

**Prepared by: John Curtice, Steve Fisher, and Laurence Lessard-Phillips**

**Date: 5 April 2006**

**Comparative Study of Electoral Systems  
Module 2: Macro Report**

August 23, 2004

Country: United Kingdom (GBR)

Date of Election: 5 May 2005

NOTE TO COLLABORATORS: The information provided in this report contributes to an important part of the CSES project. Your efforts in providing these data are greatly appreciated! Any supplementary documents that you can provide (e.g., electoral legislation, party manifestos, electoral commission reports, media reports) are also appreciated, and may be made available on the CSES website.

**Part I: Data Pertinent to the Election at which the Module was Administered**

1. Report the number of portfolios (cabinet posts) held by each party in cabinet, *prior* to the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all".)

Name of Political Party  
Labour Party

Number of Portfolios  
All

1a. What was the size of the cabinet before the election?  
23

2. Report the number of portfolios (cabinet posts) held by each party in cabinet, *after* the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all").

Name of Political Party  
Labour Party

Number of Portfolios  
All

2a. What was the size of the cabinet after the election?  
23

3. Political Parties (most active during the election in which the module was administered and receiving at least 3% of the vote):

Party Name/Label	Year Party Founded	Ideological Family	European Parliament Political Group (where applicable)	International Party Organizational Membership
A. Conservative Party	1841	E	1	21
B. Labour Party	1900	D	3	27
C. Liberal Democrats	1859	F	4	23
D. Scottish National Party	1934	O	7/8	00
E. Plaid Cymru	1925	O	7/8	00
F.				

The SNP & PC did not receive 3% of the vote across Britain as a whole, but are nonetheless important parties in Scotland and Wales respectively.

Liberal democrats were formed in 1988 from a merger of the Liberal Party (formed in 1859) and the Social Democratic Party (formed in 1981).

Ideological Party Families: (These are suggestions only. If a party does not fit well into this classification scheme, please provide an alternative and some explanation).

- |                               |                                  |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| (A) Ecology Parties           | (G) Liberal Parties              | (M) Agrarian Parties |
| (B) Communist Parties         | (H) Right Liberal Parties        | (N) Ethnic Parties   |
| (C) Socialist Parties         | (I) Christian Democratic Parties | (O) Regional Parties |
| (D) Social Democratic Parties | (J) National Parties             | (P) Other Parties    |
| (E) Conservative Parties      | (K) Independents                 |                      |
| (F) Left Liberal Parties      | (L) Single Issue Parties         |                      |

The following lists provide examples of political groups and organizations to which a particular party might belong. Please report any and all international affiliations for each party.

European Parliament Political Groups:

- (1) European People's Party
- (2) European Democrats
- (3) Party of European Socialists
- (4) European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
- (5) Confederation of European United Left
- (6) Nordic Green Left
- (7) Greens
- (8) European Free Alliance
- (9) Europe for the Nations
- (10) Europe of Democracies and Diversities
- (00) Not Applicable
- (98) Don't Know

International Party Organizations:

- (11) Asia Pacific Socialist Organization
- (12) Caribbean Democratic Union
- (13) Christian Democratic International
- (14) Christian Democratic Organization of America
- (15) Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
- (16) Democratic Union of Africa
- (17) Eastern European Social Democratic Forum
- (18) Green Movement
- (19) Humanist Party
- (20) International Communist Union
- (21) International Democrat Union
- (22) International League of Democratic Socialists
- (23) Liberal International

- (24) Natural Law Party
- (25) Pacific Democratic Union
- (26) Organization of African Liberal Parties
- (27) Socialist International

- (28) Socialist Inter-Africa
- (00) Not Applicable
- (98) Don't Know

3a. Were there any significant parties not represented in parliament *before* the election?  
No

3b. Were there any significant parties not represented in parliament *after* the election?  
No

3c. Were there any other non-represented parties or independent actors whom you believe to have had a significant effect on the election?  
No

4a. Ideological Positions of Parties:

Please indicate Parties A-F's positions on a left-right dimension (in the expert judgment of the CSES Collaborator). If this dimension is not appropriate, please provide an explanation of the salient cleavages, and parties' relative positions.

