

The UK Party System and Party Politics

Part 1: The electoral dimension

Patrick Dunleavy

Gv 311: British Politics course,
Lecture 13 Lent Term 2014

A 'party system' is constituted by

- a. How voters behave
- b. Electoral institution effects favouring one or more parties over others
- c. Party ideologies and cleavages
- d. Governance institutions favouring some parties
- e. How parties recruit elites and how they behave in office and opposition
- f. How much parties shape public policies

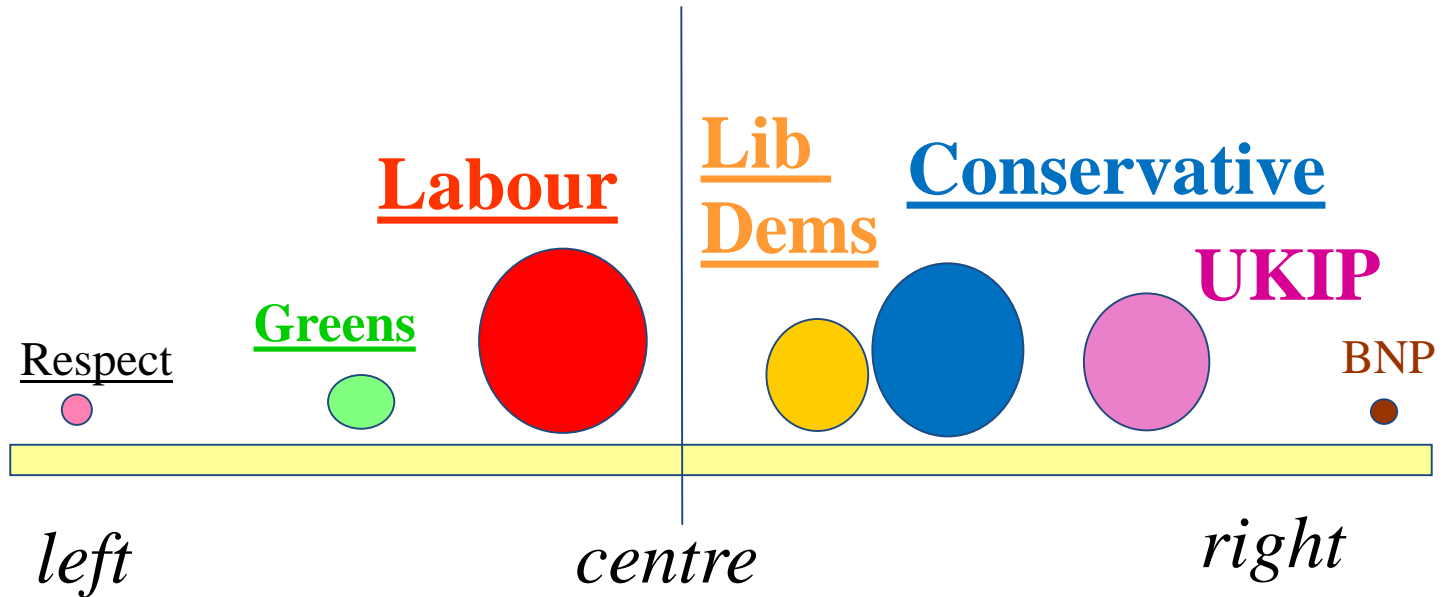
Six key propositions for this week

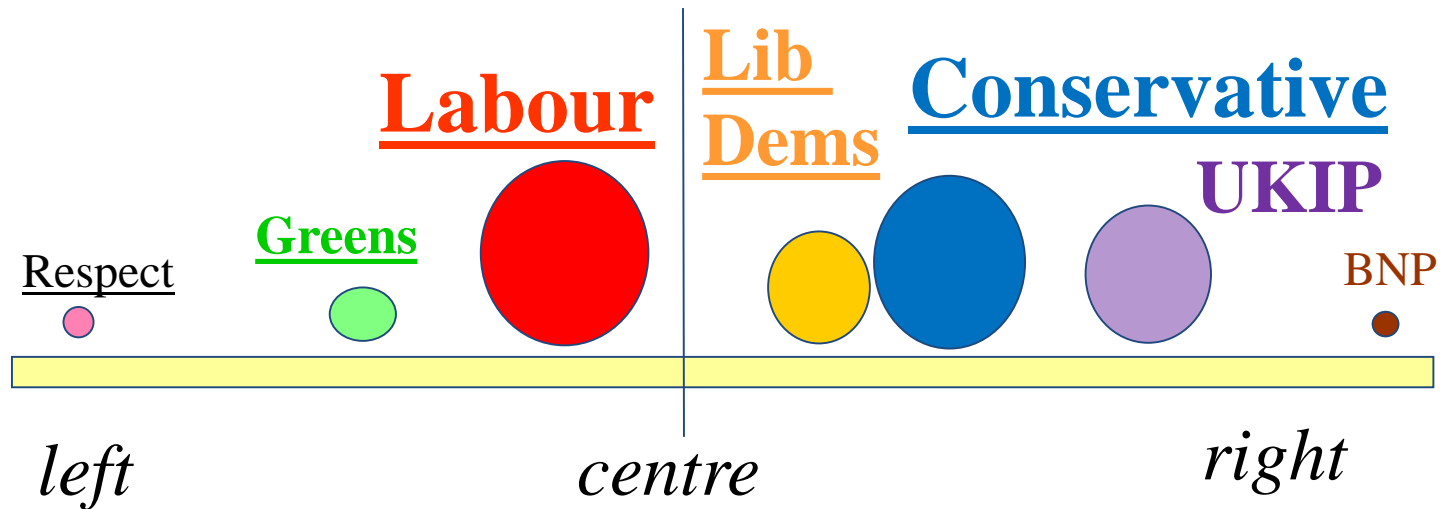
1. In terms of voting Great Britain is a standard European multi-party system
2. GB has not been a 'two-party system' since 1974 - nor a 2.5 or 3 party system since 2000
3. Voters' multi-partism is artificially suppressed by plurality rule voting at general elections

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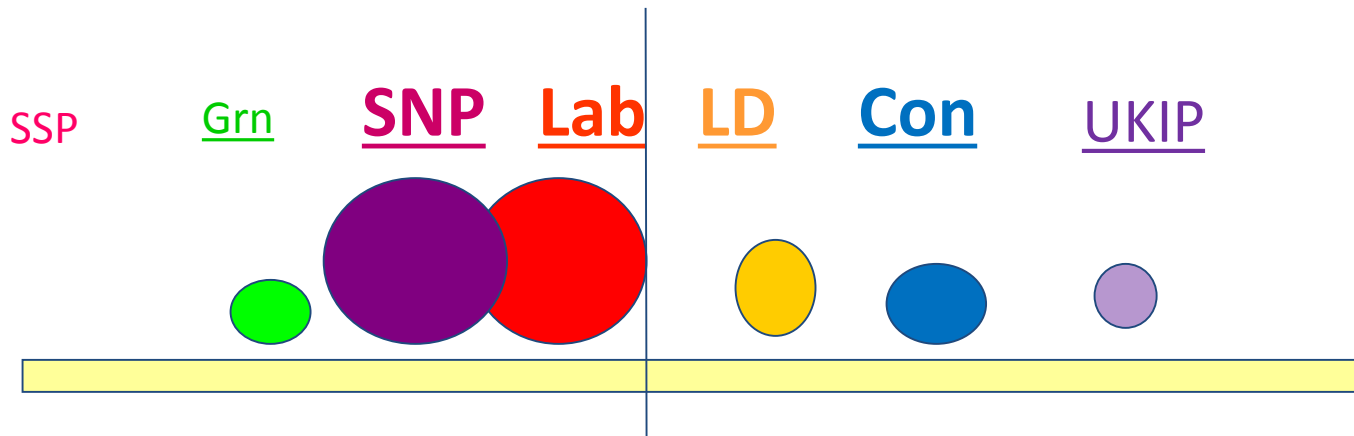
1. In terms of voting Great Britain is a standard European multi-party system
2. GB has not been a 'two-party system' since 1974 - nor a 2.5 or 3 party system since 2000
3. Voters' multi-partism is artificially suppressed by plurality rule voting at general elections
4. **Duverger's Law is falsified** (USA's special case)
5. **Dickson & Scheve provide a strong theory basis for maturity/modernity = multi-partism**
6. **GB's party system is evolving like many others**

