

**KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN**  
**FACULTEIT SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN**

# Party organisation in a multi-level setting: Spain and the United Kingdom

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Proefschrift tot het verkrijgen  
van de graad van  
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**Elodie FABRE**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND PARTY NAMES

AM	Assembly Member (in the National Assembly for Wales)
AMS	Additional Member System
AP	<i>Alianza Popular</i> , Popular Alliance
BNG	<i>Bloque Nacionalista Gallego</i> , Galicia Nationalist Bloc
CC	<i>Coalición Canarias</i> , Coalition Canary Islands
CHA	<i>Chunta Aragonesista</i> , Union for Aragon
CDS	<i>Centro Democrático y Social</i> , Democratic and Social Centre
CiU	<i>Convergència i Unió</i> , Convergence and Unity
CLP	Constituency Labour Party (Labour party constituency association)
CPF	Conservative Policy Forum
D	Gallagher's index of disproportionality
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EA	<i>Eusko Alkartasuna</i> , Basque Solidarity
EAJ-PNV	<i>Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco</i> , Basque Nationalist Party
EE	<i>Euskadiko Ezkerra</i> , Basque Left
ENEP	Effective number of electoral parties
ENPP	Effective number of parliamentary parties
EPLP	European Parliamentary Labour Party
ERC	<i>Ezquerra Republicana de Catalunya</i> , Catalan Republican Left
EUiA	<i>Esquerra Unida i Alternativa</i> , United Left and Alternative (Catalan IU)
HB	<i>Herri Batasuna</i> , Unity of the People
ICV	<i>Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds</i> , Initiative for Catalonia-Greens
IU	<i>Izquierda Unida</i> , United Left
JMC	Joint Ministerial Committee
KHHC	Kidderminster Hospital and Health Concern
L	Lee index of deviation
LD	Liberal Democrats
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament (UK House of Commons)
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
<i>Nafarroa-Bai</i>	'Navarra Yes', coalition platform of the Basque nationalist parties EAJ-PNV, EA and Aralar in Navarra
NCC	National Conservative Convention
NEC	National Executive Committee (of the Labour party)
NPF	National Policy Forum (Labour party)
OMOV	One member one vote
PC	<i>Plaid Cymru</i> (also called Plaid since 2006), the Party of Wales
PCE	<i>Partido Comunista de España</i> , Spanish Communist Party
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
PP	<i>Partido Popular</i> , Popular Party
PSC	<i>Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya</i> (PSC-PSOE), Socialist Party of Catalonia
PSOE	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i> , Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
PSUC	<i>Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya</i> , Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia
SDLP	Social Democratic Labour Party
SDP	Social Democratic Party

SMP	Single member plurality electoral system, also called first-past-the-post
SNP	Scottish National Party
UCD	<i>Unión del Centro Democrático</i> , Union of the Democratic Centre
UK	United Kingdom
UPN	<i>Unión del Pueblo Navarro</i> , Union of the People of Navarre
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party



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# INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, a large number of West European countries have decentralised power to sub-national levels of government. From the birth of the Federal Republic of Germany in the immediate aftermath of World War 2 to the recent reform of the statutes of autonomy of Catalonia, most West European countries display some form of decentralisation. During the same period of time, no West European country has centralised its decision-making procedures (see Hooghe and Marks 2001a, Table II). The phenomenon is therefore a wide-ranging one and seems to be characteristic of a trend among Western democracies.

Decentralisation, regionalisation, devolution, several words refer to the transfer of power to sub-national levels of government.<sup>1</sup> They all refer to some form of distribution of power that is not concentrated at the centre. They also suggest, at a more normative level, that diversity is healthy and desirable because it safeguards individual liberties and promotes debate, argument and understanding (Heywood 1998: 32). The argument is also made that decentralisation brings decisions closer to the people according to the principle of subsidiarity, and fosters democratic practices and citizenship skills (Teles and Landy 2001: 114). Diversity, internal debate and mass participation are concepts that political parties have sometimes struggled with, relying instead on a more controlled and centralised model of organisation and management of their internal affairs. Institutional decentralisation may therefore represent a particular challenge for political parties and their organisation.

The role and crucial importance of political parties in contemporary politics hardly needs being restated. Since Ostrogorski's early study of British and American political parties (1964, first published in 1902), countless studies have come to provide evidence of the central position of political parties in modern politics. Even while the party decline thesis is gaining ground among party scholars (Selle and Svåsand 1991; Wattenberg 1998; Lawson and Merkl 1988), political parties still remain the central and quasi-unique actors of traditional electoral politics.

The relationship between political parties and decentralisation can go both ways. On the one hand, as holders of the quasi-monopoly of candidate nominations (at least in a Western European context) and of political representation, political parties form governments and control parliaments. Contemporary government is indeed typically party government (see Katz 1982). As collective policy-makers, parties can shape their environment (Wilson 1994: 264). Consequently, political parties are the initiators of decentralising reforms and shape the structure of the state (van Biezen 2003: 5).

On the other hand, the structure of the state and its institutions are also likely to have an impact on political parties. Regional decentralisation gives birth to new arenas of party competition. Regional assemblies, parliaments or councils create a framework

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this dissertation, the term 'region' will refer to the highest level of sub-national government in a country, irrespective of the name these units may be given in their country or their aspirations to the status of nation.

for a new set of elections and the designation of assembly members and regional governments. Organisationally, political parties have to create new structures or adapt existing ones in order to compete efficiently in regional elections, by fielding candidates, developing party programmes, devising electoral strategies and leading campaigns in each of the regional political arenas. Programmatically, those parties that present candidates for both state-wide and regional elections face the unique challenge of having to compete for different electorates. In general elections they have to present a platform to the whole national electorate, while they compete to gain votes from territorial sub-sections of the same electorate in regional elections. Not only are these regional electorates potentially different in terms of their demographics, interests and cultures, but the division of powers between the central and regional governments is also likely to determine the terms of the debate and create potential differences with regard to the issues addressed by party programmes and election campaigns.

Regional assemblies represent powerful new opportunity structures for political parties, as they increase their chances of accessing public office and gaining expertise and resources. Non-state-wide parties, often ethnoregionalist or minority nationalist parties, particularly benefit from the creation of elected bodies at the regional level. These parties are often at least partly responsible for the decentralisation of decision-making to the regional level, through their lobbying in favour of the recognition of cultural and historical rights or special regional interests. Ethnoregionalist parties are not, however, the only parties to have emerged or benefited from the creation of regional assemblies: the Scottish Socialist Party and the Greens have failed to gain seats in Westminster but have won seats in Scotland or in the London Assembly,<sup>2</sup> and the German Greens gained representation in the *Länder* at the beginning of the 1980s before gaining seats in the *Bundestag*.

This dissertation explores the organisation of state-wide parties and focuses on the articulation between the central and regional levels of party organisation. Both organisationally and programmatically, regionalisation is likely to represent a challenge for the cohesion of state-wide political parties, as they need to maintain a level of coherence and unity across the country while trying to appeal to different electorates. The degree of unity and cohesion that political parties want to maintain can vary from one party to another, depending – among other things – on how highly they value unity and the use of a single, unified message across the whole country at all times.

The dissertation does not look at how state-wide political parties deal with coalition agreements at different levels (on this topic, see Stefuriuc 2007 and forthcoming) nor does it analyse party strategies and policies at the different levels (see Pogorelis *et al.* 2005, Fawcett 2004). The dissertation primarily aims at investigating the consequences of the regional decentralisation of power on the vertical organisation of state-wide political parties. The main questions are whether political parties mirror in their organisation the structure of the state and which factors most affect the relationship between the central and regional levels of party organisation. To this effect, the dissertation presents a comprehensive framework for the study of the vertical organisation of political parties in multi-level systems, drawing from different research fields, most notably the literature on party organisation and comparative federalism.

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<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Socialist Party and the Scottish Green Party also support the autonomy of Scotland but do not exclusively campaign on this issue.

### *Regional decentralisation and party organisational change*

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is distinctly neo-institutionalist (Hall and Taylor 1996; Kato 1996). New institutionalism rejects the formalism of traditional institutionalism, which relies on comprehensive descriptions of laws and institutions. The new institutionalism analyses the relationships between individuals and institutions and understands that institutions and organisations are made of people and are not just governed by formal rules (Kato 1996; March and Olsen 1984). It is the main contention of this dissertation that a neo-institutionalist perspective facilitates the understanding of how institutions change and how they constrain the behaviour of the individuals.

The problematic at the heart of this dissertation is double: under which conditions do political parties adopt certain organisational forms, and which institutional factors affect the behaviour of actors within political parties? It is therefore at the crossroad of two of the strands of neo-institutionalism identified by Hall and Taylor (1996): historical and sociological institutionalisms. From the latter, this research adopts a focus on the reasons why organisations adopt specific forms and on the type of factors that lead to a particular organisational form (Hall and Taylor 1996: 947). From the former, it adopts a calculus approach to the relationship between institutions and individual behaviour, focuses on power relations and the asymmetry in the distribution of power and resources, and considers that history plays a crucial role in the way organisations are formed and evolve (Hall and Taylor 1996: 939-41; Kato 1996: 556). The combination of these two approaches provides a large framework and a large number of possible interactions between institutions and between institutions and actors. The framework investigates the effects of institutions on the behaviour of party actors but also recognises the agency in processes of change and decision-making within institutions. The aim of this dissertation is to assess which factors are the most relevant inductively, through the evaluation of their impact in the cases (Steinmo and Thelen 1992: 12).

The starting proposition of this dissertation is that structural elements such as institutions and broad environmental factors shape the way political parties organise. Processes such as the selection of leaders and election candidates and policy-making are influenced by a variety of factors, both internal (the rules of the game established by the party constitution and other party rules) and external (the political system, the type of state structure, the party system). Political parties are seen as organisations that are influenced by the environment in which they operate, but also as organisations that provide a framework for action for politicians and the various groups they include.

The use of a neo-institutional framework integrates the role of agency in the model. The organisational structure of a political party is also the result of a series of conscious decisions. As Wilson (1980: 528) puts it, 'parties are not simply passive recipients of pressures from their socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, and competitive environment'. Party organisation and party change are the result of a combination of a leadership push and party acceptance of change (Wilson 1994: 275). In a number of articles, Harmel and Janda (1994 and 2003) have provided evidence of the role of leaders and dominant factions in triggering party change. They also rightly emphasise the importance of the leaders' 'perception' of the environment and the changes it may necessitate in order to improve the party efficiency (Harmel and Janda: 1994: 267; Harmel *et al.* 1995: 26, Appendix 2). As a result, the organisation of political

parties results from a combination of environmental constraints and leadership decisions to shape the organisation to achieve party goals.

This research is at the crossroads of several fields of investigation. The literature on party organisation is obviously a core area of reference. However, this particular field has often only considered the issue of party centralisation and decentralisation with respect to the relationship between the central party and its membership. More rarely has the issue of intra-party central-regional relations been investigated (see, for some early exceptions Eldersveld 1964: 98 and 1971: 80; Duverger 1951: 59-80). References to the 'federal' vertical organisation of political parties can also be found in the literature on federalism (Riker 1975; Chandler and Chandler 1987; Scharpf 1995), where the correlation between forms of federalism and party organisation is investigated.

The literature on multi-level governance and the development of 'Euro-parties' can also provide insights into the dynamics of multi-level organisation and the impact of environmental pressures and change (Deschouwer 2000). In recent years, following devolution in the United Kingdom, the political consequences of decentralisation on political parties and party systems have become subjects of a more systematic investigation (Hopkin 2003; Deschouwer 2003; Hough and Jeffery 2003). Such studies have tried to bring together various hypotheses regarding the organisation of political parties in multi-level settings. This research will try and combine all these approaches.

#### *Why study political parties in Spain and in the United Kingdom?*

This study of the organisation of state-wide political parties in a multi-level setting will compare parties in two countries, Spain and the United Kingdom in the period up to the last state-wide election in each country, that is, 2004 in Spain and 2005 in the UK. Both countries have undergone more or less recent reforms of their state structure that have led to the creation of regional assemblies or parliaments and they have become some of the most decentralised countries of the continent. Both countries share a West European political culture, are members of the European Union and are parliamentary democracies. The fact that both are also monarchies increases the similarity between the two democratic systems, as both countries do not elect their head of state and there is therefore only one state-wide election. The regional decentralisation of power and their membership of the EU mean that they share the same multi-level challenges, both upwards and downwards. A number of institutional and political-system characteristics bring Spain close to the Westminster majoritarian model of democracy epitomised by the UK (Lijphart 1999): concentration of executive power in one-party cabinets, cabinet dominance over the parliament, two-party system for the UK and effective number of 2.5 for Spain, electoral systems with disproportional outcomes (even though Spain has a form of PR), and asymmetrical bicameral parliament with a strong lower chamber.

There are however a number of differences between the two countries. The first one derives obviously from the fact that Spain is a recently democratised country while the UK is the oldest of all European democracies. In spite of its rather recent admission into the club of European democracies, Spain is now a consolidated democracy with stable and functioning political, administrative and economic systems. Both countries also depart with respect to the degree of centralisation that prevailed prior to the decentralising reforms. On the one hand, Franco's dictatorship imposed a very centralised organisation of the state, repressed the expression of regionalist feelings and actively supported Spanish nationalism. On the other, the United

Kingdom already allowed some levels of internal differentiation. For instance, Scotland kept its legal system after the union with England, and Wales kept its national distinctiveness and the use of its language in many areas (Bogdanor 2001: 7-10).

In Spain, the empirical study is limited to three autonomous communities, the Basque country, Galicia and Catalonia, which all have a special status recognised in the constitution. This status as 'historic nationalities', based on their history and specific regional cultures, allowed them to reach a higher level of autonomy faster than the other regions. The rationale behind this selection of regions is that it is in these regions that decentralisation is the most likely to have an impact on the political parties due to this conjunction of cultural and institutional factors. The regional organisation of the British state-wide parties is studied Scotland and Wales. Devolution has not been implemented in England and Northern Ireland poses several problems. Most importantly, the Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended four times since 1998, and the last time lasted between 14 October 2002 and 7 May 2007. In addition, the main state-wide parties that present candidates in England, Scotland and Wales are nearly virtually absent from the Northern Ireland political scene.

It was decided to make an in-depth study of several regions in two countries rather than a larger sample of countries, which would have led to a more superficial study of the organisation of each country. As a result, this study contains an in-depth analysis of each party system and its state-wide parties and compares the organisation of these parties both within but also across regions and countries up to the last general election in each country (2004 in Spain and 2005 in the UK).

The state-wide parties studied in this dissertation are the most important ones in each country. By most important we mean state-wide parties that are in power at the state-wide level or at the regional level, or form the official opposition at the state-wide level. As a result, two Spanish political parties fit these criteria: the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE), now in power at the central level and in a number of autonomous communities, and the *Partido Popular* (Popular Party, PP), in power centrally between 1996 and 2004 and also in some regions such as the Valencian Community, Murcia, Castile and Leon and Madrid. Another party would qualify as state-wide, *Izquierda Unida* (United Left), the left-wing coalition born from the union the Spanish Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Español*, PCE) and other small parties on the left of the PSOE. However, the party has never achieved a number of representatives significant enough to form a government or participate in a government coalition either in Madrid or at the regional level. Even though the United Left has blackmail potential in Sartori's sense, as it supports some PSOE regional governments on a law-by-law basis, the party does not fit into our criteria.

In the United Kingdom, three parties are studied. The Labour Party is in charge of the UK government, has governed Scotland in coalition with the Liberal Democrats until 2007 and has governed Wales either alone in 1999-2000 and 2003-2007 or in coalition with the Liberal Democrats between 2000 and 2003 and with Plaid Cymru since the 2007 election. As a major coalition partner in Scotland and Wales, the Liberal Democrats are also studied. Finally, the Conservative Party is the official opposition party at the central level. These parties can only be considered state-wide if we exclude Northern Ireland. Ulster has its own party system, with a completely different set of parties and a distinct political debate. As a result, when we talk of the United Kingdom in this dissertation, what we actually mean is Great Britain, that is, England, Scotland and Wales. Because England does not have any regional government, and that the prospects of the creation of regional assemblies in

some of the regions of England now seem very limited, the organisation of the political parties in England is outside the scope of this study. Finally, even though the city of London has also been one of the beneficiaries of the devolution reform, and in spite of its nearly 7.5 million inhabitants, London is not strictly speaking a region and is therefore also excluded from this study.

### *Plan of the dissertation*

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters, which present the framework for analysis, the methodology, the empirical data, and the comparison of the cases and the assessment of the hypotheses. Chapter 1 reviews the literature on party organisation and party change. It is a general chapter that introduces the framework of analysis of party change, which includes environmental, institutional as well as intra-party factors. Chapter 2 applies this framework to the analysis of party organisation in multi-level settings. In the process, it presents a large number of factors that are expected to affect party organisation: the type of multi-level institutional arrangement and how it came about; centre-periphery relations and regionalism; state-wide and regional party systems; intra-party factors such as party type, and party ideology. These factors are described and expected relationships are put forward so as to present a comprehensive framework of analysis. Chapter 3 addresses the methodological issues at stake in this dissertation, in particular the number of cases and the methods of data collection. It also defends the case selection further, and presents a coding scheme elaborated in order to compare the vertical organisation of political parties in multi-level settings and the respective powers of the central party and regional branches at the central and regional levels.

The rest of the dissertation applies the framework to the cases. Chapters 4 and 6, which are aimed primarily at those readers unfamiliar with Spain and the UK, details the environment in which respectively the political parties operate: state formation; state structure, form of decentralisation and distribution of competencies between the central and regional governments; and features of the state-wide and regional party systems, electoral systems, voting patterns in state-wide and regional elections.

Chapters 5 and 7 describe the organisation of respectively the British and Spanish state-wide political parties. They summarise the formation and history of each party and describe the relationship between the central and regional levels for a number of party processes. How do state-wide parties integrate their regional branches in their central organs and in the decision-making processes of the central party? To what extent are regional party branches free to organise themselves, choose their political elites and elaborate their own policies? The chapters answer these questions by looking at ten party processes at the central and regional levels.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the empirical substance and the empirical findings of the research. Chapter 8 compares the organisation of all these parties and assesses the hypotheses presented in chapter 2 in order to evaluate which factors seem to account the most how the central and regional levels of party organisation relate with one another. This last chapter shows that all the parties had to devise some response to the decentralisation of power and the existence of regional politics but that different forms of organisation can be found, from very autonomous regional branches to very centralised party structures.

# CHAPTER 1. PARTY ORGANISATION AND PARTY CHANGE

The study of party organisation has a long and distinguished history, starting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with Mosei Ostrogorski's study of the organisation of the political parties of England and the United States (1964, first published in 1902). Michels (1914, first published in 1911) shortly after launched a number of themes (internal democracy, relationships between the leadership and the membership, professionalisation, etc.) that were to pervade the literature for the whole century and beyond.

The importance of political parties has been emphasised in the academic literature on countless occasions, either to complain about it or to observe the considerable role that parties play in contemporary societies. Political parties have come to embody representative democracy and, in his much-used quote, Schattschneider went as far as saying that 'modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties' (1942: 1).

This chapter presents a general framework for the study of party organisational change. Its main contention is that both structure and agency should be taken into account but that structure conditions the possibility of agency. To this purpose, it reviews the literature on party organisation, discussing first what political parties are and comparing the various definitions that can be found in the literature. It then considers how parties organise, the various elements that constitute their organisation, the way authors have discussed and analysed party organisation and how the various parts of these organisations interact. Finally, it presents a framework for the study of party change that illustrates how intra-party agency and party organisation are influenced by institutional factors and how intra-party actors can behave within these constraints.

## 1.1. The organisation of political parties

This section aims at providing a definition of political parties. Like any definition, it will fall short of describing political parties in each and every one of their aspects but will still try to establish their specificity as organisations. Then, the organisational issues at stake within political parties will be highlighted through a review of the literature on party organisation and an overview of the party models that have been developed in an attempt to explain party organisation and parties change.

### *1.1.1. Aspects of party organisation*

#### *Definition*

Definitions can vary between 'minimal definitions' (Sartori 2005: 52) that emphasise the main distinguishing aspects of one phenomenon and detailed ones that aim at thoroughness. Since Burke's early definition of a political party as 'a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some

particular principle in which they are all agreed' (quoted in Sartori 2005: 8), the development and generalisation of the presence of political parties in democratic countries (but also in non-democratic countries, which are often ruled by a single party) has generated a large number of definitions. Most of them differ on their level of precision, amount of details provided and also focus of the author.

In the category of minimal definitions of political parties enters Sartori's as 'any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or non-free), candidates for public office' (2005: 56). Parties are defined as a grouping of individuals that come together for political purposes under an 'official label' and that participate in the electoral competition for public office. They are therefore differentiated from both factions, which are merely interested in achieving benefits for their members (Sartori 2005: 8) and interest groups, which aim at influencing office holders and policy without entering the electoral arena.

Epstein proposed a similar definition of political parties as 'any group, however loosely organized, seeking to elect governmental office-holders under a given label' (1967: 9). This absence of any organisational requirement allows the inclusion in the party category of groups of 'office-holders or aspiring office-holders' (1967: 9) that collectively seek votes but do not have any organisational support of affiliated supporters. He recognised, however, that in modern democracies the instances of organisation-less political parties are extremely uncommon. It is indeed rare that even small groups of like-minded independent candidates do not form some organisation to co-ordinate their efforts and strengthen their visibility. Like Sartori, he argued that the distinguishing feature of political parties was that they filed candidates for election to public office. Therefore, two characteristics appear to be fundamental: a level of formal organisation and an official label, and the filing of candidates for elections.

Other definitions have added elements regarding the purpose and goals of political parties. For instance, Hennessy defined parties as 'social organizations that attempt to influence (1) the selection and tenure of the personnel of government by putting forward candidates for elective office, (2) the policies of government according to some general principles or proclivities upon which most of their members agree' (quoted in Sartori 2005: 53). This definition combines Sartori's definition of parties as groupings that place candidates in elections for public office with Burke's notion that political parties follow some principles in the elaboration and implementation of their policies. It also adds that political parties are necessarily *organised* groups. Therefore, parties do not just aim at achieving office for the sake of power but for the defence and implementation of certain principles or 'proclivities'.