Party Name	Left											Right	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
A. Conservative									x				
B. Labour					x								
C. Liberal Democrats					x								
D. SNP					x								
E. Plaid Cymru					x								
F.													

4aa. Do you believe there would be general consensus on these placements among informed observers in your country?  
Yes, insofar as academics ever agree on these things.

4b. If you have asked respondents to rank political parties on an alternative dimension, other than the left-right dimension, please also provide your own rankings of the parties on this dimension.

Name of dimension:

Label for left hand position:

Label for right hand position:

Party Name	Left										Right
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A.											
B.											
C.											
D.											
E.											
F.											

4bb. Do you believe there would be general consensus about these placements among informed observers in your country?

5. In your view, what are the five most salient factors that affected the outcome of the election (e.g. major scandals; economic events; the presence of an independent actor; specific issues)?

1. Trust in Prime Minister following the war in Iraq
2. Tax
3. Immigration
4. Health
5. Education

5a. Do you believe there would be general consensus about the importance of these factors among informed observers in your country?

Reasonable agreement

## 6. Electoral Alliances:

Sometimes, electoral alliances are made at the constituency level as, for example, in Finland. Documenting who is allied with whom, and how, in each constituency is a large task and we do not expect you to do more than make some general reference to the existence of constituency-level alliances. Sometimes, electoral alliances are made at the national level -- these are the alliances that we would like you to identify. Information is sought on who is allied with whom and on the nature of the electoral alliance.

a) Were electoral alliances permitted during the election campaign?

- No  
 Yes

If the wording of the question means that national alliances existed rather than whether they were 'permitted', then answer is no.

Otherwise, alliances were permitted but did not exist in this election.

If yes, please complete the following:

<u>Alliance Name</u>	<u>Participant Parties (please indicate dominant members with an "*")</u>
Alliance 1:	
Alliance 2:	
Alliance 3:	
Alliance 4:	
Alliance 5:	

7. Party Leaders and Presidential Candidates:

In legislative elections, please report the leader of each party.

In presidential elections, list presidential candidates and their parties. If candidates were endorsed by more than one party, please indicate this below.

<u>Party of Candidate</u>	<u>Name of Party Leader or Presidential Candidate</u>
A. Conservative	Michael Howard
B. Labour	Tony Blair
C. Liberal Democrats	Charles Kenndy
D. SNP	Alex Salmond
E. Plaid Cymru	Daffyd Iwan
F.	

## Part II: Data on Electoral Institutions

If possible, please supplement this section with copies of the electoral law, voters' handbooks, electoral commission reports, and/or any other relevant materials.

### A. QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

---

**Definitions:** An electoral district is defined as a geographic area within which votes are counted and seats allocated. If a district cannot be partitioned into smaller districts within which votes are counted and seats allocated, it is called primary. If it can be partitioned into primary districts, and during the counting process there is some transfer of votes and/or seats from the primary districts to the larger district, then the larger district is called secondary. If a district can be partitioned into secondary districts (again with some transfer of votes and/or seats), it is called tertiary.

In some electoral systems, there are electoral districts that are geographically nested but not otherwise related for purposes of seat allocation. In Lithuania, for example, there are 71 single-member districts that operate under a majority runoff system, and also a single nationwide district that operates under proportional representation (the largest remainders method with the Hare quota). Neither votes nor seats from the single-member districts transfer to the nationwide district, however. The two processes are entirely independent (with voters having one vote in each district). In this case, the nationwide district, although it contains the 71 single-member districts, is not considered to be secondary. It is primary. One might say that there are two segments to the electoral system in such cases.

