

The Multilevel Voter: Identity, Territory and Electoral Behaviour

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JAC M. LARNER

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with sub-state politics and the influence it has on political behaviour and attitudes. Parting company with much of the existing literature that examines elections in multilevel systems, I argue that it is incorrect to assume that factors at the statewide level determine electoral behaviour and attitudes at the sub-state level. Rather, elections at the statewide and sub-state level should be seen as interdependent. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the thesis and sets up the analytic framework upon which my research is based. I also give a broad discussion of my method and explain why I choose Scotland and Wales as cases in my argument. In Chapter 2, I outline and describe my primary data sources – the devolved election studies – by detailing their origins and design. Chapter 3 examines what voters know about sub-state politics. I examine data from 10 election studies in total and introduce a unique new dataset of press coverage of the NHS to examine policy attribution. I find that considerable proportions of citizens have little knowledge of sub-state political issues. Chapter 4 focuses on the role that national identities play in vote choice at sub-state and statewide elections. I also introduce the concept of party blocs in Scotland and Wales. Results indicate that national identity is a substantial predictor of bloc vote choice. In Chapter 5 I examine how sub-state identities influence how voters cast their ballots at elections to different levels of government. My results indicate that vote switching is more prevalent among those who identify with a sub-state identity (instead of a statewide identity). Chapter 6 tests whether split-ticket voting at

Thesis advisors: R. Awan-Scully, E. G. Poole and R. Wyn Jones

Jac M. Larner

devolved elections is driven by strategic motivations. While voters appear to understand when it is in their interests to cast a strategic vote in their constituency, there is no evidence suggesting they do in the list vote. In the final chapter, I conclude by highlighting the findings of this thesis and remarking on the importance of this work for future analyses of elections in multilevel systems.

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Note on interpretation of tables

For ease of interpretation, regression results in the form of maximum discrete change in probability unless otherwise stated in the main body of this thesis. This is the change in predicted probability of moving from the minimum (discrete) value of an explanatory variable to the maximum value, holding all else equal. The way these values are calculated are as followed:

$$Pr(Y = 1|\bar{x}, X_k = Max) - Pr(Y = 1|\bar{x}, X_k = Min) \quad (1)$$

where \bar{x} denotes all remaining predictors. While X_k is allowed to change, all remaining predictors are kept at the same value. I set these predictors to their mean (continuous variables), median (ordinal variables) or mode (nominal variables).

Full regression tables are presented in the Appendices.

1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

POLITICS DOES NOT OCCUR ON A SINGLE PLANE, NOR IS IT CONSTANT WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF NATION-STATES. Growing up in Wales, this has always seemed an obvious statement of political reality. The majority of my schooling, and my family's employment, was shaped by policies implemented not by the UK Government in London, but the Welsh Government in Cardiff. At school, my classmates and I were met with the proposition that yes, we could be British, but we were also Welsh – a label often loaded with far greater significance for us. Throughout my political science education, I have learned that these dynamics are often referred to as 'sub-state' factors, owing to the fact that they are concentrated within a territory below that of the nation-state, in this case being the UK. The idea then, that political attitudes and behaviours are shaped by these 'sub-state' factors again seemed self-evident. When people I grew up with talked about politics, the UK or 'Britain' was mostly only referenced in terms of the Olympics or the wars it was fighting overseas. It led me to conclude that to understand political behaviour and attitudes in the UK electoral scholars

should study and take account of these factors.

Yet this is not the case in the majority of the literature I have come across throughout my studies. Instead, sub-state politics are often explained as a function of state-wide factors and analyses of statewide politics rarely engage with sub-state factors at all (Henderson et al., 2017). In this thesis, I hope to show that this is mistaken. When scholars do not pay adequate attention to sub-state factors, they are effectively fighting an analytical battle with one arm tied behind their back. Examining sub-state political behaviour – and its interaction with statewide politics – reveals a world of new evidence and understanding for political scientists. In the words of Lupia (2006a), “[w]e should focus on the lower levels.” (pp. 220). In an increasingly complex, globalized, and interdependent world, there are very few policy areas that can now be attributed exclusively to just one central level of the state (Marks et al., 2008). This has led to a fundamental transformation in nation-state governance and, crucially, how citizens in these states interact with politics. It is now highly likely that responsibility for policy areas as diverse as healthcare, education, defence, immigration, income tax, and refuse disposal is divided across multiple levels of government operating within different geographical boundaries. This arrangement is commonly referred to as ‘multilevel governance’ (Bache and Flinders, 2005).

Across Europe, the multilevel dynamics of politics have rarely been so visible, making the study of sub-state politics and elections both timely and necessary. In Italy, the success of the former northern Italian regionalist party *Lega Nord* has propelled the party into a ruling coalition with the Five Star Movement, and its leader, Matteo Salvini, to the Deputy Premiership of the country. This has occurred against a backdrop of calls for greater autonomy, and even for independence, for the regions of Lombardy and Veneto (Cento Bull and Gilbert, 2001; Povoledo, 2017). In Spain, a growing sense of Catalan identity led to a unilateral referendum on independence held in Catalonia, and the subsequent forceful reaction by the central Spanish state generated widespread civil unrest in the region (Minder and Barry, 2017). Across the rest of Spain, right-wing populist party VOX has gained

popularity through its hard-line pro-centralization message in response to several years of growing demands for more Catalan autonomy and separation from Spain (Martí, 2013; Elias, 2015; Cramer, 2015).

In the UK, where the majority of this thesis has been written and its subject matter, the multilevel dynamic of politics has never been more apparent. The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum has led to a fundamental reordering of politics not only in Scotland but across the rest of the UK. In Scotland it has redefined the cleavages that drive political behaviour and created new group identities around which voters organise themselves (Fieldhouse and Prosser, 2018). It has also led to seismic shifts in the UK Parliament, with the pro-Independence Scottish National Party becoming the third largest political party in the House of Commons after the 2015 and 2017 statewide elections. In response to the referendum, then-Prime Minister David Cameron introduced ‘English Votes for English Laws’, asserting the UK Parliament’s role as both a UK and ‘English’ institution. This took place against a backdrop of the growing prominence of English national identity in political debate (Henderson et al., 2017). In Wales, the National Assembly has seen a foundational redrawing of its competences, moving from a conferred to a reserved model of government and the devolution of tax powers (Wyn Jones and Scully, 2012; Poole and Ifan, 2019). In Northern Ireland, which has been without a power-sharing executive since January 2017, shifts in demography and identities, and Brexit have resulted in growing support for reunification with the Republic of Ireland (Hayward and McManus, 2018). These dynamics have rarely been so clearly displayed than the outcome of the 2016 Referendum on EU membership, a vote which saw Scotland and Northern Ireland opt to remain, and England and Wales opt to leave. The diverging paths of the UK’s four constituent countries has become such a salient issue that the current UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed himself ‘Minister for the Union’. At no point in the last twenty years has it been so important for scholars of elections to focus on developing a multilevel understanding of politics.

I use this thesis to address a number of separate, but related research questions analyzing the dy-

namics of multilevel electoral behaviour. The first examines what voters know (and don't know) about politics in a multilevel system, and the implications this has on voting behaviour. The second question I address examines the factors that distinguish electoral behaviour in sub-state areas from other territories within a nation-state. The final two research questions focus on vertical and horizontal split-ticket voting.

The rest of this chapter will proceed as follows. First, I outline the broad aims and messages I put forward throughout this thesis. Second, I describe my analytic framework, discussing existing research that focuses on multilevel electoral behaviour. I then discuss the methods, cases, and data that I use throughout the thesis to address my research questions. Finally, I provide an detailed overview of each of the chapters that follow, and their contribution to the field.

1.1.1 Aims

The aims of this thesis are driven at least in part by the experience and political events outlined above. I hope that the research herein stands as a challenge to much of the existing literature on electoral behaviour that fails to take sub-state politics seriously. This literature has been restricted by methodological nationalism: the assumption that the state and statewide factors are the prime 'movers' of political behaviour at elections to all levels of government. This restriction is 'baked in' to methods of data collection and analysis, ensuring that future research maintains and replicates these biases.

This thesis breaks from this literature and it is my ambition to show that the study of sub-state politics is vital to the pursuit of knowledge on elections in multilevel systems. I aim to do so by adopting a multilevel approach: one that does not assume the prominence of attitudes and behaviours at one level over another. Such an approach can offer new information and explanations for electoral behaviour at the sub-state *and* statewide levels. I also hope that this thesis will lead read-

ers to go one step beyond and conclude that it is *impossible* in many cases to understand elections in multilevel systems without taking such an approach. I aim to do this by addressing a series of research questions that I argue emphasise the importance of engaging with sub-state politics, and illustrate the ‘multilevel’ nature of political behaviour. I provide a more detailed overview of these questions later on in this chapter.

By addressing these research questions, I also hope to advance, and in some cases challenge, existing theories and models of political behaviour. For example, by examining the role of sub-state identities in vote choice through a multilevel lens I highlight the substantial influence these identities have prior to evaluations of competency. I also aim to show that these identities act as powerful heuristics that voters use to compensate for low levels of knowledge about sub-state politics. In the next section, I outline the analytic framework upon which this work is built.

1.2 Analytic Framework

1.2.1 The Trend Towards Multilevel Governance

The last forty years have witnessed a trend towards decentralization in nation-states across the world (Hooghe et al., 2010; Schakel and Romanova, 2018). This decentralization has involved the transfer of responsibility for various policy areas away from the central nation-state to sub-state institutions, leading to “the dispersion of authoritative decision-making across multiple territorial levels” (Hooghe, 2001, pp. 12). Germany, Spain, Austria, UK, Denmark, France, Canada, Australia, France, Sweden, Belgium and Norway have all either introduced or increased the number of sub-state bodies and elections to them. These nation-states can be described as *multi-level*, due to the multiple planes of governance created by a transformative shift away from a primarily centralized government organization to a system of interconnected institutions and actors at supra-state, state and sub-state

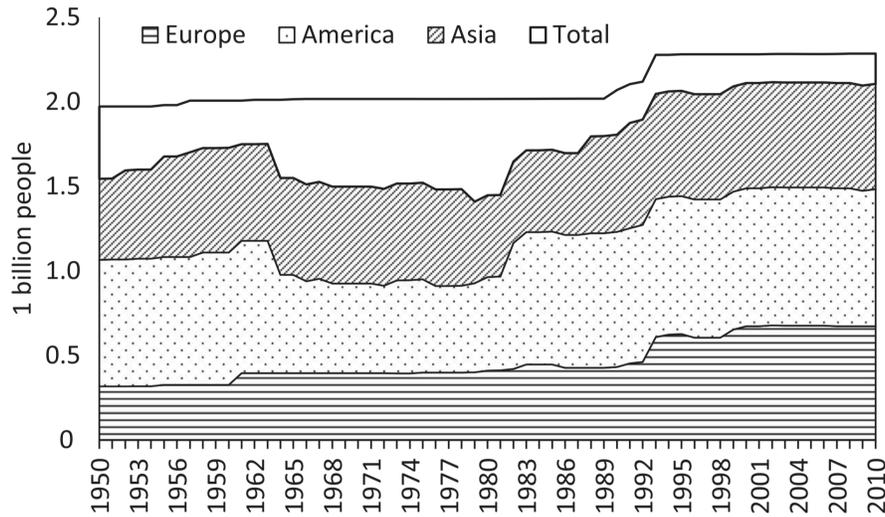


Figure 1.1: Number of people living in territories with directly elected regional assemblies in 81 countries over time
Source: Schakel and Romanova (2018)

levels (Detterbeck, 2012).

This trend is a result of a two, often simultaneous, processes. The first has seen centralized governments respond to a bottom-up process from groups calling for more autonomy from the nation-state (Catalonia, Scotland and Wales for example). A simultaneous process of top-down decentralization has also emerged, with an eye to create a more accountable democracy and (or) freer markets (e.g. in London) (Beramendi, 2009). The scale of decentralization has been described by Schakel and Romanova (2018) and is illustrated in Figure 1.1. Across Europe, America, and Asia, nearly two billion citizens were to some extent governed by sub-state bodies in 2010. In turn, as the number of multi-level systems has increased, the study of these systems has become a growing focus of comparative political research (for example, Rhodes, 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Hough and Jeffery, 2003; Swenden, 2006; Jeffery and Schakel, 2013; Bolleyer et al., 2014; Schakel and Dandoy, 2014; Massetti and Schakel, 2015).

It is important for us as political scientists to realize the impact that shifts in governance can have

on citizens' lives. For a substantial proportion of citizens across the world the politics of the 'everyday' now occur across multiple territorial levels and are not dictated from a singular plane at the level of the state. The institutions responsible for their family's education, their ability to access health-care, the quality of their roads, and the amount of tax they pay are all likely to be determined by politicians and bureaucracies at different levels of government.

This shift has had a transformative effect on democracy in these nation-states. As Figure 1.1 shows, more than nine out of every ten citizens who are able to cast a vote in a statewide election in these areas can now cast a vote in a sub-state election. Spain, Italy, the UK and Belgium have all seen growing independence or sovereignty movements gain ground, in some cases threatening the territorial integrity of the nation-states within which they operate (BBC, 2014, 2017).

1.2.2 Elections in Multi-Level Electoral Systems

Despite the trend of decentralization identified by political scientists, the study of sub-state elections still lags considerably behind that of state-wide elections (Schakel and Romanova, 2018). Both in terms of theory and method, multilevel dynamics are too often included as an afterthought, or excluded altogether. To address this, and to lay out my research framework within which my research takes place, I highlight some of the schools of thought that have developed in the study of multi-level elections. I begin by addressing methodological nationalism, a critique of electoral research that assumes the supremacy of the nation-state, developed by Jeffery and Wincott (2010b). Second, I discuss the second-order election (SOE) hypothesis (Reif and Schmitt, 1980). This is the most commonly known explanation of voting in multilevel systems and the target of Jeffery and Wincott (2010b)'s critique. Finally, I go on to describe what a 'multilevel' understanding of elections might look like.

1.2.3 Methodological nationalism

Sub-state governance and elections are an increasingly common occurrence, yet the scholarship on elections remains focused on elections at the level of the nation-state. [Schakel and Romanova \(2018\)](#) attribute this to *methodological nationalism*, or the assumption that the nation-state is the natural form of social and political organization. The term was originally developed by [Wimmer and Glick Schiller \(2002\)](#) as a critique of the dominant narratives of international relations and migration studies, and applied to the study of elections by [Jeffery and Wincott \(2010b\)](#) (see also [Beck, 2000, 2003; Jeffery and Schakel, 2013](#)). For [Beck \(2002\)](#), methodological nationalism takes the following premises for granted:

“it equates societies with nation-state societies and sees states and their government as the cornerstones of a social sciences analysis. It assumes that humanity is naturally divided into a limited number of nations, which on the inside, organise themselves as nation-states and, on the outside, set boundaries to distinguish themselves from other nation-states. It goes even further: this outer delimitation, as well as the competition between nation-states, represents the most fundamental category of political organisation [and] the social science stance is rooted in the concept of nation-state. It is nation-state outlook on society, politics, law, justice and history, which governs the sociological imagination” (pp. 51-2).

These assumptions have become (or rather always have been) the norm in social sciences, and in particular the study of elections. It is not necessarily a set of conscious biases but is nonetheless entrenched within theories of politics and the ways in which data is collected. In this vein, [Jeffery and Wincott \(2010a\)](#) compare methodological nationalism to [Billig \(1995\)](#)'s conception of Western nationalism in general: “at once forgotten or taken for granted, but also omnipresent and regularly

reinforced at a subliminal level” (pp. 172). They argue that this methodological nationalism has blinkered the social sciences to what is happening within the state at sub-state and regional levels. These regional and sub-state communities “may themselves and from the ‘bottom up’, actively seek to, and succeed in” influencing and changing multi-level relationships, with voters, parties and interest groups pursuing territorial goals that are not consistent with the boundaries of the nation-state (Jeffery, 2006, pp.214). Yet a theoretical and methodological fixation with the nation-state has meant that it has been difficult for social scientists to explore these dynamics. These assumptions have created a historical tendency for the social sciences to overstate the dominance of the central state, even prior to wide-scale decentralization. As I expand upon in Chapter 2, data collection habits that date back over 70 years have made multilevel analysis of voting within nation-states impracticable.

1.2.4 The Second-Order Election Hypothesis

Jeffery and Wincott (2010b)’s critique can be viewed as a direct challenge to the dominant frame of analyses of sub-state elections which assumes the supremacy of state-wide elections. Here, electoral behaviour at the sub-state or supranational levels is assumed to be primarily a function of statewide issues and attitudes. Perhaps the best example of this approach is the second-order election (SOE) theory, an approach to electoral behaviour in multilevel systems that has sought to explain differential patterns of voting between levels of government (Jeffery and Schakel, 2013). Coined by Reif and Schmitt (1980) in their study of elections to the European Parliament, the SOE theory proposes that voting patterns in non-statewide elections are heavily influenced by issues and events at the statewide level, and most importantly, satisfaction with statewide government performance. The evidence often cited in support of this model consists of four contentions (Rohrschneider and Clark, 2007);

1. Relative to statewide elections, voters have a tendency to ‘defect’ from the governing statewide party in favour of opposition parties.

2. Smaller parties will tend to benefit from this defection.
3. The rate of defection from larger ruling parties to small opposition parties is greater during the middle of a parliamentary cycle, when performance evaluations of governing parties tend to be at their lowest.
4. Turnout at non-statewide elections is lower relative to statewide elections.

The mechanisms for these behaviours draw from on a range of existing theories of electoral behaviour and have been examined more thoroughly in subsequent analyses. The model relies heavily on the work of Tufte (1975) and his conception of elections acting as referendums, namely, that when voters are faced with an election that they do not perceive to be important, they use their vote choice to send a message to the governing statewide party (Tufte, 1975; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Oppenhuis et al., 1996; Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017). Depending on the point at which non-statewide election falls in the political business cycle, the governing party will normally perform worse than its performance at statewide elections, with opposition and smaller parties doing better (Soldatos, 1994). The theory approaches differential turnout through a rational choice framework (see Blais, 2000). If we consider the choice to vote as a result of a cost-benefit analysis voters undertake, we can expect higher participation in elections at which voters believe the benefits of voting will outweigh the cost (Downs, 1957). The balance between the costs and benefits of voting is dependent on the probability of a vote having an impact on the result of an electoral contest, as well as the perceived costs of having a candidate not of your choosing win (Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). Mattila (2003) and Pacek et al. (2009) argue that the decision to vote is one that carries a low-cost and low-expected benefits. As a result, it only requires small changes in the cost or benefit to induce a significant change in ballot behaviour (Aldrich, 1993). According to the SOE theory, voters do not perceive European Parliament elections to be as important or relevant as statewide elections, meaning that the perceived benefit achieved by voting would be less than the cost of voting.

The SOE theory also states that the behaviour of elites at these elections are a function of statewide considerations. For example, [Andeweg \(1995\)](#) has argued that political parties face incentives to maintain focus on their statewide policy program, even during elections to non-nation state bodies. This is because they are aware that their performance in government will be judged on their ability to implement their manifesto commitments at the statewide level. This has a knock-on effect on the behaviour of individual citizens: As parties fail to debate the European Union (EU) in its own right and as a separate level of government, the electorate are unlikely to hear information necessary to determining their vote choices, and therefore fall back on statewide events and judgments ([Gabel, 2000](#)).

At European Parliament elections, the SOE theory has been a useful analytical tool through which to explain voting behaviour ([Reif and Schmitt, 1980](#); [Norris and Reif](#); [Marsh, 1998](#); [Majone, 1998](#); [Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999](#); [Rohrschneider, 2002](#); [Rohrschneider and Clark, 2007](#); [Hix and Marsh, 2007](#)). Its success has led to it being applied beyond its original context, moving from supranational to sub-state elections. On the basis of observations of aggregate-level voting data, sub-state elections appear to fit the pattern described by the SOE theory. Like elections to the European Parliament, sub-state elections tend to have a lower turnout than statewide elections², and receive significantly less attention in the media. Small and ethno-regionalist political parties also tend to receive higher vote shares relative to statewide elections (see [Perez-Nievas and Bonet, 2008](#)). Yet analysis of aggregate data has also challenged the ability of the SOE hypothesis to explain voting patterns in sub-state elections. [Hough and Jeffery \(2003\)](#) show that while the SOE certainly has some explanatory power in Germany and selected contests in Spain, the hypothesis falls short in other sub-state areas. In territories historically considered politically and culturally distinct from the rest of the nation-state – such as the Basque Country, Catalonia, Scotland, and Wales – the SOE model has not offered an adequate explanatory device for voting behaviour. They conclude that “regional elections in the historic nationalities at least are clearly not ‘second order’ elections, but rather oper-

ate according to a distinctive region-specific dynamic” (Hough and Jeffery, 2003). Similarly, Dandoy and Schakel (2013) argue that voting behaviour at regional elections moves along a regionalization-nationalization continuum, with more ‘second order’ behaviour occurring in states with higher levels of centralization.

Furthermore, the SOE theory has empirical and theoretical weaknesses that warrant attention. First, the equivalence of European Parliament elections and sub-state elections is questionable. European Parliament elections do not generate a directly elected executive as many sub-state elections do (Perez-Nievas and Bonet, 2008). The European Commission, which serves as the executive of the European Union, is appointed by the European Council and then receives a vote of approval by the European Parliament. The resulting outcome is one that is far less accountable to the citizenry of the European Union than the outcomes of sub-state elections. In addition, it is probable that an electorate’s knowledge of a regional political arena is greater than the European political arena, a contention that I address in Chapter 3. There are many reasons why this may be the case, such as political parties being more willing to enter into discourse of regional politics and policies relating to issues closer to home (Perez-Nievas and Bonet, 2008).

The second, as has already been mentioned, is the assumption of the primacy of statewide elections over ‘less important elections’ (Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017). In particular, the assumption that the effect of elections at the statewide level have a substantial and largely ‘one-way’ impact on elections and behaviours at other levels. The possibility that elections and behaviours at other levels might have a substantial impact on statewide elections is rarely considered or investigated. In this way scholars create a vicious circle: existing theory highlights the importance of statewide elections, encouraging scholars to apply these perspectives to other elections at different levels of government, which further stress the importance of statewide factors. As Jeffery and Wincott (2010b) argue “[the SOE hypothesis] imports the assumption that other electoral competitions are subordinate to statewide politics, [and] pre-empts alternate possibilities”(pp. 179).

The SOE theory has also faced empirical challenges; in particular, its over-reliance on aggregate data to draw inferences about individual-level behaviour. (Schakel and Romanova, 2018). At its basic level, the SOE model is about the motivations and behaviours of individual voters. Aggregate-level analysis simply cannot ascertain why voters behave differently and why turnout is lower at different elections; it can only identify net variations in voting patterns (King, 2013a). Therefore, an individual-level analysis using survey data is required to actually understand the motivations of political behaviour in multilevel systems. When individual-level analysis has been carried out, the SOE theory has often lacked explanatory power. Trystan et al. (2003) argue that a ‘multi-level voting’ approach – whereby it is accepted that some parties will systematically perform better electoral contests at certain levels than others – offered a more powerful explanatory model in explaining the inaugural 1999 elections to the National Assembly for Wales. Similarly, Wyn Jones and Scully (2006) have found that voters in devolved elections are often driven by uniquely Welsh/Scottish issues. More recent work by Scully (2013) has suggested that Scottish issues hold more weight at Scottish elections than Welsh issues do at Welsh elections, consistent with Dandoy and Schakel (2013)³. Although these studies face their own limitations (see Chapter 5) they pose a significant challenge to how sub-state election analysis should be approached.

1.3 A multilevel understanding of elections

This thesis argues that the study of sub-state elections, and indeed of elections in general, requires a different approach. If scholars continue to see sub-state politics as a function of statewide politics, they are closing themselves off to a world of information that can contribute to our understanding of political behaviour at every level. An evolving body of work has developed in recent years that advocates for a multilevel understanding of elections and electoral behaviour (Schakel and Romanova, 2018). In this next section I discuss electoral research that can help us understand the dynamics of

elections in multi-level systems.

1.3.1 Elections in multi-level systems: a two-way street

An essential first step in understanding the dynamics of electoral politics in multilevel systems is to acknowledge the interchange that exists between different levels within a nation-state, and in particular the interchange of behaviours that occurs between elections. Unlike the SOE, which sees electoral behaviour at sub-state elections as a function of statewide issues and attitudes, I argue that we should instead view elections in multi-level systems as a two-way street. This means that scholars of elections should account not only for how statewide factors might influence sub-state politics, but how sub-state factors can have a substantial impact on statewide, and indeed international, political events. To do this, we can draw upon a wide range of evidence from political science. For example, inherent within the theory of electoral cycles is the idea that past elections, and the relative timing of them, have an impact on the electoral outcomes of any other given election. [Schmitt and van der Eijk \(2008\)](#) identify different relationships, or ‘interdependencies’, between elections in multilevel systems:

1. ‘interdependencies between previous [and future elections]’ and;
2. ‘interdependencies between elections at different levels of government.’

In other words, the focus of each election is necessarily defined by the preceding one; the winning party or parties set the policy agenda until the next election at which they must defend these policies against an opposition. By the same logic, each election sets the parameters within which the following election takes place. If it is true that election results at different levels are interdependent of one another, then the motivations and behaviours of voters and politicians are necessarily interdependent also, given that they determine electoral results. Therefore, when examining an election

in a multi-level system of governance, it is necessary to consider how factors at other levels may influence the outcome. In this sense elections at a particular level in multi-level systems should not be viewed as isolated events affected only by factors measured at the level of the nation-state. After all, when government terms of office run to full term (or near full term) it is very likely that any election that precedes another will be one that occurs at a different level, excluding the small number of areas where elections at multiple levels are held concurrently (Belgium and Spain, for example). It is likely to be the case then that one of the largest and temporally relevant influences of voter and elite behaviour will be a recent election that occurred at a different level of government. Once again, we can turn to the literature of electoral cycles for support. This body of work describes a trend observed across a variety of states whereby the fortunes of political parties are influenced in part by where the poll falls in the political business cycle (Tufte, 1975; Soldatos, 1994). By this reading, it is the temporal distance between elections, rather than whether they are first or second-order elections, which plays the largest role in determining how one election impacts upon another: i.e an election held 12 months prior to another election is likely to play a larger role than than an election held 24 months prior (Schakel and Dandoy, 2014)

Contemporary political events across Europe illustrate how sub-state issues and elections have had substantial impact on statewide politics. In the UK, general election campaigns in Scotland and Wales – and indeed areas beyond their borders – are often framed by the previous sub-state election. The 2011 devolved election victory of the SNP, and subsequent Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014, dominated Conservative campaign messaging across the rest of Great Britain at the 2015 statewide general election (see Figure 1.2 for illustrative example) (see Cowley and Kavanagh, 2018).

In Spain, the recent electoral success of right-wing populist party VOX can be viewed as a reactionary response to, among other things, the Catalan independence movement. Santiago Abascal, the party's leader, has vowed to uphold "the unity of Spain and centralization of the state" (Hedgcoe, 2018), whilst Fernandez-Albertos (2019) has argued that "the Catalan issue is what has most



Figure 1.2: Conservative campaign poster, 2015 General Election **Source:** M&C Saatchi, London

motivated their support so far”. There are also recent examples of how sub-state factors have affected not only statewide political events, but international agreements between multiple nation-states. The Canada-Europe Trade Agreement was twice seriously delayed by sub-state interests; first by dairy farmers in Quebec (Johnson et al., 2013), and then by the sub-state Walloon Parliament in Belgium (BBC, 2016). These examples present compelling evidence for a detailed and rigorous examination of two-way interdependencies that exist between elections at different levels of government.

Such evidence of interactions between tiers of government also calls into question the idea that the relationship between statewide and sub-state politics is a one-way relationship. Elections at different levels of government can be used to ‘frame’ future elections. This is particularly important when assessing media coverage of multilevel politics. Prior elections are likely to be used in the media as ‘referendums’ (Simon, 1989) or ‘barometers’ (Anderson and Ward, 1996) that offer a real test of public opinion. Mattila (2003) has argued that ‘politicians, journalists and potential voters show increased interest in voting because [European Parliament] elections serve as markers of party strength in the upcoming [state-wide] elections.’ (pp. 456). It is also important to consider that such influence does not necessarily follow the normal logic of causation, where earlier events are causes and later ones are consequences. Oppenhuis et al. (1996) show that the effect of a statewide

election on a European Parliament election that precedes it, is different in character from one that follows it. Political actors are likely to anticipate future political events like elections and modify their behaviour as a result. I would suggest, then, that the way in which the media cover and frame politics in multilevel systems can therefore have a substantial impact on the political behaviour of citizens.

Another way that elections can be seen as interdependent is through the formation of voting habits. Habit is often cited as a proposed factor that can explain voting behaviour and turnout in particular: people are more likely to vote in the current election if they voted in previous elections (Gerber et al., 2003). Yet it is possible that other aspects of political behaviour can manifest themselves as habits. For example, Shachar (2003) has presented evidence that party choice can also be viewed as a habit. In multilevel systems, this habit can be disrupted if voters cast their ballots for different parties at different levels of government.

The literature identifies two ways in which multilevel systems facilitate this differential voting. The first is that voters choose the party they vote for based on level-specific factors (Trystan et al., 2003; Hough and Jeffery, 2003; Wyn Jones and Scully, 2006; Schakel and Dandoy, 2014; Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017). This theory of electoral behaviour has been referred to as ‘multi-level voting’, and challenges the SOE understanding of electoral behaviour as a reaction to statewide factors (Trystan et al., 2003).

Second, multilevel institutions can also disrupt the voting habits of citizens by creating incentives to cast votes for different parties at different elections. This is particularly relevant in multilevel systems where different electoral systems are used at different levels of government. Electoral systems are frequently cited as having a considerable impact on the behaviours of voters and political parties (Duverger, 1954; Sartori, 1976; Cox, 1997; Farrell, 2001). How a system translates votes into representation shapes how parties coordinate organization and campaign efforts and how voters measure the costs and benefits of voting. When voters do face incentives to vote differently at dif-

ferent levels of government, this can change their future electoral behaviour. Shachar (2003) argues that the act of voting for a party different to the one a voter normally votes for, increases the probability of that voter defecting to another party at subsequent elections. This can create a ‘spill-over’ of knowledge and behaviours from one election to the next, and between levels. Voters will procure an understanding of which parties are competitors and potential challengers; ways of maximizing the influence of their vote; and the political issues that are prevalent in their arena. Future voting will be built upon this knowledge, with knowledge from more recent elections having a larger influencing role. This notion of path dependency – that electoral choices are made utilizing past knowledge and decisions – has been examined in electoral research to a limited extent (see Campbell, 1966; Reif and Schmitt, 1980), but has not yet been analysed to the same extent in multi-level systems.

1.3.2 Summary

Elections at one level cannot be viewed in isolation, and instead should be viewed as points on an electoral continuum. Voters use knowledge from multiple levels of politics when formulating their electoral choices, and are often unaware of doing so, as elites and parties coordinate between levels and voters seek quick sources of information. This means that the behaviours and attitudes of voters are not constant, and are shaped by the level of government most salient at the time and the outcomes of previous elections at any level. Elections in multilevel systems must be viewed in this context. Recent political events in Spain, the UK and Belgium have highlighted that scholars can no longer view sub-state factors as a function of statewide issues. Instead, our analysis of elections in general need to account for both of these factors.

1.4 Method, Case, and Data

In this section I discuss my method and case selection for this thesis, and introduce the data used in the analysis of this dissertation.

1.4.1 Method

The primary source of analysis in this thesis is individual-level survey data. This offers a number of benefits when analyzing the behaviour of large populations. First, survey research allows the researcher to identify characteristics and trends within their sample and generalize these onto the real-world population (Johnston, 2008). Second, the large-scale adoption of internet-based surveys has dramatically reduced the cost of collecting responses, allowing for the collection of larger sample sizes which invariably capture a greater degree of variation within the sample. As many of the most common quantitative analysis techniques such as regression are dependent on variation between observations, this allows for more in-depth analysis of differences between groups in a sample. Third, the anonymity provided by surveys also provides benefits to individual-level research. Research on behaviour is dependent upon subjects providing truthful responses to the best of their ability. When conducted anonymously, respondents face less social pressure to change their answers to be more socially desirable (Tourangeau et al., 2000b).

Finally, as I am interested in the individual motivations and drivers of electoral behaviour in multilevel systems, surveys offer the only feasible way to uncover these individual dynamics among large groups of the population. Aggregate-level data cannot tell us information about individual-level behaviour or motivation due to the problem of ecological inference (King, 2013b). Small- N qualitative research such as focus groups or in-depth interviews also face problems. While they are able to provide much more in-depth insights into the behaviour of certain individuals, we cannot extrapolate

and generalize onto the real population. Survey research offers an ideal middle ground between the two.

1.4.2 Case and Data Selection

Throughout this thesis, I focus on two sub-state areas within the UK: Scotland and Wales. Political decentralization is relatively new to the UK, with devolution only occurring after referendums in 1997. Yet the UK has also been home to long-term territorial heterogeneity when it comes to electoral behaviour, particularly in Scotland and Wales (see, for example, [Blondel, 1963](#); [Hearl et al., 1996](#); [Mitchell, 2009](#)). In this way, the UK offers a unique case where political scientists are able to analyse how voters behave when presented with an entirely new political arena, and a new electoral system to go with it. Yet Scotland and Wales also offer an interesting contrast to one another. Since joining the UK in 1707, Scotland has retained a degree of institutional autonomy, with separate legal and educational systems ([Mitchell, 2009](#)). In contrast, Wales has been assimilated into the institutions of England to a far greater degree ([Balsom et al., 1983](#)). Yet it has maintained a distinct culture, with different religious traditions, and a substantial population of first-language Welsh-speakers. These cultural dynamics have often been cited as mechanisms that amplify the influence of sub-state factors in political behaviour ([Hough and Jeffery, 2003](#); [Jeffery and Hough, 2003](#)).

Scotland and Wales also make for useful cases due to the availability of high-quality survey data: dedicated election surveys have been carried out at every devolved election since 1999. These studies provide political scientists with detailed individual-level data on political attitudes and behaviours, with level-specific questions. The devolved election studies are discussed in more detail in [Chapter 2](#). Outside of the devolved election studies, the British Election Study also offers a useful source of data for voters in Scotland and Wales. The 2014-2017 British Election Study includes booster samples of respondents in Scotland and Wales providing enough observations to carry out detailed analysis

(Fieldhouse et al., 2018).

The main methodological innovation of this thesis is to combine these data, merging the BES with the devolved election studies. By doing so, I create a new multilevel panel that – for the first time in the UK – is able to follow the same voters over time, over multiple election at different levels of government. These data also includes questions specific to both levels of government, which means that the data is less vulnerable to vote recall bias. Previously, if scholars were interested in how a respondent voted at a previous election to a different level of government, they were reliant on respondents being able to accurately and honestly volunteer that information. Yet it is well established in the political science literature that vote recall and vote self-prediction are unreliable (Weir, 1975; Himmelweit et al., 1978; Tourangeau et al., 2000b; Rogers and Aida, 2014). This unreliability is heightened by respondents’ current party preferences, at times of party preference volatility, or when asked proximate to a different election (van Elsas et al., 2013). As Chapter 5 will show, party preferences are not stable between elections to different levels. However, by linking the BES with devolved election studies, previous vote (in addition to numerous other variables of interest) is recorded in the immediate aftermath of the vote, reducing the likelihood of recall bias. It also allows for the combination of attitudes from different levels, meaning that the interaction between attitudes and behaviours between levels can be better understood.

1.5 Overview

This thesis brings together four substantive chapters that analyze different aspects of political behaviour in Scotland and Wales. Separate research questions are addressed in each chapter, yet are unified in their effort to provide answers to questions about individual-level behaviour in multilevel electoral systems. In this section, I provide an overview of each chapter, and address the contributions each make to the wider literature of electoral behaviour.

The first substantive chapter of this thesis is a comprehensive investigation of what citizens in Scotland and Wales know about politics. This represents the first attempt to do so. Political knowledge is assumed to be of central importance to the health of democracy: the better informed citizens are about politics, the better placed they are to express their preferences and attitudes at the ballot box and to hold incumbents to account (Fiorina, 1981). Not only has this assumption underpinned normative theories of democracy for decades (Downs, 1957; Dahl, 1971, 1989, 1998; Held, 1996), but it is also assumed to play a central role in many of our empirical models of voting behaviour (e.g., Inglehart, 1990; Zaller and Feldman, 1992; Freedman et al., 2004). Knowing what voters do or don't know is an important foundation upon which other work can be built. It is of particular interest and importance in a relatively young multilevel system like those of Scotland and Wales. Here, citizen awareness of political facts relating to the sub-state level cannot be taken as a given.

The chapter is split into three substantive sections. The first focuses on descriptive analysis of political knowledge in Scotland and Wales. Landman (2003) argues that systematic research should always begin with good description. As such, I provide a detailed descriptive analysis of all survey questions included in the Scottish and Welsh devolved election studies that test respondent knowledge from 1999-2016. I also investigate whether there are systematic differences in political knowledge levels between Scotland and Wales, something which may have significant implications for comparisons of voting behaviour between the two sub-state areas. Here I establish two trends. The first is that a substantial proportion of Scottish and Welsh citizens are unable to correctly answer questions about politics at the devolved level. The second is the existence of a knowledge gap between Scotland and Wales: Scottish citizens know more about devolved politics than Welsh citizens.

The second section examines the supply of political information in Scotland and Wales, a potential source of the knowledge gap. To do so, I use an entirely unique dataset of over 190,000 newspaper articles between 2000 and 2017. I run a content analysis on the data to identify which level of government the print media talk about when they discuss a prominent devolved policy area: the Na-

tional Health Service (NHS). This analysis – of approximately 96,000,000 words – identifies clear trends in press coverage that may go some way to explain different levels of knowledge in Scotland and Wales. Again, this is a unique contribution to the field, being the largest and most comprehensive analysis of political media coverage carried out in Scotland and Wales. In the third and final section I return to individual-level survey data to examine what differentiates those citizens who know more or less about politics with a series of regression analyses. Here, I make a contribution to the existing literature on political knowledge and elections in multilevel systems by linking national identity and level-specific media consumption to what citizens do or do not know. This is the first time that sub-state specific factors have been shown to have an impact on levels of political knowledge.

Chapter 4 addresses Scotland and Wales' territorial heterogeneity, relative to England. Work by electoral scholars has long recognized that Scotland and Wales are distinct political areas, even in the decades prior to devolution (Blondel, 1963; Butler and Stokes, 1969; Hearl et al., 1996; Trystan et al., 2003; Johns et al., 2010; Scully, 2016). This distinctiveness has been defined by the strength of the Labour Party, the weakness of the Conservative Party, and the significant presence of left-of-centre ethno-regionalist parties (the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru).

Existing explanations of voting behaviour have not adequately addressed the mechanisms for this distinctiveness. I argue that an explanation for this can be uncovered by examining the factors further back in the funnel of causality, specifically national identity. I start with a conception of political party competition in Scotland and Wales occurring between 'blocs' of parties: a left-of-centre bloc and a right-of-centre bloc. I then examine which factors can predict which bloc of parties a voter chooses to vote for at three elections: the 2015 UK general election, the 2016 devolved elections, and the 2017 UK general election.

To do this, I combine individual-level survey data from the 2014-2017 British Election Study (Fieldhouse et al., 2018) and the 2016 devolved election studies (Henderson et al., 2016; Scully et al.,

2016). This creates the opportunity to follow the same individuals across these three elections. Combining election surveys is a new approach that has not previously been used in the UK, and is also relatively unique in the study of multilevel electoral behaviour more generally. My results show that national identity is a powerful explanatory tool for distinguishing between the two blocs of voters. The implications of this are twofold. First, it confirms the role of sub-state identities in influencing and determining vote choice at statewide elections. It therefore establishes the need for electoral scholars to account for multilevel factors in analyses of voting behaviour, even when examining an isolated electoral event at a different level of government.

Second, the results have more specific implications for the study of political behaviour in the UK. As a nation-state, the UK is currently undergoing a period of seismic constitutional flux and uncertainty, accompanied by increasing social, political, and geographic polarization. If we are to understand long-term political change in the UK, it is vital to understand where diverging political attitudes are generated, and how they are solidified into political behaviours.

In Chapter 5, I focus on differential voting between levels of government. In other words, why do some voters vote for different parties at elections to different levels of government? My starting point here is the Multilevel Voting (MLV) hypothesis which postulates that voters in multilevel systems use different logics to make vote choices at elections to different levels of government (Trystan et al., 2003). Jeffery and Hough (2003) argue that this is because of the presence of ‘historic nationalities’ or the the existence of strong sub-state identities.

Yet Jeffery and Hough (2003)’s hypothesis has never been tested at the individual-level; it is instead a hypothesis derived from observing aggregate-level vote returns. This is an ecological fallacy: individual-level behaviours (i.e. vote choice) cannot be inferred from aggregate-level patterns. It also fails to acknowledge that national identity within sub-state territories is heterogeneous. Some voters will identify with a sub-state identity, others will identify with a statewide identity, and some will identify with both or neither. *A priori*, we would expect to see considerable variation between indi-

viduals in their propensity to vote for different parties at different levels of government, conditional on the national identities with which they identify.

This chapter puts this ‘historic nationalities’ hypothesis to the test at the individual-level: that voters with strong levels of attachment to a sub-state identity will be more likely to switch the party they vote for at different levels of government. For this analysis, I use Wales alone as a case, owing to the availability of data. Again, I combine observations from the BES and WES to create a panel of respondents across three elections at different levels. I find that national identity does indeed play a role in differential voting in Wales, but only among certain groups of voters. This is the first analysis which has shown national identity to influence differential voting at the individual-level, and provides an important explanatory mechanism for proponents of MLV. It also sets the foundations of future comparative analysis, providing testable hypotheses that can be adapted across cases.

Chapter 6 addresses the phenomena of voters casting ‘split-tickets’ at Scottish and Welsh devolved elections. At these elections, voters use the additional member system (AMS), which provides voters with two separate ballot papers, one with a list of parties, and one with a list candidates. The candidate ballot elects members via a plurality vote from constituencies, whilst the party list ballot elects members on a compensatory basis using the D’Hondt formula from larger geographic areas referred to as regions. This means that voters are able to vote for two different parties at the same election, or ‘split’ their ticket.

This behaviour has been well-documented and explored in numerous democracies that use mixed electoral systems across the world (see [Karp et al., 2002](#); [Plescia, 2016](#); [Jesse, 1988](#); [Helmke, 2009](#)) but there has been very little focus on ticket-splitting in the UK, with the exception of two studies which focus on a single election: [Curtice \(2006c\)](#) and [Carman and Johns \(2010\)](#). In this chapter, I use survey data from multiple devolved elections to examine the motivations that drive split-ticket voting. Specifically, I am interested in whether strategic motivations drive split-ticket voting at devolved elections.

The analysis has several implications for the study of electoral behaviour in Scotland and Wales, and in a wider multilevel context. In Scotland and Wales, the findings call into question citizens understanding of the electoral system and their ability to maximize their preferences at elections. More widely, the findings raise questions about the role of institutions in influencing vote choice in multilevel elections. The analysis shows that, under certain circumstances, the Scottish and Welsh electoral systems can encourage voters to vote for two different parties at devolved elections.

Returning to the central message of this thesis, it is important to draw from the literature is that no election in Scotland, Wales, or anywhere else occurs in a vacuum. Elections at one level cannot be viewed in isolation, and instead should be viewed as points on an electoral continuum. Voters use knowledge from multiple levels of governance when formulating their electoral choices and are often unaware of doing so as elites and parties coordinate between levels and voters seek quick sources of information. To answer the questions of how and why voting behaviour differs between levels the answer must be firmly based in an understanding of these facts.

2

The Devolved Election Studies

2.1 Introduction

Before presenting my substantive chapters, I think it is first appropriate to provide an overview of the data I use throughout. The primary sources of survey data used in this thesis are the Scottish and Welsh Election Studies – referenced throughout this thesis as SES and WES respectively – which I collectively refer to as the devolved election studies. In total, ten election studies and four referendum studies of voting age adults have been carried out in Scotland and Wales between 1997-2016 (including the 1997 devolution referendums).

Whilst this tally could arguably be extended even further to include the 1979 Scottish and Welsh Referendum studies, for the purpose of this thesis, I am only interested in the political behaviours and attitudes of citizens in the ‘Age of Devolution’: from 1997 to the present day. Regular election surveys have not been carried out in Northern Ireland, and as such are not included in this analysis.

In this chapter, I provide a descriptive overview of origin of the studies, their methodologies and themes, and conclude by offering thoughts on the future of the devolved election studies.

2.2 Origins

Prior to the devolved election studies, the British Election Study (BES) had served as the longest running – and for a considerable time, the only – source of survey data available for the study of political behaviour in Great Britain.⁴ Founded by David Butler and Donald Stokes in 1963, the study borrowed heavily from the ‘Michigan model’ of election studies, which Donald Stokes himself had co-authored (see [Campbell et al., 1960](#)). Drawing on the socio-psychological focus of the *American Voter*, the initial British Election Studies were designed with a focus on Britain-wide class voting, reflecting the dominance of theory that identified socio-political cleavages as the dominant driver of political behaviour in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s ([Butler and Stokes, 1969](#); [Crewe et al., 1977](#); [Curtice, 2006a](#)). Other social cleavages such as territorial dimensions were not considered in the survey design, although these omissions were later acknowledged by Butler and Stokes in their seminal work *Political Change in Britain* ([Butler and Stokes, 1969](#)).

Among UK electoral surveys, the BES is unrivalled in terms of the insights into political behaviour and attitudes in Britain yielded from its data. Yet design features that can be traced back to its origin have restricted the analytic reach of investigations since, namely through the production and reproduction of survey samples ill-equipped to facilitate analysis of sub-state dynamics. This is despite substantial territorial heterogeneity across the UK noted as early as [Blondel \(1963\)](#). As [Figure 2.1](#) illustrates, it was not until 2010 that the BES Scotland sub-sample rose to 1,000 respondents. The Scottish samples faced further limitations in that sampling did not extend above the main population belt until 1992. As [Jowell et al. \(1993\)](#) describe in the explanatory notes of the 1983-1987 BES, “electors in [...] the Scottish Highlands were excluded from the sampling frame [...] because the small and scattered population could not be interviewed cost effectively.” (pp. 14). This had been the case at every previous BES ([Butler and Stokes, 1969](#)).

In the face of these obstacles, a number of academics based in Scotland and Wales began to run

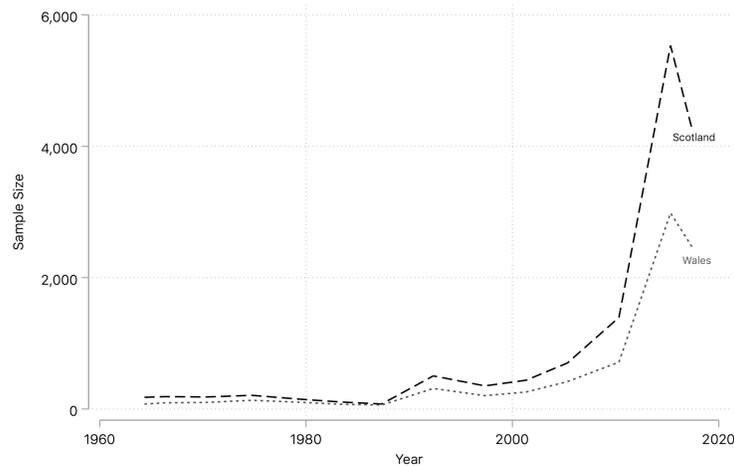


Figure 2.1: BES sample sizes in Scotland and Wales, 1964-2017

Scotland- and Wales-only surveys. In 1979 teams of political scientists in Scotland and Wales carried out election studies in the aftermath of the first referendums on devolution in 1979 (Miller and Brand, 1981; Madgwick and Balsom, 1980). Scholars in Scotland also ran a post-election survey on a Scotland-only sample in the aftermath of the 1992 UK general election (Brand and Mitchell, 1994). Although these efforts were ‘one-off’ studies, they provided the blueprint for the first devolved election studies that followed.

The devolved election studies officially began in 1997 in the lead-up to the Scottish and Welsh referendums. The project was initially a collaboration between the Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends (CREST – now National Centre for Social Research or NatCen), Anthony Heath at the University of Oxford, and a number of political scientists in Scotland, namely David McCrone, Lindsay Paterson and John Curtice. Welsh involvement in the study arrived relatively late in the game. Unlike Scotland, which had a number of academics with decades of experience of survey design and application, Wales was largely lacking similar expertise. As has been the case in the establishment of many election studies round the world (see E. Miller, 2006, for a discussion of

the origins of the American National Election Studies), the team was put together largely through happenstance. It was a chance phone call from Heath to Richard Wyn Jones at University of Wales, Aberystwyth – at the time working on Critical Theory in International Security Studies – that led to the establishment of the Welsh wing of the Referendum Study.

2.3 Survey Design

The various authors and contributors to the inaugural devolved election studies (listed in Table 2.1) faced a unique obstacle that the vast majority of statewide election studies had never faced: no devolved elections had yet taken place in Scotland or Wales. The institutions of interest - the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales - did not yet exist, and neither did a list of their responsibilities and functions. At the inaugural elections in 1999, voters had very little knowledge of what these institutions might look like, what they were able to do, how the electoral system worked and, – in an election where there were no incumbents – were generally unaware of the candidates beyond their party cues (see Chapter 3).

The investigators were largely in the same position. This meant that the early authors had to anticipate the issues and drivers of voting at the first devolved elections, without ever having seen one take place. As such they relied heavily upon the British Election Studies - studies that the majority of the original investigators had led since 1983. Not only did this path dependency exert influence on the academic output from these studies, it also influenced later studies as the desire for comparability across studies meant that the focus of the early studies fed into subsequent ones. Notably, the 1999 Welsh Election Study abstract stated that the survey was “designed in the tradition of British General Election Studies and in close conjunction with the 1999 ‘Scottish Social Attitudes/Scottish Parliamentary Election Study’ ” (Heath et al., 2000)

Much of the initial process of deciding the themes and topics that would be included in the initial

referendum studies took place at Nuffield College, Oxford. The teams were keen to make the studies in Scotland and Wales comparable throughout and the majority of the questions were therefore asked in both countries. The design was also heavily influenced by previous questions asked in Scotland and Wales. The Scottish survey was shaped significantly by earlier work initially in the Scottish Cross-section of the 1974 British Election Study and carried on by William Miller and Jack Brand on the 1979 Scottish Election Study (Miller and Brand, 1981). These in turn helped shape the 1992 Scottish Election Study carried out by James Mitchell and Jack Brand which was administered as an ‘add-on’ to the 1992 British Election Study (Jowell et al., 1993). In Scotland, much effort has been made to maintain the substantial time-series of identical questions since at least 2007, enabling the SES to assess change over time for a number of voters in Scotland across potentially one of the most turbulent time in its political history. More recently, waves of the Scottish Election Study have been conducted in sync with major UK political events for a number of reasons: firstly to keep the quasi-panel and question time-series going, and secondly to address areas of public opinion or politics in Scotland that the British Election Study does not capture adequately.

In order to create something of a time-series for survey data collected in Wales, questions were recycled from the 1979 Welsh Referendum Study and from the only serious attempt to study electoral behaviour in Wales: Balsom et al. (1983). Creating a nascent time-series proved valuable as scholars were faced with the challenge of working out what had changed since the monumental 1979 Devolution Referendum defeat in Wales, where nearly 4 out of 5 voters rejected devolution, to the 1997 referendum at which a slim majority of voters voted in favour of the establishment of a National Assembly for Wales (Wyn Jones and Scully, 2012).

The full list of studies conducted with the aim of exploring electoral behaviour in Scotland and Wales is illustrated in Table 2.1. Since their inception, the number of scholars involved with election studies has expanded considerably, each bringing their own ideas and contributions. This table reflects a pattern observed in much of the academic work on these two nations, with Scotland’s elec-

tion study team having varied to a much greater extent than that in Wales, where Richard Wyn Jones was involved in every study from 1997-2011, and Roger Awan-Scully involved in every study from 2007-2016.