In a similar vein but with even more details, La Palombara and Weiner's definition (1966: 6) includes four characteristics: (1) organisational continuity; (2) organisational presence at the local level, with communications between the local and national levels; (3) a power-seeking strategy (to differentiate parties from interest groups) and; (4) also a vote-seeking strategy. Hennessy's organisational requirement is therefore specified. Parties outlive their leaders and have a territorial anchorage through local associations that are in constant communication with the central, national level. A distinction is thereby made between political parties and movements that exist only for their leader(s) and/or are only composed of a national organisation. Political parties are also defined in function of their goals: they seek power and popular support through votes.

For the purpose of this dissertation, a minimal definition is preferred rather than a definition that would assume why parties act and be too restrictive. As a result,



Katz's definition of parties as 'formal organizations that promote candidates for office under a common identifying label' (2006: 34) fits this purpose: it assigns party with an organisational dimension, an electoral purpose and a common set of principles shared by the members of the organisation.

#### *From two to three faces of party organisation*

Political parties are not unitary actors and the literature on party organisation has attempted to observe and explain the relationships between the various 'faces' of party organisations. Traditionally, studies of party organisation have focused on the relationship between the party elite and the party membership seen as a section of civil society, and models of party organisation used this dichotomy as their distinguishing criterion (Mair 1994: 2). It is the shifting balance of power between the party elite and the membership and the relative importance of each that determined the type of a party's organisation.

Michels observed the evolution of the German SPD at the beginning of the century and concluded that an 'iron law of oligarchy' governed all organisations, and more specifically party organisations (1914). As a result of this 'law', political parties develop elite structures and increasingly marginalise their rank and file. Likewise, Duverger's distinction between cadre and mass parties is based on the parties' relationship with civil society and the importance of their membership, both in number but also in terms of intra-party power. Kirchheimer's 'catch-all party' model describes the organisational transformation of the mass parties in the post-war period as another shift in the elite-membership relationship, one in which the membership loses in importance and intraparty power.

Katz and Mair argue that instead of looking at parties through the traditional division between party elite and party membership, we should view parties as having three 'faces': the 'party in public office', the 'party in central office' and the 'party on the ground' (Katz and Mair 1993; Mair 1994: 4). This distinction could already be found in Key's distinction between the 'party-in-government', the 'party-in-the-electorate' and the party organisation or apparatus (Key 1958: 181-2).

The 'party in public office' represents the parliamentary and government side of the party, its elected officials. The 'party in central office' is its bureaucracy. Finally, the 'party on the ground' is the voluntary face of the party, from its registered members to its supporters and also, as the case may be, financial backers. This distinction is a useful heuristic tool to understand the multi-faceted nature of political parties. The history and organisational evolution of political parties can be interpreted as a fight for power between these three sectors of party organisation, each with its own interests, with temporary shifts in the balance of power between them.

#### *1.1.2. What parties do: goals and functions*

What parties do entails two aspects of their activities: the motives of their actions and the results of their actions. The former relates to party *goals*, that is, what parties aim to achieve when they present candidates through elections. The roles played by political parties in democratic polities have been the object of a great number of studies that have discussed and emphasised the *functions* of political parties, that is, the intended or unintended consequences of their action for the polity.

### *Party goals: arbitrating between office, vote and policy*

Typically, three goals have been attributed to political parties to explain their behaviour in electoral competition. The first two models of party behaviour emanate from coalition theory. A first perspective considers that parties are office-seekers: what parties really want is control over as much of the executive branch as possible (Riker 1962). Office is construed as government office. It means that during coalition negotiations, an office-seeking party would not take policy closeness to other potential partners into consideration. The potential of office for future electoral returns is not an issue for that party either. A second theory of party competition considers that parties seek to maximise their impact on public policy. Policy-seeking parties are first and foremost concerned with policy, not office. However, office is often instrumental to achieving policy, so the two goals are not incompatible. Office often comes as a complement of policy as a party goal (Strøm 1990: 567; Strøm and Müller 1999: 8).

Finally, the rational choice tradition expects that parties try to maximise their electoral support. Parties try to maximise their number of votes in order to achieve office. Policies are only instruments in the politicians' quest for 'power, prestige and income' (Downs 1957: 30). However, votes can only be instrumental to other goals, such as office and policy.

Parties have to arbitrate between these three goals because they cannot be achieved simultaneously. These objectives are not mutually exclusive, as for instance the objective of gaining the largest possible share of the vote can help in the achievement of the other two goals. However, achieving office and some level of control over the executive branch of government, gaining the largest possible number of votes from among the electorate and having their policy proposals implemented in public policy are objectives that cannot be simultaneously realised (Strøm and Müller 1999: 9). The choice between these objectives depends on a number of factors, first and foremost on party organisation and the relationship between party leaders, who tend to be office-seeking, and the party rank and file, who tend to be policy-seeking. As a result, trade-offs have to be made between these two faces of party organisation for the determination of party goals (Strøm and Müller 1999: 13-18). The dominance of one face in the organisation is likely to facilitate the pursuit of their preferred goal.

### *Party functions*

As we have seen earlier, parties are said to perform a number of functions both at the societal level and at the governmental level (Merton 1957; Merriam 1923; 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 exercise a number of functions for the democratic polity by providing candidates for election and participating in government. Parties have a *recruitment* function through the selection and fielding of candidates for election. There are different ways in which parties can address this function. While for parties recruitment can be a way to reward activists and party members by offering them an opportunity to gain office, a number of social expectations have tended to complicate the way parties perform this function. Parties are increasingly expected to select a pool of candidates that mirrors the structure of society (Fiers, Gerard and Van Uytven 2006). This is where issues such as gender parity and the representation of social and ethnic minorities appear (Norris and Lovenduski 1993, Norris and Franklin 1997; Anwar 2001). At the same time, parties are increasingly under pressure internally to

'democratise' their selection procedures and give party members and activists a say in the selection of their candidates.

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* (Blondel 1991).

Other key functions include *social representation, interest aggregation*, conveying interests, demands, preferences, etc. to the centre (*expressive function*) and providing a link between the governed and government (*linkage*) (Chambers 1966: 89-90). All participate to the *integration* of citizens into the political system and contribute to the homogenisation of political preferences. These functions are closely related, as expression, interest aggregation, social representation and integration all contribute to the exercise of the linkage function.

Linkage is exercised through the inclusion of segments of society into the parties and into the electoral process. These segments become included in the democratic process and understand that they have a stake in society and that their voice counts. Parties represent various social groups either through direct appeal to these groups or more symbolically (*societal representation*). This function is exercised during election campaigns, when parties vie for the support of various groups but also in parliament through the implementation of legislative programmes. Parties 'represent' these groups and their interests at the centre of the polity. Parties express 'their' issues and their proposals in the political debate and try to make them visible to the authorities and government. By expressing opinions and interests, parties act as a relay between the citizens and the state and serve as a medium of citizen mobilisation in the political arena and political integration of the masses in the political system.

Interest aggregation is one aspect of the parties' function as a broker between the governed and government. Political parties are the recipients of opinions and demands coming from all sectors of societies, social classes, interest groups, individual citizens, etc. Parties aggregate interests by combining various interests in their policy proposals. Interest aggregation can happen at several stages of the political game: before the election when the party elaborates its election manifesto, after the election when parties have to collaborate to form a governing coalition, and/or during the policy-making stage when the party is in government.

In the process of their formulation of policies and electoral programmes, political parties must select from among these opinions and claims and aggregate them into their proposals (*issue structuring*). In the process of enlarging their potential electorate, parties must act as brokers between increasingly diverse interests and encourage the different interests to strike deals and reach compromise (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 5). As parties become more 'catch-all', the weight of ideology decreases and parties must attract voters beyond their '*classe gardée*'.

The campaign activities through which parties try to mobilise support for their candidates represents their *mobilisation* function. Their strategies of electoral mobilisation vary on the issues they stress during electoral campaigns and the scope of the electorate they wish to attract. Kitschelt (1989) distinguishes between two types of 'logics of party competition': parties that aim at representing a group of individuals united around common concerns or social ties ('logic of constituency representation') and parties that adopt strategies aimed at maximising votes and the number of elected candidates ('logic of electoral competition').

The role of parties as brokers has changed together with the segments of society included in the political parties. First, elite, cadre parties only represented a small segment of society while trying to appeal to larger sectors of the electorate, even though most typically elite parties existed in the period before universal suffrage. On the other hand, mass parties aimed at encapsulating one particular segment, albeit larger than the one of the cadre parties, a social class, or the members of a particular religious group, for instance, and aimed at getting maximum number of votes from that group at election time.

With the development of catch-all parties, the notion of linkage becomes larger, as parties cease to appeal to one particular group but try on the contrary to attract the largest number of voters. Paradoxically, this larger appeal goes hand in hand with weaker citizen-party ties (Kirchheimer 1966: 193). Parties therefore come to represent broad, and sometimes vague, interests, rather than well-defined group interests. Finally, Mair (1994) even argues that parties are abandoning this function, as they start to shift their focus from society to the state. However, even though they might not perform this linkage function as well as they used to and in spite of evidence of the decline in party membership (Mair and van Biezen 2001), parties still try to mobilize segments of the electorate and still represent and aggregate the interests of different groups into the political arena.

In the process of this aggregation of interests and through their role as brokers between society and government, parties participate in the integration of the citizens and different groups, either based on interests, territory or social origin, in the political system. National integration is defined as a process 'where political allegiances are focused increasingly at the national level over time, while there is a corresponding decrease in the salience of local and more parochial allegiances' (Jackman 1972: 512). This process is facilitated by the development of political parties, which develop communications between the various parts of the country, while the competitiveness of the party system and the extension of centrally-controlled competences 'helps to set the national system of government *above* any particular set of politicians' or local level (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 4).

Caramani (2004: 73) shows that there is a '*clear trend across Europe toward increasing nationally integrated electorates and homogeneous party systems*' (original emphasis). The development of functional cleavages has reduced the importance of cultural-regional cleavages in voting behaviour and party systems have become more homogeneous as a result. Where cultural cleavages have remained strong, they have slowed rather than prevented the development of functional cleavages. Even the recent trend toward institutional decentralisation has not led to a re-territorialisation of voting behaviour across the board (Caramani 2004: 291). However, in a few cases the process of nationalisation has been incomplete, as for instance in Italy or in Belgium, which has undergone a process of regionalisation of its party system. The result is party systems with a strong presence of regionally-based parties and heterogeneous patterns of electoral behaviour.

The exercise of these functions contributes to the development of a more cohesive and unified polity and political parties play a crucial role in this process. In the words of Sartori (2005: xxi), 'parties are the central intermediate and intermediary structure between society and government'. The way parties perform these functions, but also their ability to do so, can depend in great part on the way parties organise. The next section describes the models that have been used to account for the internal organisation of political parties.

### *1.1.3. Models of party organisation*

The way political parties organise has been the subject of numerous studies. One of the key concerns of researchers on party organisation has been internal party democracy, that is, the relationship between party leadership and membership, and building models of party organisation generally based on the parties' relations with their environments and their internal balance of power.

The concern on internal democracy has led to a focus on the dichotomy between the grassroots party on the one hand and the national leadership and central organs on the other. At the heart of this conception of political parties lies the assumption that parties play a particular role in society, that of representing the people, or a fraction of it, and expressing its preferences or grievances (Kirchheimer 1966: 189). If the parties operate in a democratic environment and accept its underlying values, one would therefore expect that parties are themselves democratic organisations, that is, miniature democratic polities, with the membership in place of the people, the conference or convention of delegates in place of the parliament and the leadership as the executive branch of government. However, as they started to study the organisation of political parties, authors realised early on that parties did not live up to this ideal. As Michels (1914: 24) put it, 'in a political party (...), democracy is not for domestic use: it is rather an export article'. The issue of party democracy remains a crucial element in the typologies of political parties.

#### *Elite-cadre parties*

Duverger (1976) distinguished between 'internally created' and 'externally created' political parties. Internally created parties are political parties that were created inside parliament as the coming together of MPs that shared a number of common principles and interests. They were typically organised in small 'cadre parties', characterised by a dominance of the parliamentary party over an embryonic membership and a loose formal organisation. These parties represented the first organisational form of political parties and generally emerged before the extension of the suffrage. Elite parties are loosely organised formations aimed primarily at facilitating the election of a number of prominent individuals. Neumann (1956) branded these parties 'parties of individual representation', characterised by low levels of political participation. At the central level, these parties only have an embryonic organisation with little power over local organisations that generally control their own resources. The primary function of the extra-parliamentary party is to mobilise the vote and support party candidates at election time.

#### *The mass party model*

Mass parties were often initially externally created parties, that is, parties that were created outside of parliament in order to represent groups previously excluded from the political game. Unlike elite parties, their existence preceded accession to power. Because they originally lacked the resources that come with public office and the support of business backers, these parties had to find other resources, and a large, active membership can compensate in number and involvement what the parties lack in wealthy supporters (Wolinetz 2002: 140). They organised as mass organisations aimed at encapsulating the members of a social class or particular group. Neumann (1956) labelled these parties 'parties of social integration'. Their dense organisation was built around a network of ancillary organisations that provided services and channels

of participation to the members and that constituted instruments of control for the party (Neumann 1956: 404). In his description of 'mass parties', Duverger (1976: 91) showed how the national leadership rested on a wide membership, often drawn from a particular section of the population and organised in a centralised system.

Duverger (1976) argued that the organisation of externally created parties was superior to that of internally created parties in that it was better suited to mobilise masses and bring out the vote. As a result of what he called a 'contagion from the left', internally created parties would transform their structures to become mass parties.

In organisational terms, mass parties are built around a strong, centralised bureaucracy at the national level. The extra-parliamentary leadership controls the other branches of the party through their command of the bureaucracy and resources. In order to attach themselves the loyalty of party members, mass parties encourage participation at the local level in constituency associations but also through the election of the party leadership and the representation of the membership in the national congress. However, in practice 'the ideological rigidity and the internal processes of training and recruiting members of the elite (through extensive socialization in the local branches and the internal educational system) make real competitive intra-party elections unlikely' (Krouwel 2006: 255).

In his early classical work on party organisation, Michels analysed the way the leadership tended to seize power over the rank and file and how the need for a more efficient political organisation induced a professional approach to politics that increased the gap between the leaders and the membership. He observed that an 'iron law of oligarchy' resulted from the organisational imperative of political parties. Put differently, 'who says organisation says tendency towards oligarchy' (Michels 1919: 15). This study documented how social-democratic parties, and in particular the German SPD, evolved from an equalitarian organisation based on principles of intra-party direct democracy towards an increasingly specialised organisation characterised by an internal division of labour and the emergence of an increasingly autonomous leadership.

### *The catch-all party model*

Using the same argument of electoral efficiency, Epstein (1967) argued that the organisation of American parties was in fact better suited to the development of modern electioneering methods based on television campaigning and broad electoral appeals that go beyond class and traditional ties. As a result, he expected a 'contagion from the right' to happen so that political parties would then take the form of professionalised parties with a centralised organisation, a lesser reliance of the membership organisation and a more autonomous leadership.

Kirchheimer's 'catch-all' party model (1966) and Panebianco's 'electoral-professional' model (1988) also focus on the dichotomy (and increasing distance) between the national leadership and the membership. Kirchheimer observed that changes in the social structures, with high levels of economic growth and the rise of new middle classes, reduced social and political polarisation and diminished the appeal of mass parties. As political polarisation decreased, parties abandoned 'attempts at the intellectual and moral *encadrement* of the masses' (Kirchheimer 1966: 184). This manifested itself through a lesser importance of ideologies and a focus on more immediate electoral results. Catch-all parties broaden their appeal beyond their *classe gardée* by reducing the ideological load of their programmes. At the same time, the party leadership gains more decisional autonomy while the role of individual party

members is downgraded (Kirchheimer 1966: 190). Like for Epstein and Duverger, the transformation of mass parties into catch-all parties is a competitive phenomenon. If one party becomes catch-all, the other parties are likely to follow suit. However, Kirchheimer remained relatively vague about the precise organisational characteristics that make a party 'catch-all' (Krouwel 2006: 256).

Panebianco (1988) specified the organisational characteristics of the catch-all party model with his 'electoral-professional party' model. Defined as an ideal-type, the 'electoral-professional party' is characterised by the rise of paid professionals within the party, the increasing importance of public representatives and the strengthening of the role for the leadership inside and outside the party (Panebianco 1988: 262-74). This means that the party bureaucracy and the extra-parliamentary party see their importance decrease. The party rank and file also lose influence as the leadership increasingly appeals to the opinion at large and relies on professionals for its campaigns and big private donors and the state for their funding. Finally, parties de-emphasise their ideological baggage and focus instead on the leadership and issues that have a wide appeal in the electorate (Panebianco 1988: 264).

### *The cartel party model*

Retracing the evolution of party models from the elite party to the mass party and then to the catch-all party, Katz and Mair (1995: 17) proposed a new party model, the 'cartel party', which is primarily characterised by the 'interpenetration of party and state'. As parties cease to be ideologically driven, office becomes the main party goal and parties are increasingly interested in maintaining their position in office. The state has become essential for the survival of political parties, being a source of legitimacy through positions in public office and a supplier of resources, in particular with regard to the state funding of political parties but also in terms of staff and expertise (Mair 1994: 8-9). As a result, 'existing parties are able to use their control over resources to sustain themselves and to hinder the rise of new parties' (Ware 1996: 108). One of the provocative arguments of the cartel thesis is the claim that established parties colluded in order to secure their access to and control of state resources.

In organisational terms, the parliamentary elite has increased its power within the party through long periods in government and control over resources. Through public funding, the party in public office is able to hire more staff and gain independence from the party in central office (Katz and Mair 2002: 123). The increasing reliance on professionals and the use of television and electronic media as direct channels of communication with the electorate mean that election campaigns are increasingly nationalised and centralised (Katz and Mair 2002: 125). The party in public office is increasingly isolated from both the party in central office and the party on the ground. The party in central office has also become more professionalised and it has simultaneously ceased to be an organisation that holds the parliamentary leadership accountable for the membership (Katz and Mair 2002: 125).

The party on the ground is in a rather paradoxical situation. There seems to be a trend towards the empowerment of party members in the selection of candidates and party leaders. Party leaders have simultaneously become more autonomous and tend to appeal directly to the electorate rather than their rank and file. At a time, while evidence points to a steady decline in membership figures (Mair and van Biezen 2001), party members remain useful for the image of the parties: party members are symbolically important and act as 'legitimisers' (Mair 1994: 15) by providing the image of a party connected with civil society. Moreover, party members represent a pool of

'warm bodies' from which to select candidates and an important source of party resources, both financial but also as campaigners at the local level (Katz and Mair 2002: 127-9). At the same time, the new rights of the membership are accompanied by an increased atomisation of the membership by means of consultation via membership ballots. Local activists are marginalised and the newly empowered party members are assumed to be more easily influenced by the party leadership (Katz and Mair 2002: 129).

The autonomy of the party in public office is partly matched by the autonomy of lower party strata. As the national leadership frees itself from the pressures from the regional and local party leaders, those also assert their right to decide autonomously from the central party in the management of party affairs at their respective levels (Mair 1994: 17; Katz and Mair 1995: 21)

Doubts have been expressed on the validity and reality of this new party type (Koole 1996; Kitschelt 2000). The cartelisation hypothesis still lacks empirical confirmation. Whereas it is true that political parties are increasingly reliant on the state for subsidies, there are still countries that resist state funding of political parties' activities (the UK and Switzerland, for instance). Moreover, evidence shows that the development of state funding has not necessarily led to the transformation of political parties into 'cartel parties' (Young 1998). It is also true to say that, if they have attempted to prevent new parties from emerging, established parties have relatively failed to achieve their goal and that cartels of parties have not emerged (Detterbeck 2005: 185-6).

Rather than a new party type distinct from its predecessors, this category of cartel parties represents rather a development, or a variation, from the catch-all/electoral-professional party model (Krouwel 2006). All these party models are ideal types, and real parties never completely conform to one of them. Rather, they display characteristics of two or more types, often some features of the mass-bureaucratic model and others of the electoral professional party (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999: 308) and appear closer to one model than to another. In this discussion of models of party organisation, little was said of the sources of these changes and about how parties change from one organisational form to another. The next section addresses this issue in order to develop a model of party change that will be used in the analysis of party organisation in multi-level settings.

## **1.2. Party organisation and change: a framework for analysis**

A great deal of literature addresses party change and how new pressures on established political parties give rise to new organisational forms. Change can take many forms from wholesale change to small-scale change in some aspects of the party's structure or programmatic orientation. At this stage, it is important to define a term that is often related to change: adaptation. Generally, this term is used to refer to change made in response to environmental changes. However, it is interesting – and more fruitful – to broaden its definition so as to include 'change intended to better suit the party to its environment or to some other circumstance which the party cannot immediately or directly alter' (Harmel 2002: 139). Change would then refer to any alteration to the organisation of a political party, whatever its source and scope. Here the focus will be on the organisational aspect of adaptation and change and the issue of programmatic change, however interesting and important, is left aside.

Theories of party change and adaptation all argue that many factors shape, or at least influence, the organisation of political parties. The main issue relates to the



respective role of environmental factors and party agency. The framework adopted here emphasises the important role of historical and environmental factors in processes of change and adaptation. The environment encompasses a wide range of factors, from the legal-institutional framework of a country to social trends and the political environment, such as the party system and conditions of electoral competition. However, an element of agency needs to be included in order to avoid presenting parties as passive institutions. The framework also considers that without some action or decision taken at the leadership level, no change can happen.

### *1.2.1. The context of party formation and institutionalisation*

The third wave of democratisation has led to the renewal of scholarly interest in party formation and consolidation. In the new South European democracies of Spain, Portugal and Greece as well as in the Central and Eastern European post-communist democracies, political parties have come to play a crucial role in the process of democratic transition, the formation of governments and the consolidation of the democratic regimes. The comparison between the organisation of these parties and the models of party organisation and change of their older West European counterparts proved to be rather problematic as new democracies provide very different constraints and opportunity structures (van Biezen 2005: 149 and 154).

