Thatcher, Humphrey Atkins and other senior ministers met their Irish counterparts in Dublin. The result was an agreement that civil servants from both countries would draw up plans for closer Anglo-Irish co-operation, including new institutional structures. Nearly a year later in November 1981 the two governments agreed to establish 'an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council' to give expression to 'their two countries unique relationship, particularly in the field of economic co-operation and co-operation on legal measures'.

By this time it was clear that the British government was committed to an Assembly election in Northern Ireland. Atkin's strategy was to let the new Assembly decide on a cross-party basis what powers it would ask Westminster to return to the Province; that policy became known as 'rolling devolution.' A White Paper, *A Framework for Devolution*, outlined this and other alternatives in April 1982. These moves created a variety of problems for the SDLP, which had been consistently distancing itself since the late 1970s from any form of political accommodation within the context of Northern Ireland. Although the Anglo-Irish Council held out the potential to satisfy the SDLP's need for an Irish dimension, from the SDLP perspective it had too few powers and no provision for creating an institutional forum for elected members of the British and Irish parliaments and from Northern Ireland.

The SDLP's long-term approach to seeking political change in the Province was significantly altered by the IRA hunger strikes. IRA prisoners had been spasmodically protesting against the abolition of political status in 1976. These protests had taken the form of a refusal to wear prison clothes (the 'blanket' protest) and smearing excrement on the walls of their cells (the 'dirty' protest). These methods had won few concessions from the British government, and in 1980 a further channel of protest was blocked when four IRA prisoners had their claims of 'inhuman and degrading treatment' rejected by the European Court of Human Rights. It was at this point that the IRA took the extreme step of sanctioning a hunger strike. Although hunger strikes are highly emotive in Ireland and have the potential for radicalizing mass opinion, they also harbour the risk that a prisoner will die and his death will be blamed on the IRA, not the British government. A successful hunger strike is one in which concessions are won on the very brink of death. As part of their continuing claim for political status, seven IRA prisoners went on hunger strike in October 1980, but the protest was called off without concessions after 53 days, when one of the seven was close to death.

A second series of hunger strikes began in early 1981. Bobby Sands was the first to refuse food, and he was followed by others at varying intervals. On 5 March Frank Maguire, the Independent Republican MP for Fermanagh & South Tyrone at Westminster, died. The seat had a relatively small Catholic majority. Initially three Catholic candidates were nominated in the by-election

to fill the vacancy: Bobby Sands, Noel Maguire, the dead MP's brother, standing as an Independent Republican; and Austin Currie of the SDLP. Twelve days before the election, the SDLP party executive withdrew Currie's nomination, followed the next day by Noel Maguire, and thus leaving the field clear for Sands, who narrowly won the seat. One SDLP district councillor in Fermanagh, Tom Murray, signed Sands' nomination papers. Sands died on 5 May, and by September nine others had also died on hunger strike without winning significant concessions from the British government. The hunger strikes were called off on 3 October 1981.

Politically, the hunger strikes marked a watershed in Catholic politics in Northern Ireland. Firstly, they brought Catholic political divisions into sharp relief. During the previous decade, the Catholic community was prepared to vote for the SDLP on the grounds that Catholic political unity was of paramount importance, and that the party represented the appropriate vehicle for presenting Catholic political demands to the British government. Thus, the SDLP gained support from moderate nationalists as well as from Catholics with republican inclinations. The hunger strikes split a coalition of Catholic opinion prepared to give the SDLP their support at the political level, and the IRA support at the military level. As the survey findings in Table VIII.1 show, about two-thirds of Catholic opinion had little or no sympathy for the hunger strikers, while the remainder supported the strike. There is no division in Protestant opinion: 97 per cent of the Protestants interviewed had no sympathy at all with the hunger strike.

Secondly, the sizeable section of Catholic opinion favouring the strike led the IRA to feel it had a sufficiently large numerical base from which to mount an electoral challenge to the SDLP. Moreover, the actions of the SDLP horrified many moderate Catholics. In the early 1970s one of the party's major criticisms of the old Nationalist Party had been the latter's collusion with physical force republicanism during elections. An informal agreement existed in the 1950s and 1960s that Nationalists had the exclusive right to contest elections to the Stormont Parliament, while Westminster elections were the preserve of republicans. The SDLP now appeared to be doing the same by standing aside to allow the election of Sands in Fermanagh & South Tyrone, and also doing the same thing when Owen Carron, Sands' election agent, contested and won the second by-election to fill the seat.

The political emergence of a Catholic republican minority after the hunger strike formed the background to the SDLP's decision about contesting the October 1982 Assembly election. The SDLP had already stated its opposition to the principle of the Assembly when the White Paper had been published in April 1982. John Hume, who had succeeded Gerry Fitt as leader, stated that 'any party which accepts without question proposals which can clearly be shown to be unworkable, in order to present an image of reasonableness to the

Table VIII.1 ULSTER ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE HUNGER STRIKE

Q: How much sympathy do you have with the IRA hunger strikers in the Maze Prison?

	Protestant		Catholic		Total
	%		%		
A great deal	-		7		20
A fair amount	-		6		15
A little	2		12		31
None at all	97		74		33

Source: MORI survey for Sunday Times, 18-22 June 1981, N = 1,008.

community, is an irresponsible political party' (*Irish Times*, 27 April 1982). The decision about whether or not to contest the election symbolized the party's future approach to the whole Northern Ireland problem. To contest the election and participate in the Assembly would have followed the constitutional, participatory path the party had committed itself to in 1970, and implied that the party felt an internal solution to the problem was possible. To abstain from contesting the election, or to abstain from taking up seats if elected, would imply that the party considered an internal political solution impossible, and that a feasible solution would have to embrace a broader framework, encompassing relations with the Irish Republic.

The SDLP's decision to contest the election but not to take their seats provided a compromise between the two groups within the party, one of which wanted to participate fully in the Assembly, and the other to have no part in it. The compromise that was reached enabled the party to maintain its unity, but also to defend its electoral position against Sinn Fein, which had by then decided to nominate candidates on an abstentionist platform. It was a compromise that once again reflected the divisions within Catholic opinion. A survey carried out just before the Assembly election showed that while 38 per cent of Catholics favoured the idea of the Assembly, 37 per cent had no opinion, and 1 in 4 opposed it (Table VIII.2). By contrast, two-thirds of Protestants favoured the Assembly.

Table VIII.2 ULSTER ATTITUDES TO N. IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Q: There will be an election for a Northern Ireland Assembly on October 10th. Are you in favour, or opposed to the idea of this Assembly?

	Protestant		Catholic		Total
	%		%		
In favour	66		38		55
Opposed	8		25		15
Don't know	26		37		30

Source: Ulster Marketing Surveys for BBC, 5-6 October 1982, N = 1,009.

Both the SDLP and Sinn Fein contested the Assembly election, the latter polling creditably with 10.1 per cent of the first preference vote and 5 of the 78 seats, compared to the SDLP's 18.8 per cent and 14 seats. The Democratic Unionists, traditionally the weaker of the two Unionist parties, also polled well against the Official Unionists, winning 23.0 per cent of the vote and 21 seats against the latter's 29.8 per cent and 26 seats. Overall, the combined vote for Loyalist and Unionist parties fell slightly in 1982 when compared to the 1975 Convention election -- from 62.5 per cent of the first preference vote to 58.6 per cent. Through the intervention of Sinn Fein, the total Irish unity vote increased, from 25.9 per cent in 1975 to 31.7 per cent in 1982 (Elliott and Wilford, 1983).

Although no Catholic group attended the Assembly, it met during the remainder of 1982 and throughout 1983, debating and passing motions on such topics as security, Anglo-Irish relations, and the form devolution should take in the Province. The strategy of the Official Unionists was to use the Assembly as a forum to demand from the British government a return to majority rule in Northern Ireland, while the Democratic Unionists argued that the Assembly itself provided an institutional framework for the return of devolution, and that powers could be gradually given to it. These differences in approach surfaced on a variety of occasions, most notably with regard to the role of the committees which were set up to scrutinize the British government's administration in Northern Ireland. While the Democratic Unionists were prepared to accept these committees as a first step towards legislative devolution, the Official

Unionists regarded them as a distraction from the real issue of obtaining full devolution. As a result, the Official Unionists boycotted the committees until February 1983.

Outside the Assembly, the SDLP continued to attack the Protestant community's resistance to political change, along with what they saw as the British government's tolerance of that resistance. In a speech to the 1983 party conference, John Hume attacked the British government for their acceptance of the Protestant position, and argued that they should 'accept that there are other ways and means in which the Protestant identity can be protected' (*Belfast Telegraph*, 28 January 1983). The SDLP's position was to move away from any solution involving the United Kingdom alone, and to look towards an all-Ireland solution actively encompassing the Irish and British governments. It was this policy which provided the SDLP with a major plank in their 1983 Westminster election platform.

