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The UK General Election 2015

Lessons learned by a Comparison of the manifestos
of the political parties

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Lessons learned by a Comparison of the manifestos of the political parties

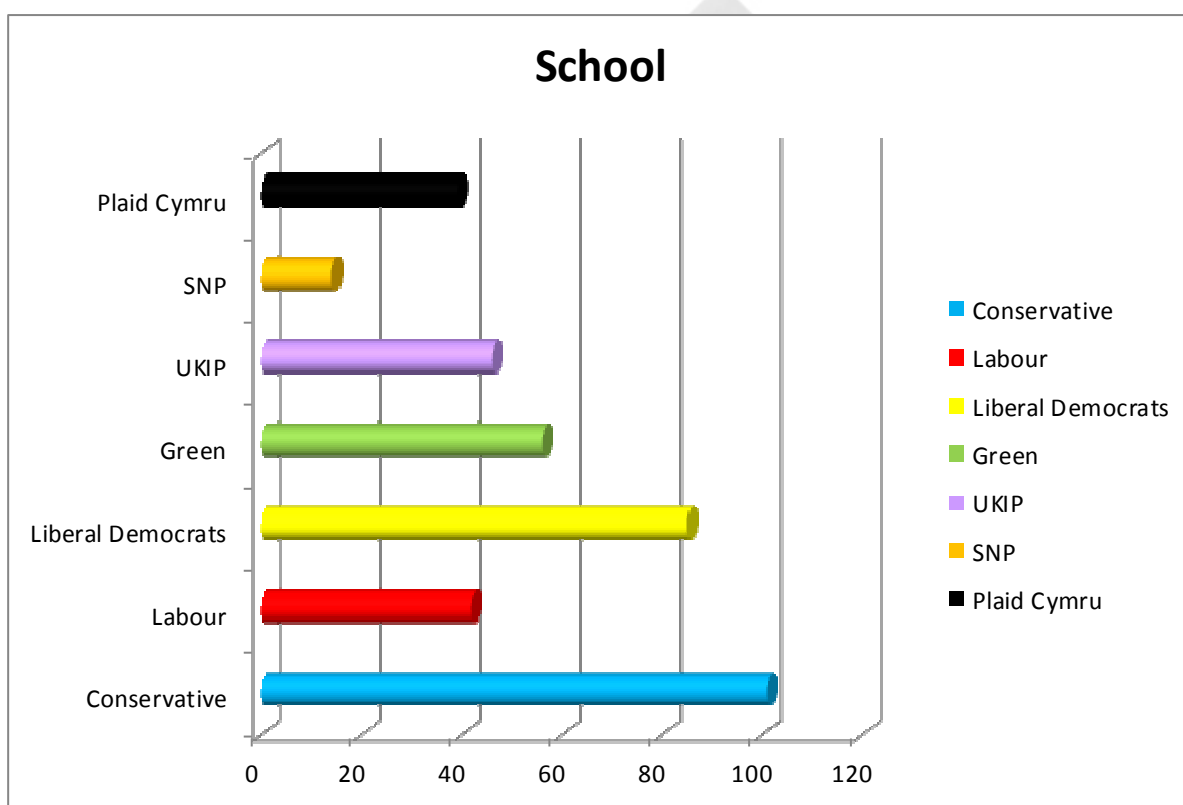
Lesson 1: Beware the politician that makes promises they can't keep!

The Conservative manifesto does not use the word “pledge” at all but it has **one** promise. Plaid Cymru is similarly mean having 1 pledge and 1 promise. The Labour Party is the most generous with their 11 promises, with the Liberal Democrats on their heels with 9 closely followed with Nicola Sturgeon with her 7. I am not a pedant, so I have combined all the mentions of “pledge” or “promise” (but stripping out mentions of “compromise”) in the first pie chart.