1. How many segments (as just defined) are there in the electoral system?

- 1 segment
- 2 segments
- more than 2

Please answer the following questions (questions 2 through 11) for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature:

2. How many primary electoral districts are there?

646 (628 in GB; area covered by survey data)

3. For each primary electoral district, how many members are elected from each district?

(If district variation exists, answer 3a)

1

3a. If districts elect varying number of members, please list the districts, indicating the number of members elected from that district. (Attach separate sheets, as required).

District Number of Members

4. How many secondary electoral districts are there?

N/A

5. How many tertiary electoral districts are there?

N/A

If possible, please summarize the information above for questions 1-3 and 4-5 in the table here:

Chambers/Houses		Lower			Upper		
Segments	Number	1	2	3 or more	1	2	3 or more
Primary districts	Number	646					
	No. of members*	(628)					
Secondary districts	Number						
	No. of members*						
Tertiary districts	Number						
	No. of members*						

\*Please report the total number of members for all districts, per segment.

(628 in GB; area covered by survey data)

B. QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTING.

---

6. Exactly how are votes cast by voters?

6a. How many votes do they or can they cast?

1

6b. Do they vote for candidates, for lists, or for both? (please explain)

Voters vote for a single candidate, whose party affiliation is indicated on the ballot.

7. Are the votes transferable?

No

8. If more than one vote can be cast, can they be cumulated?

9. Are there any other features of voting that should be noted?

C. QUESTIONS ABOUT CONVERTING VOTES INTO SEATS.

---

10. Exactly how are votes converted into seats?

Simple-plurality rule

10a. Are there legally mandated thresholds that a party must exceed before it is eligible to receive seats?

No

If so, what is the threshold?

10b. What electoral formula or formulas are used?

Plurality, single member district

11. If there are lists, are they closed, open, or flexible?

- closed
- flexible, but in practice virtually closed
- flexible
- flexible, but in practice virtually open
- open

**Definitions:** A list is closed if the seats that are awarded to that list are always occupied by the candidates in order of their appearance on the list (i.e., if the list gets x seats then necessarily the top x names on the list get the seats). A list is open if the question of which candidates on the list get the seats that are awarded to the list is determined solely by the votes that each candidate receives. A list is flexible if parties place their candidates in the order they would like to see them elected, but voters can, with varying degrees of ease, change this order through votes they cast for individual candidates.

**Please repeat questions 2 through 11 of this section for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature.**

D. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF ELECTORAL ALLIANCE.

---

**Definitions:** A joint list refers to one on which candidates of different parties run together.

Apparentement refers to a legal agreement between two or more lists to pool their votes for the purposes of an initial seat allocation, with seats initially allocated to the alliance then reallocated to the lists in the alliance.

12. What are the possibilities of forming alliances in the system?

Parties can agree to stand down for each other in one or more constituencies to field a jointly agreed candidate (from macro report module 1).

12a. Can parties run joint lists?

Yes

No

As explained above.

12b. Is there apparentement or linking of lists

Yes

No

12c. Can candidates run with the endorsement of more than one party?

Yes

No

12d. Do parties withdraw their lists or candidates in some constituencies, urging their supporters there to vote for an ally's list or candidate?

Yes

No

This was not an important feature in the 2005 election.

12e. Other?

13. Are joint lists possible?

No

13a. If joint lists are possible, are they subject to different regulations than single-party lists? For example, higher thresholds, different numbers of candidates that may appear on the list, etc.