The neo-institutionalist school argues that history and institutions play a crucial role. After Panebianco (1988), van Biezen (2003: 16) argues that the historical and institutional context in which parties operate is a key element in the understanding of party organisation and party change. Panebianco (1988: 50) argues that 'a party's organizational characteristics depend more upon its history, i.e. on how the organization originated and how it consolidated, than upon any other factor'. History is important as it sets the context in which parties are born and develop.

The level of institutionalisation of party organisations depends on the context of party formation ('the genetic model') (Panebianco 1988: 55). Institutionalisation can be defined as 'the process by which an organisation, from being a means to an end, becomes an end in itself' (Hopkin 1999: 2). Janda defines an institutionalised party as 'one that is reified in the public mind so that "the party" exists as a social organisation apart from its momentary leaders and this organization demonstrates recurring patterns of behavior valued by those who identify with it' (Janda 1980: 19). This definition sees the development of attachments to and identification with the organisation as a crucial aspect of party institutionalisation. In his operationalisation of the concept, Janda emphasises the importance of the passage of time (Janda 1980: 19-20). The longer the party has been in existence and the higher its value in the eyes of its members and supporters the higher the degree of institutionalisation of a party. An institutionalised party has ceased to be an organisation used only in order to achieve personal objectives but rather a stable and valued structure (Hopkin 1999: 2-3; Panebianco 1988: 53).

Three main factors contribute to a party's genetic model: first, the pattern of territorial construction of the party, that is, whether the party formation occurs through territorial penetration (from the centre to the peripheries) or diffusion (local elites form build local political associations that are later integrated into a single, national organisation); second, the presence (or absence) of an external sponsor (such as a trade union or the USSR Communist party, for instance) that influences the leadership's legitimacy and authority; and third, the role played by a charismatic leader in the party's formation (Panebianco 1988: 50-3).

Territorial penetration is likely to produce more highly institutionalised parties, as central elites control the formation of the party structure. On the other hand, parties built through territorial diffusion are more likely to have a complex mode of unification and be under the influence of local organisations that jealous guard their original autonomy. Territorial diffusion is likely to give rise to more decentralised political parties. The presence of an external sponsor organisation is likely to hinder the formation of a strongly institutionalised party, as the party remains dependent on an external organisation. The existence of an external source of leadership legitimacy leads to indirect forms of loyalty within the party as the party comes second to the 'sponsor'. However, evidence has shown that parties with an extra-national external sponsor (like Communist parties) could be strongly institutionalised parties. Finally, the creation of a party as a vehicle for a charismatic individual is likely to result in weakly institutionalised parties. Organisations based on 'pure charisma' are characterised by a strong level of centralisation but they are weakly institutionalised because institutionalisation would require a transfer of authority from the leader to the organisation itself. As a result, they are unlikely to survive their leader (Panebianco 1988: 50-3, 63-7).

Panebianco's 'genetic' model of party change (1988) emphasises the 'stickiness' of organisational forms and rules. As a result of 'organisational resistance', a party's genetic structure would continue to prevail through subsequent stages of party development and hinder (or slow down) attempts to change party organisation and in particular internal power balance (Wilson 1994: 532; Hopkin 2003: 228). Path dependency implies that each organisational decision taken by political parties (and organisations in general) restricts the range of available options and potential organisational changes in the future. Today's party organisation and options for organisational change are partly determined by the organisational decisions taken in the past and the organisational stage in which the parties are (formation, institutionalisation or consolidation). For instance, it may be difficult for a party that has given some voice or privilege to a group to rid this group of its advantages. Unless there is a broad consensus in the rest of the party and the section of the party in question is not ready to fight hard to keep its position within the party (see for instance the trade unions and the Labour party at the beginning of the 1990s), such a change may be difficult.

As a result, and in the words of Hopkin and Paolucci (1999: 309), 'Historic political parties, whilst responding to the opportunities and constraints of modern electoral competition, remain rooted to their original identities, and are unlikely to jeopardise their electoral and social foundations for unpredictable short-term gains'. However, the limit of this emphasis on the 'genetic model' of party organisation is that it does not account well for the incentives for party change (Ware 1996: 104).

### *1.2.2. Institutions, society and electoral competition*

Neo-institutionalists emphasise the role of environmental factors. Parties are said to respond to their environment and are expected to adapt to it (van Biezen 2003: 15; Panebianco 1988: 19-20). Keefe went as far as saying that 'parties are less what they make of themselves that what their environment makes of them' (Keefe 1972: 1, quoted in Harmel and Janda 1982: 7). There are three main elements in this environment: the structure of the state, the social environment and the competitive electoral context.

The structure of the state, often constitutionally entrenched, is a first factor. It influences such things as the vertical articulation of political parties, the importance of the parliamentary and presidential (when applicable) electoral contests for the parties and the respective role and power of the parties' elected representatives in the executive and legislative branches. Some constitutions mention political parties and recognise their role in the exercise of democratic rights and the government of the country. At the same time, this recognition is often supplemented by legal restrictions or obligations. Parties are also affected by an increasing amount of legislation regulating their behaviour, in some cases their methods of candidate selection and more often their finance (van Biezen 2004).

Sociological explanations have also been put forward: parties change in response to changes in the structure of society. For instance, Kirchheimer (1966) observes that the weakening strength of traditional bonds and ideologies leads to the loosening of the ties between leaders and party members, which in turn pushes parties to transform their structures so that ordinary party members are less important and the party leadership gains in power and autonomy. Likewise, the emergence of the 'cartel party' model is supposed to result from political, socioeconomic and technological trends, such as the increasing disaffection of the electorate vis-à-vis political parties, decreasing levels of participation in party activities, declining party identification and changing patterns of electoral competition and party funding (Katz and Mair 1995: 15-6). As the levels of party membership decrease across the board (Mair and van Biezen 2001) and the costs of electoral competition increase, political parties are expected to change their organisation and also change the rules of party competition in order to reinforce their position and limit entry into the political arena for small and new parties.

The cleavage structure of society has been singled out as a crucial factor in the development of the party system and the development and relative strength of political parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Changes in social alignments and in the class structure of society have an impact on the structure of party competition and political parties. For instance, Lipset (2001) showed how changes in the economy produced changes in the occupational structure of society like the growth of the middle classes and the subsequent decline of the industrial working class, which, in conjunction with the development of post-materialist values, led to the decline of class conflict and what he calls the 'Americanisation' of European social-democratic parties.

Finally, other theories of party organisation and change emphasise the role of inter-party competition. A particular example of this is the 'contagion hypothesis': parties change their organisation in order to mimic the organisation of other, more successful, parties. Duverger (1976) expected cadre parties to transform themselves into mass parties because mass parties were more efficient in the post-enfranchisement era of mass politics. In a time of mass democratisation, the organisation of mass parties seemed better suited to the new conditions of party competition. In this case, the pressure comes from the integration of new social groups in democratic politics, other parties and the developments of modern party competition. While he disagreed with Duverger on the direction of party change, Epstein (1967) considered that the integration of new voters and the new methods of communications were likely to produce a 'contagion from the right'. Epstein therefore expected political parties to adapt their structures to resemble American political parties, that is, less institutionalised parties with a more flexible organisation and less permanent membership structures. For Epstein and Duverger, while social factors influence the way parties organise, change from one type of party to another is the

result of the pressures of party competition. While both turned out to be wrong (there was no general convergence of political parties towards one model or the other), electoral competitiveness remains a strong incentive for party change (Ware 1996: 104).

There are several consequences to this assumed role of the environment. First, all the parties of a country are expected to display a number of common characteristics as they are all under the influence of the same institutional and social environment (Harmel and Janda 1982: 44-5). Second, this image of party change assumes a clear causal primacy of the environment (Harmel and Janda 1982: 11). This first point will be discussed in the light of the evidence provided in the empirical study later. The second point, on the other hand, needs to be mitigated, as it may give the impression that parties are expected to adapt automatically to their environment. Whereas it can easily be admitted that the environment in which political parties are embedded has a strong effect on their organisation, the environment alone cannot explain how parties organise. An argument against this strong institutionalist paradigm is that parties are also purposive agents that are capable of changing their environment. The institutional structure of the state, from the regime to the level of centralisation, is often the result of the government or parliamentary action of political parties. This aspect of the environment-parties interaction will be mostly left aside, as the focus of this dissertation is instead on what influences the structure of the political parties rather than how the political parties influence their environment, but it shows that parties are not passive organisations and it helps emphasise the active role played by political parties in the political system.

Finally, if parties are shaped in the first place by their environment, any change – at least, any change of a significant nature – in the environment should result in some adaptational change on the part of the parties. The argument is that 'parties do not exist in a vacuum' (Lawson, 1976: 27) and that the most striking and influential aspect of their environment is the institutional framework of the polity. Whereas some changes are too important to be ignored by the parties, others may be met with more resistance. As a result, there is a hierarchy of environmental changes that are likely to generate party change.

### *1.2.3. Intra-party power relations and leadership effect*

This hierarchy of environmental factors is not innate and there has to be some decision taken by the parties in order to determine what kind of change is worth transforming the party organisation for. Party change can be a long process, as some formal rules have to be followed and the assent of various sectors of the party organisation has to be secured. In the process, party change can turn out to be divisive for the party if the internal balance of power or the party's core values are to be altered by the proposed changes. As a result, political parties are likely to select the type of environmental factors that have sufficient significance for the party to transform itself and embark on a potentially divisive process of party re-organisation. This means that the parties themselves are responsible for processes of party adaptation and that a level of agency should be added to the framework.

The next questions are then: under which circumstances do parties change, and what or who are the triggers of change? A framework is therefore needed to establish the 'micro-foundations' that explain internal relationships within political parties and the motives of party actors in processes of organisational change (Kitschelt 1989: 43; Kitschelt 2000: 150). At the same time as he emphasises the role of history and

institutional factors, Panebianco describes intra-party dynamics, that is, the relations between party leadership and party membership, in terms of strategies and power relations. Power is relational and is an unequal exchange relation between the leadership and the membership (Panebianco 1988: 22). Power is relational because it is not an attribute: leaders only have power insofar as they have a membership to exercise it on. At the same time, the existence of a membership conditions the exercise of the leaders' powers over it, and it is therefore the source of the members' power.

The exchange relation is unequal because the leadership is the group that benefits the most from the exchange. Leaders receive *selective* incentives, i.e. benefits that are distributed to only some of the participants, such as elective positions, possible government portfolios and high-ranking positions within the organisation. In contrast, party members only receive *collective* incentives, that is, benefits – or prospects of benefits – that the organisation distributes equally among its members (Panebianco 1988: 23). The leaders and elected officials of the party are those who benefits from 'private goods' and the party membership receives mainly 'public goods' (Gaxie 1977).<sup>3</sup> Party bureaucrats also benefit from selective incentives, as their employment is dependent on the party's survival and may also depend on the party success if the party's resources are highly dependent on public funding (the amount of which is often dependent on the parties' shares of the vote and number of elected officials).

From this account, we understand that the leadership has more resources than the membership and is able to devote more time to the maintenance and administration of the organisation than party members. Thanks to the resources they obtain from the organisation, the leadership acquires a greater ability to affect the party and influence its decisions. The role of the party leadership is a disputed issue. For instance, van Biezen (2005: 153) argues that 'the behaviour of party leaderships and party strategies cannot be seen to be independent from the structural context in which the party is embedded' and concludes that studies of party formation and change should focus on 'environmental factors external to the party as key determinants of party formation'. On the other hand, a number of authors consider that party leaders, or the dominant coalition, play a crucial role in the process of party change (Wilson 1980 and 1994; Panebianco 1988; Deschouwer 1992; Harmel and Janda 1994; Harmel 2002).

The leadership group is more than simply the party leader and his deputy. It is what Panebianco calls 'dominant coalition', that is, an alliance of groups of national, local and regional leaders, and also sometimes leaders of ancillary organisations, who 'control the most vital zones of uncertainty' (Panebianco 1988: 38). Panebianco argues that the leader is never alone and that he is at the centre of a coalition of forces that come together to rule the party (Panebianco 1988: 38-9).

For instance, Gunther and Diamond (2001: 33) emphasise the role of party leaders in processes of party change and the way their decisions may run counter to 'trends' in party organisation and produce different types of party responses to the same institutional factors:

'while socioeconomic and technological developments may create circumstances favourable to the development and progressive dominance of organizationally thin parties, they cannot predict precisely what kind of party is likely to emerge, let alone become a dominant model. Elite decision to pursue different strategies of voter mobilization or different

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<sup>3</sup> For a full explanation of the role of collective goods in organisations, see Olson (1971).

goals altogether (like, constituency representation instead of vote maximization) can lead to the adoption of a much more sharply defined ideological or programmatic stand'.

Leadership-driven party change occurs in three situations: change of party leadership, change in dominant coalition, and external stimuli perceived by the leadership. The first two assume that changes in the leadership structure – the election of a new leader or a change in the coalition that leads the party – are triggers of party change. The election of a new leader gives him/her a mandate to lead the party, and this might entail party change if such a change is perceived to be necessary. Likewise, if a new internal coalition takes over the party, it is likely to try and adapt the party structure to its needs and according to its principles and primary goals.

The 'external shock' theory assumes that environmental changes or pressures cannot become sources of party organisational change unless the party leadership perceives the need to change the organisation (Deschouwer 1992; Harmel and Janda 1994: 267). Party change is therefore the result of the perception by the party leadership (in a broad sense) that the conditions of the environment have changed and that the party needs to adapt (Mair et al. 2004: 9). The necessity will be felt if the party's performance is undermined by the changes in the environment. This notion of performance relates to the ability of political parties to achieve their goals. As we saw earlier, possible party goals are votes and election victory (generating vote-seeking behaviour), placing representatives in public office (office-seeking behaviour) and promoting values and implementing policies (policy-seeking behaviour) (Strøm and Müller 1999). The perception that environmental changes prevent the party from achieving its optimal electoral results is likely to be the most salient to party leaders. Consequently, changes to the conditions of electoral competition are likely to be the type of change that affects party leaders the most, and they are therefore the most likely to prompt party adaptation (Wilson 1980: 528; see also Mair, Müller and Plasser 2004).

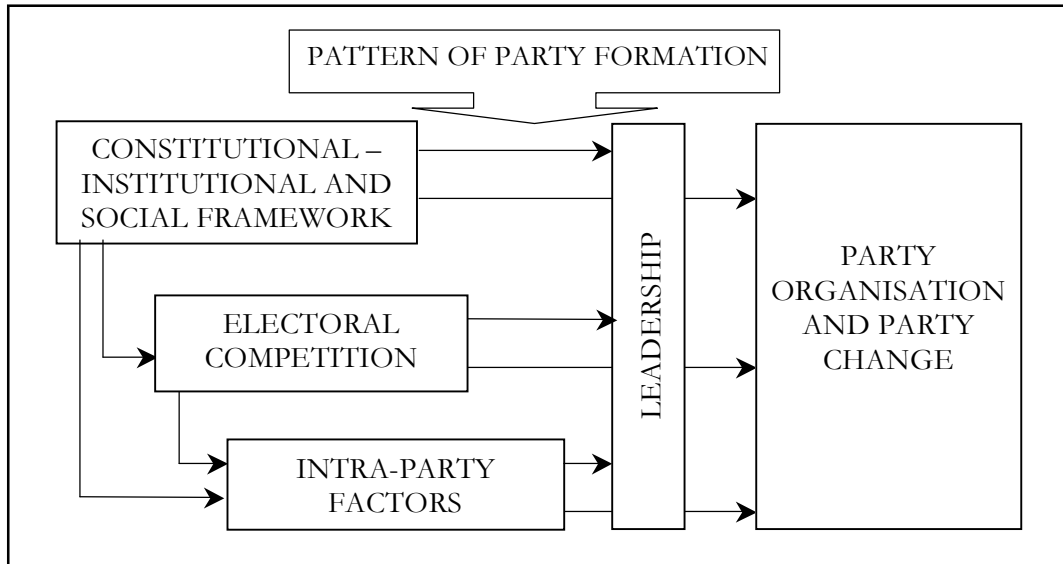
At the same time, the party leaders or the dominant coalition are unlikely to promote changes that limit their power or that shift the balance of power too dramatically against their own interests. Changes will only be implemented if the organisation's survival and performance are at stake or to consolidate the leadership or dominant coalition (Harmel and Janda 1994: 279). Because the leadership's primary goal is to preserve the performance and stability of the organisation, this involves most of the time the preservation of 'the party's internal authority channels' (Panebianco 1988: 42).

Leadership perception is only a step in the process of change: party leaders and the dominant coalition must then convince the rest of the party that the changes are indeed necessary. As we saw earlier, parties are creatures of habit, with 'sticky' procedures and a tendency towards internal inertia. In particular, party leaders have to overcome the resistance of the party bureaucracy and the rank and file (Wilson 1994: 275). According to Panebianco (1988: 13-4), '[h]olding environmental constraints constant, the more the selective incentives prevail in the organization, the more the organization will tend to adapt. The more collective incentives prevail, the more the organization will adopt strategies of domination [of the environment]'. It results that change is likely to be easier in office-seeking parties than in policy-seeking parties.

Overall, party change is likely to be prompted by party leaders and their perception that changes in the environment require the party to change in order to

maintain or improve its ability to achieve its goals. Party organisations have a tendency toward organisational inertia, and only those environmental changes that affect the most their survival and electoral chances are likely to induce party change.

**Figure 1.1.** A Model of Party Organisation and Party Change



*Source:* adapted from Wilson 1980.

To conclude this chapter, the figure above recapitulates the model of party change adopted in this dissertation. The 'genetic model' of party formation exerts a constraint on the party's ability to change and the direction of change. The 'environment' is divided into two categories of independent variables: constitutional and institutional settings and structure of electoral competition. A third category includes intra-party factors such as the internal balance of power between party leadership, party bureaucracy and party membership and the party's ideology and goals. Their effect on party organisation and party change is finally mediated through the perception of the party leadership.

## CHAPTER 2. DETERMINANTS OF PARTY ORGANISATION IN MULTI-LEVEL SETTINGS

Chapter 1 elaborated a general framework through which the organisation of political parties can be studied. This chapter adapts this framework to the study of state-wide political parties in multi-level settings. The territorial dimension of state-wide parties and the relationships between central and regional levels of organisation become a crucial aspect of party organisation in multi-level systems, but the literature reviewed in chapter 1 says very little on this issue. The first section presents number of organisational strategies can be adopted by the parties in order to overcome co-ordination problems. Three categories of variables are then considered in turn: the institutional and social environment, which consists of the characteristics of the decentralised institutional arrangement and the territorial cleavages that shape society; the structure of party competition, that is, the electoral system, the electoral cycle and the state-wide and regional party systems; and finally internal party factors such as party type, party ideology and party finance.

### 2.1. The territorial dimension of party organisation

#### 2.1.1. *State-wide parties: definition and organisational issues*

While political parties were often born in single-level polities, today most democratic polities are multi-levelled. This is especially the case in Europe, where power is pooled together at the European level for a large number of issues and areas of competence while being simultaneously spread within the member states through more or less advanced processes of territorial decentralisation. As office-holders have to be elected in a range of territorial institutions, political parties play a crucial role in the running of elections and governments at all levels. In a multi-level system, political parties are not only brokers between the state and the citizens. They also provide a linkage between the levels, presenting voters with easily identifiable labels and an element of cohesion across the country, and influencing the way the multi-level system works (Deschouwer 2000: 14).

The multi-level nature of the polity creates opportunity structures for political parties to compete at different levels and choose which level is their 'core level', that is, their level of reference for electoral competition (Deschouwer 2003: 216-7). Parties can participate in elections at the regional level, at the national level or at both levels. Another dimension to the territorial organisation of political parties is their 'territorial pervasiveness', that is the number of regions in which the party runs for election (Deschouwer 2006: 292). From these two dimensions, a typology of parties in multi-level setting can be established, with parties participating in elections at the regional level, at the national level or at both levels, in one region, some regions or all the regions, which makes a total of nine possible forms of organisation (Deschouwer 2006).



Within the whole population of political parties in multi-level polities, this dissertation focuses only on some of them: state-wide parties. The distinguishing features of state-wide parties are their participation in electoral contests at both national and regional levels and their territorial coverage or pervasiveness. State-wide parties are political parties that present candidates for election in all or most of the constituencies for general and regional elections. The term 'state-wide' is preferred to federal or national for two reasons. First, state-wide political parties are not only found in federal countries. With the spread of decentralisation and devolution reforms, the forms of decentralised distribution of power and competences are numerous and do not necessarily conform to the classical definition of a federation. The term 'federal party' is moreover sometimes used to define political parties that file candidates for federal elections in opposition to parties that present candidates for sub-national level elections, as is the case in Canada for instance (Chandler and Chandler 1987). As a result, the term 'state-wide' seems more appropriate, as it conveys a sense that the party is present all over the country and contest different types of elections. The terms 'national' and 'central' are used to refer to the central party and 'regional' for the highest tier of sub-state government. This is not to say that some sub-national units are not nations, but this distinction between 'national' and 'regional' remains useful for the sake of clarity.

State-wide parties are 'integrated parties', that is, parties in which there is a mutual interdependence between the levels (Renzsch 2001: 2). As the party's organisation is present at all levels, electoral success at one level facilitates electoral success at other levels. If the national level is the most important level, this link is likely to be top-down, from the national to the regional level. The survival of the overall structure is a crucial goal of the national party elite because the defection of one sub-national unit affects the cohesion of the whole and harms its strength as a national organisation. As a result, national elites are likely to give some autonomy to regional elites to preserve the organisation (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 192-4). However, the relative autonomy of regional party branches may vary between and within parties, as control over party processes and party organs at both levels becomes a critical aspect of party organisation.

State-wide parties that compete in a federal or devolved state are confronted with a specific challenge. On the one hand, they compete in general elections and file candidates in all the regions. For these elections, they devise a single electoral programme that should appeal to as large a group of voters as possible. On the other hand, they compete in regional elections, for which they need to take the specific interests of each region into account. This challenge is nowhere greater than in federal or devolved states with a multinational character (van Biezen and Hopkin 2006: 15) because the issues that are discussed at the regional level will often diverge from those that dominate general elections (Fabre *et al.* 2005: 37). Issues of regional identity and regional institution-building are more likely to be at stake in regional elections than in general elections. In multinational federations state-wide parties will often face the competition of ethno-regionalist parties (de Winter and Türsan 1998), which tend to build their electoral appeal on criticising all political actors that can be identified with the centre. Such parties also tend to question the state-wide parties' 'regional' credentials. This tension between national campaigns and more particularistic regional campaigns may represent a source of conflict for state-wide parties, as regional leaders may want to emphasise regional issues and adapt their programme to the regional context while the central party is more likely to prefer programmatic homogeneity. In other words, the issue of their vertical organisation is a potential conundrum for state-

wide parties, as they have to find a balance between party cohesion and regional demands for autonomy.

