‘Governance transitions’ and minority nationalist parties’ pressure for welfare state change: Evidence from Welsh and Scottish elections - and the UK’s ‘Brexit’ referendum

Abstract

This study is concerned with welfare state development and the intersection between the twin global phenomena of sub-state nationalism and ‘governance transitions’. Specifically, how minority nationalist parties’ (MNPs) use discourse to exert pressure for welfare change. Accordingly, here we explore their discourse in Scottish and Welsh elections, and the UK ‘Brexit’ referendum on European Union membership. The findings reveal how pressure for welfare change is framed using key tropes including nation-building, extending social protection, and resistance to central government programmes. The wider significance to understanding global social policy lies in: 1. revealing the discursive processes associated with multi-level welfare state dynamics; 2. demonstrating how MNPs and governance transitions combine to pressure for welfare state change; and 3. showing how the resultant territorialisation of policy discourse advances ‘sub-state’ models of social citizenship.

Key Words: Welfare Pressures, Governance, Minority Nationalist Parties, Discourse

Introduction

This study addresses lacunae on the interplay between two transnational trends shaping global social policy at the beginning of the twenty-first century: governance transitions and minority nationalism. Its emphasis on political discourse aligns with recent ideational and constructivist accounts of how ideas are a key factor shaping welfare state change (Blyth 2002; Taylor-Gooby, 2005; Beland, 2005; Stiller 2010). The research aim is to examine how minority nationalist parties’ (MNPs) may use discourse to exert pressure for welfare change in the context of two types of governance transition: ‘devolution’ (or

state decentralisation) and supranational collaboration. Both are critical junctures when pre-existing state forms are reconfigured. Accordingly, the following discussion centres on Scottish and Welsh elections, and the UK 'Brexit' referendum on European Union membership.

In methodological terms the validity of this approach is affirmed by Schmidt (2002, 190) who asserts, 'discourse, in short, matters'. This is 'understood as whatever policy actors say to one another and to the public more generally in their efforts to construct and legitimate their policy programs, [it] *is the missing element in the explanation of policy change in the welfare state*. As both a set of ideas about the necessity and appropriateness of reform and an interactive process of policy construction and communication, discourse can create an interactive consensus for change' (Schmidt 2002, 169, emphasis added). Of course, this is not to argue that ideas *alone* are responsible for change. They are modified by functional constraints, as well political considerations – such as policy actors' blame avoidance strategies (see Vis and Van Kersbergen 2013). However, the absence of systematic attention to pressure from nationalist parties' for welfare change in the context of government transitions is a significant lacuna because, as existing accounts tell us, MNPs have 'become the main driving force in the construction of region-specific welfare systems' (Vampa 2014, 473). Moreover, as Béland and Lecours' (2006) seminal text explains, 'social policy presents mobilisation and identity-building potential for sub-state nationalism, and [crucially …] nationalist movements affect the structure of welfare states. Nationalism and the welfare state revolve around the notion of solidarity' (p.77).

'Welfare-state pressure' is 'the theoretical term for denoting the objective forces that strain the welfare state. It includes the whole range of economic, political, and social forces both endogenous and exogenous' (Jæger and Kvist 2003, 557). Reference to the literature on welfare-state pressures since the 1960s affirms the need for the present analysis. It identifies four important theoretical phases (Jæger and Kvist, 2003): 1. The challenges that emerged in the 1960s in relation to: industrialism, urbanization, and the capitalist economy (Wilensky 1975); 2. Pressures in the 1970s from economic crisis and fiscal instability accompanied by a resurgence of (neo-)Marxist (Offe, 1984) and (neo-)liberal

thinking (Hayek, 1994) that threw the conflicting aims of maintaining tax revenues and upholding popular support into sharp relief. 3. Subsequently, from the early 1990s, attention shifted to mostly exogenous "challenges" – largely stemming from economic globalization, and the question of welfare state retrenchment and restructuring (Pierson 1994). And 4. Post-2000, attention shifted to endogenous pressures of demographic developments, changes in post-industrial labour markets, and questions over the popularity of public welfare programmes. What is striking here is the fact that - although the international rise of nationalism has attracted significant scholarly examination (Gellner and Breuilly 2010), limited attention has been given to nationalist ideas as a key pressure for welfare reform. Accordingly, in addressing this lacuna, this paper's focus on MNPs and governance transitions heeds Jæger and Kvist's (2003, p. 568) rejoinder that 'the content of pressures and their relationship to welfare reform need further examination'.

As noted, welfare state pressure emanating from MNPs in the context of two types of governance transition are explored here: In the case of state decentralisation (or devolution), as Faguet (2013, 2) observes, it 'is one of the most important reforms of the past generation, both in terms of the number of countries affected and the potentially deep implications for the nature and quality of governance'. The second transition, supranational governance collaboration, takes many different forms. Yet it can broadly be characterised as independent states' partial pooling of sovereignty and government functions. The example considered here is the case of the European Union.

Because welfare-state pressure may secure different outcomes the present focus links to wider scholarly debate on the changing nature of the welfare state in the twenty-first century. Two aspects are particularly worthy of note here: 1. whether pressure drives convergence or divergence in international welfare systems (McBride and McNutt, 2007); and 2. Whether it leads to welfare state contraction or expansion. At the unitary state level the evidence on these issues is mixed. For example, absolute convergence is strongest in relation to social expenditure (notably, in relation to pensions, labour market policy and health). Yet, even here the process has been gradual and has not led to

uniformity (Ebbinghaus, 2011). However, other areas of welfare (notably, family policy and benefits 'in-kind') have been subject to a common trend of expansion. In turn, this has fuelled divergence reflected in significant differences in the size, structure and institutional configuration of today's welfare states (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). What is less clear (and where the present study of 'sub-state' pressures makes an original contribution), is how such issues play out at the regional (or 'meso') level. Thus, the current analysis responds to calls to address this lacuna: 'it is to hope that future scholarship will […] explore further the relationship between social policy, national identity, and territorial mobilization' (Béland and Lecours', 2005: 700). In short, the underlying rationale for the following analysis is that 'so far, very few studies have focused on the relationship between the politicization of regional identities and welfare governance' (Vampa, 2014a:3).

To address these lacunae the remainder of this article is structured thus: following an overview of the literature on MNPs, governance transitions and welfare; the research context is outlined and the methodology explained. The findings are then set out in two parts: 1. A series of hypotheses from the extant literature are used to explore MNPs' framing of pressure for welfare change in Scottish and Welsh manifesto discourse on welfare; 2. This is followed by analysis of MNP discourse on the European Union, including that associated with the 2016 EU 'Brexit' Referendum. The paper concludes by reflecting on the main findings and their significance.

Minority Nationalist Parties, 'Governance Transitions' and Welfare

Over recent decades the rise of 'new' governance (Rhodes 1997) has challenged the hegemony of centralised welfare (Bache and Flinders, 2004). This has involved governance transitions as states restructure. As noted, such transitions include the uploading of government powers to a supranational tier and/or downloading to the meso-level. Viewed from an international perspective, the latter case of 'de-centralized' or 'sub-state' welfare is nothing new. Indeed, the present may broadly be regarded as events turning full-circle. Anglo-American antecedents include sixteenth century Elizabethan Poor

Laws whereby local parishes provided rudimentary poor relief (Piven and Cloward 1971, Katz 1986). Whilst Islamic examples include the West African *waqf* – or, voluntary endowment of local institutions for the poor (Illife, 1987: 93). Subsequently, the rise of the nation state and attendant centralisation of welfare came to characterise much of the Twentieth century (Pierson 1995; Esping-Andersen 1990).

