



UNIT 21 : SUPPORT MATERIAL

DIFFERENT ELECTORAL SYSTEMS: SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT **THE WELSH ASSEMBLY.**

The Scottish Parliament

Since the summer of 1999 a parliament is once again being held in Scotland after a break of 300 years. This parliament has all the powers that were once the province of the Scottish Office. While there is still a Secretary for Scotland on the UK cabinet representing Scotland there is also a First Minister of the Scottish Parliament. This Parliament has the power to take decisions that affect Scotland alone. It has limited ability to vary taxation and does not have any power over such things as foreign affairs and defence.

Electoral system

The most interesting thing about the Scottish parliament is that it does not use the "first past the post" electoral system but a form of proportional representation called the Additional Member System (or AMS). In the "first past the post" system the candidate who get the highest number of votes in a constituency is elected and all the other votes are ignored.

In the AMS everybody on the Electoral Role has two votes :

- ◆ One for the local constituency which are identical to the Westminster constituencies in Scotland. These are listed below.
- ◆ One vote for the Region. A map of the Regions is shown below.

The first votes counts just as it does for the Westminster election. The Second vote in the Region is used to balance the number of Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) according to the number of votes.

Constituencies

Central Scotland

Airdrie and Shotts
Coatbridge and Chryston
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth
East Kilbride
Falkirk East
Falkirk West
Hamilton North and Bellshill
Hamilton South
Kilmarnock and Loudoun
Motherwell and Wishaw

Glasgow

Glasgow Anniesland
Glasgow Baillieston
Glasgow Cathcart
Glasgow Govan
Glasgow Kelvin
Glasgow Maryhill
Glasgow Pollok
Glasgow Rutherglen
Glasgow Shettleston
Glasgow Springburn

Highlands and Islands

Argyll and Bute
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross
Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber
Moray
Orkney
Ross, Skye and Inverness West
Shetland
Western Isles

Lothians

Edinburgh Central
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh
Edinburgh North and Leith
Edinburgh Pentlands
Edinburgh South
Edinburgh West
Linlithgow
Livingston
Midlothian

Mid Scotland and Fife

Central Fife
Dunfermline East
Dunfermline West
Kirkcaldy
North East Fife
North Tayside
Ochil
Perth
Stirling

North East Scotland

Aberdeen Central

Aberdeen North
Aberdeen South
Angus
Banff and Buchan
Dundee East
Dundee West
Gordon
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine

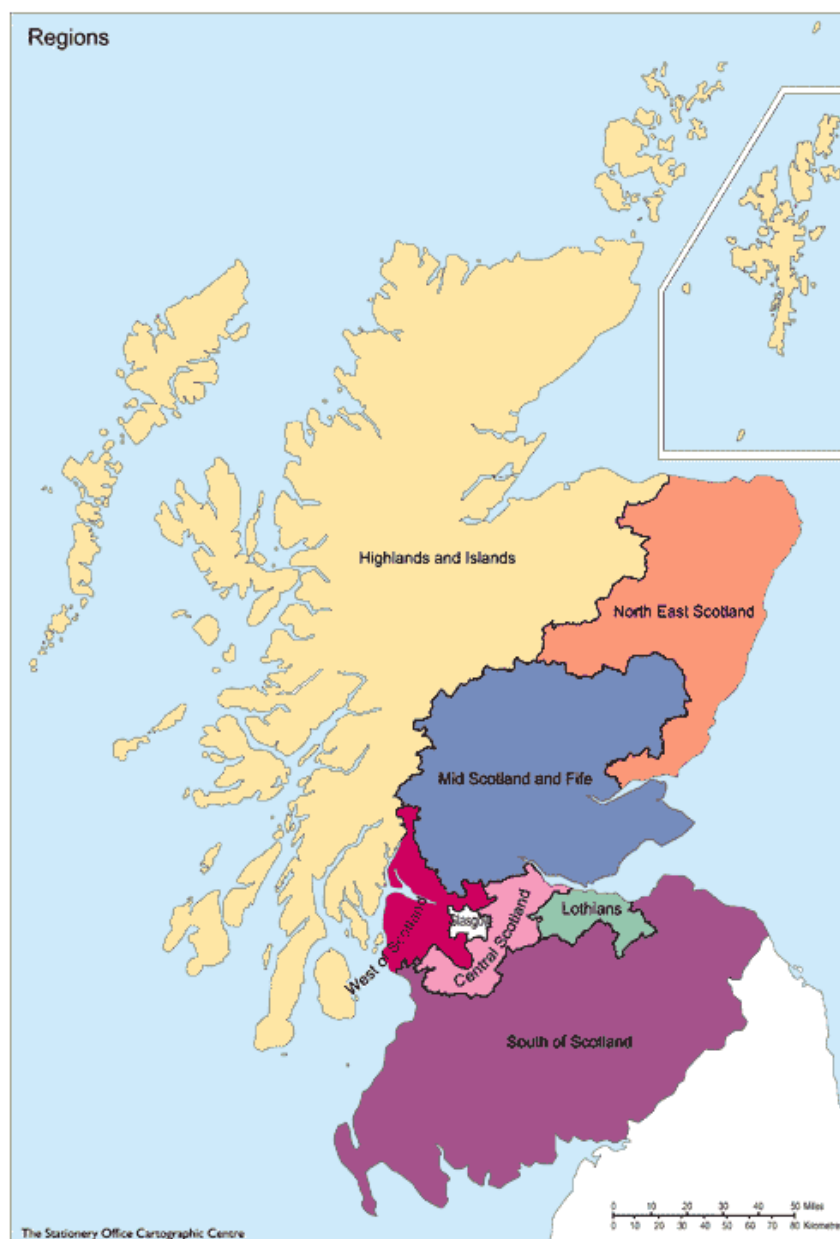
South of Scotland

Ayr
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley
Clydesdale
Cunningham South
Dumfries
East Lothian
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale
Roxburgh and Berwickshire

Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale

West of Scotland

Clydebank and Milngavie
Cunningham North
Dumbarton
Eastwood
Greenock and Inverclyde
Paisley North
Paisley South
Strathkelvin and Bearsden
West Renfrewshire



How the Electoral system works:

The first vote is used to choose the constituency MSP. This is cast on the purple form shown.