Table 2.1

Country	Year	Name	Principal Investigators	Company	Survey Type
Scotland	1997	Scottish and Welsh Referendum Studies	1. Roger Jowell (Social and Community Planning Research), 2. Anthony Heath (University of Oxford), 3. John Curtice (University of Strathclyde), 4. Richard Wyn Jones (University of Wales, Aberystwyth)	Social and Community Planning Research	F2F, Self-completion
Scotland	1997	Scottish Referendum Survey, 1997	1. David Denver (Lancaster University), 2. James Mitchell (University of Strathclyde), 3. Charles Pattie (University of Sheffield), 4. Hugh Bochel (University of Lincolnshire)	University of Strathclyde & Lancaster University	Postal Survey
Scotland	1999	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 1999	1. David McCrone (University of Edinburgh), 2. Lindsay Paterson (University of Edinburgh), 4. John Curtice (University of Strathclyde), 5. Ben Seyd (University College London), 6. Alison Park (National Centre for Social Research)	National Centre for Social Research	F2F
Scotland	2003	2003 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	National Centre for Social Research	National Centre for Social Research	F2F & Self-completion questionnaire
Scotland	2007	Scottish Election Study, 2007	1. Rob Johns (University of Strathclyde), 2. James Mitchell (University of Strathclyde), 3. David Denver (Lancaster University), 4. Charles Pattie (University of Sheffield)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel
Scotland	2011	Scottish Election Study, 2011	1. Chris Carman (University of Strathclyde), 2. James Mitchell (University of Edinburgh), 3. Rob Johns (University of Essex)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel

Continued on next page

Scotland	2014	Scottish Referendum Study 2014	1. Ailsa Henderson (University of Edinburgh), 2. Christopher Carman (University of Glasgow), 3. James Mitchell (University of Strathclyde), 4. Rob Johns (University of Essex)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel
Scotland	2016	Scottish Election Study, 2016	1. Ailsa Henderson (University of Edinburgh), 2. Alan Convery (University of Edinburgh), 3. Chris Carman (University of Glasgow), 5. Rob Johns (University of Essex)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel
Wales	1997	Scottish and Welsh Referendum Studies, 1997	1. Roger Jowell (Social and Community Planning Research), 2. Anthony Heath (University of Oxford), 3. John Curtice (University of Strathclyde), 4. Richard Wyn Jones (University of Wales, Aberystwyth)	Social and Community Planning Research	F2F, Self-completion
Wales	1999	Welsh Assembly Election Study, 1999	1. Richard Wyn Jones (University of Wales, Aberystwyth), 2. Anthony Heath (University of Oxford), 3. Ben Seyd (University College London), 4. John Curtice (University of Strathclyde)	National Centre for Social Research	F2F, RDD, clustered phone & F2F samples
Wales	2003	Welsh Life and Times Study (Welsh Assembly Election Study), 2003	1. Richard Wyn Jones, (University of Wales, Aberystwyth), 2. Anthony Heath (University of Oxford)	National Centre for Social Research	F2F, Phone if interviewed in Welsh

Continued on next page

Wales	2007	Welsh Life and Times Study (Welsh Assembly Election Study), 2007	1. Richard Wyn Jones (University of Wales, Aberystwyth), 2. Roger Scully (University of Wales), 3. Miranda Phillips (National Centre for Social Research)	National Centre for Social Research	F2F & Self-completion questionnaire
Wales	2011	Welsh Referendum Study, 2011	1. Roger Scully (Cardiff University), 2. Richard Wyn Jones (Cardiff University)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel
Wales	2011	Welsh Election Study, 2011	1. Roger Scully (Aberystwyth University), 2. Richard Wyn Jones (Cardiff University)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel
Wales	2016	Welsh Election Study, 2016	1. Roger Scully (Cardiff University), 2. David Cutts (University of Bath), 3. Luke Sloan (Cardiff University), 4. Peter Burnap (Cardiff University), 5. Matthew Williams (Cardiff University), 6. Richard Wyn Jones (Cardiff University)	YouGov plc	Internet Panel

Table 2.1: The Devolved Election Studies. NB: F2F = Face-to-Face.

Table 2.2 illustrates clearly that the devolved election studies have increased their complexity and reach substantially since the initial referendum studies were conducted. Whilst sample size in both Scotland and Wales started from a base of 676 in 1997, the 2016 election studies had sample sizes of over 4,000 in both countries. The studies have also seen a sharp increase in the number of questions respondents are asked, allowing for a much more detailed analysis not only of vote choice, but of a number of political and social attitudes and behaviours.

The initial studies followed a Michigan-style framework, namely a single cross-section survey, with data collected via face-to-face interviews from a random sample of the population. This format was used by the election studies of 1999 and 2003 in Scotland and between 1999-2007 in Wales. The 2007 Scottish Election Study was the first to introduce multiple cross-sections – providing the devolved electoral studies with a better tool through which to study causality. This study also included an additional ‘post-post’ wave to identify the unique ballot problems that occurred during the 2007 SP elections (see [Hepburn, 2010](#)). 2007 was the first time the devolved election studies were carried out online by YouGov, a move that allowed for larger samples to be surveyed and a greater number of variables to be explored. The 2011 Welsh Referendum Study followed suit, meaning that all devolved election studies since 2011 have been carried out by YouGov using their respondent panel.

Table 2.2

Name	Design	Sample Size	Response Rate	# of Variables
Scottish and Welsh Referendum Studies, 1997	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	676	59%	358
Scottish Referendum Survey, 1997	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	2,335	52%	80
Scottish and Welsh Referendum Studies, 1997	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	686	60%	358

Continued on next page

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 1999	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	1,482	59%	440
Welsh Assembly Election Study, 1999	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	1,256	43%	536
2003 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	1,508	57%	513
Welsh Life and Times Study (Welsh Assembly Election Study), 2003	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	988	63%	369
Scottish Election Study, 2007	Three cross-sections (pre-, post- and post2-election). Small panel including 2007 respondents	1,872	72%*	536
Welsh Life and Times Study (Welsh Assembly Election Study), 2007	One-time cross-section (Post-election)	884	54%	353
Scottish Election Study, 2011	Two cross-sections (pre- & post-election)	2,046	N/A	465
Welsh Referendum Study, 2011	Two cross-sections (Pre- and post-election)	2,569	N/A	595
Welsh Election Study, 2011	Two cross-sections (Pre- and post-election)	1,943	N/A	637
Scottish Referendum Study 2014	Three cross-sections (pre- & post-referendum, 1 year post-referendum)	4,849	N/A	859

Continued on next page

Scottish Election Study, 2016	Three cross-sections (pre-, post-elections+additional post-GE17), Panel including 2014 & 2011 respondents	4,074	N/A	791
Welsh Election Study, 2016	Two cross-sections (Pre- and post-election), Rolling campaign cross-section, Expert survey, 12 month social media monitoring, Panel including 2011 respondents	4,163	N/A	1,596

Table 2.2: The Devolved Election Studies Summary Statistics. NB: YouGov use an online panel of pre-registered respondents for surveys and as such response rate is not applicable to these studies.

The 2016 Welsh Election Study also saw the introduction of a ‘rolling campaign wave’ – also called a rolling cross-section or rolling ‘thunder’ wave – something first employed by the 1984 American National Election Study and a defining characteristic of the Canadian Election Study (Brady and Johnston, 1987; Bartels, 1987, 1988; Johnston and Brady, 2002). The campaign wave takes multiple ‘snapshots’ of a small subset of the larger sample at more regular time points throughout the campaign. In the case of the 2016 WES a random sample of roughly 100 respondents from the larger panel were interviewed every day for the final 30 days of the campaign. This attempts to respond to some concerns regarding causal inference that have troubled Michigan-style election studies (see, for example, Curtice, 2002) as it enables researchers to link responses to external information sources or events occurring throughout the campaign period such as debates, scandals, or particular news stories (Johnston and Brady, 2002).

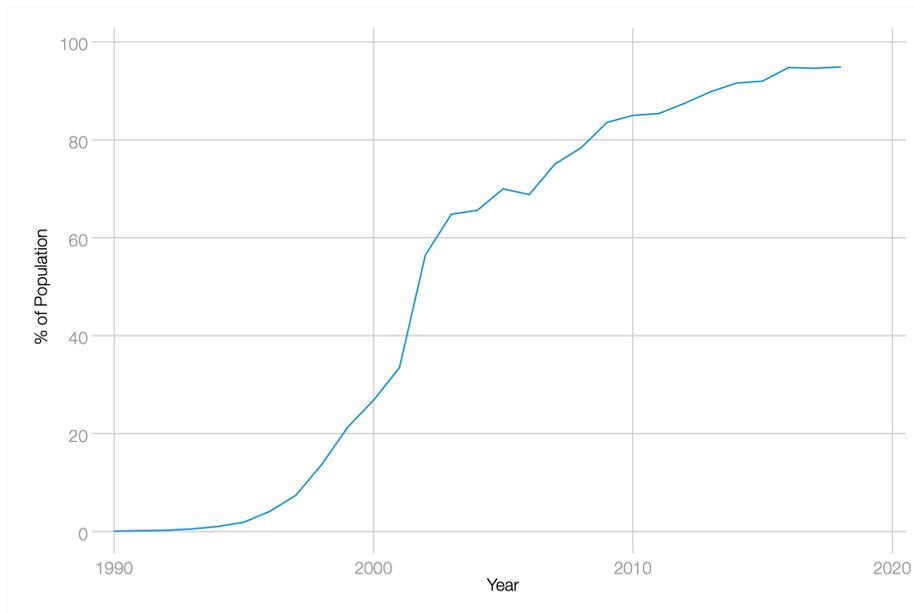


Figure 2.2: Individuals in the UK using the Internet (% of population). Source: World Bank.

2.4 The Consequences of Changing Survey Design

In addition to describing how the design of the devolved election studies has evolved over time, it is necessary to discuss how these changes impact upon the inferences that can be drawn from these data. Two changes stand out in this regard: the move from smaller N probability sampling techniques to larger N non-probability sampling, and the mode switch from mostly face-to-face interviewing to online polls. Non-probability sampling has become increasingly prevalent in the social sciences in the past two-decades, going hand-in-hand with the switch in survey mode to online. As such, I discuss these two changes in tandem.

The switch from probability to non-probability samples can be thought of as a something of a trade-off. Probability samples, such as those used by the SES from 1997-2003 and by the WES from 1997-2007, have for many decades been the method used by survey researchers to make reliable and

accurate inferences to broader populations (Baker et al., 2013). One reason for this is that surveys carried out via probability samples are considered to have high external validity (Morton and Williams, 2010). Practically, they are the closest most research can get to a truly random sample, where every individual in a target population has an equal probability of being selected.

Yet for all the benefits probability sampling brings, in practice it is costly and time-intensive. Face-to-face – the most common place mode of interview for most major surveys⁵ – interviewing relies on teams of interviewers often travelling across considerable physical distances to interview respondents that may not be available. While random digit dial (RDD) surveys reduced this cost somewhat, the decline of landline telephone use⁶ and the rise of caller ID with increased mobile phone use has meant that this mode is increasingly subject to non-response bias (Brehm, 1993; Curtin et al., 2005; Ansolabehere and Schaffner, 2014).

This has occurred simultaneously with a rapid increase in the number of individuals with regular access to the internet (see Figure 2.2). Online surveys, most commonly conducted among a panel of respondents who have been recruited by survey companies, are considerably less costly than other survey modes due to the automation of collection, cleaning and coding of data (Brick, 2011). Once the sample is collected, *post hoc* weights are applied to reproduce known parameters of the target population. This reduction in cost offers a number of advantages beyond financial saving. Much larger samples can be collected allowing for more robust analyses of sub-sections of society, or larger booster samples of hard-to-reach groups can also be collected more readily. Table 2.2 illustrates this clearly: both the sample size and the number of variables increased considerably in election studies carried out online.

Despite the added cost efficiency provided by online opt-in panels, they do not have the same benefits as probability-sampling. Opt-in panels are rarely representative of the target population, especially when researchers are interested in more than just a handful of variables. Samples derived from these panels have frequently been found to be more politically engaged, better educated, and

wealthier than the median citizen (Baker et al., 2010). Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that *post hoc* weighting rarely compensates fully for sample composition biases (Dever et al., 2008; Tourangeau et al., 2013). As a consequence, researchers cannot have the same confidence in their inferences that come with probability samples. As Baker et al. (2010) noted in the AAPOR Task Force on Online Panels, researchers “should avoid non-probability opt-in panels when a key research objective is to accurately estimate population values . . . [and] claims of ‘representativeness’ should be avoided when using these sample sources.” As most political science research in particular aims to infer findings from sample to a larger target population (e.g. the electorate) this weakened external validity is a considerable concern.

As the use of online surveys and sampling has developed, more recent research has begun to suggest that inferences from online opt-in samples can still add considerable value. In a comparison of survey modes Ansolabehere and Schaffner (2014) found that a ‘carefully executed opt-in Internet panel’ produces estimates that are as accurate as RDD surveys and had a total survey error similar to that of a postal survey which used a random sample of residential addresses. Similarly the AAPOR Task Force on Non-Probability Sampling concluded that non-probability samples can be appropriate for statistical inference when underpinned by sound theoretical and modelling assumptions (Baker et al., 2013).

2.5 Themes

Like all election surveys, the devolved election studies have consistently included questions on topics that are understood to be particularly salient to voters. These topics can be grouped into three broad categories: national identity, voting motivations, and legitimacy.⁷ In the remainder of this section I provide an outline of the central themes of the studies.

2.5.1 National Identity

The devolved election studies have advanced the study of national identity in the UK more than any other one topic, both in the analysis derived from the studies and the effect they have had on other surveys. Since 1999 each survey has included at least three – and often many more – questions about a respondents’ national identity. The inclusion of these variables has consequently shaped the focus of research of political behaviour and attitudes in Scotland and Wales. Much of the work produced has illustrated the importance of national identity in political attitudes and behaviours, uncovering relationships that had rarely been touched upon pre-devolution. Previous studies using ‘British’ data essentially meant a focus on England, where the vast majority of constituencies, voters, and candidates are based. This meant that the study of national identities were largely confined to qualitative studies or one-off surveys (e.g. [Budge and Urwin, 1966](#); [Balsom et al., 1983](#); [Bennie et al., 1997b](#)).

Early scholarship on the devolved election studies showed national identity to be an important variable that could be used to explain a host of political behaviours. [Curtice \(1999\)](#) found national identity to provide an explanation of the apparent differing levels of enthusiasm and support for devolution in both Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, support for the Scottish Parliament was highest among those who identified as more Scottish than British, with a parallel relationship observed in Wales for Welsh identifiers. British identifiers in Wales were found to be more sceptical of devolution compared to British identifiers in Scotland which was a partial explanation for the differing results.

[Curtice \(1999\)](#) also found little support for the notion that people in Scotland were more Scottish than people in Wales were Welsh, it was just that the different nationalities in each country behaved in different ways (see also [Wyn Jones, 2001](#)). National identity also seemed to play a role in how optimistic people were about the impact that devolution would make on their lives. In Scotland, re-

spondents of all national identities perceived the impact to be the same (i.e. those who identified as either more British or more Scottish thought that devolution would have similar impact). In Wales, attitudes were this was again highly stratified by national identity: people who identified as more Welsh believed devolution would have a much greater impact than those who identified as more British (Curtice, 1999; Wyn Jones and Lewis, 1999; Bromley, 2003).

Support for political parties in Wales and Scotland has also been historically stratified along lines of national identity. In Wales Wyn Jones et al. (2002) identified that Plaid Cymru support was disproportionately drawn from those who identify as Welsh not British; whereas the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' support was overwhelmingly drawn from voters who identified as more British. Labour was the only party to draw mostly proportional support from across national identity groups; perhaps helping to explain their unusually consistent success in elections in Wales. The same authors frame Conservative party support as inextricably linked to notions of 'Englishness', a claim similar to that made by Mitchell (1990b) in Scotland. These patterns have existed for decades, leading Butler and Stokes to pronounce Wales as "the most anti-Conservative area in all of Britain" (Butler and Stokes, 1969, pp. 171).

Analysis in Scotland has been more reluctant to use national identity as an explanatory variable in explaining party support or vote choice. For example, Paterson (2006)'s *Sources of Support for the SNP* neglects to look at the association between SNP support and national identity. Despite this reluctance, national identity has continued to play an important role in explaining political attitudes and behaviours in Scotland, particularly constitutional references. For example, those who feel more Scottish are more likely to favour more powers for the Scottish Parliament or independence, and those who identify as more British are considerably more likely to favour the status quo (Johns et al., 2010; Henderson et al., 2015). These findings have taken on particular importance in the wake of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, where vote choice was heavily split along lines of national identity (Sharp et al., 2014).

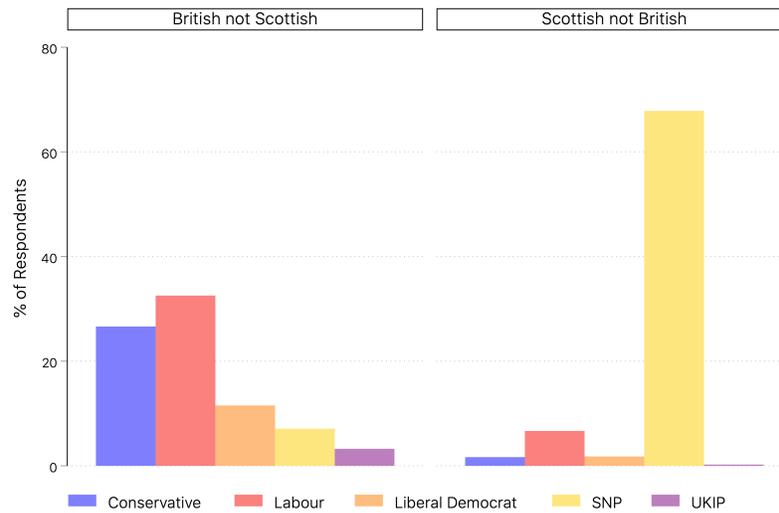


Figure 2.3: 2015 UK General Election vote choice in Scotland by national identity. Scottish not British N = 839, British not Scottish N = 338. **Source:** SES 2016

The recent electoral dominance of the SNP has also been shown to be correlated with national identity (Johns and Mitchell, 2016), with Figure 2.3 illustrating the strength of this relationship using 2016 SES data. Johns and Mitchell (2016) also argued, however, that the key to the SNP’s electoral success was their ability to gather votes from groups that also felt a sense of British identity.

2.5.2 Voting motivations

Beyond the influence of national identity the devolved election studies have brought a new understanding of the mechanics of vote choice in Scotland and Wales. Early scholarship on political behaviour in Scotland and Wales had focused on sociological approaches to explaining vote choice; whereby a voter’s social background largely determines the party they vote for (e.g. Budge and Urwin, 1966; Balsom et al., 1983; Bennie et al., 1997b). In particular, these studies focused on factors unique to Scotland and Wales, such as religion and sectarianism in Scotland, and the Welsh language

in Wales.

As the sociological model began to be challenged more broadly by literature on economic voting (e.g. Fiorina, 1981; Sanders et al., 1987; Lewis-Beck, 1990; Clarke et al., 2004) it also came under scrutiny in Scotland and Wales. In their analysis of the 2007 Scottish Parliament election Johns et al. (2009b) argued that vote choice at this election could be better explained by so-called valence or competency measures. This was further supported by a more detailed analysis in *Voting for a Scottish Government* where the authors use the 2007 SES to show that Scottish voters saw the SNP as the most competent at dealing with Scottish issues (see also Johns, 2011b; Johns et al., 2013a; Carman et al., 2014). In Wales, Scully and Wyn Jones (2012) also illustrated that the 2011 Welsh election could be better explained using valence evaluations of party and leader competence (see also Scully, 2013; Scully and Larner, 2017).

2.5.3 Legitimacy

At the initial devolved elections, an understandable focus of political scientists was to understand the perceived legitimacy of new devolved institutions. How would voters receive the establishment of new legislatures and executives? This was a particular concern in Wales where the result was very close on a low turnout (Wyn Jones and Lewis, 1999). The result led Taylor et al. (1999) to comment that:

“...‘Welsh’ Wales may have backed devolution, ‘British’ Wales still appeared to want to retain its links with Westminster. Far from giving the new assembly the legitimacy that would have derived from a clear popular vote, the referendum simply exposed a fault line at the heart of Welsh society” (pp. xxviii).

Subsequent evidence pointed to a rapid change in attitudes post-1999. Scully et al. (2004) examined whether low voter turnout at the inaugural 1999 Welsh election was a sign that the Welsh elec-

torate did not view the institution as legitimate. While they did find evidence of a lack of interest, they found little support for abolishing it. In the two decades since the inaugural elections in Wales there has been ‘steadily declining opposition to devolution’ (Wyn Jones and Scully, 2012, pp. 165). Indeed, Wyn Jones and Scully (2012) argued that the result of the 2011 Welsh Referendum – which asked voters in Wales whether the Assembly should be granted law-making powers – confirmed that devolution(and the institutions associated with it) were now the accepted form of government in Wales. In particular, they noted that groups and areas originally opposed to devolution in 1979 and 1997 were now broadly supportive of it (Wyn Jones and Scully, 2003, 2012).

In Scotland, legitimacy was seen as less of an immediate concern since the 1997 referendum produced a large vote in favour on a higher turnout than in Wales. Yet low voter turnout at the 2003 Scottish election – less than 50% – still gave rise to concern among those who wished devolution to be a permanent feature of the Scottish political landscape. While a similar drop in turnout at the 2001 UK General Election implies that voter disillusionment with devolution is unlikely to be the cause (Bromley and Curtice, 2003), the SES did produce considerable evidence of voters being disappointed with devolution and the Scottish Parliament (Bromley and Curtice, 2003; Bromley, 2003; Park and McCrone, 2006). This disappointment – which could equally be labelled as poor expectation management – during the first two terms of the Scottish parliament may have played a role in the unexpected rise and success of the SNP.

Political scientists have also examined how citizens think about the divergence in levels of government responsibility between Scotland and Wales. In the wake of the 2003 devolved elections, Curtice (2006b) argued that a “system of asymmetric devolution appears to be the only constitutional structure capable of enjoying public support throughout Great Britain” (pp.109). More recently, work by (Henderson et al., 2013) used data from the devolved election studies, in addition to other sources, to identify what they labelled a ‘devolution paradox’ whereby citizens want their sub-state governments to do more, but do not want policy to diverge from other territories within the state.

2.6 Summary: The Future of the Devolved Election Studies

As devolved studies increase in number, so do the possible research questions that emerge from them. In particular, an ever-increasing time-series opens new possibilities to examine changes in attitudes over time and the importance of political context in influencing political behaviour. With this in mind, I conclude this chapter by briefly outlining some of the issues that future studies face.

First, future studies should maintain a substantial and meaningful time-series with previous election surveys by carrying forward existing question wording and format as far as possible. Phillip Converse, one of the founders of the American National Election Study, is often attributed as having said that election studies should never change question wording, even when better alternatives become available. Here, the time-series is the most valuable aspect of the studies: it allows us to track attitudinal and behavioural changes in the population over time. This uniformity is unfortunately missing from the devolved election studies, as the vast majority of questions asked in 1997/9 have either had their wording and format changed substantially or have been dropped altogether. Recent improvements have been made however: Scotland has maintained a valuable time-series since 2007 and Wales since 2011. Every effort to be made to ensure this continues.

The studies should also allow for comparisons between surveys carried out in Scotland and Wales. Doing so will also allow future analysis to better understand divergence or convergence in the political attitudes and behaviours between the two countries. Comparable data from two sub-state polities with very similar cultural and political traditions is a surprisingly rare commodity in political science, and is a unique selling point of the devolved election studies. This is not to say that the devolved election studies should ignore the context in which voters cast their ballots (this is perhaps the biggest weakness of Michigan-style election studies). Instead, future surveys should aim to create a balance between these two, often opposing, needs. Throughout this thesis I demonstrate that the ability to compare Scotland and Wales directly can help us to answer a wide range of questions.

Finally, if the study of elections in the UK is to truly adopt a multilevel approach, the devolved election studies should be linked to the British Election Study. In Chapters 4 and 5 I demonstrate how this is currently possible, although it is important to emphasise that this is not a result of proactive planning on the part of the BES and devolved election teams. If both sets of studies are to continue being carried out by the same polling company – most recently by YouGov – then it should be possible to create a multilevel panel using respondents who were interviewed in both studies. This will allow political scientists to explore questions that had previously been shut off to them, such as voter switching between levels of government (see Chapter 5), the concept of multilevel partisanship, or the differences in what individual voters do or do not know about different levels of politics.

3

Voter knowledge in Scotland and Wales

3.1 Introduction

SINCE THEIR FOUNDATION IN 1999, THE DEVOLVED GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS OF SCOTLAND AND WALES HAVE BEEN A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF POLITICAL LIFE IN THE UK. The influence of both institutions has steadily increased over the last two decades. The Scottish parliament has acquired new powers over income tax and social security (see [Poole and Ifan, 2019](#)) - arguably making it one of the most powerful sub-state legislatures in the world ([Hooghe et al., 2016](#)). Meanwhile the National Assembly for Wales has also acquired new powers, albeit from a lower base of responsibilities, acquiring both law-making powers and control over a number of taxes from Westminster (see [Wyn Jones and Scully, 2012](#); [Poole and Ifan, 2019](#)). As law-making and tax-raising bodies the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales⁸ now wield considerable power over the day-to-day lives of citizens. But what do citizens of Scotland and Wales know about these institutions?

This chapter provides the first comprehensive review of citizens' political knowledge. It is divided

into three main sections. First, I provide a detailed descriptive analysis of survey questions that asked respondents in Scotland and Wales about political facts over the period between 1999 and the most recent election studies in 2016. Second, I examine the supply of political information in Scotland and Wales using a unique dataset of over 190,000 newspaper articles. Finally, I examine what differentiates citizens who know more or less about politics with a series of regressions performed on survey data from the 2016 Scottish and Welsh Election Studies (the SES and WES).

The motivation underpinning this exploration are simple; namely, the assumption that political knowledge matters. The better informed citizens are about politics, the better placed they are to express their preferences and attitudes. This is the assumption that has underpinned normative theories of democracy for decades (Downs, 1957; Dahl, 1971, 1989, 1998; Held, 1996). An informed citizenry, it is argued, is better placed to hold incumbents to account for their behaviours whilst in office, thereby better protecting its interests (Fiorina, 1981).

Assumptions of political knowledge also play a central role in many of the the empirical models that political scientists use to understand political behaviour. Indeed, the ability of voters to make evaluations of competence constitute a central tenet of many of the dominant theories of vote choice in Scotland and Wales over the past decade (Johns et al., 2010; Johns, 2011b; Johns et al., 2013a; Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012; Scully, 2013; Scully and Lerner, 2017). Political knowledge is also frequently used as a variable in analyses of political behaviour, which presents further grounds for exploration. Numerous studies have employed political knowledge as an explanatory variable (e.g., Inglehart, 1990), an intervening variable (e.g., Zaller and Feldman, 1992) or a dependent variable (e.g., Freedman et al., 2004). A better understanding of what voters do or don't know is an important foundation upon which other work on political behaviour can be built.

3.2 Why Political Knowledge Matters

“A popular government, without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.” (James Madison, 1822. *Letter to W. T. Barry*)

Political knowledge has long been understood as playing a central role in the functioning of representative democracy. Heavily influenced by the writers of the US constitution, theorists of democracy have long argued that government can only be held to account for its actions when citizens know what it is doing (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968; Dahl, 1971, 1989, 1998; Held, 1996). A focus on political knowledge can also be traced back to the earliest works of quantitative political science. In *Voting*, Berelson et al. (1954) argue that “The democratic citizen is expected to be well-informed about political affairs. He is supposed to know what the issues are, what their history is, what the relevant facts are, what alternatives are proposed, what the party stands for, what the consequences are” (pp.308, see also Lazarsfeld et al., 1944; Campbell et al., 1960). With this information, citizens are expected to judge incumbents and challengers by their records and reward or punish them at elections accordingly (Dahl, 1989; Fiorina, 1981). This bottom-up accountability mechanism is what provides incumbents with the incentive to be ‘responsive’ to citizens’ wishes, and legislate accordingly (Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). After all, if citizens’ vote choice is not influenced at least to some degree by government performance, incumbents have little incentive to pursue policy goals that reflect citizens’ interests. As Verba writes, “democratic responsiveness depends on citizen participation” (Verba, 1996, pp.2). Yet ever since Converse (1964)’s influential essay *The nature of belief systems in mass publics*, political scientists have cast doubt on this foundational assumption that citizens know enough about politics to make decisions effectively.

In Scotland and Wales, the establishment of the devolved institutions was championed as a pro-

cess that would increase the accountability of political actors and policies to the citizens of Scotland and Wales. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair prefaced the White Paper that constituted the blueprint for Scottish devolution '*Scotland's Parliament*' with the assertion that "a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly [will give] the people of Scotland and Wales more control over their own affairs within the UK" (*The Scottish Office, 1997*, pp.v). In the same document, the inaugural First Minister of Scotland Donald Dewar⁹ wrote that "The Scottish Parliament will strengthen democratic control and make government more accountable to the people of Scotland." (*The Scottish Office, 1997*, pp.vii). In the pre-referendum white paper *A Voice for Wales* similar ambitions are presented: "[t]he Government is committed to establishing a new, more inclusive and participative democracy in Britain. Its proposals for a Welsh Assembly reflect these aims" (*The Wales Office, 1997*, pp. 3).

To date, researchers have not sought to assess whether citizens in Scotland and Wales have access to the necessary information to allow this accountability mechanism to function effectively. In multilevel systems generally, existing evidence suggests we should not assume this to be the case. *Soroka and Wlezien (2010)* argue that non-unitary or decentralized political systems can provide unclear or confused government policy signals: the more levels of government making policy in various policy areas, the less clear it is to citizens what their 'government' is actually doing (*Powell and Whitten, 1993; Downs, 1999; Rodden, 2004*). This signal is further confused in multilevel systems like the UK where substantial proportions of the devolved governments' budgets are transferred from central government. Here, multiple levels of government are involved in multiple policy areas but the actions of central government are not directly visible despite its out-sized role in determining the allocation of funds (*Cutler, 2004; Johns, 2011b*). What voters do - or don't - know is likely to have an important impact on whether representatives are held to account in Scotland and Wales.

Political knowledge also has several benefits that extend beyond the mechanism of democratic accountability, namely that it can be thought of as a good in and of itself. Political information is an important resource for citizens and, as *Carpini and Keeter (1996)* argue, it is "a facilitator of other

forms of political and thus, indirectly, socio-economic power” (pp. 1). Yet political information is also more readily available to those citizens who are already socially, economically and politically advantaged. Consequently, it is easier for these citizens to realize their interests through a democratic political system. It is imperative, therefore, to identify systematic barriers to accessing political information where they exist. As [Habermas \(1984\)](#) has argued, the health of a democracy can be measured by the extent to which citizens are able to enter into public debate with equivalent amounts of information. Where citizens – or particular groups of citizens – do not have sufficient information, democracy can start to falter. [Entman \(1989\)](#) shows that what citizens know about politics shapes the parameters of political discourse more broadly. Where citizens are less informed, political campaigns will be more likely to use sensationalism and demagoguery to appeal to voters ([Carpini and Keeter, 1996](#)).

[Carpini and Keeter \(1993\)](#) argue that political knowledge is a crucial part of citizenship on the whole. How citizens engage with politics extends far beyond infrequent opportunities to cast votes. When citizens seek recourse for problems they face, political knowledge is an important factor in deciding how these problems are solved. Similarly, if citizens or groups of citizens have low levels of political knowledge, it is considerably more difficult for them to express their individual or collective interests at the ballot box.

That leads us to the question: what do citizens in Scotland and Wales know about politics? The limited amount of existing work carried out in this field has produced mixed results. [Johns \(2011b\)](#) analysis of voters at the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary election found that while ‘many voters’ were able to correctly assign policy responsibilities they were unlikely to use this knowledge in their decision-making calculus at election time. In Wales, in the sole existing study on this issue [Dafydd and Badanjak \(2018\)](#) focused on attributions of responsibility among 2016 Welsh Election Study respondents finding that “few [voters] have the knowledge or the inclination to hold those in power to account.” (pp. 1). Analysis carried out elsewhere has also produced mixed results. [Cutler \(2004\)](#)

has suggested that many citizens are unable to say which levels of government are responsible for different policy areas or decisions (see also [Cutler, 2008a](#)). This is in part due to the behaviour of elites in multilevel systems. Work by [Rico and Liñeira \(2018\)](#) has shown that multilevel structures of governance produce incentives for elites to ‘pass the buck’ by shifting blame across levels of government. Conversely, [Rudolph \(2003\)](#) found that citizens were able to more or less accurately apportion responsibility to different levels of government.

3.3 Measuring Political Knowledge in Scotland and Wales

All systematic research begins with good description ([Landman, 2003](#), pp. 5). In this section I focus on what citizens in Scotland and Wales *do* know about politics. To do so, I draw upon the work of [Neuman et al. \(1992\)](#) and [Carpini and Keeter \(1996\)](#) and provide a detailed description of how respondents in Scotland and Wales perform when asked about certain facts relating to politics. Using data from Scottish and Welsh Election Studies from five elections, I provide analysis based primarily on the percentage of respondents who are able to correctly answer factual questions.

Before we can say with any level of certainty what citizens do or don’t know a number of issues warrant attention. The first is epistemological: how do political scientists decide what information is useful for voters to know? Are political scientists well equipped to make such decisions? These questions have troubled scholars of electoral studies for decades. [Schattschneider \(1975\)](#) warned that political scientists were in danger of setting standards that were totally unrealistic: “We become cynical about democracy because the public does not act the way the simplistic definition of democracy says that it should act [...] The trouble is that we have defined democracy in such a way that we are in danger of putting ourselves out of business” (pp. 134-36). In an essay titled *How Elitism Undermines The Study Of Voter Competence*, [Lupia \(2006a\)](#) argues that claims of “what informed voters ought to think about” when making political choices should be treated as highly suspect. This is be-

cause political scientists allow their own ideological biases to influence what they say voters ‘should’ know. As political scientists, it is often part of our job to seek out political information. Political information is also, hopefully, an area in which we have a particular interest. We therefore have incentives to place greater importance on the information that both interests us, and that we often rely upon for employment.

It is also unrealistic to expect voters to have consistent levels of knowledge on a multitude of areas within the field of politics. Information generally is costly to acquire, and there are often costs associated with processing and remembering that information. When we do make decisions, it is not possible for us to consult all of the potentially relevant information to that decision. Instead, we make decisions based on the smaller subsets of information that we are able to recall more quickly (DeBell, 2013). Inevitably, this tends to be information that we have recently acquired or used (Berent and Krosnick, 1995; Lupia, 2006b, 2016). Even if it were possible therefore, acquiring all possible facts that relate to certain political choices voters face is inefficient. Instead, it makes sense for citizens to focus on information that is immediately relevant to their lives. In fact there is some evidence that groups of voters with knowledge of individual areas of interest play an important role in modern democracies. These groups - what Converse (1964) called ‘issue publics’ - play a dual role in holding elected officials to account on these specific issues and act as a heuristic for the wider electorate.

The task of measuring what citizens may or may not know using surveys is far from straightforward. Doing so involves a three-step process, with each step facing its own unique challenges. The first step for the researcher is to decide what information they will ask citizens about. For example, do they want to know whether respondents know which party won the most recent election, whether the economy has grown or shrunk in the past 5 years, or how many local councillors are elected in their electoral ward? Deciding which facts about politics are ‘useful’ for respondents to know is something that has confounded the discipline in the past. Lupia (2006a) argues that in

order to decide what facts to ask respondents about, political scientists should ask themselves two questions: “What benefit does society receive when a randomly selected individual can recite this fact?” and “Is this knowledge key for individuals to carry out their tasks?”.

Questions of validity also arise with regards to measuring political knowledge using mass surveys. The percentage of respondents who can correctly answer a political knowledge question in a survey is not necessarily the same as the percentage of the general population who are aware of that information. In particular, survey non-response and question format are likely to affect the validity of results: an accurate picture of what citizens do or do not know is heavily dependent on the ability of survey researchers to obtain representative samples. As discussed in Chapter 2, both Scottish and Welsh Election Studies switched from a probability sampling framework to online opt-in panels. Inferring what the wider population Scottish and Welsh citizens know from these samples is not straightforward.

The ‘true’ distributions of measures such as gender and age can be obtained from the census, and variables like vote choice can be compared against actual vote returns. Thus, samples can be weighted according to these known distributions to make data more representative.¹⁰ However, the level of political knowledge within the wider population is unknown.¹¹ As such, one cannot be sure that the distributions of knowledge seen in online samples are an accurate reflection of the target population. For example, both the SES and WES have samples that likely over-represent politically active members of the public. Table 3.1 shows the turnout estimates for the 2016 devolved elections from the 2016 SES and WES, along with official declarations of turnout provided by the UK’s Electoral Commission. In both cases, the survey samples over-estimate turnout by approximately 30 percentage points. Ample evidence exists that links political knowledge and civic and political participation (e.g. [Carpini and Keeter, 1993](#); [Blais, 2000](#); [Clarke et al., 2011](#)). Therefore, a sample that overestimates participation to such a degree potentially overestimates levels of knowledge also. This is an important consideration when examining the findings of this chapter.

	Official	Survey	Difference
Scotland	55.6	84.0	28.4
Wales	45.3	79.2	33.9

Table 3.1: Turnout estimates for 2016 devolved election in Scotland and Wales. **Source:** Electoral Commission (official) & SES and WES (unweighted survey sample estimate).

Once the researcher has identified the information they wish to ask respondents about, they move to the second step: designing a question which can gauge a respondents knowledge on this subject with a satisfactory degree of accuracy. Evidence drawn from surveys containing knowledge questions can be misleading due to the process respondents go through when answering questions. When respondents agree to take part in a survey, they are unaware of the topics they will be asked about. This means that their responses to questions may not be reflective of their attitudes but are rather responses constructed on-the-spot in reaction to the question being asked (Zaller and Feldman, 1992; Tourangeau et al., 2000b). In fact, Converse (1964) presented evidence that a substantial proportion of respondents may answer these questions at random.

Survey question format is also likely to influence the percentage of respondents providing the correct response. For example, questions that provide a closed number of options for respondents to select from are likely to produce different results from open-ended questions. The questions asked in each SES and WES cover a number of different topics and areas, some more useful than others. Very few of the questions were repeated in multiple years, limiting analysis of changes in the levels of knowledge among citizens.¹² Despite this discontinuity, the questions asked can generally be divided into three categories:

1. *Responsibility:* Which levels of government are responsible for different policy areas?
2. *Actors:* Who are the individuals and institutions with power to influence these policy areas, and what policy positions do they hold?

3. *Electoral System*: Do citizens know how their vote works?

These three categories largely represent what [Carpini and Keeter \(1996\)](#) call ‘the rules of the game’: information that is at least beneficial, if not necessary, for democracy to work effectively. The remaining analysis is broken down into these categories.

3.3.1 Attributions of Responsibility

Questions of responsibility ask respondents to identify which level of government are accountable for different policy areas. For example, a number of questions in the SES and WES ask whether the devolved institutions are responsible for defence, income tax, the NHS, policing, and education. [Tables 3.2 and 3.3](#) list all questions of attribution of responsibility in the SES and WES between 1999-2016. Although the initial devolved election studies asked a number of the same questions, more recent surveys have asked separate questions in Scotland and Wales. The question format has also diverged rendering direct comparison impossible - even where questions ostensibly ask about the same policy area. For example, the 2016 SES offers respondents three options when asking ‘Which level of government is responsible for X?’: UK Government, Scottish Government, and Don’t Know. In the 2016 WES however, respondents are provided with a longer list of options: European Union, UK Government, Welsh Government, Local Authorities, Don’t Know. Limiting the number of options is likely to overestimate the percentage of SES respondents providing the right answer, as respondents who guess the answer have much higher odds of being correct. Conversely, additional response options in the WES could underestimate respondents’ knowledge by creating confusion.

The first election studies in 1999 uncover considerable confusion. In Scotland, although two-thirds of respondents were aware that the Scottish Parliament would control its budget less than half of respondents were aware of the Scottish Parliament’s tax powers. In Wales, fewer than 30% of respondents were able to correctly attribute responsibility in 1999. There does appear to have

Year	Question	% Correct
1999	Scottish Parliament will control its budget*	74
2016	Foreign Affairs reserved	73
2016	Defence reserved	73
2003	UK Gov't makes all defence decisions	72
2016	Local government devolved	71
2016	Immigration reserved	71
2016	Education devolved	68
2016	NHS devolved	63
2016	Pensions reserved	58
2007	Spending on the NHS in Scotland has gone down since 2003*	53
2007	Scottish Executive to decide whether to renew Trident*	53
2003	Liberal Democrats were part of Scottish government 1999-2003*	53
2003	Scottish Parliament can change Scottish Income Tax*	47
2016	Welfare Benefits reserved	46
1999	Scottish Parliament not able to change tax*	45
2016	Agriculture devolved	44
2003	List MSPs not responsible for problem in area*	15

Table 3.2: % of SES respondents able to correctly answer questions about responsibility. % correct for questions denoted by * are derived by adding 'definitely true' and 'probably true' (or 'definitely false' and 'probably false'). All data are weighted. **Source:** SES 1999-2016

Year	Question	% Correct
2007	The UK Government makes all decisions about defence*	74
2016	Which level of government is responsible for Defence and Foreign Affairs?	70
2007	The Welsh Assembly decides school budget*	69
2003	UK Government makes defence decisions*	66
2007	The Welsh Assembly cannot change income tax level in Wales*	56
2003	The Welsh Assembly can decide how much of its budget is spent on schools*	55
2003	Welsh Assembly can't change income tax*	54
2016	Which level of government is responsible for Schools?	50
2016	Which level of government is responsible for level of income tax?	50
2016	Which level of government is responsible for NHS?	49
2016	Which level of government is responsible for police?	33
1999	Assembly makes defence decisions*	29
1999	Assembly not able to change tax	26
1999	The Welsh Assembly decides school budget*	26

Table 3.3: % of WES respondents able to correctly answer questions about responsibility. % correct for questions denoted by * are derived by adding 'definitely true' and 'probably true' (or 'definitely false' and 'probably false'). All data are weighted. **Source:** WES 1999-2016

been some improvement since 1999, with certain policy areas more clear to respondents than others. In particular, defence and foreign affairs appear to be an area of policy that the majority of respondents knew to be a UK Government responsibility. Respondents seem less sure, however, of who is responsible for devolved policy areas. Considerably fewer respondents knew that the NHS, for example, is a devolved policy area in Scotland and Wales than knew that defence and foreign affairs were not.

In both cases, the results provide some cause for optimism, and some cause for concern. In Scotland and Wales, respondents' ability to correctly attribute responsibility to different levels of government seems to have improved substantially from a low base in 1999. In the most recent SES, a majority of respondents were able to correctly identify the level of government responsible for foreign affairs, defence, local government, immigration, education, the NHS, and pensions. Slightly less than half knew which level of government was responsible for welfare benefits and agriculture,

but responsibility for these policy areas was arguably uniquely unclear at the time of the 2016 SES.¹³ In Wales, a substantial plurality of respondents was able to identify the level of government responsible for schools, income tax, the NHS, and defence and foreign affairs.

Yet in both cases there remains a substantial proportion of respondents left unable to identify which level of government is responsible for certain policy areas. This has far-reaching implications for the study of voting behaviour in Scotland and Wales. For example, the dominant explanation of voting behaviour at devolved elections has been the valence model (Clarke et al., 2004; Johns et al., 2010, 2009b; Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012; Scully, 2013); which states that vote choice is heavily influenced by which party voters' think is best placed to deal with the most important issue. In Wales, a majority of voters in the most recent WES and BES have stated that the most important issue for them is the NHS. Yet less than half of respondents are aware of which government – and therefore which governing party – is responsible for NHS policy. This poses a clear theoretical challenge for the valence theory of voting at devolved elections.

3.3.2 Actors

Quite apart from policy attribution, if voters are to hold incumbents to account for their performance in government, they need to be aware of who those incumbents are. Political candidates and parties are also among some of the most powerful heuristics used by voters to determine vote choice (King, 2002; Clarke et al., 2004; Poguntke and Webb, 2005; Costa Lobo and Curtice, 2014; Prosser et al., 2018). The SES and WES have included a number of questions asking respondents to identify certain political actors. Table 3.4 once again gives the percentage of SES respondents who answered each question correctly and in each case a majority of respondents gave the correct answer. Unsurprisingly, the question that most respondents could answer correctly was whether the SNP had promised to hold an independence referendum should they win the election. At the other end

Year	Question	% Correct
2007	The SNP has promised to hold a referendum on independence if it wins*	82
2007	Labour had Ministers in the 2003-2007 executive	77
2007	Conservatives had Ministers in the 2003-2007 executive	70
2007	Liberal Democrats had Ministers in the 2003-2007 executive	69
2007	The Liberal Democrats are committed to introduce local income tax*	63
2007	Conservatives had Ministers in the 2003-2007 executive	62
2003	Liberal Democrats were part of Scottish government 1999-2003*	53

Table 3.4: SES respondents' knowledge of political actors. % correct for questions denoted by * are derived by adding 'definitely true' and 'probably true' (or 'definitely false' and 'probably false'). All data are weighted. **Source:** SES 1999-2016

of the table, just over half of respondents in 2003 knew that Labour had formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats in the aftermath of the 1999 devolved election.

In Wales, respondents were asked primarily about individual actors. The results are shown in Table 3.5. All respondents were asked whether they could identify their constituency Member of Parliament (MP) and Assembly Member (AM) from a list of six names.¹⁴ The names were all fictitious, except for the respondent's actual MP and AM. More respondents were able to name their MP than their AM, but in both cases a majority of respondents were able to correctly identify their representatives. This was not the case for other representatives however. Only 2% of respondents were able to identify two of Wales' four Members of the European Parliament and two of the four regional AMs. As Welsh MEPs represent the whole of Wales and spend a considerable amount of time on the European continent, it is unsurprising that respondents had little knowledge of them. Similarly, regional AMs are not elected as individual candidates but from a party list, represent large regions consisting of multiple constituencies, and take up roles that make them less visible to constituents (Poole, 2018).¹⁵

Year	Question	% Correct
2016	Which of the following people is the MP in your UK parliamentary constituency?	70
2016	Match Jeremy Hunt to correct job	58
2016	Match John Bercow to correct job	57
2016	Which of the following people is the AM in your NAW constituency?	53
2016	Match Tim Farron to correct job	43
2016	Match Kirsty Williams to correct job	41
2003	Ron Davies First Minister before Rhodri Morgan*	21
2016	Match Mark Drakeford to correct job	18
2016	Match Jean Claude-Juncker to correct job	15
2016	Match Rosemary Butler to correct job	11
2016	Match Donald Tusk to correct job	10
2016	Match Martin Schulz to correct job	6
2016	Name recognition of Regional AMs (both correct)	2
2016	Name recognition of MEPs (both correct)	2

Table 3.5: WES respondents' knowledge of political actors % correct for questions denoted by * are derived by adding 'definitely true' and 'probably true' (or 'definitely false' and 'probably false'). All data are weighted. **Source:** WES 1999-2016

3.3.3 Electoral System

Surprisingly, political scientists have rarely analyzed citizens' understanding of a vital aspect of democracy: the electoral system. But if voters are unsure of how to use the electoral system to voice their political preferences, their knowledge of political actors and government responsibility might be of little use. This question is perhaps even more salient when a new or different form of electoral system is introduced to the electorate. This was the case in Scotland and Wales at the first devolved elections in 1999, when voters were introduced to the Additional Member System (AMS), more commonly known Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) (Dunleavy and Margetts, 1999). In contrast to UK general elections where voters received one vote for a constituency, under AMS voters have two votes; one for a constituency and one for a regional list. The constituency contest is decided by the same plurality system used at UK general elections, but the regional seats are propor-

tionally assigned using the D'Hondt formula. This system is generally considered to be one of the most difficult electoral systems for voters to understand (Farrell and Gallagher, 1999; Gschwend, 2006; Carman and Johns, 2010).

Despite limited analysis, there is considerable evidence of voter confusion in relation to the electoral system. The first devolved elections in 1999 saw multiple reports of voter confusion (BBC, 1999; Seenan, 1999), with future Welsh First Minister Rhodri Morgan remarking “I think it is fair to say that a lot of people were confused by it.” (Morgan, 1999). *The Guardian* quoted a Glasgow polling worker as saying: “It’s been a nightmare, I’ve spent half the morning trying to explain to people how it’s supposed to work. Even after I explained, half of them didn’t understand. It’s just too confusing” (Seenan, 1999). Survey analysis by Curtice et al. (2000) confirmed this, finding that while voters did not report difficulty in filling out ballot papers, nearly half of voters said that they couldn’t understand how seats would be allocated. Whilst it might be expected that there is some confusion at the very first use of a new electoral system this confusion has continued.¹⁶

Tables 3.6 and 3.7 provide details of all knowledge questions on the electoral system asked in the SES and WES. The SES also provides the opportunity to look at changes in knowledge of the electoral system over time in Scotland. By asking some of the same questions in each SES, it is possible to create a time-series between 1999 and 2016. Figure 3.1 shows how the proportion of SES respondents providing correct answers to questions on the electoral system have changed over time. It is important to note that as this is not panel data, we cannot draw inferences from it regarding whether an individual’s knowledge of the electoral system has changed. The pattern that emerges is surprising. For every question, the proportion of respondents able to provide the correct answer actually decreased dramatically between the inaugural election in 1999 and the second devolved election in 2003 before recovering. An explanation for the drop in knowledge at the second election may be to do with focus. In the run-up to the 1999 SP election, great effort was made to provide information on the electoral system that was to be used.¹⁷ This effort has not been made in subsequent

Year	Question	% Correct
1999	Can vote for same party twice*	78
2016	You cant vote for the same party in both constituency and regional lists*	73
2007	You cant vote for the same party in both constituency and regional lists*	69
2003	Can vote for same party on 1st and 2nd vote	67
1999	List seat ensure fair share of seats*	63
2011	It would be much easier under AV for small parties to win seats*	60
2007	[In LEs] You can only rank candidates from one party*	60
2007	[In LEs] You vote by ranking candidates rather than choosing just one*	57
2011	AV is more proportional than our current system*	55
2011	If you're going to vote for a small party, you're better off choosing it in the list*	50
2016	If you're going to vote for a small party, you're better off choosing it in the list*	48
2007	Better choosing a small party in the regional than the constituency vote*	46
2007	[In LEs] Each ward will be represented by 3 or 4 councillors*	46
2003	List seats make fair share of seats*	43
2016	The number of seats won by a party is decided by the number of constituency votes	42
2007	[In LEs] Only your first two preferences count in the calculations of who gets elected*	38
1999	Candidates standing for constituencies cant stand for list*	31
2007	Number of seats won by a party is determined by number of constituency votes*	30
2011	The number of seats won by a party is decided by the number of constituency votes	30
1999	Seats decided by 1st vote*	30
1999	Two votes show 1st and 2nd Preference*	26
2016	Where a party is very strong, not much point voting for it on the list*	24
2003	Party seats are decided by the number of 1st votes	24
2003	Given 2 votes to show 1st and 2nd preference	23
2003	Candidates standing for constituencies cant stand for list*	21
1999	Party with less than 5% of second votes unlikely to win list seats*	19
2011	Where a party is very strong, not much point voting for it on the list*	18
2007	Where a party is very strong, not much point voting for it on the list*	18
2003	Party with less than 5% of second votes unlikely to win list seats*	15

Table 3.6: Scottish voters' knowledge of electoral system used for Scottish Parliamentary and local elections. % correct for questions denoted by * are derived by adding 'definitely true' and 'probably true' (or 'definitely false' and 'probably false'). **Source:** SES 1999-2016. All data are weighted.

Year	Question	% Correct
2003	In NAW elections you are allowed to vote for the same party on 1st and 2nd votes*	50
2007	In NAW elections you are allowed to vote for the same party on 1st and 2nd votes*	49
2003	There are 60 members of the Welsh Assembly*	36
2003	List seat ensure fair share*	35
2003	Two votes show 1st and 2nd preference*	25
2003	Party with less than 5% of 2nd vote unlikely to win list*	24
1999	List seat ensure fair share*	22
1999	Can vote for same party twice	22
2003	Seats are decided by 1st votes	19
2007	The Welsh National Assembly has about 100 elected members*	19
2003	If you stand in the constituency you cant stand on the list*	13
1999	Party with less than 5% of 2nd vote unlikely to win list*	12
1999	If you stand in the constituency you cant stand on the list*	8
1999	2 votes show 1st and 2nd preference*	8
1999	Seats are decided by 1st votes	8

Table 3.7: Welsh voters' knowledge of electoral system used in National Assembly for Wales elections. % correct for questions denoted by * are derived by adding 'definitely true' and 'probably true' (or 'definitely false' and 'probably false'). **Source:** WES 1999-2016. All data are weighted.

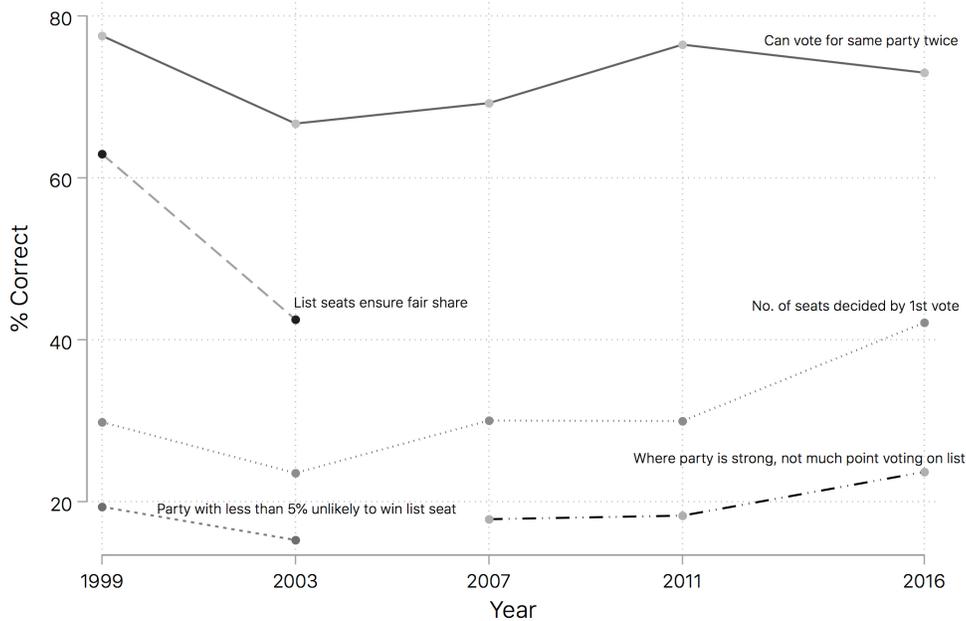


Figure 3.1: How has knowledge of the electoral system changed in the Scottish electorate? **Source:** SES, 1999-2016. All data are weighted.

elections, perhaps explaining the dip and then steady recovery, as voters become more acquainted with the electoral system.

