

POLITICAL PARTIES AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRATION IN BRITAIN¹

Elodie Fabre
University of Edinburgh, e.fabre@ed.ac.uk

DRAFT

Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association,
Concordia University, Montreal, 1-3 June 2010

Parties are said to perform a number of functions both at the societal level and at the governmental level (Merton 1957; Kirchheimer 1966: 188-9; Scarrow 1998). Gunther and Diamond (2001: 7-8) make a list of seven functions that political parties perform in democratic polities. First of all, parties provide candidates for election and participating in government. Parties have a recruitment function through the selection and fielding of candidates for election. Parties also perform a crucial function in the governance of democratic polities by forming and sustaining government. Through their activities in parliament, parties have the ability to influence the formation of government, either directly through government participation alone or in coalition or by supporting a minority government without direct participation in government. Other key functions include social representation, interest aggregation, conveying them to the centre (expressive function) and providing a link between the governed and government (linkage) (Chambers 1966: 89-90). These functions contribute to the integration of citizens into the political system and contribute to the homogenisation of political preferences. Jackman (1972: 512) defines 'national integration as having occurred when citizens' geographical or spatial location in the society does not help to predict their political attitudes and behavior'. These functions are closely related, as expression, interest aggregation, social representation and integration all contribute to the exercise of this function of integration of citizen into a national polity.

In a multi-level and multinational context, linkage and integration across regional units become difficult, as parties not only have to address functional issues but also territorial issues. The combination of functional and regional cleavages makes the task of integrating the territory more difficult, not only for governments but also for political parties. The capacity of a federal country, in particular of a multinational federal country, to overcome the differences between its regional units rests in part on the manner in which the political and institutional system allows different regional interests to be represented in central decision-making processes.

The interests of regional units may be taken into account at the central level through three different mechanisms: an institutional system that allows regional governments to participate in central decision-making (via intergovernmental relations or a second chamber of territorial representation); a party system that includes parties that represent the interests of all the territories at the central level, either through statewide parties or through non-statewide regionalist parties; and finally statewide political parties, which are present throughout the country and may consequently include representatives of their regional

¹ Part of this paper has already appeared in Fabre (2009) 'Les partis politiques nationaux et non nationaux au Royaume Uni', in Jean-Benoit Pilet et al. (eds) *L'Absence de Partis Nationaux: Menace ou Opportunité?* Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

branches and integrate the country's territorial and multinational dimension into their organisation.

Britain presents us with a case of a multinational, multi-level country with both statewide and non-statewide parties. On the one hand, statewide political parties (Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats) present candidates throughout the whole country for statewide and regional elections.² On the other, non-statewide parties demand more autonomy or the independence of Scotland and Wales. These parties have very different interests when it comes to territorial integration within the Union. Britain is also a case where few mechanisms allow regional governments or representatives to influence central decision making. This means that most of the burden of territorial integration rests on the party system and the political parties.

This article focuses on the way in which the British party system and its statewide parties manage to accommodate the different territorial interests of the Union. The first part addresses the issues of territorial integration and linkage by political parties. The characteristics of the British party system and the differences between the nations are presented in a second part, and a third part addresses the issue of the role of statewide political parties as integrative organisations in post-devolution Britain. Finally, the article looks at the possible evolution of the system and potential problems ahead for the Union and for statewide parties. It shows that in this context, stronger, more efficient institutional mechanisms may be necessary to manage devolved Britain and efficiently include regional interests in central decision making.

Political parties and territorial integration: representation and linkage in multi-level systems

As is well known, political parties have played a crucial role in the formation of statewide polities. In the process of mobilising the electorate, parties have contributed to the integration of local communities into national political systems, breaking local resistance, developing statewide organisations and mobilising the electorate along functional rather than territorial cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). In most polities, parties have developed their organisation nationally, reaching more or less every corner of the national territory. For Rokkan and Urwin (1982: 4), this ability to mobilise nationally has been key to their success: 'political parties have been highly successful in mobilizing support cross-regionally: for most parties in most countries, failure to compete successfully in one region has usually reflected a similar inability over the whole state'.

As statewide organisations, parties can become agents of national integration 'if they serve as genuine brokers between disparate regional or social interests' (Daalder 1966). Integrated parties, that is, parties that compete in both statewide and sub-state elections, can have a stabilising impact on federalism and encourage centripetal forces (Filippov et al. 2004). This may however be quite difficult in a context of heterogeneity based on territorial and social divisions. In multinational states, there may be more variations between the party systems and voting patterns of sub-state electorates. These differences may not only be based on economic disparities as in culturally homogeneous societies, but also on differences in historical experiences, cultural traditions and languages. This means that statewide parties may find it more difficult to be present across the whole territory but also that they may not enjoy the same level of support across all constituencies and regions. Different levels of support across regions may also be due to the presence of different parties in specific regions, for instance non-statewide parties such as regionalist or autonomist parties (de Winter et al. 2006).

² This article focuses only on Great Britain, excluding Northern Ireland, which has a party system that differs from that of the rest of the country.

The form of federalism is also likely to affect the sort of vertical linkages within statewide parties (Hopkin 2003; Tholakson 2009). While an integrated (or co-operative) multi-level system will encourage the development of linkages between party levels and the integration of regional leaders or representatives into central party organs, dual federalism is expected to lead to looser ties between the levels (Chandler and Chandler 1987; Scharpf 1995: 32; Deschouwer 2003).

