

**Abstract**

STV is often extolled because it allows voters to express a nuanced choice, but is criticised for being too confusing. In practice the system is little used, but evidence from where it is indicates much depends on how voters choose to use it. STV was used for the first time in Scottish local elections in 2007, providing valuable new evidence on how voters respond to the system. We use survey data to examine the incidence of various indicators of apparent failure by Scottish voters to exploit STV, and compare both the levels and patterns of incidence with equivalent data for Ireland. We find little sign of confusion in either country, but significant evidence of ballot order effects in Scotland.

**Keywords**

Single Transferable Vote; Voter Competence; Ballot Order Effect; Scotland; Ireland

## 1. Introduction

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) in multi-member constituencies is little used in public elections. Currently, just two relatively small European countries deploy it to elect the principal house of their statewide legislature – Ireland and Malta (Reynolds et al., 2004). Yet conceptually the system is of particular interest. Under it, voters formally vote for candidates, not parties, doing so by placing them in rank order. Unlike (typically proportional) systems that use open or flexible lists, expressing a preference for one of the candidates nominated by a particular party does nothing to enhance the chances of any other of that party's candidates being elected (Cox, 1997; Shugart, 2005). Yet at the same time, STV usually produces results that are reasonably proportional to the total of (first preference) votes cast for each party's set of candidates, and, as a result, it is widely regarded as a proportional system (Lijphart, 1994; Carter and Farrell, 2010). The system is thus 'fair' to parties yet also ensures that who is elected depends entirely on the level of support expressed for individual candidates.

This combination of attributes has won STV many admirers, not least within academic political science (Lijphart and Grofman, 1984). Two reasons are commonly put forward as to why it should be preferred to other systems of proportional representation. First, the system maximizes voter choice (Lakeman, 1974). Should they so wish, voters can express support for candidates from different parties and can indicate backing for some of a particular party's candidates, but not others, safe in the knowledge that doing so will not be taken in any way as an endorsement of any of the other candidates nominated by that party. Second, STV ensures that every legislator is individually accountable to voters and no candidate can secure election simply by hanging on to the coattails of their party or fellow, more popular candidates (Bogdanor, 1984). That, among other things, means that system would seem to provide quite strong incentives to candidates to secure a personal vote by, for example, providing good constituency service (Bowler and Farrell, 1993; Bowler and Grofman, 2000a; Marsh, 2000; Marsh, 2007; though see also Carey and Shugart, 1995).

Yet whether these apparent advantages are realised depends on how the system is used; that is, on the strategies that are deployed by the parties and on how voters decide to use the opportunities afforded to them by the ballot paper. Voters' ability to choose will be constrained if parties opt to nominate no more candidates than they would hope to get elected. Parties may also try to persuade their supporters to exercise their choice in a particular way by issuing a recommendation as to how they should order that party's candidates (Gallagher, 1992; Farrell et al., 1996; Marsh, 2000), thereby potentially making it less likely that voters exercise their own judgment. Parties may even advise their supporters to give later preferences to the candidates of one party rather another. In any event, irrespective of what parties might do, voters who have no wish to do anything other than back a particular party may well be disinclined to express anything like a subtle, nuanced

choice. They may even be take the easiest route to completing their ballot paper and simply vote for the candidates of their preferred party in the order in which they appear on the ballot paper (Robson and Walsh, 1974; Marsh, 1981; Ortega Villodres and de la Puerta, 2004; Ortega Villodres, 2008).

Indeed, we already know from the relatively limited experience of STV to date that different electorates can respond to the system very differently (Bowler and Grofman, 2000b; Farrell, 2010). In Ireland, nearly all voters express more than one preference, and while most cast some kind of preference for all of the candidates of their first preference party, less than half place all of that party's candidates above those of any other party (Marsh et al., 2008). For a significant body of Irish voters, the qualities and local connections of candidates matter above and beyond their party affiliation. On the other hand, in Malta the presence of a very strong two-party system means that very few voters give any kind of preference to the candidates of more than one party, a behaviour that is both encouraged by and reflected in the fact that the candidates of each party are grouped together on the ballot paper (Hirczy de Miño and Lane, 2000).<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, it is sometimes disputed whether the potential for more nuanced candidate centred voting created by STV is necessarily a feature to be admired. Encouraging candidates to curry favour with voters in a particular locality may be thought to encourage clientelism, if not corruption, and a tendency for elected representatives to focus on advancing the particular needs and interests of their constituency rather than scrutinizing the government and evaluating national public policy (Carty 1981; Carey and Shugart, 1995; Fitzgerald, 2003; Shugart, 2005; Arbuthnott, 2006). The focus on candidates may mean political parties are weakened and prove ineffective at aggregating public policy options, a role they need to perform if voters are to have an effective influence on the direction of public policy. Meanwhile, the relative complexity of the system could well be thought a source of irritation if not indeed of potential confusion amongst voters, a concern that was particularly eloquently expressed by the Independent Commission on the Voting System created by the then UK Labour government following its election victory in 1997:

The Commission sees the extension of voter choice as highly desirable up to the point at which the average voter is able and eager meaningfully to exercise choice, both between and within parties. But that where the choice offered resembles a caricature of an over-zealous American breakfast waiter going on posing an indefinite number of unwanted options, it becomes both an exasperation and an incitement to the giving of random answers... exasperation may discourage going to the polls at all and randomness lead to the casting of perverse or at least meaningless votes. Some people want to be able to choose between candidates of the same party, but many are interested only in voting for parties, and would not appreciate being forced into choosing between candidates of the same party about each of whom they know little. (Jenkins, 1998: paragraph 95)

Still, STV spread its tentacles a little wider when in 2007 the system was introduced (in place of single member plurality) for elections to local councils in Scotland – a decision made by the devolved Scottish government in Edinburgh rather than the UK government in London.<sup>2</sup> All of the seats in the country's 32 local authorities were contested in three or four member wards – a size dictated by Labour's wish (as at that time the dominant party in Scotland) to minimise the increased proportionality that the switch to the system would generate (Clark and Bennie, 2008). One potential consequence of this was, of course, that the number of candidates nominated by the parties – and thus the extent of intraparty choice available to voters – could well be quite limited.

Despite this particular feature of its implementation, there is good reason why the way in which voters in Scotland responded to the introduction of STV is of general interest to students of the system. Although, as in the rest of Great Britain, partisanship has weakened in Scotland during the post-war era (Curtice et al., 2009), parties could still be thought to have a stronger hold on the affections of the public than they do in Ireland's strongly localist political culture (Bogdanor, 1985). At the same time, however – and in sharp contrast to the position in Malta – the days when the country had a two party system dominated by the Conservatives and Labour are long over. Not only are the Liberal Democrats important players, but so also are the pro-independence Scottish National Party, while a number of other parties, most notably the Greens, have also been able to secure some representation in the Scottish Parliament. Meanwhile, candidates were placed on the STV ballot paper in alphabetical order of family name without any grouping by party. Thus Scotland affords a context in which party is thought likely to matter, but also an environment in which voters have a wide choice of effective parties and where the ballot structure does not emphasise the role of parties at all. It thus might be thought to provide evidence of what happens when voters are given an unalloyed opportunity to express a nuanced electoral choice in a political context that is more typical of that found in mature European democracies than either the increasingly weak party system in Ireland or the unusually strong two-party one on Malta.