As noted, state decentralisation or devolution is one of the most important reforms of recent decades (Faguet, 2013: 2; cf. Steiner, 2008; Boockmann et al, 2013; Mok and Wu, 2013; Gallego and Subirats, 2012; Sellers and Lidstrom, 2007; Jakimow, 2014). The result for social policy-making has been the global 'transference of power, authority, and resources to subnational levels of government' (Rodriguez-Pose and Gill, 2003: 334). In many cases this has been driven by stateless nations' demand for greater regional autonomy, as well as secessionist mobilisation (Beland and Lecours, 2008).

Whilst the topic of welfare decentralisation has long been a focus of academic study (cf. James, 1928; Abouchar, 1971), it has traditionally been explored in relation to issues of public cost, efficiency, trust and accountability (Thomson, 2002; Halkos and Tzeremes, 2011; Rauhut and Kahila, 2012). An under-explored dimension is the effect of the transition from centralised administration with single state-wide elections, to a decentralised system with elections to regional parliaments. It is this transition that is explored in the following analysis. Specifically, we are concerned with how state decentralisation intersects with another transnational trend, sub-state civic nationalism. This nexus is an appropriate locus of enquiry for, as the extant literature tells us, nationalist parties seek to mobilise social policy as part of their strategies for greater autonomy and nation building, often advocating distinctive approaches and levels of provision (Beland and Lecours, 2005, 2008; Ferrera, 2005).

The dearth of systematic attention to pressure for welfare state change in nationalist parties' manifesto discourse is a striking oversight because parties' pledges mark a key aspect of the formative phase of policy-making. *Inter alia*, they provide insight into the political vision and ambition for 'sub-state' welfare; reveal the link between identity, political behaviour and policy development; and underline the intersection between ideology and social protection (Vincent, 1992; George and Page,

1995; Deacon, 2002; Fitzpatrick, 2002). Crucially, they also inform an understanding of agenda-setting (Cobb and Ross 1997), as well as the nature of political competition on matters of welfare. They also provide a discursive benchmark against which to check future policy delivery. In the latter regard, the present examples of Plaid Cymru and the SNP have added significance as both parties have held government office since 1999.[1] Whilst it is true that manifesto discourse does not always translate into action and outcomes, the aim here is not to replicate existing instrumental policy evaluations that attempt to measure policy impact (Caracelli and Greene 1993; Ivankova 2011). Rather, the objective is to explore pressure for welfare state change. To offer an *ex ante* processual perspective has explanatory power that complements traditional *ex post* policy analysis of the way MNPs' discourse shapes 'sub-state' welfare (cf. Brodie, 1997).

The second governance transition examined in this study relates to supranational governance collaborations. Although widely differing in nature, they can be broadly characterised as independent states' partial pooling of sovereignty and government functions. Examples include, the European Union and the Union of South American Nations. Here we examine the former. Whilst there is continuing debate over the EU's influence on member states' welfare systems (Sevinc and Civan, 2013), as a unitary state, the UK joined the EU (then 'European Economic Community') in 1973. In June 2016, it voted to leave. This is an appropriate area of enquiry that complements the foregoing analysis of regional welfare proposals, for, as Threlfall's (2007) seminal work underlines, 'social policy can be argued to be truly functional to a regional integration process in the era of globalization, coexisting and co-evolving with it'. A full discussion of social policy and the EU's development is beyond the present purposes (cf. Carlsson et al, 2002; Kleinman, 2002). Suffice to note, that the EU has major implications for the nature of welfare in member states. Yet, reflecting the EU's *sui generis* development, the way that this operates is complex. For example, it is not a direct welfare provider. Moreover, it is member states (and, although often overlooked, constituent meso-governments -) that generally determine social spending. However, the EU influence on welfare is significant and set out in treaty provisions and 'hard' law covering diverse matters such as workers' rights, employment legislation, economic

development aid, and equality and human rights. In consequence, member states have ceded key welfare powers to the European Commission and Parliament such that, for example, they are, are 'not free to take an increasing number of actions, such as refuse maternity leave and pay to mothers, employ child labour, or refuse social security entitlements to a wide range of their residents' (Threlfall, 2007: 288). Thus, the following analysis examines the welfare implications of Europe in minority nationalist parties' election discourse, as well as political speeches and 'grey' literature following the Brexit vote.

It therefore provides a needed insight on the interplay between two transnational trends shaping global social policy. This matters on a number of counts. It tells us whether this nexus contributes to the general erosion of social protection (Pierson, 1995) or presents opportunities for expansion (Lieberman and Shaw, 2000). In line with the competitive theory of federalism (Dawson and Robinson, 1963), it also tells us whether devolution promotes greater inter-regional variation in social programs (Costa-Font, 2010), or leads to sub-state welfare convergence. In addition, it furthers understanding of evolving modes of social citizenship in multi-level systems. In sum, it is an appropriate locus of enquiry centring on, what Ferrera (2005) memorably describes as, 'the new spatial politics of social protection'.

On definitional matters, as Gamble (2016: 3) explains, in the North American tradition 'welfare is defined narrowly to mean income transfers or direct services which support the poor and give a minimum standard of living'. However, in common with a raft of studies (cf. Banting and Costa-Font, 2010; Costa-Font, 2010), this study employs a broader, 'European' definition. One that has its roots in the early seminal texts on welfare (Cf. Beveridge, 1943; Titmus, 1958). It refers to state intervention to coordinate and/or provide services designed to improve the general well-being of citizens and/or offer protection. In other words, 'spending to pool collective risks and to provide investment in human capital of all citizens' (Gamble, 2016: 3; see also Greve, 2013). As Beresford (2016: 2) puts it, 'it is essentially concerned with how we take care of each other as human beings'. Typically, it involves policies concerned with tackling Beveridge's five "giant evils" (want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness).

This holistic definition is consistent with the international decline in welfare in the form of direct cash transfers and the rise of myriad benefits and support 'in kind' in areas such as health, housing, employability, child care, and social care (Castles, 2005; Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2009; Hemerijck, 2012).

Research Context

Legislatures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were (re-)established in 1998-9. A full explication of the rapid, ongoing constitutional change in the UK is outwith the present purposes (see for example, Mitchell and Mitchell, 2011; Deacon, 2012). However, notwithstanding the 'remain' vote in the 2014 independence referendum, Scotland's future secession remains a distinct possibility. It is a scenario given added momentum following the UK's impending exit from the EU. Demographic change also means Northern Ireland's long-term position is unclear.[2] Whilst, since 1999, Wales has seen a significant shift in opinion in favour of varying degrees of 'home-rule'.

It is in this context that the UK has adopted an asymmetrical model of devolution. The three 'regional' legislatures vary in terms of policy responsibilities, the number of parliamentarians and electoral system. Yet they also share common features; including a five year election cycle, and primary law-making and tax raising powers.[3] Crucially, much of their work is concerned with delivering social welfare. The following analysis focuses on Scotland and Wales because the goal of the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru ('The Party of Wales') is secession and independence from a union state. Paradoxically, in the case of nationalist parties in Northern Ireland the goal is union. Specifically, the achievement of a re-united Ireland by merging Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. The latter creates a singular welfare dynamic that is addressed elsewhere ([redacted]).