The 1983 General Election

In keeping with the rest of the United Kingdom, there was a major revision of constituency boundaries in Northern Ireland. But unlike mainland Britain, the changes had not been initiated by the Boundary Commission's regular revisions to take account of population shifts. Rather, they stemmed from an agreement reached between the Labour government in 1977 and 1978 and the Ulster Unionist MPs, that the latter would support the government in motions of confidence if Northern Ireland's Westminster representation - since 1921 having far more electors per constituency than Britain - was brought into line with the rest of the United Kingdom. The agreement to increase the number of Ulster seats from 12 to 17 was honoured by the incoming Conservative government in 1979.

The subsequent boundary changes resulted in major revisions in all but two constituencies -- North Belfast and Fermanagh & South Tyrone -- and made the task of estimating the religious (and hence the political) complexion of each constituency more difficult. Some approximation of religious affiliation in the 17 constituencies can be made by using the 1981 census, and adjusting for the 19 per cent of the population who failed to answer the religion question. The proportion of the population refusing to state their religion in the 1981 census varies considerably between constituencies: the largest (23.7 per cent) is found in West Belfast, which has a large Catholic majority, while the lowest is found in constituencies which have a large Protestant majority, such as Strangford (15.4 per cent). There would appear to be prima facie evidence that Catholics are disproportionately represented among the non-stated category. The simplest method of allocating these persons to one or the other religious community is to

distribute them according to the religious balance in the constituency: for example, if stated Catholics comprise 30 per cent of the population, then assume that 30 per cent of the not stated are Catholics. This is not a practical solution since it under-estimates the Catholic electorate.

The best practical alternative is to assume some weighting to the Catholic proportion in the not stated category. The weighting used here is one third: that is, it is assumed that the Catholic not stated category is made up of one third more than they appear to be on the basis of the stated proportion in the population. For example, if the stated percentage of Catholics in a constituency is 30 per cent, then it is assumed that the not stated category is 40 per cent Catholic (30 + (30/3)).

Calculations show that 6 of the 17 constituencies have Catholic majorities: West Belfast (71 per cent Catholic); Foyle (68 per cent); Newry & Armagh (60 per cent); Mid Ulster (54 per cent); South Down (53 per cent); and Fermanagh & South Tyrone (50 per cent). The remaining 11 constituencies have secure Protestant majorities ranging from 95 per cent of the population in East Belfast, to 63 per cent in Upper Bann.

Within the Protestant community, the Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist negotiated to reach agreed candidates in the 11 constituencies with loyalist majorities, and in the remaining seats where it was possible that the Catholic majority's vote would be split between the SDLP and Sinn Féin. The Official Unionists were disinclined to negotiate, except for the fact that Enoch Powell would be in jeopardy in South Down if the Protestant vote was split with the Democratic Unionists. A draft agreement was made between the two parties, in which the Official Unionists would nominate candidates in Fermanagh & South Tyrone, South Down and Newry & Armagh, while the Democratic Unionists would contest Foyle, West Belfast and Mid Ulster. The agreement collapsed when the local Official Unionist party in Mid Ulster refused to stand aside for the Democratic Unionist's candidate, the Rev William McCrea. In the event, the agreement partially held, and the Official Unionists were the sole Protestant party in Fermanagh & South Tyrone and Newry & Armagh, while the Democratic Unionists were given a clear field in Foyle. The Democratic Unionists also stood aside in North Down, so as to increase the chances of re-election for James Kilfedder, who had left the Official Unionist Party in 1979 and was contesting the election as a 'Popular Unionist' against an Official Unionist candidate, Robert McCartney.

There were no comparable attempts to agree candidates among the two groups competing for the Catholic vote, the SDLP and Sinn Féin. The Irish Independence Party, which had unsuccessfully contested a few seats in the 1982 Assembly election decided not to contest the election.

The SDLP, recalling the problems they precipitated by failing to contest the two Fermanagh & South Tyrone by-elections in 1981, contested all 17 seats,

while Sinn Fein contested 14. The SDLP strategy was to point out the links between Sinn Fein and the IRA, and to highlight their own attempts to broaden the discussion of Northern Ireland to include the Irish Republic. In this latter aspect of their campaign, the SDLP emphasized the New Ireland Forum, an all-Ireland body designed to bring the political parties together to discuss possible constitutional solutions. However, within Northern Ireland only the SDLP agreed to attend the Forum; the other three invited parties, the Official Unionists, Democratic Unionists and Alliance, all refused; Sinn Fein was not invited because of its links with the IRA. The SDLP placed great emphasis on the Forum; Hume claimed during the election that it would 'make a dramatic impact not only on Irish opinion, but on British opinion and international opinion. It will open up the whole debate on the Irish question' (*Guardian*, 21 May 1983).

While the SDLP focused on Sinn Fein's link with the IRA, Sinn Fein itself made no attempt to obscure its support for physical force. At least six of its 14 candidates had either been interned or served prison sentences for terrorist offences, and this was mentioned in their election literature, presumably to enhance their popular appeal. Sinn Fein emphasised the complementary nature of the ballot and the bullet. As Danny Morrison, the Mid Ulster candidate, put it, they approached the election 'with an Armalite in one hand and a ballot box in the other.' In a BBC interview, Gerry Adams, the West Belfast candidate, stated 'The use of force is a question for the IRA and we support their use of force.' (quoted in *Irish Times*, 30 May 1983).

One significant dimension to the SDLP-Sinn Fein competition involved political organisation. Although the SDLP had developed an extensive cross-local political organization in the early 1970s, apathy and a lack of political progress had gradually undermined its effectiveness, particularly in Belfast. By contrast, Sinn Fein had been developing an organization based on local communities, and the October 1982 Assembly election had provided an opportunity to test it. Moreover, they were energetically setting up advice centres to cope with individual grievances, and by June 1983 it was estimated they had eight centres functioning and another five planned. By focusing on local issues such as housing, and raising these grievances with government, Sinn Fein was tapping a tradition of Irish political localism by which public representatives act as mediators between the individual and government, and in return gain the individual's vote (See Bax, 1977 and Sacks, 1976). The SDLP and Sinn Fein also came into conflict at the local level, and after the election the SDLP published a list of incidents in which candidates, canvassers and supporters were attacked or intimidated by IRA supporters (*Irish Times*, 7 July 1983).

The bi-confessional Alliance Party of Northern Ireland vied for the support of both communities. Unlike the SDLP, which had moved away from a power

sharing solution within the context of the Northern Ireland state, Alliance adhered to the basic 1973 Sunningdale framework. Its manifesto warned, 'The price of devolution is really an accommodation with constitutional nationalists who totally reject violence and are prepared to give their support to the institutions of the state' (Alliance Party, 1983). It nominated 12 candidates in the election, significantly not contesting West Belfast in the hope that the Alliance vote would go to the sitting MP, Gerry Fitt, who was being challenged by both the SDLP and Sinn Fein. Fitt had previously lost his Belfast City Council seat in the 1981 District Council elections. Rather than mounting a door-to-door canvass, Fitt placed full page advertisements in the Protestant *Belfast Newsletter* and the Catholic *Irish News* (costing £ 2,270 and £ 1,900 respectively) listing details of his parliamentary interjections and speeches from *Hansard*.

The general election result gave the Official Unionists a plurality of the vote, 34 per cent, and 10 of the 17 seats (Table VIII.3). The Democratic Unionists emerged as the second largest party, with 20 per cent of the vote and 4 seats. Within the Catholic community, the SDLP led Sinn Fein in total votes. But each party had one candidate elected. John Hume, the SDLP leader, was returned for Foyle, easily beating his Sinn Fein rival, Martin McGuinness. In

Table VIII.3 THE 1983 ELECTION RESULT IN N. IRELAND

	Candidates	Votes	%	Seats
Ulster Unionist	16	259,952	34.0	11
Democratic Unionist	14	152,749	20.0	3
Other Loyalists ^a	2	23,995	3.1	1
All Unionist-loyalist	32	436,696	57.1	15
APNI	12	61,275	8.0	0
SDLP	17	137,012	17.9	1
Sinn Fein	14	102,701	13.4	1
Workers' Party	14	14,650	1.9	0
All Irish unity	45	254,363	33.2	2
Other	5	12,591	1.7	0
Total	95	764,925	100.0	17

^a James Kilfedder in North Down and Billy Gault in North Belfast.