The 2014 party system, in England

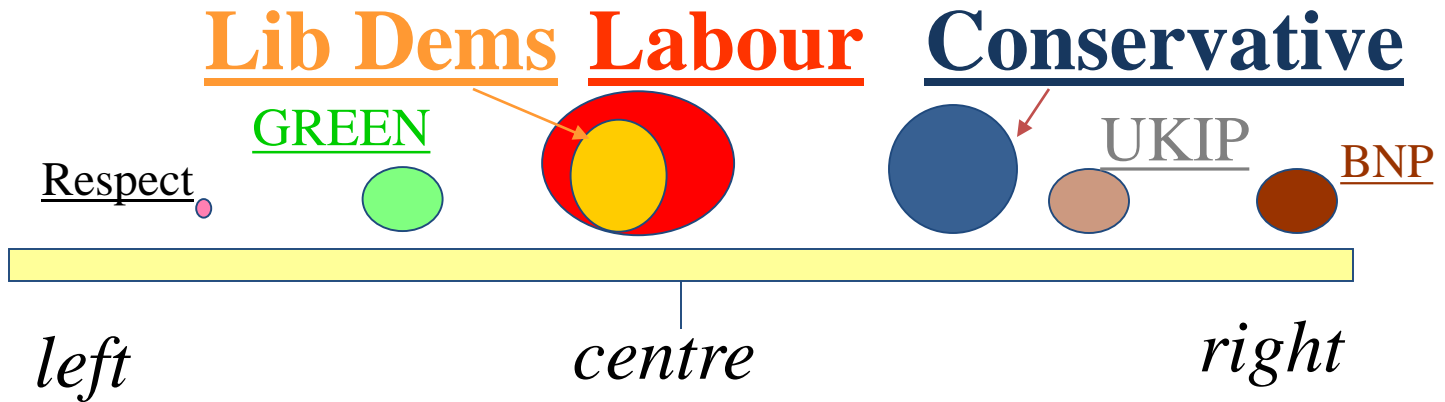




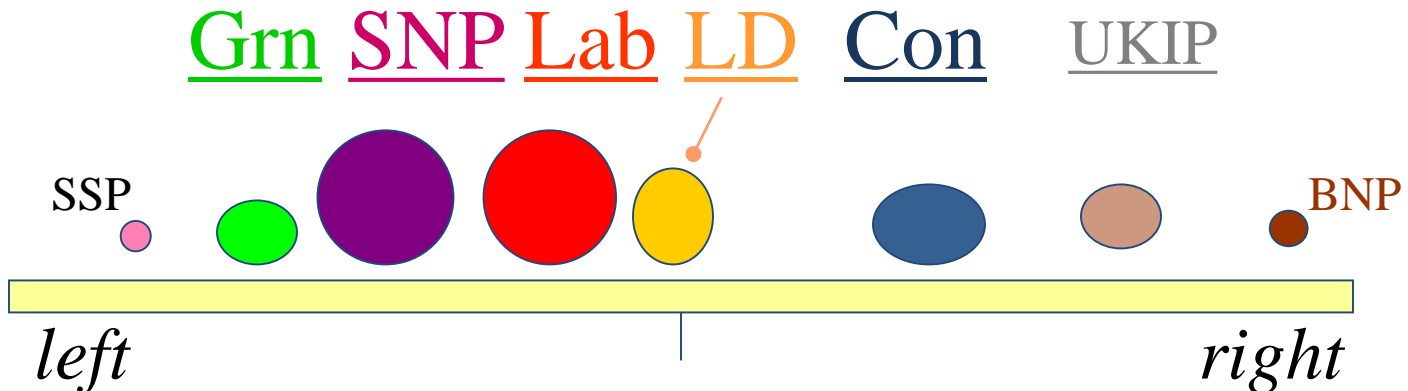
The Scottish party system



2010 The English party system



2010 The Scottish party system



State of the Parties: 2001-10 general elections

% vote share	Labour	Con	Lib Dem	Other	Lab lead
2001	42	33	19	6	+ 9
2005	36	33	23	8	+ 3
2010	29.5	37	23.5	10	-7.5
2014 av. poll	38	32	10	12+3	+ 6

Figure 1: The vote share results for the 2010 general election in Great Britain

Great Britain share of the votes	% votes	Change in support (% points) since 2005	Compare 2005 % vote share	MPs in 2010	Other party representation
Conservative	36.9	+ 4	33	306	All forums
Labour	29.6	- 6	36	258	All forums
Liberal Democrats	23.5	+ 0.4	23	57	All forums
UK Independence Party (UKIP)	3.2	+ 0.9	2.3	0	EP, GLA, LG
British National Party (BNP)	1.9	+ 1.2	0.7	0	EP, GLA, LG
Scottish National Party (SNP)	1.7	+ 0.1	1.6	6	EP, SP, LG
Greens	1.0	- 0.1	1.0	1	EP, GLA, LG
Plaid Cymru (Wales only)	0.6	- 0.1	0.7	3	EP, WNA, LG
Other parties/candidates	1.6	-0.1	1.7	0	-
Total	100%				

Notes: EP European Parliament; GLA Greater London Assembly; LG local government councillors; SP Scottish Parliament; WNA Welsh National Assembly

The decline of the Labour and Conservatives two party system at general elections since 1950

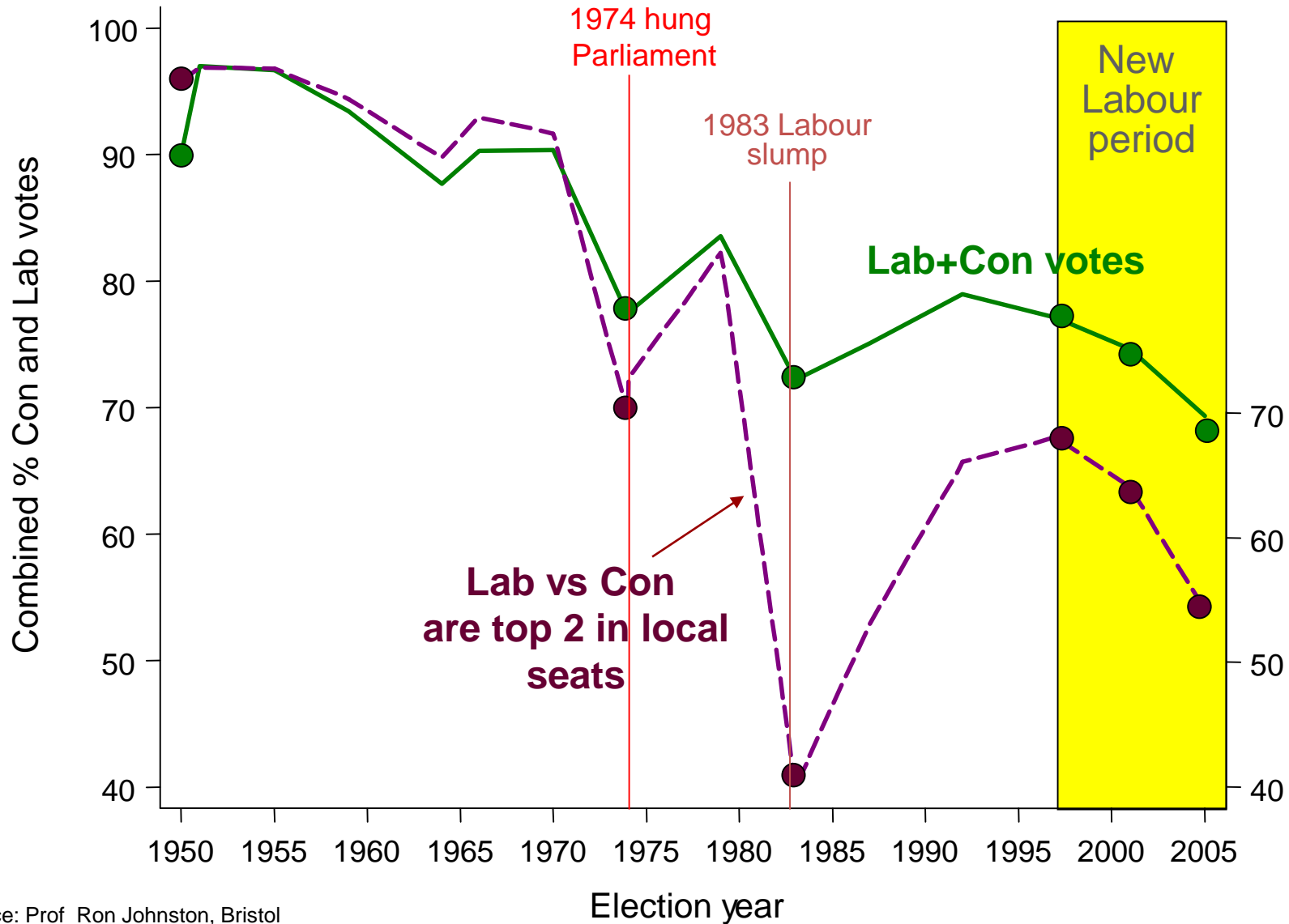
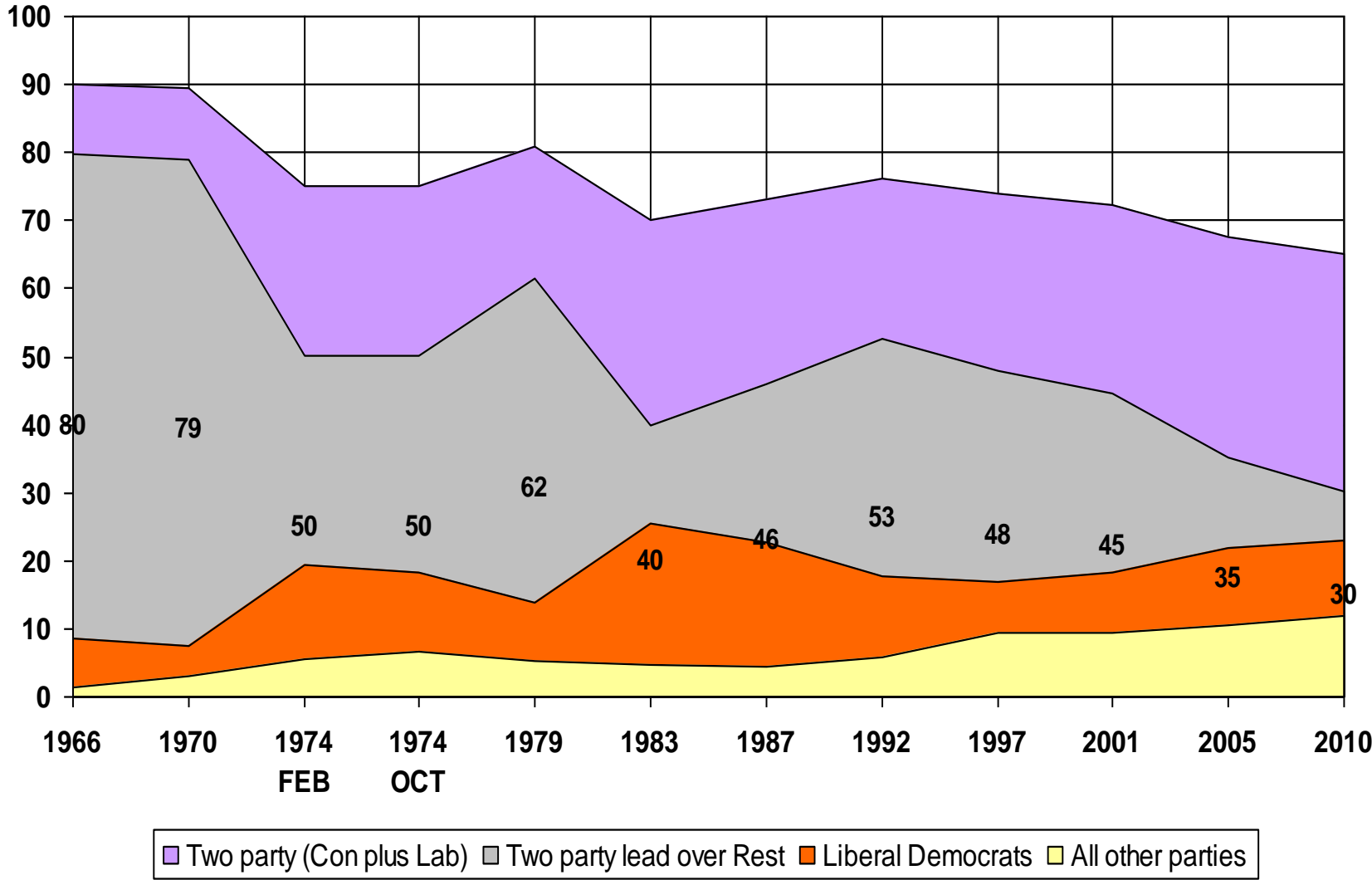


