

Appendix 2: electoral data source question

Introduction

This section provides examples of the 20-mark electoral data source question in question paper 2.

Example question

Study **Sources A–F**, then answer the question which follows.

Introduction

Scotland's local councils were elected on 3 May 2007 using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. This new system, which replaced the traditional First Past the Post system, requires voters to rank candidates in order of preference and is intended to produce outcomes in terms of seats that are more proportional to votes than First Past the Post.

The use of a broadly proportional system for local elections, it was claimed, would make Scotland's councils more representative of local views and of the diversity of local society — it would give electors a wider and better choice of candidates and would lead to more voters having a councillor of their choice.

Source A: Scottish local council elections 1999–2007 — control of councils by party

	1999	2003	2007
Conservative	0	0	0
Labour	15	13	2
Liberal Democrats	0	1	0
SNP	1	1	0
No overall control	10	11	27

Source B: Scottish local council elections 1999–2007 — votes and seats

	1999			2003			2007		
	Number of seats	% of seats	% of votes	Number of seats	% of seats	% of votes	Number of seats	% of seats	% of votes
Con	108	8.8	13.7	123	10.1	15.2	143	11.7	15.6
Lab	551	45.1	36.6	509	41.7	32.9	348	28.5	28.1
Lib Dem	156	12.8	12.7	175	14.3	14.6	166	13.6	12.7
SNP	204	16.7	28.8	181	14.8	24.3	363	29.7	27.9
Others	203	16.6	8.2	234	19.1	13.0	202	16.5	15.7

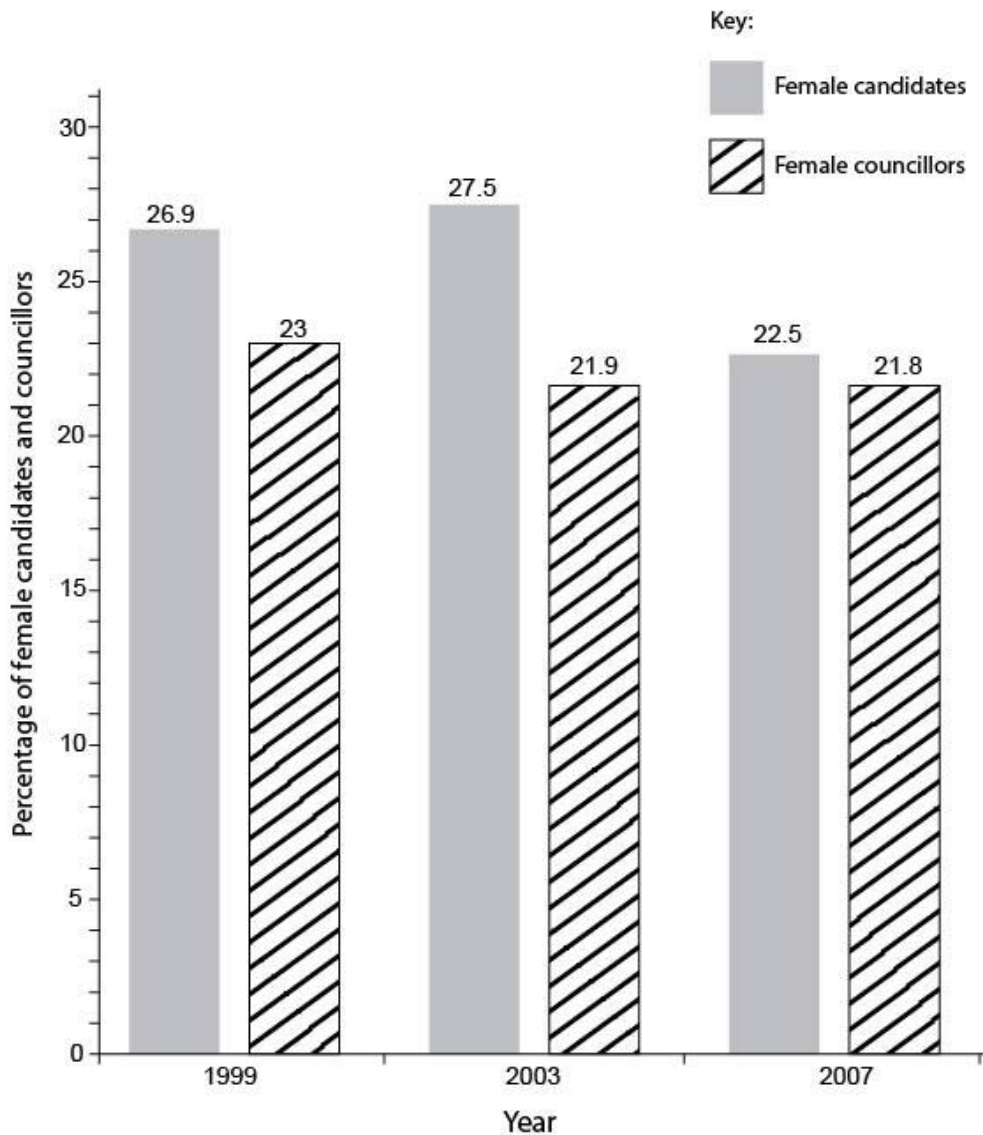
Source C: Turnout and spoilt ballots in council elections, 1999–2007

	1999	2003	2007
Turnout (%)	58.1	49.6	53.8
Number of spoilt ballots	13,597	14,579	38,351

Source D: Number of candidates in council elections, 1999–2007

	1999	2003	2007
Number of candidates	3,934	4,195	2,607
Number of seats	1,222	1,222	1,222

Source E: Percentage of female candidates and councillors, 1999–2007



Source F: Assorted data

The 2012 local government elections took place on 3 May 2012 and were the second set of elections to be held for local councils under the STV voting system. This was five years, rather than the usual four, after the previous elections in 2007. The reason for the delay was to separate the local government elections and the Scottish Parliament elections. The total electorate for the 2012 local government election was 3,983,792 and the turnout on Election Day was 39.1%.

Across Scotland 605,617 postal ballots were issued to voters. Counting for the elections appeared to go smoothly and data indicated that 27,044 ballots were spoilt (1.74% of the total ballots). Candidates in this election were competing for 1,223 available seats. In total 2,496 candidates stood for election, with the SNP having the highest number of candidates from the main parties (613 in total).

In the election 23.4% of the candidates were women and women made up 24.3% of the councillors elected in 2012. From the main parties the Liberal Democrats had the highest number of female candidates standing for election at 27.5% of their total, with the SNP lowest on 23.8%. The Liberal Democrats also had the highest proportion of female candidates elected as women made up 36.6% of Liberal Democrat councillors.

Using only the information in Sources A–F:

The 2007 council elections were a total disaster for the Labour Party. The election saw the SNP replace Labour as the dominant party in Scottish local government. The introduction of the new STV voting system saw both much greater participation all round as well as fairer representation compared to previous elections. However, the 2012 election was disappointing as there was a deterioration in both these areas.

To what extent does the information in these sources support the viewpoint above?