



TABLE 2  
OPINION POLLS IN SCOTLAND 1979-1983

	System Three (Quarterly Averages)				Con	M.O.R.I.		
	Con	Lab	Lib/All	SNP		Con	Lab	Lib/All
1979 Result	31	42	9	17	31	42	9	17
1979 (4)	26	49	8	16	-	-	-	-
1980 (1)	27	49	9	13	-	-	-	-
1980 (2)	23	53	8	15	-	-	-	-
1980 (3)	20	56	8	15				
1980 (4)	20	55	10	16	27	51	9	11
1981 (1)	18	53	10	16	20	44	19	16
1981 (2)	16	51	14	20	23	42	20	15
1981 (3)	17	52	13	17	20	44	22	13
1981 (4)	15	45	22	18	17	36	34	13
1982 (1)	18	41	23	17	18	39	29	14
1982 (2)	22	42	19	16	23	34	25	17
1982 (3)	24	43	16	16	27	38	21	13
1982 (4)	25	46	16	12	27	43	19	11
1983 (1)	27	46	13	13	26	39	25	10

Source: System Three publishes a regular monthly poll in the Glasgow Herald M.O.R.I. has, since late 1980, undertaken regular quarterly polls for the Scotsman.

England and Wales, and Labour's internal troubles culminating in the founding of the SDP, did comparatively little to shake Labour's hold in Scotland.

It should be noted, however, that there are some striking differences between the System Three and MORI polls. The former regularly put Labour support higher and Alliance support lower than the latter. But both polls consistently showed a sizeable Labour lead over the Conservatives and a decline, albeit uneven, in SNP support.

These consistent findings were confirmed by the results of local elections held in the inter-election period. Table 3 shows the distribution of votes in the District elections of 1980 and the Regional elections of 1982. Though the figures for local elections are crude, in that they take no account of variations in candidatures, they illustrate the continuing weakness of the Conservatives and the strength of Labour. Even in 1982, with the Falklands War apparently

TABLE 3  
LOCAL ELECTIONS IN SCOTLAND

	General Election	District Elections	Regional Elections
	1979	1980	1982
	%	%	%
Con	31.4	26.5	26.6
Lab	41.6	49.8	39.9
Lib/All	9.0	6.8	19.3
SNP	17.3	17.0	14.2

Notes The General Election figures do not add to 100 because votes for 'Others' are not included in the table. The local election calculations exclude 'others' altogether.

strengthening Conservative support elsewhere and a very substantial challenge by the recently formed Liberal/SDP Alliance, Labour's share of the vote in Scotland was not far short of what it was in the General Election in 1979. The Regional election results also confirmed the decline in SNP support from its General Election level.

There were four Parliamentary by-elections in Scotland between 1979 and 1983. The first occurred before the formation of the SDP in the tiny constituency of Glasgow Central and was comfortably won by Labour. In March 1982, however, Roy Jenkins won for the Alliance the formerly safe Conservative seat of Glasgow Hillhead. But this did not signal a general Alliance breakthrough in Scotland, for in the two succeeding by-elections (Coatbridge and Airdrie and Glasgow Queen's Park) they came fourth with lost deposits, and Labour easily retained the seats.

Inter-election indicators did not suggest, then, that 1983 would witness any major change in the electoral picture in Scotland as a whole. Labour dominance seemed to be as secure as ever, the Alliance, despite Hillhead, was doing less spectacularly than in the rest of the country and, while there was a decline in SNP support, they still remained an important potential electoral force.

#### The Scottish Results 1983

Table 4 shows the distribution of votes in Scotland and the rest of Britain at the 1979 and 1983 elections. As in the seventies the two

TABLE 4  
DISTRIBUTION OF VOTES 1979-1983

	Scotland		England and Wales	
	1979	1983	1979	1983
	%	%	%	%
Con	31.4	28.4	46.3	45.1
Lab	41.6	35.1	37.4	27.6
Lib/All	9.0	24.5	14.7	26.2
SNP	17.3	11.7	-	-
Others	0.7	0.3	1.6	1.2

major parties together received a smaller share of the Scottish votes (63.5%) than they did in England and Wales (72.7%), but due to the success of the Alliance in England and Wales and the decline of the SNP, in Scotland, the difference was not as marked as it had been in 1979 or October 1974. In terms of the relative strengths of the Conservatives and Labour, however, the difference between Scotland and the rest of the country was greater than ever. In Scotland there was a Labour lead of 6.7% while in England and Wales the Conservatives led by a massive 17.5%. Scotland diverged, therefore, by 24 points compared with 19 points in 1979.