Since 1999 successive Scottish and Welsh governments have used their powers to promote welfare policies in areas such as housing, social care, services for older and disabled people - as well as

migrants and asylum seekers and those seeking employment.[4] Often the accompanying policy discourse underlines how these are deliberately designed to mitigate the effects of Westminster policies (Drakeford, 2007; Mooney and Scott, 2012). It should also be noted that traditionally there has been a broad uniformity of benefits, payments and entitlements ('social security') overseen in Great Britain by a single central government ministry (the Department for Work and Pensions). However, the Welfare Reform Act (2012) has changed matters. It has given the Scottish and Welsh Governments responsibility for discretionary income maintenance policies (DWP, 2011; Birrell and Gray, 2014).[5] This has seen the creation of the Scottish Welfare Fund (linked to the Scottish Government's anti-poverty and independent living policies) and the Welsh Government's Discretionary Assistance Fund (with emergency and individual assistance payments designed to enable or maintain independent living for disabled people or those who have no other immediate means of meeting the cost of living).[6] As noted, the 'direction of travel' is one of growing divergence. The welfare powers in the Scotland Act (2016) and (to a lesser degree) the Wales Bill (2016) offer the prospect of the further territorialisation of direct transfers.[7]

Methodology

Using manifestos as a data-source is appropriate for they constitute the principal political texts that reflect political parties' priorities and issue positions, thereby allowing systematic analysis over time. In multi-level systems, they also inform an understanding of the impact of governance transitions on the development of social policy regimes, particularly pressure for welfare state change. In short, as Shanahan et al (2011: 535) underline, they 'contain beliefs, mobilize citizens, strategically deploy scientific information in the pursuit of policy positions, and influence public opinion'.

In order to explore MNPs' discourse on sub-state welfare this study follows established practice and analyses the use of 'framing' (Jütersonke and Stucki, 2007). 'Frames' have been widely used in comparative critical discourse analysis of policy-making across polities and tiers of government (Papacharissi, 2008). They constitute a 'schemata of interpretation' (Goffman, 1974: 27) and form part

of an 'interpretative approach that places an emphasis on the language of policy documents' (Fisher, 2003: 223). The following analysis was operationalized by coding all welfare pledges in a database derived from electronic copies of the election manifestos (1999- 2016) of the Scottish Nationalist Party and Plaid Cymru. The coding frame related to the series of research hypotheses (see below) on the nature of pressure for welfare state change. For example, whether party pledges were concerned with welfare expansion, resistance to central government reforms, the introduction of new modes of welfare delivery, or boosting accountability and legitimacy. It is a methodology that is well-established in political and policy science - as evidenced by the vast international corpus of manifesto studies (see for example, Neundorf and Adams, 2016; Toubeau and Wagner, 2016), yet largely lacking in welfare research. In addition, frame analysis was also applied to the MNPs' discourse on European Union membership and recent 'Brexit' referendum outcome. The data sources constituted a purposive sample of the 'grey' literature of political speeches, press conferences, pamphlets, media interviews and party publications and policy briefings.

In sum, the foregoing methods were employed as an appropriate means of understanding the articulation of pressure for welfare-state change in multi-level systems, not least because they contribute to our understanding of the use of language and the construction of meaning in public policy making (McKee, 2003). Attention now turns to the findings. These are presented in two parts that map onto the two types of governance transition examined in this study. The first considers the impact of state decentralisation; and the second, the supranational European 'project'.

1: State decentralisation

The following sets out four hypotheses grounded in the extant literature on state decentralisation, welfare and civic nationalism. This discussion is structured so that, in turn, the underlying rationale for each is presented, followed by consideration of the findings and whether they confirm or reject the

hypothesis. The aim is to illuminate how MNPs use the transition to devolved governance in order to pressure for welfare state change.

Hypothesis One: (a). MNPs' electoral discourse is framed in terms of governance, power and the political control of social welfare; and (b). MNPs' manifesto discourse on sub-state welfare is framed in terms of resistance to central government programmes.

Existing work highlights how central governments may constrain the social policy-making of regional administrations. As Obinger and Starke (2014: 4) put it, 'institutional veto points have decisively impeded the expansion of the welfare state'. In an era of multi-level governance two factors are pivotal in this: the constitutional powers available to meso-government (Banting, 1987) and inter-governmental relations between central (or federal) administrations and regional executives (Obinger, 2005; López-Santana and Moyer, 2012). In turn, the latter depends upon the ideological (dis-)alignment of the parties holding office in the different political centres, and whether this leads to conflict or cooperation. As Pierson (1995: 455) explains, in 'federal systems, the popularity of social provision becomes a source of potential conflict among competing centres of political authority. Social policy debates in federal systems are frequently as much or more about the locus of policy control as about policy content'. However, control is not the sole factor at play here. As Beland and Lecours (2005: 681) observe, MNPs act to 'reinforc[e] regional policy autonomy, which is depicted *as an alternative to centralist schemes*'. In other words, control is intimately linked to the regional ability to resist central government programmes. A raft of leading studies illustrate this. They range from Beland's (2008) insightful account of French-Canadian nationalist resistance to federal social programmes in the 1930s and 40s, Mooney and Scott's (2012: 185) insights on SNP resistance to Thatcherism in 1980s Scotland, to Birrell and Gray's (2014) account of Sinn Fein and SDLP's resistance to recent Westminster welfare policies in Northern Ireland. It is against this backdrop that, as noted, *it is hypothesised that MNPs'*

electoral discourse is framed in terms of governance, power and pressure for the political control of social welfare (Hypothesis 1a) and resistance to central government programmes (Hypothesis 1b).

The manifesto data confirm hypotheses 1a. In the case of pressure for the control of welfare, it accounts for a small yet significant proportion of the pledges (3.8 per cent). In Scotland, this is frequently articulated in terms of national independence following succession from the UK. For example, 'on to independence… only with independence can we give our old people the dignity they deserve, get rid of the indignity of means testing for residential care, introduce a cold climate allowance, [and] establish decent pensions' (SNP, 1999: 8); and 'even with full access to benefit entitlement, however, the current Westminster benefits arrangements cannot lift many carers out of poverty. With Independence, we would have the power to tackle this shortcoming through our comprehensive review of tax and benefits' (SNP, 2003: 18).

Notably, compared to the SNP, Plaid Cymru give more than double the attention to the political control of welfare (5.2 compared to 2.3 per cent). This reflects greater frustration with limited and opaque powers over welfare in the Welsh constitutional settlement when compared to the clearer, more expansive arrangements that apply to Scotland. For example, 'unnecessary restrictions [have been] placed on our National Assembly to act decisively… Plaid Cymru has the ideas and the drive to build our nation… our country should have the tools to act like a nation, to innovate, to create jobs and to deliver world-class public services' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 42). Accordingly, the demand for political control of welfare is explicit: 'a Plaid Cymru Government will seek to transfer control of appropriate welfare powers to Wales and do everything possible to protect people from the damage caused by Westminster's cuts to benefits and inappropriate, unfair benefits sanctions' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 153).