Table VIII.4 PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION IN N. IRELAND

	East of Bann		West of Bann		Total
	Bann	Belfast	Bann	Bann	
Official Unionist first					
DUP second	4	1	1	1	6
Alliance second	0	1	0	0	1
SDLP second	2	0	1	1	3
Sinn Fein second	0	0	1	1	1
Total	6	2	3	3	11
Democratic Unionist first					
Official Unionist second	1	1	0	0	2
Sinn Fein second	0	0	1	1	1
Total	1	1	1	1	3
Other first ^a					
Alliance second	1	0	0	0	1
SDLP first					
Democratic Unionist second	0	0	1	1	1
Sinn Fein first					
SDLP second	0	1	0	0	1

^a James Kilfedder in North Down

West Belfast, Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein vice president, beat both Gerry Fitt and the SDLP candidate, Joe Hendron. The remaining seat went to James Kilfedder in North Down. Despite the apparent SDLP lead over Sinn Fein, if we examine the percentage vote each party received in the constituencies it contested, the lead is much narrower. By this measure Sinn Fein actually received nearly 16 per cent of the vote, only 2 per cent behind the SDLP. The pattern of party competition in eight of the 17 contests involved competition between the Official Unionists and DUP (Table VIII.4). A further three had the Official Unionists first and the SDLP second. There were six different patterns of competition in the six remaining seats.

The distribution of seats was influenced by two complementary factors: the nature of the electoral system and the territorial clustering of party support.

The first past the post system used in Westminster elections favours parties which can maximize their vote in specific areas, and is to the disadvantage of parties whose support is dissipated across a range of constituencies. By contrast, the single transferable vote proportional representation system (STV-PR) methods used in Northern Ireland local government and provincial elections, greatly reduces the advantage of larger, territorially grouped parties. This is illustrated by comparing the votes and seats gained by the parties in the 1982 Assembly election, conducted under proportional representation, and the 1983 general election. In the PR election, the discrepancy between the proportion of votes and seats was small, averaging just 3 per cent and as in the general election, the discrepancy consistently favoured the Unionist parties. In the general election, however, the average discrepancy between votes and seats was nearly 10 per cent, ranging from a 24.8 per cent advantage for the Official Unionists to a 12 per cent disadvantage for the SDLP. On the basis of a proportional allocation of seats, the Official Unionists would have returned 6 MPs not 10; the SDLP 3, not 1; Sinn Fein 2 not 1; and Alliance would have elected its first Westminster MP.

Another way to illustrate the territorial clustering of the vote is to examine the party votes in the three major regions of Northern Ireland which have shown to be electorally important over the last half century (McAllister, 1983): Belfast, the region surrounding Belfast to the East of the River Bann; and the region West of the River Bann. Each of the five parties has a distinct regional base (Table VIII.5). The two Unionist parties are weakest West of the Bann and strongest in Belfast. Alliance finds the bulk of its support in Belfast and East

Table VIII.5 REGIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN N. IRELAND

Party	Deviation from N. Ireland total			
	Total %	E. of Bann %	Belfast %	W. of Bann %
Official Unionist	34.0	+5.2	-5.7	-1.9
Democratic Unionist	20.0	+6.2	+2.1	-2.2
APNI	8.0	+3.5	+5.6	-6.3
SDLP	17.9	-5.7	-5.3	+8.2
Sinn Fein	13.4	-9.9	+1.1	+8.9

a. (For a definition of regions, see Appendix A).

of the Bann, and does worst in constituencies to the West of the Bann, where sectarian tensions are highest. Both the SDLP and Sinn Fein are strongest in the West. It is noteworthy that Sinn Fein does considerably better in Belfast than the SDLP.

The most significant aspect of the 1983 general election in Northern Ireland was the success of Sinn Fein, which increased its vote from 10.1 per cent in the 1982 Assembly election to 13.4 per cent. Two hypotheses can be put forward to account for this increase, each of which have implications for British government policy in Northern Ireland, and for the party system as a whole. The first hypothesis sees the Sinn Fein increase as a protest vote, consisting mainly of ex-SDLP voters who have become disillusioned with attempts to find an internal Northern Ireland settlement and are disaffected with the SDLP's political leadership. Secondly, it has been suggested that it represents the mobilization of a republican vote, which is largely unrelated to the SDLP, representing the turnout of Catholics sympathetic to republicanism, but who had not bothered to vote previously because they did not regard parties rejecting physical force as worth voting for. The protest vote hypothesis implies that there has been a shift in Catholic political opinion, and casts doubt on the practicality of any British-sponsored internal solution. On the other hand, the mobilization of the vote hypothesis means there has been no shift in opinion: republicans have always existed in Northern Ireland, and now are prepared to turn out to vote for a republican party, whereas previously they abstained from voting on principle.

Comparing the SDLP and Sinn Fein vote totals between the 1982 Assembly and the 1983 general election casts doubt on the protest vote hypothesis. Disaffection from the SDLP suggests that it should have lost votes, when in fact its vote increased from 118,891 in 1982 to 137,012 in 1983. Moreover, the turnout between the two elections increased by just over 10 per cent, from 62.3 per cent to 72.8 per cent, bringing an extra 100,000 voters to the polls. Of these extra voters, it would appear that some 43,000 were additional Official and Democratic Unionist voters, around 17,000 were extra SDLP voters, and the remaining 40,000 favoured Sinn Fein, accounting for the party's rise in total votes from 64,191 to 102,701. Clearly, there is strong evidence pointing to the mobilization of a republican vote hypothesis. Rather than there being any decay in the SDLP's electoral position within the Catholic community, Sinn Fein have managed to gain support from individuals who previously preferred to abstain from voting. In other words, Catholic attitudes have changed less than Catholic electoral behaviour. Previously, the division was between SDLP voters and republican abstentionists. Now it is between SDLP and republican voters.

The Implications of the Result

From a United Kingdom perspective, the 1983 general election once again displayed Northern Ireland's uniqueness. While social class differentiated the major parties in Britain, Northern Ireland's political parties were divided on the more fundamental question of the constitution, with two parties seeing themselves as British, another Irish. Moreover, one in every seven Ulster voters (or one in three Catholics) cast their ballot for a party advocating the violent removal of the British presence from the Province (Table VIII.6).

Examining the religious and class break-down of support for the parties shows that four parties are exclusively confessional, two Protestant, and two Catholic; only the Alliance Party draws its support from both religions. In terms of the social class of supporters, all five gain cross-class support; with all except the Alliance and Official Unionist parties drawing proportionately more from the middle class.

For the British government, the election result has three major implications. Firstly and most obviously, the divisions within communities, expressed by elected MPs, means that a political accommodation is very difficult to achieve. The two Unionist parties are divided about how they should be governed - as a part of Britain, like any other part of the mainland, or with distinctive institutions and administration. The two Catholic parties are divided less on the ultimate aim of a united Ireland than on the methods to be used to achieve this,

Table VIII.6 PARTY PREFERENCE BY RELIGION AND CLASS IN ULSTER

Religion	Official Unionist		Democratic Unionist		APNI	SDLP	Sinn Fein
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Protestant	98	95	54	4	-	-	-
Catholic	2	2	45	96	98	98	98
Other	-	3	1	-	2	-	2
Class							
Middle class	43	30	54	37	20		
Working class	57	70	46	63	80		

Source: Market Research Bureau of Ireland survey for Irish News
30 May-1 June 1983, N = 1,020.

constitutional action or extra-constitutional physical force. The SDLP believes that constitutional change can come with pressure by the Dublin government; Sinn Fein relies on its own forces. The result of these intra-communal political divisions is that no single group can be said to be fully representative of either community and in any negotiations several groups would have to be considered for each. Sinn Fein's electoral success added a further complication in that successive British governments since 1976 had committed themselves not to negotiate with the IRA. Although the Irish Republic had reaffirmed that they would not negotiate with these groups, this commitment is now more difficult for the British when an IRA supporter in Sinn Fein is a member of the Westminster Parliament.

Secondly, the republican movement has traditionally had two wings: one, a physical force organization dedicated to removing the British presence by arms, and the other, a political group supporting the military campaign by non-violent action that could be taken "overground" rather than "underground". From the late 1960s until the early 1980s, the IRA's military wing was predominant. The election result shows that the political wing is now also important. The IRA can try to reap direct political benefits from the military campaign, whereas before the lack of a creditable, competent, political voice meant that the gains to be made from the military side were limited. Indeed, Gerry Adams admitted that Sinn Fein's role was to complement the military campaign, arguing that their strategy was 'to broaden and popularise the armed struggle' (*Sunday Times*, 8 May 1983).

Finally, the election result reaffirmed that devolution remains an impractical option in Northern Ireland, at least in the immediate future. The Unionists are dissatisfied with anything less than majority rule in a provincial Parliament or full integration with Britain. Similarly, the SDLP are committed to abstaining from participation in the Assembly, and to seeking a political solution outside the framework of the United Kingdom, with the aid of the Irish government in Dublin. Temporary direct rule thus remains. Opinion polls have shown that direct rule is endorsed by a majority in both communities in Northern Ireland as an acceptable short-term solution (Rose, McAllister and Main, 1978). While they continue to display fundamental divisions about ultimate constitutional goals, temporary direct rule remains by default.

IX The Integration of the British Electorate

Explanations of the outcome of elections in the United Kingdom are often asymmetrical. Elections in England are not explained in terms of distinctive English factors. Instead, voting behaviour is explained in terms of social structure characteristics common to every Western nation. The leading studies of voting behaviour in Britain (Butler and Stokes, 1974; Sartvik and Crewe, 1983) assume generic rather than nation-specific influences. Both sets of authors analyse voting with a conceptual framework developed at the University of Michigan and exported to more than a dozen countries from Australia and Japan to Finland and Italy. Insofar as the framework identifies distinctive national factors, they are common to the whole of Britain, such as party identification or party leaders; they are not factors unique to England.