Lesson 2: Tony Blair got elected in 1997 with a promise of “Education, education, education”

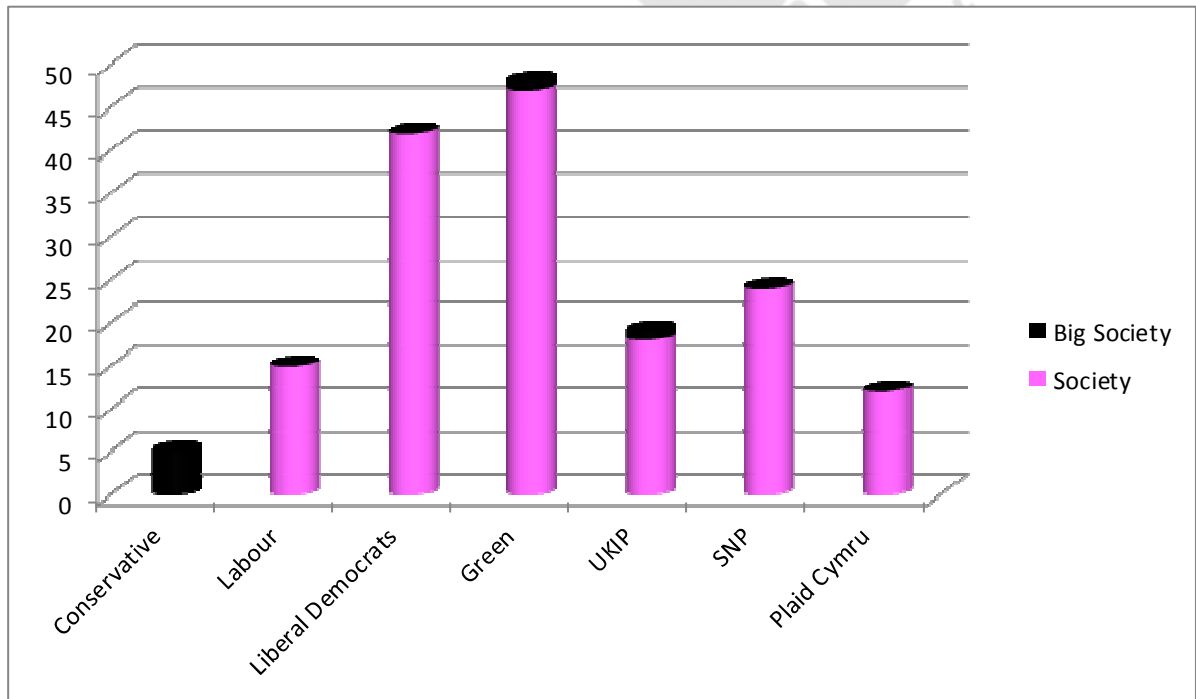
This is so old hat in 2015. No-one wins elections talking about education anymore. The 21st century politician must talk about schools. The Conservatives can't shut up about them in their manifesto! The Liberal Democrats are keen to talk about them – perhaps it's Nick Clegg with 3 school aged children. Nicola Sturgeon is positively quiet about schools unlike Plaid Cymru who mention them nearly 3 times as much.



Lesson 3: What happened to the Big Society?

The Conservatives were so keen to talk about this in the 2010 election and they are still keen to talk about it this time with its 5 mentions. Interesting neither Labour nor the Liberal Democrats talk about the Big Society. Both the Greens and UKIP mention it once but in disparaging terms.