The data also confirm Hypothesis 1b on meso-resistance to central government welfare policies. It is a feature of both MNPs' discourse (5.8 per cent of pledges). In contrast to the language employed in central government policies, the MNPs pressure for an approach to welfare based on collectivism, statist solutions and resistance to private sector involvement in welfare provision. As policy theory explains (Swedlow 2014), resistance needs to be seen in both political and cultural terms. This is certainly the case in relation to Scotland and Wales on the one hand, and England on the other. The former nations have more of a communitarian, 'Leftist' culture – reflected in a long tradition of voting for Left-of-centre parties; whilst the right-of-centre Conservative and Unionist Party has consistently has stronger support from English voters.[8] Examples of the MNP discourse include: 'Plaid Cymru is profoundly concerned at the erosion of the welfare state… and the effect of this on the elderly, the young, the unemployed, the disadvantaged and the disabled. We see an important opportunity for the National Assembly to challenge the right-wing views that currently dominate London politics' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: x); and 'Scotland's NHS will remain firmly in the public sector. We will not follow the route adopted in England which will lead to the dismemberment of the NHS' (SNP, 2011: 32). A key aspect of the resistance centres on the MNPs' rejection of New Public Management techniques. The latter places emphasis on performance indicators and market mechanisms; something that has been favoured by successive Conservation Westminster governments.

Foucault's view of power as a changing set of relations that produces different strategies for action is germane here. Particularly, the view that 'there are no relations of power without resistances' and that these 'are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised' (Foucault 1980, 142). Accordingly, analysis reveals how the two MNPs refer to a broad range of policy tools and techniques to resist central government programmes (Prior and Barnes, 2011), these include legislative and fiscal measures. The former is typified by: 'The [UK] government's unfair 75 per cent 'clawback' of council housing sale receipts which deprives communities of much-needed housing investment funds will be repealed' (SNP 2003, 23). The latter is illustrated by: 'We will use the Welsh Government's

discretionary housing payments power to compensate in full those families affected by the withdrawal of benefit under the Bedroom Tax'[9] (Welsh Government 2016, 48).

Hypothesis Two. MNPs' 'sub-state' manifesto discourse on welfare is framed in terms of nation-building and identity.

As Kazepov (2010: 21) notes, 'the welfare state can be seen as the last step of the long-term historical development through which territorially bounded political communities came to introduce redistributive arrangements for their citizens'. Crucially, as centralised notions of welfare are being challenged: 'the territorial bond of political communities is changing scale, [in turn,] shifting… the redistributive capacities states have in different directions as well. In particular, this is true towards to sub-national levels' (p.11). The extant literature tells us that one of the main drivers of decentralisation is national minorities' call for regional autonomy (Beland and Lecours, 2006: 77). In this way, 'sub-state nationalism can affect social policy making… by reshaping the policy agenda at… the sub-state level' (Beland and Lecours, 2005: 681). A survey of the extant literature confirms this observation. For example: 'social policymaking has been *an important nation-building tool*' (Mooney and Scott, 2011: 2); 'welfare states are *a key element of nation-building'* (Greer, 2010: 182); 'welfare provision is significant for *promoting nation-building* and social citizenship' (Mok and Wu, 2013: 62); and 'in multinational states such as Canada and the United Kingdom, *welfare-state development has had a nation-building dimension*… that deserves more attention' (Beland and Lecours, 2005: 700). Notwithstanding this, a key lacuna is study of the role of electoral discourse in this process. To address this, as noted, it is hypothesised that MNPs' 'sub-state' manifesto discourse on welfare is framed in terms of nation-building and identity (Hypothesis Two).

The data from both countries confirm this hypothesis (Table 1.). A small but significant proportion of pledges (4 per cent) is explicitly concerned with articulating welfare policy proposals in terms of nation-building. The limited number of such pledges does not negate the significance of the

finding. This type of clause is common in electoral discourse analysis. It constitutes a normative, 'high level' statement of overarching political vision (Habermas 1996: 289; Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). As the international corpus of manifesto studies attests, these will always be less numerous than other types of clause. This is because of their strategic nature. The vast majority of pledges complement these and in the main are concerned with the practicalities of how such normative visions may be turned into outcomes through specific policy measures.

Accordingly, from the outset of devolution in Wales, Plaid Cymru's election programmes emphasize that 'sub-state' welfare provision as integral to identity and nation-building. The discourse reveals how the transition to devolved governance provide new discursive opportunities to facilitate this. Thus, the 'regional' legislature is at the heart of this agenda. For example, 'the National Assembly is… the focus of our national aspirations… It must lead our national development… in health care; in fighting poverty; and in providing education and training' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 7); and 'the key task of the National Assembly will be to consolidate this new Wales. The Party of Wales will aim to ensure that the following feature strongly in our new Wales… A just society, which fights poverty and social exclusion' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 5). In turn, the Scottish discourse is typified by its programme for the first modern-era Scottish general election: 'this manifesto contains details of other policies that will also contribute to the development of Scotland and the welfare and well-being of those who live here' (SNP, 1999: 14).

[Temporary Note – Table 1. – about here]

In both countries MNPs' education policy is a further, prominent part of the nation-building discourse. For example, 'we will develop the concept of "Scottish Studies" in our schools, creating a distinct strand of learning focused on Scotland and incorporating Scottish History, Scottish Literature, the Scots and

Gaelic Languages, wider Scottish culture and Scottish current affairs' (SNP, 2011: 12). Whilst in Wales, the stated goal is 'developing an enhanced awareness of Welsh history and identity through the education system' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 22); and ensuring 'the development of a new National Curriculum for Wales… we regard this as a key component in our development as a nation' (Plaid Cymru, 2003: 18).

Complementing this, language policy is also at the heart of this discourse. In the case of Scotland it is expressed in the following terms: 'the SNP will ensure that Scotland's diverse linguistic and cultural heritage, including the Gaelic and Scots languages and Scottish History have an enhanced place in the classroom' (SNP, 1999: 11). Reflecting the higher proportion of the population that speak the indigenous language, the discourse in Wales is more detailed and is articulated in terms of specific aspects of policy. For example, 'government departments can play an important role in promoting Welsh in areas such as education, housing, planning and employment. We will set up a powerful language unit in the First Minister's Office to ensure effective coordination of policies across government' (Plaid Cymru, 2007: 29); and 'we will… ensure that sufficient Welsh language childcare is available in all parts of Wales' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 33).

Whilst education and language policy are to the fore, the current analysis also shows how the nation-building trope extends across welfare policy areas. For example, we are committed to 'maintain[ing] the planned arts and heritage funding, for both its intrinsic value and its contribution to the growth of our nation' (Plaid Cymru, 2011: 26); and 'among the most exciting opportunities of Welsh nationhood is the chance to build a new kind of society. One that promotes equality, [and] tackles poverty' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 27).

Hypothesis Three: (a). MNPs' electoral discourse on welfare change is framed in terms of enhanced accountability and legitimacy; and (b). It alludes to shared values and solidarity as underpinning sub-state models of social citizenship.