In this article we examine how voters in Scotland used the ballot paper in the 2007 local elections and systematically compare their behaviour with that of voters in parliamentary elections in the Republic of Ireland, focusing on the 2002 Irish election in particular. As to date Ireland's experience has been the one that accords most closely with the expectations of the advocates of STV and the system there also uses both an alphabetically ordered ballot paper and relatively small constituencies (electing between three and five representatives), the country provides a valuable benchmark against which to assess what happened in Scotland. Of course, in so doing we need to be aware that we are comparing an electorate with eighty years' experience of STV with one that was using it in a public election for the first time.<sup>3</sup> It might be thought that first time around voters will not have fully appreciated the opportunities for expressing a more nuanced choice that STV brings, and especially so given that the 2007 local elections were held on the same day as an election to the Scottish Parliament that was not only more likely to be more salient in voters' minds but also was conducted under an AMS system that only required them to mark their ballot papers with an 'X'. On the other hand, there is no

evidence that voters in Scotland proved particularly slow at taking the opportunity afforded by a double ballot AMS system to vote for different parties on the two ballots when they first had the opportunity to do so in the 1999 Scottish Parliament election (Curtice et al., 2009). We would thus anticipate that if voters in Scotland are inclined to use the opportunities under STV to express a more nuanced choice, there should be clear evidence of them doing so the first time around.

## **2. Data**

Our data come from the 2007 Scottish Social Attitudes survey and the 2002 Irish National Election Study, both of which interviewed probability samples of their respective populations face to face in the weeks immediately after polling day (for further details see Curtice et al., 2009; Marsh et al., 2008). Both surveys invited respondents who said they had voted in the relevant STV election to record how they had cast their preferences by completing a mock ballot paper. This ballot paper listed all the names and party labels of those standing in their local ward or constituency.<sup>4</sup> A total of 703 respondents to the Scottish Social Attitudes survey and 1,831 respondents to the Irish National Election Study completed that paper.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, in order to facilitate a comparative study, a number of key questions about voters' attitudes towards parties and candidates that had appeared on the earlier Irish study were replicated on the Scottish survey.

These data have some disadvantages – voters may fail to record some of their (lower) preferences through forgetfulness or fatigue. There is also the potential for sampling error and bias. Meanwhile, some of the behaviours in which we are interested are at least partly discernible from the published results, especially as all of the ballots in Scotland were counted electronically as were those in three constituencies in Ireland, a procedure that means that full information on the number of preferences expressed by voters was both gathered and published. However comparison of the number of preferences expressed by respondents to the Scottish survey with these published details reveals only a small discrepancy (Curtice et al., 2009: 161-2), while, where the comparison can be made, the same is also true of the Irish study, (Marsh et al 2008: 29). Meanwhile the considerable advantage of the mock ballots is that we can use them alongside other data from the two surveys to identify the kinds of individuals who engage in different kinds of behaviours and it is this issue that is of central concern here.

## **3. Questions**

As we have seen, advocates of STV laud the fact that it affords voters the chance to cast more than one preference, in so doing to express support for more than one party, and even to take little account of party affiliation in deciding the order in which they place candidates. Meanwhile, we have also noted the concern that exists that voters might do no more than rank the candidates of their preferred party in the order in which they appear on the ballot paper. These observations mean we can identify four possible measures of apparent 'failure' by voters to use the system to express a nuanced choice:

- a. Voting for just one candidate

- b. Voting for just one party
- c. Voting the straight party ticket, that is placing all the candidates of one party above those of all others.
- d. Voting in alphabetical order.

We thus assess the incidence of each of these behaviours in Scotland in 2007 and examine whether they are more common amongst some kinds of voters than others. At the same time, we consider how similar the incidence of these behaviours and the kinds of voters amongst whom they were most common was to the position in Ireland in 2002. In examining the kinds of voters amongst whom these behaviours were more common, we assess three possible sets of reasons that might promote their incidence. Two of these refer to the characteristics of voters, while the other concerns the context in which they are asked to vote.

First of all, as suggested by the UK voting commission, we might anticipate that some voters have fewer resources and thus less capacity to exercise the relatively complex judgement that exercising choice under STV demands. Voters need not only to decide which party they like most, but their relative feelings about a number of different parties. At the same time, if alongside their consideration of the parties voters are to place the candidates in order of preference in an informed manner, they need to become aware of the qualities, stances and record of the individual candidates as well. Voters with fewer cognitive resources might well find this all a bit too much, and express only the simplest of choices such as placing the candidates of their preferred party in the order in which they appear on the ballot paper (Miller and Krosnick, 1998; King and Leigh, 2009).

Meanwhile, one obvious reason why voters might not want to vote in a nuanced fashion is that they have a strong sense of attachment to or identification with a party, and thus all that they want to do is to back that party. They will thus lack the motivation to give any kind of preference to a candidate of any other party. Certainly, studies of voting on the occasion of multiple elections in the United States, and under the two-ballot Additional Member System (including in Scotland) all indicate that strong partisans are less likely than those with little or no sense of attachment to a party to split their tickets and give a vote to more than one party (Beck et al., 1992; Burden and Kimball, 2002; Karp et al., 2002; Gschwend, 2007; Curtice et al. 2009).

However, how people vote under STV is also likely to depend on the context in which they cast their ballot; that is the structure of the contest in their particular ward or constituency. There are two aspects of this that are potentially important – the nomination strategies of the parties and the relative electoral strength of those parties locally. A voter whose preferred party nominates more than one candidate in their district has, on the one hand, less reason to cast only one preference – because he or she will likely want to support their preferred candidate's running mate(s) – but, on the other hand, seems more likely to vote for one party only. Similarly, a voter whose preferred party is strong locally has less reason to vote for more than one party, as it is relatively unlikely that their vote will be wasted (that is become wholly non-transferable) as a result. Such a voter also has more reason to cast a

straight party ticket vote – in these circumstances giving a second or even a third preference to candidates from that party is more likely to prove effective in helping it secure a second (or third) seat.

Which of these three sets of considerations proves to be the more influential is clearly important to any evaluation of the merits of STV. If voters do indeed respond to the structure of the contest in their particular constituency, it would indicate that voters are relatively inclined to use the more nuanced features of the system when it is likely to prove effective to do so, and thus demonstrate a considerable degree of competence in completing their ballots. On the other hand, if voters with less apparent capacity seem less willing and able to exploit the system, even when it is appropriate to do so, this might be thought to constitute evidence of potential confusion. Or perhaps for many voters the subtleties of STV simply pass them by, irrespective of where they live or their cognitive capacity, because all they want to do to express their support for one particular party.