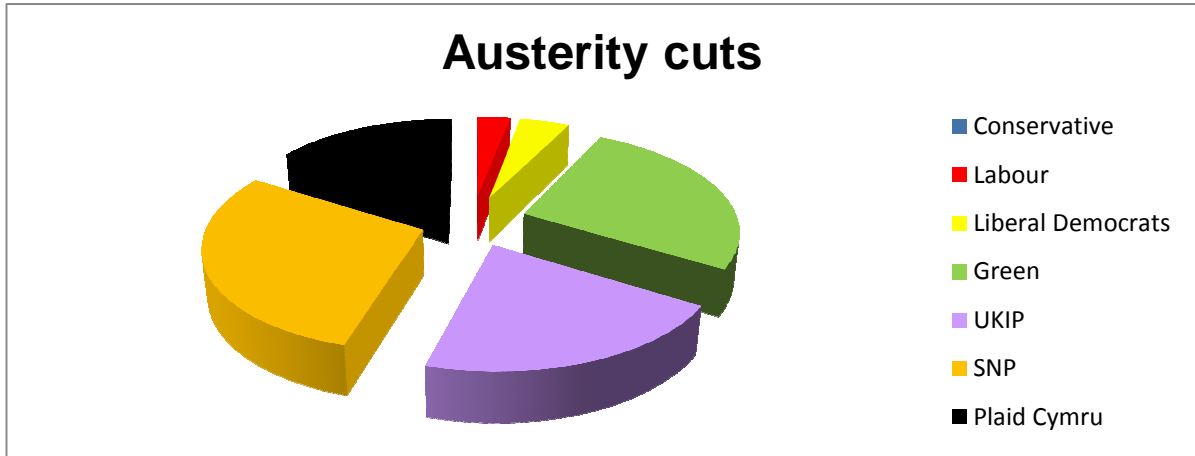
Mrs. Thatcher is famous for saying that there was no such thing as society. And if you are a Conservative then that's still true today as their manifesto does not mention society at all – not even a broken one. The Green Party can't shut up about society and the Liberal Democrats are not far behind either. Interesting Nigel Farage's UKIP and the SNP talk about society far more in their manifestos than Labour. So talk about society with the voters is seen as a vote winner from both the left and the right.



Lesson 4: Surely talk about austerity and cuts must be a big vote winner?

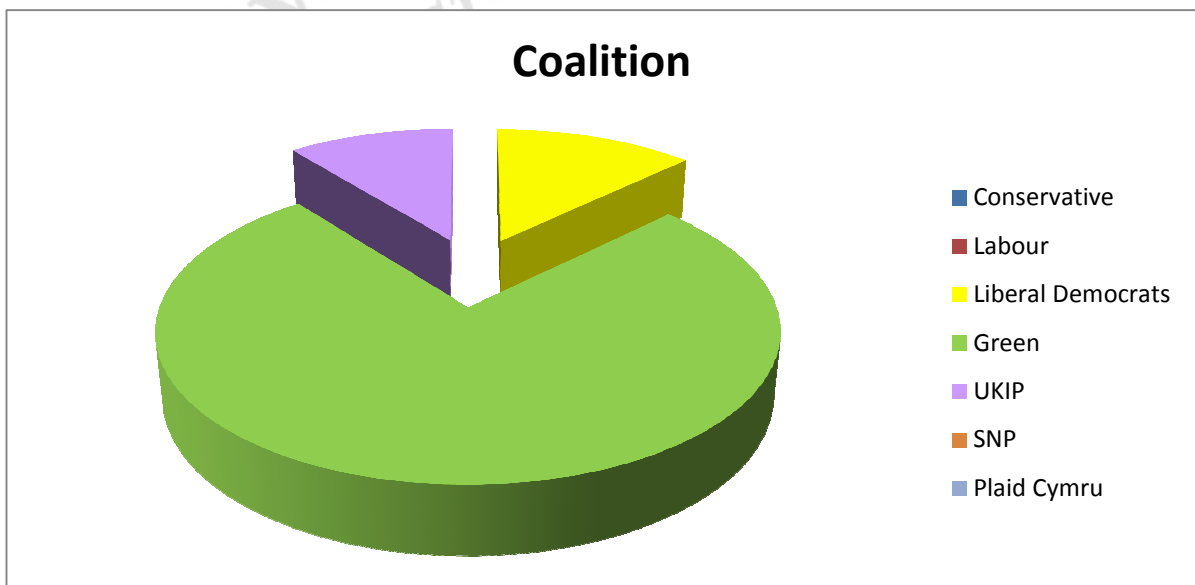
The Conservative manifesto mentions the cuts once – but that is to talk about tax cuts which both Labour and the Liberal Democrats mention once as well. The Conservative manifesto out of shame or neglect does not mention the austerity cuts at all.