Minority nationalist parties' core critique of union states is that they lack legitimacy because their representative institutions deny local autonomy and impose centrally-determined political agendas on sub-state nations (Hutchinson and Smith, 1995; Coakley, 2012). As Diaz-Serrano and Rodríguez-Pose (2015: 412) explain, 'the original and still the fundamental objective of the transfer of powers and resources to subnational tiers of government is to improve the delivery of public goods and services to individuals *by the creation of more legitimate tiers of government, closer to the people and, therefore, more responsive to their needs and wants'*. In turn, this has important implications for traditional notions of citizenship. As Bauböck and Guiraudon (2009: 439) observe, 'the territorial boundaries of citizenship are no longer identical with those of states… territorial devolution has created new spaces for sub-state models of social citizenship'. However, the scholarly literature in this area is incomplete. Whilst 'decentralization has shifted decision making to the local elected representatives, consequently impacting power dynamics… bad governance and poor accountability can severely undermine the interest of the poor and the socially vulnerable' (Gurtoo and Udayaadithya, 2014). Specifically, the 'literature on administrative responsiveness, i.e. congruence between public policy and community preferences, however, is limited' (p.114). Accordingly, as noted, *it is hypothesised that (a). MNPs' electoral discourse on welfare decentralisation is framed in terms of enhanced accountability and legitimacy; and (b). It alludes to shared values and solidarity as underpinning sub-state models of social citizenship (Hypothesis Three).*

The findings confirm both parts of the hypothesis. A small, yet significant number (3 per cent) of the pledges pressuring for welfare change are framed in terms of accountability and legitimacy (a further example of normative discourse clauses, see for example Van Dijk, 1981: 177). Welsh examples include: 'following the devolution of further welfare powers to Wales, a Plaid Cymru Government would make the consultation of disabled people's groups a statutory requirement for all future changes to welfare policy, to ensure that the voices of disabled people are always heard' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 155).

In Scotland, such framing is particularly evident in health and housing policy. For example: 'we want to simplify the structure and create a more accountable and transparent service, with devolved powers to allow communities to shape services according to their needs' (SNP, 2003: 12).

The current analysis also shows how the MNPs' manifesto discourse advances sub-state models of social citizenship. Reference to the wider literature on citizenship allows a number of constituent tropes to be identified (Johnston Conover, Crewe and Searing, 1991; Rapoport, 2013). The first is concerned with notions of a shared history, culture, identity and sense of belonging.[10] This is particularly evident in the MNPs' education pledges. For example, 'helping children and young people to develop a better understanding of themselves, their communities, their history and their culture' (Plaid Cymru, 2003: 18); and 'a modern Scottish curriculum… Scottish history, culture and heritage will be embedded in school life to provide a Scottish world view' (SNP, 2007: 23).

The second trope is one of 'national values'. For example, 'the new self-confidence of the Welsh electorate demands a confident and determined government that will build social policies on the basis of *our values as a nation* and the needs of our communities' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 21), '*Welsh values* and aspirations' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 17); and 'Scotland is a diverse, welcoming and outward-looking nation, with compassion and a drive for fairness sitting at the *very heart of our values'* (SNP, 2016: 41). In turn, this begs the question as to what constitute the putative 'national values'. The following analysis shows how they can be deconstructed to reveal a number of constituent themes that further illuminate sub-state models of citizenship. For example:

- *Tolerance*: **'**Learning about citizenship: We will help schools engage pupils in citizenship education which… prepares them to play a full part in society and promotes a culture of respect and tolerance' (SNP, 2007: 15);
- *Compassion*: 'traditionally Scots have believed in the values of compassion, community and the common weel. We think these values are still important to our society. Many of us believe that the Scottish Parliament will fail unless it delivers a better, more compassionate society.

That is at the heart of our policy intentions for health, education and housing in this manifesto' (SNP, 1999: 7).

- *Fairness*: 'The Party of Wales will strive for a health service that is fairer' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 6); 'fair educational opportunities for all are fundamental to civilised society' (Plaid Cymru, 2003: 8); and 'fairness… so every child, no matter their background, has an equal chance of going to university' (SNP, 2016: 38). And,
- *Social justice*: 'the full powers of Independence… will lead to… improving public services and delivering social justice' (SNP, 2003: 16);

Promoting equality is a further tenet of the SNP and Plaid Cymru citizenship discourse. Examples span policy areas and include: 'developing a national citizenship of equals, with both individual entitlements and shared responsibilities' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 17); and 'all of our people have a right to share in our nation's opportunity and potential, and we want to guarantee that equality' (SNP, 2003: 27).

The MNPs' model of citizenship revealed here can therefore be seen as a rescaling of the social contract between the individual and the state (Stoer and Magalhães, 2002). The discourse shows how the state in question here is no longer the UK, but MNPs' vision of a transitioning Scotland and Wales as they move to independence. The manifestos also underline how this is founded upon liberal and pluralist thinking on rights and responsibilities in relation to welfare. For example, in the former case, 'we will legislate to provide the same rights to access to treatment for people living with chronic, severe substance misuse problems as are now provided for people with mental health problems' (Plaid Cymru, 2011: 27); and 'a written constitution for an independent Scotland to guarantee the rights and liberties of citizens and limit the power of government' (SNP, 2007: 19).

In addition, analysis reveals a 'responsibility trope' that is concerned with citizens' self-reliance, accountability for their actions, and obligations towards others. Examples include: 'developing a rights and responsibilities code to instil a sense of personal responsibility in our young people' (SNP, 2003: 11); 'We will also work to build a culture of responsibility and confidence across our nation' (SNP, 2011:

5); and 'education has a key role in our national development by helping children and young people… it must also instil in them a sense of global citizenship and the responsibilities that go with it' (Plaid Cymru, 2003: 11). Allied to this, both MNPs underline that volunteering is a key element in being a 'responsible citizen'. For example, 'civic service in the community will be an integral part of the education curriculum' (Plaid Cymru, 2007: 33); and 'We will investigate the option of elective time in the school week, to free up time for… community volunteering or sport' (SNP, 2007: 15).

Two further, related tropes can be identified in the MNPs' discourse on 'sub-state' citizenship: 'participation' and 'inclusiveness'. Thus, the discourse underlines that welfare citizenship in Scotland and Wales is based on individuals' active engagement in shaping policies and services. Moreover, it emphasises that this should be free from barriers and open to all. For example, 'we will target groups with low participation rates, including women, the disabled and poorer people, seeking ways of assisting and encouraging their participation' (Plaid Cymru, 2003: 15); and 'we want carers themselves to have a more direct voice in the decision making process and will bring forward proposals for an annual 'Carers Parliament' (SNP, 2011: 8).

Hypothesis Four: MNPs' electoral discourse is framed in terms of pressure for meso-level welfare expansion and new modes of welfare

An enduring debate in the literature on governance transitions and welfare centres on the extent to which decentralisation leads to the erosion of social protection (Pierson, 1995) or presents opportunities for meso-level innovation and expansion (Lieberman and Shaw, 2000). This has a strong electoral dimension. Thus, the competitive theory of federalism points to how decentralisation may result in greater interregional variation in social programs (Costa-Font, 2010). Notably, at the individual state level in federal systems with strong party competition, there is an observed propensity for parties to adopt policies to benefit the "have-nots", owing to their greater need to broaden their support and compete for votes (Key, 1956; Jennings, 1979). It is in this context that MNPs may advance a 'social

democratic vision of solidarity and social citizenship… [offering the *potential* for] expansion of social policy at the sub-state level' (Beland and Lecours, 2008: 31). It should be noted that causality is not being claimed here - exceptions can be found – such as French-Canadian nationalist resistance to federal social programmes in the 1930s and 40s (Beland, 2008, op cit). Yet a survey of the extant literature reveals a multiplicity of accounts (Petmesidou, 1996; Le Galès and Lequesne, 1998; Sellers and Lidström, 2007; Priyadarshee and Hossain, 2010; Ezcurra and Rodríguez-Pose, 2011; Giovannetti, 2011) that support Kazepov's (2010) conclusion that welfare decentralisation brings the prospect of increased social protection and 'the widening of local experimentation… transforming the local level into a social laboratory' (p.66). Accordingly, as noted, *it is hypothesised that MNPs' electoral discourse is framed in terms of meso-level welfare expansion and new modes of welfare*.

