

General election 2010

Gavin Thompson

An election of uneven swings at local level returned a hung Parliament

No one party won an overall majority, for the first time in the UK since February 1974. The Conservatives won the most seats, 305, gaining 96 compared with notional 2005 general election results on the new constituency boundaries. Labour lost 90 seats, leaving them with 258, while the Liberal Democrats were down five on 57. However, the pattern was uneven: all three major parties both gained and lost seats.

VOTES AND SWINGS

The Conservatives won 36.0% of the vote, up by 3.7% points and a higher share of the vote than Labour won in securing an overall majority in 2005. Though they lost seats and underperformed their opinion poll position in the lead up to the election, the Liberal Democrat share of the vote was up 1.0% points to 23.0%.

Between them, therefore, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats won 59.0% of the popular vote, the largest share for a subsequent Government since World War II. Labour won 29.0% of the vote, their lowest since 1983 and down 6.2% points compared with 2005. 35% of voters voted for parties other than Labour and the Conservatives, the highest since 1918.

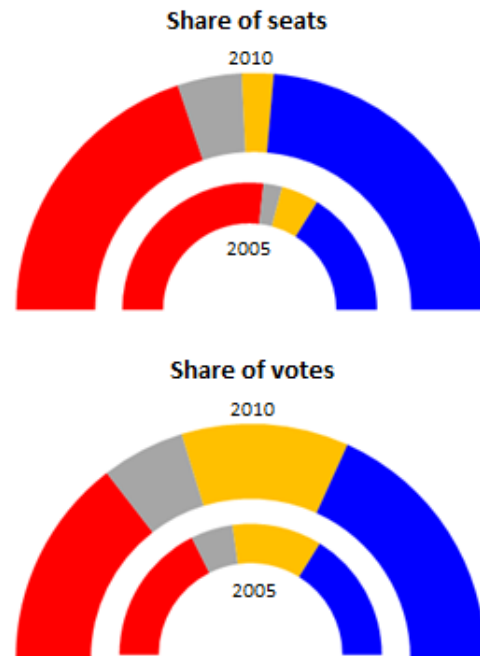
The swing from Labour to the Conservatives was 4.9%. However, there was considerable variation between seats. Some top Conservative targets did not change hands, whereas some requiring much larger swings than the national average did.

29.7 million people cast valid votes, a turnout of 65.1%, 3.7% points more than in 2005.

SMALLER PARTIES

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition leaves the DUP the second largest opposition party, with 8 MPs, though their leader, Peter Robinson, lost his seat. The Scottish National Party were unchanged on six seats while Plaid Cymru were up one on their notional 2005 position with three seats.

The Green Party and the Alliance Party won their first House of Commons seats. The BNP and UKIP both increased their shares of the vote but did not come close to winning a seat.



An uneven election

Seats changing hands by seat winner

Constituencies are all shown equally sized. Comparisons are with notional 2005 results