By contrast, studies of election outcomes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland seek or claim to find unique influences differentiating elections between the nations of the United Kingdom. For using a study upon Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland is more or less assumed to justify emphasizing nation-specific rather than generic influences upon votes. Whereas the generic approach risks ignoring what is distinctive about election outcomes in Britain, focusing on a single nation within Britain is vulnerable to the nominalist fallacy. It assumes that because a study is defined by the boundaries of a nation, then non-Scottish or non-Welsh influences are irrelevant, and that the distinctive feature of Scottish social structure is that it is Scottish.

Northern Ireland is unique in being dominated by nation-specific influences. The parties contesting elections in Ulster have no links with parties in what is referred to as mainland Britain. The uniqueness of Northern Ireland is further emphasized by the fact that parties to political conflict there include illegal and active armed groups, such as the Provisional IRA and the Ulster Volunteer Force, acting as alternatives or supplements to electoral organisations (Rose,

1976: chapter 3). Nowhere in Great Britain does political competition take the form it does in Ulster.

Whereas preceding chapters have examined the four nations of the United Kingdom separately, the purpose here is to use data about social structure, territorial differences and election outcomes to test the extent to which the British electorate is integrated. Integration occurs insofar as there are common influences upon voting; insofar as territorial and particularistic national influences are of principal importance, then electoral competition involves different or, in Northern Ireland, dis-integrative influences. In the second section, the extent of national differences in competition for seats is examined. Given that any universe of more than 600 constituencies is bound to have some exceptions, the third section examines the constituencies that deviate from the Britainwide pattern.

The Dominance of Social Structure

When separate regression analyses for England, Wales and Scotland are compared, the results are broadly similar. Two social structure influences stand out as consistently important: the socio-economic status of a constituency and agriculture. The significance of national differences is further mitigated by the evidence of regional effects dividing each nation. In Wales, Plaid Cymru is a partial exception to these generalizations (Table VI.3). The percentage of Welsh-speakers in a constituency has a greater impact upon the Plaid vote than the socio-economic status of a constituency has upon the vote. However, the proportion of the Welsh vote thus influenced is small, only eight per cent. Moreover, language use divides the regions of Wales from each other.

Analysing all the constituencies of Great Britain together gives full and proper weight to England; the 523 English constituencies will dominate statistical analysis as they do the creation of a House of Commons majority. Excluding Northern Ireland, because Ulster votes are not cast for parties competing in Britain, also follows the political ground rules for constructing a House of Commons majority. By combining the three nations of Britain together, it is possible to test whether or to what extent there is a distinctly national effect in Scotland and Wales, just as separate analyses of Scotland and Wales could test the significance of regional divisions within Scotland and Wales. An all-Britain analysis also tests the importance of social structure common in constituencies from Sussex to Strathclyde, and from Aldershot to Aberdeen.

Analytically, the British electorate can be described as integrated insofar as common social structure influences are the principal determinants of votes rather than territorial factors. The results are clear: social influences do result in

the integration of electoral competition (Table IX.1). Four social structure influences can explain 60 per cent of the variation in Labour's vote, and 54 per cent of the variation in Conservative vote. Social structure is less important in determining the Alliance vote, but nonetheless explains more than half of the Alliance vote that can be accounted for by regression analysis.

Where a constituency ranks in socio-economic status is more important than where it is placed on a map. The socio-economic status of a constituency is the single most important influence upon the level of a party's vote. Occupation, housing and levels of unemployment are far more important than regional culture, or centre-periphery measures of distance. The difference in the Conservative vote in constituencies at the top and bottom of the status scale is 36 per cent, and the difference in the Labour vote is 43 per cent. Variations of this magnitude assure the Conservatives of hundreds of safe seats, and Labour of many safe seats too. The relatively weak impact of socio-economic status upon the Alliance vote, nine per cent at the extremes, explains why the Alliance has so very few safe seats. Apparent national differences can also be explained in socio-economic terms. One reason why the Conservative vote is lower in Scotland is not Scottish culture, but because Scottish constituencies on average rank substantially lower in socio-economic status, for the proportion of council

Table IX.1 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND TERRITORIAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE

IN BRITAIN

	Conservative vote		Labour vote		Alliance vote	
	% var.	b expl'd	% var.	b expl'd	% var.	b expl'd
Socio-ec. status	.36**	40	-.43**	34	.09**	9
Agriculture	.10**	13	-.20**	19	.06**	7
Immigrants	-.01	0	-.06*	5	-.01	1
Elderly	-.01	1	-.02*	2	.00	0
Territory						
Miles from London	-.02**	13	-.01*	4	.01*	3
Region ^a	4.3**	9	-8.0**	12	3.9**	7
(Constant) r ²	(24.0)	76	(60.1)	76	(17.2)	26

^a South of England for all parties.

tenants in Scotland is about double the English average (cf. Appendix Table B.3).

Agriculture is a second social structure influence important throughout Britain. The Conservative vote rises by 10 per cent in the most agricultural constituency as against urban constituencies, and the Alliance vote rises six per cent, all other things being equal. The Labour vote is even more strongly affected, falling from its urban peak by 20 per cent in the most rural constituencies. A higher level of agriculture in some parts of Scotland and Wales (Appendix Table B.3), results in very industrial areas favouring Labour, and very agricultural areas having a low Labour vote. Thus, social structure can simultaneously create divisions within nations and integrate social groups Britainwide.

The presence of a substantial number of immigrants in a constituency appears to produce a complex reaction. Once the socio-economic status of high immigrant constituencies is taken into account, the Labour vote is likely to be less than would be expected. In the most immigrant constituency, Labour loses six per cent of the vote it would be expected to get because of its other characteristics (Table IX.1). Constituencies high in immigrants tend to have a substantially lower turnout; people living in transient accommodation, and especially recent immigrants, are much less likely to vote. The turnout factor, which is not included in the regression, appears to depress the likelihood of pro-Labour immigrants actually casting their ballots.

Examining the proportion of the elderly in a constituency is a reminder that social structure influences are very unequal in importance. By comparison with levels of socio-economic status and agriculture, the elderly have virtually no impact upon the vote in British constituencies. Elderly people tend to be set in voting patterns decades previously by influences already taken into account, such as socio-economic status.

Territorial influences are of secondary importance; they are more important than the age composition of a constituency, but far less significant than its socio-economic status or agriculture. Distance from London has a limited but noticeable impact upon the vote of each of the parties; it accounts for 13 per cent of the variance in the Conservative vote, for four per cent of that in the Labour vote, and three per cent in the Alliance vote, once all other influences are controlled for. The further a constituency is from London, the more likely the Conservative and Labour vote is to fall. This is true within England, as well as being true as between English and Scottish constituencies. The Conservative vote in a Scottish constituency 400 miles from London is likely to be eight per cent lower than in the same type of seat in London, but the party's vote would also be down by five per cent in a North of England constituency 250 miles from London.

The political distinctiveness of the South of England, even after allowance for

its socio-economic status and agriculture, is noteworthy too. A total of 12 per cent of the variance in the Labour vote can be explained by its poor showing in constituencies in the South of England, and nine per cent of the variation in the Conservative vote and seven per cent in the Alliance vote can be explained by the strength of these parties in the South of England.

Regional analysis of the whole of Britain combines the four English regions and Wales and Scotland, previously examined separately. The distinctive national element in the politics of Wales and Scotland is preserved by not disaggregating Wales and Scotland into regions. Moreover, doing this increases statistical reliability, given that Scotland and Wales have fewer constituencies than the smallest of the four English regions. The extent to which regional effects are important in each of these six regions of Britain and for each party is assessed here, as in previous chapters, by comparing the vote that the party would be expected to gain because of its social structure with the vote actually obtained (Table IX.2).

In analysing regional patterns in voting, it is crucial to distinguish between the extent and the causes of differences. For example, we can note that there are great differences between the Conservative vote in Chelsea as against Bow & Poplar, but this would not be explained in terms of differences in regional culture within inner London, but by differences in social structure. The extent of regional differences in the vote are substantial in Britain. The mean constituency vote for the Conservatives ranges 25 per cent, from 53 per cent in the South of England to 28 per cent in Scotland. The Labour vote ranges by 21 per cent, from a 37 per cent share in the North of England and in Wales to 15

Table IX.2 REGIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE IN BRITAIN

	% Conservative vote		% Labour vote		% Alliance vote				
	Act	Diff	Act	Diff	Act	Diff			
England									
South	53	47	+6	16	24	-8	30	28	+2
London	43	44	-1	30	27	+3	25	27	-2
Midlands	45	45	0	31	30	+1	23	23	0
North	38	40	-2	37	34	+3	24	25	-1
Wales	31	30	+1	37	39	-2	23	22	+1
Scotland	28	30	-2	35	40	-5	25	22	+3

per cent in the South of England. By contrast, the Alliance vote varies only seven per cent from 30 per cent in the South of England to 23 per cent in the Midlands and in Wales.