The focus of this dissertation is on one aspect of party organisation: the distribution of decision-making authority among units and across levels (Harmel 2002: 138), with a focus on two levels, the central party organs of the state-wide party and the regional branches. The degree of centralisation or regional decentralisation of party structures is observed through two aspects of party organisation, which mirror the way in which decentralised and federal states are organised. Elazar (1987: 12) defines a federal political system as a form of government that combines 'elements of shared-rule and regional self-rule'. On the one hand, two levels of government can act on their citizens through their respective institutions, and on the other hand they are involved in some form of joint decision-making. In terms of party organisation, this means looking at the level of involvement of regional sub-units in central party organs and the level of autonomy of regional sub-units. The former relates to the degree to which regional sub-units are represented in central organs and involved in central decision-making processes, for instance in relation with the selection of the state-wide party leader, the selection of candidates for general elections, and the elaboration of the programme for these same elections. The latter refers to the same processes at the regional level and to the extent to which regional sub-units are able to perform these competences independently from the central party.

### *2.1.2. Political parties and decentralisation*

The literature on political parties has often focused on national politics and as a result references to the regional tier of organisation are rather scarce (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 178-9). When it mentions organisational centralisation, this literature often refers to the relationship between the centre and the membership or the increasing power of the party leadership at the expense of the other party groups. However, in federal, regionalised and decentralised polities, the regional level should also be taken into account.

One of the first references to the territorial dimension of party organisation can be found in Duverger's study of political parties. He observes that 'the political articulation [of political parties] tends to copy the administrative articulation of the state: the grouping of the 'basic elements' therefore looks like a pyramid with degrees, often coinciding with the official territorial divisions' (Duverger 1976: 91). Duverger also briefly discusses the organisation of political parties in federal countries and points out a potential paradox. He argues that because the organisation of federal states accommodates regional particularisms and allows their expression at the central level, state-wide parties need not grant autonomous powers to their regional branches. On the other hand, when the distinct regional groups of a country cannot express their originality through a federal framework, then the accommodation of regional interests through the autonomy of regional party branches becomes necessary (Duverger 1976: 109). At a more general level, he considers that the degree of (de)centralisation of political parties is influenced by a number of factors, such as the origins of the party (externally created parties, such as labour parties, are generally more centralised than parties with a parliamentary origin), party finance ('bourgeois' parties where campaign costs are paid by local candidates and constituencies allow more autonomy to their local level than mass parties that centralise their resources), and the electoral system (majoritarian systems tend to increase constituency level autonomy) (Duverger 1976: 113-4).

The literature on federalism, often influenced by the example of the US, also turned some – albeit little – of its attention to the organisation of political parties. For instance, Riker (1975: 137) argues that 'when parties are somewhat decentralized, then federalism is only partially centralized. Because of this perfect correlation, [...] the inference is immediate: one can measure federalism by measuring parties. The structure of parties is thus a surrogate for the structure of the whole constitution'. Because Riker talks about a 'perfect correlation', one can also assume that one can measure the (de)centralised organisation of political parties from the type of federalism of the state. Beyond the fact that Riker reached this conclusion by comparing democratic federal countries, such as Canada, Australia and the US to non-democratic federations such as the Soviet Union, Tito's Yugoslavia and Mexico under PRI rule, therefore making democracy a more relevant factor in explaining the degree of decentralisation of political parties, this statement reflects a strong institutional bias, a perception that the distribution of powers within of political parties automatically reflects that of the state.

Already visible in Duverger's earlier quote, and here reproduced by Riker, this tendency to consider that the federal or decentralised nature of a polity is a key element in explaining the relations between a party's centre and its sub-national units remains very strong. For instance, the organisation of integrated parties has also been described as 'a "wedding cake" structure that mimics the federation' (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 193). However, the fact that the structure of the parties reflects that of the federation does not say much about the relationships and the type of distribution of powers between the levels.

Assuming again a 'perfect correlation' between the distribution of competences of a federation and the division of power within political parties might be a step too far. Duchacek (1970: 331-2) forcefully disagrees with this tendency to correlate party organisation and federal organisation: 'a classic political party negates the federal idea of power dispersion, because political parties are deemed to aim primarily at aggregating and welding different elements of territorial and functional interests and power into one phalanx, committed to a common goal under one leadership'. Indeed, if parties are to have an aggregative function, it can be assumed that they also aim at aggregating regional interests into a single locus.

In the 1960s Eldersveld introduced the concept of stratarchy in order to describe some aspects of the vertical organisation of American political parties. By 'stratarchy', Eldersveld (1964: 9) means that parties are characterised by an important 'diffusion of power prerogatives and power exercise' and 'the existence of "strata commands", which operate with a varying, but considerable degree of, independence'. It results that American political parties are not centralised structures but on the contrary organisations characterised by limited integration and central control and by important sub-level autonomy (Wright 1971: 6). While not restricted to the Washington-states relationship, this concept of stratarchy can be a useful heuristic tool to observe multi-level party organisation.

This concept is also used by Katz and Mair (1994, 1995) in their study of party organisation. In their cartel model of party organisation, they claim that party organisations are becoming increasingly stratarchical, as opposed to hierarchical. Local elites are granted more autonomy vis-à-vis the central party, as both levels consider this situation mutually advantageous. Local office-holders and elites intervene little in national politics, while the central party gives them a large degree of autonomy in local politics (Katz and Mair 1995: 21). Political parties are also likely to adopt a stratarchical form of organisation because parties are increasingly close to and

dependent on the state for their resources (Mair 1994: 7). The closeness between state and political parties is such that 'the very structure of party organisations is determined at least in part by the structure of the state itself' (Mair 1994: 10). Indeed, if parties increasingly rely on the state for their resources, they are likely to make the most of the organisation of the state and try to gain advantages and resources at all levels of government within a country. The regional organisation of the state provides parties with opportunities to gain access to positions in public office and financial and patronage resources at another level. It becomes particularly useful for parties in opposition at the central level, as being in government at the regional level provides them with resources to which they would not have access in a unitary state. State-wide parties may find it preferable to leave regional elites organise and campaign autonomously in order to give them the possibility of adapting to the electoral demands of each particular region and increase the odds of getting candidates elected. However, the levels remain 'interdependent elements of a wider organisation' (Carty and Cross 2006: 95). Unlike 'bifurcated parties' in which central and regional organisations of the same label are 'divorced' (Renzsch 2001), they still need to co-ordinate their activities and organise the separation of powers and competences between the various levels of organisation.

Carty developed the notion of 'franchise parties' that describes this articulation between two levels of party organisation (Carty 2002 and 2004). Because it is inspired by the organisation of Canadian federal parties where there is very little interaction (if any) between federal and provincial parties with the same political label, it describes the articulation between the federal and constituency levels of organisation. Carty compares the stratarchical organisation of Canadian political parties to franchise organisations in which the central organisation provides a 'product line, sets standards, manages marketing and advertising', and the local units (the individual franchises) 'deliver the product to a particular market, invest local resources, build an organisation focused on the needs and resources of the (local) community' (Carty 2004: 10). For political parties, this means that the central party organisation provides the political line, the overall image and the organisational framework of the party, while the constituency units provide a structure for local involvement and campaign support. Local party branches are able to adapt the party to the needs of the local level.

In a multi-level context, this provides a template for the study of the relationship between the central organisation of political parties and their regional party branches. Franchise organisations can take many forms, from centralised to the federalised, and can also be asymmetrical, with larger, richer units enjoying more autonomy and power than smaller, poorer ones. It means that the franchise contract (the party constitution) can give sub-units different levels of organisational autonomy and powers. The constitution provides a framework for the distribution of competences between the central party and its sub-units, for the level of autonomy of the sub-units and for the organisation of the interdependence between the levels. The constitution attempts to solve co-ordination problems by 'exchanging autonomy for clear limits on the bounds of action' (Carty 2004: 20). The limit of this model resides in its flexibility: because the existence of a franchise contract does not prescribe the type of autonomy of the sub-national units, it fails to provide clear categories or ideal-types to compare different forms of party organisation.

### 2.1.3. Organisational strategies of state-wide parties

This section first looks at the range of possible forms of organisation at the regional level and then distinguishes between the different levels of involvement of the regional branches in central decision-making. The final organisation of the parties is a combination of these two dimensions, as table 2.1 below shows.

In a regionalised or federal polity, state-wide parties have the choice between different organisational strategies with respect to the degree of autonomy of their regional branches (Roller and van Houten 2003). This scheme adds one category (federalisation) to Roller and van Houten's range of possible relationships between central and regional levels of party organisation.

*Centralisation.* the state-wide party centralises its organisation in order to co-ordinate more efficiently its activities, to maintain a high level of intra-party cohesion and ensure the uniformity of its message and policies all over the country. The central party therefore controls the selection of regional elites and the content of election programmes for regional elections.

*Regionalisation.* the state-wide party gives more power and autonomy to its regional branches. It is a way to recognise that devolution is about letting the regions decide, at least partly, by themselves, and that decentralisation of powers should also extend to party organisation. It may be considered electorally advantageous to leave some room for manoeuvre to the regional branches, as they can adapt the party to regional party competition. The amount of power allocated to the regional party branches in the management of their own affairs and in regional party competition may vary, but the central party reserves itself the powers to oversee and/or veto regional choices in order to ensure that the policies and candidates of the regional party branches do not jeopardise the overall cohesion of the party.

*Federalisation.* a federal form of organisation gives regional party branches complete freedom in the management of party affairs corresponding to their level. They are able to independently organise, select their candidates for regional elections, make their own election manifestos, design their regional election campaign and raise their own funds to support their activities. The link between the central party and its regional branches mainly lies in the compliance with the principles of the party constitution and adherence to a common political doctrine, which the regional branches adapt to the regional context, on the model of the franchise contract (Carty 2002 and 2004).

*Split organisation.* the state-wide party dissolves its central organisation, abandons its state-wide nature and splits into regional parties. However, the moment this strategy is developed, the state-wide party ceases to exist (see the example of Belgium in Lecours 2001a: 61). This strategy is therefore likely to be a last-resort solution when it appears to party leaders that the maintenance of unified party structures has become impossible.

At the same time, the party must also decide which role it wants to give to the regional branches in its central organs. This can lead to three potential configurations:

*No involvement in central party organs:* because central party organs deal with national issues, the party considers that it is not a matter for regional party branches. This is in line with Duverger's argument that if the structure of the state accommodates regional groups and interests, political parties may feel that they need not concern themselves with issues of regional representation within their organisations. In the case of a split organisation, there is no central level of organisation.

*Involvement of regional branches in central party organs:* the regional branches gain representation in the central organs of the state-wide party. They are therefore able to

convey their problems and interests at the centre. It also allows a certain level of co-ordination between the levels and reminds the regional branches that they still have links with, and obligations towards, the rest of the party.

*Central party as a confederation:* central party organs are composed of representatives from the regional branches. There is no separate central organisation, only regional branches coming together for the purpose of co-ordinating their activities at the national level.

**Table 2.1.** Range of possible forms of multi-level party organisation: autonomy and involvement of the regional branches within state-wide parties

	<b>Centralisation</b>	<b>Regionalisation</b>	<b>Federalisation</b>	<b>Split organisation</b>
<b>No involvement</b>	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible
<b>Involvement</b>	Possible	Possible	Possible	Impossible
<b>Confederation</b>	Impossible	Unlikely	Possible	Impossible

Table 2.1 shows that three combinations are impossible. The central level of a state-wide party cannot take a confederal form if the regional branches are not powerful entities. This is why that the confederal form of the central party is even unlikely to occur if the central level is strong enough to intervene, even moderately, in regional party affairs. The confederal form of the centre is more likely to occur when the regional branches are powerful organisations able to manage their own affairs without any central intervention. In addition, a split organisation means that there is no central level to co-ordinate regional parties, making it impossible to have some form of central-level involvement in regional party affairs.

The factors that influence the adaptation of state-wide parties to the challenge of multi-level politics of political parties are described in detail in the rest of this chapter. Faced with the difficult task of participating in national and regional party competition, state-wide political parties and the nature of the 'franchise contract' are influenced by a number of factors that range from their institutional and social environment to the multi-level structure of party competition and the intra-party distribution of power and resources.

## 2.2. Regionalisation and territorial diversity

Harmel and Janda (1982: 12-3) argue that there is a hierarchy of environmental factors, from the physical environment (size, shape of the country), to socioeconomic factors and finally political factors. Whereas physical characteristics such as the size and shape of a country have little bearing on the matter, its institutional and socioeconomic structure, on the other hand, is of crucial importance. The multi-level nature of the polity is a first variable to be considered. Indeed, the issue of the territorial dimension of party organisation takes on a particular relevance in a multi-level institutional context.

There is a general expectation about the impact of a regionalised or federal system on party organisation. Parties seem to be expected to adapt quasi-automatically to the structure of the state, mimicking its overall structure. At the same time, regionalisation can be more than institutional: it may be based on the geographical concentration of cultural and economic differences. If mobilised politically, these geographical cleavages can provide the basis of support for regionalist ideas and regionalist parties.

### *2.2.1. Multi-level institutional arrangement and party adaptation*

The form of regionalisation of the state is the main variable of this category (Méndez Lago 2004). It is then subdivided into a number of dimensions to grasp the multi-faceted aspect of regionalisation: the historical development of the regionalised arrangement, the degree of institutional autonomy of the regions, the extent to which the regions have access to central decision-making and the asymmetry of the whole arrangement.

#### *Regionalisation, devolution, federalism: the various faces of multi-level governance*

Federalism is a term that refers to the promotion of multi-tiered government, which combines a central government and regional governments. It is based on the principles of balance between diversity and unity within a complex society, freedom and shared power to achieve common ends (Elazar 1987).

A federation is the application to the state of the principles of federalism. There is no single model of federal political systems, but they all share a number of common characteristics (Riker 1975: 103). Elazar (1987: 12) defines a federal political system as a form of government that combines 'elements of shared-rule and regional self-rule'. Two levels of government can act directly on their citizens on the basis of formal, democratically elected legislative and executive powers listed in a constitution that can only be amended by mutual agreement of the federal and regional governments. The autonomy of the two levels of government is ensured by this constitutional guarantee and the sharing of revenue resources. The constitution also provides for the representation of the constituent units and regional interests in the federal policy-making process, generally through a federal second chamber and intergovernmental collaboration (Elazar 1987; Watts 1999: 7). Swenden (2006: 10-11) adds some elements to this definition: the entities of government should be mainly territorial in character, as it facilitates the distinction between federal and consociational systems; both federal and regional governments should have democratic structures; and unilateral secession of one of the constituent units is generally impossible.

Federalism is not the only form of distribution of power between a central government and regional units. A regionalised system is a political system that displays some elements of federalism while at the same time retaining some characteristics of unitary or centralised systems. A regionalised political system is relatively close to the model of decentralised unitary states but it also has some federal arrangements that provide for stronger regions than in simply decentralised systems: the ultimate authority rests with the central government but sub-national units can also act upon their citizens with some degree of authority (Watts 1999: 8; Elazar 1987: 47-9; Swenden 2006: 14-5). There is therefore a sort of continuum between unitary, regionalised and federal states. Devolution, a term generally used to refer to the process that occurred in the UK in the late 1990s, fits into the category of regionalisation. It is defined as 'the transfer and subsequent sharing of powers between institutions of government within a limited framework set out in legislation' (Burrows 2000: 1). Regional governments can have relatively considerable powers but remain subordinate entities to a central government. The distinction between regional and unitary decentralised states is not clear cut, as there is no unambiguous 'cut-off point'. The difference between decentralised unitary and regionalised systems rests on the evaluation of the strength of the regional institutions in the overall institutional design (Swenden 2006: 14).

### *The historical development of decentralisation/federalism*

Varying degrees of centralisation in federal or regionalised states can in part be explained by the process of federalisation or regionalisation. A country may become federal or regionalised in two ways: either a number of independent units come together to form a federal state or a centralised state decides to give some powers to its constituent regions. The first case, 'federalisation by aggregation', involves distinct entities getting together and surrendering some of their sovereignty to share some responsibilities such as international relations, defence, security and taxes. At the same time, the constituent units keep some policy-making powers in areas of local relevance. Under such circumstances, the regions often want to retain as much power as possible and keep the powers of the federal government limited and under control (Watts 1999: 36; Baldi 1999: 18-9). The distribution of powers tends to benefit the regions. The powers of the federal and regional government are detailed in a constitution and the residual powers, i.e., the powers that are not otherwise listed, are generally assigned to the regions.

The other case is called 'federalism by decentralisation'. A unitary state, often under the pressure of regionalist movements or parties, decentralises power to its constituent regions. The central government is more likely to hold on to its prerogatives and the regions are likely to be less powerful than the regions of an 'aggregated' state (Baldi 1999: 19). The constitution tends to assign the residual powers to the central government and circumscribe the competences of the regions (Watts 1999: 38).

If a country was created relatively recently as the result of a process of aggregation, some form of party system is likely to have preceded the formation of the state. Some parties, created on a regional basis and used to being independent, are likely to have resisted the extension of a national structure. The regional party system may also have retained some particularities: some parties may be competing in only one or a few regions, or different parties may be competing for the federal and provincial elections. This is what Renzsch (2001: 2) calls a 'bifurcated party system'. The later the formation of the state, the more likely this will be the case, as a 'modern' form of a party system will have a greater impact on state-building.

If a federation formed through a process of devolution, the original centralised organisation is likely to have some lasting effects on the organisation of political parties. The parties' national organs are likely to have the upper hand on party business, at least in the early stages following devolution. Later, parties may adapt their structure to that of the state and hand over some centrally-managed functions to the regional party branches. In such countries, we are likely to find 'integrated' parties competing at both national and regional levels and trying to keep 'closed ranks' (Renzsch 2001: 2).

### *Distribution of competences: the dual-integrative continuum and the scope of decentralised powers*

The notion of federalism or regional devolution is not sufficient in itself, as there are two dimensions to the issue: the nature of the distribution of powers and the scope of regional autonomy. The first dimension relates to the way competences are distributed and shared between the central and regional levels: whether each level has exclusive competence over policy areas or central and regional governments share responsibility over policy-making and implementation. The second dimension refers to the amount of power given to the sub-national level of government.



Federal systems can be ranked along a scale ranging from very dual to very cooperative (Swenden 2006: 49-50). In a dual federal system, the federal and regional levels are virtually independent from one another in their decision-making. Dual (or jurisdictional) federalism means that each level has a clearly identifiable set of legislative, executive and fiscal responsibilities (Chandler and Chandler 1987: 95; Scharpf 1995: 31). Each level tends to be exclusively responsible for the areas over which it has competence (even though some level of overlap, however small, is always bound to occur) and the machinery of government tends to be replicated at each level. Because of the low level of policy-sharing, intergovernmental relations at the executive level are generally limited. A complete separation of fields of competence is rather impossible, and areas of shared (or concurrent) competence occur, so that both federal and regional governments have the possibility to legislate over a particular matter (Swenden 2006: 50-1). The more competences are shared between the levels, the more cooperative the federal system becomes.

In contrast, joint-decision federal systems are characterised by a division of labour – rather than areas of competence – between the federal and regional governments (Chandler and Chandler 1987: 94). The classic example of a joint-decision federation is Germany, where the federal level is responsible for legislation and the *Länder* have responsibility over policy implementation and tax collection. Federal legislation moreover requires the agreement of the federal government with the regional governments because of the nature of the second federal chamber, the *Bundesrat*, which is composed of representatives of the *Länder* governments (Scharpf 1995: 33). As a result, the levels are highly interdependent and co-operation becomes a necessity of efficient government. Intergovernmental relations are strongly developed and the regions are involved in the central decision-making process in order to ensure that their interests are properly taken into account and that they do not become mere administrative appendages of the federal government.

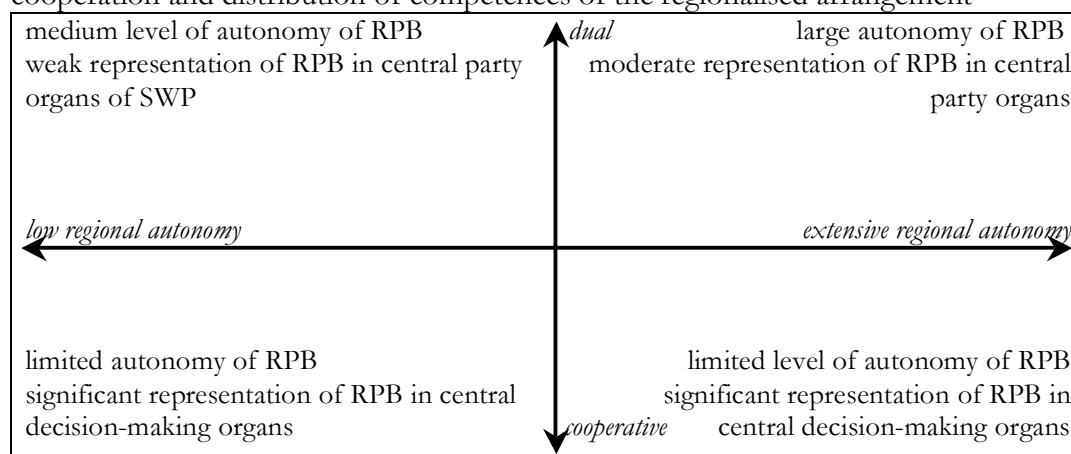
This distinction between dual and cooperative can also apply to regionalised but not yet federal multi-level polities. The difference between regionalised and fully federal systems does not lie in the way powers are distributed, that is, in either a dual or an integrative way, but in the scope of devolved powers (or the fiscal or administrative capacity that goes with it) that is more limited in regionalised systems. Hence, we can analytically distinguish between the *nature* (dual vs. integrative) of the institutional arrangement and the *scope* of the regionalised powers. The scope of regionalised powers refers to the capacity of regional governments to legislate over a large number of issues and the level of their financial autonomy. In addition, this hierarchy also depends on the security of the regionalised powers, that is, the protection of the competences of the regional governments provided by the constitution.