It is left to the SNP, Greens and UKIP to bang the austerity cuts drum with SNP and Greens wanting an end to austerity with the Greens proposing tax rises as a result. Surprisingly Labour hardly mentions austerity cuts at all – perhaps you don't need to if you have two kitchens.



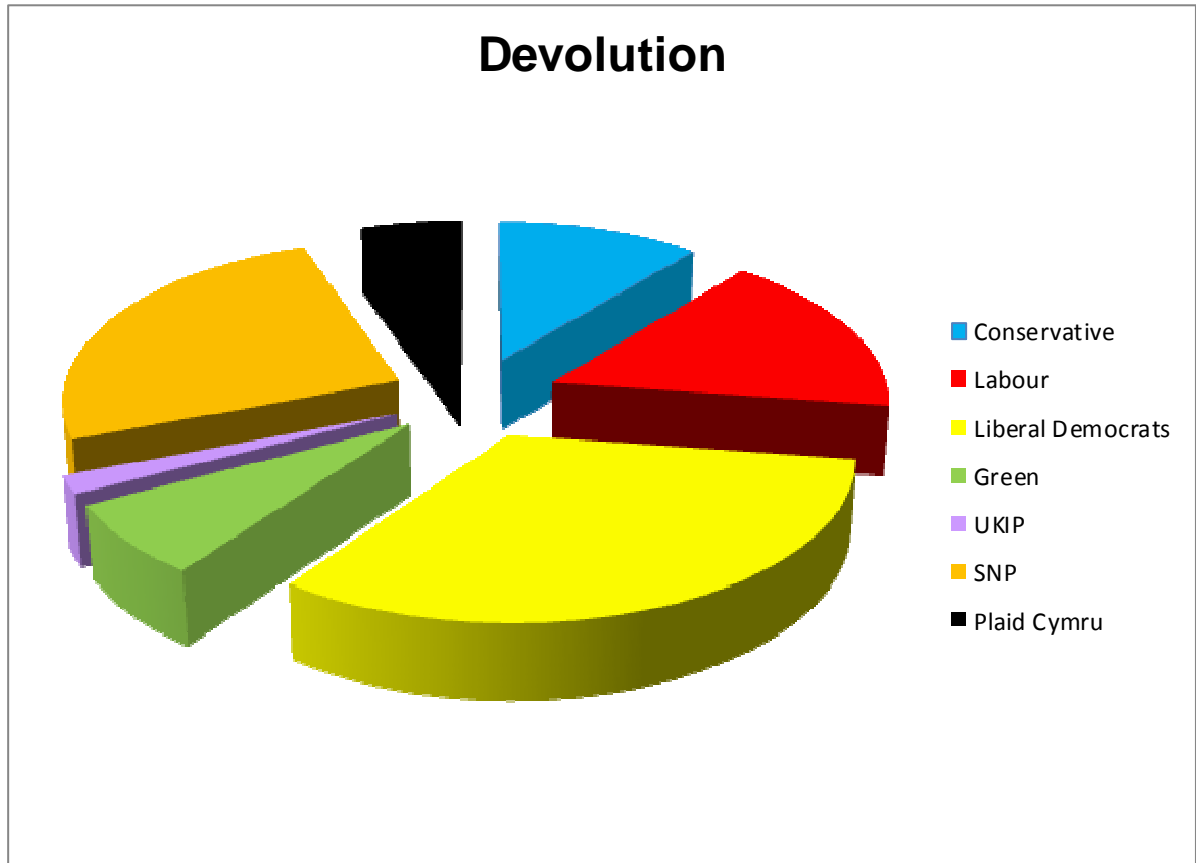
Lesson 5: With the election predicted to be so close, they all must be talking about coalition?