The second vote for a Region is then cast on the peach form below. Notice that on this one you are voting not for a candidate but a party. The party declares a list of candidates that it wishes to serve if its candidates are elected on the second vote.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCY: NAME OF CONSTITUENCY		
VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY		
<input type="radio"/>	SURNAME Forename Candidate's address Party description	
<input type="radio"/>	SURNAME Forename Candidate's address Party description	
<input type="radio"/>	SURNAME Forename Candidate's address Description	
<input type="radio"/>	SURNAME Forename Candidate's address Party description	
<input type="radio"/>	SURNAME Forename Candidate's address Description	
<input type="radio"/>	SURNAME Forename Candidate's address Party description	

blue form

Scottish Parliament Region: Name of Region		Put X in one box
Mark one X only on this paper		
<input type="radio"/>	PARTY A (First candidate, second candidate, third candidate, fourth candidate, fifth candidate, sixth candidate, seventh candidate, eighth candidate, ninth candidate, tenth candidate, eleventh candidate, twelfth candidate)	
<input type="radio"/>	PARTY B (First candidate, second candidate, third candidate, fourth candidate, fifth candidate, sixth candidate, seventh candidate)	
<input type="radio"/>	PARTY C (First candidate, second candidate, third candidate, fourth candidate, fifth candidate, sixth candidate, seventh candidate, eighth candidate, ninth candidate, tenth candidate, eleventh candidate, twelfth candidate)	
<input type="radio"/>	PARTY D (First candidate, second candidate, third candidate, fourth candidate)	
<input type="radio"/>	PARTY E (First candidate, second candidate, third candidate, fourth candidate, fifth candidate, sixth candidate, seventh candidate, eighth candidate, ninth candidate, tenth candidate, eleventh candidate, twelfth candidate)	
	INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE'S SURNAME Forename Description	
	INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE'S SURNAME Forename Description	

peach form

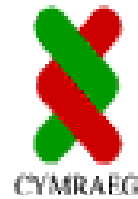
- ◆ Firstly the number of MSPs elected for the constituencies in each region are added up.
- ◆ Then the second votes in each region are added up.
- ◆ MSPs are then added from the party lists one at a time in the order of the list until the number of MSPs for each party in each region approximately represents the proportions of second votes for that party in that region.

	Party1	Party2	Party3	Party4
Votes on regional ballot	61,974	63,362	61,189	37,206
Constituencies won	2	4	2	0
Additional seats allocated	2	0	3	2
Total seats in parliament	4	4	4	2

The table above shows how the system works. The first row shows the total number of Regional votes gained by each party and the number of constituencies won by each. Parties 1 2 and 3 all had about equal votes and the additional regional seats are added to give each four MSPs each. Party 4 won only half the number of Regional votes and only has a total of two extra regional MSPs of the other three parties. Note that voters in this system do not have to vote for the same party as the candidate they vote for in the constituency election. You could vote both Labour and Tory at the same time!



The National Assembly for Wales



The Welsh Assembly is elected in the same way as the Scottish Parliament except the number of Regions is just four. The Welsh body is not a full parliament and does not have tax varying powers. It cannot make major changes in the law. It does however have all the responsibilities for the Welsh budget that was once the responsibility of the Welsh Office.



This is a computer generated picture of the design for the home of the Welsh Assembly to be built in Cardiff.



This is one of the four commemorative stamps issued to mark the opening of the Assembly in Wales

The Queen opened the Welsh Assembly and is here signing the visitors book.



OTHER FORMS OF ELECTORAL PROCEDURE

First past the Post

This is the procedure used in all UK constituencies until 1999 (except in Northern Ireland) . This is very simple, each member of the electorate has a single vote, the single candidate with the most votes is elected as the member of Parliament for that constituency. This has the advantage that each constituency has a clear representative and usually this system gives the party that is slightly ahead a clear majority in Parliament. It does, however, mean that if a party is consistently second in every constituency it could have nearly as many votes but no MPs. This method has led to parties that have less than 50% of the vote having massive majorities in the number of MPs.

Whether this is considered good or bad depends on your point of view.



Single Transferable vote

This method means that there is a threshold on the proportion of votes that any one candidate has to achieve to be elected. This is usually 50%. Each member of the electorate has a number of preferences they can make. They can declare a first choice and also a second and sometimes subsequent choices.

If a candidate achieves 50% of the vote on the voters first choice they are elected. If not the candidate with the lowest number of votes is removed from the contest and the votes for that candidate are reassigned according to the second choices. This procedure is repeated until one candidate achieves 50% or more. This method means that you ensure that a candidate is rarely elected when there are many candidates which oppose them and the vote against them is split.

Large constituencies.

Under this system constituencies are very large, and a number of MPs are elected for each constituency representing parties in proportion to the proportion of votes cast for that party. This has the disadvantage that it is not clear who your representative is in a given constituency and also the vote is for a party not a **person**.