Riker (1975: 13-4) quite generally expressed the effect of federalism on political parties when he wrote that 'the multiplicity of authorities in an only partially centralized federation is correlated with the decentralization of parties'. However, with the distinction between nature and scope of federalism, we can formulate more detailed hypotheses regarding the impact of federalism on party organisation.

Following Scharpf (1995: 32), we would expect dual federal systems to favour highly regionalised, if not truncated, state-wide parties. In such states, the relations between the centre and the regions can be difficult insofar as regional political elites may find it convenient and strategically useful to exploit conflicts with the centre (Chandler and Chandler 1987: 95). As the relations between the state and the regions become more politicised, regional branches may distance themselves from the state-

wide party. Moreover, each level of government has areas of competence for which it is responsible and accountable, different issues are discussed at each level and there is a clear distinction between state-wide and regional politics. The existence of two political games being played at different levels of government allows for more internal differentiation within political parties (Deschouwer 2000: 6). Central parties do not have to keep their regional branches under tight control out of fear that the lack of popularity or bad record of a regional branch might adversely affect its electoral prospects at the state level. On the contrary, the situation creates incentives for state-wide parties to allow internal differentiation and also possibly bifurcation, with distinct parties of the same name operating at different levels of government. As a result, we expect state-wide parties that operate in a dual system to give more autonomy to their regional branches. In keeping with the dual model of organisation, we hypothesise that regional branches will have limited access to the central decision-making organs of the state-wide party.

**Figure 2.1.** Expected organisation of state-wide parties in function of the degree of cooperation and distribution of competences of the regionalised arrangement



*Abbreviations:* SWP: state-wide party; RPB: regional party branches.

Conversely, we expect party organisations to be less regionalised in integrative federations but anticipate a stronger involvement of the regional branches in the central organs of state-wide parties. This would be consistent with the typical pattern of intergovernmental relations that we find in highly integrative federations. As federal legislation is passed and implemented in co-operation with regional governments or representatives, it is in the interest of the ruling party or coalition at the federal level to ensure that regional party branches follow central party policy. Likewise, opposition parties will want to present a united front across the whole country. Regional elections moreover influence the federal legislative process. They are closely followed by state-wide party headquarters and the media. Regional elections, with their state-wide significance, tend to be seen as a test for the federal government (Chandler and Chandler 1987: 98). This connection between national and regional politics strengthens the need for party cohesion. State-wide parties therefore tend to wield more control over their regional branches in order to ensure loyalty and compliance with party policy at the regional level (Deschouwer 2000: 17). As a result, we expect that the incentive for the state-wide party to control its regional party branches will be high in cooperative federations.

With respect to the effect of the scope of regionalised powers, we expect that the powers of the regional branches will be more extensive as the scope of decentralised

powers is large. Significant regional autonomy can also provide regional branches with enough resources to increase their representation in central party organs. Conversely, the more limited the powers of regional governments, the lower the autonomy of the regional branches and the lower the representation of the regional branches in central party organs.

### *Institutional asymmetry*

An additional characteristic of federalism should be taken into account: institutional (or *de jure*) asymmetry. Institutional asymmetry refers to 'constitutionally embedded differences between the legal status and prerogatives of different subunits within the same federation' (Stepan 2001: 326). This means that some regions enjoy more self-government than others (Kymlica 2001: 104; Requejo 2001: 44). The literature on federalism also refers to *de facto* asymmetry. This relates to non-institutional geographical diversity, based on economic, social and cultural differences between the regions. This will be addressed in the next sub-section. However, *de facto* asymmetry is often the reason for institutional asymmetry (Swenden 2006: 63; Bauböck 2002: 1). Stepan (2001: 327-8) shows how all the multinational federations (India, Belgium, Canada and Spain) are constitutionally asymmetrical.

As a result, state-wide parties may not have the same form of organisation all over the country and some regions may carry more weight at the centre. In an asymmetrical federation the regional party branches of the most powerful regions are likely to enjoy more autonomy than those in less powerful regions. They can also have different responsibilities or special representation in the party's state-wide organs.

### *2.2.2. Territorial diversity*

The most crucial socioeconomic factor is the level of homogeneity or heterogeneity of society and inter-regional differences. Economic differences create internal differentiation between the regions, which might in turn be reflected in party competition at the regional level. The shape of the multi-level territorial arrangement often correlates with the geographical cleavage structure of the country. Whereas the importance of the centre-periphery cleavage on the regionalisation of the state is not the prime concern of this study, the influence of this cleavage first on the structure of party competition and then on party organisation is a factor to take into account. The strength of the centre-periphery cleavage partly explains the presence of regionalist parties (de Winter and Türsan 1998) and the degree of nationalisation of the party system (Caramani 2004). Moreover, by creating regional differences, economic factors and centre-periphery cleavages also influence the internal structures of state-wide political parties, creating needs to emphasise different issues in different regions and also differences in the salience of identity politics in regional party competition.

Territorial cleavages are likely to have an impact on state-wide political parties in two ways: directly, through calls for internal differentiation within the parties themselves in order to accommodate local and regional differences, and indirectly via the party system and the possible presence of regionalist or separatist parties.

### *Territorial versus functional cleavages*

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) describe how processes of nation-building can trigger feelings of resentment from the peripheries. The development of modern states generally involved the establishment of a centralising bureaucracy with a monopoly

over political and administrative powers and economic resources. It typically involved the extraction of resources from the regions for the edification and strengthening of the centre (Eisenstadt 1981: 97). The movement of unification often resulted in the promotion of the culture of the centre as a set of unifying values and traditions and corresponding attempts to marginalise the cultures of the other regions.

At the same time, a number of political and social processes facilitated the emergence of a national polity. Rokkan (1966: 244) described this change from mainly territorial politics to nationalised politics as a process in four steps: first, formal *incorporation* of new citizens in the polity through the extension of suffrage; then the *mobilisation* of these citizens through their engagement in electoral politics; third, the *activation* of these citizens via direct participation in public life; and finally the replacement of the old local and regional ruling elites by the penetration of national political parties in local and municipal electoral contests (*politicisation*). The overall result was then the development of 'obedience and loyalties to the nation which transcend loyalties to its parts' and the 'emergence of shared values and perspectives' (Chambers 1966: 98).

The early literature on cleavages often assumed that territorial cleavages would eventually disappear while functional cleavages (church-state, land-industry and owner-worker) would dominate. The survival of local and regional movements and demands was generally seen as the last signs of an obsolete political culture. Moreover, after World War II, references to ethnic origins and national identity were often frowned upon. As a result, political integration was seen as desirable, if not inevitable (Urwin 1985: 151; Williams 1997: 112).

Caramani (2004 and 2005) shows how over time parties and party systems have become increasingly nationalised across Western Europe. Looking at patterns of electoral support, party coverage and turnout, he observes that over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, electoral participation, voting per party family and party presence are increasingly territorially homogeneous across the countries. The functional left-right alignment has become the most common and influential dimension of Western electoral politics (Caramani 2005: 319; Budge and Robertson 1987: 390-1, table 18.1). Politics are therefore characterised by a 'progressive reduction of territorial disparities of cleavages in Europe, except for linguistic, territorial and ethnic cleavages that specifically refer to the distinctiveness of the cultural and economic regions' (Caramani 2005: 315).

In spite of this wide-ranging process of homogenisation, there are still 'pockets of resistance' to the nationalisation of politics, which 'can be principally explained through cultural cleavages that resisted the homogenizing impact of class politics – the most important cause of de-territorialization processes' (Caramani 2005: 318).

#### *The territorial cleavage and sources of territorial differentiation*

Territorial resistance to the nationalisation of politics and the development of a centralising centre are often thought of in terms of centre-periphery conflict (Rokkan and Urwin 1982; Mény and Wright 1985). The notions of centre and periphery should not be understood literally, i.e., in terms of geographical distance. Territorial resistance to unification and centralisation is likely to happen in a number of cases, when there is competition between several centres (or potential centres) of political control; between several centres of economic power; or 'between the culturally and economically advanced areas and the backward periphery' (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 41). There are therefore several sources of territorial conflict: over political and administrative

control, economic power and cultural homogenisation (Rokkan and Urwin 1982: 5; Keating and Loughlin 1997: 2-5). A region is most likely to claim special recognition if this claim can be based on a variety of sources or grievances, thereby strengthening its claim to uniqueness and distinctiveness. The emphasis is often put on the cultural and/or linguistic nature of a region's specificity, but the existence of economic interests different from those of the centre can also be a source of territorial claims. The combination of economic, political and cultural distinctiveness is likely to constitute a solid ground for regionalist claims.

The notion of centre-periphery conflict is based on the assumption that the periphery is in some way dependent upon the centre for its economic survival, its culture or its government (Rokkan and Urwin 1982: 5). The centre is a location where key resources are concentrated (political, administrative, economic and/or cultural), while the periphery is isolated and lacks the resources to weigh on the country's internal flow of wealth and communications. However, territorial conflict can also emerge as a result of a rivalry between a capital and one or several territories that also possess at least one of the resources mentioned above.

Territorial diversity, or societal heterogeneity with a territorial basis, is likely to have a direct impact on the organisation of political parties, as the existence of a specific culture, interests, etc. may result in calls for internal differentiation within state-wide parties (Deschouwer 2003). The existence of regionally concentrated sets of interests may prompt regional party elites to ask for some level of intra-party power. They may argue for instance that they can be seen as more legitimate than the national party organisation but also that they understand the local and regional circumstances better because of their better knowledge of regional specificities (Harmel and Janda 1982: 63). However, we expect party leaderships to be wary of change and eager to preserve their power, unless their electoral performances are likely to be affected by not granting some autonomy to their regional branches. As a result, we can expect intra-party autonomy in the most vocally regionalist territories, and therefore some asymmetry in the internal organisation of the state-wide parties.

### *Regionalism and regionalist parties*

In recent decades, the notion of nation-state has been increasingly questioned and most European countries have had to come to terms with an increasing electoral mobilisation of some of their regions around specifically regional issues. However, not all ethno-national or ethno-linguistic groups organise for the defence of their rights or interests or even to actively seek self-government. As Urwin (1985: 154) puts it,

'because of decades, if not centuries, of the diffusion and implementation of standardizing central practices, the simple fact is that in most parts of Europe ethnic groups find it possible to possess two or more identities that enjoy a benign relationship – or at least to keep them in separate, and not necessarily, antagonistic compartments'.

The existence of a distinct identity is not enough, however, for a regionalist movement or party to emerge. Indeed, this specific regional identity must be electorally mobilised and the stakes of the relationship between the centre and the region must be raised so as to be perceived as problematic by significant sections of the electorate.

The parties that mobilise on this issue are often called regionalist or ethno-regionalist parties. The term ethno-regionalist refers to the fact that these parties tend to define themselves on the basis of an exclusive group identity (Türsan 1998: 5-6). Müller-Rommel (1998: 19) define ethnoregionalist parties as parties that represent 'the

efforts of geographically concentrated peripheral minorities which challenge the working order and sometimes even the democratic order of a nation-state by demanding recognition of their cultural identity'.

Keating (1997: 24) argues that there are three types of regionalisms: *defensive regionalism*, which aims at defending a region against perceived threats to its economic status or cultural, religious or linguistic identity; *integrating regionalism*, whose claims are essentially economic, as the stated objective is to modernise the region and re-integrate it into the larger national economic community; and *autonomist regionalism*, which wishes to protect and promote the regions in terms of economic status, culture and identity through regional autonomy. Some element (culture, economic development, etc.) might dominate one region's regionalism, but a mix of demands can cohabitate, often fuelled by both 'cultural and economic discontent' (Urwin 1985: 165). Defensive and integrative regionalisms are also often combined with autonomist regionalism to claim that a region's interests and culture can best be defended if the region enjoys some level of self-government.

This phenomenon seems to have regained in strength all across Europe in the last few decades. In the late 1960s the electoral results of the Flemish *Volksumie* increased as the Flemings were claiming their rights as a nation against the French-speaking Belgian elites (de Winter 1998). Since the 1970s, the United Kingdom has seen the revival of Scottish and Welsh nationalism (Garner and Kelly 1998 chapter 8). At the same time, Corsican nationalism became more vocal in France (Dominici 2005), while the new Spanish democracy saw the emergence of many regionalist parties in the various autonomous communities of the country. In northern Italy, a number of local and regional movements were created in the late 1970s and 1980s, from the *Union Valdôtaine* to the *Lega Nord*, while the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* has defended the rights of the German- and Ladin-speakers in South Tyrol since 1945 (Holzer and Schwegler 1998: 162). These are some of the most salient examples of the 1960s-1970s electoral revival of regionalist claims.

Their success has been explained by a variety of factors: economic divergence, processes of modernisation and state-building (Lipset and Rokkan 1967); resentment from 'colonised' peripheries that depend on the economic support of industrialised centres (Hechter 1975); successful electoral mobilisation of 'feelings of belonging' by political leaders (de Winter 1998). Beyond the aim of defending or promoting the rights of their regions, regionalist parties often wish to achieve some degree of self-government and regional autonomy for their region or even to separate the region from the rest of the country and create a new country for the group they defend. Regardless of their ultimate goal, these parties constitute a specific challenge to state-wide parties by stressing issues that do not necessarily directly concern the whole polity, question the existing organisation of the political system or threaten the country's territorial integrity.

State-wide parties are more likely to give autonomous powers to their regional branches when these claims of regional distinctiveness lead to the creation of ethnoregionalist political parties that threaten their electoral prospects. State-wide parties may see their electoral position threatened in regions where regionalism and electoral support for regionalist parties are strong. If the electoral challenge is considered to be serious by the party leadership, state-wide parties are likely to adopt some form of decentralised organisation, giving their regional branches some organisational, but also possibly programmatic, autonomy in order to increase their chances in national and regional elections.

The level of the challenge posed by regionalist parties is also a function of the opportunity structures constituted by the multi-level electoral framework for both state-wide and regionalist parties. The existence of regional elections and their overall impact on the political system, the electoral system and the status of the regional elections as self-standing or second-order elections are crucial factors in the impact of regionalism and regionalist parties on state-wide parties. This will be the subject of the next section of this chapter.

### **2.3. Multi-level party competition**

The simple existence of a second set of elections at the regional level affects the state-wide parties' strategies and organisation. Regional elections generate the need for another level of organisation and create a new level of intermediary party elites. The electoral system in use for regional elections is likely to have a great impact on the parties, as it either facilitates or hinders the challenge posed by regionalist parties or simply regionally-based parties that decide to use this new opportunity structure to advance their interests. When regional elections produce different results from the national elections and when the set of actors involved in national and regional elections differ, state-wide parties may perceive a need to adjust their structures to the regional level of competition because the differentiation of the regional political arena means that political parties increasingly need to adapt their strategies to the regional context. This form of adaptation may be more difficult to operate from the centre, and the national party may consider it more efficient to give regional elites some level of autonomy in the management of regional elections.

#### *2.3.1. Electoral system and multi-level party competition*

##### *Electoral systems and party centralisation*

The direct influence of electoral systems on party organisation is rather scarcely documented, and the existing literature bases its affirmations more on observation than on any theoretical perspective. For obvious reasons, the emphasis is principally on intra-party methods of candidate selection and then on how candidate selection affects the larger organisation of the party.

Duverger first expressed the link between electoral system and party organisation. He argues that electoral systems with single-member constituencies encourage constituency autonomy, while list systems require some level of coordination above the local level (Duverger 1976: 96-7).<sup>4</sup> List systems therefore facilitate a form of articulation above the local level in order to elaborate the lists. They reduce the importance of personalities and increase that of ideas and programmes. As a result, list systems encourage the development of a national, state-wide organisation (Duverger 1976: 97). On the other hand, single-member constituencies strengthen the role of the candidate and focus electoral campaigns on local issues at the expense of more general issues and programmatic considerations.

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<sup>4</sup> 'Le scrutin de liste, fonctionnant dans le cadre d'une grande circonscription, oblige les comités ou les sections locales du parti à établir entre eux une articulation forte à l'intérieur de la circonscription, afin de s'entendre sur la composition des listes. Au contraire, le scrutin uninominal, fonctionnant dans une circonscription étroite, tend à faire de chaque petit groupe local du parti une entité indépendante, et par conséquent à affaiblir l'articulation de celui-ci' (Duverger 1976: 96).

Single-member electoral systems undermine the overall articulation of political parties and encourage constituency-level autonomy.

Farrell reformulated this by making a distinction between on the one hand candidate-based systems, such as single-member but also single-transferable vote systems, and on the other party-based electoral systems. Party-based systems facilitate top-down control over candidate selection: the elaboration of party lists requires a level of co-ordination that makes central control possible, and individual list candidates tend to rely more on the party machine as personal campaigning is unlikely to make any real difference to their chances of being elected (Ware 1996: 291-6). When electoral systems require that voters choose between candidates, the emphasis is more on the legitimacy of the individual candidate.

Recent studies on changes in party organisation show that parties tend to emphasise grassroots involvement in candidate selection at constituency level (Scarrow 1999; Bille 2001; Hopkin 2001). Mair (1997: 113-4) however points to a paradox: at the same time as party members are balloted on candidate selection and leadership selection, an increasingly atomistic conception of party membership emerges. Members are consulted via postal ballots rather than in local meetings, and the role of local party elites and activists is undermined. Consequently, the autonomy of party leaders increases, as they owe their position and legitimacy to the membership vote, and organised leadership challenges are less likely to be successful. Other trends in party change also indicate an increased centralisation of party processes and the evolution of campaigning techniques point to a tighter control of the central party apparatus over campaign processes and a tendency for central party leadership to have some level of oversight over candidate selection (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell 2000).

These observations all relate to national elections and focus on constituency-level autonomy and national party control. In federal or regionalised systems, the issue is whether this oversight or control over candidate selection happens at the central or regional level. Regional party units and regional party leaders seem to have more autonomy over candidate selection in federal systems (Gallagher 1988: 257). However, some evidence also points to a strengthening of central party powers over candidate selection for federal elections in the cases of Canadian federal parties and the Australian Labor Party (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell 2000: 141). Overall, the direct effect of electoral system on the vertical organisation of political parties and the distribution of competences is difficult to predict. However, if the logic of regionalisation were to be respected with regards to candidate selection, and given the well-documented contemporary changes in party organisation, we could expect that the central party controls or oversees the process of candidate selection – but also campaigning at the local level – for general elections, while the regional party branches have more autonomy to select their candidates and develop their own electoral programme and strategy for regional elections.

#### *Electoral systems and party systems in a multi-level environment*

In parallel, an abundant literature stresses the crucial importance of electoral systems on the structure of party systems. This section only aims at emphasising the most crucial aspects of this literature, at the risk of over-generalisation. Nevertheless, it intends to stress how electoral systems influence the territorial organisation of state-wide parties, using the party system as an intervening variable.

Duverger provided a very explicit formulation of the impact of electoral systems on the party systems and the number of parties in particular. What came to be known



as 'Duverger's law' states that: 1) proportional representation (PR) and two-round majoritarian systems favour multi-party systems and 2) single-member plurality systems (SMP) encourage the development of two-party systems (Duverger 1976: 291). There are actually two effects that generate the tendency of SMP to generate dual party systems. There is first a *mechanical* effect in the way votes are translated into seats. SMP tends to have a high level of disproportionality in the votes/seat ratio, which is beneficial to a limited number of big parties, often two. Accordingly, small parties are disadvantaged by SMP. There is also a *psychological* effect in the way strategic considerations influence voters, who understand that voting for a third party could be a 'waste of votes' (Duverger 1976: 315-6). As a result, third parties tend to have difficulties in gaining seats in SMP systems, unless their electorate is geographically concentrated. But then, their number of seats is inevitably limited to the number of constituencies available in their region.

On the other hand, PR systems are supposed to benefit smaller parties by providing a more proportional translation of the number of votes into seats. However, the proportionality of PR electoral systems depends on a number of factors. The number of seats allocated to each electoral constituency (the district magnitude) is probably the single most important factor affecting list-system proportionality (Taagepera and Shugart 1989 chapter 11) and the rule is that the greater the district magnitude, the more proportional the electoral system (Taagepera and Shugart 1989: 19).

In a multi-level setting, state-wide parties may be confronted with different electoral systems for different elections. The existence of different electoral laws for different elections means that 'some parties might not have the same chances to elect candidates in regional or national elections' because of several factors, such as district magnitude and election timing (Deschouwer 2003: 223). As a result, they would have to adapt their procedures and strategies to the different electoral systems.

Moreover, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that when a polity is characterised by cultural, ethnic or religious cleavages, the most likely electoral system is some form of proportional representation. The logic of this argument is that cultural cleavages do not accommodate well with the 'winner-take-all' logic of majoritarian democracy. They argue that 'the deeper the [cultural, ethnic or religious] cleavages the less the likelihood of loyal acceptance of decisions by representatives of the other side' (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 32). Such differences would then lead to the adoption of a proportional electoral formula, whereby minorities would have more chances of getting some of their representatives elected. Regionalist parties would then find it easier to obtain seats, in particular in regional elections, when the district magnitude is often higher than that of national elections. The more proportional the electoral system the more state-wide parties will face the competition of regional parties.

In a multi-level system, parties may choose to adapt their organisation and give some autonomy to their regional branches if more parties, and in particular regionally-based parties such as regionalist parties, are able to gain representation in the regional parliament thanks to a more proportional electoral system. Indicators such as the effective number of parties represented in national and regional elections and the deviation from proportionality in regional and general elections may come to help us explain how electoral systems affect party strategies and organisation.

### 2.3.2. Regional elections in the general electoral context

Another issue with regard to regional politics is the relative importance of regional elections *vis-à-vis* general elections. In general, regional elections cannot be taken completely independently from the national political context, and there is a level of dependence of regional politics on national politics. When regional elections are of secondary significance compared to the national elections, they are often said to be 'second-order' elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980). The significance of regional elections in the wider electoral context can depend on a number of factors. It has been argued, for instance, that the electoral cycle influences electoral results in regional elections and causes varying levels of interconnection between national and regional elections.