Figure 1: Trends in the vote shares for the top two parties and for smaller parties, 1970 to 2010



Note: The numbers in grey area here show the combined Conservative and Labour per cent support, minus the combined support for the Liberal Democrats

Per cent of each 'occupational class' voting for main parties 2010

Occupational class	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Other parties	Total
Upper non-manual (AB)	39	26	29	7	100%
Routine non-manual (C1)	39	28	24	9	100%
Skilled manual (C2)	37	29	22	12	100%
Unskilled manual/ not working (DE)	31	40	17	12	100%

Source: Ipsos MORI (2010) 'How Britain Voted 2010'. <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oltemId=2613>

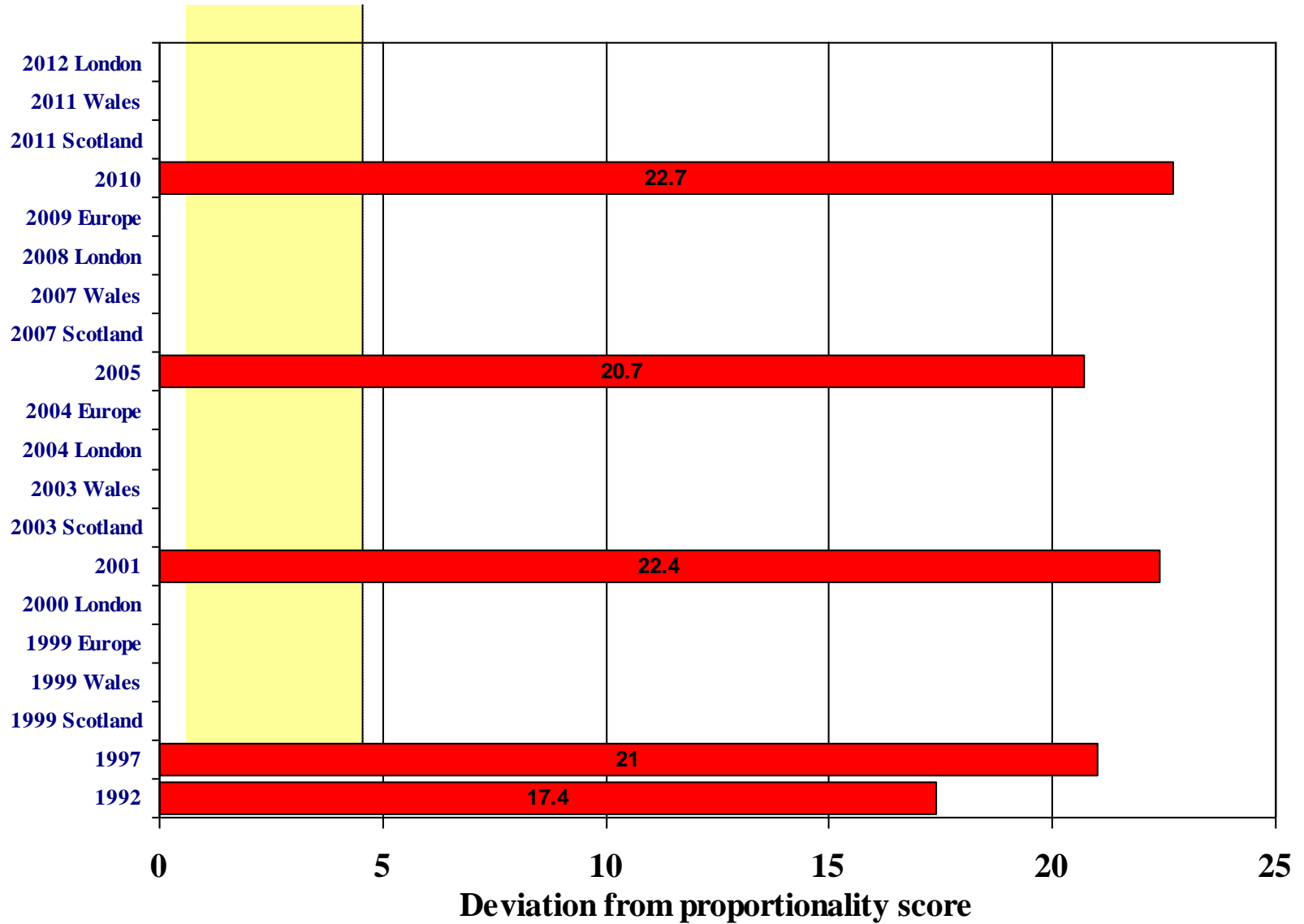
**Institutional factors supporting
the top two parties,
despite voters' changing view**

The DV (deviation from proportionality) score

- We calculate the differences in seats shares compared with votes shares for each party
- Add up all the scores ignoring + or - signs
- Divide by 2 to remedy double-counting
- Gives DV score
- Note: Minimum DV score is 0%
No maximum DV score – unless all MPs go to a party with no votes at all, which is not a democracy

Party	Vote %	Seats %	Deviation
Con	35	45	+10
Lab	30	38	+8
Lib	20	7	-13
Other	5	0	-5
<i>Total (Ignore = or -)</i>			<i>36</i>
<i>Deviation from Proportionality</i>			<i>18%</i>

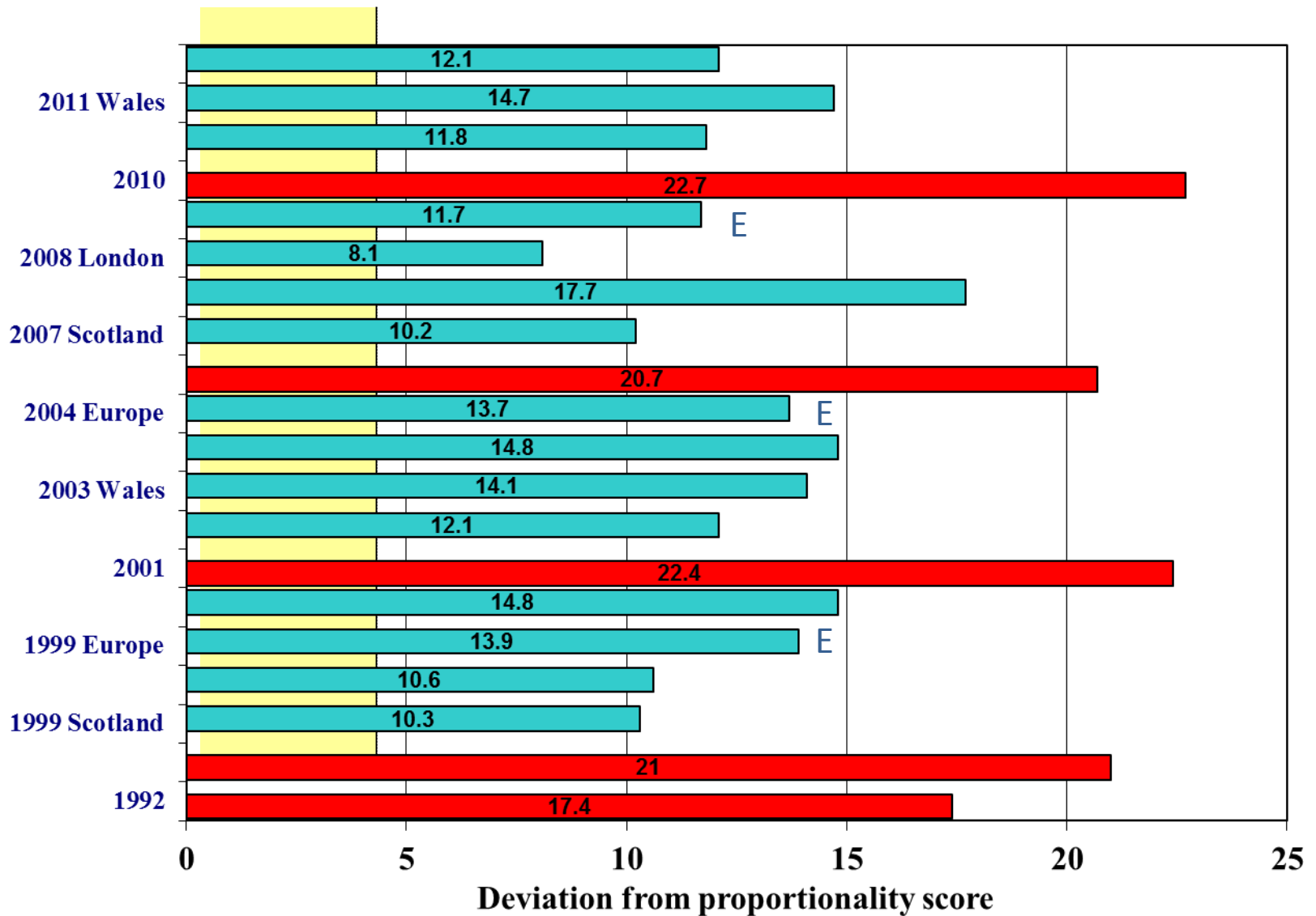
'Deviation from proportionality' scores, 1992-2012