#### **4. How Did Voters Use the Ballot Paper?**

Table 1 shows the incidence in both Scotland and Ireland of the four kinds of behaviour in which we are interested. As indicated earlier, by voting the straight party ticket we mean that where the party for which a voter cast a first preference vote nominated more than one candidate, that voter ranked all of that party's candidates above those of any other party. Meanwhile, a voter is said to have voted down the ballot paper when the candidate to whom they gave their first preference was positioned higher up the ballot paper than the candidate to whom they gave their second preference.

TABLE 1 NEAR HERE

All four behaviours were more common in Scotland in 2007 than in Ireland in 2002. However, most Scottish voters cast more than one preference. Moreover, most gave a preference to more than one party, while over two in five of those whose first preference party nominated more than one candidate did not rank all of the candidates of their first preference party above those of any other party. Thus while voters in Scotland appear to have been more partisan than their Irish counterparts, many did use the opportunity provided by the system to express more nuanced choices. On the other hand, there is some evidence of alphabetical or donkey voting in the Scottish local elections. If ballot position had no effect on how people voted, then only half of those who expressed more than one preference should have given their second preference vote to a candidate placed lower down the ballot paper than the one to whom they gave their first preference. This proves to be the case in Ireland – but as many as 60% voted that way in Scotland. Indeed, the election results themselves in the 2007 Scottish local elections show that where a party put up more than one candidate, a candidate placed lower on the ballot paper was less likely to be elected (Denver et al., 2009; Electoral Reform Society, 2008).

#### **5.1 Confusion Reigns?**

But does this mean that people in Scotland were particularly confused about the system, and especially so those who might be thought less able to cope with a more complicated system? Table 2 shows the incidence of the first three of our behaviours broken down by four indicators of voters' apparent capacity to cope with a more complex method of voting. (We will return to the incidence of alphabetical voting below.) These indicators are level of education, the number of correct answers to a short quiz about the devolution settlement in Scotland/political affairs in Ireland and (for Scotland only) responses to two questions about the perceived difficulty of completing the STV ballot paper and of understanding how votes are translated into seats.<sup>6</sup>

TABLE 2 NEAR HERE

There are some indications that those in Scotland with fewer cognitive resources were less likely to exploit the opportunity to express a nuanced choice. In particular, those who scored less well on our knowledge quiz were significantly more likely to cast only one preference and to vote for only one party. There are also signs that those with fewer educational qualifications were somewhat more likely to behave in those ways. Much the same is true of those who said the ballot paper was very difficult to complete or that it was very difficult to understand how seats are allocated. However, only 5% of all respondents said the ballot paper was very difficult to complete while just 8% said the same of how seats were allocated, and consequently the distinctiveness of their behaviour is not statistically significant either. Meanwhile, there is little sign that those with less apparent capacity were more likely to vote for the straight party ticket. Indeed, if anything this was a behaviour in which those with more capacity were more likely to engage, and especially so those with rather more political knowledge.

These patterns are little different from those in Ireland. There, those with primary only education were three times as likely as those with a degree to vote for just one party, though the equivalent pattern is absent when it comes to knowledge.<sup>7</sup> Given that most voters in Ireland indicated more than one preference, large differences in the incidence of such behaviour were unlikely to be in evidence, and in practice none are, while as in Scotland there is no evidence at all that those with apparently less cognitive ability were more likely to vote a straight party ticket. In short, not only is there only limited evidence that those in Scotland with less cognitive capacity were especially likely to eschew the opportunities STV provides to express a more nuanced choice, but also it seems that in this respect voters in Scotland proved to be much the same as their counterparts in Ireland.

## 5.2 A Lack of Motivation?

Table 3 shows the incidence of the same three behaviours by three indicators of voters' motivations, focusing in particular on the degree to which voters would, on the one hand, appear to have a strong motivation to behave in a partisan fashion and, on the other, to vote for a popular candidate.

The first of our indicators is voters' strength of party identification.<sup>8</sup> We expect strong identifiers to be more likely to vote for just one party and, faced with multiple



candidates from their first preference party, to vote the straight party ticket. Given their expected reluctance to vote for more than one party, and given that in some cases their preferred party may have only nominated one candidate, they might also be somewhat more likely to express just one preference.

The second measure is the score a respondent gave their first preference party when asked to give it a mark out of ten to show how much they liked or disliked it. This information was only collected for the four largest parties in Scotland and the six biggest in Ireland, and thus the analysis is confined to those who gave their first preference to one of those parties (who comprise 82% and 89% of the sample of voters respectively). We would expect those who gave their party a high score to behave in a similar fashion to strong party identifiers.

Our third measure is the score a respondent gave the candidate for whom they expressed a first preference when asked to give him or her a mark out of ten to show how much they liked or disliked them. We would expect those voters who gave their first preference candidate a high score to be less likely to vote only for one party and to vote the straight party ticket, as they are voters upon whom at least one candidate has made a favourable impact as an individual. They might also, as a result, be less likely to express just one preference. However, as highly partisan voters may well be inclined to give the candidate(s) standing for their party a high score, these patterns may only be apparent once we have taken into account the score respondents gave to their first preference party. It is those voters who give a candidate a high score even though they do not give that candidate's party a high score who would seem most likely to behave on the basis of what they thought of one or more individual candidates rather than what they felt about the parties.

TABLE 3 NEAR HERE

In Ireland, those with a relatively strong party attachment were significantly more likely to vote for only one party and to vote the straight ticket. In Scotland, in contrast, the differences between stronger and weaker identifiers are rather smaller (especially so in respect of voting a straight ticket) and given the (smaller) sample size are not significant. However, as expected, voters in Scotland who very much liked the party to which they gave their first preference vote were far more likely to vote for only one party and to vote a straight ticket. In this they were little different from their counterparts in Ireland. Meanwhile those who liked the particular candidate to whom they gave their first preference vote very much behaved in much the same way as those who did not, except that they appeared a little more likely to vote only for one party (albeit in Scotland not significantly so). However, given the need to disentangle the impact of candidate evaluations from those of party ones, this is a subject to which we will return in multivariate analysis that is presented below.

So, while just as likely as anyone else to cast more than one preference, those in Scotland for whom a principal motivation for voting was to express support for a party they particularly liked were in other respects less likely to express a nuanced choice. In this, however, they were little different from similarly motivated voters in Ireland. At the same time, though, this observation does not help us explain why the

overall incidence of straight ticket voting and voting only for one party was so much higher in Scotland than in Ireland. For contrary to what we might expect, in fact, rather more voters in Ireland (35%) than in Scotland (26%) gave the party of their first preference vote a high likeability score of nine or ten. We evidently need to extend the scope of our investigation.