14. If apparentement is possible, what lists can participate in such agreements:

- lists of the same party in the same constituency
- lists of the same party from different constituencies
- lists of different parties in the same constituency

15. If candidates can run with the endorsement of more than one party, is this reflected on the ballot?

X No

- No party endorsements are indicated on the ballot paper
- Yes, candidate's name appears once, together with the names of all supporting parties
- Yes, candidate's name appears as many times as there are different parties endorsing him/her, each time with the name of the endorsing party
- Yes, other (please explain):

### Part III: Data on Regime Type

Below are various questions about the type of regime--presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential--in your country. There are two potential problems with these questions that should be noted at the outset. First, in some countries there may be a discrepancy between the *de jure* (or legal) situation and the *de facto* (or practical) situation. For example, in Great Britain the Queen still possesses a legal right to veto legislation, but this right has not been exercised since 1707. In the case of such obviously obsolete powers, please answer according to the *de facto* situation. Otherwise, describe the *de jure* situation. A second potential problem is that the questions may not be phrased optimally for the situation in your particular country. In such cases, please answer as best you can, providing some indication of the difficulties as you see them.

#### A. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE HEAD OF STATE.

---

**Definitions:** The Head of State is typically the highest ranking official in the executive branch of government. Often, this position is held by a president or a monarch, and may be more ceremonial than effective. The Head of Government is usually the highest ranking official in the legislative branch of government. In some systems, this may be someone other than the Head of State (i.e. the prime minister in the Westminster systems), while in other cases, the roles of the Head of State and Head of Government are combined (i.e. in the United States, the president serves as both the Head of State and the Head of Government).

1. Who is the Head of State?

- President
- Monarch
- Prime Minister serves as ceremonial head of state
- Other (please specify)

2. How is the head of state selected?

- Direct election
- Indirect election
- Birth right
- Divine right
- Other (Explain)

2a. If by direct election, by what process?

- Plurality election
- Run-off or two-ballot system
- Other (Explain)

2a1. If by run-off system, how are the candidates selected for the final round?

- The \_\_\_\_\_(##) candidates with the highest vote totals advance to the second round
- Any candidate with at least \_\_\_\_\_% of the popular vote advances to the second round

2b. If by indirect election, by what process?

- Electoral college
- Selection by the legislature
- Other (Explain)

2b1. If by electoral college, how are electors chosen?

2b2. Does the electoral college deliberate?

- Yes
- No

2b3. What is the voting procedure used by the electoral college?

2b4. If by the legislature, by which chamber(s) of the legislature? What is the voting procedure used?

3. Does the Head of State have the following powers? Please check all that apply:

3a. Introduce legislation?

- Yes
- X No

3b. Require expedited action on specific legislation? (i.e., set a deadline by which the legislature is required to act on the bill)?

- Yes
- X No

**Definitions:** A Head of State possesses a partial veto when he or she can target specific clauses of a piece of legislation for veto, while promulgating the rest. In the U.S., such vetoes are sometimes called line item vetoes. A Head of State possesses a package veto when he or she can veto the entire piece of legislation submitted by the legislature, but cannot veto some parts and accept others.

3c. Package veto?

- No
- Yes, and the requirement to override the veto is:

3d. Partial veto?

- No
- Yes, and the requirement to override the veto is:

3e. Issue decrees with the power of law?

- Yes
- No

3f. Emergency powers?

- Yes
- No

3g. Negotiate treaties and international agreements?

- No
- Yes, provided the following additional requirements are met:

3h. Commander of the armed forces?

- Yes
- No

3i. Initiate referenda or plebiscites?

- Yes
- No

3j. Refer legislation to the judicial branch for review of constitutionality?

- Yes
- No

3k. Convene special legislative sessions?

- Yes
- No

## B. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT.

---

**Definitions:** In some countries, the Head of Government is directly elected, in elections that may or may not occur concurrently with legislative elections. In these cases, the Head of Government is said to be elected independently of the legislature. In others, the Head of Government is the leader of the governing party or governing coalition in the legislature, and so, the selection of the Head of Government depends upon the distribution of seats in the legislature. In these cases, the Head of Government is not elected independently of the legislature.

4. Is the Head of Government elected independently of the legislature?

- Yes
- No

4a. Is the Head of Government also the Head of State?

- Yes
- No

4b. If the Head of Government is not elected independently of the legislature, how is the Head of Government selected?