Practicable minimum score for any voting system is around 4%

Plurality election

'Deviation from proportionality' scores, 1992-2012



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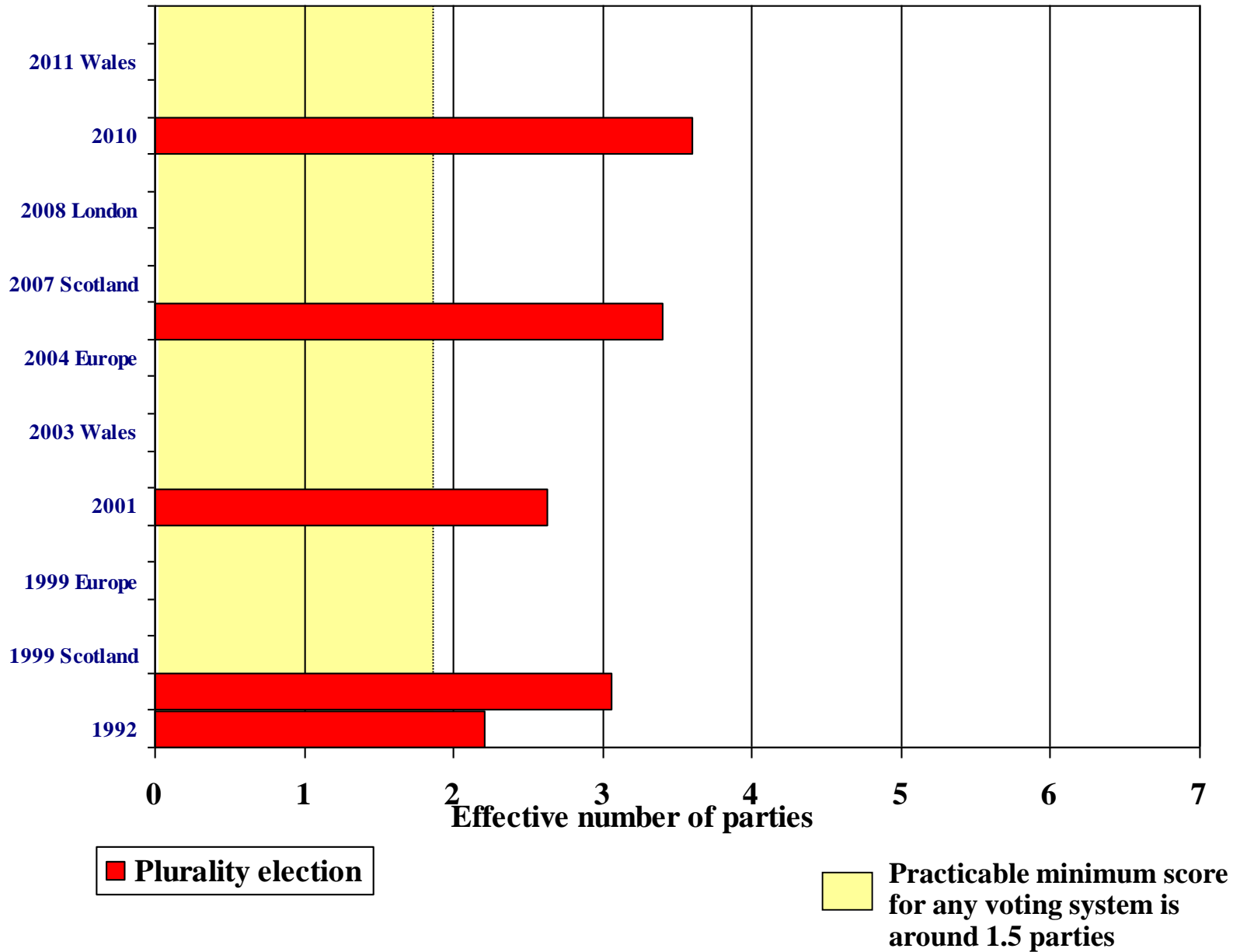
British AMS (PR) election

Counting parties – the ENP score

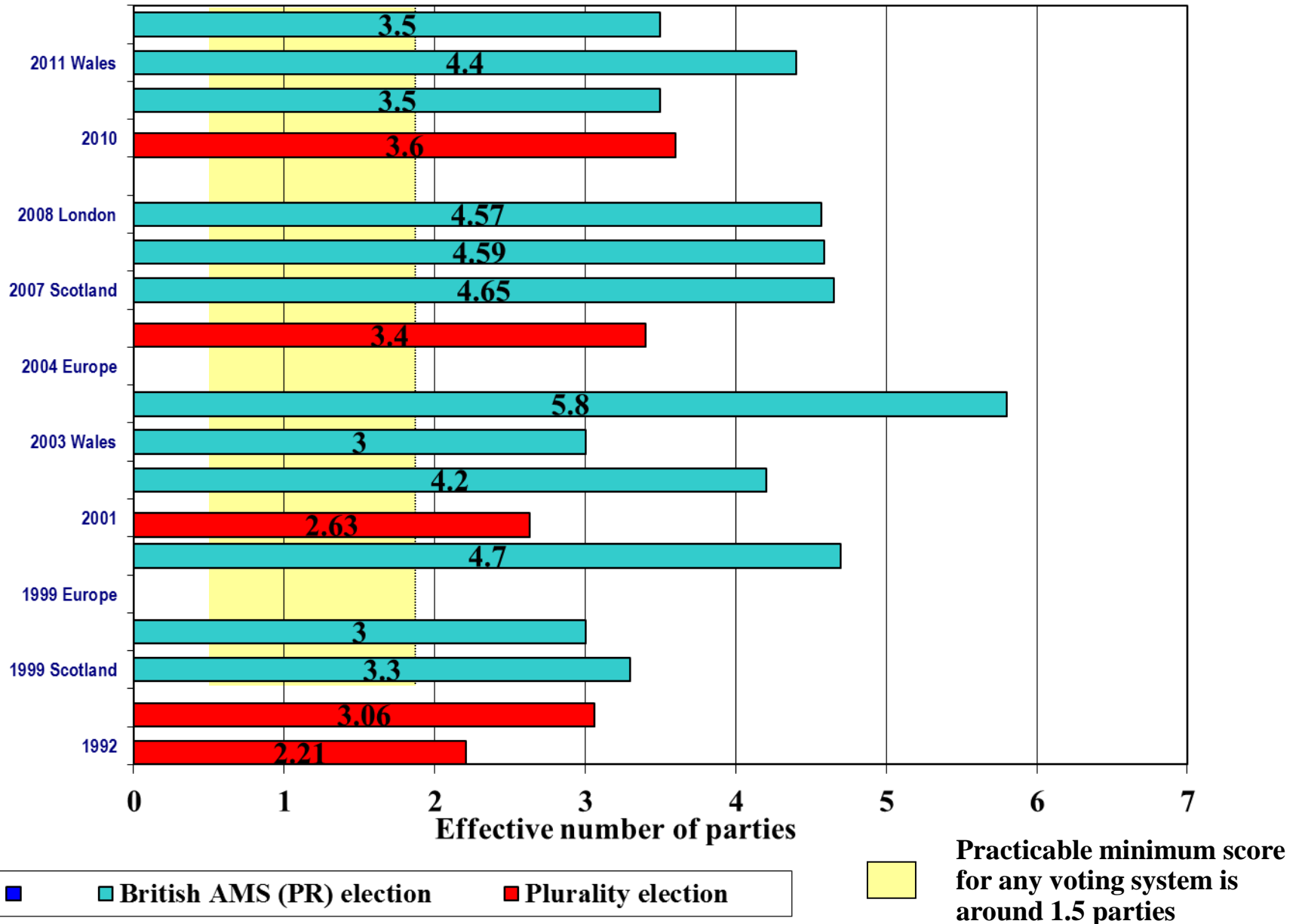
- We calculate the effective number of parties (ENP) by squaring the decimal vote shares, summing and dividing 1 by the sum
- The squaring process weights the contribution of large parties highly, and marginalizes that of small parties
- Here 1 divided by 0.312 = 3.21 parties