### 5.3 A Question of Context?

Indeed, as noted earlier, how voters use the ballot paper is unlikely simply to be a reflection of their individual capacity and motivation. It is also likely to be affected by the context in which they are voting. A voter whose party nominates more than one candidate might be expected to be less likely to cast only one preference but more likely to vote for one party only. A voter whose party is strong locally would seem to have less reason to do other than vote a straight party ticket, and thus to vote for more than one party.

#### TABLE 4 NEAR HERE

Table 4 examines how far the incidence of casting only one preference and voting only for one party varied within the two countries by local context. Those in Scotland whose first preference party nominated more than one candidate were indeed significantly less likely to cast only one preference and more likely to vote just for one party. Equally, those living in wards where their preferred party was strong locally (as measured by the ratio of that party's share of the first preference vote to the quota required locally to win a seat) were more likely to vote only for one party. However, the relationship between the local strength of a voter's first preference party and casting just one vote is not significant, although the pattern is in the expected direction – supporters of stronger parties were apparently more likely to vote for more than one candidate. In addition to the analyses in the table, it is also the case in Scotland that where a voter's first preference party nominated more than one candidate and won more than 1.5 quotas on the first preference vote locally – and thus was potentially in a position to secure the election of more than one candidate – far more (55%) of its first preference voters voted the straight party ticket than did where such a party won less than 1.5 quotas (20%).

Yet in exhibiting such patterns, Scotland was simply replicating behaviours that are equally evident in Ireland. There too, those whose first preference party nominated more than one candidate were significantly more likely to vote only for one party and less likely to express only one preference. Equally those whose first preference party was relatively strong locally were more likely to vote only for one party. In addition those whose first preference party won more than 1.5 quotas and nominated more than one candidate were rather more likely (47%) to vote a straight party ticket than those whose preferred party secured less than 1.5 quotas (39%).

But while political context seems to have had much the same impact on voters in the two countries, the incidence of these different contexts was very different. Remember that all of Scotland's wards only elected three or four members, whereas in Ireland 14 of the 42 Dáil Éireann constituencies then in existence elected five members, thereby meaning that a lower share of the vote is needed to meet the

quota required to win a seat.. At the same time, Scotland's party system in 2007 was more fractured than was Ireland's in 2002.<sup>9</sup> As a result, rather fewer voters in Scotland (28%) than in Ireland (36%) participated in a contest where their first preference party won more than 1.86 quotas. Equally these features of the STV system and the political landscape encouraged parties in Scotland to pursue relatively conservative nomination strategies; indeed in some instances the SNP in particular actually set their sights too low and nominated fewer candidates than the number of seats they were capable of winning (Denver and Bochel, 2007; Electoral Reform Society, 2008). In the event, no less than 43% of voters in Scotland voted for a party that fielded only one candidate, compared with just 23% in Ireland.

Thus in some respects less choice was on offer to voters in Scotland than was available to those in Ireland. In particular, far fewer enjoyed the luxury of choosing between candidates of the same party. On the other hand, the keener competition for seats meant that vote transfers between parties were more likely to have some bearing on the eventual result, and voters in that situation locally appear to have responded accordingly. But given that between them these two features of the Scottish election should have helped reduce the incidence of all three of the behaviours of apparent failure to express a nuanced choice we have been analysing so far, their higher overall incidence in Scotland evidently still remains to be explained.

#### **5.4 Multivariate Analysis**

So it appears that how voters use STV depends not just on their own capacities and motivation, but also on the structure and character of the choice on offer to them locally. Still, those who strongly like a particular party seem less inclined to express a more nuanced choice, while there were some hints that those with less apparent capacity might have been somewhat less likely to do so too. Evidently we should examine the relative importance of these apparent influences when considered together. We might wonder whether all of these features are indeed related to use of the ballot paper once we have taken the role of the other influences into account – and in particular whether the limited evidence that those who would seem less able to cope with STV were less likely to exploit its potential does indeed prove to be robust in the face of such a test. At the same time, it will be remembered from our earlier discussion that we can only hope to identify the role that a strong liking for a particular candidate had on how people used the ballot paper once we have also taken into account how much they like their first preference party.

In order to address these issues, we undertake a multivariate analysis of each the three kinds of behaviour we have been examining so far. The independent variables in each case are the indicators of capacity, motivation and context that we have examined so far (except that as the analysis of straight party ticket voting is confined to those whose first preference party nominated more than one candidate, the number of candidates nominated by the respondent's first preference party is omitted in that case).<sup>10</sup> The results are shown in Table 5. These are logit estimations, as the dependent variable in each case is a dichotomy.

TABLE 5 NEAR HERE

The analysis confirms that there is some evidence that those in Scotland who might be thought to be less able to cope with a complex ballot paper were more likely to cast only one preference and to support only one party. Those with few if any educational qualifications were significantly more likely than those who are relatively well qualified to do both. In addition, those who were less successful at answering the relevant knowledge quiz were significantly more likely to express only one preference.

Nevertheless, these relationships are relatively weak. The biggest influence on whether people cast just one preference was whether or not their first preference party nominated more than one candidate. Voters were far less likely to cast only one vote where their first preference party nominated more than one candidate. In addition, the electoral strength of that party locally also made a significant difference. Meanwhile, we can now also see that there is an indication that voters who rated their first preference candidate highly were, as we anticipated, less likely to vote for just one candidate.

Equally, while those with fewer educational qualifications may have been more likely to confine their preferences to the candidates of one party, other considerations mattered too. First, voters were more likely to behave that way if their first preference party was locally electorally strong. Second, voters who liked their first preference party a great deal were inclined to vote only for candidates of that party while, once that relationship is accounted for, we can see that those who ranked their first preference candidate highly were less likely to do so. In short, partisan voters often confined their preferences to their preferred party, while more candidate centred ones were less likely to do so.

At the same time, the multivariate analysis clearly confirms our unexpected finding earlier that those with less knowledge were actually less likely to vote the straight party ticket. Here also, however, voters' partisanship played an important role. Those who liked their first preference party a great deal were much more likely to vote the straight party ticket. Indeed so strong is this relationship that perhaps we should not be surprised that it was more knowledgeable voters who engaged in such behaviour – for more partisan voters are inclined to be knowledgeable, doubtless because their partisanship gives them a motivation to acquire political knowledge.

Meanwhile, there is a striking similarity between the results for Scotland and those for Ireland. Those voters in Ireland with lower educational qualifications were more likely to express only one preference or to cast a vote for only one party (although level of political knowledge does not appear to have made any difference). It seems that in Ireland too there is at least limited evidence, if no more, that apparently less able voters are less likely to use the full opportunity created by STV to express a more nuanced vote.

However, the relationship between apparent capacity and engaging in single preference or single party voting is not necessarily the most important one. Rather, as in Scotland the most important reason why people only cast one preference is because their first preference party only nominated one candidate locally. In tandem with Scotland too, Irish voters are less likely to vote for more than one party if they

strongly like their first preference party or if their party is electorally strong locally. Meanwhile partisanship is clearly the primary source of straight ticket voting in Ireland while our indicators of capacity play no significant role at all – again more or less mirroring the position in Scotland.