Comparing the regional share of the vote that each party would be predicted to have solely on the basis of its social structure with what it actually achieved shows that nearly the whole of inter-regional differences can be explained by social structure. The average difference between the actual and predicted vote for the Alliance in six regions is 1.5 per cent; for the Conservatives, 2.0 per cent; and for Labour, 3.7 per cent. In two-thirds of the cases the differences are two per cent or less, well within what could be caused by rounding and measurement errors. The party most subject to regional effects is Labour and the effects tend to be negative. Labour does eight per cent worse in its vote in the South of England than would be expected from social structure, and five per cent below what would be expected in Scotland.

The two regions which evidence some effect, however secondary, are at the extremes of Britain, the South of England and Scotland. In the South of England the Conservatives would be expected to do well because of its relatively high socio-economic status and agricultural areas. In fact, the Conservatives do six per cent better than expected. The Alliance would be expected to come second because of the social structure; it does, and adds two per cent to its expected vote. Labour suffers from its weakness, polling below the poor vote it would be expected to have in the South of England by eight per cent. In Scotland, the presence of the Nationalists, taking 12 per cent of the vote, increases the likelihood of British parties polling worse than would otherwise be predicted. Labour also polls below its expected vote in Scotland, because the very high proportion of council house tenants in Scotland causes the prediction of a relatively high Labour vote, but council-house tenancy is less a sign of low socio-economic status in Scotland than in England.

Regional differences are nominal, for the sub-cultures of Scotland and Wales are meant to be different in kind from that of London; differences in social structure are differences of degree. The regression analyses emphasize that it is differences in degree—particularly, the degree to which a constituency is high or low in socio-economic status or in agriculture—that have the greatest impact upon a party's share of the vote. The one influence that can double or halve the Conservative or Labour vote in a constituency is the Britain-wide influence of socio-economic status.

Constituency Competition for Seats

A map of a country's social structure will reveal a degree of variation from one area to another, and so too will a map of election results. What is distinctive

about Anglo-American countries is that the first-past-the-post electoral system makes the party first in votes the exclusive representative of a constituency. The winning party enjoys hegemony in the constituency. The concept of hegemony not only means the dominance of one group, but also the presence of a minority to be dominated. If the winning MP secures less than half the total vote, then the hegemony of representation affects a majority of the voters. By being the sole voice of a constituency in Parliament, its MP can claim to represent the whole area, though winning the votes of only a part.

While there is competition for votes in each single-member constituency, in a three-party race the result is always the same: two parties will lose. The presence of any opposition MPs in the House of Commons depends upon the empirical relationship between social structure, party loyalties and constituency boundaries. In a sense, the House of Commons represents the voters in spite of rather than because of the mechanics of the electoral system.

There are two ways in which parties can compete successfully for seats in the House of Commons. On the one hand, a party may claim the loyalty of social groups that tend to be preponderant in particular places, whether parts of a conurbation, a region or nation. Labour's appeal to manual workers, council-house tenants and the unemployed makes low-status constituencies safe Labour seats. Of the 100 constituencies in Britain ranking lowest in socio-economic status, Labour won 91 at the 1983 general election; the Conservatives five (Nottingham North, Basildon, Harlow, the Wrekin, and Corby); the Alliance three (Southwark & Bermondsey, Roxburgh & Berwickshire, and Woolwich); and the SNP one (Dumfries East). Reciprocally, the Conservatives tend to have the loyalty of middle-class home-owners unconcerned about unemployment. Of the 100 constituencies ranking highest in socio-economic status in Britain, the Conservatives won all 100.

If the social structure of a constituency more or less assures the party half the vote, then it has a safe seat. Even when Labour's vote dropped to 27.6 per cent of the nationwide total in 1983, it could still win 32.2 per cent of all seats in Parliament. In a similar fashion, when the Conservative share of the vote dropped to 35.8 per cent in October, 1974, the Conservatives could enjoy the luxury of over-representation, winning 43.6 per cent of all the seats in the Commons.

The Alliance suffers in the competition for parliamentary representation because its vote is distributed very evenly Britain-wide. Whereas the Conservative share of the vote varied from 46.0 per cent in England to 28.4 per cent in Scotland, and Labour's share from 37.5 per cent in Wales to 26.9 per cent in England, the difference in the Alliance vote was much narrower being 26.4 per cent in England, 24.5 per cent in Scotland, and 23.2 per cent in Wales. The Alliance vote was also spread far more evenly among the regions of England than the Labour or Conservative vote.

In an electoral system in which it pays to concentrate political appeal, the Alliance is distinctive in that its vote is not greatly influenced by any salient feature of social structure. In a country where each constituency is not a microcosm of society as a whole, but is usually biased in favour of a party with a definite appeal to particular socio-economic groups, the Alliance is likely to end up second. One of its opponents benefits from the social structure, finishing first, and the other avoids wasting votes by finishing third. As long as Alliance support is so evenly spread, the only way in which it can hope to win a parliamentary majority is by increasing its popular vote to a level much above that required to give the Conservative or Labour Party a majority of seats in Parliament.

The Nationalists concentrate their efforts far more narrowly than the Alliance, only contesting seats in Scotland and Wales. Their desirous shares of the total United Kingdom vote must be multiplied many times to take into account the restricted electorate to which they appeal. Within Scotland, the SNP makes an appeal to all Scots, whatever their socio-economic status. It succeeds in attracting votes across class lines, but it fails to win many seats in Scotland (see Brand, McLean, and Miller, 1983). In February, 1974 the SNP won 22 per cent of the Scottish vote and 10 per cent of the seats; it rose to a high of 30 per cent of the vote and 15 per cent of the seats in October, 1974, before falling to 12 per cent of the vote and three per cent of the seats in 1983.

Plaid Cymru's electoral appeal is concentrated upon a doubly limited section of the electorate. Plaid Cymru not only advocates an independent Wales, but also the promotion of the historic language of the Principality, a language spoken by only one-fifth of the Welsh population. The Welsh-speakers to whom Plaid appeals are concentrated in a limited number of constituencies in North and West Wales. Within these constituencies, the language appeal of Plaid Cymru benefits it even more than Labour benefits from its socio-economic status. For this reason, Plaid Cymru is able to win a relatively larger number of seats than the SNP--5.2 per cent of Wales in the 1983 election, as against 2.8 per cent of Scotland for the SNP--even though Plaid Cymru consistently wins a much lower share of the vote.

Northern Ireland further emphasizes the importance of basing an electoral appeal upon a major social characteristic, in this case religion. Religion tends to determine the share of the vote going to Unionist and Loyalist as against Irish unity candidates. In the constituencies where Protestants and Catholics are fairly evenly balanced in number, one community can lose the election by splitting its vote between two candidates if the other is united behind a single candidate. Where one religion is heavily preponderant, then competition can take place between Protestant parties. Given the constituency concentration of Catholics, if united behind a single candidate Catholic voters can win up to five seats in Northern Ireland.

In the 1983 United Kingdom election, the competition for seats involved two types of parties, those that had an appeal skewed in territorial or social terms or both--the Conservative, Labour, Nationalist and Ulster parties--as against the Alliance. Given the nature of the first-past-the-post electoral system, the former were relatively more successful in competition for seats in the House of Commons.

There is a very skew distribution of parliamentary representation among the regions and nations of the United Kingdom (Table IX.3). In 1983 the Conservatives won 61 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons, but their regional representation varied from 95 per cent of the seats in the South of England to 29 per cent in Scotland. This variation of more than three to one was of far greater magnitude than the difference in the party's vote. The Labour Party's parliamentary representation was skewed more from weakness than strength. Its share of MPs ranged from two per cent in the South of England to 57 per cent of Scottish MPs. The representation of Nationalist parties is by intent concentrated in Wales and Scotland. Northern Ireland representation is 100 per cent different from constituencies in Britain. The Alliance's parliamentary representation is much the same in all parts of Britain only because it is everywhere weak in parliamentary representation.

Every region in Britain is competitive in terms of votes, for no party can claim

Table IX.3 THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

	Conservatives Labour Alliance Nationalist ¹			
	(% seats won)			
England				
South of England	95	2	3	0
London	67	31	2	0
Midlands	71	29	0	0
North	41	55	4	0
Total England	69	4	27	2
Wales	37	53	5	5
Scotland	29	57	11	3
N. Ireland	0	0	0	100
United Kingdom	61	32	3.5	3.5

two-thirds of a region's votes, and usually the leading party takes less than half the vote. But few regions of the United Kingdom are competitive in terms of parliamentary representation. Parliamentary representation reflects balanced competition when at least two parties elect a substantial proportion of MPs for a region. It is hegemonic, subject to one-party domination, if one party elects the great bulk of MPs from a region.