#### *Second-order elections*

Regional elections belong to a cycle of elections that range from local elections to national and even European elections. State-wide political parties compete in all of these elections in most of a country's constituencies. As a result, they represent a link between these levels, presenting voters with clear, identifiable labels and a sense of continuity and political coherence. The degree to which regional elections are connected to the wider political context is a crucial element in the study of regional politics. The existence of a link between electoral results at different levels is also likely to affect the organisation of state-wide parties.

The literature on second-order elections considers whether regional elections are elections 'in their own right' or whether their results depend on national debates and electoral considerations. The notion of 'second-order' elections was first developed by Reif and Schmitt (1980) for the study of European election. In this seminal article, they argue that national elections are the most salient elections and dominate all other electoral contests, including 'by-elections, municipal elections, various sorts of regional elections, those to a 'second chamber', and the like' (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 8). The connection between the two levels means that voters do not only vote according to the stakes of the regional elections, the candidates and the regional situation, but also according to the national situation. Their explanation goes beyond the sole effect of the electoral cycle.

The framework for analysis of second-order elections is based on the idea that there is 'less at stake' in second-order elections than in national elections, which serve as reference for voters but also for party strategies. Second-order elections have three characteristics:

- 1) Lower levels of electoral participation. Because the stakes of second-order elections are lower, fewer citizens make an effort to vote. At the same time, the campaign is likely to have a lower intensity and media-coverage than national elections. The result is a lower turnout rate.
- 2) Small and new parties fare better in regional elections. Because the stakes are lower, voters feel free to 'experiment' with smaller parties that reflect their positions better but have little chance of becoming significant political forces in national elections.
- 3) Government parties lose while opposition parties see their share of the vote increase, in particular if regional elections are held around the middle of the national electoral cycle.

Reif and Schmitt recognise that some election-specific elements must be taken into account, such as whether the same parties compete at both levels, whether the same parties are in power, whether similar patterns of coalition-building are at play at both levels (1980: 10-1). However, their interpretation of voting patterns and electoral

results makes it virtually impossible to reach a conclusion other than that non-national elections are second-order elections. For instance, they expect lower turnout, but higher turnout is also possible if a country uses a PR electoral system. The fact that voters tend to vote for smaller parties is interpreted as 'experimentation' and not as a possible voters' calculus that these parties are more likely to have an impact on regional politics or represent them better in the particular circumstances presented by the election.

Recent studies on regional elections have come to add some nuance to the notion of second-order election. For instance, Jeffery and Hough (2003) and Detterbeck and Renzsch (2003) have shown that the territorial cleavages and levels of regional identification also play an important role in determining the level of independence of regional election results from state-wide results. Studies on Spain and Germany reveal some evidence that regional elections are more self-standing when voters have a higher level of identification with the region or national-regional double identity (Jeffery and Hough 2003; Pallarés and Keating 2003). When a region displays high levels of regional identification, voters are more likely to vote for a regionalist party but they are also more likely to be interested in regional politics and to be aware of the stakes of the election.

Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argue that the level of interest in sub-national elections depends on the stakes of the election. The stakes are higher when the election is likely to elect members of a parliament or assembly and regional government with significant powers and competences over regional policy. If a regional government has some influence over the way people live, people will be more interested in the election, and this should be reflected by rather high levels of electoral participation (or at least not significantly lower levels than the national turnout rate). When the stakes of a regional election are high, voters are more likely to distinguish between regional and national elections and vote on regional issues only rather than react to the policies of the national government. As a result, regional elections may present different results than those of the national election for different reasons than those assumed by Reif and Schmitt. Distinct voting behaviour is actually in this case a rational choice made on the basis of the regional situation. More distinct patterns of voting behaviour and different electoral results are to be expected in regions with important competences over regional policy. On the other hand, when a region has little power to determine its own policies, the election is more likely to be dominated by national factors.

Finally, regional elections are more likely to be interconnected with national politics if their results directly affect national politics. This is especially the case when there is a second chamber that includes representatives of regional governments, like the German *Bundesrat*. When the national and regional levels are interconnected for policy development and implementation, the regional elections are likely to be influenced by national considerations (Scharpf 1995: 33). In such cases, national party elites are likely to be more involved in the campaign and the national stakes of the election are ever present in the regional campaign. The opposition parties are likely to present the election as a referendum on the national government, and the media focus on the election will emphasise the national consequences of the poll.

All these considerations have an effect on political parties and their organisation. If regional elections are seen as second-order, or if they have an impact on the national level, either directly as in the case of the *Bundesrat* or indirectly if opposition parties use regional elections as electoral tests in prevision for the next national election, then state-wide parties will be inclined to keep a close eye on what their

regional party branches do in terms of candidate selection, electoral programme and campaigning. In such a case, state-wide parties will be more integrated and the national leadership will have some level of control over the party's leadership and candidates at the regional level to ensure that they are in the same party faction or agree with the dominant party group at the national level, but also over the programme, in order to enhance party cohesion and policy coherence across the country (Chandler and Chandler 1987: 98).

On the other hand, if the two electoral arenas are disconnected and regional voters vote on regional issues for regional elections, state-wide parties are more likely to adopt a regionalised structure, giving their regional branches more autonomy to adapt their programmes to regional circumstances. This is also likely to be a self-reinforcing cycle, as successful regional leaders will gain more legitimacy and clout over their party branch and the national leaders will find it more difficult to have a say over regional party affairs. This process may take place some time after the establishment of a set of regional institutions, as the electorate needs some time to adapt to and understand the powers of the new regional bodies and political parties need time to register those changes as well.

### *Electoral cycle*

The timing of elections is also likely to have a crucial impact on whether regional elections are overshadowed by national considerations. Observations of the results of American midterm elections have suggested that electoral support for government and opposition parties follow a cycle. After a 'honeymoon period' in which its level of support remains stable, the party of the President loses support with an all-time low at the moment of the midterm Congressional elections (Campbell 1960: 408). The American example is particularly symptomatic of this phenomenon: '[w]ith the single exception of the 1934 election, the president's party has lost congressional seats in each midterm election since the Civil War' (Campbell 1987: 965).<sup>5</sup> The party starts to recover support shortly before the next presidential election (Johnston 1999). During the same period, opposition parties see their electoral support increase, with a peak around the midterm point. A number of explanations have come to explain this pattern: lower intensity of the midterm election (Campbell 1960), support for the president, state of the economy (Tufte 1975), dramatic political events and long-term patterns of party support (Simon, Ostrom and Marra 1991).

The same sort of cycle was observed in multi-level systems. What has come to be called the 'Dinkel curve' (after a 1977 article by Rainer Dinkel on electoral support of government and opposition parties in federal and Land elections) shows how federal government parties have a lower level of support in Land elections compared to the preceding or succeeding federal election in that Land (Jeffery and Hough 2001: 80; Hough and Jeffery 2006: 125-6). The 'electoral cycle' effect theory assumes a link between the results of the first-order (national) election and the performance of national government and opposition parties in regional elections. Voters use the regional elections to send a message to the national level and parties. Generally, it means expressing their dissatisfaction with the national government. A pattern of electoral support emerges in which support for government parties decreases until the middle of the electoral cycle and then slowly recovers, while electoral support for

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<sup>5</sup> The 1998 and 2002 elections have since come to contradict this 'rule', which was confirmed again in the 2006 midterms.

opposition parties tend to follow an opposite pattern, with both parties converging toward the end of the cycle (Jeffery and Hough 2001: 76-7; Johnston 1999: 499-503).

When general and regional elections are concurrent, regional elections are overshadowed by the national contest and voters are likely to cast their vote in similar ways for the national and regional elections. The simultaneity of national and regional elections is likely to reduce the level of autonomy of the regional parties, as the state-wide parties want to keep the whole party 'on message' (Deschouwer 2006: 296).

Regional elections taking place shortly before or after state-wide elections are also likely to be closely related to the national level. If regional elections take place immediately after the national election, the party that has won the national election is likely to benefit from a 'honeymoon period' in the aftermath of the election. The regional election is likely to replicate the results of the national election or even to see an increase in the support for the government party (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 9-10; Marsh 2000: 287). The contest is likely to be 'nationalised' by its proximity with the national election. The regional branch of the winning party 'might try to surf the winning wave' (Deschouwer 2006: 297), while the losing parties will try to limit their losses in the regional arena. As a result, national parties are likely to exercise a strong control over their regional branches if regional elections closely follow national elections. This centripetal pull is however likely to be stronger in the winning state-wide party than in opposition parties.

Regional elections taking place immediately before national elections are likely to be considered as 'test elections'. The proximity with a national election tends to 'nationalise' the stakes of regional elections, as the national leaderships of state-wide parties tend to consider such elections as a test and want to use these regional elections as part of their wider state-wide campaign, testing themes and campaign strategies (Deschouwer 2006: 297). Again, the regional autonomy of regional party branches is likely to be limited because of this electoral connexion with the national level.

For regional election at other times of the electoral cycle and further from national elections, the situation is likely to depend on other factors, as seen above with the issue of second-order elections. Opposition parties are likely to present the regional election as a referendum on the performance of the government. As a result, government parties tend to lose votes, while opposition parties gain votes. The results of government parties are assumed to reach a nadir at mid-term (Pallarés and Keating 2003). During this period, the leaderships of the state-wide parties might pay less attention to regional elections and a disconnection between the two levels becomes possible. The more independent the regional elections from the national political context, the higher the likelihood that regional party branches will gain some autonomy.

Another aspect of the electoral cycle is the horizontal simultaneity of the regional elections. Horizontal simultaneity occurs when all or several regional elections happen at the same time. When all, or a large number of, the regional elections happen on the same day, the likely outcome is a nationalisation of the stakes of the contests and therefore state-wide parties are likely to try and keep closed ranks and deliver a single coherent message all across the country (Deschouwer 2003: 223). Horizontal simultaneity is likely to encourage party centralisation and limit the autonomy of regional party branches.

Overall, a single regional election occurring far from the national election can provide regional branches with more opportunities to gain some autonomy from the central party (provided the region is sufficiently powerful and/or culturally distinctive

so as to increase the stakes of the regional election and make it distinct from the national campaign themes). In contrast, the proximity to a national election and concurrence of several elections will most likely push state-wide parties to maintain high levels of party cohesion and therefore limit the autonomy of their regional branches.

## 2.4. Endogenous factors of party organisation

The way political parties are organised in general and the respective powers of the three faces of party organisation (party in public office, party in central office and party on the ground) are likely to affect the level of autonomy of their regional branches. This section looks at patterns of party change and intra-party relations, the impact of party ideology, and the role of party finance and the internal distribution of resources.

### 2.4.1. Models of party organisation and intra-party behaviour

#### *Party formation, party types and adaptation to the regional structure of the state*

The way a state-wide party was formed and its organisational structure when the state adopted its regionalised structure are crucial factors in the way it will adapt to the challenge of regionalisation. To reiterate the point made in the previous chapter on the role of history and the 'generic model' of political parties, parties remain heavily influenced by their original organisation. Change happens incrementally and occurs insofar as the proposed change is not too far removed from the previous form of organisation (Panebianco 1988). As a result, a centralised party is very unlikely to rapidly transform into a federal organisation. Rather, if it feels the need to change its organisation, it is likely to tread carefully and start by granting moderate powers to its regional branches.

To recapitulate the description of party types made in chapter 1, table 2.2 below summarises the major organisational aspects of the major contemporary party types found in the literature.<sup>6</sup> Models of party organisation are useful heuristic tools to determine the relative importance of party leadership, bureaucracy and membership. They show the relationship between these three faces of the party organisation, the type of goals followed by the parties and the strategy that each type is likely to adopt. All these bear a significant influence on the way parties organise at the regional level. For instance, parties that place a high value on office may adapt their organisation more easily, while policy-oriented parties may find that giving autonomy to their regional branches carries too much of a risk of policy differentiation.

The organisation of mass parties seems rather unsuited to the regionalisation of party structures. In their ideal-type form, mass parties are often ideologically rigid and centralised at the national level (Krouwel 2006: 255). The combination of these two elements makes the development of autonomous regional elites unlikely. In mass parties, collective incentives tend to prevail. Consequently, mass parties are more rigid and are more unlikely to change.

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<sup>6</sup> Elite-cadre parties are excluded from the table, as this party type does not describe any existing party; the business-firm type is also excluded, as it does not describe any of the parties studied in the following chapters.

**Table 2.2.** Models of party organisation

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Mass party</b>	<b>Catch-all electoralist party</b>	<b>Cartel party</b>
<b>Period</b>	<b>1880-1950</b>	<b>1950-present</b>	<b>1950-present</b>
Origin	Extra-parliamentary origin	Originates from mass parties, linking or merging themselves with interest groups	Fusion of parliamentary parties with the state apparatus (and interest groups)
Electoral appeal and social support	Appeal to specific social, religious or ethnic group on the basis of social cleavages such as class and religion	Appeal to broad middle class, beyond core group of support	'Regular clientele' that provides support in exchange for favourable policies
Importance of membership organisation	Voluntary membership organisation is the core of the party	Marginalisation of members	Members as pool for recruitment of political personnel
Position of party in central office	Symbiosis between party in central office and party on the ground	Subordinate to party in public office	Symbiosis between party in central office and party in public office
Position of party in public office	Subject to extra-parliamentary leadership	Concentration of power and resources at the parliamentary group	Concentration of power at the parliamentary party leadership and government
Resource structure	Membership contributions, ancillary organisations and party press	Interest groups and state subsidies	State subsidies
Regional decentralisation	Unlikely –centralisation of party apparatus	Subordination to electoralist considerations makes adaptation likely	Stratarchical organisation

*Source:* Krouwel 2006: 262-3 (extracts of Table 21.2), last line (regional decentralisation) own elaboration

On the other hand, catch-all electoralist parties and cartel parties, where selective incentives tend to prevail, are likely to be more adaptable. When office rewards become the goal of the organisation, it is more likely to adapt to its environment. Catch-all parties are characterised by an increased autonomy of the leadership. As Kitschelt (1994: 35) puts it

'the more a party's electoral and office payoffs are sensitive to strategic appeals of competitors because citizens vote more on issues than party identification, the more important is the ability of party leaders to set and revise party objectives during campaigns and in legislative politics'.

This increased autonomy of party leaderships and the increasing personalisation of electoral contests mean that political parties have become 'presidentialised' (Poguntke and Webb 2005). Presidentialised parties, in which party power has shifted to the benefit of the party leaders, are more likely to change rapidly than parties in which intermediary-level elites and activists have a veto power. This does not mean that presidentialised parties will systematically give more powers to their regional branches. However, party leaders are more sensitive to organisational failures to deliver party goals, in particular when the party fails to win seats and achieve office. If they perceive that the existing organisation fails to achieve their objectives, they will be more easily inclined to change the organisation. If party leaders are unrestrained by controls of vetoes from other party sectors, the party's organisation is likely to change more rapidly.

Katz and Mair (1994) consider that cartel parties are likely to adopt a stratarchical form of organisation. It is beneficial to both national and regional leaders, as they all gain a large degree of autonomy and increase their ability to react strategically to electoral demands. As a result, when parties have an organisation close to that of a cartel party, we can assume that they will be more adaptable and will give a large degree of autonomy to their regional party branches. The stratarchical model moreover implies a limited input from the sub-national level in state-wide party affairs.

#### *Organisational strategies: cost and benefits of central-regional relationships*

Regardless of what type of organisation political parties adopt, the relationship between the central and the regional levels of party organisation occurs mainly at the leadership level. Decisions regarding fundamental aspects of party organisation as well as the relations between levels are mainly taken through formal and informal contacts between national and regional leaders, who may have multiple, and sometimes contradicting, motives for action.

The national, central leadership primarily wishes to maximise votes in state-wide elections, as votes can help the party achieve office or policy goals. Regional leaders want to achieve the best possible electoral results in regional elections while making sure that they will not be overruled or dismissed by the national leadership (van Houten forthcoming).

There are a number of potential benefits for the central party to give some level of autonomy to their regional branches. For instance, the central party might see giving the regional branches more responsibilities as a strategy to avoid 'work overload' and offload some responsibilities onto others (Hopkin 2003). At the same time, in the context of the 'party crisis' theory, decentralising power within the party can be seen as a strategy to bring the party closer to the people while central party intervention can be seen as the undue intervention of a remote national elite.



Moreover, the national leadership may expect to obtain some form of advantage from giving autonomy to the regional party branches. The regional leadership has an information advantage over the national leadership with regard to what happens in the regional political arena and a better understanding of the regional electorate. This form of expertise is not easily available to the national leadership and would otherwise be costly to obtain (van Houten forthcoming). Electorally, regional leaders are likely to be seen as having more credibility in regional politics and the party would rather suffer if regional leaders were to be seen as agents (some would say 'puppets') of the national leadership.

National elites can also hope that some form of positive spill-over from regional electoral success may occur: popularity at the regional level can transform into votes for the party in national elections. Electoral success and government positions at the regional level can be particularly useful for parties that are in opposition at the central level, as holding power at the regional level can provide them with some record on which to build a reputation and an image as a responsible governing party.

The national leadership can also expect redistributive consequences favourable to the party's support base through a better adaptation of the party's strategies to the regional context (Hopkin 2003). For instance, better electoral results mean more opportunities to place party members in public office, more patronage resources, and more money when public funding is made available at the regional level. The interests of the national and regional parties therefore coincide in this instance: they both want to achieve the best electoral results and consider that the ability of regional branches to adapt their campaign strategies and messages to the regional context is the strategy most likely to achieve these results.

Regional elites also prefer some form of organisation that gives them the largest possible autonomy within the party. Autonomy can give them the image of 'self-standing' political leaders and increase their credibility on the regional scene as defenders of the region. Being able to elaborate their policies and strategies at the regional level allows them to counter possible attacks by regionalist parties, which are likely to try and use the link of the regional party branches with the centre as a sign that their loyalty lies with the centre rather than the region. In other words, by having some room for manoeuvre within the state-wide party, regional leaders can present themselves as being 'their own men' rather than 'puppets' of the centre.

However, the autonomy of the regional party branches can be a source of conflict between the two levels (van Houten, forthcoming). There are indeed risks of conflict over zones of autonomy and control and over election strategies. In this respect, policy can be the greatest source of conflict. Devolution and decentralisation create potential for policy divergence between national and regional platforms. Different political arenas and different issues being discussed both between the national and regional levels and across the regions can cause policy divergence. This may put party cohesion in jeopardy, with different messages being delivered to different audiences by the same party. Policy divergence can be a source of crises for the party, as national and regional leaders argue about party policy and programs. It can also have negative consequences on the party's electoral prospects if the electorate sees it as lacking coherence and having different messages for different audiences (Roller and van Houten 2003: 4).

Finally, national leaders may be wary of the way the negative image of one regional branch can affect the party as a whole. The distinction between the two levels is not as clear-cut as it might seem. Voters may not perceive very clearly the difference between the regional and national political arenas; regional politics may have an impact

on national politics, through media focus or intergovernmental relations for instance. The national leadership may therefore be reluctant to relinquish all control over its regional branches.

Another issue is that of the involvement of regional party branches in central party organs. For national leaders, the integration of regional leaders and representatives in the state-wide party can have a number of advantages: first of all, they can provide expertise and a better understanding of the issues that are important to each region. The participation of regional branches in central party organs can therefore improve the party's exercise of its aggregative function with respect to territorial issues. Their participation can also serve national leaders to remind the regions that they are part of a larger whole, with which they share both interests and common principles. It can therefore improve the level of co-ordination between the levels and across the regions.

At the same time, regional elites gain access to central decision-making and gain some influence over policy and the distribution of party resources. They can hope that through their presence in central party organs the state-wide party will understand better regional interests and issues. This access to central decision-making provides regional leaders and representatives with resources that they can use either as a stepping stone into national politics or as a source of prestige and influence at the regional level.

For national party leaders, the main drawback of regional participation in central decision-making organs is that it creates checks between the levels and can limit leadership autonomy. National elites may want to limit the involvement of potentially powerful regional leaders, who could wield some power at the central level and curtail their freedom of manoeuvre over state-wide party matters. Moreover, there is a risk for national elites that regional representatives use their involvement at the centre uniquely to voice regional grievances. This could potentially be disruptive for the functioning of national party bodies.

Likewise, regional elites may fear that the co-operation between the national and regional levels limit their autonomy at their own level. Co-operation provides national elites with an opportunity to oversee regional processes and try to influence regional decision-making. Finally, in regions with a high level of support for regionalist parties, this link with the centre can be seen as a political liability for regional party branches. Regionalist parties are likely to use this link to emphasise the fact that regional party leaders of state-wide parties have divided loyalties.

#### *Incumbency and the changing nature of central-regional relationships*

One factor that may contribute to periodic changes in the relationships between central and regional levels of organisation is incumbency. Holding executive office provides considerable resources, which office-holders may try to use to their advantage in intra-party affairs. The relationships between the levels may therefore vary depending on the incumbency status of the central and regional levels.

Table 2.3 below provides an overview of the possible incumbency situations in a multi-level system and indicates the possible relationships between the central and regional levels of organisation in these different situations. Four scenarios are possible: both levels are in government, the central level is in government and the regional level in the opposition, the central level is in the opposition and the regional level in government, and finally both levels are in the opposition. It is also possible that some regional branches are in government while others are in the opposition, which means

that central-regional relations might be asymmetrical. When the central party is in government, it will try to control its regional branches, as it is in its interests to have compliant regional branches and to see the regional branches follow the government's line. It is more likely to succeed when the regional branches are in the opposition. When both levels are in government, the task of the central party may be a little more difficult, as the regional branches may also argue that they have some legitimacy independently from the central party and should therefore be more autonomous.

**Table 2.3.** Incumbency and central-regional relationships

		Central level	
		Government	Opposition
Regional level	Government	When both levels are in government, the central level is likely to dominate and submit the regional branches to the strategy of the state-wide party	The regional branches in power at the regional level are likely to increase their level of autonomy and central influence when the central party is in the opposition
	Opposition	The central level is very likely to dominate the regional branches that are in the opposition	The central party is likely to prevail in central-regional relations, but regional branches may occasionally try to increase their level of autonomy

When the central party is in the opposition, the regional party branches may enjoy more autonomy. First of all, the central party may be focusing on its state-wide strategy, momentarily paying less attention to the regional branches. As a result, the regional branches may feel freer to follow their own strategies and to adopt their own policies. This is even more likely to occur when regional branches are in government at the regional level. In addition, regional office-holders may use this asymmetry to increase their influence at the centre, using to their advantage the temporary weakness and opposition status of the central party.