3.3.4 Comparing Scotland and Wales

The most recent iterations of the SES and WES have not asked the same questions or used comparable question format in the knowledge questions posed to respondents. This means that from 2007 onward it is not possible to compare levels of knowledge in Scotland and Wales using these data sources. The election studies of 1999 and 2003 did ask the same questions however.¹⁸ While these studies were carried out nearly two decades ago during devolution’s infancy, a comparison of this data can at least give us an idea of the baselines of political knowledge on devolved issues. In par-

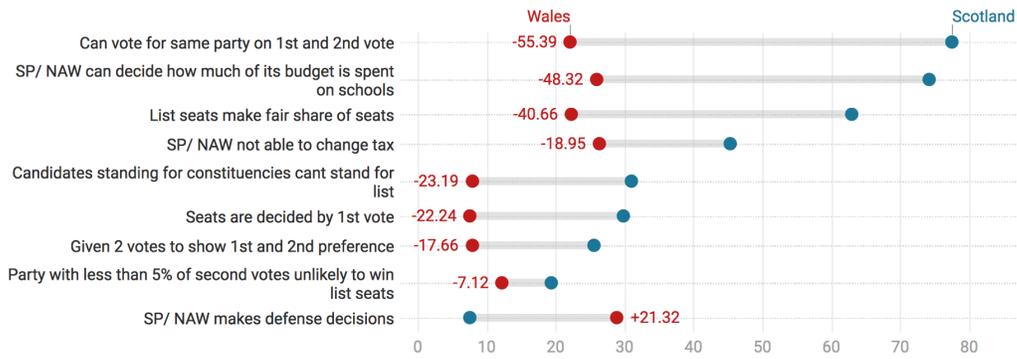


Figure 3.2: The knowledge gap between Scotland and Wales 1999. Labels given as Δ = % correct in Wales - % correct in Scotland **Source:** SES and WES, 1999

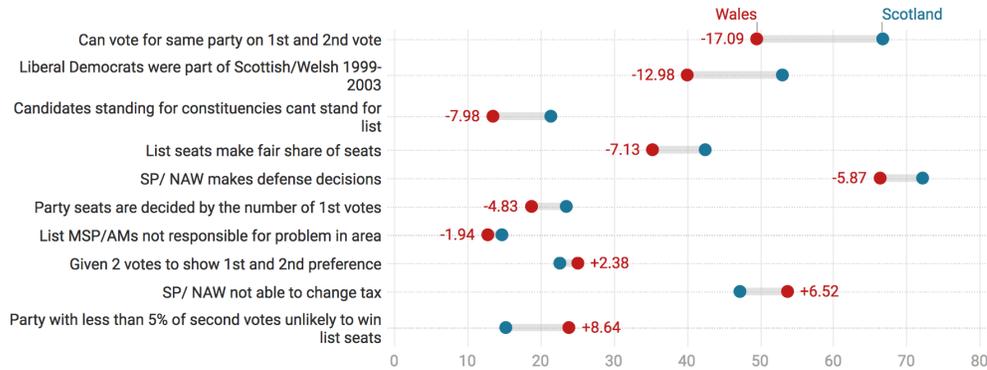


Figure 3.3: The knowledge gap between Scotland and Wales 2003. Labels given as Δ = % correct in Wales - % correct in Scotland **Source:** SES and WES, 2003

ticular, it may assist in identifying any substantial knowledge ‘gap’, where knowledge of devolved issues is considerably higher in Scotland than in Wales or vice versa. Figure 3.2 shows the difference in the percentage of respondents who provided the correct answer in Scotland and Wales from the 1999 SES and WES. In every question bar one, fewer respondents in Wales were able to provide the correct answer to questions regarding the electoral system and the responsibilities of the devolved institutions. Indeed, in 1999 not one question yielded more than 30% correct answers from the Welsh sample.

Figure 3.3 shows that the size of the knowledge gap had reduced somewhat by 2003. However,

this was not because knowledge of devolved issues in Wales had caught up with Scotland, but rather that Scottish respondents knew *less* about devolved issues in 2003 than they did in 1999. As has already been argued, this could be a result of the lack of a coordinated information campaign in 2003 in Scotland as there had been in 1999. It is also possible that the devolved elections were just not considered salient by voters at that time. The Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales were dissolved just days after the start of the 2003 Iraq War, and [Wyn Jones and Scully \(2006\)](#) have shown that voters were considerably influenced by the war at the time of the election.

The next question to address is whether this knowledge gap is unique to devolved issues, or whether it is replicated across all aspects of politics in Scotland and Wales? For this, I turn to the British Election Study ([Fieldhouse et al., 2018](#)). Here, respondents in England, Scotland, and Wales were asked a number of questions about UK and international politics across the first 12 waves of the British Election Study Internet Panel, between 2014 and 2018. The results are displayed in [Table 3.8](#). In this data, there is very little difference between what Scottish and Welsh citizens know about politics, although on average respondents in Scotland do slightly better on these questions. The more consistent trend in the data is that respondents in Wales and, in particular, Scotland perform better on the survey's knowledge questions than respondents in England. By this reading at least, the knowledge gap identified by the 1999 and 2003 devolved elections studies has not carried through to the BES and questions about non-devolved issues.

Because of the absence of comparable questions since 2003, we do not know whether a knowledge gap still exists on devolved issues between respondents in Scotland and Wales. It could be the case that knowledge in Wales has caught up with Scotland since 2003, or that knowledge in Scotland has declined to the level seen in Wales, as happened between 1999 and 2003. However, there is at least some anecdotal evidence that this may not be the case. First, turnout at Scottish Parliamentary elections has remained substantially higher than elections to the National Assembly for Wales and numerous studies have demonstrated a link between political knowledge and participation (e.g.

Question	England	Scotland	Wales
Know Ed Milliband's Job (W _{1,2,3})	92	91	92
Know Nick Clegg's Job (W _{1,2,3})	91	90	92
Polling stations close at 10pm on election day (W ₁₁)	86	92	88
Know George Osborne's Job (W _{1,2,3})	87	88	88
Know Vladimir Putin's Job (W _{2,3,4})	84	86	88
Know Angela Merkel's Job (W _{2,3,4})	85	84	86
Know Theresa May's Job (W _{1,2,3})	83	82	84
Only taxpayers are allowed to vote (W ₁₂)	82	84	83
Only taxpayers are allowed to vote (W ₁₁)	81	85	82
Know Vladimir Putin's Job (W ₁₀)	82	84	81
Know John Bercow's Job (W _{1,2,3})	78	82	79
Know Angela Merkel's Job (W ₁₀)	79	79	71
Correctly Identify MP (W ₃)	72	72	71
The number of MPs is about 100 (W ₁₂)	65	78	70
MPs from different parties are on committees (W ₁₁)	66	77	70
MPs from different parties are on committees (W ₁₂)	65	76	71
The number of MPs is about 100 (W ₁₁)	66	75	70
Correctly Identify MP (W ₂)	70	69	70
Can't stand for parliament unless pay deposit (W ₁₁)	65	74	69
Can't stand for parliament unless pay deposit (W ₁₂)	62	75	70
Switzerland is a member of the EU (W ₈)	68	67	70
Correctly Identify MP (W ₁)	69	67	67
The Lib Dems favour PR for Westminster (W ₁₂)	61	70	66
The Lib Dems favour PR for Westminster (W ₁₁)	62	70	65
Know Bashar al-Assad's Job (W _{2,3,4})	58	61	59
The EU is made up of 15 member states (W ₈)	49	51	49
Know John Kerry's Job (W ₁₀)	46	49	37
Know Francois Hollande's Job (W ₁₀)	43	52	36
EU members elect same number of reps to the EP (W ₈)	41	45	41
Know Bashar al-Assad's Job (W ₁₀)	42	45	34
Know Benjamin Netanyahu's Job (W ₁₀)	40	41	35
EU spends more on agriculture than any other policy (W ₈)	33	37	36
Croatia is a member of the EU (W ₈)	35	36	34
The ECHR only has jurisdiction over EU members (W ₈)	20	21	21

Table 3.8: British Election Study Internet Panel Knowledge questions, with % correct answers for respondents in England, Scotland and Wales. **Source:** BESIP (Fieldhouse et al., 2018). All data are weighted.

Blais, 2000). Second, the influence of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum has been profound. Fieldhouse and Prosser (2018) have shown how the referendum acted as an electoral ‘shock’ that re-drew the dividing lines upon which Scottish politics take place. Devolved issues, and specifically the question of independence, now play a fundamental role in Scottish politics that is absent from Welsh politics. Finally, the media landscape of Scotland and Wales differ considerably. The ease with which voters can access political information on devolved issues plays a substantial, and understudied, role in the existence of any potential knowledge gap between Scotland and Wales. This is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

3.4 The Supply of Political Information in Scotland and Wales

Most models of public responsiveness and democratic accountability depend on voters being able to acquire accurate information about what incumbents and challengers are doing. Only by doing so are they able to attribute blame or reward for the policies they pursue in office. This ability depends on a supply of political information where policy responsibility is clear to voters (Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). The field of political communication has long studied the ways in which citizens acquire information about politics, focusing in particular on the role of the media in this process. Iyengar and Kinder (1987), for example, show that certain issues are more likely to influence political behaviour among voters when those issues are covered prominently in the media. This is due to a ‘priming’ effect, where exposure to a stimulus – in this case a media story – influences a response to a subsequent stimulus (i.e. voting). This research has been shown to be very robust, supported with both experimental and survey methodologies (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Krosnick and Brannon, 1993; Valentino et al., 2002; Sanders and Norris, 2005; Brandenburg, 2006; Norris, 2006; Stevens et al., 2011). In his seminal work *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippman argued that “public opinion is primarily a moralized and codified version of the facts” (Lippmann, 1922b, pp. 81-82). What facts

the media do or do not cover is therefore likely to have a substantial impact on public opinion and behaviour. In particular, the ways in which the media discuss policy responsibility and attribution is likely to influence how citizens think about politics. This is not a straightforward task in multilevel systems such as Scotland and Wales, where responsibility for policies is divided between multiple governments operating within distinct geographic boundaries (Downs, 1957).

Where multilevel governance is a relatively recent occurrence, media organizations do not necessarily have the capacity or desire to reflect the multilevel nature of government and policy. In the UK, large parts of the media market are heavily centralized. All of the major UK serving newspapers are produced and printed in England and, with 84% of the UK's population living in England, focus primarily on news and editorial content that relates to England. Scotland has long had a history of distinct media institutions, and this has continued since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. Multiple Scottish national newspapers exist, and several UK newspapers produce Scottish editions, which contain Scotland-specific editorial content (albeit to differing degrees). In Wales however, the news media landscape is considerably different. Only one Wales-wide newspaper remains in-print, and UK newspapers do not produce Welsh-editions. To this degree, the organization of the UK media market has, to a large extent, reflected the uneven multilevel structures of governance.

Until now, there have been relatively few attempts to analyze how these media organizations talk about politics in the UK. We are therefore largely unaware of the extent to which the media are able to reflect the complexities of multilevel governance to citizens. In this section, I provide the first large-N content analysis of attribution of responsibility in the UK, Scottish, and Welsh media. To do this, I create a unique dataset of every newspaper article mentioning the 'NHS' from the period of 2000-2017 in 18 newspapers. The newspapers, listed in Table 3.9, were those for which pre-existing libraries exist in the Lexus Nexus database. This yields a dataset of 190,868 articles on which to base my analysis. The decision to focus on the NHS as a policy was made for two reasons. The

Publication	Country	No. of Articles
Scotland on Sunday	Scotland	1,449
Scotsman	Scotland	15,365
Scottish Daily Mail	Scotland	7,109
Scottish Express	Scotland	5,535
Scottish Mail on Sunday	Scotland	1,385
The Herald	Scotland	19,387
The National	Scotland	573
The Daily Telegraph	UK	7,443
The Guardian	UK	31,949
The Independent	UK	14,645
The Independent on Sunday	UK	1,576
The Observer	UK	5,591
The Sunday Telegraph	UK	4,063
The Times	UK	74,798
Daily Post	Wales	14,299
South Wales Echo	Wales	9,467
South Wales Evening Post	Wales	14,022
Western Mail	Wales	18,150

Table 3.9: Number of articles per publication in sample.

first, is that it can be used as a policy-specific search term that should provide less ‘noise’ than terms such as ‘education’ or ‘defence’ (e.g. ‘Welsh rugby’s success is built on strong defence’). The second reason I focus on the NHS is that it is a policy area for which responsibility is clearly devolved. In both Scotland and Wales, a majority of respondents knew that responsibility for the NHS was devolved and is frequently named by respondents in both nations as one of the ‘Most Important Issue facing Scotland/Wales’ in opinion polls.¹⁹ It has also been the Welsh and Scottish government’s largest area of spending since 1999.

Using this data, I use a search of the text of each article for specific key words that uniquely identify the Scottish/Welsh Government, and the UK Government. A full list of search keywords used to identify each level of government is provided in Table A.1 in Appendix A. This should allow us

to understand which level of government is discussed, or not discussed, when the NHS is written about in the press. For the analysis I divide the newspapers in the dataset into three categories depending on where they are produced and printed: 'UK News', 'Scottish News', and 'Welsh News'. Scottish editions of UK newspapers are included in the 'Scottish News' category. 'UK' newspapers are those produced and printed in England, but target a 'UK-wide' audience.²⁰

Figure 3.4 show which level of government each category of newspaper talks about when they talk about the NHS. In the UK press, articles that mention the NHS are most frequently accompanied by mentions of the UK Government: roughly one in every three articles. Mentions of the Scottish and Welsh governments are considerably less frequent in the UK Press, with approximately one in thirty-three articles mentioning the Scottish Government, and one in every hundred mentioning the Welsh Government. In the Scottish press, the Scottish government is mentioned in roughly one in every three articles, and the UK Government in one in every five articles. Finally, in the Welsh press the Welsh Government is mentioned in just over one in every three articles, and the UK Government in one in every ten.

The next question I focus on is whether these patterns have changed over time. It is conceivable that as devolution has become more established in the UK, the press may have adapted the ways in which responsibility for policy areas is discussed. Figure 3.5 therefore shows these data disaggregated over time. In UK newspapers mentions of the Scottish Government have increased slightly over time, from less than one mention in every hundred articles in January 2000 to roughly four of every hundred articles in December 2017. Two noticeable and dramatic spikes occur in UK newspaper mentions of the Scottish Government, both of which coincide with significant Scottish political events that had a substantial impact on the UK as a whole. The first occurs between August-October 2014 at the time of the Scottish Independence Referendum. The second occurs at the time of the UK general election in May 2015, a time when the Scottish National Party were expected to make historic gains. Mentions of the Welsh Government in the UK press have stayed at a relatively

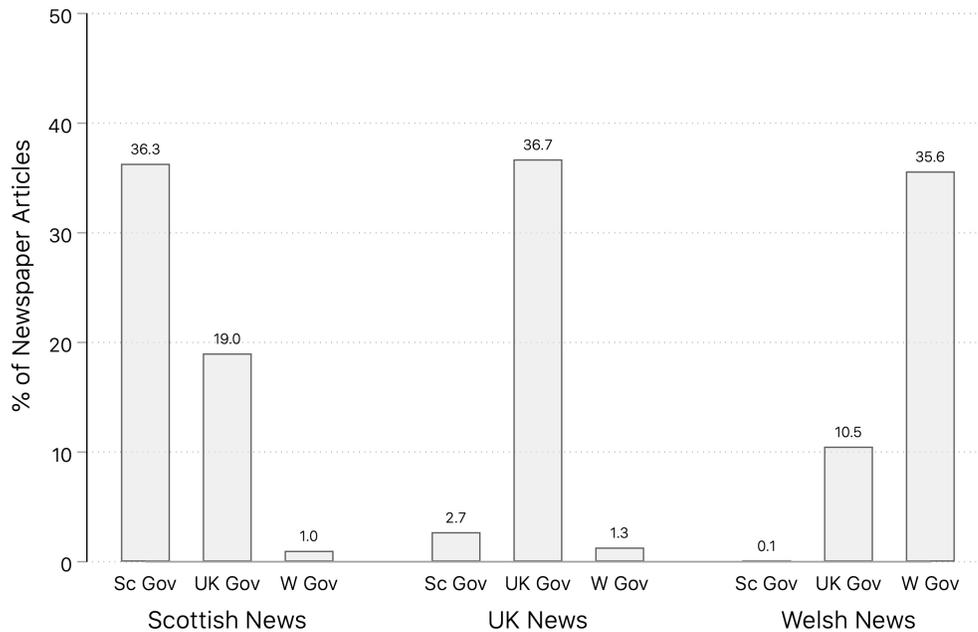
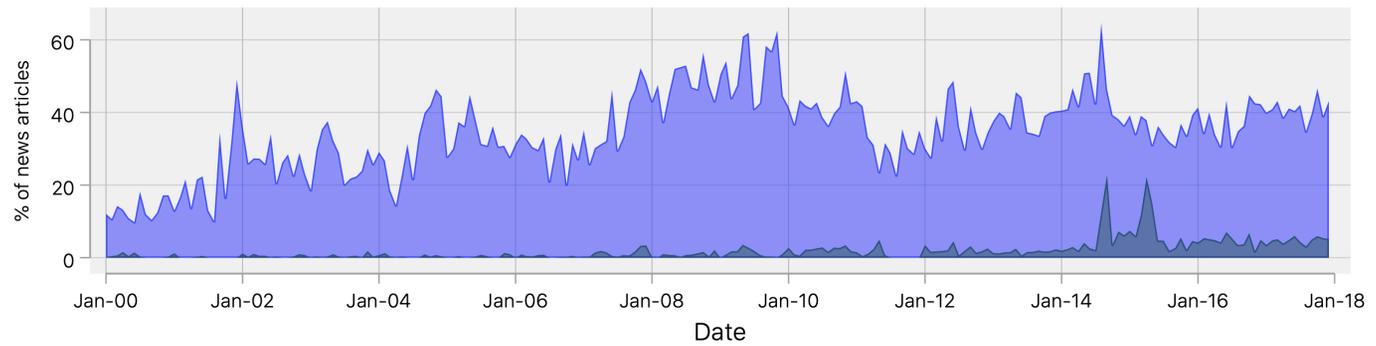


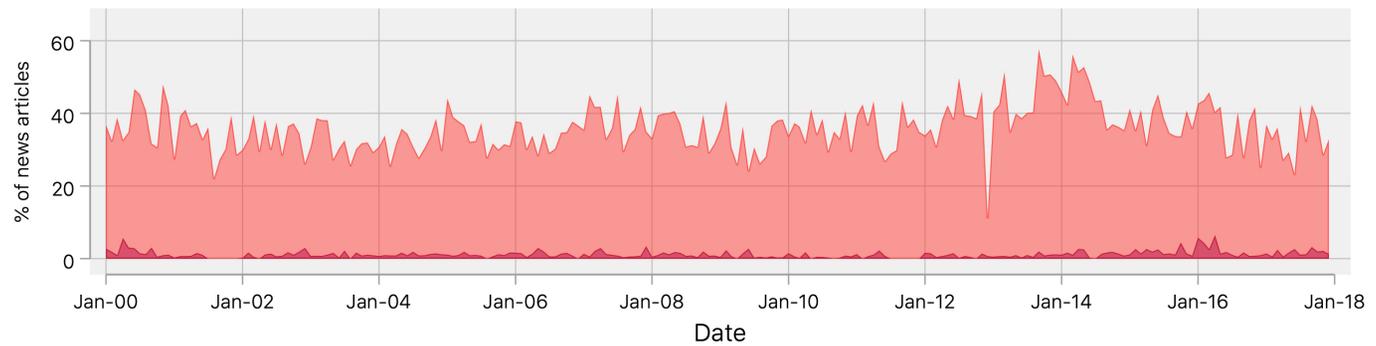
Figure 3.4: To whom do the news media attribute responsibility for the NHS? % of newspaper articles that mention UK, Scottish, and Welsh Government search terms when discussing the NHS, 2000-2017. N = 190,868

stable low level since 2000, although there was a far less dramatic spike in mentions between December 2015 and March of 2016.

Since January 2000, mentions of the Scottish Government in the Scottish Press have nearly quadrupled. In particular there was a considerable and sustained increase in mentions of the Scottish Government in the aftermath of the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary elections. This was the first election that saw the SNP as the largest party in Scotland (Johns and Mitchell, 2016). In the Welsh press, mentions of the Welsh Government have been more consistent over time with just under 40% of articles mentioning the Welsh Government.²¹



■ Scottish Government key words in Scottish Press
 ■ Scottish Government key words in UK Press



■ Welsh Government key words in Welsh Press
 ■ Welsh Government key words in UK Press

Figure 3.5: Monthly % of articles mentioning the 'NHS' that also include Scottish and Welsh Government key words. Full list of search key words provided in Table A.1 in Appendix A.

3.4.1 Why does this matter?

Drawn from a unique dataset of every newspaper citation of the NHS in 18 newspapers between 2000 and 2017, this analysis demonstrates that a newspaper's country of origin largely dictates the level of government discussed in articles mentioning the NHS. When talking about the NHS, the Scottish and Welsh press talk most frequently about the Scottish and Welsh Governments, whilst also regularly talking about the UK Government. This is probably an accurate reflection of responsibility for the NHS in both countries. The devolved governments are responsible for the majority of policy and allocation of funds to the NHS, yet the UK Government maintains an influence through the transfer of a substantial proportion of the devolved institutions' budgets. The UK press, however, rarely talks about the devolved governments of Scotland and Wales when discussing the NHS. Instead, discussions of the NHS are more commonly combined with mentions of the UK Government (which only has legislative competence over the NHS in England). Given the role that the media plays in framing issues and priming citizens, the differences in how different outlets cover politics is likely to have profound effects on citizens.

If the majority of citizens in Scotland and Wales received political information from primarily Scottish/Welsh media sources, these differences would not be an issue. Yet media consumption in Scotland and Wales is remarkably uneven. Table 3.10 shows the breakdown in newspaper readership in Scotland and Wales according to the 2016 SES and WES. In Scotland, a large majority of newspaper readers said they read a Scottish newspaper or Scottish edition. In stark contrast, only 6% of WES respondents say they read a Welsh newspaper, with the vast majority of newspapers readers opting to read UK newspapers. Citizens in Scotland and Wales are therefore accessing very different types of political information, at least when they are reading articles about the NHS. It is possible, of course, that the NHS is a unique policy area and that press coverage of other policy areas is different. I think this is implausible however, and would argue that this is a trend that exists across press

Scotland	%	Wales	%
Scottish/ Scottish Edition Newspaper	45.6	Welsh/ Welsh Edition newspaper	6.0
UK Newspaper	11.2	UK Newspaper	45.6
None	32.6	None	42.7
N	4,074	N	3,272

Table 3.10: Percentage of Scottish and Welsh Election Study (2016) respondents' newspaper readership.

coverage more generally.

As a result of these patterns presented in the data, I would expect two consequences. The first, already illustrated in the previous section, is the existence of a knowledge gap between Scotland and Wales on devolved issues. The second is that in Wales a respondent's news consumption habits are likely to be a strong predictor of their ability to answer knowledge questions about devolved issues. I address this in the next section of this chapter.

3.5 Explaining Political Knowledge

Which factors distinguish citizens who know a lot about politics from those who know less? The same question could be asked about any subject or topic of course. What separates citizens who know lots about football or music from those who do not? [Luskin \(1990\)](#) has argued that in order to learn about politics, as with all topics, citizens need to have the ability, motivation and opportunity to do so. Motivation in particular is often highlighted in the literature as a key factor ([Converse, 1964](#); [Carpini and Keeter, 1996](#); [Johns, 2011b](#); [Bartels, 2006](#)). In *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*, [Converse \(1964\)](#) was among the first to recognize the importance of individual motivation. He noted that “different controversies excite different people to the point of real opinion formation” (pp. 245). Again, there is evidence to suggest that this is not unique politics. [Burnett and McCubbins \(2018\)](#) asked university students a series of questions about a range of topics, including questions designed to measure their levels of knowledge about politics. Their results showed that

respondents' knowledge about politics is constructed in a similar way to their knowledge of other subjects. They also showed that a positive relationship, albeit not a particularly strong one, tended to exist between political knowledge and knowledge of other subjects. In other words, students who knew more about politics tended to know more about topics such as the economy, sports, popular culture, and geography (Burnett and McCubbins, 2018).

The *opportunity* to learn about politics can be interpreted in two different ways. The first was discussed in the previous section of this chapter that focused on the supply of political information. If political information about politics – or a particular domain of politics – is not widely accessible through the media, this reduces the opportunity of citizens to access this information. The second way to interpret the importance of opportunity is to consider it through a society-wide angle. This requires identifying the factors that have been shown to reduce the opportunity of individuals or groups to take part in other aspects of citizenship. Numerous socio-demographic factors such as race and ethnicity (Gilroy, 2013; Sobolewska et al., 2018; Allen, 2018), education (Allen, 2018), social class (Evans and Tilley, 2017), and gender (Russell et al., 2002; Campbell et al., 2010; Stirbu et al., 2018; Allen and Cutts, 2018) have been shown to have a substantial impact on the ability of citizens to engage fully in the social, economic and political system.

Aspects of citizens' identities beyond social demographics are also likely to affect their ability to answer certain questions. In social psychology, Taylor and Doria (1981) have argued that individuals often assign responsibility for actions using a “group-serving” bias. Positive outcomes are claimed for the group (or groups) they identify with, whilst negative outcomes are blamed on out-groups. Knowledge questions which ask about attribution of responsibility are therefore particularly sensitive to this bias. Numerous studies have shown that partisan identity biases citizens' attributions of responsibility (Tilley and Hobolt, 2011; Bisgaard, 2019; Sulitzeanu-Kenan and Zohlnhöfer, 2019). This partisan bias has also been observed in multilevel systems (see Cutler, 2004; Rudolph, 2003; Johns, 2011b). In Scotland and Wales national identity has also been shown to have an impact on

political attitudes and behaviours. Work by [Scully et al. \(2004\)](#) has shown that Welsh identifying citizens are more likely to participate in devolved elections, and more likely to be satisfied with the institution ([Wyn Jones, 2001](#); [Trystan et al., 2003](#)). [Curtice \(2006d\)](#) found a similar effect in Scotland, although the effect was less prominent than in Wales. It might be expected therefore that Scottish and Welsh identity are a useful predictor of knowledge of devolved politics. Citizens who identify more closely with the substate identity (i.e. Scottish or Welsh) may feel more invested in the devolved institutions, and therefore have the motivation to seek out information about devolved politics. Recent experimental work by [León and Orriols \(2019\)](#) has also shown how national identity in Scotland and Wales may bias citizens' attributions of responsibility, although not to the same extent as partisan identity.

3.5.1 Analysis

To examine the correlates of political knowledge I use survey data from the 2016 WES and SES, the most recent devolved election studies. I estimate a series of logistic regression models predicting whether a respondent gave a correct answer to the knowledge questions included in these surveys. This will allow an analysis of the impact of explanatory variable on different domains of knowledge, rather than an abstract additive or factor scale. The full wording of all knowledge questions used in the analysis as dependent variables is available in [Appendix A](#). For explanatory variables, the same measures are used for the analysis of Scottish and Welsh data, with the exception of respondents' TV viewership: the 2016 SES does not ask respondents about which TV news stations they watch. As there is substantial evidence that television news has an impact on political knowledge (e.g. [Iyengar and Kinder, 1987](#)), I include these controls in the Welsh analysis. I also include variables that measure whether a respondent reads a Scottish or Welsh, UK, or no newspaper. We might expect that respondents who read newspapers generally to perform better in knowledge questions; however,

given the analysis in the previous section of this chapter, I am particularly interested in any associations between reading Scottish/ Welsh papers and political knowledge.

Motivation is a trait that we are unable to measure in survey research. Citizen motivation is therefore measured by way of a proxy variable that asks respondents how interested they are generally in politics on a five-point scale ranging from ‘Very interested’ to ‘Not at all interested’. Citizens with a particular interest in politics would be expected to be most motivated to seek out political information (see [Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2005](#)). To measure national identity, I include the commonly used ‘Moreno’ scale of national identity (see [Moreno, 1988](#)). This asks respondents to place themselves on a five-point scale ranging from ‘Scottish/Welsh not British’ to ‘British not Scottish/Welsh’. I also include variables to control for socio-demographic factors like ethnicity, gender, education, social class, age, and household income. Household income is measured using a binary variable, coded 1 if the respondent’s household earnings are above the median income in Scotland and Wales, and 0 if it is below the median household income (see [McGuinness, 2018](#), for figures).

3.5.2 Explaining political knowledge in Scotland

Table 3.11 displays maximum discrete changes in the probability of SES respondents correctly identifying which level of government is responsible for different policy areas. Full regression tables, along with results for additional policy areas, are included in Appendix A. For each policy area, political interest has the strongest association with being able to correctly identify which level of government is responsible for what. Respondents who are more interested in politics were substantially more likely to be able to correctly attribute responsibility for reserved and devolved policy areas. This is entirely consistent with existing research on political knowledge that shows motivation and interest to be one of the strongest predictors of political knowledge (see [Luskin, 1990](#), for example).

The results also show that systematic factors are powerful predictors of political knowledge. The

effect of formal education is comparable in size to that of political interest: respondents with more formal education are more likely to correctly assign responsibility. This effect is symptomatic of the broader societal benefits associated with formal education that extends beyond its role of teaching students facts about politics. It also plays a central role in setting career paths and building personal and social networks that provide citizens with greater opportunities to access information and learn about politics. Social class operates in a similar fashion. Those in higher social classes have far greater opportunities to access political information in society (Evans and Tilley, 2017).

Socio-demographic factors also appear to play a substantial role in respondents' ability to answer SES knowledge questions. Respondent gender shows a consistent effect: respondents who identify as female are less likely to answer SES knowledge questions correctly than those who identify as male. This may reflect the fact that women have historically been excluded and underrepresented in the political sphere in the UK (Lovenduski, 2005; Russell et al., 2002). Although devolution has seen an increase in representation of women in elected office, the majority of politicians at every level of government in Scotland and Wales are men (Stirbu et al., 2018). Yet given that the majority of citizens – and by extension eligible voters – are women, it remains unclear why this gender gap in knowledge still exists.

As Figure 3.6 shows, even powerful predictors of political knowledge like education and political interest do nothing to mediate the knowledge gender gap. The size of this gap is, at least in part, due to the different ways that men and women answer survey questions. Considerably higher proportions of respondents identifying as female answered 'Don't know' to all types of knowledge questions asked in the WES and SES. Table 3.12 illustrates the difference in questions of attribution in the 2016 SES.

	Schools	Agriculture	NHS	Defence	Pensions	Welfare
Age (Centred)	0.261*	0.065	0.280*	0.284*	0.447*	0.219*
Female	-0.058*	-0.067*	-0.062*	-0.076*	-0.104*	-0.049*
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>						
GCSE	0.015	0.001	0.015	0.023	0.041	0.011
A-level	0.057*	0.036	0.053*	0.063*	0.063*	0.054*
Degree	0.122*	0.082*	0.116*	0.097*	0.094*	0.062*
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>						
AB	0.091*	0.092*	0.090*	0.077*	0.077*	0.035
C1C2	0.055*	0.056*	0.057*	0.051*	0.058*	0.012
Ethnic Minority	0.016	0.003	0.014	-0.023	-0.054	-0.080
Income	0.0013	-0.019	-0.0053	-0.0105	0.005	-0.003
<i>Party ID (Ref = Other/None)</i>						
Conservative	0.021	0.064*	0.001	0.003	-0.010	-0.031
Labour	-0.025	0.024	-0.026	-0.012	0.015	-0.046
Liberal Democrat	0.077	0.081	0.044	0.037	0.032	0.072
SNP	0.002	-0.034	-0.006	0.014	0.046*	0.043
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very Interested)</i>						
Fairly Interested	-0.140*	-0.071*	-0.190*	-0.106*	-0.084*	-0.036*
Not very Interested	-0.361*	-0.211*	-0.414*	-0.315*	-0.249*	-0.138*
Not at all Interested	-0.664*	-0.370*	-0.649*	-0.575*	-0.398*	-0.267*
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Scottish not British)</i>						
More Scottish than British	0.060*	0.015	0.047	0.026	0.008	-0.003*
Equally Scottish and British	0.027	0.009	0.029	0.001	0.005	-0.061*
More British than Scottish	0.049	-0.003	0.044	0.037	0.015	-0.051
British not Scottish	-0.017	-0.080*	-0.004	-0.002	0.025	-0.028
Scottish Newspaper	-0.001	0.013	-0.012	0.010	0.014	0.007
UK Newspaper	0.053*	0.066*	0.050*	0.049*	0.022	-0.002

Table 3.11: Maximum Discrete Changes in Probability of Answering Questions Correct, Scotland

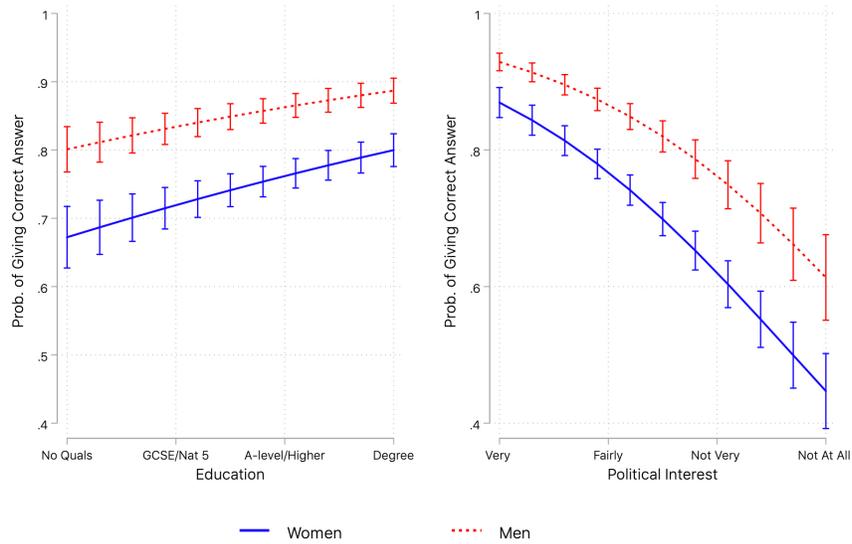


Figure 3.6: Effect of education and political interest on the probability a respondent knows which level of government is responsible for immigration. Effects are separated by respondent gender. Source: SES 2016

Literature on the psychology of survey responses suggest that in most cases ‘Don’t know’ means don’t know (Beatty et al., 1998; Grichting, 1994). But this in itself is linked to the deep cultural and gendered norms rooted in society. Men tend to overestimate the levels of expertise they have on a whole range of topics, whilst women are less confident in their knowledge (Voyer and Voyer, 2014). It may also be the case that women also have less access to political information in their day-to-day lives. Much like education, gender still remains a powerful predictor of which employment sectors men and women go into (Roberts et al., 2019). Within these sectors women may have less opportunity to access political information. More broadly, it is also likely the case that women generally have less opportunity to learn about politics, as society still sees the political world as an inherently male sphere of society (Lovenduski, 2005).

Gender is not the only group identifying factor that provides a consistent effect. For almost every responsibility question, older respondents performed better than younger respondents. This

	Schools	Defence	NHS	Pensions	Immigration
Male	11	10	10	14	11
Female	22	23	21	28	24

Table 3.12: % of respondents who answered 'Don't know' to questions about government responsibility, by gender

is a common finding in the study of political knowledge (for example, [Carpini and Keeter, 1993](#)): older citizens have been exposed to the political world for a greater amount of time, and are therefore exposed to a greater amount of political information. This life-cycle effect, can be further isolated from a potential cohort or generational effect that may also influence citizens' levels of political knowledge. Citizens born into different generations will have found themselves coming of age though distinct political times and events. For example, citizens who came of age during the 1960s were eligible to vote at a time where political participation and polarization was particularly high. Conversely, citizens who came of age during the early 2000s faced a period of historically low political participation. These effects may work in tandem with each other to result in older citizens placing higher importance on political events than younger citizens ([Blais, 2000](#)). That said, it is still perhaps surprising in the context of Scotland and Wales. Here, we might expect those respondents who have only known devolution since reaching voting age (at this point anyone under the age of 38 years old) to have a better understanding of the divisions of power in Scotland. The models do not provide any evidence of this however, with the effect of age consistent over the majority of questions asked.

3.5.3 Explaining political knowledge in Wales

In Wales, I present results predicting whether respondents are able to correctly identify different political actors. Again, additional regressions for all knowledge questions are provided in [Appendix A](#). [Table 3.13](#) gives the results as maximum discrete changes in probabilities.²² [Appendix A](#) also contains

regressions asking respondents to identify the level of government responsible for different policy areas. Many of the effects are similar to those in Scotland: political interest, gender, education, age and social class all influence respondents ability to correctly answer political knowledge questions.

Analysing Table 3.13, the results differ substantially from Scotland in that media consumption and national identity appears to play a more consistent role among Welsh respondents than in Scotland. Specifically, these two factors appear to influence WES respondents' ability to identify political actors. Respondents at the 'British' end of the Moreno national identity scale were generally more likely to be able to identify UK-level political actors, and less likely to identify devolved-level actors relative to respondents who felt 'Welsh not British'. Party identity also appears to be a more consistent predictor in Wales, with Labour and Plaid Cymru support particularly associated with certain forms of knowledge.

Respondents who consumed Welsh media were substantially more likely to be able to match devolved political actors to their job titles compared to those who did not read or watch news. The effect of Welsh media consumption appears to be unique to knowledge of devolved political issues and actors; it does not appear to have an influence on respondents' knowledge of UK-level political actors. Consumption of UK news media does not appear to have any effect of knowledge of devolved political actors, but respondents who watched UK television news were more likely to be able to identify UK political actors.

These results should be interpreted with some caution. While it could be the case that respondents who consume Welsh media know more about devolved politics as a result, self-selection may also play an important role. Unlike in Scotland, consumption of Welsh media (specifically newspapers) instead of UK media is not the norm (see Section 3.4). It is plausible therefore that citizens who choose Welsh media over other forms are already more inclined to have an interest in and learn about devolved political issues. This may also explain the role that national identity plays. Respondents who considered themselves to be more Welsh than British were more likely to be able to cor-

rectly answer questions about devolved political actors than respondents who felt more British. Conversely, respondents who are more British were more likely to answer questions about UK political actors compared more Welsh-identifying respondents (except for respondent's MP).

When respondents were asked about the level of government responsible for certain policy areas, the Welsh results were more in-line with Scottish results. Here, national identity and media consumption appear to play a less consistent role, with knowledge better explained by political interest and socio-demographic factors. Media still appears to play at least a limited role here though, with consumers of UK television news more likely to be able to correctly attribute responsibility for policy areas, and UK newspaper readers less likely to be able to do so. The reference point for both categories are those respondents who said they did not generally watch or read any news.

3.6 Conclusion

Against a backdrop of political science literature that stresses the central importance of political knowledge (e.g. [Converse, 1964](#); [Carpini and Keeter, 1993](#); [Achen and Bartels, 2016](#)), this chapter provides the first comprehensive review of what citizens in Scotland and Wales know about politics.

The results are stark. Substantial proportions of citizens in Scotland and Wales are unable to answer questions about politics. In Wales, there was no knowledge question asked in the WES between 1999-2016 where more than 75% of respondents were able to provide the correct answer. In Scotland, only 5% of the questions asked between 1999-2016 were answered correctly by more than 75% of respondents. The electoral system in particular is a source of confusion for respondents. This is a theme that is repeated in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

	Butler	Drakeford	Williams	R's AM	Bercow	Hunt	Farron	R's MP
Age (Centred)	0.052	0.236*	0.320*	0.324*	0.426*	0.047	0.094	0.245*
Female	-0.022	-0.022	-0.096*	-0.015	-0.099*	-0.057*	-0.161*	-0.017
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>								
GCSE	0.043	0.018	-0.014	-0.025	0.039	0.061*	0.133*	0.045
A-level	0.053	-0.015	0.033	0.052	0.061	0.084*	0.107*	0.073*
Degree	0.094*	0.084*	0.085*	0.106*	0.128*	0.150*	0.203*	0.112*
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>								
AB	0.060*	0.107*	0.091*	0.006	0.056*	0.120*	0.105*	-0.004
C1C2	0.014	0.025	-0.001	-0.020	0.025	0.046*	0.042	-0.024
Ethnic Minority	0.038	-0.038	-0.114	-0.067	-0.087	-0.058	-0.069	-0.095*
Income	0.011	0.058*	0.067*	0.045*	0.068*	-0.033	0.036	0.014
<i>Party ID (Ref = Other/None)</i>								
Conservative	0.023	0.027	0.001	0.015	0.077*	0.029	-0.003	0.030
Labour	0.060*	0.061	0.092*	0.124*	0.082*	0.086*	0.076*	0.096*
Liberal Democrat	-0.021	0.017	0.206*	0.099*	0.023	0.039	0.183*	0.054*
Plaid Cymru	0.143*	0.152*	0.188*	0.127*	0.025	0.056	0.094	0.058
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very Interested)</i>								
Fairly Interested	-0.071*	-0.116*	-0.130*	-0.081*	-0.148*	-0.140*	-0.296*	-0.053*
Not very Interested	-0.101*	-0.144*	-0.304*	-0.151*	-0.407*	-0.388*	-0.484*	-0.217*
Not at all Interested	-0.061*	-0.151*	-0.394*	-0.180*	-0.464*	-0.449*	-0.587*	-0.259*
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Welsh not British)</i>								
More Welsh than British	-0.013	-0.019	0.075	0.015	0.061*	0.065*	0.031	0.025
Equally Welsh and British	-0.001	-0.043	0.058	-0.005	0.064	0.073*	0.070	0.017
More British than Welsh	0.003	-0.049	0.011	-0.020	0.081	0.077*	0.096*	-0.037*
British not Welsh	-0.054*	-0.122*	-0.049*	-0.062*	0.085	0.048	0.088*	-0.015*
Welsh Newspaper	0.090*	0.155*	0.126	0.092*	0.057	-0.015	0.043	0.078*
UK Newspaper	0.007	0.009	-0.035	0.002	0.085*	0.022	0.041	0.003
Welsh TV	0.090*	0.181*	0.174*	0.033	-0.024	-0.004	-0.055*	0.015
UK TV	0.036	0.003	0.092*	0.023	0.082*	0.057*	0.131*	0.012

Table 3.13: Maximum Discrete Changes in Probability of Answering Questions Correct, Scotland

Several factors differentiate those who are able to correctly answer knowledge questions. Primarily, it appears that it is individual interest in politics that is associated with better political knowledge, though this itself is likely driven by other factors such as social class, age, education, and gender. Media consumption and national identity also play a role, but only for certain types of information.

Analysis of the supply of political information in Scotland and Wales share many similarities, but also one important difference. In both cases, Scottish and Welsh newspapers appear to attribute responsibility to the devolved governments for the NHS. ‘UK’ press rarely, if ever, mention the devolved administrations when discussing the NHS. This is of particular consequence in Wales, where the majority of citizens consume UK media. This likely contributes to the knowledge-gap between Scottish and Welsh respondents identified in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. Such a gap does not appear to exist to the same extent when asking questions about UK and international politics (see Table 3.8). More work needs to be done here to establish whether a knowledge gap on devolved issues still exists, although there is little reason to think it does not.

It is important to stress that this analysis is not seeking to castigate voters over their lack of knowledge. Quite the opposite. Instead it should highlight how the current system is failing them. If political decentralization continues to be a rapidly growing trend across the world, then policy-makers must find a way to respond to the sort of evidence presented in this chapter. If decentralization is to have a real improvement on the everyday lives of citizens, they must be empowered to access its benefits. When voters are unable to access the information to make judgments of incumbents records, they are likely to ‘fall-back’ on heuristics linked to group identity to make political choices (Achen and Bartels, 2016). The next chapter in this thesis examines the role of some of these identities – namely national identity – in shaping how voters make electoral choices.

Notes

¹At time of writing.

²Notable exceptions include Catalonia and Quebec, where sub-state election have garnered a larger turnout relative to statewide elections on multiple occasions.

³In Scully's analysis of the 2011 devolved elections he concluded that "the greater extent of Scottish autonomy and distinctiveness helped to make their sub-state election in May 2011 significantly more 'Scottish' than the simultaneous contest in Wales was 'Welsh'" (Scully, 2013).

⁴The British Social Attitudes survey was founded in 1983, but focused on questions measuring social attitudes. It also suffered from the same issues as the BES regarding limiting sample sizes in Scotland and Wales. In 1999, the semi-regular Scottish Social Attitudes Survey was founded partly in response to this limitation.

⁵The British Election Study cross-section, American National Election Study, General Social Survey etc.

⁶During the period of 2012-2017, the demand for landline calls in the UK has dropped from 103 billion minutes in 2012 to 54 billion. 21% of households do not have a landline in 2019, compared to 16% in 2014 (Ofcom, 2019).

⁷This is not to say, however, that these provide an exhaustive limits on the scope of questions included. In Scotland, for example, a substantial number of SES questions, and subsequently research, have explored the various electoral systems used in elections in Scotland, focusing particularly on the transition to Single Transferable Vote voting at the 2007 Scottish local elections (Curtice et al., 2000; Curtice and Seyd, 2011; Johns and Shephard, 2011; Denver et al., 2009a,b; Hepburn, 2008b; Curtice and Marsh, 2008), and the rapid growth and success of the SNP (Mitchell, 2012; Johns and Mitchell, 2016).

⁸Soon to be renamed 'Senedd' - the Welsh word for Parliament

⁹Dewar was Secretary of State for Scotland at the time of writing.

¹⁰Although it is important to note that weighting is unable to correct for serious composition bias (see Tourangeau et al., 2013)

¹¹Unfortunately, surveys that use probability sampling such as the British and Scottish Social Attitudes surveys, and the British Election Study cross-section do not ask comparable knowledge questions.

¹²See discussion in introduction

¹³Although welfare benefits are reserved to the UK Government, the Scotland Act 2016 devolved responsibil-

ity for 11 benefits (see <https://www.deliveringforscotland.gov.uk/at-work/benefits-entitlement/>). The establishment of a Scottish social security agency was a talking point of the campaign and a manifesto pledge several parties (for example, [SNP, 2016](#), pp. 7). Responsibility for agriculture is devolved to the Scottish Parliament, but is also heavily influenced by the European Union's Common Agriculture Policy. The SES was carried out less than ten weeks prior to the EU Referendum, making this topic highly salient at the time.

¹⁴Respondents were asked to select their AM from the following list: Gemma Davies, Simon Jones, Lowri Jenkins, Paul Granger, Martyn Hughes and [Actual AM].

¹⁵The WES 2016 also asked provided respondents with the names of nine different political actors, three from each level of government with legislative power in Wales; the National Assembly for Wales, Westminster, and the European Union (EU). For each name they were given a number of different positions, and asked to match the name with their position. Respondents were most familiar with Westminster political actors, and least familiar with EU actors. This may tell us some information about the relative importance that voters place on these three institutions. However, these results should be interpreted with caution. It is again worth asking "Is this knowledge key for individuals to carry out their tasks?" ([Lupia, 2006a](#)). Being able to match the names of three senior EU officials to their job titles is arguably not information that is beneficial to the majority of voters. Their job titles are all also far less simple to distinguish between: they all start with 'President of the European X'.

¹⁶The Scottish Parliamentary elections in 2007 saw perhaps the most obvious case of widespread voter confusion in recent UK political history. These elections occurred the same day as the Scottish local elections which were to be run using a single-transferable vote (STV) system for the first time. The subsequent confusion led to over 140,000 votes (7% of all votes cast) declared invalid ([Hepburn, 2008a](#)).

¹⁷The inaugural devolved elections were preceded by educational programs to inform the public about the new electoral system. Both the Scottish and Welsh offices committed £2 million to these programs ([White et al., 1999](#)).

¹⁸In 1999 and 2003 the SES and WES were both carried out by NatCen. In 2007 the two studies diverged, with the SES carried out by YouGov, and NatCen retaining WES.

¹⁹See <https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/electionsinwales/2016/08/08/the-most-important-issue-part-iii/>, accessed 15/05/19.

²⁰In many cases 'UK-wide' means 'England and Wales'. This is because several newspapers may produce separate Scottish editions of the newspaper, and several are not for sale in Northern Ireland.

²¹The sharp dip observed in mentions of the Welsh Government in the Welsh press observed in October 2013 is due to missing data. For this period the records for the Daily Post and Western Mail were not available.

²²The same analyses are repeated in Appendix [A](#) on knowledge of EU political actors

4

Explaining Scotland and Wales' Electoral Distinctiveness

4.1 Introduction

SINCE THE EARLIEST SURVEYS OF ELECTIONS ACROSS THE UK, VOTERS IN SCOTLAND AND WALES HAVE BEHAVED IN A SYSTEMATICALLY DIFFERENT WAY FROM VOTERS IN ENGLAND. This difference has been defined by the electoral success and dominance of left-of-centre parties. Both countries have seen extended periods of success for the Labour Party and Conservative Party weakness, and both countries are home to substantial non-statewide or ethno-regionalist parties: the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru. In Scotland, the SNP have risen to become the dominant political party, having won the most votes and seats at the previous two statewide general elections and the three previous sub-state elections. In Wales, Labour continue their near-century of electoral dominance at every level of government, while the Conservatives continue to under perform compared to elections in England. Plaid Cymru continue to play an influential role

in Welsh politics, but are yet to match the SNP's success. This comes as the UK is in a period of seismic constitutional flux and uncertainty, accompanied by increasing social, political, and geographic polarization (Hobolt, 2018). If we are to understand long-term political change in the UK, it is vital to understand where diverging political attitudes are generated, and how they are solidified into political behaviours.

In this chapter I argue that Scotland and Wales' electoral distinctiveness can be explained by the presence of strong sub-state national identities. As Chapter 2 makes clear, national identity has long been used as an explanatory variable in studies of political behaviour in Scotland and Wales (for example Balsom et al., 1983; Bennie et al., 1997a). More recently, explanations of voting in Scotland and Wales have turned to choice-based models, which have questioned the role of national identity in decisions of vote choice (Johns et al., 2010, 2009b; Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012).

I depart from the existing literature by proposing that national identity does indeed play a central role in vote choice. I argue that the main left-of-centre parties – Labour and the SNP/Plaid Cymru – form a bloc that is strongly associated with Scottish and Welsh national identity. The main right-of-centre parties – the Conservative Party and (at time surveys were carried out) UKIP – form a bloc of parties heavily associated with British identity. I argue that these Scottish/Welsh and British party blocs can explain Scotland and Wales' electoral distinctiveness.

The next section of this chapter focuses on describing Scotland and Wales' electoral distinctiveness. I then review of existing work on political behaviour in Scotland and Wales, before outlining my theoretical framework and hypotheses. To test these, I use a series of analyses using survey data from the BES, and the SES and WES. Finally, I present my results and discuss the implications for future research.

4.2 Scotland, Wales, and the territorial cleavage

The UK is a multinational state. So said [Rose \(1971\)](#) in his analysis of the cultural, sociological, and political differences of the constituent countries of the UK. Nearly two decades hence, [Hearl et al. \(1996, pp.180\)](#) argued that “the central class cleavage in British politics has a strong territorial dimension as well, if that does not in fact now predominate.” These works were heavily grounded in the sociological approaches to political science that explain electoral dissimilarity between areas as a function of the politicization of a ‘territorial cleavage’ ([Lijphart, 1977](#)). By this reading, degrees of territorial heterogeneity are influenced by a host of factors such as language, religion, ethnicity, culture, history and economy ([Lipset and Rokkan, 1967](#); [Rokkan and Urwin, 1982](#)).

In Scotland and Wales, this territorial cleavage has manifested itself in two main ways. The first has been the consistent success of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party’s poor performance relative to England, as shown in [4.1](#). In Wales, Labour has won the largest number of votes and seats at every general, devolved and local election since 1922, making the Party in Wales arguably the most successful election winning force in any Western democracy. In contrast, the Conservative Party has gained a smaller vote share in Wales than in England at every general election since 1859, prior to the Representation of the People Act 1867. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party has been more successful electorally, having been the largest party in Scotland as recently as 1959 and overtaking Labour to become the second largest party in Scotland at the 2017 general election. Yet the intervening period was associated with a decline in Conservative electoral fortunes that accompanied Labour’s ascendancy.