In the UK, territorial integration through the representation of sub-state interests at the centre is confronted with two main problems: the asymmetry of devolution and of the distribution of population and the limited influence of the Celtic nations in central decision making. The demographic asymmetry between England, which represents 84 percent of the population, and Scotland and Wales (8 and 5 percent respectively) means that English debates tend to dominate political debates, making it difficult for Scotland and Wales to make their voice heard at the centre.³ Erk and Anderson (2009: 197) argue that the number and size of sub-units play an important role in limiting or intensifying tensions between the sub-state units. They observe that ‘federalism tends to be more stable with multiple constitutional units rather than with two or three large units or a single dominant one’ (Erk and Anderson 2009: 197). The UK clearly is a country with a strongly dominant sub-state unit, which tends to exacerbate secessionist demands and create an ‘us versus them’ mentality in the smaller units.

In addition, since England has not been part of the movement of state reform and the project of establishing English regional assemblies was abandoned after the failure of the 2004 referendum to create an elected regional assembly in the North East, Westminster has acted as both parliament of the Union and parliament of England. The so-called West Lothian Question, which states the difficulty for a non-devolved England to accept that Scottish and Welsh MPs may vote on English-only legislation, has become more acute in recent years. The reduction of the number of Scottish MPs from 72 to 59 did not solve this problem, however, and the West Lothian Question cannot easily be solved in a context of asymmetrical devolution.

Finally, mechanisms of representation of the sub-state units in central decision making are very limited in the UK. The second chamber, the House of Lords, does not include representatives of the Scottish and Welsh governments or devolved chambers. The Wakeham report on the reform of the House of Lords (2000) recommended to introduce territorial representation as a criteria for selection of part of the new House, but this model was abandoned and all debates on the composition of a reformed House of Lords have since focused on the issue of the share of elected members as opposed to appointed members and have brushed the issue of territorial representation aside. In addition, the mechanisms of executive federalism are quite limited and have often taken the form of informal meetings, in particular when Labour governed at all levels. Finally, the mechanisms of judicial review of legislation are also limited (Trench 2005: 195-97; Horgan 2003; Dorey 2005: 281-82).

The factors place most of the burden of territorial integration and interest representation on the shoulders of the party system. The rest of this paper will look at the way British statewide parties perform this integrative function after ten years of devolution. The next section looks at the linkage in the party system: the congruence of the statewide and devolved party systems and the differences between in election results of statewide and devolved elections (Thorlakson 2006: 47-48).

³ ONS data <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=6>

The British party systems

A statewide party system dominated by two main parties

Table 1 below illustrates the territorial coverage of political parties in the House of Commons. Out of 11 parties in 2005 and 10 parties in 2010, only three are statewide in the sense that they present candidates across Britain: the Labour party, the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. However, the Conservative parliamentary group is very much dominated by MPs from England than the Labour and Lib Dem groups. The Green party covers England and Wales but still fails to present candidates in all constituencies; a sister party competes in Scotland. The table also shows that the party system of Northern Ireland is completely different from that of the rest of the country, with Ulster-only parties. The Conservative party entered an electoral alliance with the Ulster Unionists for the 2010 general election, presenting 17 candidates under the banner 'Ulster Conservatives and Unionists – New Force', which failed to win a single seat, whereas the UUP held one seat after the 2005 election.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Statewide parties dominate the Parliament and used to form government alone until the 2010 election. The Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru only present candidates in Scotland and Wales respectively and only manage to win a limited number of seats. Since 1945, few governing parties have needed the support of a small party. The 2010 election gave the UK its first coalition government since Second World War. Before that, the Major government briefly depended on the support of Unionist party when it was tearing itself apart over Europe in 1996. This period of the Major government and the minority government of February to October 1974 were however exceptions and post-war government were always been formed by a single party benefiting from a majority of seats in Parliament. The Conservative-Liberal Democrats coalition formed after the 2010 election is therefore a clear break from habits in British politics.

Table 2 below shows that the combined share of the vote of the two main statewide parties (Labour and the Liberal Democrats) has decreased across the country to reach below two thirds of the vote. There is some level of divergence between the aggregate vote of statewide parties across Britain and their aggregate vote in Scotland and Wales. In the last general elections the two main statewide parties attracted only 59 per cent of the vote in Scotland and the governing coalition represents 59 percent of the vote across the UK, but only 35.6 in Scotland and 46.2 in Wales. This decline of the vote for statewide parties in Scotland is mainly a consequence of the decline of the Conservative party since 1955 and the growth of SNP support since the 1970s. The difference between statewide and Welsh aggregate vote for the statewide parties is less important, mainly because of the continued dominance of Labour in statewide elections, which means that Labour and the Conservative still receive over 60 per cent of all votes and the three statewide parties represent more than 80 percent of the votes in Wales (against 77 percent in Scotland).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The evolution of the Lee index in both nations reflects this trend (Table 2). The Lee index reflects the difference between statewide and regional vote (Hearl et al. 1996: 169). In Scotland, it was particularly low in 1945, started to increase at the start of the 1970s, reflecting the decline of the Tories and the emergence of the SNP as a third party in the nation. By the second 1974 election, it had reached a value of 20. Since then, it has only once gone below 20 (in 1983). In Wales, on the other hand, the traditional weakness of the Conservative party means that the Lee index was already quite high in 1945 and has

increased only moderately since; it has only exceeded the value of 20 between 1983 and 2001.

In a purely arithmetical way, Scotland and Wales only constitute a small share of the total number of seats in Parliament. Even if Scottish and Welsh MPs voted as a block in the House of Commons, ignoring the strong party discipline enforced by the parliamentary groups, they would still represent less than a sixth of the Chamber. Historically, Scotland and Wales have been overrepresented in Parliament, with fewer voters per constituency than in England. Since the 2005 election, the number of Scottish MPs was reduced from 72 to 59 to put an end to overrepresentation in Scotland after devolution. Wales remains overrepresented but nevertheless elects a mere 40 MPs.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Moreover, the electoral weight of non-statewide parties in Scotland and Wales means that they are condemned to being small parties in Westminster (See Table 3). Their only hope of influencing UK politics is in the case of a hung parliament. Indeed, in the run up to the 2010 British election, Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party both claimed that a hung parliament would be the ideal outcome of the election, creating the conditions to gain access to more resources and increase their influence at the centre. It turned out not to be the case, as the Conservative made a coalition deal with the Liberal Democrats. The alternative, a coalition of Labour and the Lib Dems supported by the nationalist parties would still have been short of a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. Non-statewide parties are therefore condemned to remain a minority in the House of Commons as well as in the Scottish contingent in Westminster, and the statewide parties dominate representation at the centre.