However, the central party's strategy to rebuild its influence at the central level may also involve attempts to control the party's regional branches in order to project the image of a united party fit to govern the whole country. In this case, regional party branches may find it more difficult to diverge from the central party line, as the central party is likely to intervene to prevent this from happening.

#### 2.4.2. *Parties and their ideology*

As a 'more or less coherent set of ideas that provide a basis for some kind of organised political action' (Heywood 2000: 22), ideologies have three dimensions that provide a framework for action: they offer an interpretation of the current state of society, present a model of how society *ought* to be and provide a programme of changes in order to bring about this new, improved society (Heywood 2000: 22; Adams 1993: 3). Even as ideologies are said to be in crisis (Bell 1965; Fukuyama 1992), political parties still structure their message around a number of values and

beliefs about how society is organised, how it should be organised, and which changes need to be implemented in order to bring about their vision of a good society.

This part briefly presents the main tenets of three contemporary political ideologies: social democracy/socialism<sup>7</sup>, liberalism, and conservatism.<sup>8</sup> These three ideologies influence the main governing parties in contemporary Western democracies. Because of national differences, this description will stay at a rather general level. It will however focus on a few points of particular relevance here: role of the state, preferred structure of the state, and perception of the nation and relations with peripheries.

Because political parties maintain an identity 'that is anchored in the cleavages and issues that gave rise to their birth' (Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge 1994: 24), the label under which parties are born, but also the ideas that they set themselves to defend at the moment of their birth, still constitute a reference for political parties and the electorate in terms of what the parties are and the bedrock of values they stand for, even though they are not unaffected by the time, changing social conditions and strategic considerations.

### *Liberal parties*

Liberalism is the child of the Enlightenment and modern, capitalist society (Eccleshall 1994: 28). Its main tenet is undoubtedly the defence and promotion of individual freedom. Liberalism emerged as a political force against tradition and the entrenched privileges of the aristocracy and established churches in the name of reason and individual freedom. Its initial success came during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, which contested the privileges of the landed aristocracy, and demanded more economic freedom and individual rights and liberties (Smith 1988: 17).

For liberals, individuals should be as free as possible within the limits of freedom for all, and they should be able to fulfil their potential and satisfy their interests (Heywood 2000: 60). Their primary aim was individual emancipation from paternalism, authoritarian state intervention and restriction of civil liberties. They campaigned in favour of the extension of civil rights, including suffrage, freedom of speech and association, and freedom of enterprise. Other core values include 'rationalism, freedom, justice and toleration' (Heywood 2000: 60). Liberals believe that individuals have an equal right to freedom. Given the possibility, they have the equal ability to reason, and conflict should be resolved through debate and negotiation (Heywood 1998: 32).

Throughout its history, the liberal movement has been divided over the means to achieve its goals. In their early days, they were divided between moderates and radicals. A crucial point of divergence between moderates and radicals was the definition of freedom and the role of the state. Liberals have always been united behind the idea that power corrupts and that concentration of power should be avoided at all costs (Heywood 1998: 40-1). As a result, early liberals argued in favour of a limited state and a 'negative' definition of freedom, that is, freedom *from* (the state,

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<sup>7</sup> Both terms will be used interchangeably. Social democracy covers a broader group of parties, including socialist, labour and social democratic parties (see Kitschelt 1994). In spite of some differences, these parties belong to the same 'party family' (see Mair and Mudde 1998).

<sup>8</sup> The list of political ideologies is rather large and also includes for instance: Christian-democracy, nationalism, fascism, ecologism, feminism, communism, anarchism, religious fundamentalism (see for instance Eccleshall *et al.* 1994 and Adams 2001).

coercion, etc.). As time went by and the industrial revolution failed to alleviate poverty and spread the newly created wealth, liberals realised that negative freedom did not mean freedom for all. A new form of 'progressive' liberalism was then developed. This positive definition of freedom involved providing the means for all to achieve freedom (freedom *to*). As a result, progressive liberals campaigned in favour of the introduction of welfare programmes in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Liberal distrust of power concentration is also combined with a belief in community and people's right of self-determination. Leach (2002: 69) reminds us that in 19<sup>th</sup> century continental Europe,

'the cause of individual liberty was [...] inextricably bound with national self-determination. Movements for national freedom or national unity were closely associated with demands for civil and political rights and for constitutional limits on government'.

This means that for the most part, liberals are likely to favour the recognition of minority rights and promote regional dispersion of power.

### *Conservatism*

Conservatism was born as a reaction against the French revolution and the emergence of the liberal movement. It rejected liberalism on the basis of a deep-seated distrust in man's rational capacities. Against the 'great ideas' of liberalism, conservatism proposed a few principles to maintain the structure of society. For conservatives, 'a stable and well-organised society is the work of centuries' (Adams 1993: 72). While the nature of conservatism is highly dependent on the national context, the European centre-right still shares a large number of characteristics and principles (Wilson 1998: ix).

Conservatives therefore tend to be wary of change. They reject radical change because it breaks the natural order of society, but they accept piecemeal change. After Burke, conservatives believe that 'a state without the means of change is a state without the means of its conservation' (quoted in Norton 1996: 72). From Burke, they also inherited a tendency to prefer the institutional status quo and to support existing constitutional practices (Garner and Kelly 1998: 57).

To preserve the cohesion of society, conservatives believe that it is important to maintain a structure of authority. The early conservative tradition was highly paternalistic, with a hierarchical view of society. For the Tories, the people owed obedience to their rulers and the latter owed protection to the former. Conservatives often compare society to a living organism in which the various parts are interdependent. Each part of this organism, be it family, church, work or government has a role to play in sustaining the whole. A natural consequence of this emphasis on authority is a conviction that government should be strong, albeit within the limits of the rule of law (Norton 1996: 75-6). As a result, whereas 'organic units' such as local communities may be given some autonomy, conservatives are likely to be suspicious of power dispersal and weakening the power of central government. As a result, conservatives are unlikely to support the regionalisation or federalisation of the state.

### *Social-democratic/ socialist parties*

Contemporary social-democratic and socialist parties are the children of the enfranchisement and political mobilisation of the working class at the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their origins in the workers' movement give them a common

base of values and beliefs in relation with the defence and protection of the rights of the working class in the framework of the cleavage between workers and industrialists.

At birth, socialism is characterised by a rejection of capitalism and a will to create a more humane society built around the principle of equality (Heywood 2000: 75-6). There are important differences among socialist groups, as some emphasise more equality while others would choose to support freedom first. Whereas today all would support liberal democracy, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the Russian revolution saw socialist parties split into two groups, with on the one hand communists who rejected the western liberal model of democracy, and on the other, the moderate socialist or social-democratic reformist left.

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the convergence of social liberals and social-democrats in the promotion of the welfare state. The core policies of social-democratic parties were the management of market economy through central planning, the redistribution of wealth through progressive taxation and the development of a welfare state bureaucracy providing education, health and social services for all (Funderburk and Thobaben 1994: 88-9; Browning 2002: 267).

Today's European socialist parties are in fact social-democratic parties that accept the values of liberal representative democracy and want to reform capitalism in order to reduce the disparities it creates in terms of wealth and wellbeing. Social democrats therefore defend both socialist and liberal values (Kitschelt 1994: 258).

With respect to decentralisation, this means that socialist and social-democratic parties are under two contradicting influences. The legacy of welfarism and egalitarian values means that these parties tend to rely on a centralising centre. If equality is to be achieved, the state has to be able to reach every corner of the country and set equal standards for all. Citizens are entitled to equal services in terms of social services, education, health services, and such equality is best achieved through a centralised bureaucracy and the definition of national standards of service provision and taxation. The liberal influence, on the other hand, encourages social-democratic parties to recognise and accept diversity. Social-democratic parties are therefore likely to recognise linguistic, ethnic, and religious minorities. As a result, they are likely to be receptive of claims to regional self-government, but they may find that the defence of these rights and self-determination put the welfare state and its principle of equality in jeopardy. The position of a social-democratic party on regionalisation is likely to depend on the balance between the socialist and liberal tendencies inside the party.

### *Comparison and hypotheses*

A factor analysis of party positions on decentralisation by party family by Budge and Robertson provides insights into party positions on decentralisation (Budge and Robertson 1987: 410-2). First, it shows that conservatives are divided between two apparently conflicting positions: on the one hand they support decentralisation and defend ethnic, religious and linguistic traditions, and on the other they emphasise government authority and efficiency. Social-democratic parties are opposed to decentralisation and emphasise nationalisation and social justice. Finally, liberal parties support decentralisation while also emphasising government authority and national effort. However, unlike conservatives, liberals believe that decentralisation can strengthen rather than weaken national unity.

Whether a party supports a social-democratic, conservative or liberal ideology will affect the view of decentralisation it will adopt. This, in turn, affects the form of territorial organisation that it will prefer. These considerations are based on ideal-type

ideologies, and parties rarely conform to all the tenets of the ideologies to which they refer themselves. As a result, things might not be so clear-cut in reality and 'cross-contamination' between parties and ideologies may occur.

Conservative parties tend to have a unionist perspective on constitutional matters. They also place a major emphasis on the issue of authority. As a result, national party elites are unlikely to encourage the development of autonomous regional elites inside the party. Conservative parties are therefore likely to resist pressures to give autonomy to their regional branches.

Socialist and social-democratic parties tend to value highly the notion of equality. Because decentralisation means that people can have access to different services in different parts of the territory and that measures of 'social engineering' from the centre become more difficult, these parties may oppose decentralisation. Social-democratic parties can be conflicted between their centralising tradition and their understanding and acceptance of minority rights. We can then expect that the stronger the socialist influence and contemporary identity, the more centralising the party will be. On the other hand, if the liberal influence is stronger, the party is more likely to support decentralisation and federalism.

Finally, liberal parties tend to encourage diversity and decentralisation of power. They are the most enthusiastic supporters of regionalisation and federalism. In organisational terms, this position on federalism is likely to be reflected in the degree of autonomy of the regional party branches.

### *2.4.3. Party finance*

The 1990s saw many countries adopt far-reaching legislative packages regarding the control of political resources. The funding of political parties has been one of the major issues in contemporary democracies, and in the last four decades nearly 50 countries adopted laws regulating party finance (Casas-Zamora 2005: 4). This legislative activity was fuelled by the uncovering of a large number of political corruption scandals related to the illegal financing of political parties (Hopkin 2004: 628). These scandals posed the question of party finance at a time when election campaigns have become particularly resource-intensive and last for longer periods of time (Farrell and Webb 2000: 104-8).

At the same time, parties face a challenge regarding their sources of funding. Whereas the mass party model assumed that political parties would rely on the fees of their large membership to support their activities, the decline in party membership and spiralling costs of modern-day campaign techniques pushes parties to find alternative sources of funding. Leaving resources obtained illegally aside, there are two main sources of political money: private donors and the state, each covering a range of practices. None of these methods is without problem, and states have adopted a variety of legislative methods to control party funding.

The way parties are funded influences the distribution of resources between the central and regional levels of organisation, which then affects the degree of autonomy of the latter. Control over financial resources is a crucial resource in the control over 'zones of uncertainty' between party levels (Panebianco 1988: 35).

#### *Different sources of party funding*

Private party funding can come from a variety of sources. One of them is membership fees. The amount of this fee varies and parties sometimes have different rates, with lower fees to attract young people or the unemployed for instance. However, the

decline in membership figures (Mair and van Biezen 2001; Poguntke 2002) means that this source of party funding is slowly drying up. Political parties can also sometimes rely on the support of ancillary organisations that contribute to their budget either through affiliation fees or donations. A combination of fees and voluntary contributions is also possible. The most famous case of an ancillary organisation contributing to a party's funding is that of the trade unions and social-democratic or communist parties.

The next private sources are individual and corporate donations. Individual private contributions are a rather traditional source of party funding. Early political parties often relied on their candidates to pay for their campaign expenses. Such cadre parties were highly dependent on the candidates' wealth and on that of their financial backers. The development of mass organisations may have reduced the relative weight of individual donations, but the current decline in party membership means that donations have once again become a potentially important source of party funding. They are however unlikely to be sufficient to cover the entire costs of maintaining party activities and organisation. Private companies can then be an important source of party funding.

State funding of political parties can be divided into two categories, direct and indirect state funding, and can cover campaign and routine, daily party activities (Nassmacher 2003: 4). Indirect funding includes a variety of ways in which the state can help parties without giving them money directly: free political advertising on the television and radio, subsidies to research or education centres linked with political parties, etc. All the European countries provide political parties with some form of indirect public funding.

Direct funding refers to the allowance awarded to parties and their candidates with the aim of supporting their political activities within the framework established by the law (Casas-Zamora 2005: 4). These public subsidies are often calculated on the basis of the parties' share or number of votes or seats on Parliament. Direct public subsidies can be of two sorts: to refund campaign expenditures (electoral subsidies) or to support parties' routine activities and parliamentary activities (permanent subsidies) (Casas-Zamora 2005: 32).

#### *Party funding and party organisation*

A combination of private and public funding can be found across Western Europe. Casas-Zamora (2005: 19) shows that most of the world's democracies have some legislation over party funding that controls or limits donations and/or provide the parties with some level of state subsidies. Within the EU-15, seven countries do not control private donations, and Germany only limits foreign contributions from non-EU countries. France has the most restrictive legislation, as it only allows individual donations within a set limit and bans all other sources of private donations. In terms of state funding, all the countries provide political parties with some state subsidies. The UK and Luxembourg are the most restrictive ones, as they only provide indirect funding and specific grants. The other EU-15 countries provide some form of direct subsidy, permanent and/or campaign spending.

In terms of organisation, the way resources are allocated within parties is a crucial factor in the distribution of power between the levels. If resources are centralised and regional party branches rely on the centre for their own resources, they are more likely to be under the influence of the central party leadership, which may use financial resources as a pressure tool to ensure the regional branches' loyalty to the



centre. When regional party branches are financially autonomous from the rest of the party, they are more likely to be independent in other respects, like policy-making and candidate recruitment for instance.

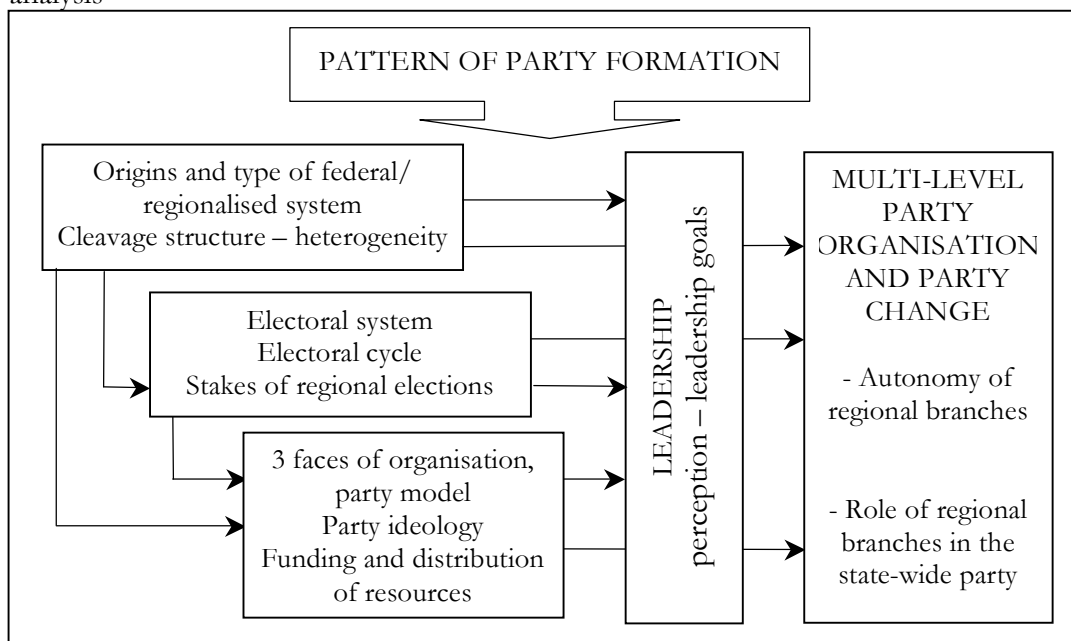
The mode of party funding can have an impact on the autonomy of regional party branches. If political parties rely mainly on private funding, autonomous regional parties might be in direct competition with their national counterparts over funding. They are likely to have the same donors, be they party members, individual or corporate donors. National and regional parties compete over the same donors, who have to choose the level where they think their money will be put to the best use. If the core level of party competition is the state-wide election, donors are more likely to fund the central party.

If parties rely mainly on public funding, the autonomy of regional party branches will depend on the mode of allocation of public subsidies. If direct public funding is allocated to the parties themselves, regional party branches will be more autonomous if state subsidies are also allocated for regional elections, and not only for general elections. If public funding is only available for state-wide elections, party organisation, like party resources, is likely to be centralised.

## 2.5. Multi-level party organisation: a framework for analysis

Figure 2.2 summarises the research framework described above and the independent variables of the model. The factors that influence party organisation are first, the type and extent of the regionalisation of the state, territorial cleavages and territorial diversity, and regionalism; then the electoral systems, the party system, the impact of regional elections and the notion of second-order elections; and finally the models of party organisation, party ideologies and party finance. These factors are filtered by the party leadership, so that only the most significant changes in the environment lead to organisational change.

**Figure 2.2.** Organisation of state-wide parties in multi-level settings: framework for analysis



To recapitulate, the framework expects that state-wide parties adapt to the form of regionalisation or federalism and are influenced by the historical circumstances that generated the devolution of power to regional sub-units of government. All things being equal, we expect a direct, positive correlation between the scope of powers of regional governments and the level of autonomy of regional party branches in state-wide parties. A dual distribution of powers between central and regional governments is expected to create conditions that facilitate the autonomy of regional party branches and limit their involvement in the party's central decision-making processes. Conversely, with a cooperative distribution of competences, regional party branches are expected to have more limited powers and the central party is expected to be more involved in regional party affairs. To compensate for these limited powers, regional party branches should be more included in central decision-making. Moreover, institutional asymmetry is likely to be reflected in the organisation of state-wide parties, with more powers given to the branches in those regions that have been granted more competences.

Territorial cleavages are also expected to affect the organisation of state-wide parties. First of all, the regional branches are expected to be more autonomous in those regions where the territorial cleavage is stronger, with distinct regional traits such as language, cultural practices, etc. Strong regionalist feelings and a high level of support for regionalist parties also create conditions that increase the likelihood of regional differences and therefore increase the pressure on state-wide parties to give more autonomy to their regional branches.

In this respect, electoral factors are very important. The electoral system can have a direct impact on the organisation of the parties, facilitating central control or making it more difficult. For instance, candidate-based electoral systems are likely to make the autonomy of lower party echelons easier, while list-based electoral systems are expected to facilitate top-down control. Electoral systems can also affect the parties indirectly by influencing the number of parties and allowing ethnoregionalist parties to be serious electoral challengers against the state-wide parties. PR electoral systems are likely to facilitate the representation of a larger number of parties, including ethnoregionalist parties. We expect that the regional branches of state-wide parties will be more autonomous when ethnoregionalist parties threaten their electoral position.

The electoral cycle and the sequence of elections between the state-wide and regional levels are also expected to influence party organisation. Vertical and horizontal simultaneity are expected to facilitate the nationalisation of elections and therefore limit the autonomy of the regional branches. Likewise, regional elections are likely to be influenced by state-wide elections when they occur closely before or after state-wide elections, thereby strengthening the central level oversight of regional party branches.

When regional elections are considered as second-order elections and are connected to state-wide politics, the central party is likely to play a role in regional affairs. In contrast, the higher the stakes of the regional elections for the regional electorate and the more the regional arena is disconnected from national politics, the higher the pressure will be for state-wide parties to grant autonomous competences to their regional branches.

A number of endogenous factors also affect the organisation of state-wide parties. The type of party organisation (mass, catch-all or cartel party) is likely to create conditions that either facilitate or hinder the party's decentralisation of powers to regional sub-units. It is expected that parties close to the mass party model will be

centralised and that cartel parties will adopt a stratarchical form of organisation. The catch-all party model does not address this issue of multi-level organisation, but they are expected to be rather flexible and to decentralise their structure if some electoral advantage can be gained from such an organisational change.

Party ideology and the parties' positions on decentralisation and the state are also expected to influence the level of party centralisation. Conservative parties are expected to be rather centralised, while liberal parties are expected to be decentralised. Social-democratic parties should be somewhat in between: the stronger the classical socialist component in the party's ideology, the more centralised the party.

The way parties are funded is also likely to influence the internal distribution of power between the central and regional levels. If resources are distributed from the centre, regional party branches will be more dependent on the centre and the party is therefore likely to be more centralised. Conversely, if they directly receive donations and/or public subsidies, they are more likely to be autonomous.

The relations between the levels may also be affected by the incumbency status of the regional and central levels of party organisation. When the central party is in government, the central leadership will try to centralise the organisation and control the regional branches. When the central party is in the opposition and a regional branch is in government, the regional branch is likely to increase its autonomy thanks to the resources of regional executive office. As a result, the balance of power between the centre and the regional branches may change, depending on the electoral results of either or both.

The power and autonomy of the leadership is deemed to be a crucial factor in the ability of parties to adapt to their environment. The effects of all internal and external factors on party organisation are mediated by party leaders (at both levels, but in particular at the central level), whose perception of the need to adapt to changes in the environment is a crucial trigger of party change. The central party leadership is a very important element in this process of change, as its perception of the party's environment can either facilitate or hinder change. Regional party leaders can also play a significant role in this process, as they can affect the perception of state-wide party leaders. They can either put pressure on the central leadership to accommodate their need for regional adaptation of the party's message and strategy to the regional context or on the contrary bow to the authority of the central party.