So far then we have only uncovered limited support for the claim that some voters in the 2007 Scottish local elections might have lacked the capacity to use the new STV ballot paper to express a more nuanced preference – and thus might have been considered confused. Moreover such apparent confusion was no more evident than in Ireland. The most important reason why voters in Scotland only cast one preference was, just as in Ireland, because their preferred party only nominated one candidate. Meanwhile voters’ sense of partisanship played a key role in determining how many parties they supported or whether they voted the straight party ticket. Voters, it seems, are more likely to fail to exploit the opportunities afforded by STV to express a more nuanced choice not so much because they were confused but, rather, because of the nature of the choice on offer or because they lacked the motivation to do so. But what about what might be regarded as perhaps the least desirable of all the four behaviours we are assessing in this paper – that the order in which voters cast their ballot is determined by the position that candidates appear on the ballot paper?

## **6. Alphabetic Voting**

In our discussion of Table 1 we noted that 60% of our respondents in Scotland who cast more than one preference gave their first preference vote to a candidate who was placed more highly on the ballot paper than the candidate to whom they gave their second preference. Other things being equal, if the position of the candidates on the ballot did not influence the order in which voters placed the candidates, we would have expected that only 50% would behave in this way.

However, Table 6 does not suggest that such behaviour was the particular preserve of those in Scotland with less apparent ability to cope with an STV ballot paper. Those who scored relatively well on our knowledge score were just as likely to vote alphabetically as those who performed less well, while there is no apparent association between education and alphabetic voting at all. It seems that we cannot blame the tendency of voters to vote alphabetically on their inability to cope with the ballot paper.

TABLE 6 NEAR HERE

Instead we secure a vital clue as to the source of this behaviour if we compare its incidence amongst those whose party nominated more than one candidate with those voting for a lone candidate (all independents are seen as lone in this sense). Amongst the former no less than 67% voted alphabetically; of the remainder only 53% did so. Moreover this 67% rises to 70% amongst straight-ticket voters. It will be recalled from Table 5 that the tendency to vote the straight party ticket was very much the preserve of those voters who strongly liked one particular party. Thus it seems that for the most part the incidence of alphabetical voting in the 2007 Scottish local elections was a consequence of the behaviour of voters whose

preferred party had nominated more than one candidate locally and whose only key concern was to express their support for that party.

In contrast, in Ireland, where alphabetic voting was no more common than would be expected by chance, voters who cast a straight party ticket were not significantly more likely than those who did not to give their first preference vote to a candidate placed higher up the ballot paper than the candidate to whom they gave their second preference. All that can be discerned is that those voting for large parties and those backing parties who nominated more than one candidate were more likely to have voted alphabetically. Even though the overall incidence of such behaviour may have been low, perhaps some Irish voters were influenced by the order of the candidates on the ballot paper when faced with the particular circumstance of multiple candidates standing for a relatively large party.

TABLE 7 NEAR HERE

Table 7, which shows the results of two models of alphabetical voting in each of the two countries, affirms these two pictures. The first model in each case includes in its set of independent variables the size of the respondent's first preference party locally, the second whether the respondent voted a straight ticket – the two variables cannot be included in the same model because they are so heavily intercorrelated. In Scotland alphabetic voting was significantly higher amongst those supporting a locally big party, but it was even more clearly so amongst those who voted a straight party ticket. In contrast none of our indicators of voters' capacity are significantly associated with the phenomenon. Equally, as in the Scottish case, there is no evidence that Irish voters with lower educational qualifications or less knowledge were more likely to engage in alphabetical voting. On the other hand, in contrast to Scotland, it seems that while those in Ireland supporting a locally larger party were more likely to vote 'down' the ballot paper, those who voted the straight party ticket were not more likely to do so.

## 7. A Pooled Analysis

We can compare the behaviour of voters in the two countries more formally by undertaking a pooled analysis of the two sets of data combined. This is undertaken in Table 8. Such an analysis allows us to test systematically for differences between the two countries in the pattern of the behaviours we have been examining. It also enables us to assess how far we have accounted for the difference in the incidence of those behaviours.

To highlight the coefficients of interest more clearly the table only displays the interaction terms for Scotland together with the coefficient for the effect of living in Scotland rather than Ireland; the main coefficients in each case are simply the coefficients for Ireland shown in the relevant column of Table 5 or Table 7. If an interaction between living in Scotland and any of our independent variables is significant then this indicates that the pattern of behaviour in Scotland in respect of that variable was significantly different from that in Ireland. Meanwhile if the constant term for living in Scotland is significant, this indicates that the overall

incidence of the behaviour in question differs between the two countries for reasons that our analysis has not fully uncovered.

First we should consider whether there are any significant interactions in respect of knowledge and education that might suggest that cognitive capacity played a more important role in Scotland than in Ireland - and that thus voters in Scotland were at apparently greater risk of being confused. As we would anticipate from the results we have presented so far, there proves to be no significant difference between the two countries in the relationship between these variables and only expressing one preference or voting for just one party. In the case of straight party ticket voting, however, there is an interaction between knowledge and being a Scottish voter; less knowledgeable voters in Scotland were somewhat more likely to vote the straight party ticket. But at the same time an interaction term that appears in the analysis of voting alphabetically suggests a tendency, albeit only a very modest one, for less educated voters in Scotland to be *less* likely to behave in that way. All in all, it seems difficult on the basis of this evidence to argue that voters in Scotland were especially confused about how to mark an STV ballot.

All of the other interactions that prove to be significant in the table are ones we might have anticipated from the informal comparison we have already undertaken of the separate analyses for each country. In Scotland straight ticket voting is less the preserve of strong party identifiers while being a straight ticket voter leads Scottish voters to vote alphabetically in the way that it is not true of their counterparts in Ireland. Meanwhile only casting one vote and only voting for one party was particularly less likely to occur in Scotland amongst those who rated a candidate strongly. Perhaps in Scotland voters were more likely to need the stimulus of a high regard for at least one candidate in order to induce them to use the ballot paper to express a more nuanced choice, whereas for voters in Ireland behaving in that way is rather more of a habit.

Moreover it was a stimulus that in practice relatively few voters in Scotland received. Only 17% gave their first preference candidate a score of nine or ten, whereas no less than 37% of voters in Ireland did so. Yet even when we take this difference into account, we have still not fully accounted for either the greater tendency of voters in Scotland to cast only one preference or for the greater likelihood that they vote for only one party.<sup>11</sup> The Scotland term in the model for both these behaviours proves to be positive and significant. It would seem that even after taking into account their capacity, motivation and the context in which they were voting, the average voter in Scotland was still simply inclined to regard the election as an occasion to choose either just one candidate or just one party.