The rise of non-statewide parties in Scottish and Welsh elections

As Table 4 illustrates, the situation is different in the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) and in the Scottish Parliament. Elections to the NAW and the Scottish Parliament have produced different political results, due in part to the electoral system but also to different patterns of voting.

The electoral system used in Scottish and Welsh elections (a mixed system, the additional member system) is more proportional than the plurality system used for Westminster elections and has only provided a party with a majority once, in the second Welsh election. The Labour party has remained the main party in all elections except the 2007 Scottish election. However, the more proportional electoral system means that it is more difficult for one party to gain the majority of the seats, and coalition governments have become regular features of devolved politics. Indeed there has been only one election when a single party was able to form a majority government. It was Labour in Wales after the 2003 election. The electoral system has allowed the Conservative party to maintain a political presence in Scotland and Wales after they lost all their MPs in the Celtic nations in 1997, and the Liberal Democrats managed to enter coalitions with the Labour party.

Non-statewide parties have also benefited from devolution. The first Scottish Parliament was remarkable by the number of parties it represented and by the fact that the SNP was the country's second political force with a level of representation to match its electoral strength. In Wales, Plaid Cymru also became the country's second party. After the 2007 election, the two autonomist parties gained access to power for the first time. Plaid Cymru, which had narrowly ceded its position as Wales's second party to the Conservatives, and Labour formed a coalition in Wales, while the SNP formed a minority government. This means that there are now more diverse governments across the UK than

at any time since the start of devolution: the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative party in Westminster, the SNP in Scotland, and Labour and Plaid Cymru in Wales.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The increasingly divergent outcomes of elections at each level in terms of votes, seat allocation and government formation and the fact that territorial interests have little chance of being integrated at the central level through the representation of non-statewide autonomist parties in Westminster highlight the importance of statewide parties as essential elements of territorial linkage in the UK and their role as integrative instruments through internal mechanisms and the construction of a collective political identity. The next section compares the way British statewide parties have addressed the issue of territorial reform in terms of party policy but also organisationally.

Statewide parties and devolution: positions and territorial organisation

Statewide parties and the issue of devolution

The Labour party implemented devolution after its return to power in 1997, but there are still some elements in its parliamentary group, including from Scotland and Wales, that opposed the creation of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales and would resist further attempts to devolve power. However, in Scotland and Wales, the devolved parliamentary groups have supported further devolution in the Calman commission on Scottish devolution and in the Richards commission

The Liberal Democrats, like their Liberal predecessor, are in favour of a federal Britain and would support improvements to the current institutional settlement, including a reform of the Welsh Assembly that would give it powers of primary legislation and a reform of the financing of the devolved institutions that would gain more fiscal and financial autonomy. They participated in the Scottish convention, supported devolution and now support the implementation of two reports on changes to the devolution settlement in Wales (Richards commission) and in Scotland (Calman commission). Labour's reception of these reports has been more lukewarm, leading to delays in the implementation of the first and discussions over the schedule for reform in Scotland.

The dominance of England in the Conservative party (which lost all representation in Wales in 1997 and regained three MPs in 2005, also lost all its Scottish MPs in 1997 and only regained one seat in 2001) has been visible in the party's discourse on the Union. After it opposed devolution and campaigned against it in 1997, the Conservatives changed their position after the referendums. Though it officially accepted devolution, the party remained divided on the topic. On the one hand, in particular under the Hague, Duncan Smith and Howard leaderships (1997-2005), a number of MPs regularly questioned devolution, arguing that the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly should be dissolved. Such remarks never failed to contribute to tensions with the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives, who embraced devolution rather more quickly. In addition, a section of the party also campaigned in favour of introducing a system that would allow English MPs to vote on those bills that only affect England. Called 'English votes for English laws', this change would prevent Scottish and Welsh MPs from voting on matters that were devolved to Scotland and Wales (Lynch 2000: 65-6). Behind these claims could often be felt a certain level of resentment against Scotland and Wales, which only strengthened the English image of the party. On the other hand, most Scottish and Welsh Conservatives have now become defenders of devolution and are in favour of reforming the system to increase the powers and fiscal autonomy of the devolved institutions.

Current leader David Cameron has tried to work towards redressing the party's English, anti-devolution image, supporting both 'English votes for English laws' and

improvements to devolution, including changes to the Barnett formula, which manages the distribution of resources across the UK. The Scottish Conservatives supported the report of the Calman commission on devolution and want a reform of the Barnett formula that would give the Scottish Parliament more financial and fiscal autonomy. Plans for reform of the Barnett formula are not particularly advanced and they will not be easy to implement. In Wales, the party became an enthusiastic supporter of devolution and recently voted in favour of holding a referendum on increasing the powers of the National Assembly. In both nations, the Conservatives have embraced devolution. In Scotland, they have become a key partner of the SNP minority government, and Welsh Conservatives considered the possibility of forming an anti-Labour coalition with the Liberals and Plaid Cymru after the 2007 election. Cameron, in his campaign to rebuild his party's image and win the 2010 elections, has tried to moderate the Conservatives' positions on devolution, arguing that he would defend the Union but also support necessary institutional changes. This strategy means that the party has tried to recognise the need to adapt to the devolved context, while maintaining a UK-wide appeal with a strong English focus.