Despite this, there was, a small swing from Labour to the Conservatives (+1.8%) in Scotland though this was smaller than elsewhere (+4.3%). Despite inter-election indicators the Alliance performed almost as well in Scotland as in England and Wales. On the other hand, SNP support declined, as anticipated, to just under 12% of the votes.

There were very considerable regional variations within Scotland as shown in Table 5. Labour strength is very heavily concentrated in

TABLE 5  
DISTRIBUTION OF VOTES BY REGION

	Con	Lab	Alliance	SNP	Others	N of Seats
	%	%	%	%	%	
Highland & Islands	26.8	15.8	40.7	15.6	-	5
Grampian	37.8	18.9	26.6	16.6	0.1	6
Tayside	33.7	20.8	15.9	29.4	0.2	5
Fife	28.6	35.5	26.8	8.2	0.9	5
Lothian	30.3	35.6	26.3	7.4	0.3	10
Central	25.7	41.2	20.1	12.8	0.2	4
Borders	34.5	7.5	54.2	3.8	-	2
Strathclyde	24.2	44.1	22.5	8.9	0.3	33
Dumfries & Galloway	44.6	16.3	18.6	20.5	-	2

the central belt and especially in Strathclyde. Almost 60% of all Labour votes were cast in this one region though it contributed only 46% of the total Scottish vote. This geographical concentration of support meant that, under our electoral system, Labour was able to convert its votes into seats more effectively than the other parties whose support was more widely distributed over the country. As a result, Labour's share of seats was, once again, very much out of proportion to its share of the vote. Labour won 41 of the 72 seats with just over a third of the vote, but the Alliance with a share only 4% less than the Conservatives found themselves with only 8 seats. It is, nevertheless, true that the Alliance did benefit from the electoral system in areas where their support was concentrated. They won all the seats in the Highland and Border regions but outside these they gleaned only 2 seats on the mainland despite having a respectable tally of votes almost everywhere. Finally, it is worth noting that in only two regions, Tayside, and Dumfries and Galloway, did the Alliance obtain a smaller share of the vote than the SNP.

#### Constituency Results

Analysis of the 1983 election results in individual constituencies is made problematical by the fact that between 1979 and 1983 the boundaries of constituencies were extensively re-drawn. Only 3 seats in Scotland (Orkney and Shetland, Western Isles, and Kilmarnock and Loudoun) were unaltered from 1979. In order to analyse change at constituency level, therefore, we have to use estimates of what the 1979 result would have been in the new constituencies. Clearly estimates cannot be as accurate as actual results and so this introduces an element of uncertainty into any analysis.

In fact the estimates appear to have been very accurate since there are high correlations between each party's estimated 1979 share of the vote in individual constituencies and the actual share in 1983. These data are shown in Table 6 together with the comparable figures for the 1974 and 1979 elections.

TABLE 6  
PARTY VOTE CORRELATIONS

	1974-79	1979-83
Con	.95	.93
Lab	.96	.96
Lib/All	.97 (N=43)	.86 (N=45)
SNP	.88	.88

Note: For 1974-79 all 'N's are 71 and for 1979-83 all 'N's are 72 except where shown.

The size of the correlation coefficients implies a large degree of uniformity in constituency changes, especially in the Labour and Conservative votes. Moreover, if we use the regression equations upon which these coefficients are based in order to derive 'predicted' scores (that is predictions of what each party's share of the vote in each constituency should have been given the 1979 estimate and assuming uniform change) and compare these with the actual result, then most of the most deviant results are readily explained.