Party	Vote	Vote sq
Con	.38	0.144
Lab	.35	0.123
Lib	.20	.04
Others	.07	.005
<i>Total</i>		<i>0.312</i>

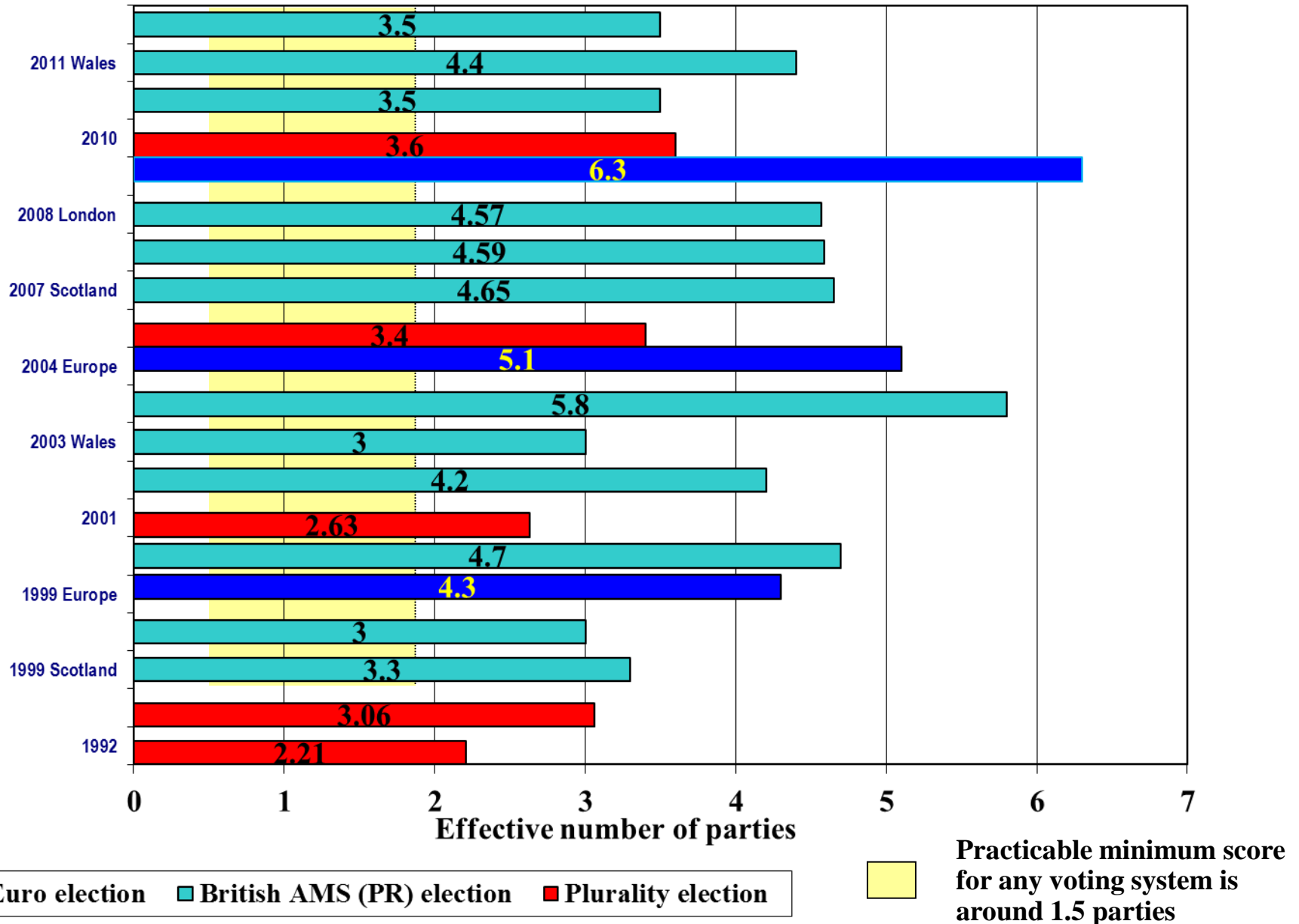
'Effective number of party' scores since 1992



'Effective number of party' scores, 1992-2012



'Effective number of party' scores, 1992-2012



Duverger's Law and the modernization of party systems

Duverger's Law

- Plurality rule elections always produce/ encourage the emergence of a two-party system. PR systems facilitate multi-partism
- Initially framed at national level
- Then re-framed to mean only at district level
- Cox reformulation – in plurality rule the maximum number of parties per district = $M + 1$ (where M is district magnitude). Nationalization of parties is separate

Dickson and Scheve counter-theory

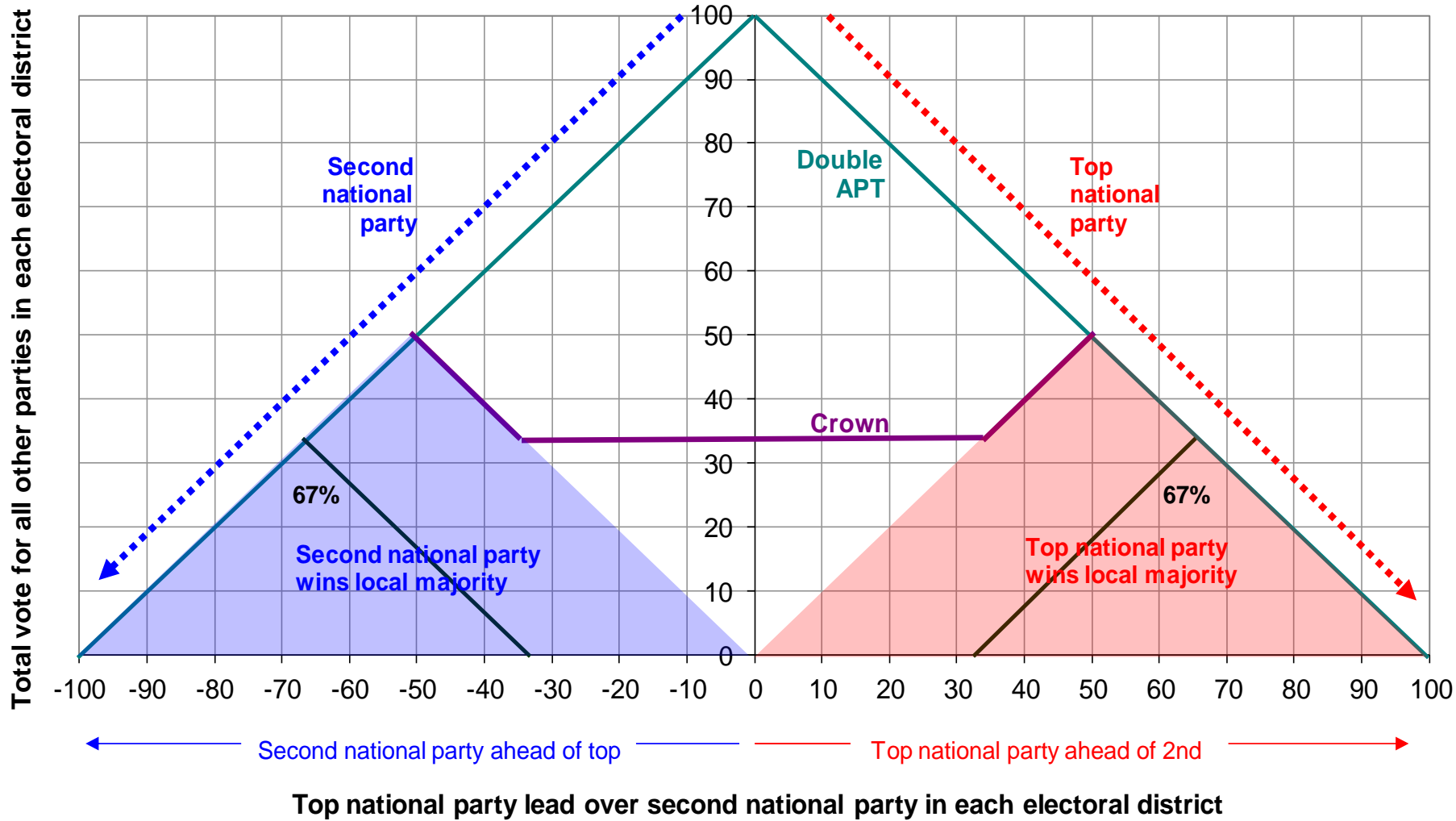
- Under plurality rule, a social group with 67%+ support in a constituency can split two ways, knowing they will still *always* beat the opposition
- Splitting majority vote is rational in maximizing the welfare of the majority of the majority – MP closer to their view
- Implies – we should never see $P_1 > 67\%$
- If opposition splits too, majority social group may fragment further yet still win