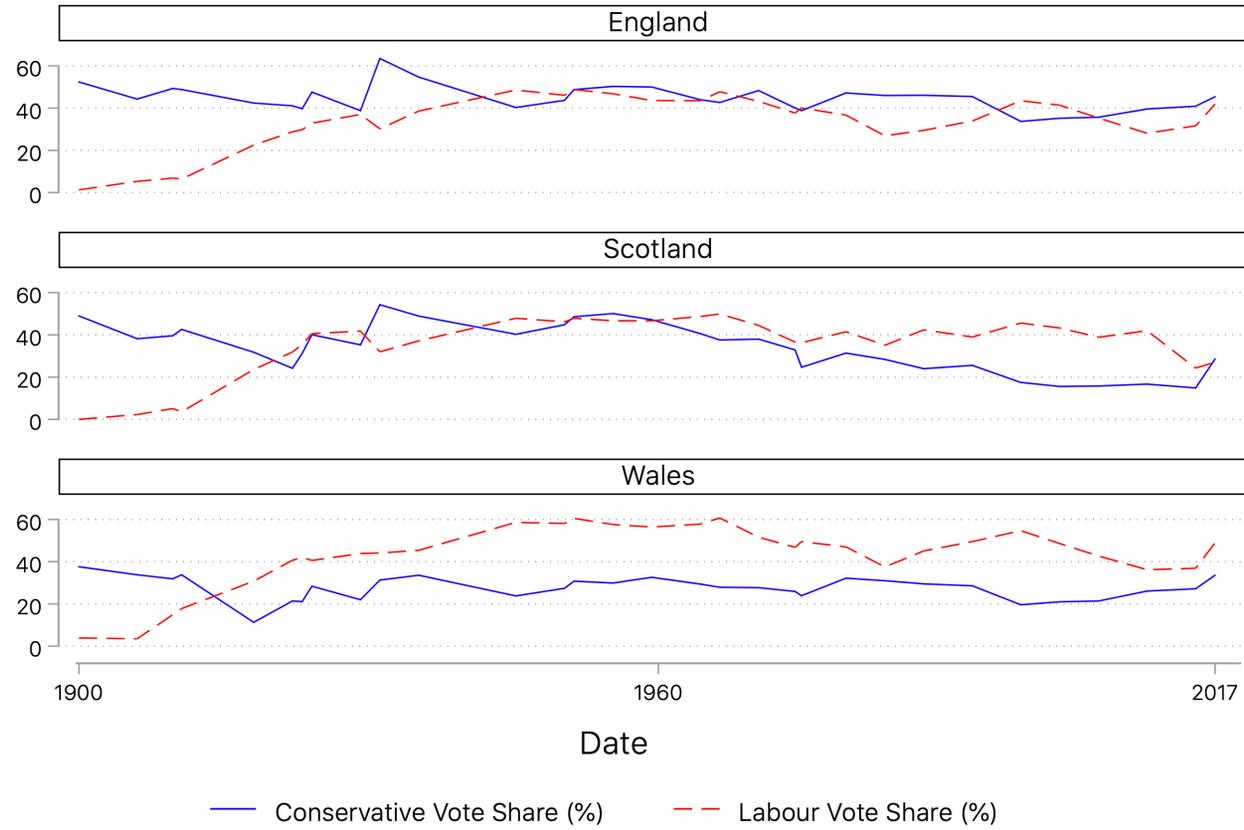


Figure 4.1: Labour and Conservative General Election vote share in England, Scotland, and Wales (1900 - 2017) Source: House of Commons Library

Since the mid-1960s, Scotland and Wales's electoral systems have differentiated from England's in a second way, namely the presence and success of 'ethno-regionalist' political parties: the SNP²³ and Plaid Cymru.²⁴ (Hough and Jeffery, 2003) These parties have had considerable impact on politics in Scotland and Wales. Both political parties have been in government in the devolved institutions: the SNP as sole governing party since 2007²⁵ and Plaid Cymru as junior coalition partners with Welsh Labour from 2007-2011. Furthermore, advocacy of devolution within the Labour Party were emboldened at least in part as a reaction to SNP/Plaid Cymru electoral success of the late 1960s and mid 1970s (Bogdanor, 2001; Mitchell, 2009; Wyn Jones and Scully, 2012; Johns and Mitchell, 2016).

In the first two decades of the 21st Century, the 'territorial cleavage' remains. The SNP have been in government at Holyrood since 2007 and returned a majority of Scotland's MPs in the 2015 and 2017 Westminster elections. In 2014, the Scottish Independence Referendum saw 44.7% of the Scottish electorate vote to leave the UK, a vote which Fieldhouse and Prosser (2018) argue constituted a fundamental re-drawing of Scottish politics. To use Sartori (1976)'s distinction, the referendum shifted the constitutional cleavage from a 'cleavage of identity' to a 'cleavage of conflict'. The 2016 EU Referendum also highlighted Scotland's continued distinctiveness with 62% of voters electing to Remain part of the EU in contrast to the UK-wide result of 51.9% in favour of Leave.

In Wales, longstanding patterns continue unabated. Even at the most recent general election in 2017, where the Conservatives achieved their highest Welsh vote share since 1935, they *lost* three seats to Labour. Labour has been the largest party at every National Assembly election by a considerable margin, holding uninterrupted power since 1999²⁶. Plaid Cymru remains a significant influence in Welsh political life particularly through its roles as coalition partners and supply arrangements for government budgets, although it has not replicated the electoral success of its Scottish sister party the SNP.

4.3 Explaining the Territorial Cleavage

Scotland and Wales have long been recognized as electorally distinct from England in the British political science literature. Several decades prior to devolution, Blondel (1963)'s pioneering work *Voters, Parties and Leaders: The Social Fabric of British Politics* highlighted the particularly unique patterns of electoral support in Wales²⁷, noting above-average levels of support for Labour among the 'lower and middle classes' and uniquely low levels of support for the Conservative Party among the 'middle class' (Blondel, 1963, pp. 62-64). Likewise, in their seminal analysis of British voting behaviour *Political Change in Britain*, Butler and Stokes (1969, pp.171) recognized that Wales was uniquely hostile to the Conservative party.

Yet the currently dominant understanding of voting behaviour in Scotland and Wales - the valence model - is unable to explain this territorial cleavage. First proposed by Clarke et al. (2004) this approach advocates a focus on competence, or 'valence'²⁸ as a way of understanding electoral choice in Britain²⁹ (see Clarke et al., 2009a; Whiteley et al., 2013, also), by using a number of performance-based survey measures to predict individuals' vote choice. Specifically, vote choice can be predicted as a function of three key variables:

1. Party identification (PID hereafter), i.e. the political party a voter feels closest to. Unlike the more traditional understanding of PID as a long-held psychological attachment to a particular political party (Campbell et al., 1960; Butler and Stokes, 1969), Clarke et al. (2004) subscribe to Fiorina (1981)'s argument that PID is instead a running tally that voters keep for the main political parties, which is relatively frequently updated by new information.
2. Party best on most important issue. Respondents are asked an open-ended question about the most important issue facing Britain today, followed by the question "and which party do you think is best-suited to handle this issue?"

3. Party leader evaluations. Respondents are asked to rate party leaders on a scale ranging from 'Dislike strongly' to 'Like strongly'. This is frequently measured in election surveys using a 0-10 thermometer score for each party leader.

These three variables act as heuristics, or information shortcuts, for voters that have little incentive or time in their day-to-day lives to research the detailed policy proposals of each political party. Using these measures, the valence model has been very successful at predicting vote choice at UK general elections, and has become “the new orthodoxy in British voting studies and in British party thinking alike” (Pattie and Johnston, 2009, pp.342).

Following in the footsteps of Clarke et al. (2004), subsequent Scottish and Welsh Election Studies (SES and WES) turned to ‘valence’ explanations of voting behaviour in devolved elections (Scully and Elias, 2008; Johns et al., 2009a; Johns, 2011a; Scully, 2013; Johns et al., 2013b; Scully and Larker, 2017). In Scotland Johns et al. (2010) illustrated how ‘performance politics’ was a major factor in the SNP’s shock victory and Labour’s defeat, arguing that “the SNP did not win due to its policy stances, whether on the constitution, council tax or anything else. Rather, it overtook Labour by persuading enough voters that it was a credible and competent party of government” (pp. 181). When examining a binary vote choice of Labour or SNP, they conclude that “national identity exerts virtually no independent influence over vote choice” (pp.185). Likewise, in Wales the valence model has challenged Balsom et al. (1983)’s ‘Three-Wales Model’ as a primary explanation for vote choice (Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012).

Despite the obvious contribution the valence model has made to understanding of vote choice in the UK it cannot explain the central question of Welsh (and Scottish) electoral distinctiveness. This is for three key reasons. The first, and perhaps most obvious reason, is that many valence models actively avoid addressing the issue of political distinctiveness across the UK empirically. In Clarke et al. (2004)’s *Political Choice in Britain*, geographic variation in general election vote is acknowledged but subsequently ignored. Models of vote choice simply include ‘dummy’ controls for the regions

and nations of the UK. This does nothing to address the cause of these territorial cleavages. Instead, the coefficients in these models actually highlight that significant territorial distinctiveness exists and that this variation is unexplained by existing explanatory variables. Far more recently, [Clarke et al. \(2017\)](#)'s attempt to apply a valence approach to explaining individual-level EU referendum vote falls victim to similar methods. Once again, the distinctiveness of the Scottish vote in the referendum is controlled away by including a dummy control for respondents in Scotland³⁰. Again, coefficients for these variables tell us that more information is needed.

Second, in order to understand the long-term territorial cleavage that exists between Scotland and Wales on the one hand and England on the other, it is first necessary to address the process of how political attitudes are generated. As [Evans \(2017\)](#) argues, political attitudes are often better understood by examining longer-term identities and beliefs. For example, a voter's social class may help us to understand attitudes towards certain economic issues such as income redistribution, which in turn influences their vote choice ([Evans, 2017](#), pp.180). In a similar vein, if we are to understand the distinctive electoral success and weakness of certain parties in Scotland and Wales, then we should examine the factors unique to voters in Scotland and Wales that have driven support for these parties for decades (or even centuries).

Third, at least part of the valence model's success lies in how valence measures are operationalized from individual-level survey data:

1. Valence measures tend to lead to less error compared to measures of identity, as they are often easier for respondents to answer, giving them greater statistical power ([Green and Jennings, 2017](#)).
2. Questions are asked in ways that increase the likelihood that answers are related to party choice. These questions specifically mention party names and party leaders, which has the potential to have a priming effect for respondents who wish to be consistent in their answers

(Tourangeau et al., 2000a; Green and Jennings, 2017). This is especially true when models use performance-based measures taken from post-election surveys. In such cases, respondents are providing information on their vote choice and performance-evaluations in a short space of time within the same survey, potentially increasing the risk of bias in their answers.

3. Performance evaluations are likely to exhibit greater variation than questions of identity, which by their very nature tend to be more constant (Green and Jennings, 2017). This means that performance-based measures will again display greater explanatory power in statistical modelling.

These factors tend to mean that valence models of vote choice give the false impression that factors further back in the funnel of causality, such as social class or national identity, are not highly important in determining vote choice.

The valence model has therefore provided a necessary but insufficient progression of the understanding of electoral behaviour in Scotland and Wales. The model aims to explain individual vote choice, and has demonstrated great success in doing so. Valence cannot, however, explain all aspects of political behaviour. As the primary authors of the valence model themselves acknowledge “The variables in the valence politics model presented [...] do not explain everything about electoral choice, but they provide powerful [...] insights into what is going on in the minds of voters.” (Whiteley et al., 2016, pp.236). If we are to understand the longer term trends of distinctiveness, we must explore additional factors that distinguish Scottish and Welsh voters from voters in England.

4.3.1 The role of national identity

To gain an understanding of what drives the territorial cleavage observed in Scotland and Wales, it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel, nor to throw out the contributions made by more recent analysis of vote choice. As already discussed, political scientists have for decades identified and sought

to explain the electoral distinctiveness of Scotland and Wales. Early political science scholarship explained these patterns via the dominant understanding of electoral politics of the time: the ‘sociological model’. First introduced to the UK by [Butler and Stokes \(1969\)](#), the model was heavily influenced by the ‘Michigan model’.^{31 32} According to this reading, vote choice is heavily influenced by party identification, a psychological attachment to a political party developed during early socialization and influenced by a voter’s social position. [Butler and Stokes \(1969\)](#) argued social class was particularly important in the UK, as illustrated by apparent patterns of ‘class voting’; that is, the tendency of voters belonging to a particular class to vote for a certain party compared to voters in a different class ([Evans, 2017](#), pp. 178). This in turn built on earlier sociological work by [Andersen and Davidson \(1943\)](#), who argued that elections should be seen as ‘democratic class struggle’. This early work viewed the electoral distinctiveness of Wales (and subsequently Scotland) as an expression of the differing class make-up of the two nations, relative to that of England.

Yet this approach was, and remains, unable to account for the rise of the SNP and Plaid Cymru whose voters are drawn from across the class boundaries. As a result, scholars broadened their understanding of the sociological model to include other measures of identity. In Wales, [Balsom et al. \(1983\)](#) developed what became known as the ‘Three Wales Model’ to explain the distinctiveness of Welsh electoral behaviour. Welsh voting behaviour, they argued, was driven by three central cleavages in Welsh society; social class, national identity, and language ([Balsom et al., 1983, 1984; Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012](#)). In particular, the authors emphasised the role that an attachment to particular cultural aspects of ‘Welsh identity’ played in influencing political behaviour in Wales. Voters who identified as exclusively Welsh, or more Welsh than British, were substantially more likely to support the Labour Party. Voters who considered themselves to be British rather than Welsh were more likely to vote Conservative. Ability to speak Welsh (or one’s family’s ability to speak Welsh) was strongly correlated with support for Plaid Cymru.

In Scotland, scholars also turned to national identity as a way of explaining Scotland’s electoral

distinctiveness. Bennie et al. (1997a) used survey data from the 1992 Scottish Election Study to show that vote choice for the Conservatives and SNP was highly correlated with national identity, with support for Labour also correlated with feelings of ‘Scottishness’. They also framed Conservative weakness in Scotland in terms of national identity, arguing the party was viewed as ‘anti-Scottish’. This was identified by the Conservative party themselves. An inquiry by two Scottish Conservative vice-presidents concluded that the party’s poor performance in the 1987 general election was due to perceptions of it being “English and anti-Scottish” (Mitchell, 1990a). In Wales, Wyn Jones et al. (2002) arrived at the same conclusion in exploring the underlying causes of Conservative weakness in Wales: the Conservatives were seen as a fundamentally ‘English’ party.

The focus on national identity as a key variable for explaining political behaviour in Scotland and Wales continued with the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales (Curtice, 1999; Wyn Jones and Trystan, 1999; Surridge and McCrone, 1999; Wyn Jones, 2001; Wyn Jones et al., 2002; Curtice, 2006d; Johns et al., 2010; Pattie and Johnston, 2009; Scully, 2016; Henderson et al.). Curtice (1999) used national identity to explain the differing outcomes of the 1997 devolved referendums. Despite levels of pride in Scottish and Welsh culture being almost identical, ‘Scottishness’, ‘Welshness’, and even ‘Britishness’ manifested themselves differently in both countries. British identifiers in Wales were more likely to oppose the NAW and less likely to view the institution as important as compared to British identifiers in Scotland. In Scotland, even a majority of those who identified as British or English voted in favour of establishing the SP (Surridge and McCrone, 1999). ‘Welsh’ identifiers were also less warm to the idea of devolution compared to their ‘Scottish’ identifying counterparts (although it was still the case that a majority of Welsh identifiers voted in favour of devolution) (Curtice, 1999). These differences, combined with the differing size of groups who identified as ‘Welsh’ compared to ‘Scottish’ explained the differing outcomes. Wyn Jones (2001) argued that “national identity has become one of the most significant determinants in influencing how members of the Welsh electorate have viewed the reforms to their country’s

political system”(Wyn Jones, 2001, pp.53).

I argue that these factors can be used to explain Scotland and Wales’ electoral distinctiveness. Fortunately, this does not mean disregarding more contemporary choice-based models of political behaviour. Rather, I argue that a holistic understanding of voting behaviour can view these strands as complementary explanations, rather than rival approaches. This interpretation is contingent on the fundamental logic that underpins the work of Campbell et al. (1960): the ‘funnel of causality’. Examining the role of variables whose influence is sequentially prior to those captured in the valence model also has important theoretical benefits. Much like social class and other sociological identities, an individual’s national identity is unlikely to be solely a result of their partisan identity. It is a manifestation of geography, attachment to history, literature, sport, community, language, and shared myths (Anderson, 1991). Therefore, unlike several of the performance-based measures in valence models of political behaviour, there are unlikely to be issues of endogeneity, or ‘reverse causality’³³.

In the next section I outline why variables further back in the funnel of causality, specifically national identity, can help us to understand the electoral distinctiveness of Scotland and Wales.

4.3.2 Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

How does national identity drives the electoral distinctiveness of Scotland and Wales? As the distinctiveness is characterized by the success of left-of-centre parties and weakness of right-of-centre parties, one obvious starting point would be to show how national identity influences left-right political attitudes. There is, of course, nothing about voters in Scotland and Wales that make them inherently more left-wing. Rather, I argue that left-wing politics has become an important feature of Scottish and Welsh identity. Thus, it is the presence of a substantial number of voters in Scotland and Wales who identify as ‘Scottish’ or ‘Welsh’ that drives the decade long dominance of this bloc of parties. The connection between left-wing political parties and these identities can be at least

partially explained by two contextual factors.

First, this alignment may be a reaction to what is widely perceived to be the ideological position of the Conservative Party. Evidence from [Wyn Jones et al. \(2002\)](#) and [Mitchell \(1990a\)](#) has shown that the Conservative Party is perceived to be inherently ‘un-Scottish’ or ‘un-Welsh’. Therefore, voters who identify as primarily Scottish or Welsh are likely to see the act of voting for the party as a contradiction to their identity. This is not to say, of course, that people who feel Scottish and Welsh will never vote for the Conservative Party. A voter’s national identity is unlikely to be the most salient issue at election time. Yet as discussed in the previous section, it can nonetheless yield important impact. The natural opposition to a party perceived to be un-Scottish and un-Welsh is therefore those parties which are aligned *with* Scottish and Welsh identity. This opposition has been, to differing extents, the Labour Party and the SNP in Scotland and Plaid Cymru in Wales. As Anthony King surmised during the BBC’s 1997 general election coverage : “The Celts clearly don’t like the Tories” ([King, 1997](#)).

The second reason for the dominance of the left-of-centre bloc in Scotland and Wales can trace its beginnings to social factors that historically aligned voters in these countries with the Labour Party. These are factors such as different religious traditions ([Bennie et al., 1997a](#)), the presence of a substantial non-English-speaking minority in Wales³⁴ ([Balsom et al., 1983](#)) combined with highly industrialized population centres and a large public sector ([Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985](#)). The SNP and Plaid Cymru then themselves adopted a left-of-centre policy platform, in part, as a reaction to the Labour Party’s success in Scotland and Wales ([Massetti and Schakel, 2015](#)). This alignment between left-of-centre political support and Scottishness and Welshness remains as an integral part of the ‘imagined communities’ of Scotland and Wales, even though many of the social features of its origin are in decline or no longer exist ([Anderson, 1991](#)).

I therefore proceed to examine the role of national identity in shaping Scotland and Wales’ electoral distinctiveness by testing two hypotheses:

H1: There is a strong positive relationship between identifying as primarily Scottish and Welsh, and left-wing political identity.

H2: There is a strong positive relationship between identifying as primarily Scottish and Welsh, and voting for left-of-centre parties.

Confirming these hypotheses will demonstrate the central role that national identity plays in Scotland and Wales's electoral distinctiveness.

4.4 Data

To explore the impact of national identity on political behaviour in Scotland and Wales, I use data from the 2015-2017 British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP), the 2016 Scottish Election Study (SES), and 2016 Welsh Election Study (WES) (Fieldhouse et al., 2018; Henderson et al., 2016; Scully et al., 2016). This provides data covering two general elections (2015 and 2017) and one devolved election (2016) in both Scotland and Wales. Although this is the period of time which has the best available data for testing my hypotheses, it also raises challenges. The three years captured by the data are perhaps some of the most politically turbulent of the last 50 years in the UK. The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum and 2016 EU Referendum have generated substantial political uncertainty: the 2015 and 2017 general election were two of the most volatile general elections ever measured by the BES (Mellon, 2016). Both referendums also led to a substantial shift in the salience of group identities within the electorate (for example, see Fieldhouse and Prosser, 2018; Hobolt et al., 2018). The politicization of 'Yes' and 'No' voters in Scotland, and 'Leave' and 'Remain' voters across the UK means we might expect that national identity effects may be more difficult to capture than at previous time-points. The data used therefore presents a difficult test for this chapter's hypothesis.

The main explanatory variable of interest, national identity, is operationalised using the BES national identity scales:

Where would you place yourself on these scales (1-7)?

- Britishness
- Scottishness (if in Scotland)
- Welshness (if in Wales)
- Englishness

From this information I create a ‘modified moreno’ scale ranging from ‘British not Scottish/Welsh’ to ‘Scottish/Welsh not British’, with a midpoint that marks ‘Equally British and Scottish/Welsh’. I create this variable by subtracting a respondents’ ‘Britishness’ score from the ‘Scottishness/Welsh’ score creating a 13-point scale, ranging from ‘-6’ to ‘6’. A ‘6’ denotes someone who sees themselves as strongly Scottish/Welsh but not British, with ‘-6’ denoting the opposite. The distributions of this variable among the Scottish and Welsh samples are provided in Figure 4.2. The distribution shows a clear pattern, with the plurality of respondents feeling a mixture of British and Scottish/Welsh. There are also key differences in the distributions in Scotland and Wales, namely that Scottish identity is more widespread than Welsh identity. In Scotland, a substantial proportion of the sample feel Scottish and not British. This number is considerably smaller in the Welsh sample. A higher proportion of respondents in Wales feel more British than Welsh compared to those in the Scottish sample.

4.5 Analysis

Perhaps the most obvious question that arises from the dominance of left-of-centre parties in Scotland and Wales is: are Scottish and Welsh voters just more left wing than voters in England? To answer this question, I rely on two variables contained in the BES: an ‘objective’ left-right scale, and a subjective left-right placement. The BES’s left-right scale places respondents on a 0-10 scale which increases in increments of 0.5. A respondent’s place on that scale is calculated from their answers to the five questions shown in Table 4.1. Each item presents a statement that captures aspects of left-wing

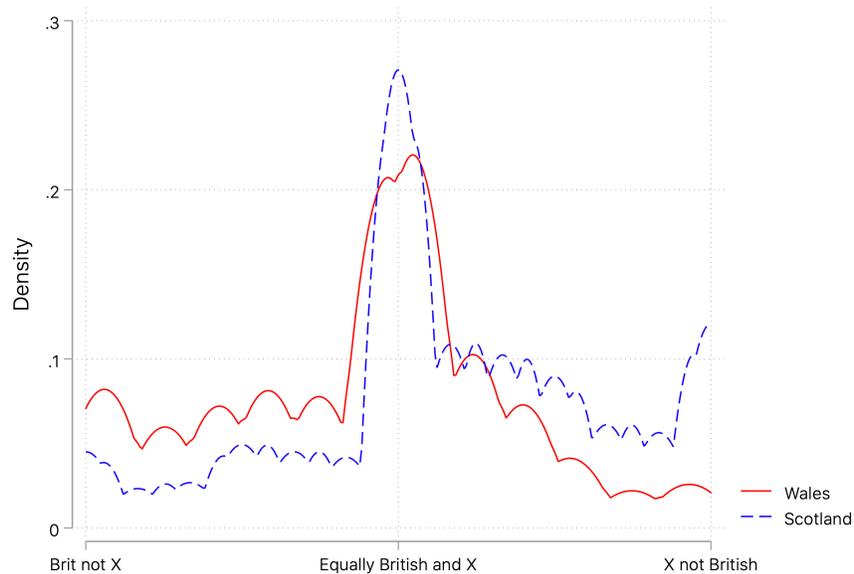


Figure 4.2: Kernel density estimates of modified Moreno score in Scotland and Wales. 'X = Scottish' in Scotland and 'X = Welsh' in Wales. **Source:** BESIP

political sentiment, with voters being asked the extent to which they agree with each. The BES scale is then constructed using this information, and the distributions of voters in England, Scotland, and Wales are shown in Figure 4.3.

The differences between respondents in each country are small, but consistent in their direction: fewer respondents in England agreed with each statements compared to Scotland and Wales. This is reflected in Figure 4.3, which shows higher numbers of Scottish and Welsh respondents on the left-hand side of the Left-Right Scale, and higher numbers of English voters on the right-hand side. This suggests voters in Scotland and Wales are at least marginally more left-wing than voters in England³⁵.

When dealing with questions of identity, however, it is often more useful to look at subjective evaluations of left-right placement. If, as I propose, alignment with left-wing political parties and thinking is an integral part of the Scottish and Welsh national identities, then we would ex-

	England	Scotland	Wales
Government should redistribute incomes	49.1	59.0	52.0
Big business takes advantage of ordinary people	73.7	81.0	79.3
Ordinary working people do not get their fair share	70.1	75.5	74.6
There is one law for the rich and one for the poor	68.0	74.0	73.5
Management will always try to get the better of employees	66.2	69.3	68.7
N	15,151	1,553	945

Table 4.1: % of respondents who 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' to BES Left-Right scale items, in England, Scotland, and Wales. All data are weighted

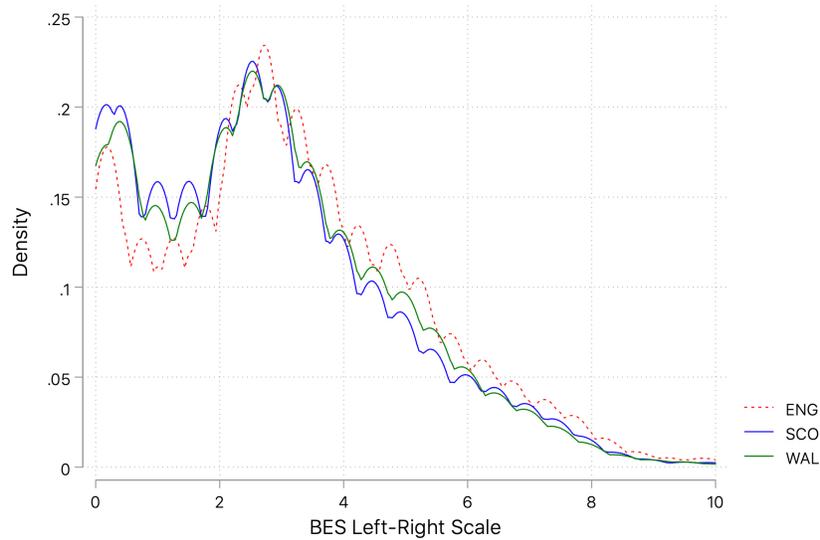


Figure 4.3: Kernel density estimates of BES left-right scale in England, Scotland and Wales **Source:** BESIP

pect higher proportions of people in these countries to consider themselves left-wing regardless of whether they ascribe to various left-wing ideas. In the 2015-2017 BES, respondents were asked to place themselves on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is very left-wing and 10 is very right-wing. Figure 4.4 illustrates the distribution of voters in England, Scotland, and Wales across the 0 to 10 ideological scale. The distributions show that subjective left-right placement follows a slightly exaggerated pattern to the BES left-right scales. Higher proportions of Scottish and Welsh voters place themselves

on the left-hand side of the 0-10 scale than English voters, and higher proportions of English voters place themselves on the right-hand side of the spectrum. A plurality of voters in the three countries place themselves towards the centre of the spectrum. An important aspect of this question is omitted from the figure however. Approximately one in five respondents were unable to place themselves on the left-right spectrum, instead opting to select ‘Don’t know’. The distribution of ‘Don’t knows’ was consistent across all three countries³⁶ but it does highlight the important point that the left-right ideological spectrum is something of an elite concept, marginalizing many people by its very design. It appears substantial numbers of voters do not conceptualize their political attitudes in this way.

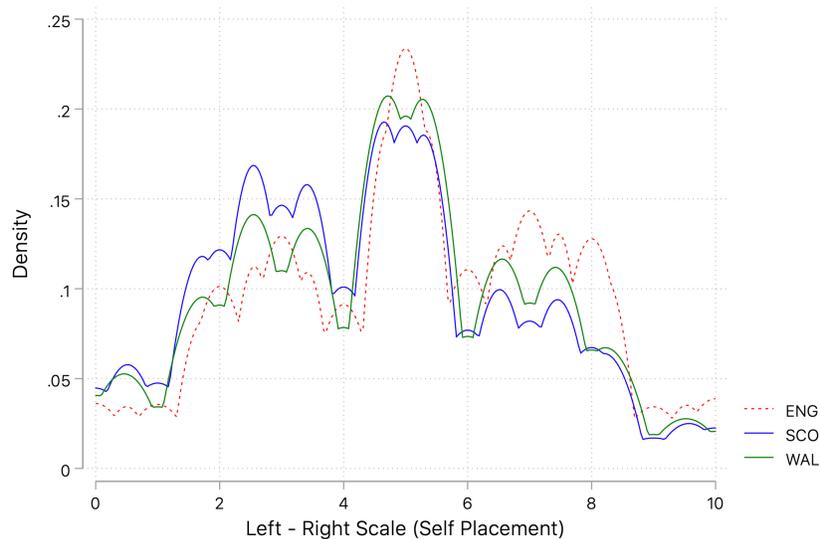


Figure 4.4: Kernel density estimates of left-right self placement in England, Scotland and Wales. N:England = 20,400, Scotland = 2,094, Wales = 1,160. **Source:** BESIP Wave 1

However, a pattern nevertheless remains in the data, confirmed by both subjective and objective measures of left-right identity, that higher proportions of voters in Scotland and Wales than England are ‘left-wing’.

Next I test hypothesis H_1 , that Scottish and Welsh identity has a positive effect on left-wing placement on left-right scales. To do this, I use four linear regression models, using BES left-right scale and subjective left-right placement as dependent variables, and run each model in both Scotland and Wales. The model is as follows:

$$\text{LEFTRIGHT} = (\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{AGE} + \beta_2 \text{GENDER} + \beta_3 \text{EDUCATION} + \beta_4 \text{CLASS} + \beta_5 \text{NATID} + \beta_6 \text{TENANT})$$

Where:

LEFTRIGHT is either a respondents' placement on the BES left-right scale or their self-placement on a left-right scale. In both measures, 0=left and 10=right. Therefore, a negative coefficient will indicate that Welsh/Scottish identity has a positive effect on left-wing placement. Respondents who answered 'Don't know' are treated as missing observations;

NATID is the modified Moreno scale as a measure of national identity;

EDUCATION is a binary variable of whether a respondent has graduated from university;

CLASS is a binary measure of subjective class identity, using the BES question:

Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular class??

- No
- Yes, middle class
- Yes, working class
- Yes, other

Respondents who identify as working class are coded as 1 and all others coded as 0;

TENANT is a binary variable of home ownership.

The results, provided in Table 4.2, indicate that national identity has substantial effect on both measures of left-right placement among respondents in Scotland and Wales. Figure 4.5 provides a more intuitive visualization of the effect. Respondents who identify as primarily Scottish or Welsh place further to the left on subjective and BES left-right placement. Conversely, respondents who identify as primarily British place further to the right on both measures. The effect of national identity on subjective left-right placement in Scotland and Wales is remarkably similar, but there is a significant difference between respondents in the two countries with regard to the BES left-right measure. Here, Scottish identity appears to have a larger effect than Welsh identity. It is possible that this is a product of the smaller samples for the subjective left-right measure due to the high number of 'Don't knows'. The people who were unable to place themselves on the left-right spectrum may be disproportionately distributed towards the right on the BES scale. However, it does also emphasize the importance of the collective national 'myth' that attaches left-wing politics to Scottish and Welsh identity. Regardless of whether Welsh identifiers are 'objectively' more left-wing than British identifiers, they still *believe* this to be the case. Ultimately, the findings offer support to Hypothesis 1: that there is a positive relationship between left-wing political sentiment and Scottish and Welsh national identity.

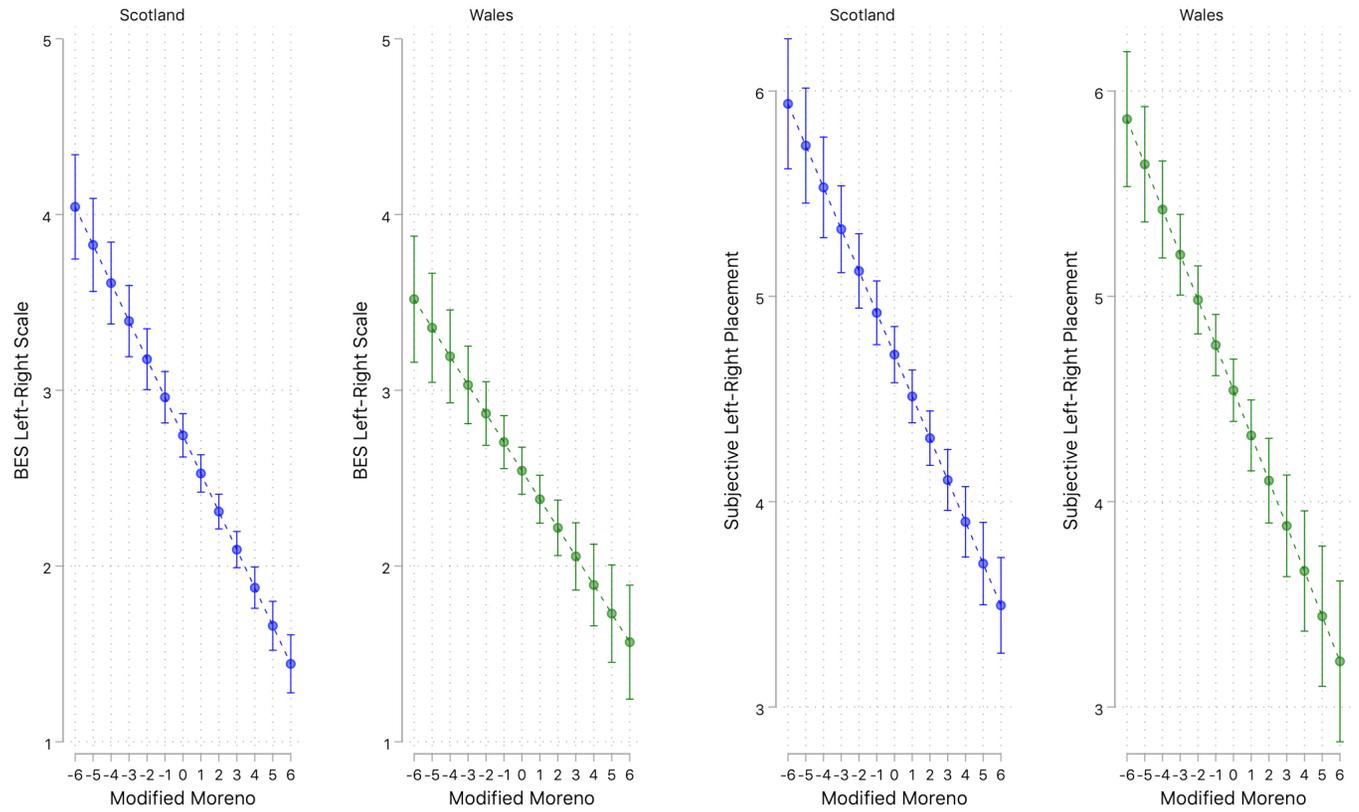


Figure 4.5: Marginal effects of national identity on left-right placement Source: BESIP

	Scotland		Wales	
	BES L-R Scale	Subjective L-R	BES L-R Scale	Subjective L-R
National Identity	-0.217*** (0.021)	-0.204*** (0.025)	-0.163*** (0.032)	-0.220*** (0.033)
Working Class	-0.583*** (0.141)	-0.698*** (0.159)	-0.947*** (0.181)	-0.609*** (0.195)
Age (Centred)	-0.020*** (0.005)	0.006 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.008)	0.002 (0.008)
Female	0.143 (0.129)	-0.351** (0.158)	0.142 (0.173)	0.113 (0.180)
Homeowner	0.145 (0.145)	0.025 (0.192)	0.137 (0.222)	0.308 (0.243)
Graduate	0.098** (0.045)	-0.256*** (0.066)	0.141** (0.059)	-0.226*** (0.065)
Constant	2.593*** (0.258)	6.022*** (0.321)	2.609*** (0.358)	5.217*** (0.440)
Observations	2301	2105	1302	1180

Table 4.2: OLS Regression predicting Left-Right Placement with standard errors in parentheses. Note, coefficients are not probabilities. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

4.5.1 National Identity and party blocs

Now that the relationship between left-right placement and national identity has been established, the analysis can turn to the link between national identity and political behaviour. In particular, it is the specific behaviour of voting for left-of-centre parties that clearly differentiates Scotland and Wales from England electorally. I begin by examining descriptive patterns of voting in relation to national identity. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 show the distribution of ‘bloc’ voting across the modified Moreno national identity scale. The blocs in question are a left-of-centre bloc, and a right-of-centre bloc. The left-of-centre bloc consists of Labour and the SNP/Plaid Cymru, and the right-of-centre bloc consists of the Conservative party and the UK Independence Party. In both countries, the data displays a stark pattern. In Scotland, a near negligible number of voters who identify as more Scot-

tish than British cast a vote for the right-of-centre bloc. In Wales, the proportion of more Welsh than British identifiers voting for the right-of-centre bloc is slightly larger, but overall, very small.

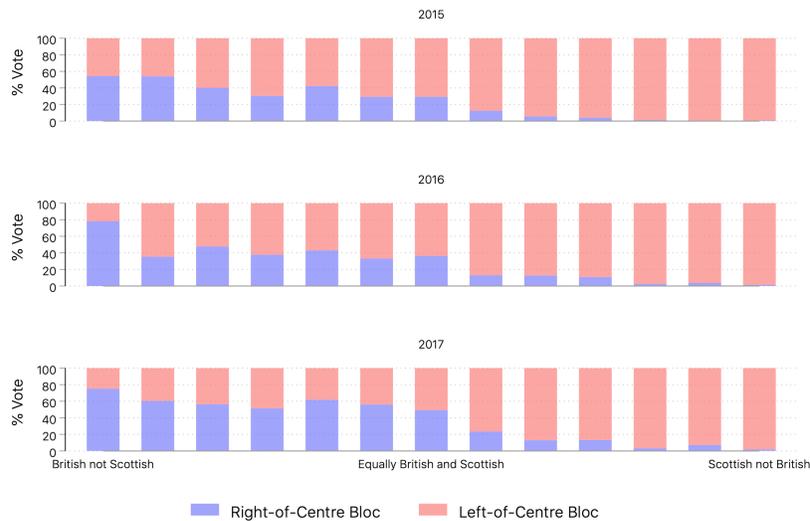


Figure 4.6: % of voters who voted for left-of-centre bloc vs. right-of-centre bloc by national identity in Scotland
Source: BESIP

At the ‘British’ end of the identity spectrum we can observe a different and less homogeneous pattern. In Scotland in 2015, a majority of respondents at the extreme end (-6 and -5) voted for the right-of-centre bloc, but a significant minority also voted for the left-of-centre bloc. At every other point on the national identity spectrum a majority of voters cast votes for the left-of-centre Bloc (although these majorities are considerably smaller at the British end of the spectrum). But 2015 is unique in Scotland in this regard: far greater majorities at the British end voted for the right-of-centre bloc in 2016 and 2017. This is likely due to the highly unusual nature of the 2015 General Election in Scotland. Held just eight months after the Scottish Independence Referendum, the SNP and Labour Party had a combined vote share of 74.3%. In Wales, the British end of the spectrum has a majority of votes cast for the right-of-centre bloc in every year. The overall pattern is clear however: there remains stark and substantial differences in vote choice between those respondents who hold

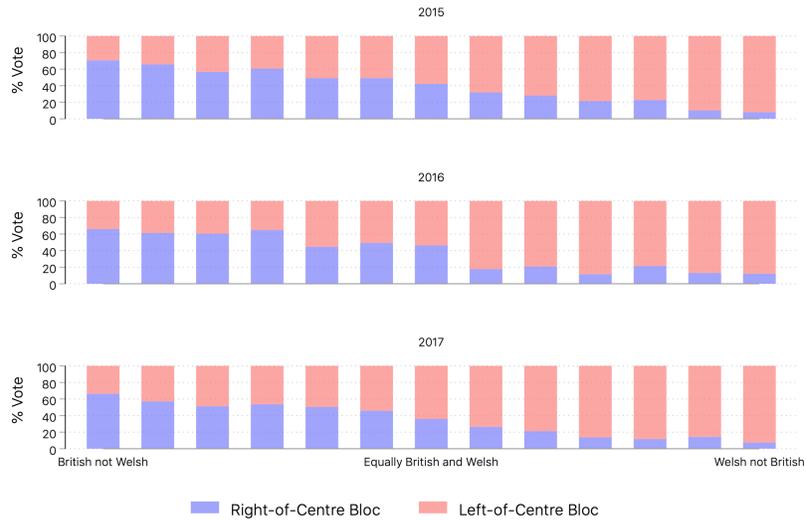


Figure 4.7: % of voters who voted for left-of-centre bloc vs. right-of-centre bloc by national identity in Wales **Source:** BESIP

different national identities in Scotland and Wales.

Next, I employ a more robust modelling of the relationship between vote choice and national identity. I employ a set of binomial logit models, using a binary dependent variable of whether a respondent voted for the Scottish/Welsh Bloc (coded as 1) or British Bloc (coded as 0). The model is specified as follows:

$$\text{BLOC VOTE} = f(\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{AGE} + \beta_2 \text{GENDER} + \beta_3 \text{EDUCATION} + \beta_4 \text{CLASS} + \beta_5 \text{NATID} + \beta_6 \text{TENANT} + \beta_7 \text{EUREFVOTE} + \beta_8 \text{INDYREF} + \beta_8 \text{WELSH}) \quad (4.1)$$

Where

NATID, *AGE*, *GENDER*, *EDUCATION*, *CLASS*, and *TENANT* are the same measures

used in Table 4.2, and

EUREFVOTE is a binary variable coded 1 if respondent voted Leave, 0 if respondent voted Remain;³⁷

INDYREF is a binary variable coded 1 if a respondent in Scotland voted for Independence and 0 otherwise³⁸

WELSH is a binary measure of whether a respondent in Wales speaks Welsh or not.

Respondents that cast votes for political parties not considered part of the two Blocs are excluded³⁹.

Table 4.3 displays discrete changes in predicted probabilities of factors influencing Scottish/Welsh Bloc vote at the 2015, 2016, and 2017 elections. Figures given are the change in the probability of voting for the Scottish/Welsh Bloc when a given explanatory variable moves from its minimum value to its maximum value, holding all other explanatory variables constant. For example, in 2015, the probability of a respondent voting for the Welsh Bloc would increase by 59% if that respondent moved from ‘Strongly British not Welsh’ to ‘Strongly Welsh not British’. For binary explanatory variables, the change in probability is the change seen moving from 0 to 1.

	Wales			Scotland		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Nat ID Scale	0.587*	0.481*	0.529*	0.273*	0.350*	0.5578*
Voted Leave	-0.447*	-0.503*	-0.480*	-0.113*	-0.095*	-0.328*
Working Class	0.256*	0.263*	0.284*	0.057*	0.101*	0.113*
Age (Centered)	-0.093	-0.469*	-0.447*	-0.073*	-0.231*	-0.143*
Female	0.020	0.106*	-0.003	0.011	-0.067	0.052
Homeowner	-0.001	-0.0245	-0.130*	-0.022	-0.015	-0.094*
Graduate	0.044	-0.139	0.105	0.012	0.012	0.027
Cymraeg	0.074	0.318*	0.022	-	-	-
Voted for Indy	-	-	-	0.192*	0.293*	0.357*

Table 4.3: Maximum Discrete Changes in predicted probability of voting for Scottish or Welsh Bloc, 2015-2017. Significant results denoted with *.

For every election covered by the data in both Scotland and Wales, a respondent's national identity has a substantial and significant effect on bloc vote choice. In Wales, the effect is more constant than in Scotland which has substantial variation between election years. At elections in Wales, moving from the minimum to the maximum value of national identity yields an increase of 48-59% in the probability of voting for the Welsh Bloc. In Scotland there is more variation, with changes in probability ranging from 27-56%. Here, the effect of national identity is smallest in 2015, although it is still considerably greater than all other factors including a respondent's vote choice at the Independence Referendum. This, again, is likely due to the highly unusual context of the 2015 general election in Scotland. The results confirm that national identity plays a large and important role in creating the parameters of vote choice in Scotland and Wales. Even when controlling for powerful predictors of vote choice like as subjective class, EU Referendum vote and Independence Referendum vote, national identity exerts a large effect.

Other substantial effects include subjective class identity and, in Scotland, a respondent's Independence Referendum vote. A respondent's EU Referendum vote also has large impact on bloc vote choice. In Wales, respondents who voted or intended to vote Leave were considerably less likely to vote for the Welsh Bloc at any of the three elections covered by the data. The effect in Scotland was considerably smaller, suggesting that attitudes towards the EU and the impending referendum played a much larger role in Wales in 2015 and 2016 than in Scotland.

In addition to the main models, I include interactions of national identity and Leave vote (vote intention in 2015 and 2016)⁴⁰. Figure 4.8 displays the full effect of the interactions across all possible values as marginal effects, in line with Brambor et al. (2006). The results emphasize the findings presented in Table 4.3, that; 1) national identity plays substantial role in setting the parameters of vote choice in Scotland and Wales among both Remain and Leave voters, and 2) that the EU Referendum had a greater impact on voting in Wales compared to Scotland.

Finally, to ensure that the effect of national identity is not driven solely by the inclusion of the

two ‘nationalist’ parties in my operationalization of the left-of-centre bloc, I employ a multinomial logistic regression that separates out Labour from the SNP and Plaid Cymru. Here, the probabilities of voting for each party are relative to the probability of a voter voting for the British party bloc. Doing so, we can identify whether national identity is only a predictor of voting for the SNP and Plaid Cymru, or if it is also a significant factor in predicting Labour vote choice. Results are presented as discrete change in predicted probabilities in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

Although the effect of national identity is, unsurprisingly, substantially larger for SNP and Plaid Cymru voters, national identity remains a significant factor in differentiating Labour voters from Conservative and UKIP voters in Scotland and Wales. For both the 2015 and 2017 general elections, voters who identified as more Scottish or Welsh than British were significantly more likely to vote for either Labour or the SNP/Plaid Cymru compared to the right-of-centre bloc of parties. National identity appears to have had a substantially large impact in 2015 in driving the Labour vote in Scotland, yet this is likely inflated due to the highly unusual 2015 general election result in Scotland which saw nearly three in every four Scottish voters vote SNP or Labour. The effect is weakest at predicting voting for Labour in Wales, yet is still a larger association than that between speaking Welsh and voting for Plaid Cymru, a relationship that is often stressed as particularly important (Balsom et al., 1983; Wyn Jones et al., 2002).

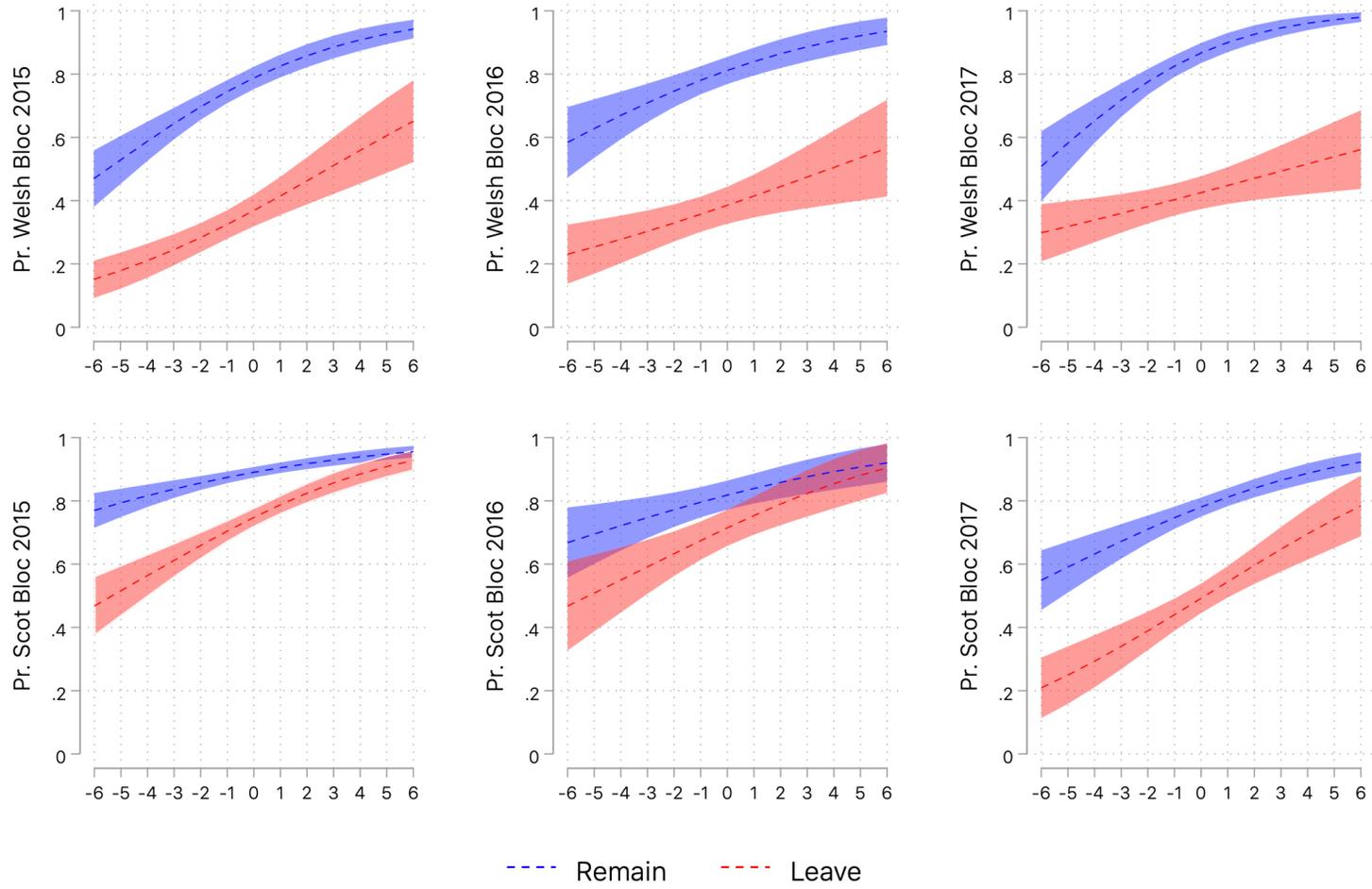


Figure 4.8: Marginal effect of national identity interacted with EU Referendum vote on probability of voting for the X bloc 2015-2017

	Scotland			Wales		
	Labour	SNP	$\bar{\Delta}$	Labour	Plaid Cymru	$\bar{\Delta}$
National ID	0.428*	0.858*	0.643	0.090*	0.524*	0.307
Leave	-0.149*	0.040*	-0.055	-0.398*	-0.048*	-0.223
Working Class	0.069*	0.001	0.035	0.275*	-0.011	0.132
Female	0.001	0.015	0.008	0.046	-0.236	-0.095
Age	0.067	-0.190*	-0.062	-0.079	-0.016	-0.048
Homeowner	-0.027	0.001	-0.013	-0.016	0.018	0.001
Graduate	0.072	-0.074	-0.001	0.007	0.035	0.021
Indy	-0.502	0.716*	0.107	-	-	-
Welsh Speaker –	-	-	-	-0.009	0.070*	0.031

Table 4.4: Maximum discrete changes in probability from multinomial logit predicting Labour/SNP/Plaid Cymru vote choice in Scotland and Wales at 2015 general election. Base outcome = voting for Conservatives or UKIP. All other predictors are set to their means. * denotes significant effect. Full tables available in Appendix B.

4.6 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to identify the drivers of Scotland and Wales' electoral distinctiveness. Ultimately, my empirical findings strongly and robustly demonstrate that national identity plays a central role in underpinning this difference. By aligning voters with left-wing political attitudes, identities, and political parties, national identity plays an important role in making voting for right-of-centre parties not impossible, but improbable, given that such an act would be contradictory to a substantial proportion of the Scottish and Welsh electorates' identity.

These blocs of parties can therefore be described as a British bloc and a Scottish/Welsh bloc, referencing the primary identities that drive support for these blocs. Even when vote choice is broken down into choice of individual party within that bloc, it remains a central predictor of Labour and SNP/Plaid Cymru vote choice.

Importantly, this effect is not restricted to sub-state elections but is consistent across multiple elections at different levels of government over time. This is significant because it shows that sub-

	Scotland			Wales		
	Labour	SNP	$\bar{\Delta}$	Labour	Plaid Cymru	$\bar{\Delta}$
National ID	0.155*	0.760*	0.458	0.133*	0.417*	0.275
Leave	-0.162*	-0.200*	-0.181	-0.454*	-0.031*	-0.243
Working Class	0.129*	-0.014	0.058	0.272*	0.018*	0.145
Female	-0.007	0.080*	0.037	0.031	-0.030	0.001
Age	-0.278*	0.160	-0.059	-0.480*	0.235	-0.123
Homeowner	-0.001*	-0.116*	-0.059	-0.159*	0.028	-0.066
Graduate	-0.202	0.263*	0.031	0.069	0.037	0.053
Indy	-0.200*	0.585*	0.193			
Welsh Speaker				-0.037	0.048*	0.006

Table 4.5: Multinomial logit predicting Labour/SNP/Plaid Cymru vote choice in Scotland and Wales at 2017 general election. Base outcome = voting for Conservatives or UKIP. Maximum discrete changes reported. All other predictors are set to their means. * denotes significant effect. Full tables available in Appendix B.

state identities drive political behaviour at the statewide level. It is also not restricted to Scotland where the proximity of the 2014 Independence Referendum might lead some to conclude that sub-state identities are unusually salient there at the moment. In Wales the effect was comparable in its strength, and consistent over the same period of time.

Finally, this chapter has implications for the wider study of voting behaviour more generally. The starting point for most of this research is to predict vote choice between individual parties. As this chapter has shown however, this can hide the effect of prior variables in the funnel of causality. The suggestion is that voters group identities make them more likely to vote for a particular group or bloc of political parties. It then may be the case that voters use more proximate factors, such as those identified by the valence model of voting behaviour, to differentiate between individual parties within that bloc, before making their vote choice. Indeed, studies in other contexts would help to shed light on the extent to which the findings in this chapter are generalizable to historic nations.