In 1983 only three of the seven regions and nations of the United Kingdom could claim balanced representation: Wales, the North of England and Scotland. In each of these areas, the Labour Party was first in the share of popular votes and first in the share of seats, but only by a limited margin. Labour won 53 per cent of the seats in Wales, 55 per cent in the North of England and 57 per cent in Scotland. Nearly half the seats in the House of Commons from these three areas were taken by also-ran parties. The Conservatives won a substantial fraction of seats in each region, and the Alliance did relatively well.

The fact that the more distant parts of Britain are most balanced in parliamentary representation is a major force for political integration. When an issue arises in the House of Commons, the voices of Scottish, Welsh and North of England MPs are sure to be heard, but they will not be voicing distinctive territorial concerns (see also McDonald, 1982). Their voices will be divided along party lines common to the whole of Britain. Scots MPs will disagree as Conservative, Labour and Alliance partisans, not as Scots versus English.

The importance of balanced representation from Scotland and Wales is underscored by the absence of such representation from Northern Ireland since the Ulster Unionists withdrew from association with the Conservative Party in 1972, and the Labour Party decided to placate the forces of Irish unity rather than contest Ulster seats. Ulster MPs tend to be treated as outcasts at Westminster; they are excluded by party lines that integrate MPs from England, Scotland and Wales.

The 1983 election result was unusual in the weakness of the Labour vote and the size of the Conservative majority in the House of Commons. But the tendency of the electoral system to make parliamentary representation hegemonic rather than competitive is consistent through the years. This can be illustrated by examining the territorial distribution of seats in the 1964 and in the February, 1974 Parliaments, when the two major parties were very nearly equal in the number of seats each won United Kingdomwide.

Even when the Conservative and Labour parties are matched almost evenly overall in the House of Commons, they are not matched evenly in most parts of the United Kingdom. In 1964 only the West Midlands and Scotland could be described as having competitive or balanced representation in Parliament. Labour won 56 per cent of seats in the West Midlands, and the Conservatives 44 per cent; in Scotland, Labour won 61 per cent of seats, against 39 per cent for

Conservative and Liberal opponents. Elsewhere, hegemony was the rule: Labour won 78 per cent of the seats in Wales (rising to 89 per cent in 1966), and Ulster Unionists took all 12 seats in Northern Ireland. In 1974, the pattern was much the same, with Labour winning 55 per cent of seats in the West Midlands, and 56 per cent of seats in Scotland. Elsewhere, one party enjoyed a hegemonic dominance of parliamentary representation. The 1983 election demonstrated a greater degree of within-region and within-nation balance in parliamentary representation.

When attention is turned to patterns of party competition, neither a one nor a two-party system can be said to exist. By definition, there will always be a second party to challenge the winner, however distant the runner up is. Strictly speaking, a two-party system exists only if two parties finish first and second in virtually every constituency. In 1983, however, the Conservative and Labour parties failed to maintain a monopoly of the positions of winner and challenger. Either the Labour or Conservative parties were third or worse in 365 seats, 56 per cent of the total in the House of Commons (Table IX.4).

The 1983 general election produced 20 different patterns of party competition. Of these, only two represent the traditional patterns of the Conservatives ahead of Labour, or Labour leading the Conservatives. Another four represent the increasing importance of constituency competition between the Alliance and the Conservatives, or less often Alliance and Labour. The presence of Nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales creates an additional five patterns of party competition. In Northern Ireland, even though there are only 17 seats, nine different patterns of party competition occur, according to whether competition is between Protestant and Catholic parties across communal lines; among Unionist and Loyalist parties; between parties advocating alternative routes to Irish unity; or between Unionists and cross-confessional candidates of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

In effect, Great Britain has three principal two-party systems today. In 265 seats, competition is between a Conservative front-runner and a second-place Alliance candidate. In 160 seats, the competition is between a Labour front-runner and a second-place Conservative candidate. In only 125 seats does the pattern of competition in the constituency, Labour challenging a Conservative incumbent, match the pattern in the House of Commons as a whole. Altogether, these three patterns of competition, each very different from the other, embrace 85 per cent of the seats in Parliament. The remaining 17 patterns of party competition account for 15 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons. Single-party hegemony is not invincible as parliamentary representation may make it appear, for in every constituency there is always an alternative to challenge the sitting MP.

Although patterns of party competition are varied, the overall effect is to maintain political integration within Britain, for in more than 95 per cent of all

Table IX.4 MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Pattern	Seats 1983	
	N	%
Conservative-Alliance ^a	283	43.5
Conservative-labour	125	19.2
Labour-Conservative	160	24.6
Labour-Alliance ^b	53	8.2
N. Ireland parties	17	2.6
Nationalist 1st or 2nd	12	1.8

^a Includes 18 seats in which Alliance finished first and Conservatives second.

^b Includes five seats in which Alliance finished first and Labour second.

constituencies the parties finishing first and second--the Conservatives, Labour and Alliance--are contesting seats Britainwide. Parties finishing second are well suited to put pressure on front-running parties.

A striking feature of the 1983 election result is that no pattern of party competition is dominant in any one nation. The most frequently occurring pattern in England is a Conservative MP challenged by an Alliance candidate, but this is found in less than half of English seats. In Scotland, the most frequent occurrence is a Labour MP with a Conservative in second place, but this is hardly more frequent than a Labour MP with an Alliance candidate in second place. In Wales the most common pattern is a Labour MP challenged by an Alliance candidate, but this occurs in less than one-third of all Welsh constituencies. Differences in patterns of party competition within nations are much greater than differences between nations, thus strengthening integration Britainwide.

Party competition need not be along lines common to the whole of Britain. In the October, 1974 election, the Scottish National Party demonstrated the

parliamentary influence that could be obtained by finishing second. Whilst winning only 11 of Scotland's 71 seats in the Commons, the SNP finished second in 42 more, becoming a major party in three-quarters of Scotland's constituencies, a position that it used to lever a devolution act from the Labour government of the day.

Notwithstanding the very skew distribution of seats among parties, the overall effect is to maintain the integration of Great Britain. In nine of the twelve general elections since 1945, the governing party has needed to win seats in two or three nations of Britain in order to enjoy a majority in Parliament. The three exceptions are Labour's landslide victory in 1945, the 1959 Conservative victory, and the Conservative landslide victory in 1983. In five postwar elections, the governing party has enjoyed a substantial lead in seats in England, but has needed representation elsewhere to be strong enough to form a government. This was the case in the Conservative governments of 1951, 1955, 1970 and 1979, as well as being true of the 1966 Labour government. The 1950 and October, 1974 election outcomes left the two major parties virtually even in parliamentary representation in England. Labour formed the government because of its relatively greater strength in Wales in 1950, and in Scotland too in 1974. In the two elections in which the government's majority was so slim that it could not be long sustained, 1964 and February, 1974, Labour took office with a majority of English MPs supporting its Conservative opponents. Conceding the majority of English seats to the opposition party meant that the governing party was soon forced to call another general election. *In order to rein control of government, a party must compete effectively Britainwide.*⁴

Deviations from the Britainwide Pattern

In a set of 650 constituencies there will inevitably be some seats that deviate from the overall pattern, whether because of a unique idiosyncratic factor (e.g. a spectacular by-election, as at Bermondsey), because of more general factors, such as having a popular incumbent MP, or local or regional traditions influencing party loyalties. Even if only five per cent of constituencies deviate from the general pattern, this still constitutes 32 abnormal constituencies, and the figure rises to 65 constituencies if a tenth of constituencies deviate. In a three-party system, a constituency deviating from the Conservative pattern need not be deviant in Labour terms or vice versa. Thus, the proportion of constituencies deviant in the vote of one or more parties could rise to 200, less than one-third of all constituencies but numerous enough to merit attention.

Conventionally, electoral deviations from the Britainwide pattern are not measured by the discrepancy between a party's expected and actual share of the vote. Instead, deviant constituencies are described as those in which the

Table IX.6 CAUSES OF DEVIANT CONSTITUENCY RESULTS

	Conservatives		Labour	
	% variance explained	b	% variance explained	b
% Turnout		-0.04		-0.03
Incumbent MP ^a		.43		-0.39
Scottish constituency ^a		-4.4**		-4.9**
Welsh constituency ^a		-12.9**		9.6**
(Constant) r ²	(4.4)	20	(1.8)	11

^a Scored zero or one.

increase in turnout can lower the Conservative share of the vote by 0.4 per cent, and the Labour share by 0.3 per cent.

Taken together, the regression analyses states a theme, the predominance of social structure as the chief determinant of the vote in British constituencies, and a variation, national differences are the chief cause of the limited amount of constituency deviance from Britainwide norms.

Part Three Competition for Government

Josep M. Vallés
Ramón M. Canals
Rosa Virós

EQUIP DE SOCIOLOGIA ELECTORAL
(UAB)

COMPORTAMIENTO ELECTORAL EN CATALUÑA
"Las elecciones autonómicas de 1984, con
una breve referencia a la evolución del
comportamiento electoral 1977-1984."

CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS CONSTITUCIONALS - FUNDACION JAUME BORIÀ
MADRID, 28, 29 y 30 de junio de 1984

Por lo que se refiere a los socialistas, las elecciones significan a la vez la oportunidad para desquitarse del inesperado fracaso de 1.980 y para revelar el triunfo espectacular obtenido en las elecciones generales de 1.982. Con todo, la situación del PSC debe re-monstrar un triple "handicap": la falta de energía con que han ejercido la oposición parlamentaria al gobierno de Pujol, debido a la obligada elaboración por consenso de la mayor parte de la producción legislativa; la pérdida de credibilidad nacionalista por razón de su aceptación de la política autonómica del PSE, desde que socialistas y UCD -por medio de la frustrada LOAPA- proyectan en 1981 una revisión del planteamiento constitucional sobre las autonomías; finalmente, la incidencia producida por el desgaste de casi año y medio de gestión socialista en el Gobierno del Estado, desde que las elecciones generales de Octubre de 1982 dieron la mayoría absoluta al PSE.

c) Su carácter de "test" para la política estatal.- De nuevo las elecciones catalanas, son percibidas por protagonistas y espectadores como un "test" para la política española general. Por una parte se quiere ver en ellas la oportunidad para registrar el presunto descenso de apoyo al gobierno socialista y, al mismo tiempo con consideradas como banco de pruebas para las dos posibles estrategias del centro-derecha de la política española: la que considera que la alternativa debe estructurarse sobre la opción conservadora que Fraga personifica y la que estima necesario reconstruir una fuerza política de "centro", sustentada sobre la "operación reformista" que estimula por el convergente Foca Junyent, como única vía para recuperar parte del espacio centrista cedido -según esta interpretación- a los socialistas.

Este carácter de ensayo general anticipado para unas futuras elecciones generales explica la movilización de todos los líderes políticos estatales que intervienen en la campaña electoral catalana. d) La confirmación del estilo presidencialista de la campaña.- La campaña electoral, muy abundante en recursos materiales, insiste de nuevo en la dinámica presidencialista, ya registrada en las elecciones de 1980. La coalición gobernante tiene en la figura de su dirigente -Jordi Pujol- uno de sus principales activos y, como tal, lo explota en su acción propagandística. Las demás fuerzas políticas - y los socialistas, en cabeza - acuden al envite y se esfuerzan también por resaltar el perfil del candidato presidencialista, incluso

Con todo el refuerzo de la plataforma institucional que significa el control de la administración autonómica, CIU acentúa los perfiles moderados de sus propuestas y presenta en primer término a la figura del Presidente Pujol como líder político indiscutido en su afirmación nacionalista y como administrador eficiente por su reciente gestión gubernamental.

c) Debilitada por los resultados de 1982 y maltrata por la escisión de su llamado "sector renovador", Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya se esfuerza por conservar un espacio nacionalista propio que no sea confundido con el de CIU, a la que ha prestado apoyo parlamentario durante los cuatro años de legislatura. Intentará luchar contra la inercia del "voto útil", afirmando su radicalismo nacionalista y su vago izquierdismo social.

d) En la izquierda, el PSC aparece como adversario cualificado y natural de CIU, de quien debe desquitarse del fracaso de 1980. La vega campaña realizada en aquel momento se transforma ahora en una intensa censura de CIU y de su líder principal, a los que acusan de apropiación partidista de la Generalitat y responsabilizan del riesgo de fractura de la comunidad catalana, entre catalanes de origen y de inmigración.

Se intenta con ello movilizar a una parte del electorado, al que se supone poco sensible a los argumentos nacionalistas y poco interesado en las elecciones autonómicas.

Las elecciones de 1980 y de 1982 han demostrado que la participación electoral de este potencial apoyo de la izquierda se convierte en elemento clave de los resultados socialistas.

Al mismo tiempo, el PSC debe contrarrestar la erosión en su imagen nacionalista, el desgaste de la gestión socialista y la escasa popularidad de su candidato a la Presidencia.

e) Desde las elecciones de 1980, la posición del PSUC se ha visto gravemente afectada por su crisis interna-5º Congreso de 1981 y escisión del PCC -, por la crisis del PCE y, como consecuencia, por el descalabro electoral en las generales de 1982, que reduce su cuota electoral a una cuarta parte de la que había obtenido en las anteriores consultas.

Para recuperar espacio político, el PSUC intenta presentarse como alternativa al tibio nacionalismo de los socialistas y al conservadurismo

a) La abstención.- La tasa de abstención para el conjunto de Cataluña se sitúa al 35,8 por ciento del censo electoral. Si contrastamos este dato con la abstención en las autonómicas de 1980, registramos un leve descenso de la abstención, que fue en aquella elección del 38,8 por ciento.

Esta participación electoral se nos aparece como relativamente débil si observamos las tasas de participación que se dan en la elección de las asambleas de las restantes Comunidades Autónomas. La participación es, en general, más elevada en la mayor parte de las Comunidades, incluso en el País Vasco, donde las elecciones autonómicas del mismo año 1984 presentan una participación del 68 por ciento. Sólo Galicia y las Islas Canarias -áreas que manifestaban en todas las consultas las tasas más bajas de participación- superan a Cataluña en proporción de abstencionistas.

Si comparamos la participación catalana en las autonómicas y en las generales, se pone de relieve el diferente comportamiento de los electores, que prestan mayor atención a las elecciones del parlamento estatal que no al del parlamento autonómico: así, todas las elecciones generales han superado la participación de las autonómicas y, si atendemos a la última elección de Octubre de 1982, comprobamos que la tasa de participación en dicha consulta -un 80 por ciento del censo- supera en casi 15 puntos la participación en las autonómicas celebradas año y medio después.

Si tratamos ahora de explicar el hecho, creemos que no cabe ya invocar un posible cansancio del elector, cuyo valor explicativo había sido esquivado en 1980, en un período de intensa actividad electoral. Por todo ello parece afirmarse diferente estilo de conducta según el tipo de elecciones.

Esta diferente pauta de comportamiento no es excepcional, puesto que también se presenta en otros países cuyo sistema constitucional prevé la doble elección de asambleas regionales y de la asamblea del Estado.

Si atendemos ahora a la distribución territorial del comportamiento abstencionista, debe señalarse una cierta modificación en la pauta observada en elecciones anteriores. Mientras se mantiene constante la menor participación de la franja litoral del país, donde se concentran los grandes núcleos urbanos y la actividad económica más in-

respecto el efecto de inducción producido por las elecciones gene-
rales planteadas también sobre una simplificación del panorama po-
lítico a favor de las dos opciones más importantes de la derecha y
de la izquierda: esta dinámica de simplificación habría influido
también en el caso de las elecciones autonómicas catalanas a favor
de CIU y de RSC, respectivamente.

-- Entre los partidos menores, el RSUC destaca por la importancia
de sus pérdidas, puesto que sólo conserva el 3,7 por ciento del cen-
so electoral, frente al 11,5 por ciento de 1980. La dinámica de sim-
plificación a la que aludimos más arriba ha hecho pagar al RSUC el
precio más elevado entre todos los partidos, sin que el PCC - resul-
tado de la escisión de los comunistas catalanes - haya podido recupe-
rar una cuota significativa del antiguo electorado del RSUC.

-- ERC sufre, asimismo, una disminución considerable - en torno al
cincuenta por ciento - de los sufragios obtenidos en 1980 y como efec-
to de la concentración de voto que beneficia a los dos mayores parti-
dos. Por su parte, AP consigue un 5 por ciento del censo electoral,
pero cede posiciones tanto en relación a las legislativas de 1982 en
las que había alcanzado, como respecto de la cota obtenida en 1980
por UCD (6,60 por ciento del censo electoral).

-- Salvo para el caso del PCC, que en su primera aparición en las e-
lecciones catalanas reune en torno al 1,6 por ciento de los electo-
res, las demás formaciones extraparlamentarias (tanto de derecha,
como de izquierda) ven disminuidos todavía más sus porcentajes, co-
mo nueva manifestación de la tendencia a menor dispersión en las pre-
ferencias del electorado.

Por lo que hace al eje derecha-izquierda, esta revisión de la evolu-
ción electoral de cada una de las fuerzas políticas nos permite tam-
bién señalar una importante diferencia respecto de las elecciones de
1980. Mientras que para aquella consulta, podíamos referirnos con re-
servas a una ligera mayoría electoral para las fuerzas políticas de
izquierda, el mapa electoral de 1984 ofrece un importante cambio de
signo. Si bien el RSC aumenta su porción del censo electoral, la iz-
quierda en su conjunto retrocede claramente con respecto la cota de
1980, mientras que el centro-derecha - gracias sobre todo a las garan-
tías de CIU - desequilibra a su favor la balanza de preferencias elec-
torales.