## **8. Conclusion**

Voters in the 2007 Scottish local elections did not make as much use of the STV ballot paper to express a more nuanced candidate centred choice as voters are inclined to do in Ireland. They were more likely to cast only one vote, to vote only for one party and to vote the straight party ticket, while there is clear evidence of alphabetical voting that is not apparent in Ireland. However, it seems we cannot blame this difference of behaviour on confusion amongst those voters who might be

thought less likely to have the capacity to cope with a more complex ballot paper. True, there is some evidence that such voters were more likely just to express one preference or to vote for one party, but this relationship is a relatively weak one, and was no more evident in Scotland in 2007 than it was in Ireland in 2002. Perhaps it has to be accepted that some kinds of voters are always a little less likely to use an STV ballot paper to express a more nuanced choice, but this pattern is probably not sufficiently strong to be regarded as a major objection to the use of STV.

Still, it seems that voters in Scotland – at all levels of knowledge and education – may still have some learning to do about how they might vote to best effect under STV. Despite the fact that more of them than their Irish counterparts found themselves voting in a contest where their first preference party was locally weak - and thus in a situation where their vote was more likely to be transferred to another candidate or party during the count – voters in Scotland were still more likely both to cast only one preference and to confine their preferences to the candidates of one party. It appears that some voters in Scotland carried the habit of making a single choice formed under first past the post with them to the local STV ballot box.

It seems too that voters in Scotland were more likely than their counterparts in Ireland to need the stimulus of the presence of a strong local candidate if they were to be persuaded not simply to cast one preference or confine their preferences to one party. Moreover, that stimulus was absent for most Scottish voters, a consequence perhaps of the fact that they were voting in a less salient local election that took place on the same day as a Scottish Parliament contest.

But of all the behaviours we have analysed, it is perhaps the incidence of alphabetic voting in Scotland that would seem to give most reason for concern amongst the advocates of STV. Such behaviour is the very opposite of the candidate centred choice that the system is meant to promote and appears to turn the chances of being elected into a lottery based on family name, or whatever other principle is used to determine the order of candidates on the ballot paper (Denver et al., 2009). True, alphabetic voting did not occur in Scotland because of the inability of voters to cope with the new system. Rather it was primarily the preserve of those voters who faced with more than one candidate from their preferred party wanted to do no more than vote the straight party ticket. These were typically relatively partisan voters who liked their first preference party a lot and for whom party was all and candidate seemingly mattered little.

We noted at the beginning of this article that it has long been evident from the divergent experiences of Ireland and Malta that STV is only as candidate centred a system as voters make it. And the incidence of straight party ticket voting in Scotland was certainly not sufficiently high to suggest that candidate did not matter at all, even on its first outing in that country. But for some voters it evidently did not matter a great deal – and as a result where a party nominated more than one candidate, those placed lower on the ballot paper were at a distinct disadvantage. Perhaps the lesson is that candidates need to become more visible, a task that may be made easier by the decision of the Scottish Government to hold future local elections on a different day than Scottish Parliament elections, a decision first



implemented in May 2012. But perhaps too the remedy for this apparent ill lies in the hands of the parties themselves. If voters are partisan but indifferent between candidates, they should be amenable to being advised how to order their ballot through 'how to vote' cards. However, in 2007 less than one in five Scottish voters whose first preference party nominated more than one candidate recalled receiving such advice, much lower than the equivalent figure of 30% in Ireland. It may not be what its advocates intended, but vote management may yet need to become an important feature of STV in Scottish local elections if some candidates' chances of being elected are not to seem like an alphabetic lottery.

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**Table 1 Incidence of Various Kinds of Ballot Paper Behaviour, Scotland 2007 and Ireland 2002**

	Scotland	Ireland
	%	%
Cast Only 1 Preference	22 (703)	6 (1831)
Voted Only for 1 Party	41 (703)	19 (1831)
Voted Straight Party Ticket	57 (307)	45 (1270)
Voted Down Ballot Paper	60 (540)	51 (1734)

Figures in brackets are number of cases upon which percentage based.

Only Cast 1 Preference: Voter reported only casting a first preference vote

Only Voted for 1 Party: Voter only expressed preferences for candidates of one party (Independents regarded as a party)

Voted Straight Party Ticket: Voter ranked all candidates of first preference party (in any order) above candidates of any other party. Figures based on those voters whose first preference party nominated more than one candidate in their ward.

Voted Down Ballot Paper. Voter's second preference candidate appeared lower down the ballot paper than their first preference candidate. Figures based on those who cast more than one preference.

**Table 2. Use of STV Ballot Paper by Indicators of Capacity**

	Scotland			Ireland		
	Cast Only 1 Preference %	Voted Only for 1 Party %	Voted Straight Party Ticket %	Cast Only 1 Preference %	Voted Only for 1 Party %	Voted Straight Party Ticket %
Highest Educational Qualification						
Higher (S)/ Leaving Certificate (I) or above	19	36	58	5	15	41
Less than Higher (S)/ Leaving Certificate (I)	27	47	52	7	24	48
	(.05)	(.05)	(ns)	(ns)	(.01)	(.10)
Knowledge Quiz Score						
Low	28	48	49	7	80	44
High	18	36	64	5	82	47
	(.05)	(.01)	(.05)	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)
Perceived Difficulty of Completing Ballot Paper						
Not at all	20	42	64			
Not very	21	39	56			
Fairly	23	38	52			
Very	45	65	54			
	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)			
Perceived Difficulty of Understanding Seat Allocation						
Not at all	14	36	65			
Not very	21	38	52			
Fairly	24	43	54			
Very	33	51	63			
	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)			

In Scotland the knowledge quiz score is derived from respondents' answers when asked to state whether particular statements

were true or false. These statements were: *The Scottish Executive makes most of the decisions about how much money should be spent on the health service in Scotland*; *The Scottish Executive decides the level of unemployment benefit paid to people in Scotland*; *The Scottish Parliament has around 70 elected members*; *The Scottish Executive is just another name for the Scottish Parliament*. In the case of the first statement one was added to a respondent's score if they said it was true, while in the case of the three remaining statements one was added if they said it was false.

In Ireland the quiz score was derived from responses to the following multiple choice questions: *Can you tell me who was the leader of Fianna Fáil during the recent general election campaign?* ((1)Charlie McCreevy-(2)Brian Cowen-(3)Charlie Haughey-(4)Bertie Ahern); *The Green Party recently elected a leader for the first time. Could you tell me who that is?* ((1)Patricia McKenna-(2)John Gormley-(3)Trevor Sargent-(4)Roger Garland); *Who was the leader of Fine Gael during the recent general election campaign?* ((1)Jim Mitchell-(2)John Bruton-(3)Michael Noonan-(4)Alan Dukes); *Who was the Ceann Comhairle in the Dáil (Speaker of the Dáil) during the last Dáil 1997-2002?* ((1)Sean Tracey-(2)Des O'Malley-(3)Sean Doherty-(4)Seamus Pattison); *Who is Ireland's European Commissioner?* ((1)David Byrne-(2)Maire Geoghan Quinn-(3)Barry Desmond-(4)Pdraig Flynn). The correct responses meriting one mark are answers 4, 3, 3, 4 and 2 respectively

Figures in brackets indicate the level at which a  $\chi^2$  test of the differences in the proportions immediately above is significant. ns = not significant.

