

The Trajectory of UK Devolution: A Dis-United Kingdom and an Independent Scotland?

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Is the UK Falling Apart?

- No
- Scottish National Party forms a secessionist government in Scotland, but:
 - Unable to secure a referendum on Scottish independence
 - May not hold onto power in May 2011 Scottish election
- What would the people say if given the choice?

Is the UK Falling Apart?

Scotland should ...	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Be independent	28	30	27	30	26	32	35	30	24
Remain part of the UK with its own elected Parliament	58	55	60	52	55	45	44	54	62
Remain part of the UK without an elected Parliament	10	12	9	12	13	17	14	9	10

Is the UK Falling Apart?

According to the <i>English</i> , Scotland should ...	1999	2000	2001	2003	2007
Be independent	20	20	19	17	19
Remain part of the UK with its own elected Parliament	54	52	60	60	48
Remain part of the UK without an elected Parliament	13	17	11	13	18

But really, is the UK Falling Apart?

- Kind of ...
- Devolution as an unstable territorial constitution:
 - The devolution equation: ‘piecemeal’ tradition of territorial accommodation + new political dynamics = centrifugal trajectory of the UK state(s)

The Piecemeal Territorial Tradition

- The asymmetrical ‘union state’: 1536-1997
- 1997: inherited and new differences

Asymmetrical Devolution

Nation	% UK Population	% UK GDP	Form of government
England	83.6	85.7	Direct rule by Westminster with some regional administration of central government policies, but no elected regional government except in London
<i>London</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>19.1</i>	<i>Greater London Authority with responsibilities for strategic policy coordination in transport, economic development, policing, and fire services; elected executive Mayor held to account by separately elected Assembly</i>
Scotland	8.6	8.1	Scottish Parliament with primary legislative powers in matters not reserved to Westminster (most fields of domestic policy); limited fiscal autonomy; electoral system favours government by majority coalition or minority single-party government
Wales	4.9	3.9	1998 Act: secondary legislative powers dependent on Westminster legislation; initial vision of all-party 'corporate body' gave way de facto to government-opposition model 2006 Act: expanded powers to legislate within areas established under individual Westminster statutes; confirmed government-opposition pattern. Electoral system favours (less strongly than Scotland) majority coalition or minority single-party government 2011: referendum on full legislative powers
Northern Ireland	2.9	2.2	Northern Ireland Assembly with primary legislative powers in matters not reserved to Westminster (with some held back by Westminster subject to the security situation); electoral and government formation rules produce multi-party proportional government to ensure cross-community balance; embedded in international relationships with Republic of Ireland

The Piecemeal Territorial Tradition

- The asymmetrical ‘union state’: 1536-1997
- 1997: inherited and new differences
- Continuities
 - No English government
 - No institutional grand design
 - No integrative state ideology
 - Gordon Brown’s ‘Britishness’?
- Disconnections and Dynamics

Disconnections

- Separation of functions, little power-sharing
 - Except Wales and not for long
- Territorial finance by block grant
 - No conditional funding
- Rudimentary intergovernmental coordination
 - No institutional framework for defining and pursuing UK-wide policy goals
 - Bilateralism
- Result: territorial compartmentalisation
 - It was ever thus ...
 - But now we have four governments, not one

Dynamics

- Different dynamics of party competition than left-right politics at Westminster
 - Left-left plus nationalism-unionism in Scotland and Wales
 - Northern Ireland
- Different electoral systems
 - Cross-party cooperation the norm
- Territorial policy communities
 - Distinctive, compartmentalised policy debates
 - Also on constitutional futures

Constitutional Debates

- Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish debates insular/bilateral, narrowly self-interested
- English debate more muted but direction is to make the government of England more distinctive and self-conscious
 - ‘English votes for English laws’
- Scottish-English relationship the key
 - What does Scotland want?
 - What relationship do the English want with Scotland?

Scotland's Divergent Debates

- SNP's National Conversation
- Options:
 - Status quo
 - Enhanced devolution
 - Scottish independence
- Unionist Commission on Scottish Devolution
- Remit:
 - More powers, including more fiscal accountability for Scottish devolution
 - Secure position of Scotland within the UK

Divergence and Convergence

- Unionism vs. nationalism
 - What about England and the rest of the UK?
- Unionist-nationalism
 - Focused on increasingly distinctive national political system for Scotland within UK union
- Nationalist-unionism
 - ‘Devolution-max’
 - Independence *and* union with rest of the UK

What Scots Want

- Two thirds want Scottish Parliament to have more powers
 - Including social security
 - Including more fiscal autonomy
 - Not including defence

What the Scots and English both Want

	England			Scotland		
	2001	2003	2007	2001	2003	2007
‘Now that Scotland has its own Parliament, it should pay for its services out of taxes collected in Scotland’						
Agree	68	59	66	52	51	57
Neither agree nor disagree	14	18	17	18	16	16
Disagree	17	23	16	27	29	22

	England			Scotland		
	2001	2003	2007	2001	2003	2007
Scottish MPs not to vote on English laws at Westminster						
Agree	57	60	60	51	48	50
Neither agree nor disagree	18	18	16	21	29	26
Disagree	14	11	11	24	23	22

Where they disagree

	England			Scotland		
	2001	2003	2007	2001	2003	2007
Do Scots get their fair share of public spending						
More than their fair share	24	22	32	10	11	16
About their fair share	44	45	38	36	35	37
Less than their fair share	9	9	7	47	48	36

- English and Scots want
 - Fiscal autonomy of Scottish Parliament
 - Reduced Scottish influence at Westminster
- Anglo-Scottish solidarity waning

Where We are Headed

- What Next?
 - Implementation of recommendations of Commission on Scottish devolution
 - Not the end of the story
- Where then?
 - Special status autonomy
 - Island regions, Trentino-Alto Adige, Basque Country
 - Confederation