The new Lib-Con governing coalition has agreed to implement the report of the Calman commission, which may give Scotland more tax-raising powers, to organise a referendum on the devolution of further powers, including primary legislation, to the National Assembly for Wales, and to review the role of Scottish MPs in Parliament when England-only legislation is debated. This shows that the coalition has adopted most the policies of the Liberal Democrats on devolution and added the Conservatives' concerns about the West Lothian Question. This means that the three parties are now supporters of devolution.

The territorial organisation of the statewide parties

Even before devolution, the statewide parties already had some form of organisation in Scotland and Wales, often varying in organisational strength and autonomy. All the parties had more or less developed Scottish and Welsh branches with national conferences and produced specific election programmes for Scotland and Wales, adapting the UK programme to each nation. The Liberal Democrats adopted the federal organisation of the former Liberal party, with English, Scottish and Welsh structures (Curtice 1988: 114). All the branches already had some level of activity, but the Scottish and Welsh branches were finally able to really use their powers with devolution. The regional branches of the Labour party were little more than administrative arms of the central party, even though the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties also organised annual conferences like the statewide party. The Scottish Conservatives had a special status within the party because it was an independent party until 1965. After joining the UK Conservatives, they retained the right to select their candidates for Westminster elections and a special conference. The Welsh structure, on the other hand, was rather weakly organised, with local organisations weakly co-ordinated at the Welsh level.

With devolution, the statewide parties have mostly focused on issues of leadership and candidate selection. For all the parties, like all parties in multi-level systems, the issue of the degree of autonomy of their regional branches compatible with the parties' overall cohesion has been a major issue. The governing Labour party has been more challenged by this issue than the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative party (Bradbury 2006; Fabre 2008). In contrast, the issue of the integration of the regional branches in the central organs of the parties has remained rather left out.

The three statewide parties all have a single integrated membership structure. The regional branches do not have differentiated structures for their members and party members join at the constituency level on behalf of the central party. It is impossible to join at the regional level or to be the member of the Scottish or Welsh party without being

part of the UK party, as is possible in Canada (Dyck 1996). The links between central parties and regional branches remain close, in particular in election campaigns, when regional branches assist the central party's campaign for regional elections and the central party can support their Scottish and Welsh parties for Scottish and Welsh elections. In contrast, political career paths are quite distinct, with relatively little movement between Westminster and the devolved institutions, except on the occasion of the first devolved elections, when 15 to 20 per cent of the new MSPs and AMs had a previous parliamentary experience (Stolz 2002 and 2008).

The Liberal Democrats provide for a larger presence of regional representatives in their central organs than Labour and the Conservatives. Their Scottish and Welsh branches have each a representative in the federal executive (Federal Executive Committee), in the committee that elaborates party policy, in the candidate selection committee, etc. the federal party however remains mostly interested in English affairs because England remains governed by Westminster and because the Scottish and Welsh branches have a high level of decisional autonomy. At the same time, while devolution has become more institutionalised and people started to measure the importance of Scottish and Welsh governments, the Scottish and Welsh party branches focus more on their own area and are less interested in what the central party does. This shift in focus can also be observed at the grassroots and local levels; it has been noticed that fewer delegates from Scotland and Wales attended the annual conference of the UK party.

This tendency of Scottish and Welsh delegates to desert the UK conference, which can often be held quite far from both nations, has also been observed in the other two statewide parties, even though the Conservative party's changing fortunes at the statewide level have led to an increased number of Scottish delegates in the last couple of years. The Scottish and Welsh Conservatives have one representative each in the party's main executive organ, the Board, while the Scottish and Welsh branches of the Labour party are not represented on the National Executive Committee (NEC). The Scottish and Welsh Labour parties are not involved in the selection of candidates for Westminster elections, nor do they play a specific role in the elaboration of party policy. This means that the integration of the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties in the party's central organs is very limited. Not only has the number of Scottish and Welsh delegates in the UK conference diminished, but the role and importance of the conference have also decreased, as the party became more centralised and gave its leadership more autonomy to decide party policy (Seyd 2001).

The interests of Scotland and Wales were always well represented in the Labour's parliamentary group thanks to a large number of Scottish and Welsh MPs, but the share of English MPs has increased significantly since the 1990s (Table 5). In the 2005, English MPs represented over 80 per cent of the PLP, a share that decrease to 74 percent in the 2010 election. At the same time, it is possible to wonder whether Scottish and Welsh MPs are good relays of the positions of the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties and their devolved parliamentary groups, since they owe their positions to the UK party. They are selected by their constituency parties from shortlists established by the UK party and their chances of being promoted are in the hands of the UK leadership. In addition, as fewer Scottish and Welsh issues are debated in Westminster because of devolution, their role as a relay of Scottish and Welsh interests at the centre has become more difficult.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

New Labour's strategy was clearly designed to regain ground in the English heartland. This strategy however also carried the risk of appearing as the abandonment the policies of accommodation of the economic interests of its core regions: the North of England,

Scotland and Wales. The Scottish and, to a larger extent, Welsh parties have sometimes tried to present an image that was still in touch with the more traditional positions of the Labour party. This sometimes led to tensions between the levels, which the central party has tried to minimise in particular through the selection of 'friendly' party leaders and candidates (see Bradbury 2009 for candidate selection; Fabre 2008). For instance, the Labour Scottish and British governments have disagreed on foundation hospitals (the then Labour Scottish government refused to implement this reform that went through in England and Wales), nuclear energy (which remains a reserved competence of the British government) and immigration (Scotland is more eager to receive immigrants than the UK government). The Welsh Labour party also displeased the central party when Rhodri Morgan, who was chosen as party leader against Blair's preferred candidate, declared that there were 'clear red waters' between Wales and England, indicating that the Welsh party had a more left-wing agenda than the London-based party. Frictions appeared again in 2006 between the two parties when the UK government decided to implement only one part of the recommendations of the Richards Commission on the reform of Welsh devolution and the extension of the competences of the National Assembly for Wales.