Perhaps it's the weariness of 5 years of it, but for the Conservatives this is the elephant in the room so this gets no mentions. Nick Clegg is not bitter so he mentions it 6 times in the Liberal Democrat's manifesto. It's left to the Green Party whose mantra at this election seems to be "Coalition, coalition, coalition". Labour and SNP are strange bedfellows here with the Conservatives as they don't mention it either.



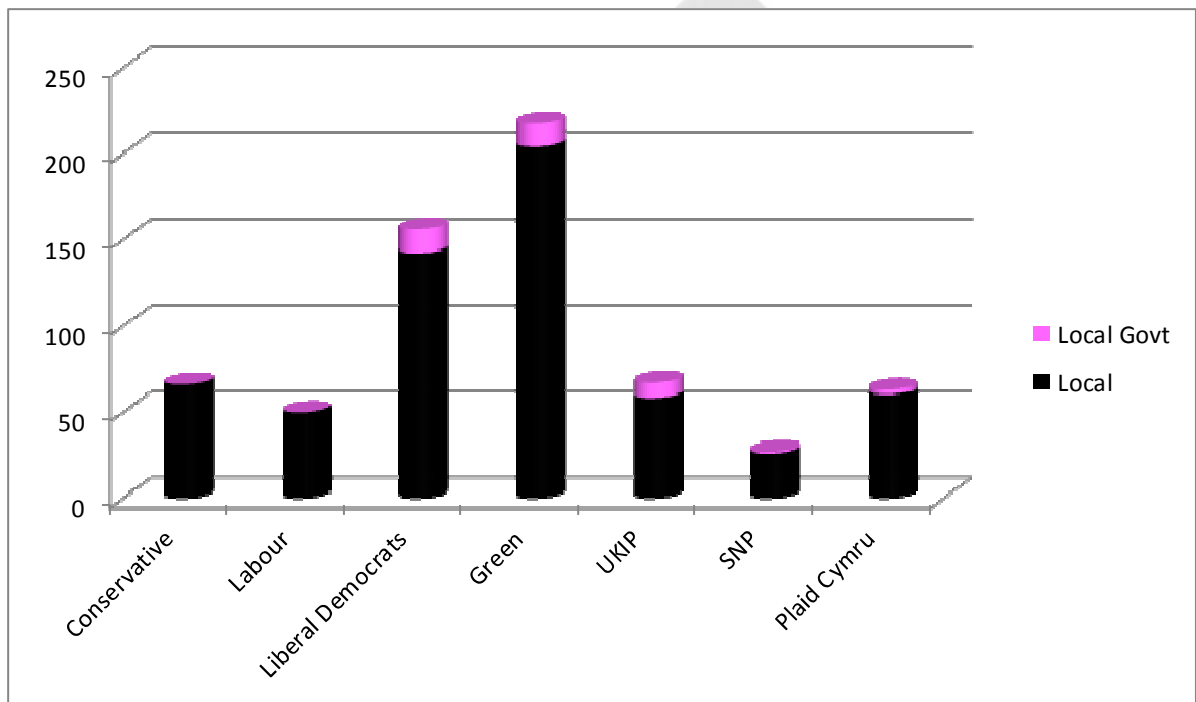
Lesson 6: What about devolution?

Surprisingly it's not the Welsh or Scottish Nationalists that talk about this the most but the Liberal Democrats. UKIP is the least keen to talk about devolution – perhaps getting independence from Europe will be more to bite off that Nigel Farage can chew.



Lesson 7: It's all about local issues on the doorstep

All the parties' manifestos are full of talk about local things from local hospitals to local schools to local parks. The Greens win the award with over 200 mentions of local. In many places there will also be local elections on 7 May 2015, but oddly mentioning local government is not the thing to talk about at all. Surprisingly neither Labour nor the Conservatives mention local government in their manifestos and the SNP mention it once sparingly too. The Liberal Democrats and Greens tie for first place for their 14 mentions of local government.



Lord knows what will happen if we have a tie in the general election!

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