Notes

²³The SNP had actually elected their first MP Robert McIntyre in 1945 in an unusual Motherwell ‘Wartime’ by-election. However, McIntyre lost his seat just three months later at the 1945 general election.

²⁴Welsh for *The Party of Wales*.

²⁵The 2007-2011 SP term saw the SNP form a minority government supported through a supply and confidence agreement with the Scottish Green Party. In 2011 the SNP won a surprise majority at Holyrood in an electoral system designed to make majorities highly improbable. In 2016, the SNP again formed a minority government as the largest party by a considerable margin.

²⁶Between 2000-2003 Labour were the senior party in a ‘partnership government’ with the Liberal Democrats, and between 2007-2011 senior coalition partner with Plaid Cymru. Currently, they rely on the support of former Welsh Liberal Democrat leader Kirsty Williams, now Education Minister, and former Plaid Cymru turned Independent AM Dafydd Elis-Thomas.

²⁷At this point in time, Scottish electoral behaviour was considered in line with ‘average’ UK voting.

²⁸The term ‘valence’ was coined by Stokes (1963) to describe issues that couldn’t be considered ‘spatial’. These are issues on which there is an absence of divergent policy alternatives. Rather, competition on these issues was about performance and competence (Green and Jennings, 2017).

²⁹Their analysis does not include Northern Ireland.

³⁰See Henderson et al., , Forthcoming for an extended discussion.

³¹The Michigan Model was itself heavily influenced by the earlier work of US journalist Walter Lippmann and the ‘Columbia model’ (Lippmann, 1922a; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944) of voting behaviour that had emerged from the US (Campbell et al., 1960).

³²Donald Stokes was part of the group of scholars responsible for developing the Michigan model (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960).

³³There is a long-standing debate within political science over the issue of endogeneity in valence models of vote choice. For an excellent summary of this debate see Green and Jennings (2017).

³⁴Scotland has its own ‘indigenous’ Celtic language in Scottish Gaelic, but the language has never had the same presence across Scotland as Welsh in Wales. The 2011 UK Census estimated that roughly 1.1% of the Scottish pop-

ulation were fluent Gaelic speakers (compared to 24% of the Welsh population according to the Welsh Language Use Survey 2013-2015) mostly concentrated in the Northern Highlands and Islands, and had been in sharp decline in Scotland's population centres from as early as 1400.

³⁵The clear skew towards the left of the spectrum across the UK-wide sample does, however, suggest that the items used in the BES are ill-equipped to adequately differentiate between respondents of differing political persuasions.

³⁶See Appendix B for full table.

³⁷EU vote is operationalised as vote intention for 2015 and 2016 analysis.

³⁸The referendum controls are included as both events have had a substantial impact on vote choice, party affiliation, and broader group identities in the UK over the time period covered by the data and as such they likely had a large impact on political behaviour (Fieldhouse and Prosser, 2018; Hobolt et al., 2018).

³⁹In Scotland, this would cover 90.8% of voters in 2015, 91.1% in 2016, and 92.8% in 2017. In Wales, this covers 89.8% of voters in 2015, 88.8% in 2016, and 94.9% in 2017.

⁴⁰Full results provided in Tables B.2 and B.3.

“Is this a Plaid Cymru election?”

Overheard at polling booth, 2016

5

National Identity and Multilevel Voting

5.1 Introduction

WHY DO SOME VOTERS VOTE FOR DIFFERENT PARTIES AT ELECTIONS TO DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT? The Multilevel Voting (MLV) hypothesis, first proposed by [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#), states that voters in multilevel systems use different logics to make vote choices at elections to different levels of government. As a result, differential voting – where voters cast votes for different parties at different levels of government – is a common occurrence. Despite not proposing a mech-

anism for *why* this occurs, the MLV has had success as a hypothesis of voting behaviour in sub-state elections in the UK (Trystan et al., 2003; Wyn Jones and Scully, 2006). Comparative research has also found evidence supporting the hypothesis in cases such as Catalonia and Galicia, but has failed to do so in others, like the German *Länder* elections. This poses a challenge to the MLV. Why does the hypothesis appear to work in certain cases, but not in others? Jeffery and Hough (2003) have posited that this variation can be explained by the presence of ‘historic nationalities’ or, put another way, the existence of strong sub-state identities. They found that in sub-state territories where substantial proportions of the population claim strong attachment to a sub-state identity, differential voting is more common. Where sub-state identities are weaker, there is less differential voting. This also explains the success of non-statewide parties at sub-state elections: voters who identify with a sub-state identity are more likely to ‘switch’ to these parties.

A significant problem remains however: Jeffery and Hough (2003)’s hypothesis has never been tested at the individual-level. Rather it is a hypothesis derived from observing aggregate-level vote returns. This is an ecological fallacy: you cannot infer individual-level behaviours (i.e. vote choice) from aggregate-level patterns. It also fails to acknowledge that national identity within sub-state territories is heterogeneous. Some voters will identify with a sub-state identity, others will identify with a statewide identity, and some will identify with both or neither. Given that this is the case, we would expect to see considerable variation between individuals in their propensity to vote for different parties at different levels of government, conditional on the national identities they identify with.

This chapter tests the relationship between national identity and differential voting, using Wales as a case. Primarily, it tests Jeffery and Hough (2003)’s hypothesis reformulated for the individual-level: Are people who identify more strongly with a sub-state identity more likely to vote for different parties at elections to different levels of government? Using a unique panel dataset created by merging the Welsh and British Election Studies at the individual voter level, I show that national

identity does indeed play an important role in differential voting: respondents who identify as primarily Welsh (rather than British) are more likely to switch the party they vote for between elections at different levels. This effect is isolated to respondents who voted for statewide parties at statewide elections. Voters who vote for non statewide parties at statewide elections are no more likely to vote differently.

5.2 Multi-level voting in sub-state electoral arenas

The previous 30 years has seen a rapid increase in state decentralization across Western Europe. These new sub-state administrations have required the creation of new electoral arenas whose boundaries are defined within existing state boundaries. Their development has been accompanied by a growing body of political science literature focusing on differential voting, or vote switching, between these levels of government.⁴¹ Much of this previous electoral research has suggested that differential voting is a common practice among electorates across a diverse range of cases (Trystan et al., 2003; Jeffery and Hough, 2003; Hough and Jeffery, 2003; Fiorina, 2003; Wyn Jones and Scully, 2006; Perez-Nievas and Bonet, 2008; Cutler, 2008b; Johns et al., 2010; Kanji et al., 2012; Jeffery and Schakel, 2013; Henderson and Romanova, 2016; Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017).

Perez-Nievas and Bonet (2008) identify two common traits in the differential voting patterns observed between statewide and sub-state elections. The first is lower voter turnout rates in sub-state elections relative to the statewide elections. The second trait is that the vote share of non-statewide parties (NSWPs)⁴² is larger, and the vote share of statewide parties' smaller, in sub-state elections (relative to statewide elections).⁴³ (Jeffery and Hough, 2003) This pattern suggests that voters in multilevel electoral systems systematically vote for different parties at elections to different levels of government. It is this second trait that is the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Why do voters switch the party they vote for at different levels of government and why do NSWPs

benefit at sub-state elections? One current explanation of vote switching in multilevel systems is the multilevel voting hypothesis (MLV). The MLV was developed by [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#) to explain voting behaviour at the inaugural 1999 sub-state election in Wales. The result of this election was an unexpectedly close affair, with the historically dominant statewide Labour Party⁴⁴ performing worse than expected and Wales' main NSWP, Plaid Cymru, exceeding expectations. In their analysis of the election [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#) identified a pattern of voters 'switching' from the larger statewide parties – Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats – to Plaid Cymru at the sub-state election. This was a result, they argued, of voters using different 'logics' at elections to different levels of government.

The hypothesis was developed to counter the so-called second-order election hypothesis (SOE). This approach divides elections into two categories – first and second-order elections – according to their relative importance ([Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017](#)). First-order elections are those that are perceived by voters to be 'high-stakes' with statewide general elections considered to be the archetypal first-order election ([Reif and Schmitt, 1980](#)). Sub-state elections are commonly thought of as second-order ([Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017](#)). According to the SOE model, voting in second-order elections is driven by first-order issues with the popularity of the state-level government taking particular prominence in voting considerations ([Reif and Schmitt, 1980](#); [van der Eijk and Oppenhuis, 1991](#); [Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017](#)). In contrast, [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#) argue that so-called first-order considerations, or statewide issues, should not be assumed to be the decisive factor in voters' vote choice. Utilizing survey data from the 1999 Welsh Election Study, the authors asked respondents which party(ies) they had voted for at the Welsh sub-state election. The authors then asked an additional question of which party respondents would vote for had there been a general election the same day. Contrary to SOE model expectations, they found little evidence of voters using statewide considerations to decide their vote choice, and little evidence of voters "voting with the boot" - where voters punish the governing statewide party at the midpoint of an electoral cycle ([Trystan](#)

et al., 2003). Instead, they argue, voters used sub-state considerations to determine a sub-state vote. Research in Scotland has come to similar conclusions, albeit via a different explanatory mechanism. Johns et al. (2010) have argued that at devolved elections Scottish voters vote for the party they perceive to be the most competent at dealing with issues for Scotland.

Voters considerations at sub-state elections are in part driven by electoral opportunities that they do not have in statewide elections. The first of these is the opportunity to vote for a NSWPs without worrying that this is a 'wasted' vote. In statewide elections NSWPs are seldom in a position to have a substantial influence on state-wide policy⁴⁵, as the maximum number of representatives they can return is limited by the number of available legislative seats in the sub-state they compete in. These concerns are likely to be exaggerated within electoral systems such as the UK, with has a history of two-party dominance. This, combined with the plurality voting system used, encourages voters to cast votes for one of the two main statewide parties at statewide elections; the Conservative party and the Labour Party. In Wales, a NSWPs that won every Welsh constituency seat could at best aim to win third place in a UK statewide election, a position with little possibility of influencing government policy. This provides voters with a strong incentive to not vote for NSWPs at statewide elections.

Previous electoral research has shown that substantial proportions of voters in plurality electoral systems have an intuitive aversion to casting votes they think will have little influence on the outcome of an election (Bawn, 1999; Carman and Johns, 2010; Cox, 1997; Curtice, 2006; Fisher, 1973; Karp et al., 2002; Reed, 1999). This aversion encourages voters to vote for SWPs at statewide elections, in an attempt to maximize the influence of their vote on the eventual outcome. At sub-state elections this is less of a concern for voters. While voters still make strategic choices regarding a party's chances of winning at the local level (see Chapter 6), it is at least possible for NSWPs to form a government by themselves. Here, NSWPs will in many cases compete in every seat up for election, meaning that the possibility of them being able to form a government is a real possibility (see Scot-

land, Catalonia, Basque Country and Quebec for recent examples).

The second opportunity provided to voters is to make vote choices based on sub-state issues and as a result seek 'local answers to local issues'. (Trystan et al., 2003; Wyn Jones and Scully, 2006).

Voters therefore distinguish between levels of government and judge how well a party is suited to government based on level-specific issues and information. In Wyn Jones and Scully (2006)'s examination of voting at Scottish and Welsh elections in 2003, they found that substantial proportions of voters were able to distinguish between levels of government, and decide on their vote accordingly.

These findings in Wales have been supported by research carried out outside of the UK. Hough and Jeffery (2003) have shown that the MLV performed better than the SOE at explaining voting patterns in Spanish regional elections, while Cutler (2008b) found that Canadian voters are able to distinguish between tiers and take into account different issues when making a vote choice. It has also influenced more recent work on devolved elections which use valence explanations of voting to explain voting behaviour (Johns et al., 2009b, 2010; Johns, 2011b; Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012; Scully, 2013; Scully and Lerner, 2017). In the most in-depth analysis of voting at devolved elections, Johns et al. (2010)'s tellingly named *Voting for a Scottish Government*, found clear evidence of voters in Scotland using primarily Scottish-issues to decide their vote choice at the 2007 SP elections. Similarly, Scully and Wyn Jones (2012) found evidence that a valence model of electoral behaviour was an effective predictor of voting behaviour in Wales, though Scully (2013) found that the extent to which this happened differed in Scotland and Wales. A product of these considerations is that voters will be more likely to vote for 'regional parties' at sub-state elections, due to their focus on issues relating to the sub-state territory.

The MLV is less clear at identifying *which* voters will switch the party they vote for between levels of government. Trystan et al. (2003)'s original analysis of MLV in Wales identified a substantial proportion of voters who switched party between the 1997 statewide and 1999 sub-state election. But what separates voters who do switch party from those who do not? In their comparative analy-

sis of patterns of differential voting in Western Europe, [Jeffery and Hough \(2003\)](#) have posited that national identity plays a central role in influencing patterns of multilevel voting. They argue that territorial heterogeneity “breaks up [the] pattern of subordination of regional elections” (pp. 210). Put another way, voters in sub-state electoral arenas that are distinct from the state are better placed to acknowledge the separation of levels of government. This means that their vote is driven “according to a distinctive region-specific dynamic” ([Hough and Jeffery, 2003](#), pp. 249). This distinction, [Jeffery and Hough \(2003\)](#) argue, is facilitated through the presence of ‘historic nationalities’, ‘widely spoken national languages’ and ‘greater levels of autonomous power’ (pp. 210). This combination provides voters with a large enough incentive to use different logics for deciding their vote at different levels of government.

Although this work focused on aggregate-level voting patterns, it might also provide us with a potential explanation for differential voting at the individual-level. Namely, that national identity can influence whether a voter switches the party they vote for between levels of government. Key within this question, as with [Jeffery and Hough \(2003\)](#)’s analysis, is the distinction between statewide and sub-state identities. A statewide identity is an identity that refers to the state as a whole such as ‘British’, ‘Spanish’ or ‘German’ identity. A sub-state identity is one that refers to a smaller component part of the state (or states) that considers itself distinct somehow from the larger state, such as Scottish and Welsh in the UK, Catalan or Basque in Spain, or Bavarian in Germany. The two identities need not be mutually exclusive: citizens are able to consider both statewide and sub-state identities important aspects of their lives ([Cutler, 2008b](#); [Maas, 2013](#)).

There are several good reasons to suspect that identification with sub-state identities in particular may influence differential voting. First, a large body of research on electoral politics has established a positive relationship between sub-state identities and voting for NSWPs ([Trystan et al., 2003](#); [Wyn Jones and Scully, 2006](#); [Scully and Lerner, 2017](#); [Scully, 2013](#); [Scully and Wyn Jones, 2012](#); [Curtice, 1999, 2006d](#); [Johns et al., 2010](#); [Jeffery, 2006](#)). As NSWPs benefit from differential voting

at sub-state elections, it is reasonable to expect that voters that switch from statewide to NSWPs at sub-state election may identify with a sub-state identity. Second, sub-state identifiers may be more likely to differentiate between statewide and sub-state political issues. By identifying with a sub-state identity, a voter is necessarily acknowledging that the sub-state territory in question is different from the wider state. This could encourage voters to use different logics at different levels of government; to recognize that these different territories have different issues, and that different parties are best suited to address them.

To further investigate these propositions, I propose three hypotheses to test the relationship between national identity and differential voting at the individual-level. The first hypothesis is thus:

H1: Voters that feel a high degree of attachment to the sub-state identity will be more likely to switch parties between elections.

H1 is a reformulation of [Jeffery and Hough \(2003\)](#)'s aggregate level hypothesis for individual-level data. However, the relationship between national identity and differential voting may not be this straightforward. The effect is likely to vary in both strength and direction among different subsections of the electorate. For example, I would expect that national identity has a very different effect among voters who vote for NSWPs at statewide elections. The MLV suggests that voters have incentives to vote for NSWPs at sub-state elections but voters who already vote for them at statewide elections do not have the same incentive to switch. Indeed, this group of voters may face an incentive *not* to switch the party they vote for at different levels. This second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: Voters that feel a high degree of attachment to the sub-state identity and voted for a NSWSP at the previous statewide election, will be less likely to switch parties between elections.

I then test a modified version of *H1* as a third hypothesis:

H3: Voters that feel a high degree of attachment to the sub-state identity and voted for a statewide party at the previous statewide election, will be more likely to switch parties between elections.

5.3 Data and Method

5.3.1 Wales as a case

I test these hypotheses using Wales as a case. I do so for five reasons. The first is that elections in Wales fit the pattern identified by [Perez-Nievas and Bonet \(2008\)](#). Across the previous five statewide elections, turnout in Wales has been approximately 65%, yet turnout at devolved elections has never exceeded 46%. NSWPs also perform better at sub-state election in Wales than they do at statewide elections. Aggregate-level data displayed in [Table 6.3](#) shows that Plaid Cymru – Wales’ largest NSWP – receives a considerable devolution dividend.⁴⁶ Since the inaugural Welsh sub-state election, the mean Plaid Cymru vote share is 10.2 percentage points higher in sub-state elections relative to state-wide elections. Every statewide party – the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats and UKIP – record a lower mean vote share at sub-state elections than at statewide elections ([ONS, 2016](#)).

Party	Mean NAW Vote	Mean GE Vote	NAW Advantage
Conservative	20.8	25.9	-5.0
Labour	37.2	42.7	-5.5
Liberal Democrat	12.1	12.7	-0.5
Plaid Cymru	22.4	12.1	10.2
UKIP	3.3	4.1	-0.8

Table 5.1: NAW and GE aggregate constituency vote advantages by party, 1999-2017. Advantage' are NAW percentage advantages. **Source:** House of Commons Library.

The second reason for choosing Wales as a case is that attachment to a sub-state identity (Welsh) is widespread throughout the population. The 2011 UK Census showed that a plurality of citizens in each of Wales’ 22 local authorities identified as primarily Welsh. However, it is also less homogenous in term of national identity than other comparable sub-state areas, such as Scotland. Considerable proportions of people living in Wales identify as British or both British and Welsh, and a non-trivial

number identify as English. This will provide enough variation among individuals to adequately explore the effect of national identity on vote switching.

Third is the availability of data. Election study surveys have been carried out at every Welsh sub-state election, whilst the British Election Survey has consistently covered each UK statewide election since 1964 (see Chapter 2). The most recent iterations of these election studies provide additional benefits as they can be linked. Both the 2015-2017 British Election Study Internet Panel (Fieldhouse et al., 2018) and the 2016 Welsh Election Study (Scully et al., 2016) were carried out online by survey company YouGov, with a substantial number of respondents taking part in both studies. Each respondent carried a unique identifier which can be used to merge the data to create a panel covering the 2015 and 2017 UK statewide general elections and the 2016 Welsh sub-state election. This has numerous benefits, the most obvious being that it reduces the risk of respondent bias through false recall. Previous research on differential voting in the UK has been constrained by the absence of any form of panel data. This meant that researchers were reliant on voters accurately recalling how they voted previously (often several years prior) or on hypothetical election questions asked in surveys (for example, see Wyn Jones and Scully, 2006).

Fourth, Welsh constituency boundaries are identical in statewide and sub-state elections, unlike in Scotland. This makes direct comparison of votes more straightforward and voters do not have to take into account shifting boundaries. Finally, the MLV originated from the study of Welsh sub-state elections. It makes sense to test this in the context it was originally designed to explain.

5.3.2 Data

The British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP) (Fieldhouse et al., 2018) interviewed roughly 30,000 respondents in Britain⁴⁷ across 14 waves, with the aim to re-interview as many previous respondents as possible. The panel covers the 2015 and 2017 general elections, and the 2016 EU Ref-

erendum. The BES also contained booster samples in Scotland and Wales, providing large samples in both nations. A total of 5,450 respondents were contacted across the 14 waves in in Wales. The 2016 Welsh Election Study (Scully et al., 2016) (SES and WES) interviewed respondents in Wales before and after the 2016 sub-state elections in Wales. 4,163 respondents were interviewed across three waves.

Both election studies were conducted online by YouGov. These respondents are drawn from YouGov's existing panel of respondents and a substantial number of respondents were interviewed in both the BES and WES. Combining both data provides a sample of 1,716 of WES respondents that completed at least one wave of the BES. As with any survey, selection bias is a concern when analyzing data. In particular, in this analysis I assume that the respondents who complete both the British and Welsh Election Study are not systematically different from those who only took part in one of the surveys. However, it could be the case that there are certain characteristics among these respondents that make them more likely to take part in multiple surveys. For example, respondents who are more interested generally in politics, may be more likely to take part in and complete multiple surveys on the subject of politics. To identify any of these potential biases I ran a logit regression where the dependent variable is coded 0 if a respondent only took part in the WES, and 1 if a respondent took part in both the WES and BES. I test for political interest, knowledge, partisanship, and other socio-demographic variables. The results are shown in Table C.1 in Appendix C.

Generally there are few substantial differences between the two samples. Respondents in the combined sample are slightly older on average, more likely to be male, and less likely to be partisans. These biases are corrected with post-stratification weights. The data are also weighted by 2015 general election vote to recreate the marginals of vote choice at this election.

5.3.3 Measures

To test my hypotheses I use a binary dependent variable that measures whether a respondent reported voting for different parties in Wave 6 of the BES and in the constituency vote of Wave 3 of the WES. The key explanatory variable, national identity, uses the BES' national identity scales presented to respondents in Wales:

Where would you place yourself on these scales (1-7)?

- Britishness
- Welshness

The distributions of these scales are provided in Figure C.2 in Appendix C.

In addition to national identity, I control for a number of other variables which may have an impact on whether a voter switches party between elections to different levels of government. The first is a variable that I expect to have a negative effect on the probability of switching: the strength of a respondent's partisan identity. Voting behaviour in the UK has generally been thought to be a function of partisan identity (among other things) (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Heath et al., 1991b; Clarke et al., 2004). Political parties, it is argued, provide a useful heuristic for voters who, in their day-to-day lives, have little time to seek out the necessary information on individual policy areas (Clarke et al., 2004, 2009b; Green and Jennings, 2017). It makes sense therefore, that those who identify as strong supporters of political parties are less likely to deviate from them at the ballot box. I use a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if a respondent identifies as a 'Very strong' or 'Fairly strong' supporter of a particular political party, and 0 otherwise.

To control for how important respondents' consider sub-state elections in Wales, I employ a variable taken from a WES question which asks respondents "On a 0-10 scale, how personally important do you consider National Assembly for Wales elections?" I include this control following Curtice

(2006d) who suggested that voters who do not consider sub-state election important might ‘experiment’ with their vote by voting for a party they wouldn’t usually consider.

I employ another binary variable to indicate whether a respondent considers the sub-state Government in Wales to be performing well with regards to the NHS. It takes a value of 1 if the respondent thinks the government has done a bad job, and a 0 otherwise. I choose the NHS as a measure for two reasons. The first is that it is the policy area which takes up the largest amount of the Welsh Government’s budget. Secondly, more citizens are aware of devolved responsibility for the NHS compared to most other policy areas (see Chapter 3).

In addition, I use a variable to capture the competitiveness of a respondent’s constituency contest at sub-state elections. As Chapter 6 shows later in this thesis, there is evidence that voters in Wales cast strategic votes when it looks as if their preferred candidate has little chance of winning. Voters may therefore switch parties not due to national identity, but simply due to the different strategic calculations voters make in different electoral contests. This variable is measured as the the difference in vote share between a respondents preferred party, and the first placed candidate in their constituency at the previous election. If their preferred party is the first-place candidate this is measured as 0. The larger the difference, the higher the incentive to cast a strategic vote.

Finally, I control for the influence of the EU Referendum over this period. The referendum and preceding campaign had profound effect on the UK political system. The referendum disrupted the traditional economic left vs. right divide of the wider UK party system, creating new salient cross-cutting cleavages that allowed voters to switch parties in unprecedented numbers. BES analysis has estimated that 32% of BES respondents (who reported voting) voted for different political parties at the 2015 and 2017 UK General Elections (Prosser et al., 2018). Their analysis has also highlighted that the 2017 general election saw the highest number of Labour-Conservative switching in any BES inter-election panel (Prosser et al., 2018).

The 2016 devolved elections in Scotland and Wales occurred just 49 days prior to the EU Referen-

dum and saturated news content in UK media. This was particularly important in Wales which lacks a strong sub-state media.⁴⁸ As voters align around new socio-political cleavages, we would expect that a sizeable minority are drawn to political parties they previously did not vote for, as the salience of the new cleavage ‘overrides’ existing partisan loyalty. Such was the proximity of the EU Referendum to the devolved elections that we would expect this sorting to have begun to occur prior to the elections in Wales. We would therefore expect to see unusually high numbers of voters ‘crossing the divide’, organizing their vote choice around what had previously been a dormant cleavage for large proportions of the population.

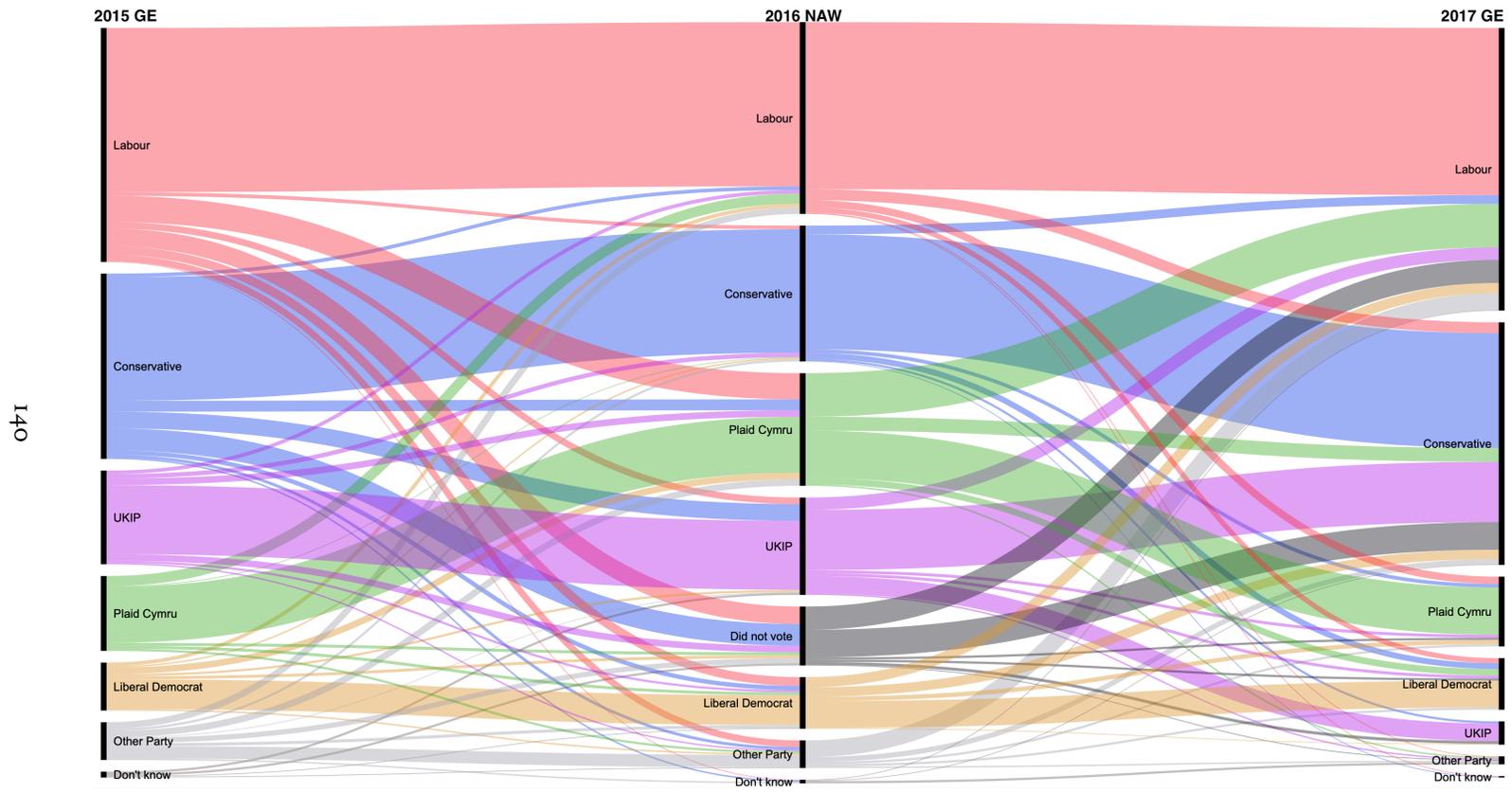


Figure 5.1: Vote switching in Wales between the 2015, 2016, and 2017 elections.

5.4 Results

Figure 5.1 shows the patterns of vote switching captured by survey respondents in the BES and WES. It illustrates the flow of votes for political parties at the 2015 and 2017 statewide General Elections and the constituency vote at the 2016 Welsh sub-state election. The size of each stream is reflective of the proportion of the electorate who voted for a given party. The data is weighted by respondents' 2015 General Election vote to accurately reflect the marginals of vote choice. Between the 2015 statewide and 2016 sub-state elections, 31% of the sample switched party with 27% switching between 2016 and the 2017 sub-state election. The individual-level patterns of voting confirm the aggregate patterns of data displayed in Table 6.3. There is a clear pattern of the two largest statewide parties, Labour and the Conservatives, losing voters from the 2015 General Election at the 2016 sub-state election. Conversely Plaid Cymru, Wales' largest NSWP, gain a substantial amount of support at the 2016 sub-state election. These patterns are then reversed again at the 2017 statewide election, with Labour and the Conservatives gaining votes and Plaid Cymru losing a considerable amount of support. Of particular note is the substantial transfer of voters between the Labour Party and Plaid Cymru: Approximately one in ten Labour voters in 2015 switched to vote for Plaid Cymru in 2016, with one in three 2016 Plaid Cymru voters switching to Labour in 2017.

To begin to explain these patterns I estimate a series of logistic regressions to test my hypotheses. To test H1 I run the models using the whole sample, with results presented in Table C.2. Model 1 estimates the likelihood of a respondent switching parties between 2015 and 2016 given their responses to the BES' national identity questions. This results in a positive and significant relationship between respondents who feel more Welsh and vote switching. British identity appears to have very little effect on whether voters switch between elections. The relationship between Welsh identity and switching is no longer significant once standard socio-demographic controls are introduced in model 2, however. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence therefore, to confirm H1 with any degree

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Welshness	0.092*	0.080	0.041	0.078	0.075	0.106*
Britishness	-0.032	-0.051	-0.037	-0.039	0.001	-0.001
Age (Centred)		-0.051	-0.027	-0.005	0.001	0.030
Female		0.127*	0.096*	0.109*	0.121*	0.125*
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>						
AB		0.017	0.019	-0.018	-0.011	0.005
C1C2		0.046	0.082*	0.069	0.068	0.068
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>						
GCSE		0.030	0.087	0.099	0.096	0.078
A-level		-0.035	0.002	0.016*	0.027*	0.015*
Degree		-0.064	-0.062*	-0.055*	-0.062*	-0.077*
Strong Partisan			-0.087*	-0.066	-0.063	-0.055
Personal Importance				-0.130	-0.100	-0.082
Gov performance				0.088*	0.076*	0.010*
Brexit at odds					-0.006	0.056
Margin						0.223*

Table 5.2: Maximum discrete change in probability of switching vote between levels. * denotes significant effect. See Table C.2 for full output.

of certainty. There is a significant effect in model 2 for gender however, with respondents who identify as female more likely to vote for different parties at elections to different levels of government. This effect remains significant in all models once more controls are added suggesting a robust effect for gender and vote switching. This is possibly a reflection of women being less likely than men to identify as a ‘strong’ supporter of a single political party. In this sample, 22% of male and 14% of female respondents identified as a strong partisan. This pattern is repeated across every wave of the BES (see Figure C.3 in Appendix C). Previous research has also suggested that women may be less attached to a single party than men. Carman and Johns (2010) found that female voters in Scotland were more likely to be in favour of coalition governments than their male counterparts.

Model 3 includes a control for the strength of party identity. As expected, there is a negative relationship between identifying as a strong supporter of a single political party and switching par-

ties. When the strength of partisan identity is particularly strong, it would likely take a considerable ‘shock’ to break that affinity and vote for another party. Models 4 and 5 introduce more controls for sub-state importance, government performance evaluation and a variable which captures whether a respondent’s preferred party took an EU referendum stance different to that respondent. There is a significant positive effect for government performance evaluations in Models 4 and 5. This means that respondents who thought the Welsh Government’s performance was poor were more likely to switch the party they voted for between 2015 and 2016. Finally, Model 6 adds the variable *Margin* which is included to capture any strategic voting that might occur. This produces a positive significant effect although the effect size is limited. It also suggests that strategic voting is a motivation to switch parties for some voters: The less competitive their preferred party was in their constituency, the higher the likelihood of switching parties. In addition to these models I run a random intercept logit model to explore possible constituency effects. The results are included in Appendix C.

Next, I proceed to test H_2 and H_3 . H_2 and H_3 both predict that the effect of national identity on differential voting will vary among different groups of voters. Therefore, I divide the sample into four smaller sub-samples comprised of respondents who voted for the four largest parties at the 2015 statewide election; Conservatives (N=190), Labour (N=262), Plaid Cymru (N=106), and UKIP (N=107). I then estimate four logit regressions using the same explanatory variables used in Model 6 of Table B.3. Concentrating first on the effect of national identity on vote switching Figure 5.2 illustrates the marginal effect of Welsh national identity on differential voting.

Among 2015 Labour and UKIP voters, the more Welsh a respondent felt, the higher the probability of that respondent switching the party they voted for at the 2016 sub-state elections. In both cases the size of the effect is substantial. The probability of switching more than doubles among both groups of voters moving from one end of the identity scale to the other. There is no visible effect among 2015 Conservative voters however, suggesting that Welsh identity plays little role in whether these voters switch party or not. H_3 is therefore partially confirmed: voters who feel

strongly Welsh and voted for statewide parties at the 2015 statewide election are more likely to switch the party they vote for between election. However, this does not apply to Conservative Party voters.

Why is this the case? One conceivable reason is that Conservative voters in general don't identify as being Welsh. In Chapter 4 I showed how support for the Conservative Party was something of an anathema to the idea of Welshness. Indeed, in this dataset 2015 Conservative voters felt the least Welsh of any of the supporters of the largest parties in Wales. The median 2015 Conservative voter gave a score of 4.2 out of 7 on the BES Welsh identity scale. This compared to 5.1 out of 7 for Labour voters, 6.1 for Plaid Cymru voters, and 4.7 for UKIP voters. The effect is therefore much weaker as 'Welshness' is impacting considerably fewer respondents. Another conceivable reason is the tendency among 2015 Conservative voters to abstain from Welsh sub-state elections. Figure 5.1 shows that, of those 2015 Conservative voters who did not vote for the Conservatives in 2016, a plurality of them did not vote. It is possible that voters who feel they cannot support the Conservatives at sub-state elections simply abstain rather than switch to another party.

Conversely, there is a negative effect among 2015 Plaid Cymru voters, indicating that the more Welsh these voters feel, the lower the probability of them switching parties. The effect is not significant but this is likely largely due to the low sample size. Whilst this result is most compatible with no effect, the direction of the effect is as H_3 would expect: that voters of NSW at statewide elections who identify strongly with a sub-state identity are less likely to switch their vote.

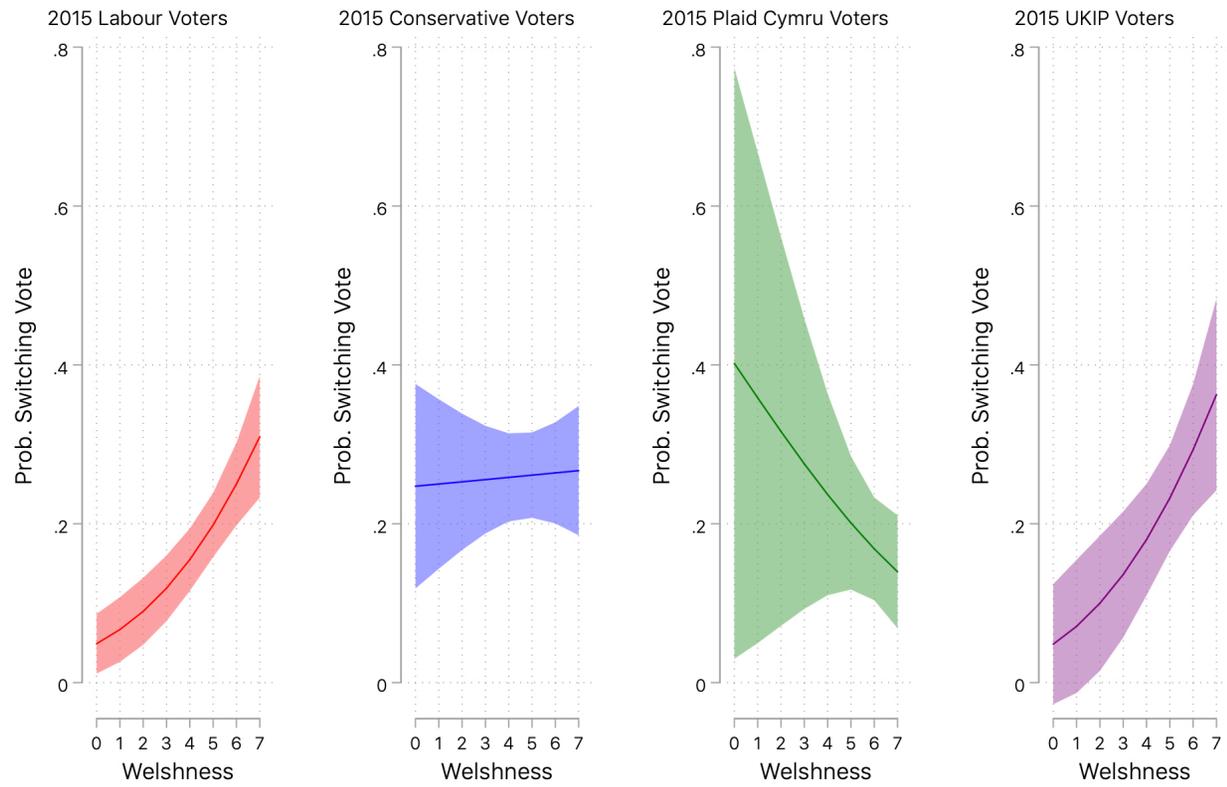


Figure 5.2: Relationship between national identity and probability of vote switching, by 2015 General Election party choice

Table 5.3 displays the models in full. Among 2015 Labour voters, government performance evaluation had an effect on the probability of vote switching. Voters who thought the the Welsh Government had performed poorly on the NHS were more likely to switch party at the 2016 sub-state elections than those who did not. This is to be expected, as the Welsh Government was a Labour government during this period.

Although Welsh identity seems to have played little role in vote switching among 2015 Conservative voters, British identity appears to have played a larger role. The more British this group of voters felt, the *less* likely they were to switch the party they voted for between elections. An explanation for this likely lies in the unique relationship between national identity and voting in Wales, as outlined in Chapter 4. The two largest parties at sub-state elections,⁴⁹ Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru, speak explicitly to Welsh identity and Welshness. However, apart from the Conservative Party, the only significant party that makes an attempt to speak to British identity is UKIP, a party that has adopted a series of polarizing policies. In this sense, British-identifying Conservative voters have ‘nowhere to go’ and therefore stay loyal to the Conservatives.

The direction of this effect was reversed among 2015 UKIP voters however. Among this group of voters, respondents who felt more Welsh *and* more British were more likely to switch the party they voted for between elections.

The EU referendum also appears to have had an impact on vote switching among 2015 Conservative and UKIP voters. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 2015 UKIP voters who were in favour of remaining in the EU (admittedly a very small sample!) were substantially more likely to vote for another party at the 2016 sub-state election. Given that leaving the EU has been UKIP’s *raison d’etre* this is entirely unsurprising. More surprising is that the effect of Brexit on 2015 Conservative voters appears to work in the opposite direction. That is, 2015 Conservative voters who wanted to leave the EU were less likely to switch the party they voted for in 2016 compared to 2015 Conservative voters who wanted to remain in the EU.

Social class also had a positive effect among 2015 Conservative and UKIP voters, with those in a higher social class more likely to switch party than those in a lower social class. Finally, tactical voting also appears to have been a motivation for switching party between elections. The less competitive voters' preferred party was in their constituency in 2016, the more likely they were to change the party they voted for from 2015.

	Labour	Conservative	Plaid Cymru	UKIP
Welshness	0.224*	0.027	-0.308	0.298*
Britishness	0.102	-0.425*	0.174	0.137*
Age (Centred)	0.174	0.168	-0.198	-0.370*
Female	0.042	0.115	-0.017	0.139*
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>				
AB	-0.001	0.090	-0.072	0.096
C1C2	0.082	0.230*	-0.164	0.149
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>				
GCSE	-0.070	-0.080	0.246	0.044
A-level	-0.086*	-0.125*	0.043	-0.022
Degree	-0.002	-0.220*	0.093	-0.053
Strong Partisan	-0.004	-0.082	-0.102	0.003
Personal Importance	-0.049	-0.193	0.042	-0.061
Gov. Performance	0.171*	0.026	-0.067	0.004
Brexit at odds	0.062	-0.120*	-0.098*	0.329
Margin	0.685*	0.383*	-0.122	-0.245

Table 5.3: Maximum discrete change in probability of switching vote between levels by 2015 GE vote. * denotes significant effect. See Table C.3 for full output.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to provide an individual-level explanation of why substantial numbers of voters switch the party they vote for at elections to different levels of government. Using [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#)'s Multi-Level Voting hypothesis as a starting point I proposed that voters who identified

strongly with a sub-state identity would be more likely to switch the party they voted for between elections. This is consistent with [Hough and Jeffery \(2003\)](#)'s argument that vote switching was more common in sub-state areas with strong 'historic nationalities'. The results I presented confirm this hypothesis: generally, voters who identify strongly with the sub-state identity are more likely to switch their vote compared to those who feel less attachment to the identity.

I also tested two additional hypotheses (H_2 and H_3) which are a considerable development on the work of [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#) and [Hough and Jeffery \(2003\)](#). H_3 tells us that voters who voted for the Conservative party at statewide elections. Among this group attachment to the sub-state identity appeared to play little role in whether they switched votes. Rather, it is the dominant statewide national identity, Britishness, which affects whether a voters switches party. The more British these voters felt, the *less* likely they were to change the party they voted for. It also provides additional information about those who vote for NSWPs at statewide elections. In the case of Wales this applies to voters who voted for Plaid Cymru in the 2015 UK General Election. Among this group of voters the stronger they identify with the sub-state the less likely they are to switch away from the NSWP.

These results allow us to develop a more general testable hypothesis about vote switching in multilevel systems: The amount of multilevel switching between a statewide and sub-state election will be a function of two factors. The first is the proportion of voters who vote for statewide parties at statewide elections but who also identify strongly with the sub-state identities. The larger this group is within a sub-state the more differential voting that can be expected. The second is the proportion of voters who voted for NSWPs at statewide elections. Here the larger this group is the less switching would be expected. Scrutiny of this hypothesis in multiple contexts would shed more light on the phenomenon of voter switching in multilevel systems.

Notes

⁴¹When elections to different levels of government are held on the same day this is referred to as vertical split-ticket voting.

⁴²Occasionally these parties have been categorized as ‘ethno-regionalist’ parties (Perez-Nievas and Bonet, 2008).

⁴³Brancati (2008) has found that NSWPs of any party family receive more votes in decentralized countries. Interestingly she found this to be true in countries with political decentralization, yet not in countries with fiscal but not political decentralization.

⁴⁴See Chapter 4.

⁴⁵A notable exception here would be the Bloc Québécois who formed Canada’s Official Opposition after the 1993 Federal Elections.

⁴⁶It could also be considered a statewide election penalty of course.

⁴⁷The BES does not collect data on Northern Ireland.

⁴⁸See Appendix C for more detailed analysis of the effect of the EU Referendum on devolved elections.

⁴⁹Although the Conservatives were the largest party at the 2011 Welsh election.

“Splitters!”

Monty Python’s *Life of Brian*, 1979

6

Do Strategic Considerations Motivate Split-Ticket Voting in Scotland and Wales?

6.1 Introduction

THE INAUGURAL DEVOLVED ELECTIONS IN SCOTLAND AND WALES IN 1999 EXPOSED SCOTTISH AND WELSH VOTERS TO A NEW ELECTORAL SYSTEM. The additional member system (AMS), also known as a mixed member proportional system (MMP), provided voters with two separate ballot

papers, one with a list of parties, and one with a list candidates. The candidate ballot elected members via a plurality vote from constituencies (or single member districts), whilst the party list ballot elected members via the quasi-proportional D'Hondt formula from larger geographic areas referred to as regions. These regions are made up of multiple constituencies. The new ballot structure presented Scottish and Welsh voters with a choice that they had not previously been faced with: an opportunity to split their ticket, or to cast votes for different parties on each ballot.

Existing electoral research on split-ticket voting suggests that strategic motivations are a central factor for voters considering casting a split-ticket (Cox, 1997; Plescia, 2016; Reed, 1999; Pappi and Thurner, 2002). The logic here is that voters deviate from their preferred political party in the constituency vote to avoid 'wasting their vote' but vote for their preferred party in the list. Scotland and Wales present interesting test cases for this theory for two key reasons. The first is the 'newness' of Scotland and Wales as electoral arenas. The inaugural devolved elections took place in 1999, and there have only been five such elections since. Prior to this the only exposure to proportional representation (PR) electoral systems that voters in Scotland and Wales had had was for European Parliament elections, which suffer from a lack of public (and arguably elite) engagement. Moreover, the AMS system is largely considered to be one of the most confusing for voters to navigate (Farrell and Gallagher, 1999; Gschwend, 2006). Analyzing instances and motivations for split-ticket voting can provide valuable information within the broader electoral research literature: in particular, how electorates react to new electoral rules and arrangements and whether these new electorates are able to maximize their electoral interests by casting strategic votes.

The second reason is methodological. Scotland and Wales are ideal cases for comparison with each other. Devolved elections in both countries occur on the same day with near-identical electoral systems. The two countries also have a common political party system and political history. In both countries the Labour Party had a near-hegemonous position in the post-war period and the Conservative Party has been historically weak. Furthermore, both countries are home to progressive-

nationalist parties that advocate political independence from the UK. Importantly, election studies for every devolved election provide detailed individual-level voter data since the inception of the devolved institutions. These devolved election studies also contain a number of similar, if not identical, questions put to voters providing the opportunity for direct comparisons between the two electorates.

This chapter sets out to test whether split-ticket voting in Scotland and Wales is driven by strategic motivations. I do this by analyzing two types of splitting: that due to strategic considerations on the constituency ballot and splitting due to strategic considerations on the list ballot. My analysis provides several new contributions to the field of voting in mixed-member electoral systems and the study of elections in Scotland and Wales. My results provide the first evidence of strategic voting at devolved elections in Scotland and Wales with strategic considerations at the constituency level appearing to play a substantial role in whether a voter split their ticket at every election analyzed. I also find evidence of confusion among voters. When the strategic incentives to cast split-tickets come from the list ballot voters do not take the opportunity to cast a split-ticket. These findings are consistent with findings produced in Chapter 3 which question how well voters in Scotland and Wales understand the electoral system. It brings into question the extent to which voters in mixed-member systems are able to maximize their electoral preferences.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First I provide a brief outline of the electoral system used at devolved elections. Second, I provide an overview of existing literature on strategic voting and split-ticket voting and outline my hypotheses. Third, I describe my data and method. Fourth, I provide descriptive analysis of split-ticket voting in Scotland and Wales. Fifth, I test my hypotheses using multivariate analysis. Finally, I conclude by drawing attention to the implications of the study for work on mixed-member systems, elections in Scotland and Wales and multi-level electoral systems.

6.2 Elections in Scotland and Wales

The inaugural devolved elections in 1999 introduced voters to an entirely new electoral system. MMP provides voters with two votes to the same legislature; one for a candidate in a single member district (SMD) and one for a larger region. SMD seats are decided by a plurality contest and the regional seats are decided via the D'Hondt system (Dunleavy and Margetts, 1999). An example of the ballot papers used in these elections is shown in Figure 6.1 and 6.2. In Scotland, voters elect 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to the Scottish Parliament – 73 from SMDs and 56 from regional lists – and in Wales, 60 Assembly Members (AMs) are elected – 40 from SMDs and 20 from regional lists. The effective elective threshold on the lists is therefore relatively high compared to other MMP systems (Carman and Johns, 2010).

The new ballot structure presented Scottish and Welsh voters with a choice that they had not previously been faced with: an opportunity to give their support to two different parties simultaneously by 'splitting their ticket'. Under MMP, split-ticket voting occurs when a voter casts votes for two different parties in the constituency and list ballot in voting at the same level of government, often referred to as horizontal splitting (see Rallings and Thrasher, 2005)⁵⁰. It has been well-documented and explored in numerous democracies across the world (see Karp et al., 2002; Plescia, 2016; Jesse, 1988; Helmke, 2009) but there has been very little focus on ticket-splitting in the UK.⁵¹ The remainder of this chapter aims to fill this glaring gap in understanding voting behaviour in the UK's devolved territories.

6.2.1 Strategic Voting

Much of the existing political science literature on split-ticket voting outside of the UK has presented strategic considerations as a central driver of split-ticket voting (Bawn, 1999; Carman and

National Assembly for Wales election	Etholiad Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Ballot paper to elect the Assembly Member for the constituency	Papur pleidleisio i ethol Aelod Cynulliad ar gyfer etholaeth
Vote <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> once only	Pleidleiswch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unwaith yn unig
Candidate A – Ymgeisydd A A Party – Plaid A	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate B – Ymgeisydd B B Party – Plaid B	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate C – Ymgeisydd C C Party – Plaid C	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate D – Ymgeisydd Ch Independent – Annibynnol	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 6.1: Example constituency ballot, National Assembly for Wales election 2016.

National Assembly for Wales election	Etholiad Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Ballot paper to elect the Assembly Members for the region	Papur pleidleisio i ethol Aelodau Cynulliad ar gyfer rhanbarth
Vote <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> once only	Pleidleiswch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unwaith yn unig
A Party – Plaid A	 <input type="checkbox"/>
B Party – Plaid B	 <input type="checkbox"/>
C Party – Plaid C	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate D – Ymgeisydd Ch Independent – Annibynnol	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 6.2: Example list ballot, National Assembly for Wales election 2016.

Johns, 2010; Cox, 1997; Curtice, 2006c; Fisher, 1973; Karp et al., 2002; Moser and Scheiner, 2009; Reed, 1999). In these analyses the SMD ballot is often viewed as the strategic vote and the list ballot as a ‘sincere’ vote: a vote for the preferred party of the voter. This assumption is loosely supported by aggregate patterns of voting across MMP electoral systems: smaller parties receive a greater share of the party list vote, and larger parties receiving higher shares of the vote in the candidate vote. The wider literature explains that this is a result of the ‘wasted vote hypothesis’ (Cox, 1997). This refers to the apparently instinctual desire voters have for their votes to impact the final outcome of an election (Riker, 1982).

The term is well illustrated by Anthony Downs in *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, where he noted that in the US Presidential election of 1948, considerable numbers of voters who preferred the Progressive Party nonetheless voted for the Democratic Party (Downs, 1957). They did so, Downs argued, in order to ensure that their vote did not contribute to a Republican victory by taking votes away from the Democratic Party. Another well-known proponent of the wasted vote hypothesis was Maurice Duverger, who argued that “in cases where there are three parties operating under the simple-majority, single-ballot system, the electors soon realize that their votes are wasted if they continue to give them to the third party; whence their natural tendency to transfer their vote to the less evil of its two adversaries in order to prevent the success of the greater evil.” (Duverger, 1954, pp.226). It is this “psychological factor” (Duverger, 1954, pp. 226) that leads to the tendency in plurality vote systems for supporters of noncompetitive parties to defect to a more competitive party to increase the influence of their vote (for example, Lanoue and Bowler, 1992; Kim and Fording, 2001; Fisher and Curtice, 2006; Blais et al., 2001, 2005; Alvarez and Nagler, 2000; Franklin et al., 1994).

There is evidence that voters in the UK behave strategically at UK general elections, which uses the same SMD plurality vote system as the candidate ballot in devolved elections. Scholars have consistently found evidence of significant proportions of the UK electorate who preferred noncompetitive parties yet voted in patterns consistent with the logic of strategic voting: the less competitive

a voter's preferred party the greater the probability of them voting for another party (Cain, 1978; Lanoue and Bowler, 1992; Fieldhouse et al., 2007; Fisher, 2004; Fisher and Curtice, 2006; Heath et al., 1991a; Clarke et al., 2004). It might be expected therefore that this strategic behaviour will spillover from the one electoral system to the other, given that SMD plurality vote is the most familiar and intuitive system most voters are accustomed to. This should hold as long as voters are aware that the plurality vote under MMP operates under the same electoral rules as that of a UK General Election.

This hypothesis – that strategic voting occurs in the SMD ballot at devolved elections – is yet to be tested in Scotland and Wales. While these voters might make strategic voting decisions in a single-ballot plurality vote system, there has been no research on whether these same voters behave in a similar way when faced with a different electoral system. If voters in Scotland and Wales split their ticket to avoid wasting their vote then we would expect to observe the same patterns as UK general elections. Assuming that the list vote is more likely to be a sincere expression of political preference, we would expect the probability of a voter casting a split-ticket to increase as the competitiveness of their preferred party in their SMD decreases.

These insights inform my first hypothesis:

H1: The less competitive a voter's first preference candidate is in their constituency, the greater the probability of them casting a split-ticket.