- Appointed by the head of state alone
- Appointed by the legislature alone
- Nominated by the head of state, and approved by the legislature
- Nominated by the legislature, and approved by the head of state
- Other (Please explain):

The head of government needs to be able to retain the confidence of the lower house of the legislature to remain in office.

5. What authorities does the Head of Government have over the composition of the cabinet?

Please check all that apply.

- Names ministers and assigns portfolios alone
- Nominates ministers for approval by the president
- Reviews and approves ministerial nominations made by the president
- Dismisses ministers and reassigns portfolios at own discretion
- Other (Please explain):

6. What authorities does the Head of Government have over the policy making process?

Please check all that apply:

- Chairs cabinet meetings
- Determines schedule of issues to be considered by the legislature
- Determines which alternatives will be voted on by the legislature, and in which order
- Refers legislative proposals to party or legislative committees
- Calls votes of confidence in government
- Other (Please explain):

### C. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CABINET

---

7. By what method(s) can the cabinet be dismissed? Please check all that apply:

- By the head of state acting alone
- By the prime minister acting alone
- By majority vote of the legislature where a majority of all legislators is required
- By majority vote of the legislature where a majority of those legislators voting is required
- By some combination of the above, acting in concert (Please explain):
- Other (Please explain):

D. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LEGISLATURE

---

8. Can the legislature be dissolved prior to regularly scheduled elections? \_\_\_\_\_No X Yes:
- By the head of state acting alone
  - By the prime minister acting alone
  - By majority vote of the legislature
  - X By some combination of the above, acting in concert (Please explain):
  - Other (Please explain):

Strictly speaking, the PM requests dissolution from the monarch but effectively the PM's decision by convention.

Head of state acting alone: except in exceptional circumstances that have not occurred recently.

9. If the legislature can be dissolved prior to regularly scheduled elections, are there restrictions on when and how the legislature can be dissolve? Please check all that apply:

- On the timing of dissolution (e.g. not within one year after a legislative election) (Please explain):
  
- As a response to action/inaction by the legislature (e.g. only when the legislature has censured the cabinet; only if the legislature fails to pass the budget) (Please explain):
  
- Other (Explain):

10. Is there a second chamber of the legislature? No\_\_\_\_\_ Yes X, it is:
- directly elected
  - indirectly elected through the following process:

Most of the second chamber is appointed to membership for life by the Head of State on the recommendation of the Head of Govt. By convention opposition members are further recommended to the Head of Govt by the leaders of those parties. By convention also the number of members of each party reflects their share of the vote at the last election to the first chamber, though not all members belong to a political party. In addition to these life members the house also includes:

- i) 92 'hereditary peers' elected by their fellow hereditary peers.
- (ii) the 26 most senior bishops in the Church of England
- (iii) 12 'law lords' responsible for certain judicial functions exercised by the second chamber

- 10a. If there is a second chamber and it is indirectly elected, are those who choose its members:
- wholly regional and/or local officials?
  - partly regional and/or local officials?
  - not necessarily regional and/or local officials?

- 10b. If there is a second chamber, does it have specific and exclusive legislative powers (i.e. the power to reject the executive's proposed budget)?
- No
  - X Yes (Please explain):

The consent of the House of Lords is required to any Act that prolong the life of the House of Commons for more than five years (i.e. postpone a general election).

- 10c. If there is a second chamber, does it have the power to remove the cabinet or censure its ministers?
- Yes
  - X No

## E. FEDERALISM

---

11. Is there a constitutionally guaranteed division of power between the central government and regional and/or local governments?
- Yes

X No

12. Does the central government have the power to remove elected officials of regional and/or local governments?

Yes

X No

#### F. REFERENCES

---

Please list any resources that were consulted in the preparation of this report, or that the CSES community may find especially helpful in understanding the political system described here.

V. Bogdanor (ed.), *The British Constitution in the 20th Century* (OUP, 2003)