The ten most deviant constituencies are listed in Table 7. Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley shows a very large deviation to

TABLE 7  
MOST DEVIANT CONSTITUENCIES

Constituency	Con Resid	Lab Resid	Alliance Resid	SNP Resid	Mean Deviation
Caithness & Sutherland	-5.1	-20.6	-	-10.0	11.9
Orkney & Shetland	+6.9	+0.5	-10.6	+14.1	8.1
Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley	+0.7	+20.8	-	+2.5	8.0
Western Isles	+1.1	+3.4	-10.7	+12.7	7.0
Glasgow Cathcart	-12.1	+5.6	+5.1	+3.8	6.7
Livingston	+9.3	-7.1	+6.2	-3.7	6.6
Inverness, Nairn & Lochaber	+6.1	-1.4	+10.9	-7.4	6.5
Angus East	+2.6	-3.1	-7.8	+12.4	6.5
Glasgow Hillhead	-9.1	-1.1	+13.4	-1.0	6.2
Dundee East	+0.2	+2.6	-8.8	+11.8	5.9

Note: 'Resid' means 'residual' which is actual % share of the vote less 'predicted' share. Thus a positive score means that the party concerned obtained that amount more of the vote share than expected while a negative score shows the amount by which the share achieved fell short of what would be expected. The absence of two figures for the Alliance indicates constituencies 'uncontested' by the Liberals in 1979.

Labour but that is because in 1979 Labour's share of the vote was depressed, 'artificially' as it were, by the candidacy of the then incumbent MP, Jim Sillars, as a separate Scottish Labour Party candidate. The other very deviant Labour constituency is Caithness and Sutherland where the incumbent MP, Robert MacLennan, had defected from Labour to the SDP and won a remarkable personal victory. The divergence of Orkney and Shetland can be explained by the departure of Jo Grimond and the candidacy of Winnie Ewing, while Western Isles, Dundee East and Angus East all show a similar pattern. In these cases the SNP either held the seat or were close challengers and in this tactical situation the Alliance failed to make an impact. The tactical circumstances also account for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber. Here a large number of former SNP voters (from Moray and Nairn) now found themselves in a constituency where the front runners were the Conservatives and the Alliance. Both of these did better than expected while the SNP dropped back. Glasgow Hillhead's result was clearly affected by the by-election in 1982 and by the fact that a national leader was contesting it. That leaves only Cathcart and Livingston which are difficult to explain. The Conservative slump in Cathcart may be due in part to the departure of Teddy Taylor who may well have had a large personal vote in 1979 while Livingston is based on a new town where, in Scotland at least, electoral behaviour has been notoriously volatile.

'Actual' changes in vote shares in individual constituencies are summarised in Table 8.

TABLE 8  
MEAN CHANGE IN SHARE OF VOTE 1979-1983  
CONSTITUENCIES

	Con	Lab	Alliance	SNP	(Alliance)
Mean	-3.0	-6.3	+11.9	-5.4	+20.7
Standard dev	4.0	4.8	5.9	4.9	7.1
	(N=72)	(N=72)	(N=45)	(N=72)	(N=27)

NOTE: Alliance change is calculated on the basis of Liberal 'support' in 1979.

Apart from the special cases already discussed, a major source of variation in constituency changes was whether or not the Liberals had 'contested' the seat in 1979. Table 9 shows that in those cases which can be classed as Alliance 'interventions', the other parties' losses

were, not unexpectedly, higher than in those which the Liberals had 'fought' in 1979.

TABLE 9  
CHANGES IN VOTE SHARES 1979-1983

	Alliance 'Interventions' Mean	Liberal 1979 Alliance 1983 Mean
Con	-4.9	-2.0
Lab	-8.5	-5.5
Alliance	+20.7	+11.9
SNP	-6.8	-4.7
	(N=26)	(N=45)

Note: For reasons already explained Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency is excluded from the 'interventions' column.

The local tactical situation also accounts for some variation as in seats where the SNP was defending or challenging closely or where the contest was clearly a case of Conservatives versus Liberals. It should be remembered too that some inaccuracy is bound to arise from the nature of the 1979 estimates. This can perhaps be illustrated by reference to Tayside North. This seat showed an increase in Labour support of 1.8% - one of only four Scottish seats where Labour's share increased. This arises because the 1979 estimate put the Labour vote at only 3.6% and clearly it is difficult to be accurate with such low percentages. In the election Labour managed to achieve 5.4%!

#### Social Correlates of Party Support

Despite evidence of an increasing weakening of the relationship between social factors and party choice at the level of individual voters, there continues to be, at the aggregate level, a positive relationship between the social and economic characteristics of constituencies and party support in them. A full range of data from the 1981 census is not yet available for the new constituencies but estimates of four key variables have been made (percentage of households which are owner-occupiers, percentage council tenants, percentage non-manual workers and percentage professional and managerial workers). In Table 10 we show the correlations between these and party support. For comparison we also show the correlations for the same variables (using 1971 census data) in the old constituencies in 1979.