In MMP systems, strategic voting is not confined solely to the plurality constituency vote. A growing body of work has shown that voters in PR systems make strategic considerations when making voting choices (Bargsted and Kedar, 2009; Abramson et al., 2010; Hobolt and Karp, 2010). Recent comparative scholarship has also had some success in finding evidence of strategic voting occurring within the PR tier of MMP systems (Plescia, 2016). The incentives for voting strategically in the list ballot are particularly high in the Scottish and Welsh contexts where the electoral threshold

in these ballots is high relative to international comparisons such as Germany (see [Tsebelis, 1986](#), for discussion of pre-devolution examples). Yet recent examples of SNP success in the regional list and SMD ballot highlight how difficult it can be for voters to discern when it makes sense for them to cast a split-ticket.⁵²

Perhaps uniquely, the Welsh system offers voters the most explicit incentives to vote strategically on the list ballot. The high ratio of SMD seats to list seats (2:1) creates a very high electoral threshold that parties must meet to win representation. In certain regions this is further exaggerated: in three of the five Welsh party list regions Labour have won the clear majority of constituencies – if not every single one – at every election. The consequences are twofold. First, the list seats in these regions are dominated by Plaid Cymru and the Conservatives, the second and third largest parties at every election. These two parties receive high shares of the vote, often over 20%, but often win no SMD seats giving them a small denominator in the D’Hondt list calculations. This means that it is difficult for other parties to ever win substantial representation through these lists. Second, it means that a vote for Labour in the list is highly unlikely to have any effect on the outcome of the contest as their chances of winning any list seats are essentially zero. This should create large incentives for supporters of Labour to abandon their first preference and cast a vote for a party more likely to win list representation.

A second and more narrow Wales-only hypothesis can therefore be derived to test for the existence of strategic splitting on the list part of the ballot:

H2: Voters who cast their ballot for the Labour Party in a South Wales SMD will be more likely to cast a split ticket.

Again, this is a context-specific hypothesis where the probability of Labour winning list seats in South Wales regions are incredibly small.

Devolved elections in Scotland and Wales are unique test-cases for these hypotheses. As relatively

new electoral arenas, Scottish and Welsh voters were confronted with a new electoral system with which they were largely unfamiliar. Yet strategic voting in such a system requires a high level of voter capacity. First, it requires knowledge of an electoral system that is considered one of the most complex for voters to use (Farrell and Gallagher, 1999; Gschwend, 2006). Voters may not even be aware that they are able to vote for different parties on the two ballots. Indeed, a common misconception in MMP electoral systems is that the two votes actually represent a first and second preference ranked vote where voters are *required* to vote for two different parties. Knowledge of ballot paper rules cannot be taken for granted, particularly given the evidence outlined in Chapter 3 of a substantial lack of understanding of the rules of the electoral system. In order to satisfy the criteria of a strategic vote, voters must know when the cost-benefit balance makes it favourable to cast a straight vs. split ticket (Plescia, 2016). This requires access to information regarding the specific political context of the constituency and list in which they will cast their votes. For the wasted vote hypothesis to apply voters must have an awareness of the competing candidates and parties in constituency and list contests and their relative probabilities of winning. As devolved elections rarely receive media coverage by UK-wide media outlets, this means that voters are therefore dependent on sub-state media sources or the political parties themselves to provide the information required (see Chapter 3 for more information here). Strategic split-ticket voting, therefore, requires a high knowledge threshold from Scottish and Welsh voters.

The two hypotheses make differing levels of demand on voters' capacity. It has been long established in the literature that voters in the UK are able to make strategic considerations in plurality systems and that these considerations may spillover into the MMP system. This means that H1 is the 'easier' test of strategic split-ticket voting in Scotland and Wales. H2 provides a much more difficult test, especially for a relatively young electoral arena and electoral system. For voters to act strategically in this sense they need to have an awareness not only of the likely outcome of their own constituency contest, but of the others in their region. They also require knowledge of how the list seats

are allocated in a system that is far from intuitive.

6.2.2 Alternative explanations

Ticket-splitting can also be explained by other quasi-strategic forms of voting behaviour. Analysis of split-ticket voting in Germany has suggested that a motivation for voters splitting their ticket is to express a preference over potential coalition partnerships (Jesse, 1988; Cox, 1997; Schoen, 1999; Pappi and Thurner, 2002; Abramson et al., 2010). This desire is perhaps unsurprising in a political system which has only produced coalition governments at the federal level since reunification but there is some evidence that this behaviour may not be context specific to Germany.

Although voters in the UK as a whole have far less exposure to multi-party government in the UK government, voters in Scotland and Wales have experienced several periods of devolved government by multiple parties: in Scotland, the 1999-2003 and 2003-07 Labour-Liberal Democrat coalitions. In Wales the 2000-03 Labour-Liberal Democrat partnership government and the 2007-11 Labour-Plaid Cymru coalition. Both countries have also seen periods of minority government involving more informal cooperation between different parties. Scotland has experienced two minority SNP governments supported by the Scottish Greens (2007-11 and 2016-present) and the post-2016 Welsh Labour administration is supported via a formal agreement with the sole Liberal Democrat AM and support from an independent member.

This additional exposure to coalition governments may lead voters in Scotland and Wales to take note of their coalition preferences when casting their votes, similar to voters in Germany. Carman and Johns (2010) tested this hypothesis at the 2007 SP election. They found that voters who profess a preference for coalition government are more likely to split their ticket. They attribute this finding to the intuitive, albeit misguided, belief that voting for more than one party was more likely to produce a coalition between those parties.

There are several reasons why investigation of split-ticket voting needs to be expanded however. This hypothesis has not been tested in Wales as Carman and Johns (2010) only examine the 2007 Scottish election. There is an argument that 2007 in Scotland was a uniquely inappropriate election at which to study split-ticket voting in isolation because it was overshadowed by considerable problems with the voting system (see Hepburn, 2008a). This was due to the introduction of a single transferable vote (STV) electoral system for local elections that were held at the same time. This electoral system asked voters to rank candidates by preference. The resulting confusion led to almost 150,000 votes (roughly 7% of all votes cast) rendered invalid. In order to confirm this behaviour this hypothesis must be tested in more than one case.

Not all split-tickets are cast due to strategic considerations. One straightforward occasion when split tickets will be cast is when a voter casts their ballot for a candidate in a constituency that belongs to a party not represented on the party list (or vice-versa). In this instance, voters are ‘forced’ to cast a split-ticket. This is a relatively common occurrence as parties themselves behave strategically in terms of which ballot paper they stand candidates. For example, smaller parties that are unlikely to win any constituency contests may concentrate on regional party lists where the probability of winning a seat is far greater (Curtice, 2006c, pp.126).

A further possible motivation for ticket-splitting is a ‘personal vote’ - a vote for a specific candidate in a constituency who is popular enough to win votes from supporters of several different political parties. But the list vote may also be subject to a personal vote effect: Parties may elect to place candidates with a high profile at the top of the list to attract attention for that party in the hope of electing a particular politician. This tactic has been used in both Scotland and Wales. For example, at the 2007 Scottish elections the SNP was labelled as “Alex Salmond for First Minister” on the party list, a tactic that was repeated in 2011, and again with Nicola Sturgeon’s name in 2016 (see Figure D.5).⁵³ Although there has been a very limited amount of analysis on incumbency effects or personal voting in a devolved context, there is some evidence that it may drive voters to cast a split

ticket. At the 1999 and 2003 SP elections [Curtice \(2006c\)](#) found that half of voters who reported that their constituency vote was for a specific candidate cast a split ticket.

Aside from considering motivations for ticket-splitting, it is equally important to discuss motivations for casting straight ballots. The primary and most intuitive motivation for not casting a split ticket is partisanship. Voters with strong levels of partisan attachment are unlikely to deviate from a straight ticket for reasons that are self-explanatory. This has been tested in several studies of split-ticket voting behaviour where models have found there to be a strong negative coefficient between ticket-splitting and partisanship ([Karp et al., 2002](#); [Roscoe, 2003](#); [Rallings and Thrasher, 2005](#); [Gschwend, 2006](#)). Partisanship may play a particularly prevalent role in the case of new electoral arenas such as Scotland and Wales.

6.3 Data and Method

The study of split-ticket voting has generally used two forms of data: aggregate-level data ([Johnston and Pattie, 2003](#); [Gschwend et al., 2003](#); [Plescia, 2016](#)), and individual-level data from surveys ([Jesse, 1988](#); [Karp et al., 2002](#); [Carman and Johns, 2010](#); [Plescia, 2016](#)). Individual-level surveys represent the only point of access to voters' considerations when casting their ballot. They can therefore be used to identify those individual-level respondents who cast split tickets. Since 1999, the Scottish and Welsh Election Studies (SES and WES) have asked voters in Scotland and Wales their vote choice – in addition to a range of other attitudinal and preference questions – at every devolved election. These two sets of studies therefore provide the best available data for analyzing split-ticket voting in the two countries. I use these datasets to test my hypotheses.

These individual-level data also have limitations that must be addressed. Both the SES and WES suffer from sampling and respondent biases. These biases are a concern as they may introduce bias into the analysis and subsequent results. One pertinent example of how this bias may affect the anal-

ysis is political participation. Table 6.1 shows the reported turnout among the SES and WES samples using population weights and official turnout figures for each devolved election. In each dataset, and in particular SES 2007, 2011, and 2016, and WES 2011 and 2016⁵⁴, respondents are considerably more likely to vote than the real population.

	Scotland		Wales	
	SES	Official	WES	Official
1999	72.5	59.1	57.2	46.0
2003	60.1	49.4	49.3	38.2
2007	78.0	52.4	49.1	43.7
2011	81.4	50.4	74.9	42.2
2016	78.2	55.6	68.3	45.3

Table 6.1: Reported SES and WES turnout with population weights and official turnout figures for devolved elections, 1999-2016. Figures given as percentages. **Source:** SES, WES, and Electoral Commission.

It is well established that political participation is correlated with education, political interest, and political knowledge (Blais, 2000). These factors have also been shown in the past to be correlated to both strategic voting and split-ticket voting (Plescia, 2016). This means that it is possible that the election studies over-recruit respondents with a high propensity to cast split-tickets meaning our analysis overestimates the quantity of this group of voters.

Similarly, the data does not accurately reflect the vote choice of the whole electorate. Carman and Johns (2010, pp. 386) found considerable sampling and respondent bias in the 2007 SES. These biases are present throughout the devolved election studies. For example, each sample considerably underestimates the vote share of the Conservatives and overestimates the vote share that smaller parties receive in both the constituency and regional list ballots. These biases are uncorrected by post-stratification weights constructed with socio-demographic information only. To correct for some of these biases I follow Carman and Johns (2010) by creating additional post-stratification weights to recreate the the distributions of vote choice for each year. This reverse-weights the data to make it look more like the ‘real’ population, using distributions in the population we know to be

accurate such as socio-demographics, turnout and party choice.

6.3.1 Descriptive Analysis

Using these data I proceed with some initial descriptive analysis. This is complemented by some aggregate-level data. The aim here is to contextualize the individual-level behaviours within the ‘bigger picture’ of aggregate patterns. First, I establish the prevalence of split-ticket voting at devolved elections. Namely, what proportion of voters have cast split tickets at each devolved election? After all, if ticket-splitting is a rare occurrence, then analysis of this behaviour is of limited use. The data suggest that this is not the case. Using SES and WES data we can infer that substantial proportions of voters cast split-tickets at every devolved election in Scotland and Wales. Figure 6.3 reports these proportions. In Scotland, as many as one in four SES respondents cast a split-ticket in 2003, although this has declined to fewer than one in five voters at the 2016 SP election. In Wales, the 2011 NAW election saw the highest proportion of WES respondents reporting splitting their ticket at 28%, with the fewest at the 2003 election. These proportions of voters casting split-tickets is consistent with international comparisons of voter behaviour in MMP systems where between 20-30% of voters do (McAllister and White, 2000; Carman and Johns, 2010; Plešcia, 2016).

Once established that this is a common behaviour among voters, aggregate and individual-level data can be used to explore the patterns of split-ticket voting. Aggregate-level voting returns provide information on which political parties perform better on each ballot. Tables 6.2 and 6.3 give the mean constituency and list vote shares for parties in Scotland and Wales at devolved elections. In Scotland, the two largest parties over the period 1999-2016, Labour and the SNP, have won higher vote shares on the constituency ballot while the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have fared better on the party list. In Wales, all of the four largest parties over the period have performed better on the constituency ballot to varying extents. This means that substantial numbers of voters are

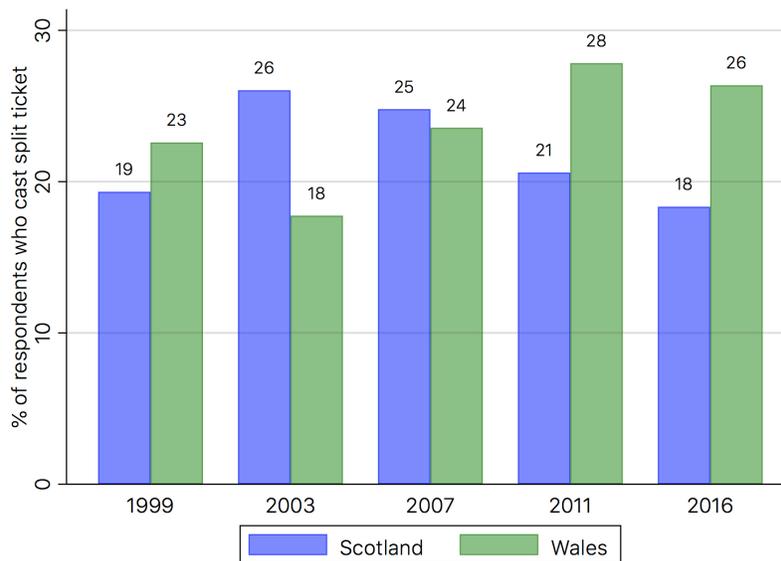


Figure 6.3: % of SES and WES (1999-2016) respondents who cast a split ticket at SP and NAW elections. All data are weighted. **Source:** SES and WES, 1999-2016

casting their list ballot for another party. This is the case in both Scotland and Wales. Several of these ‘other’ parties tend to be smaller parties who have little chance of winning a constituency contest. They therefore do not stand on the constituency, a move often made for financial reasons in order to minimize the cost of losing candidate deposits.

Party	Mean Vote Share (C)	Mean Vote Share (L)	List Advantage
Conservative	16.9	18.3	+1.4
Labour	32.0	27.6	-4.4
Liberal Democrat	12.3	14.4	+2.2
SNP	35.4	28.9	-7.2

Table 6.2: Mean Constituency (C) and List (L) vote shares (%) with mean List advantage, by party at SP elections, 1999-2016.

Figure 6.4 shows the percentage of the constituency votes cast for candidates or parties only present on one part of the ballot at every devolved election. Considerable numbers of voters at each

Party	Mean Vote Share (C)	Mean Vote Share (L)	List Advantage
Conservative	20.8	19.7	-1.2
Labour	37.4	34.0	-3.4
Liberal Democrat	12.1	10.3	-1.9
Plaid Cymru	22.4	22.0	-0.4

Table 6.3: Mean Constituency (C) and List (L) vote shares (%) with mean List advantage, by party at NAW elections, 1999-2016.

election vote for parties or candidates on one of the ballots that are not represented on the other. Although there is a considerable amount of variation between elections, substantial numbers of voters are voting for candidates of parties only represented on one half of the ballot. The list vote, in particular, sees considerable numbers of voters cast ballots for parties that do not stand candidates in constituencies.

The considerable variation between elections in the proportions of voters casting votes for parties only present on one ballot can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, and most straightforward, is the number of parties or candidates standing. For example, in the 2003 SP elections, there was an average increase of two parties standing in each party list that were not standing in any constituencies compared to 1999. When voters are given a greater range of parties to vote for there is a higher probability that their votes will therefore be spread among a greater number of parties and in cases where these parties only stand in one half of the ballot, there will be a greater number of ticket-splitting by necessity.

The second factor is the relative strength of political parties. Consider, for example, the case of UKIP in Wales at the 2011 and 2016 NAW elections. In 2011, UKIP were only starting to emerge as significant players in the UK political scene and had not had any substantial electoral success in Wales. As a result, they did not stand in any constituency contests, instead focusing on the party lists, winning 4.6% of the national vote. In the following years however, UKIP achieved considerable success across the UK, winning a considerable number of votes in the 2013 English local elec-

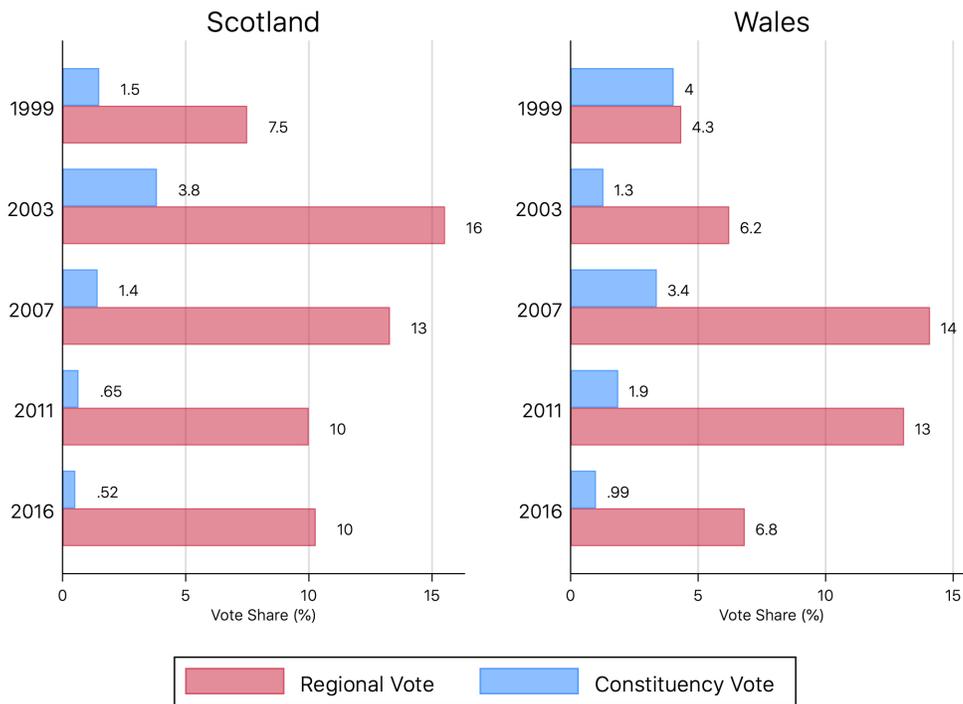


Figure 6.4: % votes of constituency and regional list votes cast for candidate or party not represented on the other ballot. **Source:** House of Commons Library

tions, the 2014 European Parliamentary elections and the 2015 UK general election. In 2016, they stood candidates in 38 of Wales’s 40 constituencies, winning 12.5% of the vote nationally and 13% in the party lists. This explains the considerable drop in the share of the regional vote cast for half-ballot parties in Wales between 2011 and 2016.

The SES and WES can also help us to understand the patterns of split ticket voting in Scotland and Wales and how they may have changed over time. Figures 6.5 and 6.6 illustrate these patterns of split-ticket voting in Scotland and Wales at each devolved election. In Scotland, the major beneficiaries on the regional list are the Scottish Green Party, as well as other smaller parties. There are several patterns which emerge in these figures. The first is the decline in Scotland of Labour and SNP con-

stituency voters voting for the other party in the regional list. In 1999, a plurality of Labour SMD voters voted for the SNP in the list vote. The same was true of SNP SMD voters voting for Labour in the list vote. Since 1999, the proportions of both sets of SMD voters voting for the other party in the list has been in decline, except for 2011 Labour SMD voters likely contributing to the SNP's historic victory. In fact, in 2016, fewer Labour SMD voters voted for the SNP on the list than for any other party.

Over the same time period the proportion of Labour and SNP SMD voters voting for the Scottish Green Party has increased at each election. One of the factors that may explain this success can also be used to explain the high number of voters splitting to other minor parties; namely that the majority of these parties will not stand on the SMD ballot. As Figure 6.4 illustrated, these voters may be *forced* to cast split ballots as they are unable to vote for their preferred party in their constituency. Additionally, it may be the case that Labour and SNP voters, who historically would have split among themselves, now split to the Greens as an alternative.

In Wales, several different trends appear. The first unique trend, which has been notably absent from SP elections, is the considerable increase in UKIP vote share at the 2011 NAW election. Considerable proportions of Conservative and Plaid Cymru constituency voters split to UKIP on the list in 2011 and, among Conservative constituency voters, in 2016. The second trend is the increase since 2003 in the proportion of Labour constituency voters who vote for Plaid Cymru in the list. In 2016 this extended to more than one in every ten Labour constituency voters.

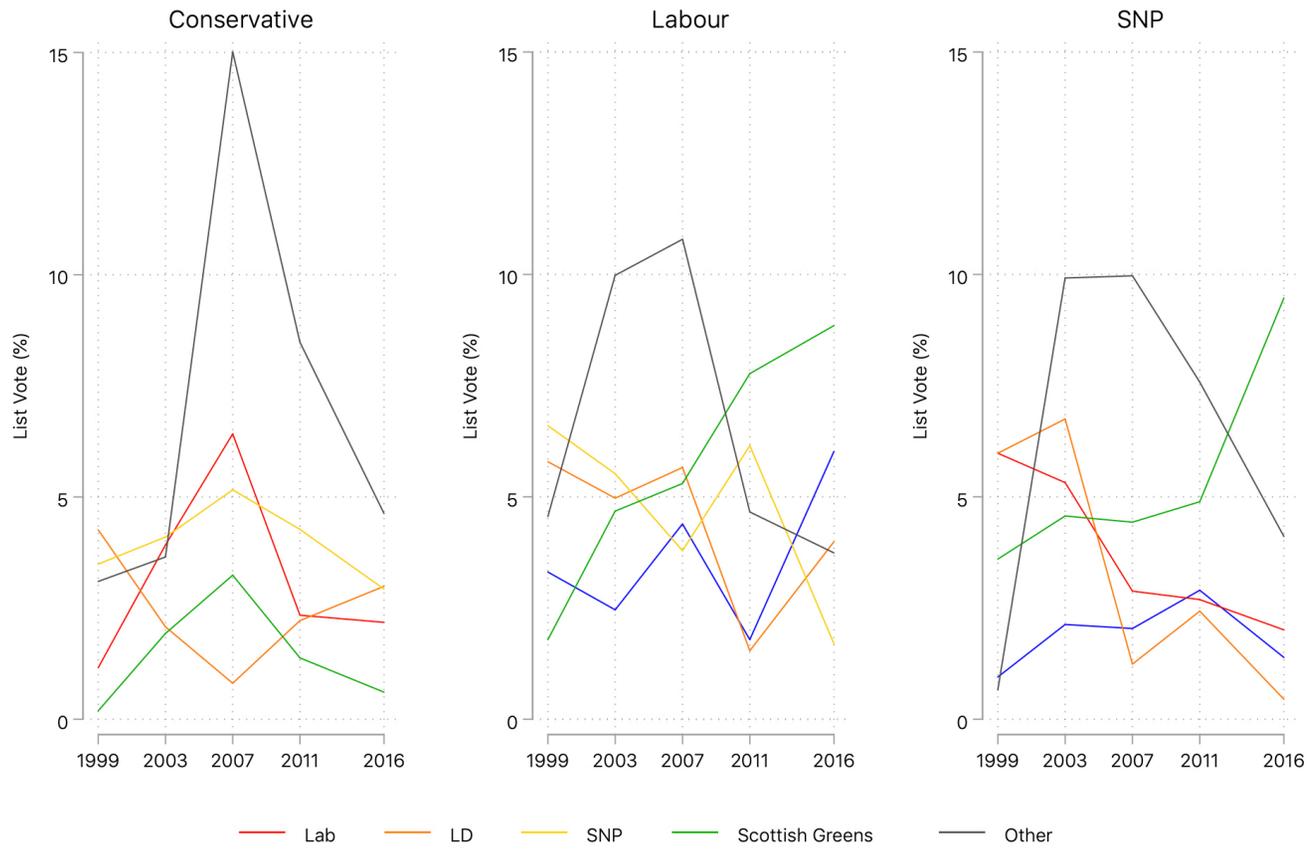


Figure 6.5: Percentage of Conservative, Labour and SNP constituency voters who cast a list for for a different party. Source: SES, 1999-2016

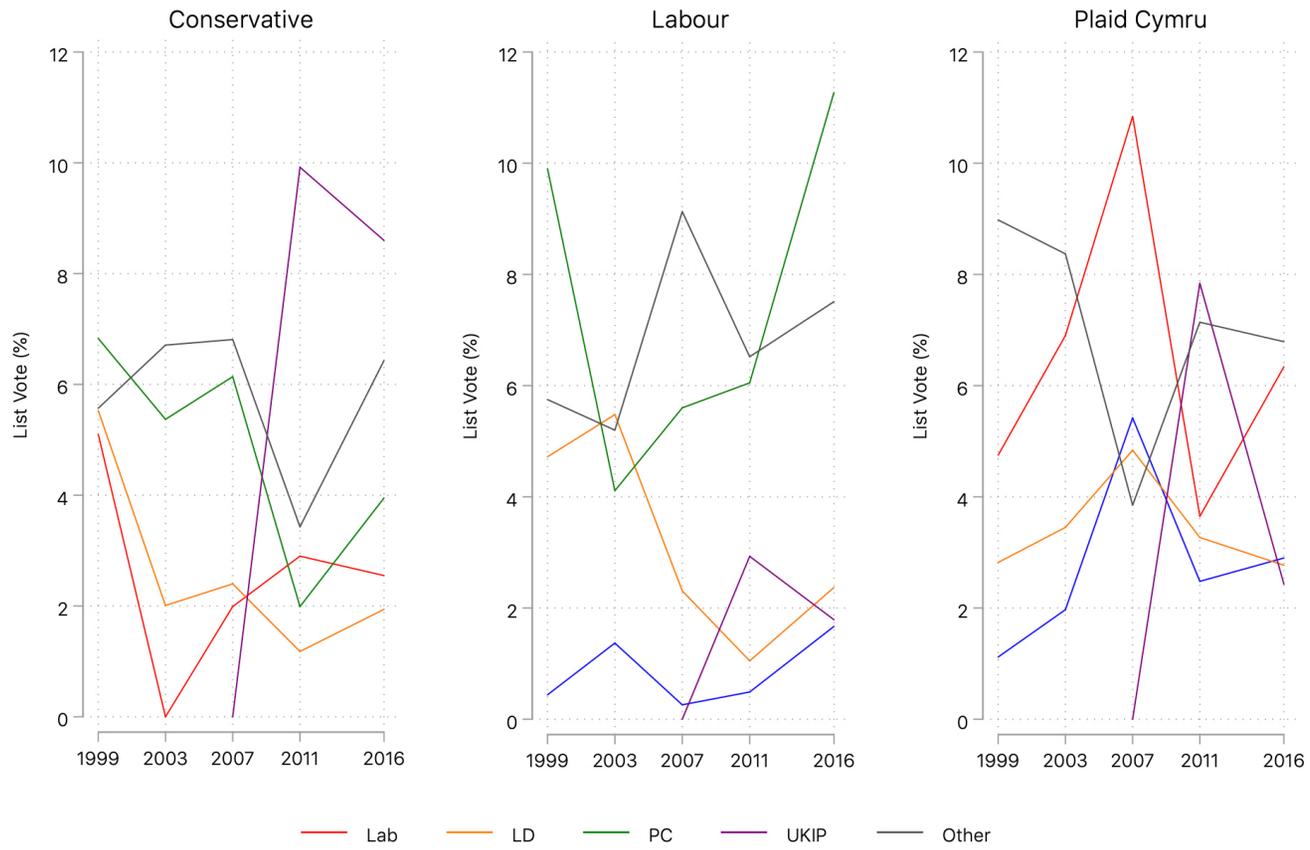


Figure 6.6: Percentage of Conservative, Labour and Plaid Cymru constituency voters who cast a list for for a different party. Source: WES, 1999-2016

	Constituency	List
Always vote this way	34.1	32.7
The party has the best policies	33.4	35.4
The party has the best leader	14.6	16.0
Vote for specific candidate, regardless of party	4.2	2.4
Tactical vote to stop another party	10.1	10.5
Preferred party had no chance of winning	2.0	1.3
Preferred party didn't stand a candidate	0.5	0.3
Other reasons	1.3	1.5
<i>N</i>	2,172	2,172

Table 6.4: Scottish responses to the question “Still thinking of this [constituency/list] vote, which of the following comes closest to the reason you voted the way you did?” Figures given are percentages. All data are weighted. **Source:** SES 2016

6.4 Multivariate Analyses

Prior to testing my hypotheses, I first show descriptive statistics from the 2016 SES and WES to examine the reasons respondents themselves gave for the ways they voted. In 2011 and 2016 SES and WES respondents were asked which party they voted for in their constituency vote, and then asked “[Still] thinking of this constituency vote, which of the following comes closest to the reason you voted the way you did?”. Respondents were then presented with a series of options to select. The question was repeated for respondents’ list vote. Tables 6.4 and 6.5 give the proportion of respondents who selected each option.

I use these responses as explanatory variables in a logistic regression where the dependent variable identifies whether a voter casts a straight or a split ticket. This uncovers which explanations lead to a higher probability of a voter casting a split-ticket. The dependent variable is a binary variable that takes a value of 1 whenever a respondent reported voting for different parties in the constituency and list votes and a 0 if the respondent reported voting for the same party on both ballots.

I also include a number of control variables. To control for the role of political knowledge in

	Constituency	List
Always vote this way	31.7	30.8
The party has the best policies	39.2	42.4
The party has the best leader	8.9	9.1
Vote for specific candidate, regardless of party	6.4	3.7
Tactical vote to stop another party	6.6	7.3
Preferred party had no chance of winning	2.9	2.3
Preferred party didn't stand a candidate	0.4	-
2nd preference; voted 1st in constituency	-	0.5
Other reasons	3.7	4.0
<i>N</i>	1,781	1,781

Table 6.5: Welsh responses to the question “Still thinking of this [constituency/list] vote, which of the following comes closest to the reason you voted the way you did?” Figures given are percentages. All data are weighted. **Source:** WES 2016

split-ticket voting I employ a categorical variable of a respondent’s highest educational qualification. It is important to note that any positive effect between education and split-ticket voting will not necessarily be a direct effect. It is unlikely to be the case, for example, that voters who complete their A-levels or attend university are taught about the electoral system. Rather, education may play an indirect role through other important social factors. For example, those with higher educational qualifications are more likely to participate politically in elections and exist in social circles who participate (Blais, 2000). It is possible that voters gain knowledge of the electoral system through these connections. Partisan identity is controlled for using a categorical variable measuring the strength of a respondent’s identification with a political party. Finally, standard demographic variables of age and gender are also included as controls.

If strategic voting is a key motivation for voters casting split tickets then we should expect a positive relationship between split-ticket voting and respondents who said their vote was to stop another party from winning or preferred another party but didn’t think that party had a chance of winning. Figures 6.7 and 6.8 show the change in probability of a respondent casting a split-ticket, depending on the reason they gave for the way they voted. The reference category is ‘I always vote this way’, so

all probabilities are relative to the group of voters who selected this option. Full regression tables with controls are provided in Appendix D.

The results show that strategic considerations have a significant and substantive positive effect on the probability of casting a split-ticket. Among those who indicated their SMD or list vote was to stop another party, the probability of casting a split-ticket was between 18 and 41% greater than those respondents who indicated they 'always voted this way'. Similarly, the probability of casting a split-ticket increased by between 27% and 40% among those who said that they voted the way they did because they didn't think that their preferred candidate/party could win. Both of these results lend support to the hypothesis that strategic motivations drive split-ticket voting. These two effects are not mutually exclusive and in many instances complement each other. It is likely that the reason why voters decide not to stick with a preferred candidate or party they think has little chance of winning is because the cost of remaining loyal to that candidate/party is that a party they do not like will win. Strategic voting may therefore be driven as much by what [McGregor et al. \(2015\)](#) call 'negative partisanship', than it is deterred by partisan identity.

There is also strong evidence of a personal vote influencing split-ticket voting. In the constituency vote, respondents who said they voted for a specific candidate regardless of party, the probability of casting a split-ticket increased by 44% in Scotland and 37% in Wales. On the list vote, there is a larger discrepancy between Scotland and Wales, with personal vote having a larger effect in Scotland compared to Wales. This is perhaps a reflection of the use of party leader names on list ballot papers being a more established and prevalent feature of SP elections. Unsurprisingly, there was also a large positive effect among respondents who cast split-tickets out of necessity or, in other words, those whose preferred party did not stand on the list or stand candidates in their constituency.

The results also provide some information that is indicative of voters not understanding the electoral system. In Wales, voters who thought that their list vote was for their second preference and their constituency was for their first preference were substantially more likely to cast a split ticket.

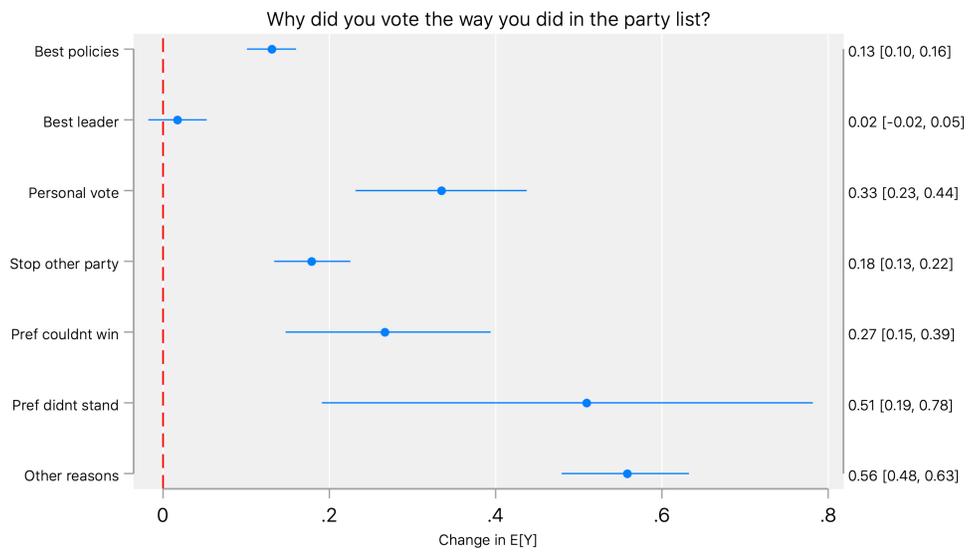
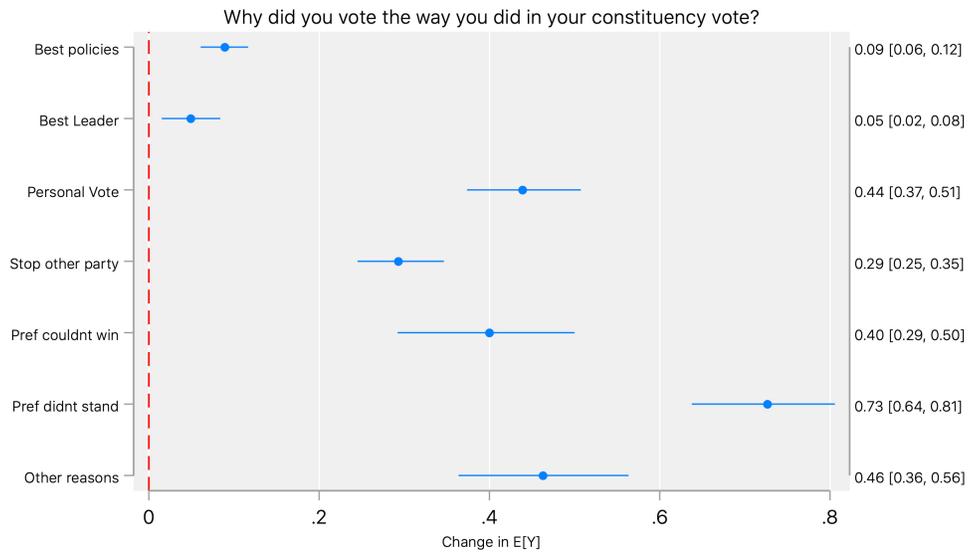


Figure 6.7: First differences plot. How do ticket-splitters explain their constituency and list vote? Source: SES 2016

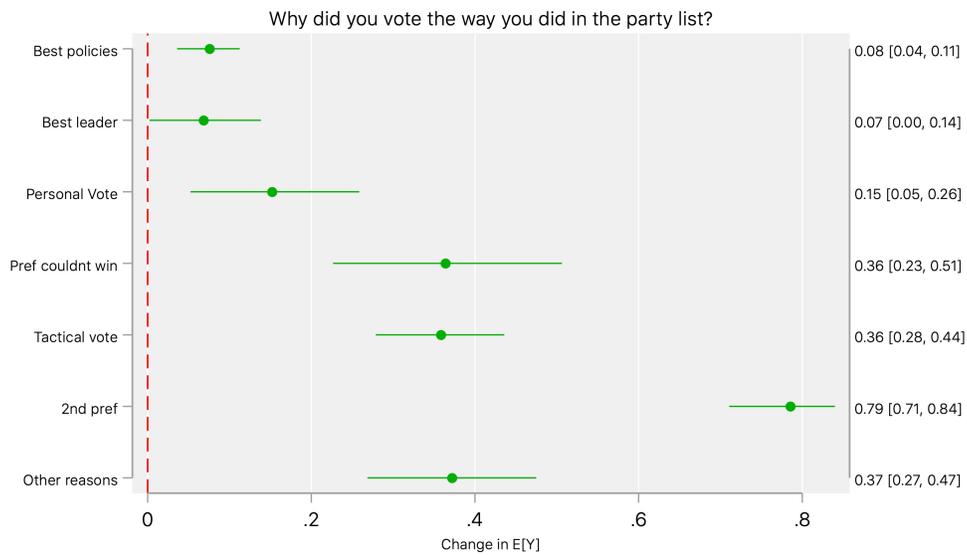
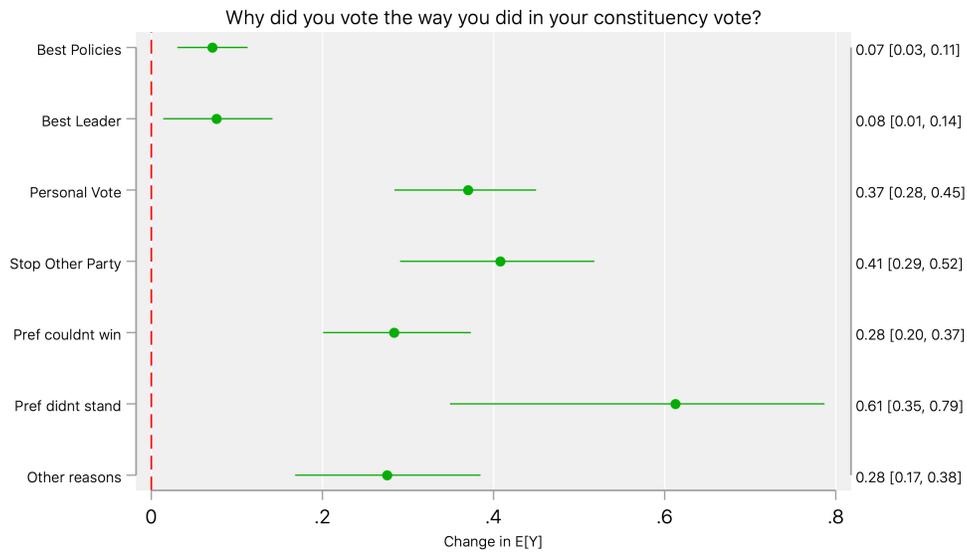


Figure 6.8: First differences plot. How do ticket-splitters explain their constituency and list vote? Source: WES 2016

It is of course unsurprising that respondents who selected this option should report casting a vote for two different parties (indeed, it is puzzling that not every respondent who selected this option reported casting a split ticket). However, it also illustrates that those respondents who do not understand the electoral system (and this is a substantial number, see Chapter 3) are not expressing their political attitudes in an efficient and effective manner.

I now move on to test my two main hypotheses, H_1 and H_2 . Restated, these are:

H_1 : The less competitive a voter's first preference candidate is in their SMD, the greater the probability of them casting a split-ticket.

H_2 : Voters who cast their ballot for the Labour Party in a South Wales SMD will be more likely to cast a split ticket.

To test H_1 and H_2 , I employ two further sets of binomial logit regressions, this time using data from multiple election years. Again, the data are taken from the SES and WES over the period of 1999-2016.

Focusing first on H_1 , I create a variable that captures the competitiveness of a respondent's preferred party in their SMD. The previous analysis has established that the probability of a voter casting a split-ticket increases when strategic considerations motivate vote choice. This is consistent with the 'wasted vote' hypothesis which tells us that voters have an intrinsic aversion to casting votes for parties or candidates that have little chance of winning (Riker, 1982). The SES and WES do not ask respondents what they think the chances of their preferred party's candidate winning their constituency or winning representation through the party list. Therefore, I follow Niemi et al. (1992, pp. 232) who suggest incorporating aggregate-level information to measure strategic voting, primarily district competitiveness, when individual-level expectations about the election outcome are not available.

To measure candidate competitiveness in the constituency ballot (H_1), I take the difference in

vote share between a respondent's preferred party candidate and the first placed candidate in that respondent's constituency at the previous election. The 'preferred party' is assumed to be the party that the respondent identifies in their response to the question "Which of the following parties do you feel closest to?". If the respondent states they are not close to any party then this is measured as zero. For those respondents whose preferred party came first in their constituency at $t-1$ this is also measured as zero. In the following analysis this variable is referred to as the 'candidate gap'.

The construction of this variable means that some election years have to be excluded from the analyses. In order to be eligible data must contain geographic data for each respondent, namely the constituency or SMD that respondent cast their vote in. Without this information it is not possible to calculate the distance between a respondent's preferred party and the first placed candidate in their area. Only five of the ten devolved election studies contained this information. In Scotland these are the 2007 and 2016 SES, and in Wales these are the 2007, 2011, and 2016 WES. The 1999 and 2003 WES have the required constituency data, but missing data means that the samples are too small to use in many multivariate analyses. The dependent variable is the same as that used in my earlier analysis; a binary variable that indicates whether a voter cast a split-ticket or not.

In addition to the controls listed in the previous analysis, I include variables that test for alternative motivations to cast a split-ticket. To measure for quasi-strategic coalition motivations I employ an additional binary variable measuring whether a respondent preferred a single-party government or a coalition government between more than one political party. This is taken from responses to the question "What do you think would generally be better for [Scotland/Wales] nowadays: to have a government in Cardiff formed by one political party on its own; or to have a government in [Edinburgh/Cardiff] formed by two political parties together in coalition?" The same measurement is used by [Carman and Johns \(2010\)](#) in their analysis of the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary election, and is shown to be a significant predictor of split-ticket voting. The 2016 SES does not include this question or any comparable questions on coalition attitudes. The 2016 analysis of Scottish voting

therefore excludes this measure. More information regarding respondents coalition attitudes are provided in Appendix C.1.

Given that the previous analysis indicated the presence of a strong personal vote driving split-ticket voting, I include a control for an incumbency effect. This is a binary variable which takes a value of 1 if a respondent voted for the incumbent in their constituency, and a 0 otherwise. All independent variables are measured in the pre-election wave of each election study. This is done to prevent voters from retroactively changing their reported attitudes, reducing the likelihood of endogeneity problems created by false recall. The dependent variable is necessarily measured at the post-election stage.

Results are provided in Table 6.6 with the effect of candidate competitiveness illustrated as marginal effects in Figure 6.9. Full regression tables are provided in Appendix D. Focusing first on Figure 6.9, the marginal effects provide strong support for *H1*. In every election year with eligible data there is a substantive positive association between the probability of casting a split-ticket and the size of the candidate gap. This is the same in Scotland and Wales. The effect is significant in all years except for 2007 in Wales, although this is due to the small sample size that year.

These results suggest that voters do generally understand that the SMD vote in MMP operates the same way as the UK General Election voting system. They are also able to effectively maximize the impact of their vote: when information from previous elections suggests that a voter's preferred candidate has little chance of winning, they are more likely to cast a split-ticket. When the information suggests that their preferred party's candidate is more competitive, they are less likely to cast a split-ticket. This confirms *H1*, and represents the first recorded evidence of strategic voting in devolved elections in the UK.

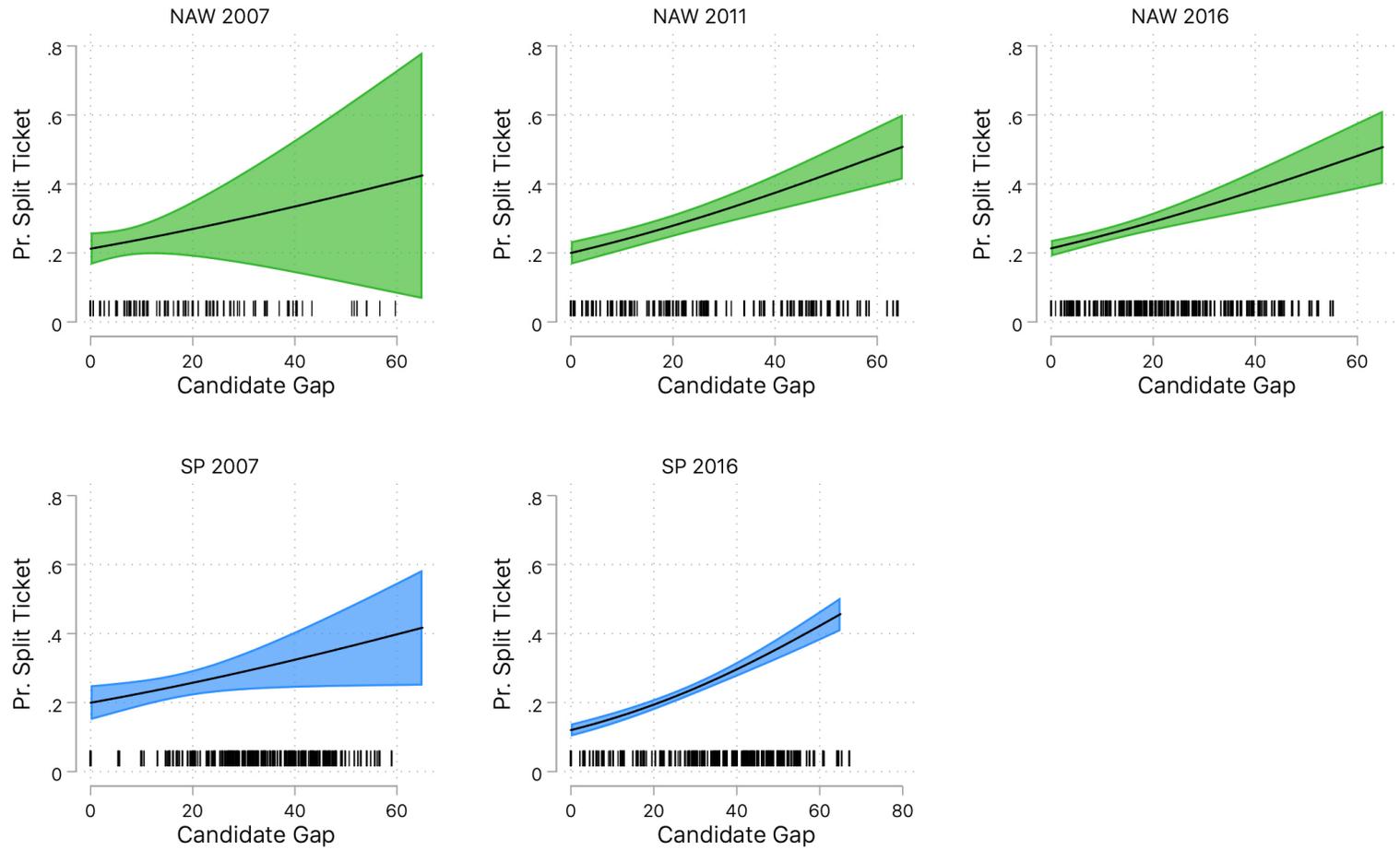


Figure 6.9: Probability of casting split-ticket given difference in vote share between voters preferred party and the first placed party's candidate at election $t-1$

	Scot '07	Scot '16	Wales '07	Wales '11	Wales '16
Gap	0.212*	0.364*	0.190	0.306*	0.254*
Voted for Incumbent	-0.044	0.009	-0.152*	0.004	0.074*
Age (Centred)	-0.060	-0.119*	0.138	-0.077	0.087
Female	0.017	-0.083*	-0.034	-0.001	-0.052*
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>					
GCSE	-0.005	0.034	0.040	0.105	0.020
A-level	0.193*	0.113*	0.041	0.110*	0.083*
Degree	0.159*	0.156*	0.155*	0.027	0.056
Prefers coalition	0.120*		0.059	0.042	0.138*
<i>Party support strength (Ref = None)</i>					
Very strong	-0.116	-0.070	-0.046	0.048	0.022*
Fairly strong	0.024	0.000	0.026	-0.003	0.097
Not very strong	0.081	-0.015*	0.043	0.161	0.047

Table 6.6: Maximum Discrete Changes in Probability of Casting Split-ticket. * denotes significant effect. See Table D.4 for full output.

To test H_2 I restrict the sample to respondents in three South Wales electoral regions: South Wales East, Central, and West. I do this as it is only in these regions where Labour SMD voters face explicit incentives to vote strategically on the list due to the overwhelming dominance of the Labour Party on the constituency ballot. This means that I only test this hypothesis on data from the 2011 and 2016 WES. The 2007 WES is dropped as it had an insufficient sample size when restricted to the three electoral regions. In this model, the main explanatory variable of interest is whether a respondent reports voting for the Labour party in the SMD ballot. I therefore include 2016 SMD reported vote as a categorical variable in the model, with the reference category being respondents who did not vote for one of the five main parties. If H_2 is correct, we should see a *positive* effect between voting Labour in the SMD and a respondent casting a split-ticket.

The results in Table 6.7 show this is not the case. Instead, the direction of the effect is the exact *opposite* of what would be expected if voters were casting strategic votes on the list. Indeed, it appears that voters who voted for the Labour party in their SMD ballot were the least likely of any

	2011	2016
Age (Centred)	-0.010	0.182*
Female	0.035	-0.061
<i>Education (Ref = no formal quals)</i>		
GCSE	0.030	-0.023
Alevel	0.046	0.047
Uni	0.045	0.042
<i>2016 SMD Vote (Ref = Other)</i>		
Conservative	0.040	-0.425*
<u>Labour</u>	<u>0.038</u>	<u>-0.616*</u>
Liberal Democrat	0.085	-0.277*
Plaid Cymru	-0.068	-0.418*
UKIP		-0.387*
Voted for Incumbent	-0.001	0.134
Prefers Coalition	0.130*	0.210*
<i>Party Support Strength (Ref = None)</i>		
Very Strong	0.058	-0.109
Fairly Strong	-0.005	-0.018
Not Very Strong	0.202	-0.070

Table 6.7: Maximum Discrete Changes in Probability of Casting Split-ticket. Sample is restricted to respondents in South Wales East, Central, and West. * denotes significant effect. See Table D.5 for full output.

other group of voters to cast a split-ticket. This means that we can say with some confidence that H_2 fails.

6.5 Discussion

The results represent something of a mixed picture regarding strategic split-ticket voting in Scotland and Wales. On the one hand, the results presented in Table 6.6 represent the first confirmation of strategic voting at devolved elections in Scotland and Wales. In the SMD ballot there is strong evidence of a substantial effect between the competitiveness of a voter's preferred party and the probability of that voter casting a split-ticket. Voters demonstrate understanding of this process, with

those describing their SMD vote as a strategic one being substantially more likely to split their ballot. This is likely the result of a ‘spillover’ of knowledge from the electoral system used at UK general elections which provides voters with the same incentives to vote strategically (Cain, 1978; Lanoue and Bowler, 1992; Fieldhouse et al., 2007; Fisher, 2004; Fisher and Curtice, 2006; Heath et al., 1991a; Clarke et al., 2004).

Yet results presented in Table 6.7 suggest that voters do not appear to cast strategic votes on the list ballot even when faced with explicit incentives to do so. In three South Wales electoral regions where the probability of the Labour Party winning list seats is infinitesimally small, voters who cast their SMD ballot for Labour were the least likely of any group to cast a split ticket. The most likely explanation for these results is that the party list vote is simply not a straightforward or intuitive ballot. Farrell and Gallagher (1999) and Gschwend (2006) have both argued that MMP system is a confusing one for voters to navigate, and that this confusion stems from the method used to allocate party list seats. Evidence in Chapter 3 backs this up, suggesting a worrying lack of understanding of the MMP electoral system among voters.

To conclude, I focus on two of the wider implications of this research for the study of electoral behaviour. The first relates to the study of elections in multilevel systems. The results show that the MMP electoral system creates incentives for voters to cast ballots for multiple parties. This has the potential to influence future vote choice in elections to other levels of government. Evidence suggests that vote choice is habit-forming and that once this habit is broken, it is more likely to be broken again in the future Shachar (2003). Strategic split-ticket voting has the potential therefore to be a ‘gateway’ into supporting other political parties at other elections. Future research should seek to address the influence that different electoral systems at different levels have on the outcomes of elections and the voting choices and political attitudes of citizens.

The second implication of these findings is a more troubling one. There is now strong evidence presented throughout this thesis that voters do not understand how to maximize their political in-

terests at devolved elections. Even when confronted with the optimal situation to cast a strategic vote they do not. This is an obvious problem facing the devolved administrations. The MMP system was implemented in the first place to produce a more representative reflection of the political views of the populations of Scotland and Wales (see [The Scottish Office, 1997](#); [The Wales Office, 1997](#)) but is failing to do so. The implications of this extend beyond devolved elections however, and represent a far more existential challenge to the study of electoral systems. Dozens of states, and even more sub-state areas, use mixed-member electoral systems to elect representatives ([Plescia, 2016](#)). If voters do not know how to maximise their preferences through the ballot box in even the most obvious and straightforward of cases it is incredibly unlikely that voters elsewhere are able to do so. Future comparative research must look to respond to this challenge.