The situation of the Conservative party is rather special. It still presents itself as a unionist party, but its representation is predominantly English (see Table 5). In many ways, Biffen's warning made in 1974 has become true:

"Today the Conservative party no longer receives the support of MPs from Northern Ireland, its representation in Scotland is lower than at any time in this century and in England it has barely a Westminster toe-hold in the large industrial cities. There is a real danger that the Tories will become the middle class party of the English shires' (in Gamble 1994: 92).

This bias in favour of England and the Conservatives' decline outside of the southern and central part of England increased in the last twenty years, until the party dramatically lost all representation from Scotland and Wales in the 1997 election. In the following general elections, it failed to gain a single seat in Wales and won one in Scotland. It now counts only one Scottish MP and three Welsh MPs. Since 1974, over 90 per cent of all Conservative MPs come from England, whereas English constituencies only represent 80 per cent of all constituencies.

Paradoxically, devolution, which it opposed, allowed the Conservative party to remain visible in Scotland and Wales. However, devolution has also sometimes led to some problems. Indeed, after the 2007 devolved elections, some posed the question about the relationship between the Scottish Tories and the rest of the party. At the central level, it appeared that some people thought that separating from the Scottish party would allow that party to develop a more English focus and attack Gordon Brown on his Scottish origins and the fact that a Scot can decide for England on issues over which English MPs have lost the power to affect Scotland (Barnes 2007). In Scotland, a break from the rest of the party was seen as a way to develop a more distinctly Scottish identity away from the Conservatives' image as anti-tax English party (Peev and MacMahon 2007). However, both UK and Scottish leaderships came out strongly against the idea, but these rumours reflect the issues that have confronted the Conservative party since 1999.

The Conservative party as it is now is more a party with a wants to be statewide, as it maintains a structure and presents candidates throughout Britain, than a party with a truly statewide representation, and its vote is far from homogeneously spread around the country. In the 2010 election, the Conservatives failed to increase their number of Scottish and Welsh MPs (one and three respectively). The advantage of an alliance with the Liberal Democrats is that they give the government a larger representation in the Celtic nations:

three Welsh MPs and 11 Scottish MPs, thereby increasing the legitimacy of the UK government across the country.

Conclusion

Overall, territorial integration is maintained through the presence of statewide parties that contribute to creating a statewide political debate, but formal mechanisms of territorial integration are relatively weak. As mentioned in the introduction, the institutional system allows only limited intergovernmental relations between the different executives, while the demographic imbalance between England on the one hand and Scotland and Wales on the other means that the representation of the Celtic nations at Westminster is too small to carry any real significant weight, except maybe in the occurrence of a hung parliament. The limited number of Scottish and Welsh MPs also means that non-statewide parties can only gain a few seats in parliament and are unlikely to have a major impact on statewide decision making. This is made even more difficult by the electoral system for general elections, which facilitates the formation of one-party majorities.

The two main statewide parties have paid little attention to the issue of internal territorial representation. The problem of the Labour and Conservative parties is that they find it more difficult to conciliate English and peripheral interests now than they used to (Brown et al. 1998: 127-29). The latest Scottish and Welsh elections have demonstrated that the statewide parties were losing grounds, even though they may still gain a majority of seats and votes in statewide elections. A mistake of the statewide parties, starting with Labour, was to think that devolution would make territorial issues and autonomist parties go away.

The current situation shows that devolution presents the statewide parties with specific challenges, which may occasionally lead to tensions between the levels. In a context of strongly asymmetrical devolution, it can be difficult for the parties to maintain their internal cohesion and reconcile the interest of England, Scotland and Wales. In addition, faced with a range of demands coming from all sectors of society (economic and social interest, ethnic minorities, gender issues), Labour and the Conservatives have only given a limited input to their Scottish and Welsh branches. Because of the disproportionate importance of England in statewide politics, the representatives of Scotland and Wales, when they are allowed to sit in central decision-making organs, have a limited influence and are rarely party heavy-weights as it can be the case in Spain or Germany (Fabre and Méndez-Lago 2009: 012-18; Detterbeck and Jeffery 2009: 63-85).

This draws a picture in which the institutional mechanisms of expression of territorial interests are limited, and the statewide parties are reluctant to include too many Scottish and Welsh representatives in their central decision-making organs and can find it difficult to articulate the same message across the whole country, while autonomist parties are on the rise in Scottish and Welsh elections. While the Labour party partly played a role of articulating territorial interests internally in the first years of devolution thanks to its hold on Westminster and partial control of the Scottish and Welsh executives, the increasingly diverging patterns of party competition between the levels require new forms of territorial integration. The Conservative party has more difficulty with this task, as its stronghold remains firmly in England. The Conservative party still draws most of its support from England, which may have further alienated Scotland and Wales had they governed alone. A coalition with the Liberal Democrats gives the government a stronger presence in Scotland and Wales.