TABLE 10  
PARTY SUPPORT, HOUSING AND OCCUPATION

	1979				1983			
	% Con	% Lab	% Lib	% SNP	% Con	% Lab	% All	% SNP
% Owner Occupiers	.57	-.65	.19	.11	.69	-.70	.36	.09
% Local Authority	-.50	.59	-.23	-.10	-.71	.76	-.41	-.13
% Non-Manual	.53	-.21	-.07	-.29	.41	-.25	.25	-.28
% Prof. & Managerial	.78	-.72	.13	.07	.73	-.68	.42	-.05

Note: For 1979 the 'N's in all cases are 71 except in the case of % Lib where the N is 43. For 1983 all 'N's are 72. The census data for 1983 are taken from R. Waller: The Almanac of British Politics

Three main points can be made about this table.

(i) The Conservative and Labour vote is much more strongly related to social factors than is the case with the Liberals or the SNP. It is worth noting, however, that the Alliance vote seems to have been more highly structured in 1983 than was Liberal support in 1979. Even so, the correlations are relatively weak.

(ii) In accordance with evidence from elsewhere (Rose, 1980) the occupational variables have declined in ability to predict Conservative and Labour support. In contrast the housing variables have become markedly more powerful.

(iii) Taken together in the form of a multiple regression, the four variables in 1983 account for 75% of the variation in the Labour vote and 64% of the variation in the Conservative vote, but only 24% of the variation in the Alliance vote and 20% of the variation in the SNP vote.

#### Turnout

Overall turnout in Scotland at 72.7% was down from 1979, when it was 76.8%, and was indeed the lowest since 1945. Not a single constituency in Scotland had a turnout greater than 80%. Less than ten years ago (Feb. 1974) 32 constituencies topped 80%. Among the Regions, turnout was highest in the very small Borders (76.8%) and lowest (as ever) in Grampian (68.8%).

Individual constituency turnouts varied a good deal more, ranging from 79.4% in Strathkelvin and Bearsden, to 62.8% in Glasgow Central.

The mean turnout was 72.6% with a standard deviation of 3.7. This compares with the following figures for previous elections:

	Mean	Standard Deviation
February 1974	78.2	4.8
October 1974	74.3	5.3
1979	76.1	5.0

So turnout in 1983 was lower but less variable than in the seventies.

Turnout variation is not easy to account for. Cities (with the exception of Dundee) have lower turnouts than the regions around them. (Thus Glasgow 69.1%, rest of Strathclyde 75.2%; Edinburgh 70.6%, rest of Lothian 74.6%; Aberdeen 66.8%, rest of Grampian 69.9%). There is also a positive correlation between turnout in 1983 and the estimated marginality of the constituency in 1979 (+.35) - and between per cent professional and managerial and turnout (+.46). But these factors do not go very far in accounting for the variation in turnout among constituencies. To do so satisfactorily would require much more extensive analysis.

#### Voting Behaviour

Election results are, of course, the aggregated effects of decisions by individual electors. In order to describe and analyse the voting behaviour of individuals we must use survey data. For the purposes of this section we have combined the results of the two campaign polls conducted for the Scotsman by MORI. Each poll involved interviewing a quota sample of 1,100 adults in 52 constituencies in Scotland. The quotas were designed to be representative of adults in Scotland. We are grateful to MORI for making the details of the polls available to us.

Table 11 shows the flow of the vote between 1979 and 1983. This is, of course, not a complete matrix since it excludes those who did not vote in either election and those who were too young to vote in 1979. It should be remembered too that these polls significantly under-estimated Alliance support and over-estimated Labour support.

TABLE 11  
THE FLOW OF THE VOTE 1979-1983

	1979 VOTE			
	Con %	Lab %	Lib %	SNP %
1983 Vote Intention	83	4.5	11.5	10
Con	4.5	78.5	6.5	12
Lab	11	15	78.5	19
Alliance	1.5	2	3.5	59
SNP				
	(N=511)	(N=790)	(N=112)	(N=178)

Nonetheless the data show that Labour lost more support to the Alliance than did the Conservatives. Former SNP voters were the least 'loyal' of any group, with almost a fifth of them going over to the Alliance, and Conservatives most 'loyal'. Table 12, again based on the MORI polls, shows the party choice of various sub-groups of electors.