Notes

⁵⁰This is opposed to ‘vertical splitting where voters vote for different parties at different levels of government ([Pappi and Thurner, 2002](#)) See Chapter 5 for more information.

⁵¹The notable exceptions being [Curtice \(2006c\)](#) and [Carman and Johns \(2010\)](#).

⁵²For example, at the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary election the SNP won every SMD seat in the Northeast Scotland region *and* a regional list seat.

⁵³See, for example, [Scotsman – Row over Alex Salmond for First Minister ballot label](#) (accessed 05/01/19) or [The National – SNP will use Nicola Sturgeon’s name on every ballot paper at the upcoming election](#) (accessed 05/01/19).

⁵⁴These surveys were carried out online, compared to previous devolved election studies carried out via a true random sample.

7

Conclusion

This thesis began with the premise that politics is not constant within the boundaries of states. Accelerating political and economic decentralization has changed how hundreds of millions of citizens experience politics, providing sub-state societies – some old and some new – with increasing controls over their lives (Schakel and Romanova, 2018). These societies inevitably shape and influence the attitudes and behaviours of those living in them, in turn affecting how they vote. The influence of these societies is also not confined to political questions within the boundaries of that society. There is no switch that people activate when moving from an election at one level to another: no option to press “on” for UK political attitudes, or “off” for Scottish political attitudes at a given moment. Instead, these attitudes and preferences are interdependent, with statewide issues affecting how people think about sub-state politics and vice versa.

In my introduction I noted that this is not reflected in many analyses of elections. Instead, our understanding of political attitudes and behaviours is held back by methodological nationalism: the assumption that the state ought to be the sole or primary unit of focus in the social sciences (Jeffery and Wincott, 2010b). This bias is inherent in not only theories of electoral behaviour, but also many methods of data collection and, as such, is built in to much of our understanding of electoral

behaviour. I noted that Reif and Schmitt (1980)'s second order election model is the archetypal example of this bias. Yet despite extensive evidence that the SOE often performs poorly at explaining certain sub-state electoral behaviours, its use remains widespread, both as a model and as a descriptive moniker for non-statewide elections (Jeffery and Hough, 2003; Hough and Jeffery, 2003; Johns et al., 2010; Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2017; Schakel and Romanova, 2018). Importantly, I suggested that the field of electoral studies has accumulated insufficient knowledge of how sub-state factors can influence and drive political attitudes and behaviours at multiple levels of government. Despite the efforts of notable exceptions, methodological nationalism still shapes not just how data is collected, but the research questions and analyses that are derived from it.

For political science to provide a meaningful account of how people interact with politics, it must reflect the realities of the social world. Such an approach requires political scientists to start their inquiries from a position that rejects the assumption that sub-state political issues, behaviours, and attitudes are merely a reaction to statewide political issues. By failing to reject this assumption, political scientists are blinkered to the multitude of ways in which sub-state factors can – and do – exercise a central and substantial role in influencing political behaviour. By interrogating sub-state politics and political behaviour as phenomena driven by more than reaction to state-wide factors, the preceding chapters are firmly located within this discipline, and aim to be an example of the benefits of carrying out research in this manner.

As a point of departure, I argued in Chapter 2 that the devolved election studies in the UK have opened up new possibilities for analyzing political behaviour at multiple levels, and exploring cases where sub-state factors can spillover and influence politics at the statewide level. One need not look further than political events in the previous five years in the UK to realize that an understanding of these factors has never been more timely or necessary. As I outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum has had a seismic effect on politics across the whole of the UK, kick-starting a period of substantial territorial divergence. Using this as a foundation, I

employed Scotland and Wales as case studies through which to explore pressing issues in the study of elections.

To conclude this thesis, this chapter highlights and re-emphasizes some of these findings and methodological innovations presented in the preceding chapters, and looks ahead to future directions in my research agenda.

7.1 Contributions

7.1.1 Political Information

In Chapter 3 I undertook the first comprehensive review of what voters know about politics in Scotland and Wales. Focusing primarily on knowledge of sub-state politics, I provided a descriptive analysis of how respondents in every devolved election study have answered questions about politics. This analysis pointed to substantial levels of confusion among voters with regards to the electoral system, governmental responsibility, and who political actors are. This descriptive analysis also pointed to the existence of a ‘knowledge gap’ between Scotland and Wales: in cases where the SES and WES asked the same questions, WES respondents were less likely to answer them correctly.

This dissertation has also sought to chart new ground through its analysis of the *supply* of political information in a multilevel system. This has been a glaring gap in the literature of elections in sub-state areas, with negligible quantitative analysis carried out. I suggested that the source of the knowledge gap might lie in the different patterns of media consumption and coverage between Scotland and Wales. My analysis showed that there was a considerable gap between how media at different levels attribute responsibility for the NHS. ‘Statewide’ media focus almost entirely upon the UK Government, which is responsible only for the health service in England. It falls solely upon sub-state media to discuss government policy and responsibility in Scotland and Wales. While the

consequences of this are limited in cases where large proportions of citizens consume sub-state news, such as in Scotland, they are far-reaching in cases where sub-state media is only consumed by very small proportions of the population, such as Wales.

Building on this descriptive foundation, I also presented evidence of the unequal distribution of political knowledge across different groups in society. Several of these findings merit highlighting again. First, certain groups of citizens were more likely to answer questions correctly – and hence demonstrate greater political knowledge – than others. Social class, political interest, gender, age, education and national identity were all associated in one way or another with the ability to correctly answer questions about politics. Second, my analysis uncovered a substantial gap in what voters knew about politics in Scotland and Wales, with citizens in Scotland being more likely to answer knowledge questions correctly on nearly every topic about which they were asked.

So, why does this matter? First, devolution and decentralization more broadly are often advocated to voters and political actors as a way of *increasing* democratic accountability and citizen involvement in politics. Yet in the UK, two decades after the establishment of the devolved institutions, considerable proportions of citizens have little knowledge of politics at that level. Policy makers must take note of this. If the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales are to become permanent and relevant to the everyday lives of voters, their citizens need to know about them.

Second, and perhaps most importantly, is the impact a lack of political knowledge can have on the lives of the people we study as social scientists. When citizens are unable to correctly attribute blame for perceived failures in different policy areas, bad policy making and poor governance can go unpunished at the ballot box. Even when citizens do have a good idea of who is responsible for particular policy areas, this matters little if they cannot use their ballots effectively. The MMP system – while admirable in its ambition to create a locally responsive and nationally representative group of elected officials – is poorly understood by those who have to use it. This cannot continue if the desired end-result is responsive and responsible government.

7.1.2 Sub-state Identities

In much of the existing political science literature on vote choice, national identity is treated as something of a ‘second-class’ explanatory variable, behind factors such as social class, education and religion, and frequently excluded from analyses of UK voting behaviour. Taken together, however, the chapters in this dissertation bring new evidence to challenge this position. My findings provide compelling evidence that sub-state identities not only play a central role influencing how citizens participate in politics at the sub-state level, but at the statewide level too.

In Chapter 4 I provided new analysis on why the electoral politics of Scotland and Wales appear to be so different to England. I argued that this electoral distinctiveness is driven in large part by the existence of strong sub-state identities. These identities are highly associated with left-right political attitudes, which I illustrated with subjective left-right placement and a left-right index from British Election Study data (see Figure 4.5). These results showed that citizens with a strong attachment to the sub-state identity – i.e. Scottish or Welsh identities – are considerably more left-wing than those who identify more strongly with the statewide identity – Britishness.

Breaking from existing literature, I developed a novel approach to conceptualizing vote choice in Scotland and Wales as a two-step process, where voters first choose between blocs of parties before picking an individual party to vote for at each election event. These can be labelled as a sub-state (Scottish/Welsh) bloc, and a statewide (British) bloc. I then presented evidence showing that national identity – operationalized here as a measure of relative territorial identity – is consistently the strongest predictor of which bloc of parties a voter supported, exercising a stronger effect than either social class or education. This effect is consistent in both Scotland and Wales across three different elections, and is even stronger than contemporary political actions and attitudes, such as Scottish Independence and EU Referendum vote choice.

These findings have clear implications for the debate surrounding vote choice in the UK and be-

yond. First, the conception of party competition occurring between blocs of parties is one that can be tested in other contexts. It is plausible, and perhaps even likely, that in sub-state territories with strong sub-state identities voters' use these identities as heuristics to group together blocs of parties. This is a hypothesis that is testable with pre-existing survey data in these cases, and as such will contribute to my agenda for future work. Second, it affirms the importance of sub-state identities as a heuristic within the funnel of causality. The analysis shows that this is not an effect limited to sub-state elections, or those voters casting their vote for 'nationalist' parties. Where analyses of UK or Britain-wide elections exclude national identity as an explanatory variable – as is the norm at present – it restricts our ability to understand the motivations driving citizens' votes.

7.1.3 Vote switching

Two of the chapters in this thesis focused on voters switching the party they voted for. Chapter 5 examines voters switching party between elections to different levels of government, and Chapter 6 examines split-ticket voting at the same election. These are far from uncommon occurrences: between one fifth and one-third of voters either switched the party they voted for between levels of government or voted for two different parties at a devolved election during the period covered in my analysis.

In chapter 5 I began by highlighting that the 'Multi-Level Voting' theory – as proposed by [Trystan et al. \(2003\)](#) and carried forward by [Hough and Jeffery \(2003\)](#) – offers only an incomplete explanation of *why* voters switch parties at different levels. Importantly, I proposed a new individual-level hypothesis that could fill gaps left by existing theory; namely, that the phenomenon of voters voting for different parties at different levels of government could, at least in part, be explained by a voter's attachment to a sub-state identity. I tested this hypothesis using an innovative dataset that combined the British and Welsh Election Studies, creating a panel of respondents across elections

to different levels. I presented evidence confirming my hypothesis: strong attachment to a sub-state identity is associated with switching parties between elections, with stronger statewide identity associated with *not* changing the party voted for at elections to different levels.

This chapter makes three substantial contributions to the literature. First, it represents a further challenge to the theoretical integrity of the second-order election model as an explanatory tool for election in a multilevel system. Vote switching is not merely a reaction to more ‘important’ statewide issues and factors, but a systematic process driven by sub-state identities. The second contribution is the development of a hypothesis that can be tested in a multitude of cases. The work of [Hough and Jeffery \(2003\)](#) has shown that there are a number of cases where patterns of multilevel voting are comparable to Wales and, as such, may be subject to the same relationships and drivers identified in this thesis. Finally, it reaffirms the findings I presented in [Chapter 4](#) that sub-state identities have a considerable influence on the behaviours of voters.

In [Chapter 6](#), I examined the extent to which split-ticket voting could be considered a strategic act. The evidence pointed to mixed results. When asked why they voted the way they did, respondents who split their ticket were considerably more likely to say their vote choice was strategic. Furthermore, I presented evidence that voters did split their ticket when their preferred party candidate in their SMD had little chance of winning. However, this behaviour did not hold when voters were faced with similar information about their preferred party on the list vote, even in positions where it was nearly impossible for their preferred party to win. This reaffirms the evidence presented in [Chapter 3](#) with regard to widespread confusion regarding the MMP electoral system in Scotland and Wales.

7.1.4 Summary

The research herein suggests that political scientists must account for these sub-state factors in any thorough analysis of electoral behaviour within multilevel states. The study of these dynamics should not be the sole purview of a sub-field of territorial specialists when there is strong evidence that they impact political behaviour and attitudes across multiple levels of government. This is not a new argument: [Lipset and Rokkan \(1967\)](#) identified the concept of a territorial cleavage over five decades ago. While I am certainly not advocating a full return to cleavage politics, the evidence presented in this thesis should compel political scientists to take sub-state issues and identities more seriously as explanatory variables at all levels.

The findings presented on political knowledge challenge the theoretical underpinnings of frequently used models of vote choice. As I have outlined throughout this thesis, the dominant explanation of vote choice in Scotland and Wales is one of competence-evaluation. Yet when the evidence points to citizens having little knowledge of which government is responsible for different policy areas, can we really be confident that their vote choices are based on government performance? [Johns \(2011b\)](#) identified that evaluations of responsibility played little role in vote choice, and were likely derived from information shortcuts such as party ID. Again, this simply reinforces the importance of including sub-state explanatory variables in models of vote choice.

7.2 Methodological Innovations

In Chapter 3 I employ a dataset that may be of interest to researchers in the wider field of social sciences. Using LexisNexis, I collected every article published in 18 sub-state and statewide newspapers using the search term ‘NHS’. The result was a wholly unique dataset of over 190,000 newspaper articles. These data contains the full article text, title, author, date, and word length as usable variables.

Although the collection process was computationally taxing, its low financial cost makes these data an invaluable tool for the analysis of media content in a range of contexts. Given the paucity of political communication research undertaken in sub-state environments, this dataset will remain an important resource for future research to draw upon.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I use a methodological innovation that may be of interest to the wider discipline. I combine the BES with the WES/SES to create a quasi-panel of respondents over multiple elections to different levels of government. This was possible as all three studies were carried out by the same polling company and, as such each respondent was assigned an ID that could be transferred across studies. The combination of separate surveys offers considerable opportunities for researchers to create quasi-panels with other surveys to create time-series data that otherwise would not be available to them. This method also maintains respondent anonymity across ‘waves’.

7.3 Limitations and agenda for future work

The central empirical findings of this dissertation represent a partial exploration of political behaviour in multilevel electoral systems. As with any study, this project has limitations that should be acknowledged.

First, is that my project only focuses on two cases: Scotland and Wales. On the one hand, this has provided many benefits such as similar survey data sources and ease of comparison. On the other, the analytic framework I put forward in my introductory chapter is generally applicable and hence both could, and should, be tested in a wider comparative context. As things stand, the small number of cases I examined in this project limits the extent to which my findings may be applied to other contexts. Comparative work also opens up new avenues of research, allowing for more in-depth analyses of the particular political contexts in which voting takes place. In future work, I will thus seek to replicate my findings across further sub-state contexts.

The second limitation this project faces is linked to the quality of survey data available in my chosen cases. The Welsh and Scottish devolved election studies represent perhaps the most extensive election studies carried out in the last two decades in any sub-state context, yet still present challenges to the researcher. Perhaps most pressing among these is the absence of any long-standing time-series data dating back to the earliest devolved elections. There has also been little continuation of questions or question wording from the first devolved election studies through to the most recent studies. In several of my chapters, this limited the extent to which I was able to make direct comparisons between the Scottish and Welsh cases, and between election studies at different points in time. To take an example, in Chapter 3 I described the existence of a knowledge gap between citizens in Scotland and Wales. This claim, however, was made using data that is now over a decade old. While I do not have any reason to think that this gap has closed over time, I also cannot state with certainty that this gap is still present in contemporary Scotland and Wales.

Several of these studies have also been carried out using opt-in online panel surveys instead of probability sampling. Whilst the use of these panels is now widespread, limitations remain on the confidence of the inferences we draw from these data. While I address this issue in Chapter 2, it is also the case that it is an inevitable challenge of research using secondary data, which will not always capture the information you would like it to. To (reluctantly) quote Donald Rumsfeld: “You go to war with the army you have, not the army you might want or wish to have at a later time” (Rumsfeld, 2004).

A third limitation relates to the pace of change taking place in contemporary politics. The last five years have been among the most politically turbulent periods in recent UK history. In this respect, this period has not been kind to those undertaking a PhD in political science through exploring UK case studies. With multiple elections, referendums, and changes in government, it has become something of an inevitability that some aspects of this thesis might seem out of sync with the political context at the time of reading. A prime example of this is the fate of the Liberal Demo-

crat Party. In Chapter 4 my formulation of party blocs does not include minor parties, which at that time included the Liberal Democrats. In the BES data of 2014-2017, fewer respondents identified as a supporter of the Liberal Democrats or reported voting for them at the 2015 or 2017 UK general elections than at any previous wave of the BES. As such, the sample of Liberal Democrat voters was so small in my analysis it made sense to include them in the category of 'other' minor parties. However, since the time of writing this chapter the party have undergone an apparent revival, gaining MPs through defections and gaining substantial support in opinion polls. It remains to be seen whether this is a merely a 'blip' or a more permanent shift in support.

This limitation is not unique to this project, but an obstacle that all social scientists must confront. While I am confident that the analysis presented still stands up to scrutiny, future replications will have to take account of the contemporary political context.

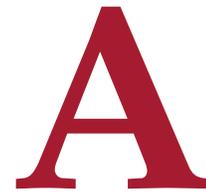
Finally, as with any wide-ranging study, this research project has been a gateway to additional research projects and future research. To conclude, I will outline three avenues for future research. First, the dataset I collected of news coverage of the NHS in Scotland and Wales also lends itself to research that can inform debate about political communication in sub-state areas. In this thesis, my analysis was restricted to what words the media use to discuss the NHS. In the future, this dataset could be used for a more in-depth analysis of the tone of this language. For example, when the UK media discuss the Scottish and Welsh NHS, is the tone positive or negative? This analysis can further inform how governmental responsibility is framed, and the effect this has on voters' behaviours and attitudes. Policy attribution is therefore a key area for future work.

Second, I aim to link the research carried out on vote switching in this thesis. Specifically, are people who cast split-tickets more likely to also switch the party they vote for between elections to different levels? We might expect that voters who are happy to change the party they vote for in their SMD between elections might also be those most comfortable with casting ballots for different parties at devolved elections. This is a research question that previously would have had to rely on

voter recall, and thus would have been prone to a greater degree of measurement error. However, with the ability to combine the BES with the devolved election studies, research should be able to measure these patterns with a relatively high degree of accuracy.

Third, is to examine whether a knowledge gap still exists between Scotland and Wales. The implications of such analysis may help us to inform the dramatic political divergence between Scotland and Wales that has occurred since 2007.

In closing, this thesis has argued that political science must adapt to the realities of politics. This means the jettisoning of biases that place the state as the primary organizing unit of societies and analysis, and adapt to political systems that are inherently multilevel. It is my hope that the preceding pages will inform this adaptation.



Supplementary Information for Chapter 3

A.1 Newspaper Data Information

Level of Government	Key Words
UK	'house of commons', 'westminster', 'commons', 'matt hancock', 'jeremy hunt', 'andrew lansley', 'andy burnham', 'alan johnson', 'patricia hewitt', 'john reid', 'alan millburn', 'frank dobson', 'theresa may', 'david cameron', 'gordon brown', 'tony blair'
Scottish	'scottish executive', 'scottish government', 'holyrood', 'sturgeon', 'salmond', 'mcconnell', 'mcleish', 'dewar', 'jeane freeman', 'shona robinson', 'alex neil', 'andy kerr', 'malcolm chisholm'
Welsh	'welsh assembly government', 'welsh government', 'welsh assembly', 'senedd', 'assembly', 'carwyn jones', 'rhodri morgan', 'mark drakeford', 'vaughan gething', 'lesley griffiths', 'edwina hart', 'brian gibbons', 'jane hutt'

Table A.1: List of key words and names used in analysis.

Table A.1 displays the list of keywords used in content analysis of data in Section 3.4. The full

news article dataset can be accessed via this link: https://www.dropbox.com/s/7h1cfhuzisa305h/_nhs.Rdata?dl=0.

A.2 Full Regression Tables for Section 3.5

The below tables display results for logistic regressions predicting whether voter correctly answered a given question. Results are presented as log-odds with standard errors in parentheses.

A.2.1 Scotland

	Defence	Foreign Affairs	Income Tax	Pensions	Welfare	Immigration
Age (Centred)	0.031*** (0.003)	0.030*** (0.003)	0.006* (0.003)	0.030*** (0.003)	0.012*** (0.002)	0.022*** (0.003)
Female	-0.590*** (0.103)	-0.521*** (0.100)	-0.011 (0.094)	-0.481*** (0.081)	-0.170** (0.073)	-0.674*** (0.095)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal qualifications)</i>						
GCSE/National 5	0.210 (0.171)	0.130 (0.167)	-0.189 (0.176)	0.198 (0.151)	0.011 (0.140)	0.060 (0.163)
A-level/Higher	0.564*** (0.144)	0.551*** (0.141)	-0.076 (0.138)	0.305** (0.123)	0.186* (0.112)	0.387*** (0.136)
University Degree	0.808*** (0.145)	0.766*** (0.142)	-0.236* (0.137)	0.431*** (0.121)	0.218** (0.110)	0.621*** (0.136)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>						
AB	0.668*** (0.147)	0.661*** (0.144)	-0.044 (0.136)	0.395*** (0.118)	0.150 (0.108)	0.545*** (0.135)
C1C2	0.438*** (0.117)	0.432*** (0.114)	-0.101 (0.118)	0.336*** (0.100)	0.079 (0.094)	0.382*** (0.110)
Ethnic Minority	-0.098 (0.206)	0.104 (0.207)	0.145 (0.187)	-0.211 (0.162)	-0.207 (0.150)	-0.171 (0.186)
Income	-0.093 (0.108)	-0.026 (0.105)	0.008 (0.103)	0.028 (0.088)	-0.009 (0.080)	-0.083 (0.100)
<i>Party ID (Ref = None/Other)</i>						
Conservative	0.010 (0.181)	-0.039 (0.177)	-0.038 (0.161)	-0.052 (0.138)	-0.113 (0.122)	0.032 (0.167)
Labour	-0.058 (0.152)	-0.150 (0.149)	-0.036 (0.143)	0.114 (0.123)	-0.165 (0.108)	-0.126 (0.140)
Liberal Democrat	0.440 (0.415)	0.182 (0.374)	-0.276 (0.334)	0.203 (0.270)	0.318 (0.235)	0.081 (0.331)
SNP	0.155 (0.136)	0.025 (0.133)	0.205* (0.123)	0.241** (0.110)	0.147 (0.099)	0.081 (0.126)
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>						
Fairly interested	-0.751*** (0.159)	-0.640*** (0.150)	0.184 (0.117)	-0.371*** (0.105)	-0.156* (0.089)	-0.537*** (0.135)
Not very interested	-1.683*** (0.172)	-1.577*** (0.163)	0.290** (0.146)	-1.038*** (0.126)	-0.561*** (0.114)	-1.295*** (0.151)
Not at all interested	-2.706*** (0.223)	-2.467*** (0.216)	0.136 (0.230)	-1.628*** (0.194)	-1.132*** (0.188)	-2.103*** (0.205)

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Table A.2 – continued from previous page

	Defence	Foreign Affairs	Income Tax	Pensions	Welfare	Immigration
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Scottish not British)</i>						
More Scottish than British	0.158 (0.141)	0.235* (0.138)	0.025 (0.132)	0.001 (0.117)	-0.073 (0.106)	0.190 (0.132)
Equally Scottish & British	-0.012 (0.149)	0.092 (0.147)	-0.035 (0.145)	0.01 (0.125)	-0.324*** (0.115)	0.042 (0.140)
More British than Scottish	0.269 (0.230)	0.164 (0.220)	-0.064 (0.210)	0.06 (0.178)	-0.265* (0.160)	0.216 (0.210)
British not Scottish	-0.082 (0.212)	-0.143 (0.205)	-0.238 (0.212)	0.056 (0.174)	-0.202 (0.156)	0.041 (0.200)
Other description	0.079 (0.237)	-0.019 (0.230)	0.080 (0.217)	-0.045 (0.189)	-0.215 (0.173)	-0.093 (0.212)
Scot Newspaper	0.070 (0.105)	0.004 (0.103)	-0.085 (0.101)	0.048 (0.087)	0.011 (0.079)	0.106 (0.098)
UK Newspaper	0.482*** (0.156)	0.501*** (0.153)	0.057 (0.127)	0.130 (0.112)	0.004 (0.098)	0.324** (0.137)
Constant	1.787*** (0.229)	1.607*** (0.220)	-1.505*** (0.205)	0.736*** (0.179)	0.311* (0.163)	1.573*** (0.208)
Observations	3409	3409	3409	3409	3409	3409
Nagelkerke R2	0.262	0.241	0.012	0.181	0.06	0.199
LL	-1381.958	-1432.974	-1580.977	-1944.96	-2282.725	-1567.333
AIC	0.825	0.855	0.942	1.155	1.353	0.934

Table A.2: Logistic regression predicting SES 2016 respondents' knowledge of which level of government is responsible for different policy areas. Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Schools	Agriculture	NHS	Local Gov	Environment
Age (Centred)	0.023*** (0.003)	0.004 (0.002)	0.021*** (0.003)	0.019*** (0.003)	0.008*** (0.002)
Female	-0.362*** (0.096)	-0.266*** (0.074)	-0.333*** (0.088)	-0.133 (0.095)	-0.385*** (0.074)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal qualifications)</i>					
GCSE/National 5	0.098	0.019	0.129	0.198	0.102

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Table A.3 – continued from previous page

	Schools	Agriculture	NHS	Local Gov	Environment
A-level/Higher	(0.161) 0.406***	(0.143) 0.169	(0.155) 0.349***	(0.165) 0.328**	(0.144) 0.151
University Degree	(0.134) 0.829***	(0.114) 0.363***	(0.127) 0.699***	(0.135) 0.582***	(0.115) 0.454***
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>					
AB	(0.138) 0.592***	(0.109) 0.365***	(0.127) 0.467***	(0.138) 0.646***	(0.110) 0.144
C1C2	(0.111) 0.365***	(0.095) 0.237**	(0.105) 0.316***	(0.110) 0.355***	(0.096) -0.059
Ethnic Minority	(0.202) 0.095	(0.151) 0.011	(0.184) 0.120	(0.191) -0.100	(0.154) 0.117
Income	(0.101) 0.003	(0.082) -0.087	(0.094) -0.037	(0.101) -0.012	(0.082) -0.023
<i>Party ID (Ref = None/Other)</i>					
Conservative	(0.171) 0.149	(0.125) 0.265**	(0.151) -0.010	(0.171) 0.199	(0.125) 0.202
Labour	(0.141) -0.155	(0.110) 0.103	(0.131) -0.135	(0.143) 0.043	(0.111) 0.061
Liberal Democrat	(0.414) 0.695*	(0.238) 0.35	(0.322) 0.304	(0.369) 0.477	(0.239) 0.345
SNP	(0.127) 0.037	(0.100) -0.128	(0.117) -0.024	(0.127) 0.161	(0.101) -0.035
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>					
Fairly interested	(0.147) -0.884***	(0.090) -0.249***	(0.130) -0.983***	(0.136) -0.554***	(0.091) -0.386***
Not very interested	(0.161) -1.784***	(0.115) -0.813***	(0.146) -1.821***	(0.152) -1.323***	(0.117) -0.965***
Not at all interested	(0.227) -3.177***	(0.214) -1.717***	(0.224) -3.122***	(0.208) -2.502***	(0.221) -1.899***
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Scottish not British)</i>					
More Scottish than British	(0.134) 0.363***	(0.107) 0.029	(0.124) 0.192	(0.133) 0.111	(0.109) -0.118
Equally Scottish & British	(0.141) 0.175	(0.116) 0.017	(0.133) 0.111	(0.142) 0.028	(0.117) -0.168

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Table A.3 – continued from previous page

	Schools	Agriculture	NHS	Local Gov	Environment
More British than Scottish	0.300 (0.213)	-0.045 (0.163)	0.170 (0.195)	0.072 (0.207)	-0.067 (0.165)
British not Scottish	-0.170 (0.196)	-0.353** (0.159)	-0.106 (0.185)	-0.083 (0.199)	-0.490*** (0.161)
Other description	0.213 (0.228)	-0.012 (0.176)	-0.045 (0.207)	0.010 (0.220)	-0.466*** (0.179)
Scot Newspaper	-0.022 (0.099)	0.042 (0.080)	-0.074 (0.092)	0.110 (0.099)	0.012 (0.080)
UK Newspaper	0.389*** (0.145)	0.266*** (0.100)	0.313** (0.128)	0.293** (0.139)	0.216** (0.101)
Constant	1.493*** (0.214)	0.068 (0.164)	1.465*** (0.199)	1.276*** (0.207)	0.468*** (0.166)
Observations	3409	3409	3409	3409	3409
Nagelkerke R ²	0.266	0.101	0.243	0.188	0.123
LL	-1518.083	-2228.879	-1727.974	-1550.118	-2197.261
AIC	0.905	1.322	1.028	0.924	1.303

Table A.3: Logistic regression predicting SES 2016 respondents' knowledge of which level of government is responsible for different policy areas. Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Age (Centred)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.005** (0.003)	0.003 (0.002)
Female	-0.100 (0.095)	-0.575*** (0.076)	-0.565*** (0.084)	-0.659*** (0.078)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal qualifications)</i>				
GCSE/National 5	0.289* (0.162)	0.139 (0.145)	-0.094 (0.172)	-0.065 (0.155)
A-level/Higher	0.463*** (0.133)	0.484*** (0.116)	0.125 (0.132)	0.534*** (0.121)
University Degree	0.779*** (0.134)	0.479*** (0.113)	0.114 (0.127)	0.780*** (0.118)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>				
AB	0.359*** (0.138)	0.251** (0.111)	0.239* (0.126)	0.457*** (0.115)
C1C2	0.147 (0.112)	0.161* (0.096)	0.239** (0.112)	0.285*** (0.101)
Ethnic Minority	-0.363** (0.185)	-0.098 (0.155)	0.059 (0.165)	-0.039 (0.160)
Income	-0.002 (0.101)	-0.023 (0.083)	-0.002 (0.093)	-0.034 (0.086)
<i>Party ID (Ref = None/Other)</i>				
Conservative	0.308* (0.170)	-0.076 (0.127)	-0.137 (0.140)	-0.096 (0.131)
Labour	0.172 (0.143)	0.086 (0.114)	-0.155 (0.124)	0.059 (0.117)
Liberal Democrat	0.511 (0.367)	0.185 (0.244)	0.084 (0.248)	0.462* (0.256)
SNP	0.454*** (0.129)	-0.058 (0.103)	-0.304*** (0.115)	0.121 (0.106)
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>				
Fairly interested	-0.471*** (0.134)	-0.578*** (0.094)	-0.258*** (0.096)	-0.771*** (0.096)
Not very interested	-0.983*** (0.152)	-1.187*** (0.119)	-0.508*** (0.132)	-1.498*** (0.124)
Not at all interested	-2.135*** (0.202)	-1.876*** (0.205)	-1.112*** (0.249)	-2.315*** (0.233)
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Scottish not British)</i>				
More Scottish than British	0.207 (0.133)	0.046 (0.110)	0.012 (0.121)	0.196* (0.114)
Equally Scottish & British	0.128 (0.140)	-0.142 (0.119)	-0.168 (0.132)	0.002 (0.124)
More British than Scottish	0.430** (0.217)	0.011 (0.168)	-0.008 (0.178)	0.170 (0.173)
British not Scottish	0.187 (0.204)	-0.279* (0.162)	-0.125 (0.176)	-0.189 (0.168)
Other description	0.010 (0.216)	-0.318* (0.180)	-0.199 (0.199)	-0.320* (0.187)
Scot Newspaper	-0.063 (0.099)	0.123 (0.081)	0.025 (0.091)	-0.281*** (0.084)

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Table A.4 – continued from previous page

	Schools	Agriculture	NHS	Local Gov
UK Newspaper	0.365** (0.143)	0.375*** (0.104)	0.335*** (0.107)	0.255** (0.106)
Constant	1.091*** (0.206)	0.549*** (0.169)	-0.686*** (0.186)	0.375** (0.174)
Observations	3409	3409	3409	3409
Nagelkerke R ²	0.152	0.145	0.062	0.227
LL	-1548.004	-2157.122	-1871.786	-2044.128
AIC	0.922	1.28	1.112	1.213

Table A.4: Logistic regression predicting SES 2016 respondents' knowledge of the devolved electoral system. Q1 = "You can't vote for the same party in both the constituency and the region", Q2 = "If you're going to vote for a small party, you're better off choosing it in the list vote", Q3 = "Where a party is very strong, there isn't much point voting for it on list", and Q4 = "The number of seats won by a party is decided only by the number of constituency votes". Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

A.2.2 Wales

	Respondent AM	Butler	Drakeford	Williams
Age (Centred)	0.020*** (0.003)	0.006 (0.006)	0.020*** (0.005)	0.020*** (0.005)
Female	-0.038 (0.080)	-0.199 (0.173)	-0.121 (0.151)	-0.370*** (0.133)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal qualifications)</i>				
GCSE/National 5	-0.112 (0.139)	0.324 (0.362)	0.137 (0.282)	-0.031 (0.236)
A-level/Higher	0.194 (0.122)	0.388 (0.311)	-0.082 (0.252)	0.143 (0.211)
University Degree	0.426*** (0.114)	0.765*** (0.282)	0.478** (0.224)	0.326* (0.197)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>				
AB	0.042 (0.112)	0.547** (0.274)	0.646*** (0.231)	0.450** (0.194)
C1C2	-0.093 (0.100)	0.133 (0.270)	0.145 (0.224)	0.036 (0.176)
Ethnic Minority	-0.154 (0.181)	0.497 (0.404)	-0.282 (0.414)	-0.283 (0.327)
Income	0.201** (0.084)	0.091 (0.190)	0.319* (0.164)	0.271* (0.141)
<i>Party ID (Ref = Other/None)</i>				
Conservative	0.058 (0.109)	0.152 (0.249)	0.065 (0.209)	-0.062 (0.177)
Labour	0.527***	0.452**	0.254	0.324*

Continued on next page

Table A.5 – continued from previous page

	Respondent AM	Butler	Drakeford	Williams
Liberal Democrat	(0.098) 0.428*** (0.165)	(0.217) -0.25 (0.426)	(0.189) 0.022 (0.327)	(0.167) 0.878*** (0.290)
Plaid Cymru	0.458*** (0.160)	0.863*** (0.306)	0.637** (0.279)	0.657** (0.274)
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>				
Somewhat interested	-0.370*** (0.094)	-0.683*** (0.179)	-0.716*** (0.160)	-0.575*** (0.150)
Not very interested	-0.657*** (0.124)	-1.309*** (0.356)	-1.163*** (0.273)	-1.336*** (0.225)
Not at all interested	-0.847*** (0.167)	-0.979* (0.566)	-1.420*** (0.511)	-1.918*** (0.373)
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Welsh not British)</i>				
More Welsh than British	-0.107 (0.140)	-0.251 (0.291)	-0.201 (0.256)	0.099 (0.246)
Equally Welsh and Welsh	-0.214 (0.133)	-0.135 (0.272)	-0.335 (0.239)	0.051 (0.229)
More British than Welsh	-0.238 (0.164)	-0.126 (0.331)	-0.412 (0.294)	-0.151 (0.271)
British not Welsh	-0.440*** (0.140)	-0.696** (0.309)	-0.886*** (0.264)	-0.399* (0.237)
None of these/DK	-0.458** (0.186)	-0.457 (0.428)	-0.537 (0.377)	-0.526 (0.328)
Welsh Newspaper	0.396** (0.173)	0.655** (0.300)	0.693** (0.286)	0.427 (0.292)
UK Newspaper	0.007 (0.081)	0.06 (0.180)	0.042 (0.156)	-0.17 (0.137)
Welsh TV	0.119 (0.085)	0.793*** (0.193)	1.076*** (0.167)	0.667*** (0.141)
UK TV	0.094 (0.091)	0.337 (0.227)	-0.029 (0.193)	0.344** (0.157)
Constant	0.270 (0.187)	-2.748*** (0.468)	-1.707*** (0.379)	-0.206 (0.330)
Observations	3143	1254	1252	1279
Nagelkerke R ²	0.122	0.226	0.284	0.29
LL	-1976.318	-487.537	-599.108	-723.451
AIC	1.274	0.819	0.999	1.172

Table A.5: Logistic regression predicting WES 2016 respondents' knowledge of devolved political actors. Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Respondent MP	Bercow	Hunt	Farron
Age (Centred)	0.023*** (0.003)	0.036*** (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)

Continued on next page

Table A.6 – continued from previous page

	Respondent MP	Bercow	Hunt	Farron
Female	-0.073 (0.097)	-0.587*** (0.159)	-0.306* (0.159)	-0.711*** (0.141)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal qualifications)</i>				
GCSE/National 5	0.239 (0.161)	0.268 (0.262)	0.509** (0.251)	0.633*** (0.245)
A-level/Higher	0.403*** (0.143)	0.382 (0.238)	0.590*** (0.228)	0.442** (0.219)
University Degree	0.624*** (0.136)	0.745*** (0.225)	0.921*** (0.215)	0.822*** (0.203)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>				
AB	0.040 (0.138)	0.440* (0.227)	0.943*** (0.225)	0.488** (0.206)
C1C2	-0.141 (0.118)	0.176 (0.195)	0.381** (0.188)	0.192 (0.186)
Ethnic Minority	-0.374* (0.203)	-0.378 (0.364)	-0.384 (0.354)	-0.208 (0.345)
Income	0.098 (0.101)	0.412** (0.162)	-0.201 (0.163)	0.159 (0.149)
<i>Party ID (Ref = Other/None)</i>				
Conservative	0.172 (0.131)	0.505** (0.220)	0.186 (0.204)	-0.011 (0.187)
Labour	0.695*** (0.122)	0.488** (0.195)	0.588*** (0.200)	0.324* (0.179)
Liberal Democrat	0.362* (0.201)	0.122 (0.319)	0.277 (0.339)	0.917*** (0.327)
Plaid Cymru	0.302 (0.193)	0.154 (0.298)	0.353 (0.313)	0.444 (0.285)
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>				
Somewhat interested	-0.410*** (0.126)	-0.980*** (0.208)	-1.035*** (0.215)	-1.355*** (0.173)
Not very interested	-1.234*** (0.147)	-1.981*** (0.259)	-2.024*** (0.260)	-2.241*** (0.240)
Not at all interested	-1.431*** (0.184)	-2.207*** (0.350)	-2.334*** (0.331)	-3.106*** (0.407)
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Welsh not British)</i>				
More Welsh than British	0.04 (0.170)	0.499* (0.270)	0.561** (0.271)	0.189 (0.255)
Equally Welsh and British	-0.051 (0.160)	0.502** (0.252)	0.571** (0.251)	0.326 (0.237)
More British than Welsh	-0.320* (0.194)	0.652** (0.317)	0.657** (0.309)	0.492* (0.286)
British not Welsh	-0.277* (0.166)	0.624** (0.264)	0.346 (0.252)	0.434* (0.247)
None of these/DK	-0.413* (0.216)	0.248 (0.362)	0.451 (0.358)	0.387 (0.350)
Welsh Newspaper	0.638*** (0.235)	0.417 (0.330)	-0.071 (0.322)	0.239 (0.296)

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Table A.6 – continued from previous page

	Respondent MP	Bercow	Hunt	Farron
UK Newspaper	0.018 (0.097)	0.521*** (0.158)	0.065 (0.159)	0.139 (0.144)
Welsh TV	0.042 (0.104)	-0.14 (0.172)	-0.057 (0.168)	-0.276* (0.154)
UK TV	0.069 (0.108)	0.469*** (0.177)	0.311* (0.181)	0.566*** (0.168)
Constant	1.294*** (0.226)	0.192 (0.372)	0.608 (0.372)	0.292 (0.350)
Observations	3143	1292	1274	1265
Nagelkerke R ²	0.169	0.376	0.285	0.351
LL	-1463.074	-552.751	-563.64	-655.647
AIC	0.948	0.896	0.926	1.078

Table A.6: Logistic regression predicting WES 2016 respondents' knowledge of UK political actors. Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	JC Juncker	D Tusk	M Schulz
Age (Centred)	0.010* (0.005)	0.004 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.008)
Female	-0.954*** (0.161)	-0.634*** (0.178)	-1.285*** (0.289)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal qualifications)</i>			
GCSE/National 5	0.242 (0.321)	0.614* (0.350)	0.844 (0.797)
A-level/Higher	0.499* (0.276)	0.340 (0.319)	1.404** (0.672)
University Degree	0.629** (0.248)	0.574** (0.288)	1.807*** (0.632)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>			
AB	0.159 (0.238)	0.019 (0.257)	0.300 (0.428)
C1C2	-0.136 (0.233)	-0.173 (0.252)	0.546 (0.422)
Ethnic Minority	-0.120 (0.391)	-0.210 (0.413)	-0.173 (0.587)
Income	0.228 (0.172)	0.019 (0.189)	-0.433 (0.271)
<i>Party ID (Ref = Other/None)</i>			
Conservative	0.012 (0.213)	-0.114 (0.244)	0.171 (0.348)
Labour	-0.011 (0.201)	-0.018 (0.220)	-0.236 (0.335)
Liberal Democrat	-0.009 (0.321)	0.265 (0.357)	0.199 (0.512)
Plaid Cymru	0.117	0.327	-0.177

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Table A.7 – continued from previous page

	JC Juncker	D Tusk	M Schulz
	(0.303)	(0.328)	(0.533)
<i>Political Interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>			
Somewhat interested	-0.281* (0.163)	-0.702*** (0.183)	-0.886*** (0.278)
Not very interested	-1.803*** (0.395)	-1.502*** (0.380)	-1.426** (0.565)
Not at all interested	-1.940*** (0.623)	-1.388** (0.557)	-1.848* (1.062)
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Welsh not British)</i>			
More Welsh than British	-0.710** (0.295)	-0.236 (0.318)	0.362 (0.529)
Equally Welsh and British	-0.002 (0.261)	0.040 (0.290)	0.298 (0.520)
More British than Welsh	-0.230 (0.316)	-0.224 (0.356)	0.600 (0.561)
British not Welsh	-0.071 (0.273)	-0.180 (0.309)	0.137 (0.537)
None of these/DK	-0.258 (0.370)	0.515 (0.385)	0.739 (0.618)
Welsh Newspaper	0.120 (0.322)	-0.023 (0.391)	-1.254 (1.051)
UK Newspaper	0.344** (0.164)	0.250 (0.182)	0.458* (0.277)
Welsh TV	-0.154 (0.171)	-0.017 (0.189)	-0.372 (0.286)
UK TV	-0.267 (0.193)	0.140 (0.218)	-0.272 (0.302)
Constant	-0.825** (0.394)	-1.314*** (0.445)	-3.185*** (0.855)
Observations	1124	1085	1085
Nagelkerke R ²	0.192	0.137	0.197
LL	-544.581	-463.736	-240.042
AIC	1.015	0.903	0.49

Table A.7: Logistic regression predicting WES 2016 respondents' knowledge of EU political actors. Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Law & Order	NHS	Schools	Defence	Economy	Tax
Age (Centred)	0.015*** (0.003)	0.030*** (0.003)	0.029*** (0.003)	0.035*** (0.003)	0.031*** (0.003)	0.038*** (0.003)
Female	-0.420*** (0.079)	-0.115 (0.080)	-0.137* (0.079)	-0.176** (0.082)	-0.143* (0.080)	-0.212** (0.083)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>						
GCSE	0.151 (0.141)	0.461*** (0.142)	0.379*** (0.140)	0.492*** (0.148)	0.479*** (0.143)	0.441*** (0.148)
A-level	-0.071 (0.125)	0.219* (0.124)	0.204* (0.124)	0.18 (0.126)	0.258** (0.123)	0.248* (0.127)
Degree	0.222* (0.114)	0.512*** (0.115)	0.474*** (0.114)	0.398*** (0.118)	0.409*** (0.114)	0.403*** (0.119)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>						
AB	0.140 (0.111)	0.296*** (0.111)	0.220** (0.110)	0.276** (0.115)	0.215* (0.111)	0.223* (0.116)
C1C2	0.041 (0.102)	0.190* (0.101)	0.200** (0.101)	0.143 (0.102)	0.162 (0.100)	0.146 (0.103)
Ethnic Minority	-0.230 (0.187)	-0.032 (0.183)	0.137 (0.181)	-0.156 (0.183)	-0.088 (0.179)	-0.317* (0.183)
Income	0.045 (0.085)	0.085 (0.085)	0.051 (0.084)	0.102 (0.087)	0.195** (0.085)	0.085 (0.088)
<i>Party ID (Ref = Other/None)</i>						
Conservative	-0.021 (0.111)	0.319*** (0.112)	0.161 (0.109)	0.13 (0.116)	0.151 (0.111)	0.122 (0.117)
Labour	0.045 (0.098)	0.141 (0.098)	0.129 (0.097)	0.177* (0.101)	0.336*** (0.098)	0.123 (0.101)
Liberal Democrat	0.253 (0.163)	0.135 (0.164)	0.077 (0.163)	0.147 (0.170)	0.154 (0.164)	0.035 (0.169)
Plaid Cymru	-0.093 (0.154)	0.238 (0.156)	0.079 (0.154)	-0.014 (0.159)	-0.038 (0.154)	-0.016 (0.160)
<i>Political interest (Ref = Very interested)</i>						
Somewhat interested	-0.328*** (0.090)	-0.135 (0.093)	-0.049 (0.091)	-0.085 (0.097)	0.012 (0.093)	-0.07 (0.098)
Not very interested	-0.640*** (0.126)	-0.610*** (0.124)	-0.467*** (0.123)	-0.450*** (0.127)	-0.291** (0.123)	-0.513*** (0.127)
Not at all interested	-0.874*** (0.185)	-1.141*** (0.182)	-1.048*** (0.186)	-0.821*** (0.172)	-0.689*** (0.170)	-0.945*** (0.173)

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Table A.8 – continued from previous page

	Law & Order	NHS	Schools	Defence	Economy	Tax
<i>Moreno Nat ID (Ref = Welsh not British)</i>						
More Welsh than British	-0.096 (0.137)	0.038 (0.139)	0.070 (0.138)	0.177 (0.142)	0.124 (0.138)	0.16 (0.142)
Equally Welsh and British	-0.108 (0.130)	-0.021 (0.132)	-0.004 (0.131)	-0.017 (0.134)	0.056 (0.131)	0 (0.135)
More British than Welsh	-0.322** (0.163)	0.175 (0.166)	0.145 (0.163)	0.131 (0.170)	0.028 (0.164)	0.114 (0.171)
British not Welsh	-0.517*** (0.140)	-0.032 (0.140)	-0.025 (0.139)	-0.005 (0.142)	-0.059 (0.138)	-0.019 (0.143)
None of these/DK	-0.304 (0.186)	-0.068 (0.187)	-0.150 (0.186)	0.073 (0.190)	0.024 (0.185)	-0.044 (0.191)
Welsh Newspaper	0.193 (0.159)	0.158 (0.166)	0.322** (0.163)	0.111 (0.174)	0.047 (0.166)	0.113 (0.175)
UK Newspaper	-0.135* (0.082)	-0.065 (0.082)	-0.034 (0.081)	-0.148* (0.084)	-0.140* (0.082)	-0.089 (0.085)
Welsh TV	0.120 (0.085)	0.101 (0.086)	0.138 (0.085)	0.013 (0.089)	-0.040 (0.086)	0.041 (0.089)
UK TV	0.087 (0.093)	0.223** (0.091)	0.121 (0.091)	0.216** (0.093)	0.183** (0.091)	0.12 (0.094)
Constant	-0.001 (0.186)	-0.484*** (0.188)	-0.626*** (0.187)	0.066 (0.191)	-0.279 (0.186)	0.197 (0.192)
Observations	3143	3143	3143	3143	3143	3143
Nagelkerke R ₂	0.096	0.168	0.14	0.165	0.133	0.175
LL	-1989.49	-1960.705	-2002.664	-1880.562	-1971.902	-1861.371
AIC	1.283	1.264	1.291	1.213	1.271	1.201

Table A.8: Logistic regression predicting WES 2016 respondents' knowledge of attribution of responsibility. Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

B

Supplementary Information for Chapter 4

B.1 National Identity Distributions

Figures [B.1](#) and [B.2](#) illustrate the distributions of British, English and Scottish/Welsh national identity in Scotland and Wales.

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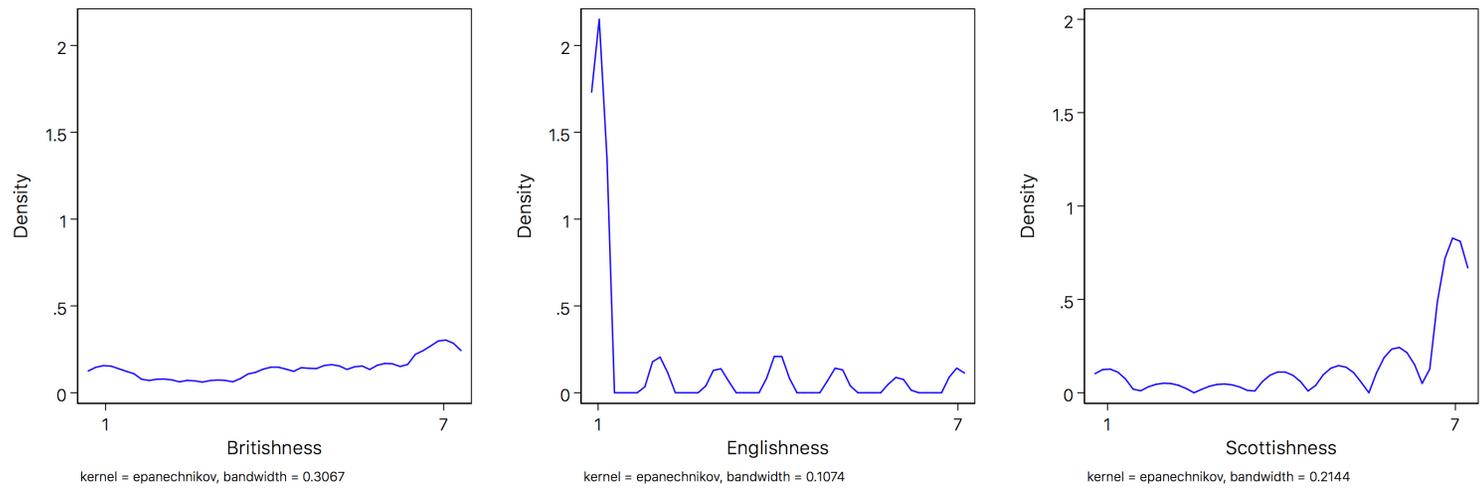


Figure B.1: Kernel density estimates of BES national identities in Scotland **Source:** BESIP

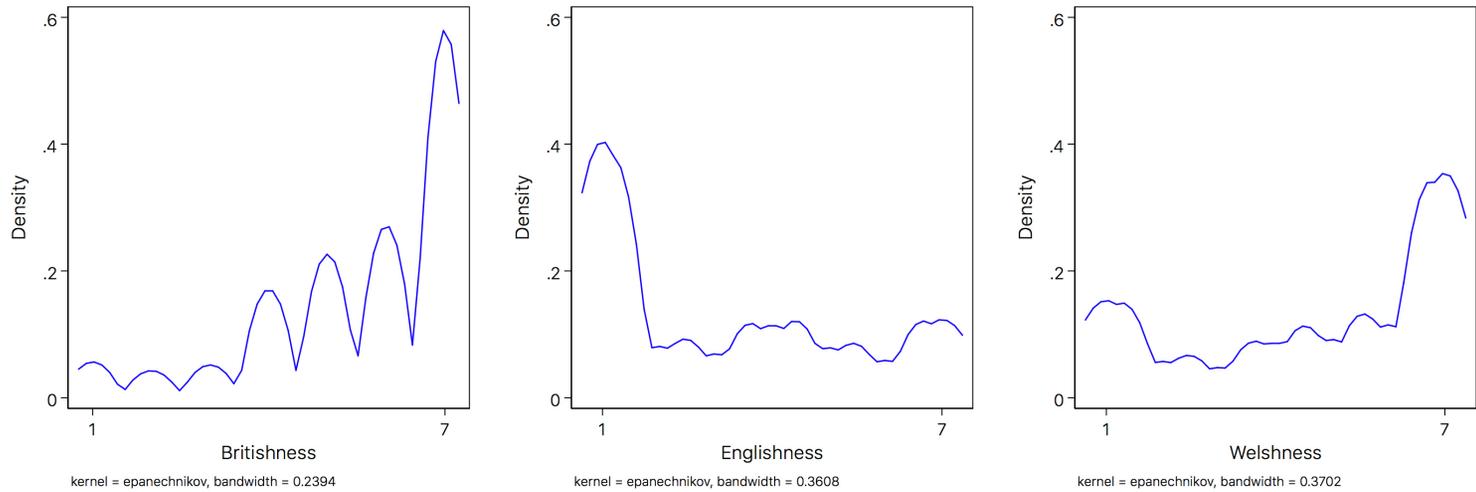


Figure B.2: Kernel density estimates of BES national identities in Wales Source: BESIP

B.1.1 Holding Multiple Identities

Many citizens do not hold a single national identity, but an often complicated mix of several national identities. Figures B.3 and B.4 illustrate the combined distributions of Scottishness and Welshness with Britishness and with Englishness. Focusing first on Scottishness/Welshness and Britishness, the negative skew of the distribution suggests that considerable number of voters feel at least partially British *and* Scottish/ Welsh. Conversely – and unsurprisingly – very few respondents appear to identify with Englishness in Scotland and Wales, although the distribution in Wales suggests more English identifiers than Scotland.