**Table 3 Use of STV Ballot Paper in by Indicators of Motivation**

	Scotland			Ireland		
	Cast Only 1 Preference	Voted Only for 1 Party	Voted Straight Party Ticket	Cast Only 1 Preference	Voted Only for 1 Party	Voted Straight Party Ticket
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Party ID</b>						
Strong	21	44	60	6	24	63
Weak/None	24	39	53	6	17	37
	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(.01)	(.01)
<b>Likeability Score of 1<sup>st</sup> pref. party</b>						
9/10	25	55	73	6	29	61
7/8	18	39	61	4	17	42
0/6	21	28	32	7	13	27
	(ns)	(.01)	(.01)	(ns)	(.01)	(.01)
<b>Likeability Score of 1<sup>st</sup> pref. candidate</b>						
9/10	25	50	54	5	24	49
7/8	16	38	60	2	14	48
0/6	26	41	54	4	16	41
	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(.01)	(ns)

Data for Likeability Score of 1<sup>st</sup> preference party based only on those who cast a 1<sup>st</sup> preference for a major party candidate. On the definition of strong and weak identifiers see fn. 7. Figures in brackets indicate the level at which a  $\chi^2$  test of the differences in the proportions immediately above is significant. ns = not significant.





**Table 4 Use of STV Ballot Paper by Indicators of Context**

	Scotland		Ireland	
	Cast Only 1 Preference	Voted Only for 1 Party	Cast Only 1 Preference	Voted Only for 1 Party
	%	%	%	%
Size of 1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party				
> 1.86 quotas	16	53	5	31
0.86-1.86 quotas	25	42	6	16
<0.86 quota	24	25	6	10
	(ns)	(.01)	(ns)	(.01)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party nominated more than 1 candidate				
Yes	14	48	3	21
No	33	33	7	9
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)

'Quota' refers to the share of the vote required to win a seat locally. In a three member ward this is one more than 25% of the vote and in a four member one, one more than 20%. Thus in a three member ward a party is deemed to have won 1.86 quotas if it has secured 46.5% of the first preference vote while in a four member one the equivalent figure is 37.2%. Meanwhile 0.86 of a quota represents 21.5% of the first preference vote in a four member ward and 17.2% in a three member one. Figures in brackets indicate the level at which a  $\chi^2$  test of the differences in the proportions immediately above is significant. ns = not significant.

**Table 5 Multivariate Analysis of Use of STV Ballot Paper**

	Scotland			Ireland		
	Cast Only 1 preference	Voted for Only 1 Party	Voted Straight Party Ticket	Cast Only 1 Preference	Voted for Only 1 Party	Vote Straight Party Ticket
Low Education	0.395* (0.238)	0.355* (0.198)	-0.289 (0.267)	0.880** (0.305)	0.525*** (0.147)	0.094 (0.132)
Low Knowledge	0.457* (0.235)	-0.314 (0.198)	0.609** (0.267)	0.091 (0.297)	-0.144 (0.147)	0.075 (0.131)
Strong party ID	-0.0682 (0.245)	-0.111 (0.206)	-0.388 (0.284)	0.065 (0.342)	0.0737 (0.161)	0.728*** (0.100)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party likeability score	0.248 (0.166)	0.631*** (0.144)	0.953*** (0.209)	0.098 (0.222)	0.479*** (0.115)	0.752*** (0.101)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. candidate likeability score	-0.382** (0.177)	-0.309** (0.143)	-0.226 (0.187)	-0.178 (0.239)	0.0692 (0.117)	-0.263** (0.104)
1st pref. party size	0.574** (0.225)	0.485*** (0.186)	0.965 (1.164)	0.053 (0.274)	0.514*** (0.133)	0.164 (0.155)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party nominated more than 1 candidate	-1.683*** (0.321)	0.206 (0.253)	na	-1.295** (0.443)	0.300 (0.278)	na
Constant	-1.109 (0.545)	-2.269*** (0.464)	-3.217 (2.365)	-3.234*** (0.653)	-4.357*** (0.383)	-1.752*** (0.350)
Observations	500	500	269	1,411	1,411	1,096
R <sup>2</sup>	0.088	0.073	0.089	0.051	0.081	0.091

Main cell entries are coefficients. Figures in brackets are standard errors

\*\*\* = p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05

na not applicable- variable not entered.

Analysis based on major party voters only. Third column in both countries based only on those major party voters whose 1<sup>st</sup> preference party put up more than 1 candidate.

Low education: in Scotland, not having the equivalent of a standard grade 1-3. In Ireland, not having a leaving certificate.

Low knowledge: In Scotland, answered no more than one of the knowledge quiz items correctly. In Ireland answered no more than two correctly.

1<sup>st</sup> pref. party likeability score: An interval level variable where an original score of 9 or 10 is coded 3, a score of 7 or 8 is coded 2, and all other values 1. Don't knows are set to missing.

1<sup>st</sup> pref. candidate likeability score: As for 1<sup>st</sup> pref. party score, except that those who said 'don't know' also coded 1.

Strong party id: In Scotland, identify fairly or very strongly with a party. In Ireland, feel close to a party. For further details see fn. 7.

1<sup>st</sup> pref. party size: In the first two columns in both countries this is an interval level variable where 1=less than 0.86 of a quota, 2=between 0.86 and 1.86 quotas, and 3=more than 1.86 quotas. In the third column, this is a dichotomous variable that distinguishes between more and less than 1.5 quotas.

1<sup>st</sup> pref party nominated more than one candidate: Party for whom respondent cast a first preference nominated more than one candidate in respondent's district.

**Table 6. Incidence of Alphabetically Ordered Voting by Indicators of Capacity, Motivation and Context**

	Scotland	Ireland
	%	%
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>		
Higher (S)/Leaving Certificate (I) or above	60	49
Less than Higher (S)/Leaving Certificate (I)	60	54
	(ns)	(.10)
<b>Knowledge Quiz Score</b>		
Low	58	52
High	59	51
	(ns)	(ns)
<b>Party identification</b>		
High	64	55
Low	56	50
	(ns)	(ns)
<b>Likeability Score of 1<sup>st</sup> pref. party</b>		
9/10	57	56
7/8	56	50
0/6	59	51
	(ns)	(ns)
<b>Likeability Score of 1<sup>st</sup> pref. candidate</b>		
9/10	54	52
7/8	57	48
0/6	63	57
	(ns)	(ns)
<b>Size of 1<sup>st</sup> . pref. party</b>		
> 1.86 quotas	64	56
0.86-1.86 quotas	58	53
<0.86 quota	58	44
	(ns)	(.01)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> pref. party nominated more than 1 candidate</b>		
Yes	67	55
No	53	39
	(.01)	(.001)
<b>Voted straight party ticket</b>		
Yes	70	55
No	61	57
	(.01)	(ns)

On the definition of 'quota' see the note to Table 4.