TABLE 12  
THE PARTY CHOICE OF SELECTED GROUPS

	Con %	Lab %	Alliance %	SNP %	
Sex					
Male	28.5	41.5	19.5	10.5	(N=916)
Female	32.5	39.5	20	8	(N=976)
Age					
18-24	27	39.5	19.5	14	(N=302)
25-34	26.5	43	21	9.5	(N=375)
35-54	32	40.5	19	8	(N=603)
55+	34	39	20	7	(N=618)
Occupational Group					
AB Professional/Managerial	51	15.5	25.5	8	(N=231)
C1 Clerical	42.5	28	22	8	(N=389)
C2 Skilled Manual	26.5	42	20	11.5	(N=565)
DE Semi-unskilled	21	54	17	8	(N=713)
Housing Tenure					
Owner Occupiers	47.5	23	21	8.5	(N=649)
Council Tenants	18.5	53	19.5	9	(N=1051)
Trade Union Members	20.5	49.5	22	8.5	(N=574)

There is little difference between men and women. Older age groups are more Tory-inclined than younger people but Labour support is roughly the same in all age groups as is support for the Alliance. The SNP, on the other hand, is clearly more attractive to young people, gaining twice the level of support among the 18-24 year olds than it gained among the over-55's.

Class differences in voting behaviour continued to decline in 1983. Although Labour obtained the largest share of votes among manual workers and the Conservatives the largest share among non-manual groups. More than 50% of each group failed to vote for their 'natural' class party and this does not take account of non-voting. Support for the Alliance was slightly greater among non-manual groups than among manual workers but even so the relative evenness of Alliance support among occupational groups is striking.

As we have already suggested, housing tenure may be replacing occupation as the best predictor of voting behaviour. The data show that Labour obtained an absolute majority (53%) of the votes of council tenants while the Conservatives received almost half of the votes of owner-occupiers. As in other cases, however, Alliance support (and SNP support) was roughly the same in the two housing groups.

Finally, it is worth noting that Labour was not supported by a majority of trade union members and that the Alliance outpolled the Conservatives in this group.

#### Conclusion

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the 1983 General Election in Scotland is the extent to which Scots continued to deviate sharply from the rest of the country in the relative support given to the Conservative and Labour parties. How is this continuing Labour advantage to be explained?

In the first place the distribution of occupations in Scotland favours Labour. According to the 1981 census 17.1% of economically active males are professional and managerial workers compared with 19.7% in Britain as a whole. On the other hand, while 49% in Britain are manual workers, this is true of 52% in Scotland. It has been estimated that occupational differences like this alone mean that Labour should have a lead over the Conservatives 8% greater than in England (Miller, 1981).

Perhaps more importantly, the housing structure in Scotland is very different from that found elsewhere. While 54.6% of Scottish households rent their accommodation from local authorities, only 31.2%

of households in Britain do so. No less than 38 of the 41 seats won by Labour have a majority of council tenants. If house tenure is replacing occupation as the major social influence on party choice, then the enormous concentrations of council tenants in Scotland may sustain Labour support with more solidity than elsewhere.

Unemployment may be a third factor sustaining Labour support. Scotland has generally had higher unemployment than the rest of the country and 1983 was no exception. In June of that year unemployment in the U.K. as a whole was 12.5% while in Scotland it was 14.5% and in Strathclyde 16.9%. But we have no direct evidence that this was influential.

There seems, on the other hand, to be little specifically Scottish about support for the Alliance. The latter's share of the Scottish vote was within 2% of their share in England and Wales so it would seem that Scots were attracted to the Alliance or repelled by other parties for the same reasons as voters everywhere.

The poor SNP performance reflects that party's internal problems since 1979 and the fact that devolution has been effectively removed, for the moment at least, from the political agenda (it was mentioned by only 4% of MORI's Scottish respondents as an important election issue).

What of the future? It would be unrealistic to expect Labour to do a great deal better in Scotland, certainly in its tally of seats, even if the fortunes took an upturn nationally. Some more second places, fewer lost deposits and the gain of an odd seat are the most optimistic hopes that it can have. The same must be said of the Conservatives. The 'jokers in the pack' are the SNP and the Alliance. We have seen in the past how SNP support can explode with little warning and Alliance support appears to be volatile in the same way. A decline in government popularity and/or the failure of Labour to 'get its act together' in opposition would set the scene for electoral mayhem in the eighties which would more than match the turbulence of the seventies.

#### References

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