TABLES

Table 1. Territorial coverage of the parties represented in the House of Commons, 2005-10

	Number of candidates in				Parliamentary seats won in			
	England	Scotland	Wales	Ulster	England	Scotland	Wales	Ulster
2005	max: 529	max: 59	max: 40	max: 18				
Conserv.	529	58	40	3	194	1	3	0
DUP	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9
Labour	529	58	40	0	286	41	29	n.a.
Lib. Dem.	528	58	40	0	47	11	4	n.a.
KHHC	1	0	0	0	1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Plaid C.	0	0	40	0	n.a.	n.a.	3	n.a.
Respect	24	0	2	0	1	n.a.	0	n.a.
SNP	0	59	0	0	n.a.	6	n.a.	n.a.
Sinn Fein	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5
SDLP	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3
UUP	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1
2010	max: 533	max: 59	max: 40	max: 18				
Alliance	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1
Conserv.	532	59	40	0	297	1	8	n.a.
DUP	0	0	0	16	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	8
Green P.	322	0	13	0	1	n.a.	0	n.a.
Labour	532	59	40	0	191	41	26	n.a.
Lib. Dem.	532	59	40	0	43	11	3	n.a.
Plaid C.	0	0	40	0	n.a.	n.a.	3	n.a.
SNP	0	59	0	0	n.a.	6	n.a.	n.a.
Sinn Fein	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5
SDLP	0	0	0	18	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3

Abbreviations: Conserv.: Conservative Party; DUP: Democratic Unionist Party; Lib. Dem.: Liberal Democrats; KHHC: ; Plaid C.: Plaid Cymru; SNP: Scottish National Party; SDLP: Social Democratic Liberal Party; UUP: Ulster Unionist Party; n.a.: not applicable.

Note: The total number of seats in the table is 645 for 2005: an independent (defection from Labour) was elected in Wales; and it is 648 for 2010: an independent (defection from UUP in opposition to UUP-Conservative alliance) was elected in Northern Ireland, and the poll one English constituency was postponed until 27th May after the death of a candidate.

Source: Richard Kimber's website <http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/ge05/candidates.htm> and <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge10/candidates.htm>, and own elaboration.

Table 2. Results of statewide parliamentary elections since 1945

	Conserv.		Labour		Liberal D.		Other		Con+	Con+	L	Con+	L
	% Votes	Seats	% Votes	Seats	% Votes	Seats	% Votes	Seats	Lab UK	Lab Scot.	Scot.	Lab Wales	Wales
1945	39.7	210	47.7	393	9.0	12	3.6	25	87.4	88.2	3.4	82.4	17.8
1950	43.3	297	46.1	315	9.1	9	1.5	4	89.4	91.0	2.5	85.5	16.6
1951	48.0	321	48.8	295	2.6	6	0.7	3	96.8	96.5	1.0	91.3	17.4
1955	49.6	344	46.4	277	2.7	6	1.3	3	96.0	96.8	1.1	87.5	19.7
1959	49.4	365	43.8	258	5.9	6	1.0	1	93.2	93.9	4.1	89.0	17.5
1964	43.3	303	44.1	317	11.2	9	1.4	1	87.4	89.3	6.7	87.2	18.2
1966	41.9	253	47.9	363	8.5	12	1.7	2	89.8	87.5	9.4	88.6	16.6
1970	46.4	330	43.0	287	7.5	6	3.2	7	89.4	82.5	11.6	79.3	19.9
1974F	37.8	297	37.2	301	19.3	14	5.8	23	75.0	69.5	19.7	72.7	18.8
1974O	35.7	276	39.3	319	18.3	13	6.7	27	75.0	61.0	27.3	73.4	19.1
1979	43.9	339	36.9	268	13.8	11	5.4	17	80.8	72.9	20.1	79.2	16.9
1983	42.4	397	27.6	209	25.4	23	4.6	21	70.0	63.5	18.0	68.5	16.8
1987	42.2	375	30.8	229	22.6	22	4.4	24	73.0	66.4	24.2	74.6	20.6
1992	41.9	336	34.4	271	17.8	20	5.8	24	76.3	64.6	24.0	78.1	22.6
1997	30.7	165	43.2	418	16.8	46	9.3	30	73.9	63.1	22.2	74.3	20.0
2001	31.7	166	40.7	412	18.3	52	9.4	29	72.4	58.9	20.6	69.6	20.6
2005	32.4	198	35.2	355	22.0	62	10.4	30	67.6	55.3	21.8	64.1	19.8
2010	36.1	306	29.0	258	23.0	57	11.9	28	65.1	58.4	30.0	62.3	16.5

Con+Lab: sum of scores of Conservative and Labour parties; *L*: Lee index measuring the degree of differentiation of electoral results in one region compared with statewide results. It is calculated by dividing by 2 the sum of absolute values of the differences in percentage of votes at the statewide and regional levels in statewide parliamentary elections (Hearl et al. 1996: 169).

Source: House of Commons (2003) for electoral results 1945-2001, Electoral Commission (2005) for electoral results of the 2005 election, BBC News website for the results of the 2010 election (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/>), and Fabre (2009) for the rest.

Table 3. Scottish and Welsh non-statewide parties in the House of Commons

	% SNP vote in Scotland	SNP seats	Number of Scottish MPs	% PC vote in Wales	PC seats	Number of Welsh MPs	Total number of MPs
1970	11.4	1	71	11.5	0	36	630
1974F	21.9	7	71	10.8	2	36	635
1974O	30.4	11	71	10.8	3	36	635
1979	17.3	2	71	8.1	2	36	635
1983	11.8	2	72	7.8	2	38	650
1987	14.0	3	72	7.3	3	38	650
1992	21.5	3	72	8.9	4	38	651
1997	22.1	6	72	9.9	4	40	659
2001	20.1	5	72	14.3	4	40	659
2005	17.7	6	59	12.6	3	40	646
2010	19.9	6	59	11.3	3	40	650

Sources: House of Commons (2003), Electoral Commission (2005) and BBC News website (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/>).