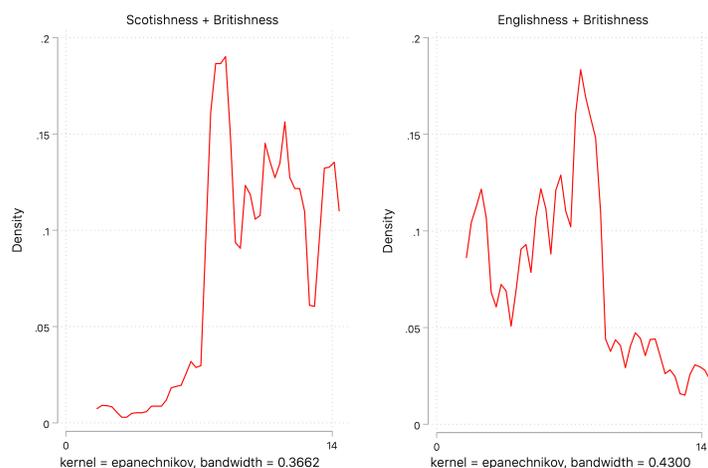


Figure B.3: Kernel density estimates of multiple identities in Scotland. 0 - 14 scale derived from adding two 7-point national identity scales together **Source:** BESIP

Figure B.5 looks at Scottish and Welshness combined with Englishness. The normal distributions provided in both suggests result from two possibilities. First, is that respondents felt very strongly attached to one identity and not attached at all to the other. The second is that respondents felt a medium degree of attachment to both identities. Subsequent analysis of the data tells us that the first explanation is the case for the vast majority of respondents.

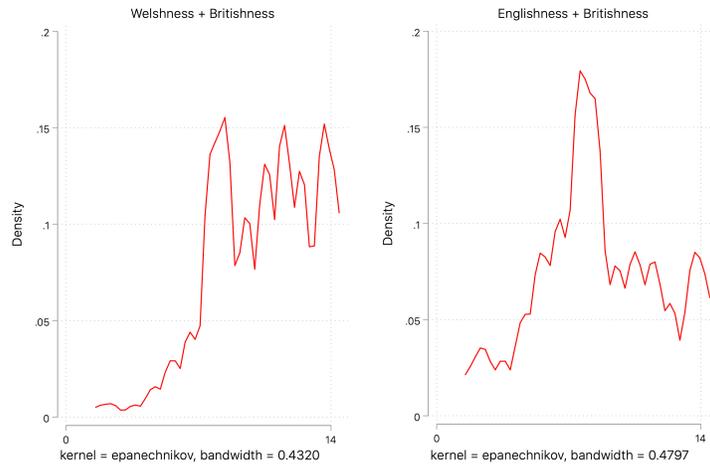


Figure B.4: Kernel density estimates of multiple identities in Wales. 0 - 14 scale derived from adding two 7-point national identity scales together **Source:** BESIP

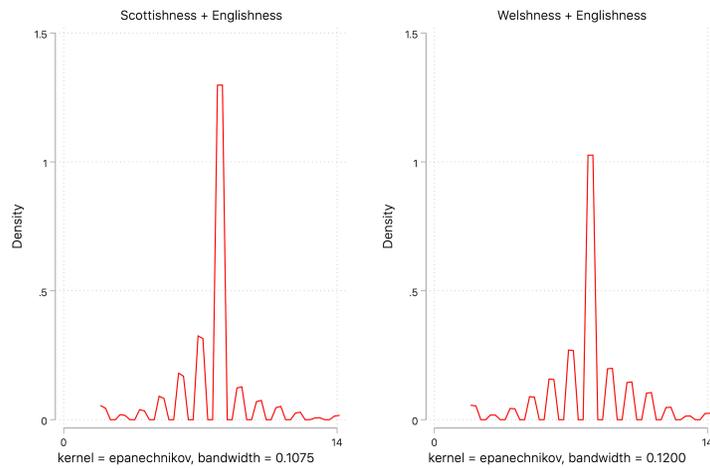


Figure B.5: Do Scottishness and Welshness overlap with Englishness? 0 - 14 scale derived from adding two 7-point national identity scales together **Source:** BESIP

B.1.2 Alternative measures of national identity

In addition to this modified Moreno scale, I use the BES national identity questions to create a set of discrete identity categories. In these categories respondents who gave a score of ‘6’ or ‘7’ for each category are considered to identify strongly with that national identity (Figures B.1 and B.2 provides distribution of these scores). Respondents were then grouped according to which categories they identified strongly with. The proportion of the sample in each category is given in Table B.1.

Wales		Scotland	
ID Group	Weighted %	ID Group	Weighted %
British only	14.68	British only	9.83
English only	1.98	English only	0.93
Welsh only	23.05	Scottish only	43.21
British & English	14.83	British & English	5.45
British & Welsh	29.66	British & Scottish	25.68
English & Welsh	0.24	English & Scottish	0.47
British & English & Welsh	3.61	British & English & Scottish	2.69
Other Identity	11.95	Other Identity	11.75
<i>Weighted N</i>	3,612		6,047

Table B.1: National identity categories in Scotland and Wales. **BESIP**

Confirming the pattern illustrated in Figure 4.2, there are clear differences in the relative size of national identity groups in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland the largest group by a considerable amount are those who fall into the ‘Scottish only’ category, followed by the British and Scottish category. Over two-thirds of all BES respondents in Scotland can be sorted into these two categories. In contrast, Wales presents a far more heterogeneous picture regarding national identity. No single category contains more than one third of the Welsh sample, with noticeably larger groups of those identifying as ‘British Only’ and ‘British and English’. The greater presence of ‘British’ and ‘English’ sentiment in Wales compared to Scotland can, in part, be explained by greater in-migration to Wales from England. According to the 2011 UK Census, 21% of the Welsh population were born in

England, compared to 9% in Scotland and greater reliance on combined England and Wales or even England only institutions (e.g. see Chapter 3).

B.1.3 Subjective Left-Right Placement with ‘Don’t know’

	England	Scotland	Wales	Total
0 - Left	2.33	3.88	3.61	2.53
1	2.25	3.78	2.39	2.39
2	6.89	9.66	8.04	7.19
3	8.93	12.44	8.93	9.24
4	6.78	8.51	7.15	6.95
5	18.07	18.22	20.51	18.2
6	8.47	6.46	6.87	8.21
7	10.4	7.54	8.55	10.06
8	8.97	5.34	6.08	8.51
9	2.59	1.71	2.05	2.49
10 - Right	2.67	2.03	2.27	2.6
Don't Know	21.65	20.43	23.56	21.64
<i>Weighted N</i>	26,037	2,631	1,517	30,186

B.2 Full Regression Tables for Table 4.3

	2015		2016		2017				
National Identity	0.231*** (0.031)	0.176*** (0.037)	0.203*** (0.032)	0.228*** (0.056)	0.189** (0.074)	0.239*** (0.062)	0.251*** (0.037)	0.226*** (0.042)	0.226*** (0.044)
Voted	-1.281*** (0.176)	-1.210*** (0.177)	-1.267*** (0.174)	-0.840** (0.366)	-0.807** (0.369)	-0.848** (0.368)	-1.657*** (0.215)	-1.666*** (0.215)	-1.641*** (0.215)
Voted for Independence	2.411*** (0.283)	2.432*** (0.280)	2.380*** (0.278)	2.867*** (0.533)	2.878*** (0.536)	2.940*** (0.549)	2.079*** (0.237)	2.083*** (0.236)	2.002*** (0.243)
Working Class	0.793*** (0.179)	0.797*** (0.180)	0.810*** (0.178)	0.950*** (0.366)	0.961*** (0.370)	0.950*** (0.367)	0.632*** (0.213)	0.625*** (0.213)	0.635*** (0.213)
Age (Centred)	-0.015** (0.007)	-0.016** (0.007)	-0.016** (0.006)	-0.036*** (0.013)	-0.036*** (0.012)	-0.036*** (0.013)	-0.012* (0.007)	-0.012* (0.007)	-0.012* (0.007)
Female	0.151 (0.167)	0.136 (0.168)	0.158 (0.166)	-0.617* (0.331)	-0.619* (0.334)	-0.624* (0.334)	0.291 (0.193)	0.289 (0.193)	0.302 (0.192)
Homeowner	-0.322 (0.209)	-0.315 (0.210)	-0.324 (0.208)	-0.146 (0.361)	-0.154 (0.361)	-0.147 (0.362)	-0.566** (0.235)	-0.574** (0.234)	-0.561** (0.233)
Graduate	0.032 (0.068)	0.032 (0.068)	0.029 (0.067)	0.022 (0.130)	0.017 (0.130)	0.022 (0.131)	0.029 (0.083)	0.029 (0.083)	0.028 (0.083)
Leave X National ID	0.111* (0.058)	0.167** (0.075)	0.167** (0.075)	0.096 (0.122)	0.096 (0.122)	0.096 (0.122)	0.056 (0.072)	0.056 (0.072)	0.096 (0.079)
Indy X National ID	1.247*** (0.350)	1.204*** (0.348)	1.216*** (0.348)	0.895 (0.615)	0.893 (0.615)	0.913 (0.621)	0.565 (0.402)	0.57 (0.399)	0.543 (0.402)
Constant	2271 (698.67)	2271 (698.638)	2271 (698.141)	519 (210.069)	519 (211.67)	519 (211.942)	1542 (601.602)	1542 (603.182)	1542 (602.678)
Observations	2271	2271	2271	519	519	519	1542	1542	1542
AIC	698.67	698.638	698.141	210.069	211.67	211.942	601.602	603.182	602.678
McFadden's R ²	0.312	0.314	0.315	0.355	0.357	0.356	0.342	0.343	0.343

Table B.2: Binomial logistic regression of factors affecting vote for Scottish Bloc. Coefficients displayed as log-odds with standard errors in parentheses. (* 0.10 ** 0.05 *** 0.01)

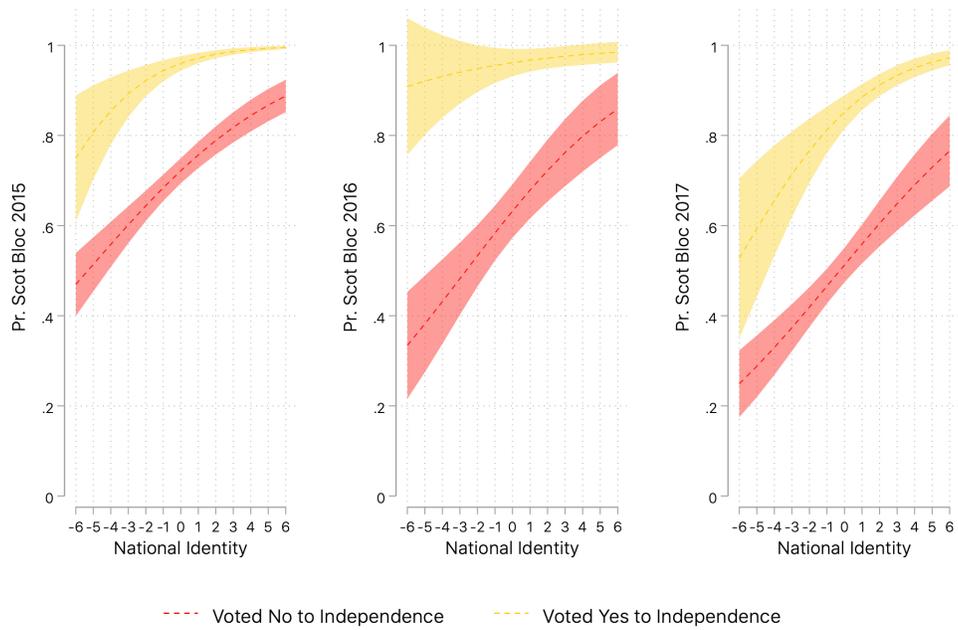


Figure B.6: Marginal effect of national identity interacted with Independence Referendum vote on probability of voting for Scottish Bloc 2015-2017. **Source:** Table B.2

	2015	2016	2017
National Identity	0.232*** (0.033)	0.181*** (0.044)	0.215*** (0.041)
Voted Leave	-1.927*** (0.182)	-2.227*** (0.272)	-2.153*** (0.210)
Working Class	1.061*** (0.186)	1.103*** (0.267)	1.235*** (0.228)
Age (Centered)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.033*** (0.010)	-0.032*** (0.010)
Female	0.082 (0.175)	0.434* (0.255)	-0.013 (0.218)
Homeowner	-0.003 (0.238)	-0.101 (0.354)	-0.579* (0.311)
Graduate	0.036 (0.074)	-0.115 (0.099)	0.088 (0.087)
Siaradwr	0.300 (0.219)	1.401*** (0.327)	0.092 (0.262)
Leave X Nat ID			
Constant	0.684* (0.400)	1.702*** (0.572)	2.070*** (0.545)
Observations	1356	645	978
AIC	683.937	281.396	436.376
McFadden's R ₂	0.248	0.314	0.297
			0.31

Table B.3: Binomial logistic regression of factors affecting vote for Welsh Bloc. Coefficients displayed as log-odds with standard errors in parentheses. (* 0.10 ** 0.05 *** 0.01)



Supplementary Information for Chapter 5

C.1 Impact of EU Referendum on Devolved Elections

The 2016 devolved elections – the first since the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum – took place in the shadow of another significant referendum. Despite requests from the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland then Prime Minister David Cameron set the date for the EU Referendum to 23rd June 2016, within six weeks of the devolved elections (Mason, 2016). The proximity of such a major UK-wide political event inevitably affected the behaviours of voters and elites. Much of the political information people were receiving was heavily influenced by discussion of the EU and UK (and, by proxy, English) politics, raising the salience of extra-territorial issues. This was particularly prevalent in Wales, which lacks a strong domestic media, and hence heavily relies on English-based media (see Chapter 3). As part of WES 2016 ‘rolling thunder’ campaign wave, roughly 100 respondents were chosen from the larger sample and interviewed in the 30 days leading up to the National Assembly for Wales elections. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement ‘The Assembly election has been completely over-shadowed by the EU referendum’. Figure C.1 displays their responses.

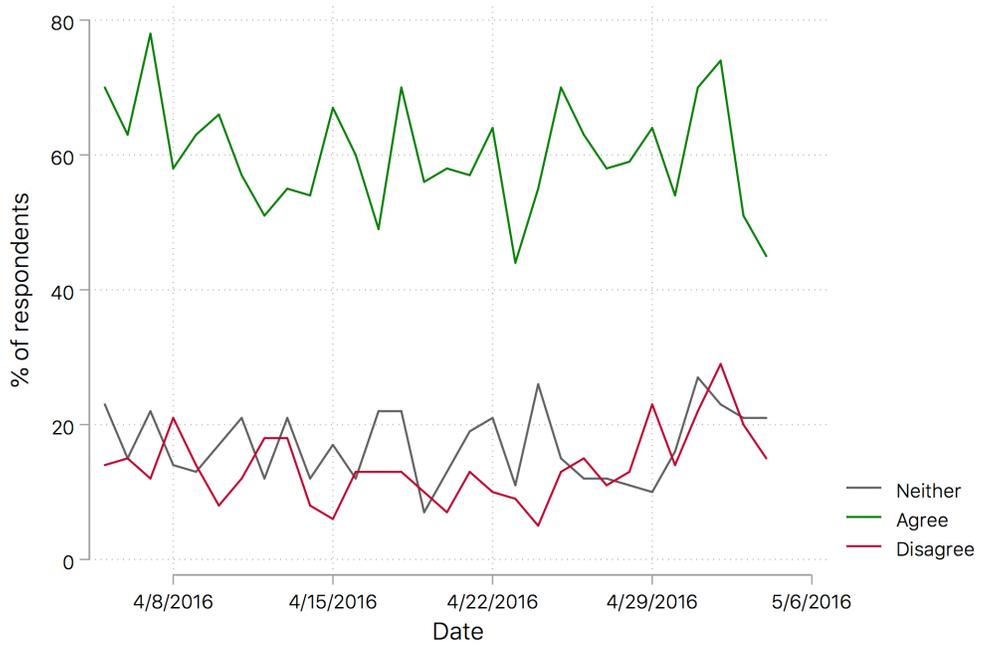


Figure C.1: WES 2016 respondents who agreed that “the National Assembly for Wales election had been completely overshadowed by the EU referendum.”

C.2 Sample robustness checks

Variable	Odds Ratio	Odds Change (%)	Std. Err.
Age (Centred)	1.037939	0.037939	0.0026686
Female	0.8407901	-0.1592099	0.0688698
<i>Social Class (Ref=DE)</i>			
AB	1.008261		0.1095913
C1C2	1.39666	0.39666	0.142234
<i>Education (Ref = No Qualifications)</i>			
GCSE/National 5	1.152127		0.1671961
A-level/Higher	0.9068793		0.1139944
University Degree	1.119061		0.1301853
Partisan	0.6394036	-0.3605964	0.0702282
<i>Political Interest (Ref=Very interested)</i>			
Somewhat interested	1.074811		0.1085609
Not very interested	0.9567837		0.150704
Not at all interested	1.053363		0.2402824
Political Knowledge	1.008173		0.0269771

Table C.1: Logit regressions predicting whether respondent took part in both the BES and WES. Significant effects presented with % odds change for ease of interpretation. **Source:** WES 2016

C.3 Distribution of national identity variables

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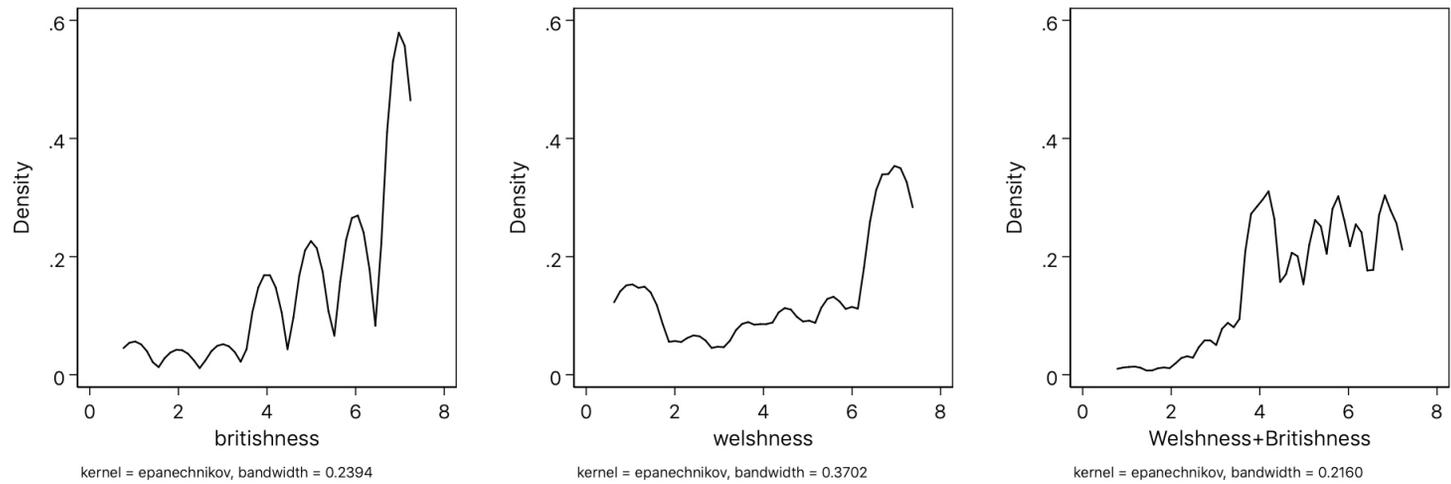


Figure C.2: Distributions of BES national identity scales in sample

C.3.1 Partisanship and Gender

Figure C.3 illustrates the gender gap among respondents reporting ‘Very strong’ support for a particular political party. Higher proportions of male respondents consistently identify as supporters of a single political party across all waves of the BESIP, although the gap appears to close somewhat in waves 12 and 13.

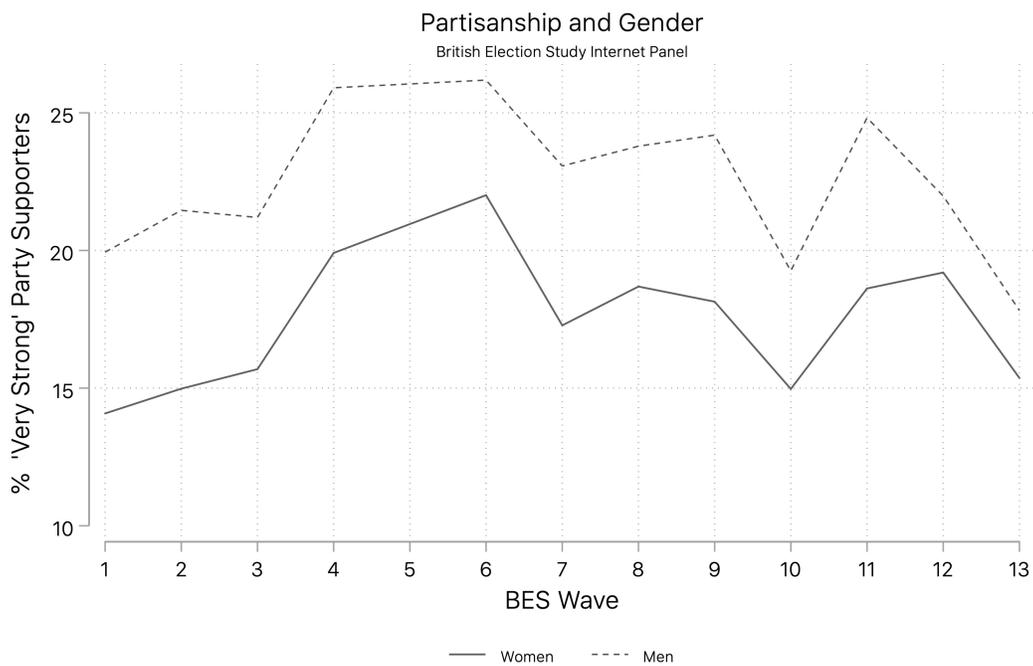


Figure C.3: % of 'Very Strong' party supporters in BESIP, waves 1-13, by respondent gender.

C.4 Multilevel Model

It is possible that voters may switch party between election to different levels of government due to factors that are not necessarily held at the individual-level, but rather at a higher level. In Wales,

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Welshness	0.074* (0.044)	0.068 (0.043)	0.042 (0.048)	0.077 (0.054)	0.073 (0.057)	0.105* (0.057)
Britishness	-0.025 (0.053)	-0.05 (0.056)	-0.035 (0.061)	-0.038 (0.066)	-0.004 (0.070)	-0.006 (0.072)
Age (Centred)		-0.004 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.008)	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.004 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.009)
Female		0.633*** (0.184)	0.500** (0.200)	0.568** (0.230)	0.660*** (0.242)	0.698*** (0.248)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>						
AB		0.121 (0.246)	0.122 (0.272)	-0.048 (0.291)	0.02 (0.315)	0.107 (0.316)
C1C2		0.244 (0.228)	0.450* (0.255)	0.392 (0.272)	0.424 (0.294)	0.429 (0.295)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>						
GCSE		0.106 (0.316)	0.164 (0.341)	0.148 (0.357)	0.061 (0.383)	0.024 (0.386)
A-level		-0.347 (0.277)	-0.446 (0.296)	-0.524* (0.317)	-0.598* (0.331)	-0.634* (0.331)
Degree		-0.304 (0.253)	-0.463* (0.280)	-0.571* (0.309)	-0.653** (0.329)	-0.700** (0.332)
Strong Partisan			-0.418** (0.207)	-0.322 (0.228)	-0.307 (0.244)	-0.269 (0.248)
Personal Importance				-0.054 (0.040)	-0.04 (0.043)	-0.031 (0.044)
Gov. Performance				0.557** (0.232)	0.507** (0.246)	0.409* (0.247)
Brexit at odds					-0.088 (0.265)	0.008 (0.269)
Margin						0.019*** (0.006)
Constant	-1.033** (0.433)	-1.197** (0.508)	-1.017* (0.581)	-0.946 (0.694)	-1.270* (0.752)	-1.955** (0.812)
Observations	1109	1088	987	837	783	783
Nagelkerke R ₂	0.007	0.035	0.046	0.07	0.069	0.099
LL	-310.609	-297.342	-244.287	-204.076	-187.29	-182.443
AIC	0.566	0.565	0.517	0.519	0.514	0.504

Table C.2: Full logit regression output used to calculate figures for Table 5.2. Results presented as log-odds with standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Labour	Conservative	Plaid Cymru	UKIP
Welshness	0.452 ^{***} (0.125)	0.033 (0.108)	-0.336 (0.228)	0.545 ^{**} (0.225)
Britishness	0.199 (0.154)	-0.351 ^{**} (0.170)	0.308 (0.218)	0.428 [*] (0.233)
Age (Centred)	0.027 (0.017)	0.022 (0.020)	-0.031 (0.022)	-0.047 [*] (0.025)
Female	0.396 (0.521)	0.787 (0.497)	-0.195 (0.627)	1.201 [*] (0.669)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>				
AB	-0.003 (0.735)	0.647 (0.684)	-0.837 (0.879)	0.857 (1.112)
C1C2	0.724 (0.531)	1.479 ^{**} (0.600)	-1.831 (1.114)	1.371 (1.020)
<i>Education (Ref = no formal quals)</i>				
GCSE	-0.865 (0.820)	-0.688 (0.804)	1.606 (2.134)	0.401 (0.749)
A-level	-1.038 [*] (0.630)	-1.164 ^{**} (0.556)	0.414 (1.415)	-0.24 (0.933)
Degree	-0.017 (0.716)	-1.634 ^{***} (0.625)	1.192 (1.195)	-0.593 (0.946)
Strong Partisan	-0.039 (0.514)	-0.551 (0.564)	-0.989 (0.808)	0.031 (1.078)
Personal Importance	-0.042 (0.079)	-0.126 (0.086)	0.075 (0.329)	-0.059 (0.121)
Gov. Performance	1.285 ^{***} (0.491)	0.198 (0.525)	-0.807 (0.770)	0.041 (0.705)
Brexit at odds	0.545 (0.598)	-0.958 [*] (0.523)	-1.482 [*] (0.777)	1.879 (2.000)
Margin	0.058 ^{***} (0.013)	0.036 ^{***} (0.011)	-0.022 (0.022)	-0.031 (0.027)
Constant	-6.206 ^{***} (1.227)	0.897 (1.559)	-0.019 (4.752)	-6.539 ^{***} (2.452)
Observations	273	210	96	114
Nagelkerke R ²	0.357	0.234	0.253	0.357
LL	-52.814	-37.191	-11.281	-18.968
AIC	0.497	0.497	0.548	0.596

Table C.3: Full logit regression output used to calculate figures for Table 5.3. Results presented as log-odds with standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

voters are divided into constituencies, within which separate electoral contests occur. It could be the case that constituency-specific issues encourage voters to switch party between levels, factors that individual-level models would not pick up. Initial analysis shows considerable variation in the proportion of voters in each constituency switching their vote between levels. Figure C.4 shows the amount of variation between constituencies in the levels of multilevel voting when no individual-level factors are accounted for.

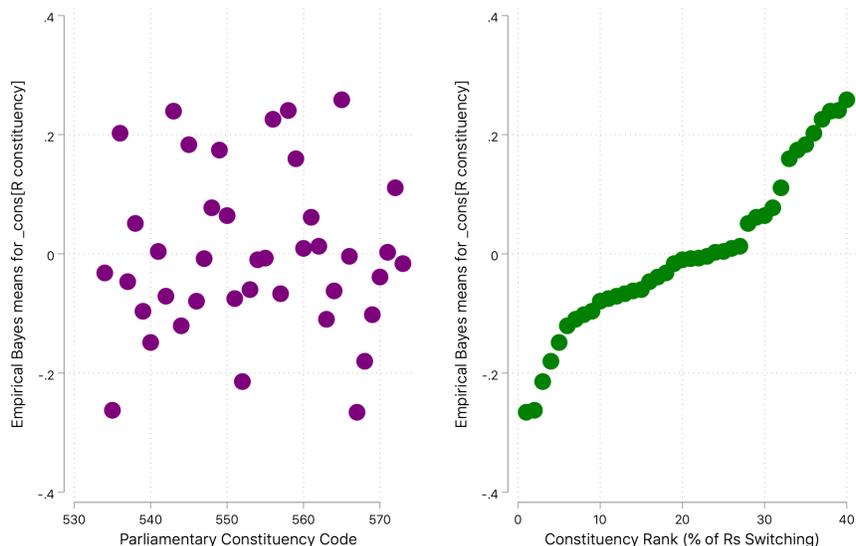


Figure C.4: Variation in amount of switching between constituencies without individual-level controls.

To test for possible constituency effects I re-ran Model 6 from Table C.2 as a random intercepts model, with respondent constituency as a level-2 unit. The results are presented in Table C.4. For ease of interpretation I have included a caterpillar plot (Figure C.5) of constituency level residuals once individual-level factors have been accounted for. As all the confidence intervals cross over the median estimated constituency effect – no effect in this case – we can say that once individual-level factors are controlled for, the variation between constituencies is no longer significant: i.e. there is no significant constituency effect.

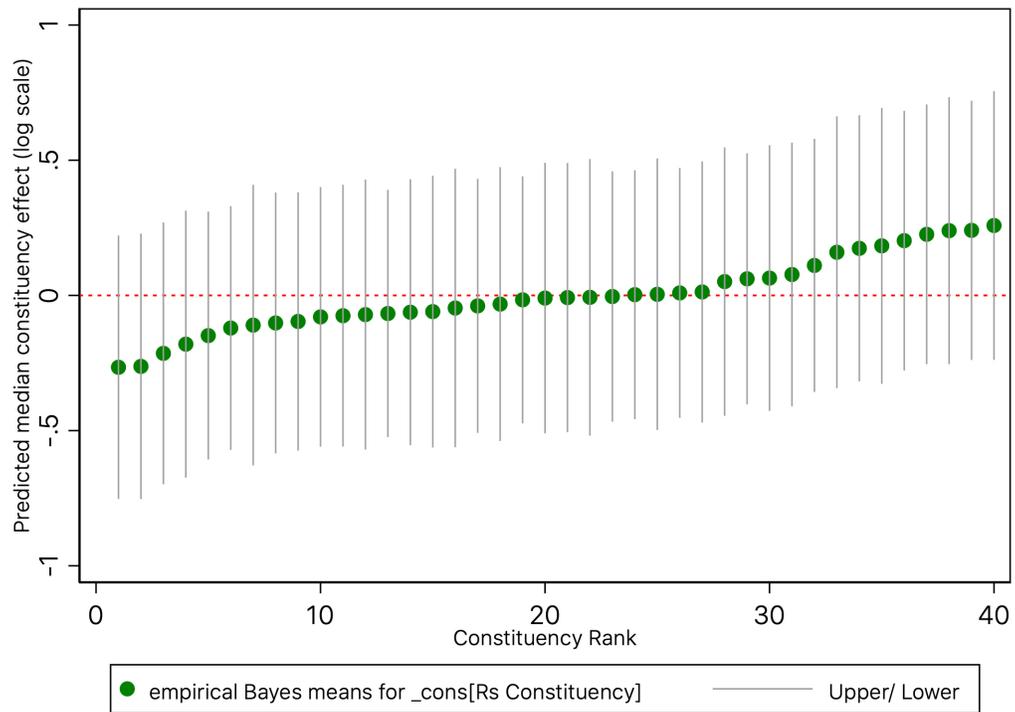


Figure C.5: Caterpillar plot of constituency residuals with individual-level controls

Welshness	0.043 (0.038)
Britishness	0.077 (0.056)
Age (Centred)	-0.004 (0.007)
Female	0.328* (0.171)
<i>Social Class (Ref = DE)</i>	
AB	-0.088 (0.236)
C1C2	0.140 (0.219)
<i>Education (Ref = No formal quals)</i>	
GCSE	0.189 (0.250)
A-level	0.054 (0.249)
Degree	0.046 (0.219)
Strong Partisan	-0.529*** (0.177)
Personal Importance	-0.035 (0.031)
Brexit at odds	-0.088 (0.198)
Gov. performance	0.001 (0.172)
Margin	0.016*** (0.004)
Constant	-1.662*** (0.561)
var(_cons[constituency])	0.079 (0.089)
Observations	843
Log pseudolikelihood	-456.683
Δ in Log pseudolikelihood	281.906

Table C.4: Random intercept model predicting whether a respondent switches the party they vote for between elections to different levels with respondent constituency as level 2 variable. Change in Log pseudolikelihood calculated as difference from null model. Results presented as log-odds with standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

D

Supplementary Information for Chapter 6

D.1 Incumbency Effects: Aggregate-level Analysis

In the main body of this chapter, I suggest that an incumbency effect might lead people to cast a split-ticket. One method for uncovering the existence of an ‘incumbency’ effect is to analyze available sources of aggregate-level data for voting at SP and NAW elections. Since the 2011 devolved election, The Electoral Commission has published constituency level data for both ballots in Scotland and Wales. This means that for each constituency, the number of votes is recorded for each constituency candidate, but also the number of votes cast for each party on the list in that constituency. While aggregate data is not an ideal source for studying split-ticket voting it can provide an insight into the existence of a incumbency effect during these elections (see [King, 2013a](#), on the problem of ecological inference). Specifically, it can identify which candidates outperform their parties in their constituency.

By calculating the ‘candidate gap’ (candidates’ vote share in constituency - party list share of candidate’s party in constituency) we can develop a relatively clear idea of which candidate’s outperform their parties. Figures [D.1](#) and [D.2](#) plot this candidate vote gap as a function of that candidate’s party

vote share in the regional list vote at the 2011 and 2016 SP and NAW elections.

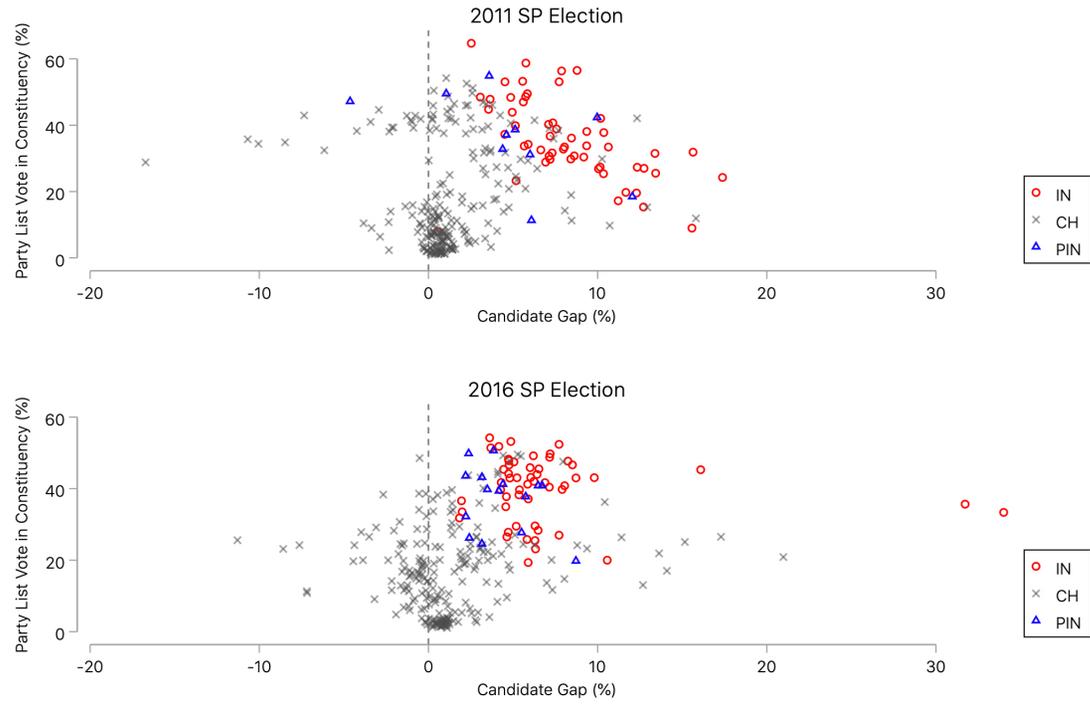


Figure D.1: Incumbency scatter plot, Scotland. IN = Incumbent, CH = Challenger, and PIN = Party Incumbent Source: The Electoral Commission

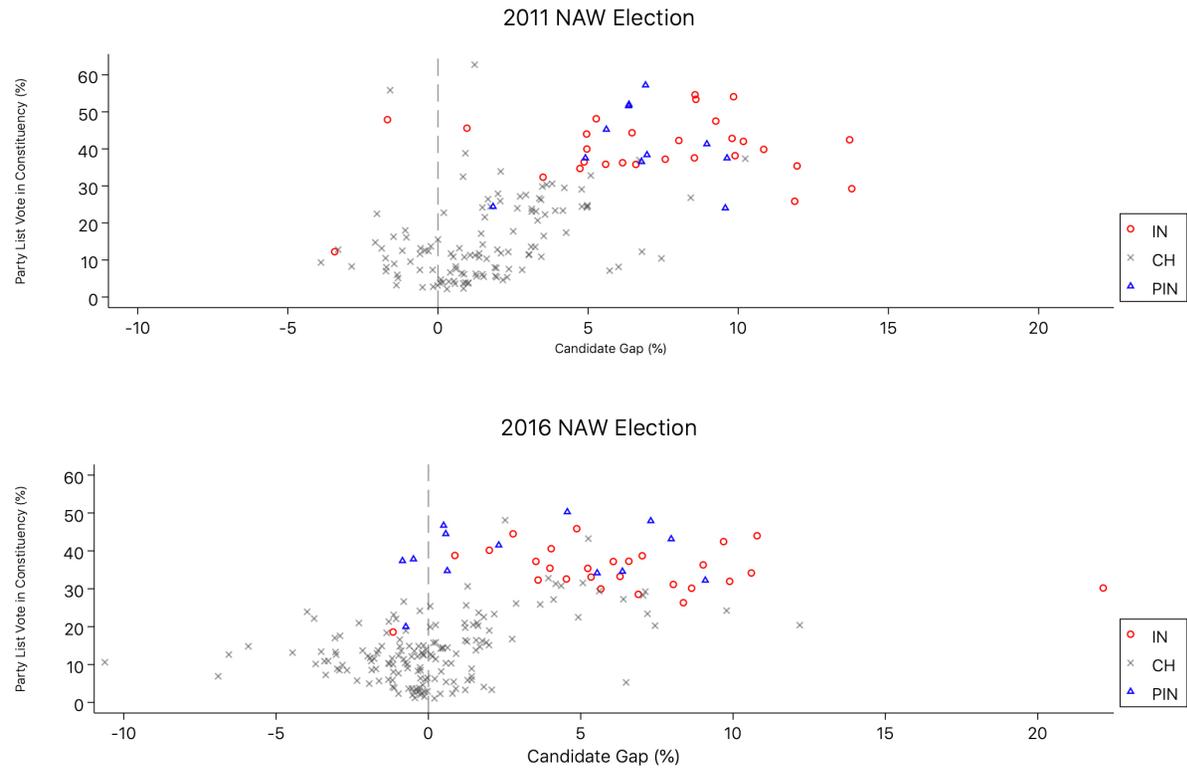


Figure D.2: Incumbency scatter plot, Wales. IN = Incumbent, CH = Challenger, and PIN = Party Incumbent Source: The Electoral Commission

Incumbents do perform better in their constituencies than their parties do in almost every case by between five and fifteen points. This is similar for party incumbents (candidates who are from the same party as previous incumbent), although they seem to do slightly less well. This is largely to be expected; there is more competition for list seats with more parties standing. In both cases there are extreme outliers where candidates outperform their parties by such large margins that there is a strong likelihood a personal vote was at play.

The same graphs are replicated in Figures D.3 and D.4. Rather than identifying candidates by their incumbency status, these figures identify them by their political party. In both Scotland and Wales, the most extreme outliers are Liberal Democrat candidates who remain elected whilst their party share collapsed⁵⁵.

If there was evidence of an incumbency effect during these elections, we would expect incumbents to have a positive candidate gap, indicating that they are more popular than - and therefore outperform - their parties in that constituency. Where strategic voting takes place we would expect to see the opposite: party's receiving more votes than their candidates in constituencies as voters deviate from their preferences at the constituency level to vote for a viable candidate.

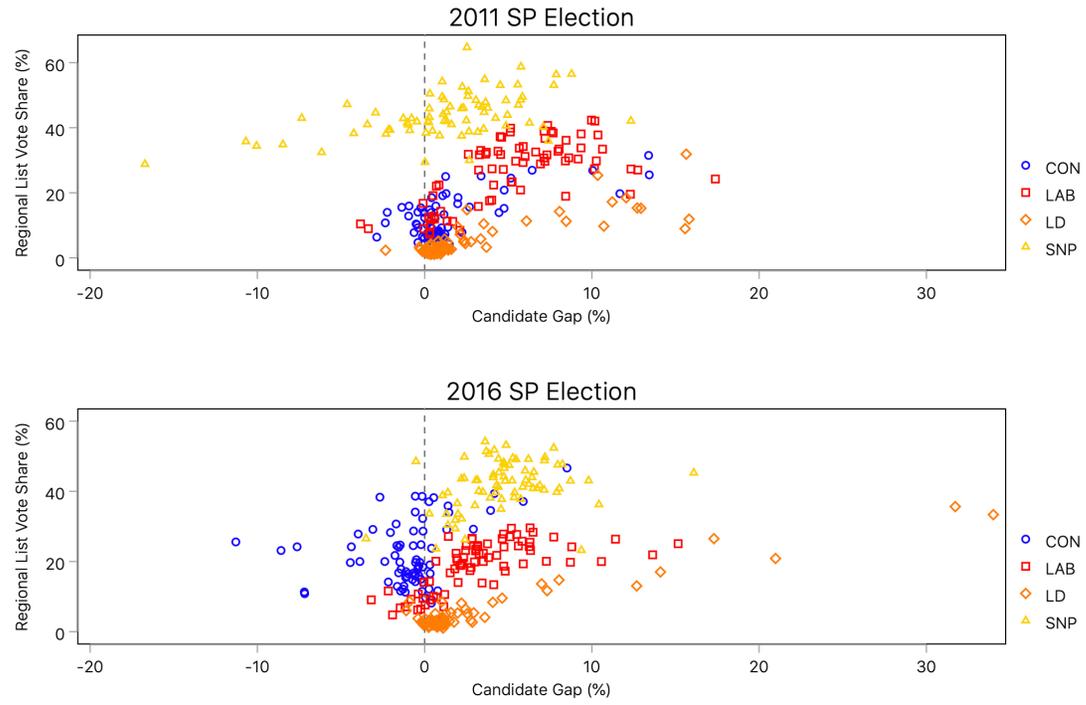


Figure D.3: Incumbency scatter plot by party, Scotland. Source: The Electoral Commission

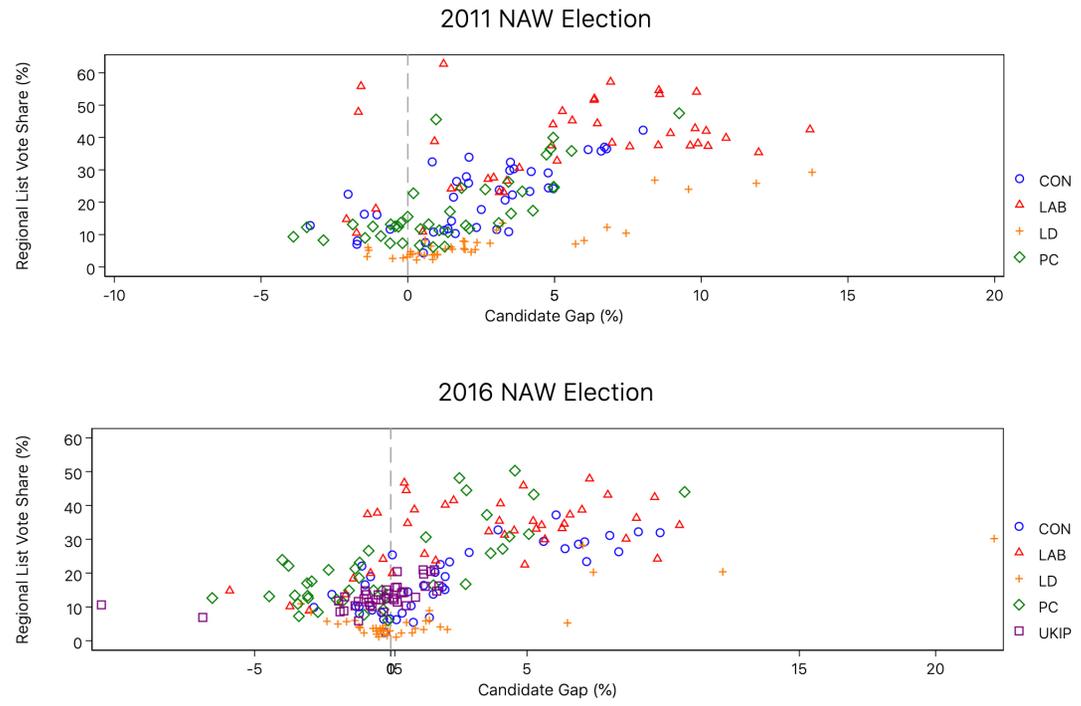


Figure D.4: Incumbency scatter plot by party, Wales Source: The Electoral Commission

	1999	2003	2007	2011	2016
Scotland	51.3	50.9	59.6	26.7	41.0
<i>N</i>	1,361	1,359	1,532	1,709	2,934
Wales	49.1	47.9	52.2	19.9	28.5
<i>N</i>	424	789	785	1,847	2,569

Table D.1: % of respondents who prefer coalition government. **Source:** SES & WES 1999-2016. All data are weighted

D.2 Coalition attitudes

Table D.1 shows the proportion of respondents in Scotland and Wales whose preference is coalition government. In both the Scotland and Wales data, approximately half of all respondents express a preference for a coalition government between 1999 and 2007. A considerable drop is seen in 2011, perhaps explained by the unpopularity of the UK Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition at the time.

It therefore seems that the experience of coalition government in Scotland and Wales was a positive one for many voters. As a result, voters might adjust their voting behaviour appropriately in order to maximize the perceived chance of a coalition occurring between their two preferred parties.

D.3 Full Regression Tables

	Scotland SMD	Scotland List
Gap	0.022*** (0.003)	0.029*** (0.003)
Incumbent	0.203* (0.107)	0.044 (0.102)
Age (Centred)	-0.014*** (0.003)	-0.016*** (0.003)
Female	-0.462*** (0.103)	-0.356*** (0.100)
<i>Education (Ref = no formal quals)</i>		
National 5s	-0.025	-0.238

Continued on next page

Table D.2 – continued from previous page

	Scotland SMD	Scotland List
Highers	(0.239) 0.469***	(0.232) 0.358**
Degree	(0.178) 0.641***	(0.172) 0.516***
<i>Party Support Strength (Ref = none at all)</i>	(0.164)	(0.160)
Very strong	0.173 (0.222)	-0.075 (0.212)
Fairly strong	0.389** (0.170)	0.198 (0.163)
Not strong	0.274* (0.166)	0.114 (0.159)
<i>Why did you vote the way you did? (Ref = Always vote this way)</i>		
Best policies	0.838*** (0.167)	0.968*** (0.149)
Best leader	0.513** (0.210)	0.162 (0.201)
Specific candidate	2.497*** (0.214)	1.894*** (0.276)
Tactical vote	1.899*** (0.189)	1.214*** (0.181)
Preferred no chance of winning	2.343*** (0.280)	1.620*** (0.345)
Preferred not standing	3.901*** (0.360)	2.699*** (0.882)
Other	2.590*** (0.281)	2.843*** (0.240)
Constant	-3.447*** (0.276)	-3.038*** (0.261)
Observations	2,854	2,854
Nagelkerke R ²	0.339	0.278
AIC	0.883	0.935
LL	-1242.437	-1316.052

Table D.2: How did Scottish respondents explain their votes? Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Wales SMD	Wales List
Gap	0.012*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.004)
Incumbent	0.447*** (0.126)	0.436*** (0.130)
Age (Centred)	0.001 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)
Female	-0.339***	-0.384***

Continued on next page

Table D.3 – continued from previous page

	Wales SMD	Wales List
	(0.120)	(0.126)
<i>Education (Ref = no formal quals)</i>		
GCSE	-0.027 (0.242)	0.116 (0.247)
A-level	0.360* (0.196)	0.333 (0.203)
Degree	0.355** (0.171)	0.273 (0.178)
Prefer Coalition	0.678*** (0.125)	0.710*** (0.129)
<i>Party support strength (Ref = None at all)</i>		
Very strong	0.133 (0.306)	0.066 (0.316)
Fairly strong	0.496* (0.277)	0.508* (0.285)
Not strong	0.277 (0.277)	0.363 (0.283)
<i>Why did you vote the way you did? (Ref = Always vote this way)</i>		
Best policies	0.452*** (0.164)	0.521*** (0.174)
Best leader	0.468* (0.240)	0.447* (0.260)
Specific candidate	1.772*** (0.226)	0.905*** (0.330)
Preferred no chance of winning	1.934*** (0.297)	1.826*** (0.367)
Tactical	1.434*** (0.241)	1.795*** (0.230)
Preferred not standing	3.025*** (0.830)	
Second pref: first in constit		4.493*** (0.539)
Other	1.391*** (0.298)	1.845*** (0.289)
Constant	-2.590*** (0.354)	-2.749*** (0.370)
Observations	1,707	1,707
Nagelkerke R ²	0.199	0.278
AIC	1.074	1.008
LL	-898.022	-841.605

Table D.3: How did Welsh respondents explain their votes? Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Scotland '07	Scotland '16	Wales '07	Wales '11	Wales '16
Gap	0.018*	0.029***	0.017	0.022***	0.021***
	(0.009)	(0.003)	(0.016)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Voted for incumbent	-0.249	0.058	-0.956***	0.019	0.383***
	(0.241)	(0.117)	(0.360)	(0.230)	(0.145)
Age (Centred)	-0.006	-0.010***	0.012	-0.006	0.007
	(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Female	0.092	-0.518***	-0.205	-0.004	-0.280**
	(0.247)	(0.115)	(0.307)	(0.209)	(0.142)
<i>Education (Ref = no formal quals)</i>					
GCSE/National 5	-0.028	0.201	0.233	0.514	0.103
	(0.450)	(0.276)	(0.427)	(0.347)	(0.279)
A-level/Higher	0.977**	0.651***	0.241	0.550*	0.420*
	(0.415)	(0.189)	(0.459)	(0.331)	(0.231)
Degree	0.838*	0.941***	0.814*	0.146	0.296
	(0.454)	(0.174)	(0.457)	(0.297)	(0.203)
Prefers coalition	0.666**		0.359	0.219	0.690***
	(0.262)		(0.329)	(0.260)	(0.147)
<i>Party support strength</i>					
Very strong	0.416	-0.093	0.259	0.746	0.241
	(0.481)	(0.186)	(0.883)	(0.581)	(0.298)
Fairly strong	0.128	0.002	0.154	-0.017	0.516*
	(0.506)	(0.186)	(0.895)	(0.266)	(0.299)
Not very strong	-0.662	-0.477*	-0.295	0.252	0.115
	(0.454)	(0.245)	(0.964)	(0.247)	(0.339)
Constant	-2.213***	-2.320***	-1.516	-1.830***	-2.168***
	(0.730)	(0.272)	(0.922)	(0.312)	(0.349)
Observations	1,202	2,854	348	973	1,707
Nagelkerke R ₂	0.166	0.167	0.113	0.081	0.071
LL	-669.095	-1269.415	-169.178	-524.803	-756.798
AIC	1.133	0.897	1.041	1.103	0.901

Table D.4: Logit Regression predicting split-ticket voting (1). Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

	Wales '11	Wales '16
Age (Centred)	-0.001 (0.010)	0.015** (0.007)
female	0.189 (0.282)	-0.334 (0.207)
<i>Education (Ref = no formal quals)</i>		
GCSE	0.158 (0.434)	-0.13 (0.382)
A-level	0.244 (0.439)	0.248 (0.321)
Degree	0.245 (0.410)	0.227 (0.285)
<i>Constituency vote (Ref = Other)</i>		
Conservative	0.211 (0.476)	-4.403*** (0.677)
Labour	0.207 (0.429)	-4.572*** (0.860)
Liberal Democrat	0.426 (0.568)	-3.975*** (0.761)
Plaid Cymru	-0.406 (0.475)	-4.392*** (0.681)
UKIP		-4.845*** (0.705)
Incumbent	-0.003 (0.317)	0.691 (0.568)
Prefers Coalition	0.646* (0.344)	1.045*** (0.213)
<i>Party support strength (Ref = none at all)</i>		
Very strong	0.309 (0.324)	-0.649 (0.421)
Fairly strong	-0.027 (0.352)	-0.097 (0.369)
Not very strong	0.928 (0.643)	-0.398 (0.388)
Constant	-1.769*** (0.447)	2.789*** (0.737)
Observations	570	980
Nagelkerke R ²	0.043	0.221
LL	-315.699	-388.497
AIC	1.16	0.826

Table D.5: Logit Regression predicting split-ticket voting (2). Standard errors in parentheses. Levels of significance: *** 99% ** 95% * 90%

Region of Mid Scotland and Fife Regional results	
POLITICAL PARTY	NUMBER VOTES CAST
All Scotland Pensioners Party Pensioners (SSCUP)	4113
British National Party	1726
Scottish Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship" Christians Together	786
Scottish Christian Peoples Alliance	638
Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party	36458
Scottish Green Party Mark Ruskell for MSP	10914
Scottish Labour Party	64623
Scottish Liberal Democrats	15103
Scottish National Party (SNP) Alex Salmond for First Minister	116691
Scottish Socialist Party Scottish Socialist Party - Save Public Services	834
Socialist Labour Party	1771
Solidarity - Scotland's Socialist Movement	202
UKIndependence Party (UKIP)	2838
Andrew Rodger Independent	1466
Total Valid Votes	258163

Figure D.5: List ballot results for Mid Scotland and Fife region, 2011 Source: Fife Council

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