The data analysis confirms this hypothesis in relation to the Scottish and Welsh case studies. The discourse in both MNPs' manifestos places particular emphasis on welfare expansion. The overwhelming majority (83.5 per cent) of pledges were framed in this way. In the case of the SNP welfare expansion was so central to its programmes, that, the party told voters, it was the only scenario under which it was prepared to use the limited tax varying powers available to the newly re-established Parliament in 1999: we will 'only use "Scotland's Penny" [a discretionary addition to UK income tax rate] to invest £690 million more in health, education and housing. (SNP, 1999: x). The SNP's 2007 manifesto provides a typical snapshot of the welfare expansion narrative. Amongst its pledges were the following: 'phasing out prescription charges to end an unfair tax on ill health; improved access to counselling and talking therapies in every health board area; annual health checks… a doubling of the number of school nurses; a school-based dental service; and the introduction of free school meals' (SNP, 2007: 18). Notwithstanding current austerity, the expansion narrative has continued unabated. For example, the 2016 SNP manifesto states: 'we will increase the NHS [National Health Service] revenue budget by

almost £2 billion [$2.6] in total' (p.42); and 'By 2021, we will almost double the number of hours of free early years education and childcare' (p.19).

Textual analysis shows the SNP's policy ambition is matched by the programmes of Plaid Cymru. For example, 'expanded provision of child care is important… we will give it priority in our allocation of financial resources' and, 'a PC government will fund the provision of free home social care' (Plaid Cymru 2003: 8). The latter pledge emulates one implemented in Scotland by a SNP government, thereby supporting Pavolini and Ranci's (2008) work showing international policy transfer as a driver of welfare expansion. In turn, the breadth and extent of the welfare expansion narrative in Wales and Scotland also supports Sheeley's (2012) conclusion that, 'state and local governments are enacting diverse programs and do not appear to be limiting welfare provision in new ways to avoid becoming "welfare magnets"' (p.321). It should also be noted that in the wake of the global economic downturn, when pre- and post – 2008 framing is compared, there is a modest increase in the number of pledges made under 'expansion of welfare' frame (SNP +8 percentage points, Plaid Cymru +6 percentage points). This suggests that MNPs' pressure for welfare state change also needs to be seen in the context of the wider economic situation. Textual analysis confirms this. For example, reference is made to 'the worst global recession in decades has had a huge impact on Wales the Plaid-driven Government in Wales has done everything it can to prioritise schools and hospitals, free prescriptions and bus passes, council services and help for jobs and the economy' (Plaid Cymru, 2011, p.14). It also shows how pressure for welfare expansion stems from a reaction to austerity measures imposed by central government. For example, 'poverty is not inevitable and our focus will be on tackling the root causes of poverty and deprivation – not just on mitigating the cuts imposed by a Westminster government' (SNP 2016, 19).

2. Supranational governance – the European 'project'

Following a brief contextual summary of Plaid Cymru and the SNP's shifting position on European integration, this section focuses on the MNPs' manifesto discourse on the EU following state

decentralisation, with reference to the implications for 'regional' welfare. In the following section this is complemented by analysis of the discourse related to the 2016 EU referendum.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the SNP 'saw international organizations as offering a stable environment for small countries in a potentially hostile world' (Mitchell, 1998: 108). As Lynch (1996: 29) notes, this signalled something of a 'reconciliation between [Scottish] sovereignty and [European] integration' whereby Europe was seen as less of a threat. Instead it was viewed as more economically advantageous to Scotland than the UK union state. However, the SNP then moved to an ambiguous position; sometimes exhibiting hostility to the EEC/ EU because of fears that integration may undermine its goal of independence (e.g. 'Scotland has suffered too much already from centralisation in Britain. Centralisation Common Market style could be a death blow to our very existence as a nation' SNP, 1974: 16). In the 1980s the Party's view changed once again: 'from hostility towards the EU, expressed as a commitment to withdraw an independent Scotland from the organisation, subject to a referendum vote, to making membership of the EU the cornerstone of its self-government policy' (Dardanelli, 2003: 10). This has been evident in each SNP manifesto to the Scottish Parliament since its re-establishment in 1999. In this way, as Hepburn observes, the SNP moved to a 'more sovereigntist position that demanded "independence in Europe"' (Hepburn, 2006: 134).

In contrast, from its founding in 1925 Plaid Cymru saw Wales as a European nation (Morgan, 1971). However, the party's founders rejected the notion of 'independence', preferring instead to pursue the goal of greater autonomy over political and cultural affairs against the backdrop of supranational cooperation in Europe (Butt Philip, 1975). However, as in the case of the SNP, the 1980s saw the Party's standpoint shift. European integration was embraced as a means to secure greater autonomy. Ultimately this was given expression in the phrase 'full national status for Wales in Europe' (Plaid Cymru, 1990: 14). Thus, Plaid's vision was one of a post-union state in which Westminster's sovereignty declined as powers were transferred to the 'regional' tier, as well as a second chamber in the EU representing regions and 'historic nations' (Nagel, 2004). Thus, as Carl (2003: 486) highlights,

the key aspects of the discourse that accompanied devolution in 1999, such as ideas around inclusive governance and progressive social policy were to 'be realised in Welsh society through European integration and Welsh influence in Europe'.

Further analysis of the MNPs' welfare change discourse on Europe in post-1999 Scottish and Welsh elections confirms the existence of the same key tropes that feature in relation to the parties' domestic manifesto programmes. For example, the welfare expansion frame is to the fore. The parties repeatedly offer a European rationale and/or comparison to support their proposals to extend and improve social policy. Examples include, in Scotland 'our health service could and should match the best in Europe' (SNP, 2003: 3) and 'poor leadership since the onset of devolution ha[s] left us with a poorly structured service, delivering far poorer health outcomes than in comparable parts of Europe' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 47).

Underlining how the pooling of risk in supranational governance is attractive to MNPs' welfare plans, both parties repeatedly make reference to the use of EU economic aid to fund their social programmes. For example, 'We will use the European Social Fund to train young people and people seeking to re-enter the workforce to become childcare workers and to set up their own childcare businesses' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 48), and 'using £64.6 [$85.2] million of European Structural Funds… we will be able to deliver an extensive range of employability and training services for the unemployed' (SNP, 2011: 12).

The European discourse is also used to further nation-building. For example, in the first elections to the re-established Scottish Parliament a key pledge is that 'a referendum on independence [will be held] within the first four year term of an SNP government, so that Scotland can move on from devolution to full membership of the European Union' (SNP, 1999: 5). Whilst in Wales, 'we remain committed to an independent Wales as a full member of the European Union' (Plaid Cymru, 2007: 14). As part of this discourse MNPs use Europe to pressure for greater 'regional' control of welfare and resistance to central government programmes. For example, 'We will demand that European funding

comes directly to the National Assembly and not to the Exchequer in Westminster' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 12) and 'we are concerned that attempts to transfer powers from Europe to Westminster will not be in the best interests of Wales, and a Plaid Cymru Welsh Government will oppose those plans' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 17).

Analysis also evidences how Europe is used by the MNPs to pressure for progressive, sub-state models of social citizenship. For example:

> Social Europe has been good for Wales. EU social policies have helped achieve more equality of opportunity, better protection for workers as well as for parents, children and young people. If the UK Government opts out once again from the Social Chapter, we will propose a special agreement between the European Commission and the Welsh Government to ensure that Wales can opt in and remain covered' (Plaid Cymru, 2016: 24).