Comparing with other countries

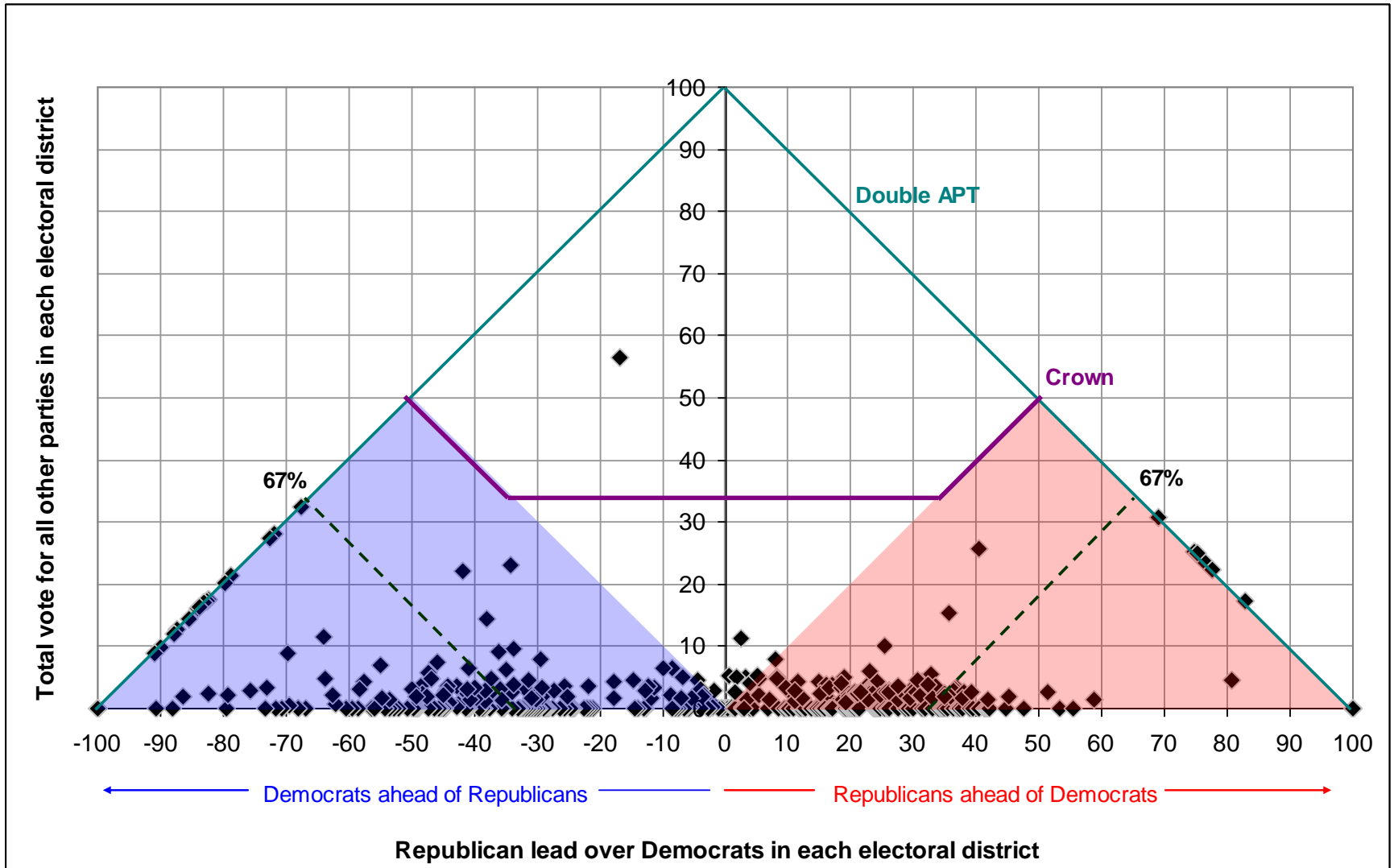
Election districts with a given number of parties receiving 1% or more of local votes	United States, House of Representatives 2006	Indian general election 2004	Great Britain, general election 2005
One	7.8	0	0
Two	52.6	3.9	0
Three	29.0	13.8	3.5
Four	9.2	23.4	32.3
Five	0.7	26.7	41.1
Six	0.2	18.4	17.5
Seven	0.2	8.6	4.9
Eight	0.2	3.1	0.6
Nine or more	0	2.0	0
Total	100%	100%	100%
No of cases	435	546	628