CTU queda clasificado en primer lugar en todas las comarcas, excepto en el Baix Llobregat en que es superado por el PSC. Tiene una fuerte implantación en la mayor parte de las comarcas, donde a excepción del Baix Llobregat y el Vallès Occidental, no baja del 25% de los votos. Tres comarcas - Solsonès, Ripollès y Cerdanya - dan a CTU la mayoría absoluta de los votos. En veinticinco de cuota electoral oscila entre el 30 y el 50% situadas en Gerona, nordeste de Lérida e interior de Barcelona y Tarragona. Son comarcas con un cierto equilibrio entre los sectores productivos, mayoría de los nacidos en Cataluña y zonas agrícolas con predominio del pequeño y mediano propietario y en general, la Cataluña Vella.

Las zonas donde su implantación es relativamente más débil, cabe situarlas en las comarcas industriales de Barcelona y Tarragona, el Segrià en Lérida, y las comarcas del Ebro, con porcentajes que oscilan entre el 24 y el 30%, con el mínimo del 18% en el Baix Llobregat, CTU gana en estas elecciones cerca de 600,000 votos. Estas ganancias parecen venir de todas direcciones. Respecto 1980, parecen llegarle, en partes iguales, del aumento de la participación, del antiguo voto de derecha no capitalizado por Coalición Popular, y de votantes de izquierda. El resto - unos cien mil votos - proviene de ERC y de otras fuerzas nacionalistas radicales. Respecto 1982, las ganancias le vienen de los bloques de derecha e izquierda, puesto que el voto de ERC, se mantiene estable y por otra parte se incrementa la abstención. Del bloque de derechas le llegan dos tercios, mientras de la izquierda una tercera parte, aproximadamente.

La distribución territorial de estos trasvases parecen proceder respecto al voto conservador, de las comarcas mixtas o rurales de Lérida y Tarragona, así como de aquellas comarcas industriales, con grandes ciudades, donde hay un sector terciario importante.

Respecto al trasvase del voto de izquierdas, procede en parte de las comarcas industriales, si bien hay que tener en cuenta que el grueso de las pérdidas de los partidos de izquierda en estas áreas van hacia la abstención. Por otra parte, CTU parece conseguir también, votos de izquierdas en las comarcas gerundenses y del interior de Barcelona, comarcas todas ellas de tipo mixto y con predominio de población nacida en Cataluña, y donde los partidos de izquierda, y especialmente los socialistas tenían una implantación muy notable.

A nivel comarcal, la implantación territorial se reparte bastante homogéneamente en todas las comarcas. No obstante, cabe señalar algunas zonas donde obtiene resultados superiores. Estas zonas se sitúan en las comarcas del Ebro y en el Valle de Aran. Tiene también una notable implantación en las comarcas donde se sitúan las capitales provinciales y las grandes ciudades. Por contra, los resultados más débiles los obtiene en las comarcas más industrializadas, así como en las del interior de Cataluña, todos del catalanismo histórico, donde CIU obtiene sus mejores resultados.

Coalición Popular, que en 1982 había arrastrado gran parte del antiguo electorado UCD, ve reducida a más de la mitad su cuota electoral y solo parece conservar, como UCD en 1980, aquella parte del electorado más reticente al catalanismo conservador de CIU, la mayoría ha optado por trasvasar su voto a CIU sin descartar que una parte se haya abstenido.

Corresponde al PSC el cuarto puesto en la clasificación al obtener el 3,6 % de los votos. Este resultado significa una estabilización respecto 1.982.

Por circunscripciones obtiene sus mejores resultados, como es tradicional en Barcelona y Tarragona.

El PSC se había caracterizado durante el periodo 1977-1980 por tener una implantación concentrada en las comarcas más industrializadas del cinturón barcelonés y tarragonés, además de las comarcas rurales del Ebro y en el Priorat. En el periodo 1982-1984, las pérdidas más espectaculares se han situado en estas comarcas, siendo más homogénea -a la baja- su implantación por todo el territorio, si bien sigue obteniendo sus mejores resultados en estas mismas áreas. Así, el Baix Llobregat y el Vallés Occidental son las comarcas que le dan mejor acogida electoral. En cambio, las comarcas donde su implantación es más débil cabe situarlas en las provincias de Lérida y Gerona, especialmente en la Cataluña Vella.

Como conclusión, podemos decir que el PSC se mantiene prácticamente estancado, y no ha podido recuperar parte de su antiguo electorado que en 1982 se incluyó por la oferta socialista, y que ahora una parte a continuado votando al PSC, y la otra se ha repartido entre la abstención y el voto al CIU.

a) Para el ciclo electoral 1.977-1.980, la divisoria derecha/izquierda se asocia en buena medida con la divisoria franquismo/antifranquismo, o, si se prefiere, con la divisoria continuismo/evolucionismo.

Como interpretar esta modificación en la orientación general del electorado catalán? Vamos a señalar dos hipótesis interpretativas de carácter general, que deben completarse con las formuladas para la trayectoria o evolución de cada una de las fuerzas políticas en particular, tal como indicaremos más adelante. Estas dos hipótesis de carácter general podrían formularse del modo siguiente:

Es, en realidad, CIU la que protagoniza esta recuperación desde las elecciones de 1.980, erigiéndose en polo principal para el voto moderado. Por lo que se refiere a la izquierda, lo que la caracteriza es su considerable variación en cuanto a su implantación electoral, contrastando sus oscilaciones con el avance sostenido del voto conservador. Esta oscilación refleja simultáneamente la caída del sufragio comunista y la volatilidad del electorado socialista.

Al predominio de la izquierda en las elecciones del primer ciclo 1.977-1.980, sucede un reajuste entre las dos alas convencionales de la escala política, gracias a la recuperación sostenida del centro-derecha.

del centro-derecha.

2.- Reajuste de la distribución derecha-izquierda y recuperación

d) Se reduce el impacto de la doble divisoria o "cleavage" derecha-izquierda, españolista/catalanista, ya que esta última (españolista/catalanista) se debilita como consecuencia de la institucionalización de la autonomía y de la responsabilidad gubernamental de la misma que recae sobre CIU. Es posible, además, preguntarnos hasta dónde habría llegado esta simplificación de las divisorias políticas, si el Gobierno estatal del PSOE hubiera adoptado una política autonómica más en consonancia con las expectativas del pacto constitucional y menos desvirtuada por la desviación "loapista" de su interpretación.

c) Se produce por ello, una progresiva erosión de los partidos con resultados relativamente más débiles, cuya resistencia organizativa y financiera al fracaso electoral relativo es muy escasa dada la fragilidad de nuestras fuerzas políticas.

en último lugar, el PSC no ha conseguido presentar un liderazgo
PSC en buenas condiciones una franja media del electorado catalán. Y
sociales, la inclinación "centrista" de Ciu ha permitido disputar al
política autonómica del PSOE. Y desde la perspectiva de los espacios
lista del PSC, "rehén" - como se ha escrito acertadamente - de una miopía
el punto de vista programático - de la progresiva indefinición nacional -
En su confrontación con los socialistas, Ciu se ha beneficiado - desde

resultados por desorientación manifiesta en el empleo de los mismos.
La abundancia de recursos económicos no ha producido, en este caso,
en la selección de sus líderes o en la retórica de sus comunicados,
mental en el tratamiento de la problemática de la sociedad catalana,
de persistente incapacidad para establecer condiciones de arraigo eie-
tagonistas principales - los socialistas -. Los primeros han hecho gran
las debilidades de sus competidores inmediatos - UCD y AP - y de sus
b) Por lo que respecta a los errores ajenos, Ciu se ha beneficiado de

las conexiones de influencia y clientelismo a que aspiran.
prevalecientes tradicionalmente inclinados al poder de turno en razón de
ción gubernamental" de las élites locales, es decir, el voto de sectores
te el "voto útil" de la derecha económica y el "voto de identidades"
A partir de estas condiciones, Ciu ha conseguido atraer progresivamente

referencia sintetizador.
de un líder indiscutible y de personalidad definida, como punto de
clas de la comunicación política, hay que tener presente la existencia
En último término, pero de gran importancia en las actuales circunstancias
lista y nada radical.

no perder el irreductible núcleo convocado por su nacionalismo - posible -
ten en Cataluña. Esta adaptación se hace con habilidad suficiente para
dantes "clases medias" - tanto tradicionales como "nuevas" - que coexisten
social (aborto, divorcio), se adaptan a amplios sectores de las abun-
mente conservadora, junto con una postura liberal en aspectos de moral
ción cerrada y doctrinaria. Una ideología social y económica moderada -
rísticas de "movimiento" permeable y adaptable, más que como organiza-
y aparecer ante el electorado como una formación política con caracte-
a) - como "mérito propio" puede valorarse la capacidad para constituirse

calificarse de "mérito propio" y lo que sería "error ajeno".
explicación del fenómeno, es necesario distinguir entre lo que podría

19