Whilst, for example, in the Scottish case reference is made to: 'benefits of EU Membership - Scotland's place in Europe matters to us as a nation and being part of a wider European family of nations has brought us benefits… The EU has led on improving workers' fundamental rights and conditions… and human rights' (SNP, 2016: 41).

2 (b). MNP discourse associated with the 2016 EU Referendum

The SNP and Plaid referendum discourse resonates with the work of Obinger et al (2010) who allude to the benefits of EU membership for small nations. Factors that make such supranational cooperation attractive include solidarity, and the pooling of risk and protection. Thus, both MNPs underline how multi-level governance, specifically the 'regional' (i.e. Scottish and Welsh)-EU nexus is pivotal to their social programmes. Notably, the Plaid Cymru discourse uses the term 'flexicurity' to capture the benefits of solidarity and security that attach to EU membership. For example, 'cohesion at the local level and diversity writ large are in this sense Europe's biggest strengths: the EU is flexicurity for a

continent of small nations, and for their citizens; a safety valve against the fluctuations of the market, pooling risk without blunting the entrepreneurial imperative' (Price and Levinger, 2011: 56). The Party also highlights the financial benefits to poor nations such as Wales of the welfare safety net provided by the EU: 'we are net beneficiaries to the extent of £150 per family each year, not net contributors to the EU - things look markedly different' to the perspective from England… European social provisions give Welsh working people some security which could totally disappear under right wing governments at Westminster'.[11] In light of these considerations both Plaid and the SNP fore-front the detrimental welfare and policy consequences of leaving the EU. For example, Plaid called the Leave vote a 'hammer blow to Wales economically', warning 'the poorest will pay the price'.[12] Noting that Brexit will have 'profound consequences for the future of the health service right across the UK'.[13]

As Kay (2009: 17) observes, 'the welfare systems of smaller countries have exploited the greater sense of solidarity in smaller communities to provide economic security without creating the substantial excluded minorities which are characteristic of all the four larger economies'. This is evident in both the SNP and Plaid Cymru discourse. For example, reference is made to how European Directives on equality and rights underpin progressive welfare in Wales and Scotland. For example, in the Scottish case, 'our membership [of the EU] brings significant benefits, such as employment rights… the right to not be discriminated against. All of these are protected by the EU'.[14] Particular emphasis is placed on gender equality: 'being part of Europe is good for everyone in Scotland – but women in particular have benefitted from a series of progressive reforms and the crucial rights which our EU membership has guaranteed… By uniting to vote to Remain in big numbers, Scotland can make clear that we reject the right-wing agenda of the Brexit campaign – and protect the vital women's rights we've come to take for granted, rather than leaving them in the hands of an unfettered, right-wing Tory government'.[15]

In addition, both parties underline resistance to centralised administration. Thus, reference is made to the role of the EU as a bulwark against unwelcome policies imposed by central government. Indeed, the dissonance between the MNPs' well-founded critique of central government initiatives and

rather idealistic interpretation of the EU is striking. The SNP argues that the Westminster government's welfare reforms have had a 'particularly detrimental impact on disabled people and women, with welfare failings and pervasive in-work poverty affecting poorly paid workers and their families'.[16] In Wales, Plaid highlights central government's failure to tackle 'issues of class and inequality', describing the referendum as an opportunity to '… a shout against poverty, about being at the bottom of a wealth league'.[17] Furthermore, particular accent is placed on social protection. For example the SNP leader stated: 'the EU guarantees co-rights and social protection… I genuinely fear that a UK working outside the single [European] market will seek economic competitiveness through deregulation and a race to the bottom'.[18]

The two MNPs are also in accord on the constitutional implications of the referendum outcome. Analysis of the discourse reveals how the 'leave' vote has renewed pressure to seek Scottish and Welsh independence within the European Union. Thus, at a specially convened post-referendum conference Plaid delegates voted overwhelmingly to reaffirm the party's commitment to an independent Wales in Europe.[19] Whilst the SNP was swift to signal its intention to hold a second referendum on Scottish independence. Implicit in this is the idea that an independent Scotland and Wales within the EU will have autonomy over welfare. For example, Plaid stated 'it is clear that the UK cannot continue in its current form… On this dark and uncertain [post-referendum vote] morning for our country, people can rest assured that Plaid Cymru is united, confident and focused on getting the best for Wales. We are determined to do everything we can in order to empower our national institution [the National Assembly for Wales] and protect our communities'.[20]

In both cases the stated goal is a progressive, European quasi-socialist vision of welfare. Thus the Plaid discourse asserts that the arguments of 'building a socially inclusive continent are compelling'; adding 'principle-based arguments […] were largely side-lined' in the [Brexit] referendum'. Analysis of the discourse shows Plaid's pro-European vision of progressive welfare is clear: 'neither will we let go the aspiration of a social Europe'.[21] In the case of Scotland, reference is made to 'explor[ing] options

for protecting Scotland's relationship with the EU, Scotland's place in the single market and the social, employment and economic benefits that come from that'.[22] Accordingly, the Party was forthright in asserting its:

> '… determination to promote excellence and equity… We will not waver in our determination to reduce inequalities, to promote an inclusive and growing economy and to reform our public services. The situation that we face will not stop us seeking to make Scotland a better country for all the people who live and work here; indeed, *the steps that we take to protect our place in the European Union will be part of that work*'.[23]

Ahead of securing independence the Plaid discourse also pressures for change so that, post-Brexit, the Welsh Parliament should have the power to re-enact European social legislation affecting welfare: 'if powers are to be repatriated [from the EU to the UK], there should be specific attention as to which parliament takes up those repatriated powers, and not the automatic default that everything goes to Westminster. For example, on social measures Wales should be should allowed to 'opt-in' even if England chooses not to do so'.[24]

Discussion

The foregoing analysis reveals how minority nationalist parties may use governance transitions and associated moves away from centralised public administration to exert pressure for welfare state change. These transitions matter because, as critical junctures, they throw governance matters into sharp relief. The discontinuity with pre-existing, centralised systems allows MNPs to use the arising discursive opportunities to articulate social policy programmes that both advance - and themselves are informed by, constitutional ambitions of independence and the political prioritisation of nation and identity. In this way governance transitions create new political spaces for shaping the formative phase of social policy-making. In the present case, prior to 1999, 'regional' elections were absent in the UK.[25]

Subsequently, Scottish and Welsh ballots have transformed the political opportunity structures open to MNPs. In like manner, the UK's membership of, and impending departure from, the European Union are pivotal transitions that, as the present study attests, MNPs use in specific ways in order to further their constitutional aims and pressure for welfare state change.

The wider significance of this to the understanding of global social policy is in showing how pressure for welfare change is a dynamic, iterative process; one that not only involves 'down-loading', or government decentralisation - but also supranational governance, the pooling of sovereignty and the 'uploading' of governmental powers. In the former case, the creation of meso-legislatures creates a discursive arena wherein MNPs articulate their ideas for welfare state change. In doing this the present case study MNPs employ a series of (non-discrete) frames. The first is concerned with challenging and resisting the policy priorities and practices of central government. The second emphasises 'sub-state' or 'regional' solidarity through welfare, thereby advancing nation building. The third, concerns pressure for welfare expansion as they seek to gain electoral support through enhanced social protection for 'sub-state' nations. In turn, these combine to promote welfare divergence, the territorialisation of policy and the emergence of distinctive 'sub-state' models of social citizenship.