Rows consistent with Duverger's Law

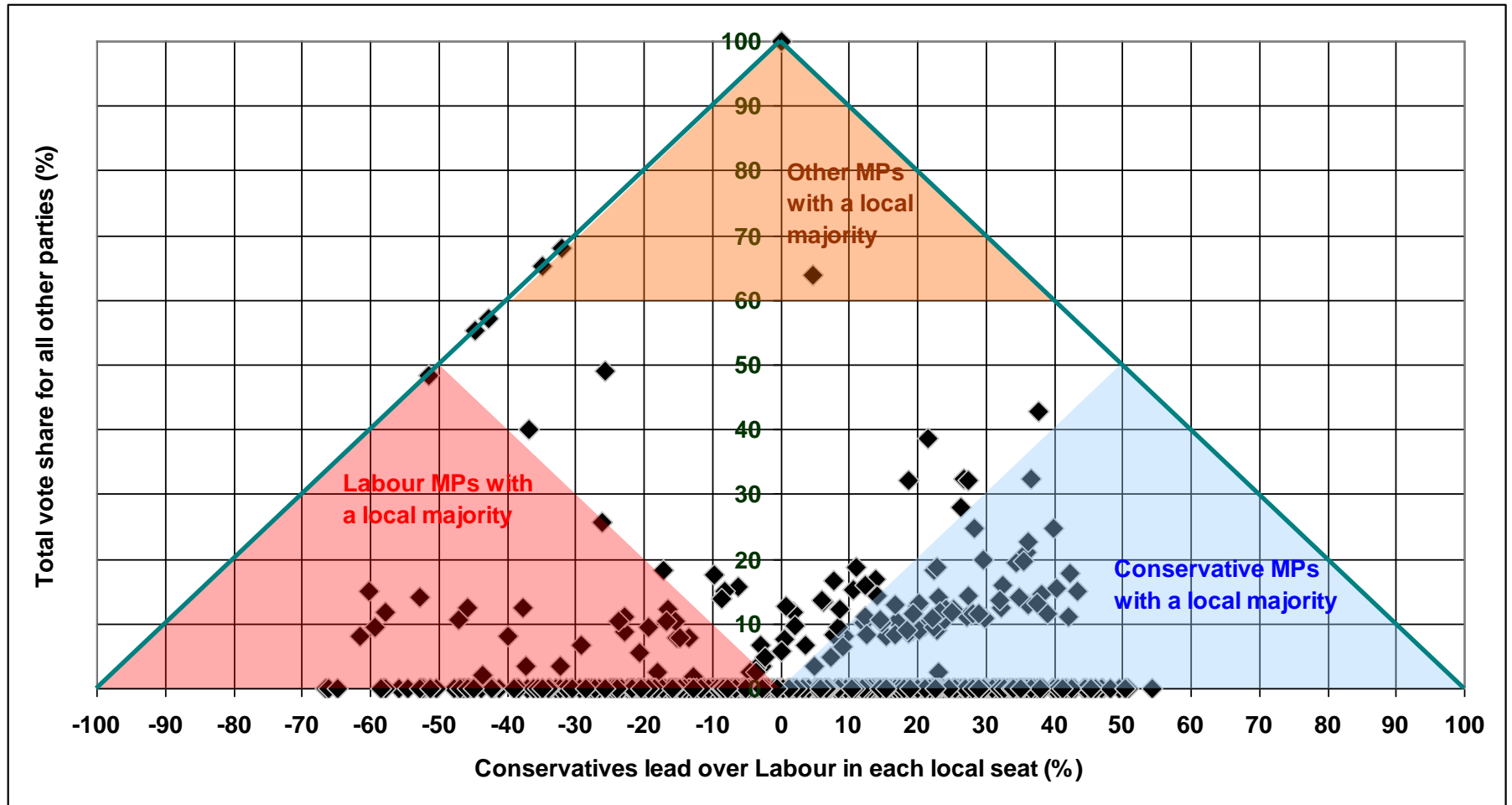
The Crown diagram



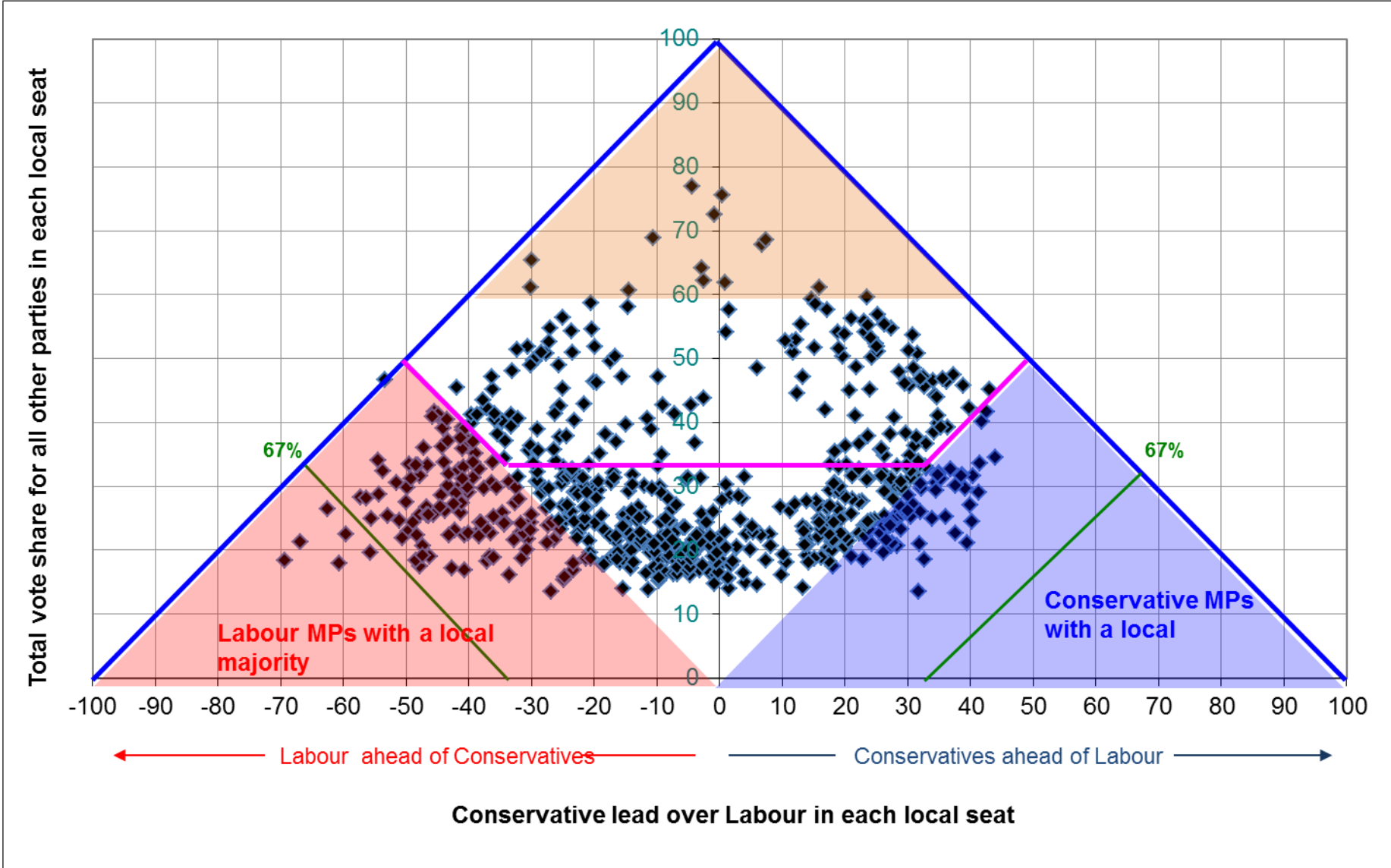
USA House of Representatives district-level outcomes 2006 election - classic two-party system



The constituency outcomes in the 1955 general election, in Great Britain - predominantly two-party system



Constituency outcomes in the 2005 general election, in Great Britain



Constituency outcomes in the 2010 general election, in Great Britain

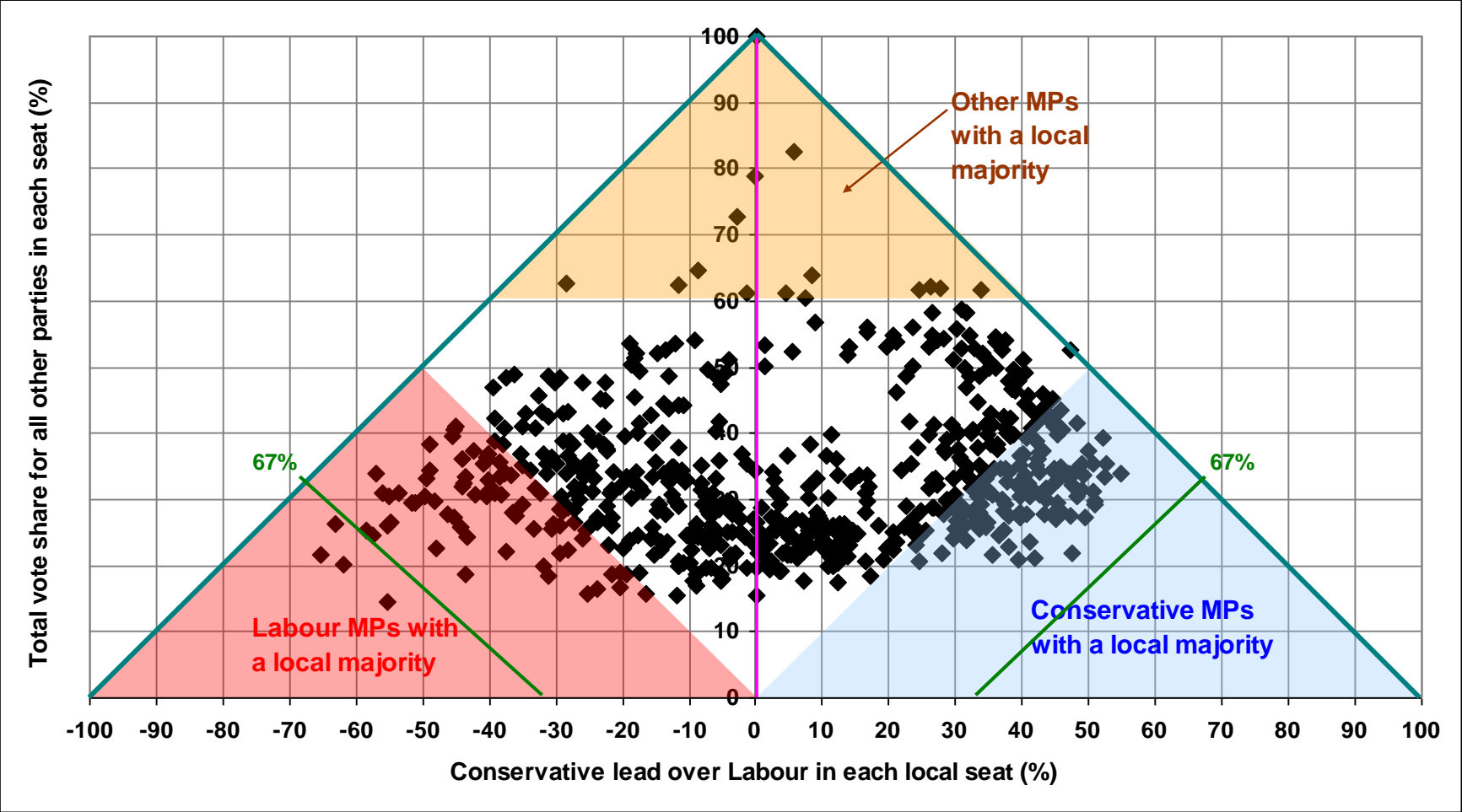
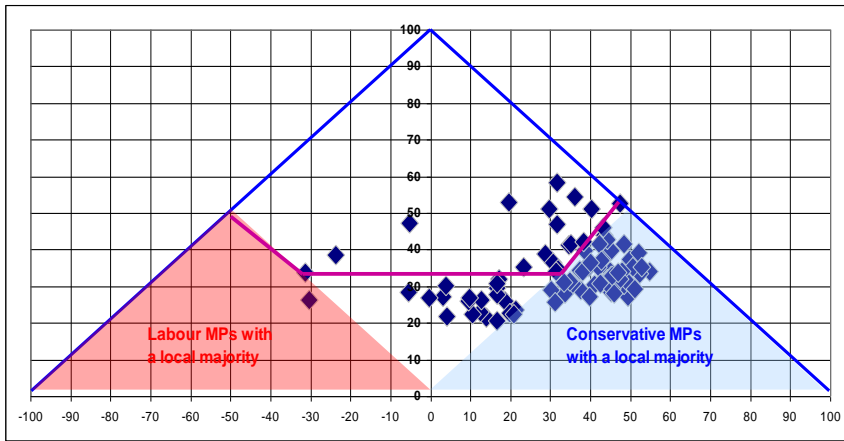
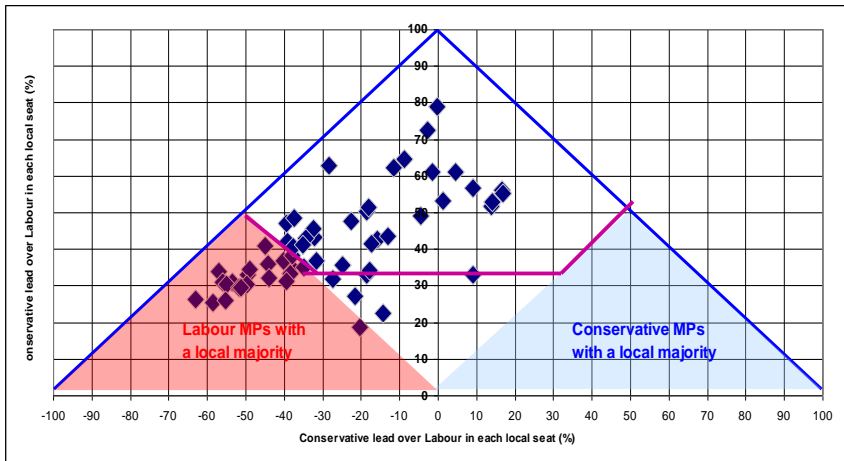
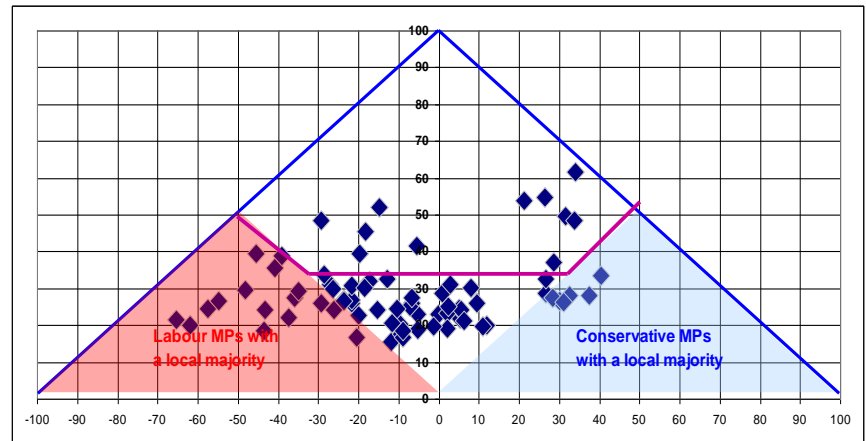