Figures in brackets indicate the level at which a  $\chi^2$  test of the differences in the proportions immediately above is significant. ns = not significant.

**Table 7 Multivariate Analysis of Alphabetically Ordered Voting**

	Scotland		Ireland	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Low Education	-0.201 (0.215)	-0.187 (0.216)	0.089 (0.114)	0.121 (0.112)
Low Knowledge	-0.114 (0.217)	-0.201 (0.219)	-0.002 (0.111)	0.013 (0.111)
Strong party ID	0.241 (0.222)	0.295 (0.224)	0.119 (0.128)	0.122 (0.129)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party likeability score	-0.108 (0.153)	-0.230 (0.160)	0.057 (0.082)	0.074 (0.083)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. candidate likeability score	-0.115 (0.150)	-0.055 (0.148)	-0.084 (0.087)	-0.082 (0.087)
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party size	0.394** (0.155)		0.204** (0.073)	
Voted straight ticket		0.723*** (0.227)		0.101 (0.120)
Constant	-0.060 (0.465)	0.634 (0.393)	-0.369 (0.246)	-0.023 (0.211)
Observations	393	393	1,361	1,361
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.017	0.024	0.007	0.003

Main cell entries are coefficients. Figures in brackets are standard errors

\*\*\* = p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05

Table based on major party voters who cast more than one preference.

Voted Straight Party Ticket: Voter ranked all candidates of first preference party (in any order) above candidates of any other party.

All other variables coded as in Table 5.

**Table 8 Pooled analysis of use of STV ballot paper in Scotland and Ireland.**

	Cast Only 1 preference	Voted Only for 1 party	Voted Straight Party Ticket	Voted Down Ballot Paper
Low educational qualifications * SCOTLAND	-0.485 (0.387)	-0.170 (0.246)	-0.383 (0.298)	-0.366* (0.212)
Low Knowledge * SCOTLAND	0.548 (0.379)	-0.170 (0.246)	0.537* (0.298)	-0.077 (0.213)
Strong party id * SCOTLAND	0.133 (0.421)	-0.185 (0.261)	-1.182*** (0.145)	
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party likeability score* SCOTLAND	0.346 (0.276)	0.152 (0.184)	0.225 (0.232)	
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. candidate likeability score * SCOTLAND	0.560* (0.297)	-0.379** (0.185)	-0.038 (0.214)	
1 <sup>st</sup> pref party size * SCOTLAND	-0.521 (0.355)	-0.028 (0.228)	-0.802 (1.17)	
1 <sup>st</sup> pref. party nominated more than 1 cand * SCOTLAND	-0.388 (0.547)	-0.094 (0.376)		
Voted straight ticket * SCOTLAND				0.451** (0.228)
SCOTLAND	1.730*** (0.84)	2.089*** (0.60)	-1.465 (2.391)	0.229 (0.205)
Observations	1911	1911	1365	2223
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.185	0.116	0.094	0.005

Main cell entries are coefficients. Figures in brackets are standard errors. Main effects not shown. \*\*\* =p<0.01 \*\* p< 0.05 \* p<0.1.

For definition of independent variables see notes to Tables 5 and 7. Straight party ticket is coded dichotomously as in Table 7 columns 3 and 6. Those whose first preference party fielded only one candidate are coded here as not voting a straight ticket.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile in elections to the Australian Senate, in which STV is also used, voters can simply make one mark to indicate that they accept an ordering of the candidates that is proposed by their party, an option that nearly all voters now take (Reilly and Maley, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> This, of course, is not the only example of the use of STV in a local or other sub-state election in a country where the system is not used in statewide elections. The system is used in all elections in Northern Ireland other than to the House of Commons, and is or has been used in some local elections in the USA, Canada, New Zealand and India (Farrell et al., 1996; Johnston and Koene, 2000; Bush 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Only a handful of voters in Scotland might previously have had experience of using STV in such an election, either as a voter in a university constituency before 1945 or in an election to the separate local education authorities that had a brief existence on Scotland in the 1920s and were elected by STV (Lakeman, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> For further details see the technical documentation of the 2007 Scottish Social Attitudes survey at [www.esds.ac.uk](http://www.esds.ac.uk) and of the Irish National Election Study at [www.tcd.ie/ines](http://www.tcd.ie/ines)

<sup>5</sup> The figure for Scotland represents 80% of all those who said they had voted in the local election. In Ireland the figure constitutes 91% of those who said they had voted.

<sup>6</sup> In Scotland as many as 53% were unable to answer more than one of the knowledge quiz question correctly and so in the table we have divided the Scottish sample at that median point. In Ireland the nearest equivalent dividing line was two correct responses, which divided the sample into two almost equally sized halves.

<sup>7</sup> Such people would have typically been older than the average, as secondary education became free from the late 1960s.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that party identification was measured differently on the two surveys. In Scotland the direction of party identification was obtained by asking first, 'Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a supporter of any one political party?'. Those who did not reply affirmatively were then asked, 'Do you think of yourself as a little closer to one political party than the others?'. Those who still did not state a party at that stage were asked, 'If there were a general election tomorrow, which political party do you think you would be most inclined to support?'. Those who named a party in response to any of these three questions were then asked, 'Would you call yourself very strong [party they have named], fairly strong or not very strong?'. Those who respond 'very strong' or 'fairly strong' in answer to this last question are regarded as 'strong' identifiers. In Ireland, respondents were asked, 'Do you usually think of yourself as close to any political party?'. If they responded affirmatively they were then asked, 'Do you feel very close to this party, somewhat close or not very close?'. If they responded negatively to the first question they were asked, 'Do you feel a little closer to one of the political parties than the others?'. Those who answered, 'Yes' to the first of these questions are classified here as a 'strong' identifier. As a result of applying these procedures 47% of respondents in Scotland who completed the mock ballot paper and 26% in Ireland were classified as strong identifiers.

<sup>9</sup> The effective number of parties in terms of votes across Scotland as a whole in 2007 was 4.75, whereas in Ireland in 2002 the equivalent figure was 3.99.

<sup>10</sup> Subjective feelings about the ballot paper and the system of seat allocation in Scotland are omitted, as these questions were not asked in Ireland. As they did not prove to be significant in the bivariate analysis, their omission is unlikely to have any material consequence for our results.

<sup>11</sup> Note also that this is also despite the fact that our analysis has also taken into account the fact that, as noted earlier, fewer voters in Scotland live in a ward where their first preference is locally large (a feature that should have depressed the incidence of both behaviours; see Table 5), and that rather more voters in Scotland (50%) than in Ireland (41%) are classified by us as having a 'low education' (a feature that had the opposite effect). In the case of casting only preference this is also despite the fact that we have taken into account the fact that fewer voters in Scotland live in wards that nominated more than one candidate (a feature that made casting a single preference more likely).