Importantly, as the present analysis also underlines, MNPs' pressure for welfare state change operates across governance tiers, challenging traditional conceptions of the nation and the "boundedness" of policy. This 're-spatialisation' of welfare is evident MNPs' references to the European Union. In this, EC Directives and policy ('Social Europe') are used to underline the case for progressive, sub-state models of citizenship. 'Flexicurity' is a notable trope used to capture the benefits of solidarity and security attaching to membership of the European 'project'. The discourse also evidences how the pooling of risk inherent in supranational governance is attractive to MNPs. This is because it underpins redistributive economic aid and reduces dependence upon central government. Thus, both civic nationalist parties studied here make repeated reference to EU structural aid as part of their welfare expansion frame. Europe also plays a key part their proposals to extend and improve social protection.

Both repeatedly offer EU comparisons in making the case for their social programmes. Thus, they variously allude to the policy goal of being 'the best in Europe', or alternatively, assert the need not to 'fall behind European standards'.

Underlining the iterative, 'regional'-supranational dynamic, the discourse on the Brexit vote provides further illustration of MNPs' use of governance transitions to advance nation-building through pressure for welfare change. Not least because the perceived negative impact of the UK's EU exit (i.e. loss of rights, regional economic aid and so on -) has strengthened the MNPs' determination to end Scottish and Welsh membership of the UK and seek independence within the European Union. In addition, the current study also provides insight into wider debates about international welfare convergence versus divergence, as well as the dynamic between welfare contraction and expansion. To date, scholarly work in this area has largely centred on unitary states. Yet the evidence of Scotland and Wales at least suggests growing divergence and expansion at the 'regional' or 'sub-state' level. This is particularly apparent in the discourse data. These detail myriad proposals for extending social welfare in diverse ways across the breadth of policy fields.

The current analysis also suggests that the future trajectory appears to be one of accelerated divergence and expansion. This is because of the swiftly changing constitutional situation in both territories. At present this is manifest in the effects of new governmental powers recently transferred to Scotland and Wales as they begin to impact on welfare. Notably, these include significant new tax-raising powers, as well as growing responsibility for direct-transfers that complement the 'payments in kind'-type social policies seen in the past. Added to this, Scotland's imminent secession from the UK is a real possibility. Yet, regardless of whether this happens, the existence of both meso-parliaments raises the immediate short-term prospect of Scottish and Welsh governments 're-enacting' EU social legislation in domestic legal codes; a development that will exert a significant influence on the nature of welfare.

In summary, the wider international significance of this study lies in highlighting how the intersection of minority nationalism and governance transitions is a key source of pressure for contemporary welfare state change. This nexus spans social policy-making across governance tiers and constitutes a hitherto neglected aspect of the discursive processes associated with transnational welfare state dynamics. Not only does it reveal how MNPs seek to promote the territorialisation of welfare, it also points to how pressure for policy divergence advances 'sub-state' models of social citizenship.

Frame	Scotland - SNP						Wales- Plaid Cymru						Combined
	1999	2003	2007	2011	2016	All	1999	2003	2007	2011	2016	All	All
Nation-building	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.4	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.8	1.2	4.5	4.0
Expansion/ new modes of welfare	15.7	11.4	21.1	12.8	25.3	86.4	10.5	15.8	9.7	18.0	26.7	80.7	83.5
Resistance to central government programmes	1.7	1.1	0.6	0.7	1.1	5.1	0.8	3.6	0.3	1.2	0.5	6.4	5.8
Accountability, legitimacy	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.4	2.8	1.1	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.5	3.2	3.0
Political control of social welfare	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.6	2.3	0.7	2.7	0.7	0.9	0.3	5.2	3.8

‡ Percentage of pledges in each country (N= 1,478)

Table 1. The framing of pledges on welfare in SNP and Plaid Cymru manifestos 1999-2016

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[1] SNP was elected as a minority government in 2007 and majority government in 2011 and 2016. Plaid Cymru formed a coalition with the Welsh Labour Party 2007-11.
[2] The growing proportion of Catholic citizens over time may see a popular vote in favour of re-unification with the south of Ireland.
[3] In the case of Wales, income tax powers are set out in the Wales Act (2014)
[4] For example, The Redundancy Action Scheme (ReAct) is a programme of funding for training provided by the Welsh Government for people living in Wales who are facing redundancy. It includes skills and training awards of £1,500 covering aspects such as accommodation costs, childcare costs, and equipment for individuals with a learning difficulty, disability, or a work-limiting health condition. http://www.careerswales.com/en/jobs-and-training/unemployment-and-redundancy/coping-with-redundancy/ [Last accessed 23.04.2016]

[5] to replace the pre-existing elements of the social fund, community care grants and crisis loans for living expenses and household items.
[6] http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/debt/discretionary-assistance-fund/?lang=en The Welsh Independent Living Grant [Last accessed 23.04.2016]
[7] See http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/11/contents/enacted/data.htm and https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-wales-bill-bil-cymru-drafft [last retrieved 23.04.2016]
[8] This dynamic relates to British party politics. The same is not necessarily true of other systems.
[9] A Westminster government policy claimed to tackle under-occupancy amongst claimants of housing benefit.
[10] Here it is important to note that shared history, culture, identity and sense of belonging might refer also to imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). This is particularly important in comparative perspective research. Work in this area needs to be cognizant of the distinction between "just" discourse and actual "facts" and their use.
[11] http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/leanne-wood/eu-referendum-wales_b_2551732.html
[12] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36612308
[13] Nicola Sturgeon MSP Speech to Royal College of Nursing's annual congress in Glasgow, June 20, 2016.
[14] Nicola Sturgeon MSP Speech to Royal College of Nursing's annual congress in Glasgow, June 20, 2016.
[15] http://leftfootforward.org/2016/06/why-nicola-sturgeon-believes-that-the-eu-is-vital-to-womens-rights/ Nicola Sturgeon MSP interview 22 June, 2016
[16] Nicola Sturgeon MSP, March 16, 2016 Speech London School of Economics http://www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/videoAndAudio/channels/publicLecturesAndEvents/player.aspx?id=2979
[17] Leanne Wood Speech July 4, 2016 http://www.plaid2016.wales/araith_eu_speech
[18] Nicola Sturgeon MSP Speech to Institute of Public Policy Research Scotland, July 25, 2016 http://www.ippr.org/events/nicola-sturgeon-on-scotland-and-europe
[19] http://www.plaid2016.wales/cynnig_cynhadledd_arbennig_special_conference_motion Vote held at special post- Brexit Conference July 16, 2016.
[20] http://www.northwalespioneer.co.uk/news/163593/eu-referendum-plaid-cymru-leader-leanne-wood-responds-to-victory-for-leave-campaign.aspx
[21] https://www.partyof.wales/the-slate/2016/07/01/dafydd-wigley-we-must-honour-the-brexit-vote-now-lets-see-the-small-print/
[22] Nicola Sturgeon Speech Scottish Parliament 28.06.2016 http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10480&mode=pdf
[23] Nicola Sturgeon Speech Scottish Parliament 28.06.2016 http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10480&mode=pdf
[24] http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/leanne-wood/eu-referendum-wales_b_2551732.html
[25] With the historical exception of the Northern Ireland Parliament.