Table 4. Elections and governments in Scotland and Wales

	Conservative		Labour		Lib. Dem.		SNP/PC		Other		Government composition	
	% votes	Seats	% votes	Seats	% votes	Seats	% votes	Seats	% votes	Seats		
Scotland	1999	15.4	18	33.6	56	12.4	17	27.3	35	11.3	3	Lab-LD
			(0+18)		(53+3)		(12+5)		(7+28)		(1+2)	
	2003	15.6	18	29.4	50	11.8	17	20.9	27	22.3	17	Lab-LD
		(3+15)		(46+4)		(13+4)		(9+18)		(2+15)		
	2007	13.9	17	29.2	46	11.3	16	31.0	47	14.6	3	SNP min.
		(4+13)		(37+9)		(11+5)		(21+26)		(1+2)		
Wales	1999	16.5	9	35.4	28	12.5	6	30.5	17	5.1	0	Lab min. (1999-2000) Lab-LD (2000-2003)
			(1+8)		(27+1)		(3+3)		(9+8)			
	2003	19.2	11	36.6	30	12.7	6	19.7	12	8.4	1	Lab
		(1+10)		(30+0)		(3+3)		(5+7)		(1+0)		
	2007	21.4	12	29.6	26	11.7	6	21.0	15	16.3	1	Lab min (06-07/2007) Lab-PC (07/2007-)
		(5+7)		(24+2)		(3+3)		(7+8)		(1+0)		

The data for % votes corresponds to the list ballot; the numbers between brackets represent the number of seats in single-members constituencies first and the number of seats from the list ballot second).

Source: Fabre 2009: 84.

Table 5. Geographical distribution of Labour, Conservative and Liberal MPs since 1970 (%)

Labour Party				
	England	Scotland	Labour	Distribution of MPs in the UK*
1970	75.3	15.3	9.4	81.1/11.3/5.7
1974F	78.7	13.3	8.0	81.3/11.2/5.7
1974O	79.9	12.9	7.2	81.3/11.2/5.7
1979	75.8	16.4	7.8	81.3/11.2/5.7
1983	70.8	19.6	9.6	80.5/11.1/5.8
1987	67.7	21.8	10.5	80.5/11.1/5.8
1992	71.0	18.0	10.0	80.5/11.1/5.8
1997	78.5	13.4	8.1	80.2/10.9/6.0
2001	78.5	13.3	8.2	80.2/10.9/6.0
2005	80.4	11.5	8.1	81.9/9.1/6.1
2010	74.0	15.9	10.1	82.0/9.1/6.2
Conservative Party				
	England	Scotland	Wales	Distribution UK*
1970	88.5	7.0	2.1	81.1/11.3/5.7
1974F	90.2	7.1	2.7	81.3/11.2/5.7
1974O	91.3	5.8	2.9	81.3/11.2/5.7
1979	90.3	6.5	3.2	81.3/11.2/5.7
1983	91.2	5.3	3.5	80.5/11.1/5.8
1987	95.2	2.7	2.1	80.5/11.1/5.8
1992	95.0	3.2	1.8	80.5/11.1/5.8
1997	100.0	0.0	0.0	80.2/10.9/6.0
2001	99.4	0.6	0.0	80.2/10.9/6.0

2005	98.0	0.5	1.5	81.9/9.1/6.1
2010	97.1	0.3	2.6	82.0/9.1/6.2
Liberal Democrats**				
	England	Scotland	Wales	Distribution UK*
1970	33.3	50.0	16.7	81.1/11.3/5.7
1974F	64.3	21.4	14.3	81.3/11.2/5.7
1974O	61.5	23.1	15.4	81.3/11.2/5.7
1979	63.6	27.3	9.1	81.3/11.2/5.7
1983	56.5	34.8	8.7	80.5/11.1/5.8
1987	45.5	40.9	13.6	80.5/11.1/5.8
1992	50.0	45.0	5.0	80.5/11.1/5.8
1997	73.9	21.7	4.4	80.2/10.9/6.0
2001	76.9	19.2	3.9	80.2/10.9/6.0
2005	75.8	17.7	6.5	81.9/9.1/6.1
2010	75.4	19.3	5.3	82.0/9.1/6.2

* Percentage of seats in House of Commons from England/Scotland/Wales (total inferior to 100 because Ulster is not included).

** Liberal Party up to 1979, Alliance SDP-Liberal in the 1983 and 1987 elections, and Liberal Democrats since 1992.

Source: Fabre 2009: 84 and own elaboration.

REFERENCES

- Barker, Rodney (1992) 'Legitimacy in the United Kingdom: Scotland and the Poll Tax', *British Journal of Political Science* 22(4): 521-33.
- Barnes, E. (2007) 'Tory civil war as second memo brands MSPs "damaged goods"', *The Scotsman*, 11 March.
- Bradbury, Jonathan (2006) 'British Political Parties and Devolution: Adapting to Multi-level Politics in Scotland and Wales', in Dan Hough and Charlie Jeffery (ed.) *Devolution and Electoral Politics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Bradbury, Jonathan (2009) 'Devolution and party organisation in the UK: Statewide parties and statewide-regional branch relations over candidate selection in Scotland and Wales', in Wilfried Swenden and Bart Maddens (eds) *Territorial Politics in Western Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Brown, Alice, David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson (1998) *Politics and Society in Scotland*. Basingstoke: Macmillan (2nd ed.).
- Chambers, W.N. (1966) 'Parties and Nation-building in America', in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds) *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Chandler, William M. and Marsha A. Chandler (1987) 'Federalism and Political Parties', *European Journal of Political Economy* 3(1&2): 87-108.
- Curtice, John (1988) 'Great Britain – Social Liberalism Reborn', in Emil J. Kirchner (ed.) *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Daalder, Hans (1966) 'Parties, Elites, and Political Parties', in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds) *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Deschouwer, Kris (2003) 'Political Parties in Multi-layered Systems', *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10(3): 213-226.
- Detterbeck, Klaus and Charlie Jeffery (2009) 'Rediscovering the region: Territorial politics and party organization in Germany', in Wilfried Swenden and Bart Maddens (eds) *Territorial politics in Western Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave..
- De Winter, Lieven, Peter Lynch and Marga Gómez-Reino (eds) (2006) *Autonomist Parties in Europe: Identity Politics and the Revival of the Territorial Cleavage*. Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials.
- Dorey, Peter (2005) *Policy Making in Britain*. London: Sage.
- Dyck, Rand (1996) 'Relations Between Federal and Provincial Parties', in A. Brian Tanguay and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds) *Canadian Parties in Transition*, Scarborough, On.: Nelson Canada.
- Electoral Commission (2005) 'General Election 2005 Summary of Results', <http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/templates/search/document.cfm/13894> [7 February 2008]
- Erk, Jan and Lawrence Anderson (2009) 'The Paradox of Federalism: Does Self-Rule Accommodate or Exacerbate Ethnic Divisions?', *Regional and Federal Studies* 19(2): 191-202.
- Fabre, Elodie (2008) 'Party Organisation in a Multi-level Setting: Party Organisational Change in Spain and the UK', *Regional and Federal Studies* 18(4): 309-29.
- Fabre, Elodie (2009) 'Les Partis Politiques Nationaux et Non Nationaux au Royaume Uni', in Jean-Benoit Pilet, Jean-Michel De Waele and Serge Jaumain (eds) *L'Absence de Partis Nationaux: Menace ou Opportunité?* Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.
- Fabre, Elodie and Mónica Méndez-Lago (2009) 'Devolution and organizational change in political parties: the British and Spanish state-wide parties compared', in Wilfried