Figure 6: The patterns of constituency outcomes across four different regions in 2010

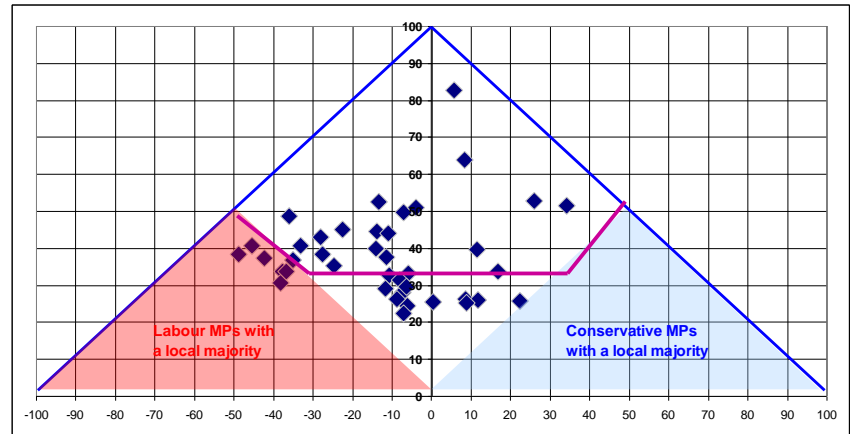
South-east



North-west

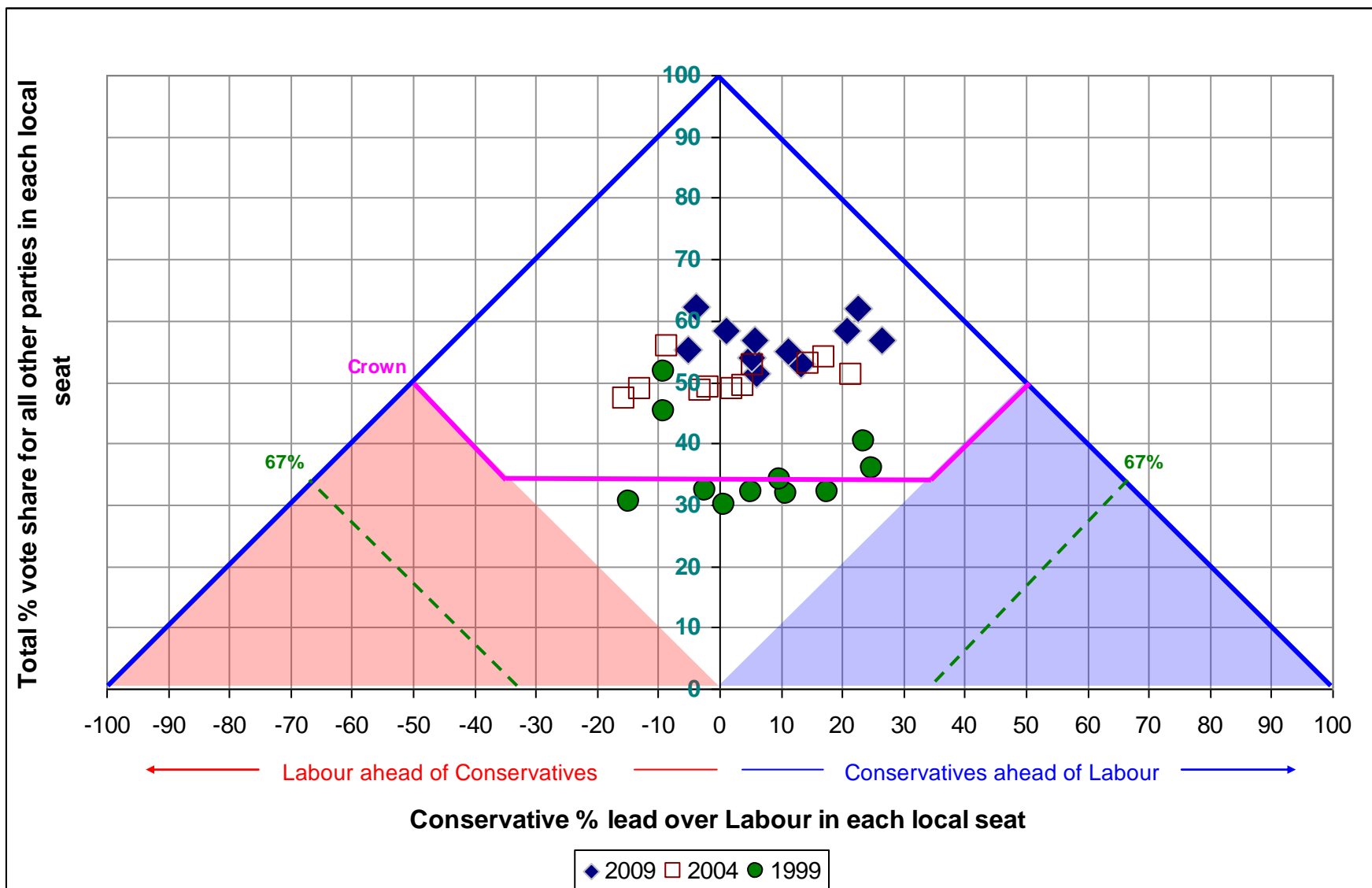


Scotland

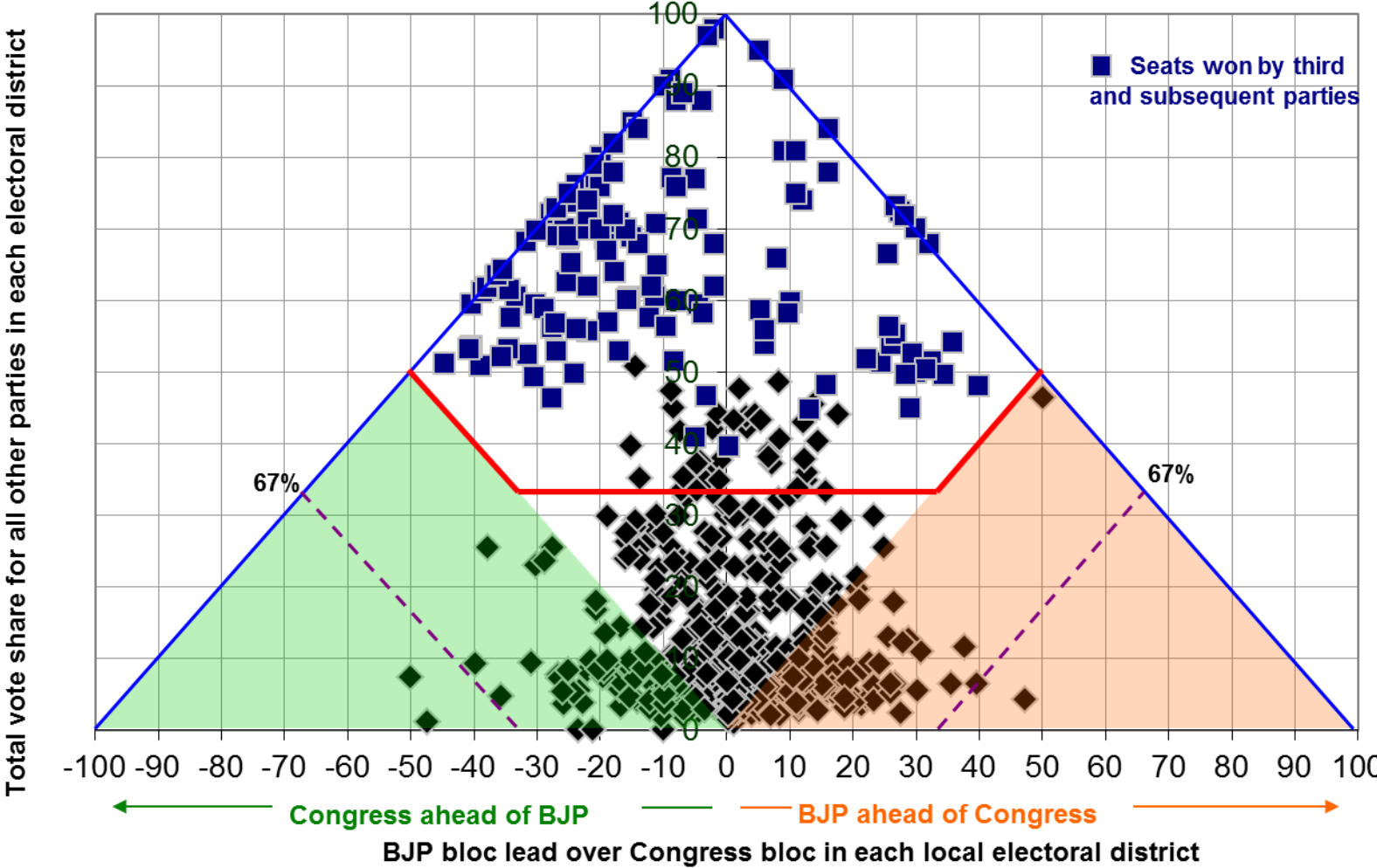


Wales

Outcomes of the European Parliament elections in Great Britain in 1999, 2004 and 2009, using regional list PR systems



Indian district-level outcomes 2004 general election



Next week:
**Party System – Ideology, Strategy,
Governance and Policy-making aspects**