- Swenden and Bart Maddens (eds) *Territorial Party Politics in Western Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Filipov, Mikhail, Peter C. Ordeshook and Olga Shvetsova (2004) *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gamble, Andrew (1994) *The Free Economy and the Strong State: the Politics of Thatcherism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edition.
- Gunther, Richard and Larry Diamond (2001) 'Types and Functions of Parties', in Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (eds) *Political Parties and Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hearl, Derek, Ian Budge and B. Pearson (1996) 'Distinctiveness of Regional Voting: a Comparative Analysis across the European Community Countries (1979-1993)', *Electoral Studies* 15(2): 167-82.
- Hopkin, Jonathan (2003) 'Political Decentralization, Electoral Change and Party Organizational Adaptation. A Framework for Analysis', *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10(3): 227-237.
- Horgan, Gerard W. (2003) 'Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations: the Emergence of Intergovernmental Agencies', *Public Policy and Administration* 18(3): 12-24.
- House of Commons (2003) *UK Election Statistics: 1945-2003* House of Commons Library Research Paper 03/59 <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2003/rp03-059.pdf>
- Jackman, Robert W. (1972) 'Political Parties, Voting, and National Integration. The Canadian Case', *Comparative Politics* 4(4): 511-536.
- Kirchheimer, Joseph (1966) 'The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems', in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds) *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan (1967) 'Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction', in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (eds) *Party Systems and Voter Alignments. Cross-National Perspectives*. New York: The Free Press.
- Lynch, Peter (2000) 'The Conservative Party and Nationhood', *The Political Quarterly* 71(1): 59-67.
- Merton, Robert K. (1957) *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Mitchell, James (1999) 'Contemporary Unionism', in C.M.M. MacDonald (ed.) *Unionist Scotland*. Edinburgh: John Donald.
- Mitchell, James, David Denver, Charles Pattie and Hugh Bochel (1998) 'The 1997 Devolution Referendum in Scotland', *Parliamentary Affairs* 51: 166-181.
- Peev, Gerry and Peter MacMahon (2007) 'Tories planning cross-Border split', *The Scotsman*, 5 April.
- Rokkan, Stein and Derek Urwin (1982) 'Introduction: Centres and Peripheries in Western Europe', in Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin (eds) *The Politics of Territorial Identity. Studies in European Regionalism*. London: Sage.
- Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords (2000) *A House for the Future*, Cm 4534. London: The Stationary Office.
- Scarrow, Howard A. (1998) 'The Function of Political Parties: A Critique of the Literature and the Approach', in Steven B. Wolinetz (ed.) *Political Parties*. Aldershot: Ashgate (first published in 1967).
- Scharpf, Fritz W. (1995) 'Federal Arrangements and Multi-Party Systems', *Australian Journal of Political Science* 30: 27-39.
- Seawright, David (1999) *An Important Matter of Principle. The Decline of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Seyd, Patrick (2001) 'Labour government – Party Relationships: Maturity or Marginalization?', in Anthony King (ed.) *Britain at the Polls, 2001*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Stolz, Klaus (2002) 'Moving up, Moving down: Political Careers across Territorial Levels', *European Journal of Political Research* 42(2): 237-8.
- Stolz, Klaus (2008) 'Political Careers in a Regionalist Context. Catalonia and Scotland Compared', Conference of the PSA Specialist Group British and Comparative Territorial Politics, Edinburgh, 10-11 January.
- Thorlakson, Lori (2006) 'Party Systems in Multi-level Contexts', in Dan Hough and Charlie Jeffery (eds) *Devolution and Electoral Politics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 37-52.
- Thorlakson, Lori (2009) 'Patterns of Party Integration, Influence and Autonomy in Seven Federations', *Party Politics* 15(2): 157-177.
- Trench, Alan (2005) 'Whitehall and the process of legislation after devolution', in Robert Hazell and Richard Rawlings (eds) *Devolution, Law Making and the Constitution*. Exeter: Academic Imprint.
- Verleden, Frederik (2009) 'Splitting the Difference: the Radical Approach of the Belgian Parties', in Bart Maddens and Wilfried Swenden (eds) *Territorial Party Politics in Western Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wyn Jones, Richard, and Roger Scully (2006) 'Devolution and Electoral Politics in Wales', in Dan Hough and Charlie Jeffery (eds) *Devolution and Electoral Politics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (1999 and 2003) <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>;
- British General Election Study (2005) <http://www.besis.org>.