The relationship between the central and regional levels of party organisation takes two aspects: on the one hand, the degree of autonomy of the regional party branches in the management of regional functions (and the concomitant level of involvement of the central party in regional party affairs), and the extent to which regional branches are involved in the central organs of the state-wide parties. Overall, it is easier to predict the level of autonomy than the degree of integration of regional party branches in central decision-making organs. For this last indicator, only the type and scope of regionalisation can help us predict the level of involvement of regional branches and representatives in central party organs.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Now that we have defined our research question and developed a research framework that hypothesises a number of possible relationships to account for party organisation in multi-level settings, we can turn to the research design. As already explained in the introduction, this dissertation will compare the organisation of state-wide parties in two countries, Spain and the United Kingdom up to their last state-wide election (2004 in the former and 2005 in the latter), to test the hypotheses presented in chapter 2. This chapter addresses the issue of the number of cases, justifies the case selection, presents the methods of data collection and introduces a coding scheme that will be used compare the organisation of state-wide parties.

### 3.1. Number of units of observation and case selection

#### *3.1.1. The issue of the number of cases*

Case selection is a difficult issue, as it is always a matter of balancing comparability, number of cases, quality of the information provided and the possible degree of generalisation. The method chosen for this empirical analysis is the comparative case study. This method requires that the same in-depth study is made for a limited number of cases and that the same variables are used systematically across each unit of analysis (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 45). Through case study research, we can obtain detailed information about the cases, observe the complexities of the social phenomena under investigation and try to assess the strength of the hypothesised relationships (Denscombe 2000: 31). The comparison of several cases strengthens the validity of the study and its results, as it produces results that do not apply only to one case. The present study compares the organisation of the main state-wide parties in two countries, adding another level of comparison: not only are several parties compared with regard to their organisation, but they are also compared across two countries, increasing the validity of the observations. A number of reasons come to explain this choice.

Data on the issue of the vertical dimension of party organisation is scarce and unsystematic, and it had to be collected for the purpose of the dissertation. This research aims at studying party organisation through the analysis of many internal party processes. This called for the realisation of interviews in the countries themselves and limited the number of countries that could be compared. An international comparison was preferred to a simple case study (study of the organisation of one party) or a single-country analysis, as it can offer conclusions that are valid beyond the context of a single country. The comparison of party organisation in two countries therefore allows our hypotheses to be tested in a manner that is less dependent upon the national context.

The method of case selection is a combination of two types of methods. First, a most similar systems design was chosen in order to control for a number of variables. The most similar systems design requires that the chosen units of analysis are as close

as possible on a maximum number of aspects in order to control for as many variables as possible and focus on a limited number of possible relationships. As no two political parties or countries share the exact same characteristics, it is more a matter of comparing 'relatively similar' countries (Dogan and Pelassy 1990: 133). This is combined with a strongest case analysis, designed to alleviate some, albeit not all, the doubts about the main hypotheses. The underlying assumption behind this research strategy is that if the hypotheses are not validated by the study of apparently favourable cases, then they are very unlikely to be validated at all (Rallings 1987: 2). If this may seem somewhat too deterministic and increases the likelihood of positive results, it still has the merits of testing hypotheses that have been rarely tested in the past.

As a result of this choice, we cannot expect to achieve a high level of external validity for the answers provided to our research questions, but we endeavour instead to achieve a higher level of internal validity (Pennings, Keman and Kleinnijenhuis 1999: 12). Whereas the conclusions of the comparison of two countries cannot lead to broad generalisations, it can at least provide a detailed account of the internal processes in the parties studied and test the validity of the hypotheses in the selected cases. The comparison can also offer interesting cues on the relationship between the variables selected in the model. From this investigation, some tendencies, in the form of organisational trends or relationships between independent and dependent variables may appear. Moreover, the two cases share characteristics that are common with other countries (regionalised nature of their government, multinational character, regionalism, etc.), for which some of the findings of this study might also apply.

### 3.1.2. Country comparison

#### *Choosing the countries to compare in Western Europe*

To study the relationship between regionalisation, regionalism and multi-level party organisation, the countries analysed had to be regionalised or federal states with instances of regionalist feelings and regionalist parties in at least some of the regions of the countries. Table 3.1 below compares the regionalised arrangements of 15 member states of the European Union (the EU between 1 January 1995 and 30 April 2004) and the presence of regionalist parties. Among the federal states of the European Union, Austria does not have any regionalist party. Belgium is ruled out, as it does not have any state-wide party: all the Belgian parties are now divided along linguistic lines. Germany has limited regionalism, most notably among the Danish minority in the Schleswig-Holstein.

The table also shows that of the non-federal European countries (countries that score less than 4 for 'constitutional federalism'), Spain and the UK without England receive the highest scores with Italy following them. Italy is regionalised state and it has regionalist parties, in particular the *Lega Nord*, the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* and the *Union Valdôtaine*. Five of its 20 regions enjoy special autonomy status that allows them to pass legislation over local matters, based on the recognition of regional minority rights and geography. The other 15 regions originally had administrative powers, but saw their areas of competence expanded in 2001. In 2005, a process of devolution (*devoluzione*) of further competences was initiated and but was rejected in a referendum held in June 2006. Because of the more limited extent of Italian regionalisation, the countries chosen to illustrate a regionalised setting are Spain and the United Kingdom.

**Table 3.1.** Regional governance in the European Union (EU 15), 2005

	Constitutional Federalism (0-4)	Special territorial autonomy (0-2)	Role of regions in central government (0-4)	Regional elections (0-2)	Summary score (0-12)	Regionalist parties (presence)
Austria	4	0	2	2	8	No
Belgium	4	1	2	2	9	Yes
Denmark	0	1	0	0	1	No
Finland	0	1	0	0	1	No
France	2	0.5	0	2	4.5	Yes
Germany	4	0	4	2	10	Yes
Greece	1	0	0	0	1	Yes
Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	No
Italy	3	0	1	2	6	Yes
Netherlands	1	0	0	2	3	Yes
Portugal	1	1	0	0	2	No
Spain	3	2	1	2	8	Yes
Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	No
UK	1	2	0	0	3	Yes
UK 2	2	2	1	2	7	Yes

*Note:* 'UK2' stands for the devolved parts of the UK: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, that is, the UK without England.

*Source:* Hooghe and Marks (2001a, Table II) and extrapolation from the same. For the coding scheme, see Hooghe and Marks (2001b).

#### *Comparing party organisation in Spain and in the UK*

Both countries share a number of characteristics that go beyond the regionalised character of their decision-making procedures. Whereas the details of the history and party systems of both countries will be described in chapters 4 and 6, it is worth pointing out the main common points between the UK and Spain at this stage to argue in favour of comparing parties in these two countries.

Both are West European parliamentary democracies with a monarch as head of state, are members of the European Union and have undergone (and are still undergoing) processes of power transfer to their constituent regions. The party systems of Spain and the UK include both state-wide and regionally-based parties. These parties are in most cases regionalist parties that advocate stronger powers for their regions and occasionally separatist parties that argue in favour of the independence of a region (such as the Scottish National Party and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*). Even though both countries have different electoral systems (plurality in the UK and PR with the D'Hondt formula of seat allocation in Spain), they have fairly similar degrees of disproportionality, favour larger parties and discriminate against the smaller parties (Lijphart 1994: 162; Lijphart 1999: 162-4).

Lijphart's criteria to evaluate the character of a democratic system (1999) show that the UK and Spain have many characteristics in common. Both countries favour single-party cabinets (even single-party minority cabinets in Spain) rather than coalition cabinets, they have a high level of interest group pluralism and the executive dominates the legislative branch of government. They have different electoral systems that nevertheless produce rather similar effects (high disproportionality, advantage to large parties) and their state-wide party systems are dominated by two large parties, with smaller parties gaining small shares of the seats. Both have decentralised government to their regions (albeit unevenly in the UK), have an asymmetrical legislature with a stronger lower chamber and have independent central banks. Spain and the UK diverge only on two criteria out of ten: Spain has a written constitution

and medium-strength judicial review of the constitutionality of the laws passed by its parliament, while the UK does not have a written constitution and has no judicial review of its laws.

As a result, we can control for a number of factors, such as the regime type (republic vs. monarchy, parliamentary vs. presidential: the fact that there are only parliamentary elections means that there is only one type of state-wide elections to consider), the main characteristics of the political system, the multi-level structure of decision-making and changing capabilities of the state (with constraints imposed at a higher level by the European Union and at a lower level by regional governments), the direct election of regional assemblies, and the presence of regionally-based political parties, sometimes of a regionalist or nationalist nature (Winter and Türsan 1998).

Both countries are quite similar with respect to their decentralised character. There are no two countries that share the exact same form of regionalised structure, both in terms of scope of the powers assigned to the regions and with respect to the nature of the type of distribution of competence (dual versus integrative). Consequently, we have to allow for a certain level of variation in that respect. Spain scores high for constitutional federalism (3 on a scale of 4), special territorial autonomy (2) and regional elections (2). It only receives a score of 1 for 'role of regions in central government'. The first crucial difference between Spain and the UK is that whereas Spain has decentralised power to all of its regions, the UK is only decentralised in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and London. The largest and most populated part of the country, England, remains ruled by the central parliament. Table 3.1 above illustrates that overall, regional governance in the UK is less developed than in Spain.

An extrapolation using Hooghe and Marks coding system (2001a Table II and 2001b Appendix 2) shows that if the non-decentralised part of the UK, England, is excluded, then the British regionalised arrangement is much closer to the Spanish one. If we consider only Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the coding of the UK (UK 2) is then very different: the regions empowered since 1999 have extensive authoritative competences over a range of policy areas but these competences are not guaranteed in a constitution (code 2 for 'Constitutional federalism'); the UK allows special territorial autonomy for some regions, with the Scottish and Northern Irish institutions<sup>9</sup> having powers of primary legislation while the Welsh Assembly only has powers of secondary legislation (score 2 for 'Special territorial autonomy', as Scotland and Northern Ireland constitute over 10% of the population); the regions have a limited and non-binding influence at the central level through executive cooperation (score of 1 for 'Role of regions in central government'); and finally, the three regional assemblies considered are directly elected (score of 2 for 'Regional elections').

Both countries have an asymmetric design. There is, however, an important difference in terms of the scope of that asymmetry between the two countries. The Spanish system was originally quite asymmetric because of the distinction between 'historic nationalities', a term used to refer to the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia and Navarre, and the other regions. This distinction provided two distinct routes towards autonomy and allowed the first group of regions (together with Andalusia, which 'forced' its way into this group) to obtain more powers than the other regions. Progressively, however, the non-historic regions have caught up on most of the

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<sup>9</sup> The suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly between October 2002 and May 2007 is ignored, as it remains that this institution, should it have functioned then, would have had such powers.

competences of the historic regions. Only a few differences in competences remain, most notably with respect to the police force in the historic regions and fiscal autonomy in the provinces of the Basque Country and Navarra.<sup>10</sup>

There is a much stronger asymmetry between Scotland and Wales. Whereas the Scottish Parliament has powers of primary legislation, the Welsh Assembly can only pass secondary legislation within the framework of Westminster bills. This asymmetry can in part be explained by the different levels of regionalism and the strength of the regionalist feelings in the regions: in Spain, it is the regions with the historical claims of regional rights to self-government that have been awarded the largest degree of autonomy. Likewise, Scotland has more claims to regional autonomy based on history and stronger support for regional self-government than Wales (see Chapters 4 and 5). The regions where regionalism is strongest and that have some historical precedents of self-government or special rights have been awarded more powers than the other regions in both countries.

The two countries also differ in other respects, starting with two crucial differences, the transition from a centralised to a decentralised state and the constitutional guarantee of decentralisation. While the UK has an old parliamentary tradition, Spain, on the other hand, has only recently become a democracy. In Spain, the transition from Franco's authoritarian regime to parliamentary democracy happened only in 1978 but also quasi-simultaneously as the process of decentralisation. The long discussions of the transition period also included the shape of the state and the extent of its competences. The final agreement produced a singular process of asymmetric decentralisation, with each newly created Autonomous Community negotiating its attributions with the central state within the framework established by the constitution (Articles 2 and 143-158). As a result, the different Autonomous Communities obtained their Statutes of Autonomy one at a time, and the first regional elections took place in 1980 (Basque Country, Catalonia), 1981 (Galicia) and 1983 (Aragon, Asturias, Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castile La Mancha, Castile and Leon, Extremadura, La Rioja, the Madrid Community, Murcia Region, Navarre, Valencian Community).

On the other hand, the United Kingdom has a very long tradition of parliamentary democracy, which will not be developed here any further as it is generally well known. While being until recently one of the most centralised countries in Europe, as a union the UK allowed some internal diversity. For instance Scotland was able to keep its Church and legal system after the 1707 union with England, and Wales managed to retain its cultural distinctiveness and linguistic rights (Bogdanor 2001: 7-10). Devolution in Scotland and Wales is very recent. It is the result of two bills passed in 1998, the Scotland Act and Government of Wales Act. The first Scottish and Welsh elections were held simultaneously the following year. Unlike Spanish decentralisation, devolution in Britain is not constitutionally protected and could be repealed by a simple Act of Parliament.

#### *Choosing the regions for the analysis of regional party processes*

In the UK, the range of regions to choose from is limited, as devolution only applied to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London. London, in spite of its very large population, is not a 'region' in the strictest sense of the term. Rather, it is more like a

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<sup>10</sup> The reform of the Catalan statute of Autonomy of 2006 is not included in this study.



large urban district. The London Assembly has fewer powers than the other three regional institutions. Another distinguishing feature of the London Assembly is its directly elected mayor. The Northern Ireland Assembly has been out of office for most of the period since its creation. As a result, the Greater London Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly are excluded from the comparison as outliers. Scotland and Wales are both geographical regions with a distinct culture and language, past experience of special administration and new devolved institutions.

**Table 3.2.** Data on the Spanish autonomous communities

	Statute of autonomy (article in constitution)	Recognised regional language	Support for regionalist parties in regional elections * (%)		Spanish (SP)/ regional (R) identity 2002** (%)	
			1999	Average	SP > R	R > SP
Navarre	Additional Provision 1	Yes†	70.93#	58.37#	7	31
Basque Country	151	Yes	54.61	63.03	8	44
Catalonia	151	Yes	46.81	48.92	20	40
Canary Islands	143	No	42.38	33.25	7	38
Galicia	151	Yes	25.11	19.29	9	32
Aragon	143	No	24.82	25.60	10	15
Balearic Islands	143	Yes	19.39	17.18	17	27
Cantabria	143	No	17	22.01	28	11
Asturias	143	No	9.88	3.53	8	23
Valencian Community	143	Yes	9.36	9.14	34	14
Andalusia	143	No	7.53	7.18	14	15
La Rioja	143	No	5.90	6.44	19	19
Castile and Leon	143	No	5.23°	3.48°	40	5
Extremadura	143	No	2.85	5.02	9	15
Murcia	143	No	-	1.95	29	5
Castile-La Mancha	143	No	-	-	37	3
Madrid	143	No	-	-	44	5

† Euskera for the Basque minority.

# These percentages include the votes for UPN (*Unión del Pueblo Navarra*), which is closely allied with PP. Both parties have an agreement according to which only the UPN competes in regional elections and the PP competes in state-wide general elections. It is a matter of dispute whether the UPN should be considered a separate 'regionalist' party. If the party is not included, the percentages drop to 28.6% (1999) and 26.6 (average).

° Regionalist parties in Castile and Leon are actually parties that defend either part of the region: *Tierra Comunera- Partido Nacionalista Castellano* and *Unidad del Pueblo Leonés*.

\* Source: compilation of data from the *Archivo Histórico Electoral, Presidencia de la Generalitat Valenciana* (Argos) <http://www.pre.gva.es/argos/archivo/index.html>

\*\*Source: CIS Boletín 31, January-April 2003: *Instituciones y Autonomías* (<http://www.cis.es/page.aspx?condicion=boletín%2031>)

As we saw above, the Spanish autonomous communities differ in their history, the way they obtained their statute of autonomy and the strength of regionalism. Table 3.2 below recapitulates some of these differences. Because of the 'most likely-most similar' method of case selection chosen in this study, it was decided to focus the analysis of party organisation in the three autonomous communities known as 'historic nationalities', that is, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. All three obtained their statute of autonomy via the fast route (article 151 of the constitution) on the basis of some previous historical experience of autonomous government and the

existence of distinctive language and cultural practices. As a result, they have a longer experience of a high level of regional self-government. These regions are also characterised by the presence of regionalist parties and a strong level of regional feelings combined with relatively low level of identification with the Spanish identity.

#### *British and Spanish state-wide parties*

The political parties analysed here are all the parties with a significant weight in the party system that present candidates for general and regional elections in most of the constituencies of their country. In both countries, none of what we call the 'state-wide parties' actually fields candidates in each and every single constituency for general and regional elections.

**Table 3.3.** Territorial coverage of the British parties represented in Westminster (2005)

	Candidates in England (max: 529)	Candidates in Scotland (max: 59)	Candidates in Wales (max: 40)	Candidates in Northern Ireland (max: 18)	Total number of seats	In national government ( <i>current</i> )	In regional government ( <i>current</i> )
Conservative	529	58	40	3	198	Yes ( <i>no</i> )	No
DUP	0	0	0	18	9	No	Yes ( <i>no</i> )
Labour	529	58	40	0	356	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
LibDem	528	58	40	0	62	No	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
KHHC	1	0	0	0	1	No	No
Plaid Cymru	0	0	40	0	3	No	No
Respect	24	0	2	0	1	No	No
SNP	0	59	0	0	6	No	No
Sinn Fein	0	0	0	18	5	No	Yes ( <i>no</i> )
SDLP	0	0	0	18	3	No	Yes ( <i>no</i> )
UUP	0	0	0	18	1	No	Yes

*Notes:* The data covers the period up to the 2005 general election and the 2003 Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh elections. National and regional government indicate whether the party has government experience. In brackets is whether the party is currently in government.

*Source:* Richard Kimber's website <http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/ge05/candidates.htm>

Table 3.3 above shows that only three parties present candidates all over Great Britain, that is, in England, Scotland and Wales for general elections. In contrast, Northern Ireland has a party system that is altogether different from the party system of Great Britain. The parties there are divided first along community lines and then in function of their position on the Good Friday Agreement and the IRA. Some Ulster parties have some links with British parties but these are nonetheless different parties. For instance, the small Alliance Party (it received 3.7% of the votes in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections of 2003) is a sister party of the Liberal Democrats. Only the Conservative party, faithful to its name (the Conservative and *Unionist* Party), keeps there an embryonic structure. It presented three candidates in 2005 and they all achieved between 1.4 and 2.6% of the votes. Only three parties with representation in the House of Commons presented candidates all across Great Britain. The main state-wide parties traditionally do not contest the seat of the Speaker of the House. In 2005, Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative party did not contest Speaker Michael Martin's seat of Glasgow North East.

Table 3.4 below presents the same data for Spain. It shows that three parties are state-wide: the *Partido Popular* (PP), the Socialist party PSOE and *Izquierda Unida*, the successor of the Communist party allied with other left-wing groups. The *Partido Popular* does not field candidates in Navarre, where it has an electoral agreement with

the *Unión del Pueblo Navarro* (UPN). The elected members of the UPN then join the PP parliamentary group in the Parliament. The PSOE is also absent from one region: in Catalonia, the socialist family is represented by the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC). However, the PSC is a party federated to the PSOE, and its members sit in the same parliamentary group in the *Congreso de los Diputados* in Madrid.

**Table 3.4.** Territorial coverage of the Spanish parties represented in the *Congreso*

Parties with national parliamentary representation	Number of constituencies (provinces) covered (max. 52)	Number of autonomous communities covered (max. 17)	Total number of seats	In national government ( <i>current</i> )	In regional government ( <i>current</i> )
BNG	4	1 (Galicia)	1	No	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
CC	2	1 (Canary Islands)	3	No	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
CHA	3	1 (Aragon)	1	No	No
CIU	4	1 (Catalonia)	10	No	Yes ( <i>no</i> )
EAJ-PNV	3	1 (Basque Country)	7	No	Yes ( <i>yes</i> – Basque Country)
ERC	8	3 (Catalonia, Valencian Community and the Balearic Islands)	8	No	Yes ( <i>yes</i> – Catalonia)
Izquierda Unida	52	17	3	No	Yes ( <i>yes</i> – Asturias and Basque Country)
Nafarroa-Bai	1	1 (Navarre)	1	No	No
PP	51	16	146	Yes ( <i>no</i> )	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
PSC	4	1 (Catalonia)	21	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
PSOE	48	16	143	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )	Yes ( <i>yes</i> )
UPN	1	1 (Navarre)	2	Yes	Yes ( <i>no</i> )

*Notes:* The data presented covers the 2005 general election and the regional elections during the period 2003-2005.

*Sources:* Ministerio del Interior <http://www.mir.es/DGPI/Elecciones/>, and Josep M<sup>a</sup> Reniu i Vilamala's website on coalitions in Spain <http://www.ub.edu/grepa/>

In some autonomous communities Izquierda Unida and its regional branches presented lists in coalition with other parties. For instance, in the Balearic Islands, the party presented a common list 'Progressistes' with the PSM, the Greens and ERC. In Catalonia, the list was *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds-Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (ICV-EUiA). The Catalan and Basque branches of IU are actually sovereign parties affiliated to Izquierda Unida. In the Valencian Community, IU is merged together with other parties (2 Green parties and 2 republic and nationalist parties) to form Entesa.

All the other parties represented in the Spanish Parliament are regionalist parties: *Convergència i Unió* and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* from Catalonia, the Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG), the Canarian Coalition (CC), the Aragonist Council (CHA), the Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ-PNV) and the Basque nationalist *Nafarroa-Bai* from Navarre.

A second criterion is the size of the state-wide parties. It was decided that only the most important ones would be selected, the state-wide parties with a governing experience at the central level or at the regional level. As a result, the three British state-wide parties were selected. Throughout the period under investigation, the Labour party has governed alone the UK (since 1997) and Wales (1999-2000 and since 2003) and has been the main partner of the coalitions governing Wales (2000-2003)

and Scotland (since 1999).<sup>11</sup> The Liberal Democrats, third party nationally, have been Scottish Labour's coalition partners in Scotland since 1999, and they have also governed in coalition with Labour in Wales between 2000 and 2003. The Conservative party has no current governing position either in the UK or the devolved assemblies. It is, however, the second party of the UK, with over 30% of the votes in each general election since 1997, and before that it had governed since 1979. It remains the party most likely to take over power in Westminster.

In Spain, both the PP and the PSOE have had governing experience at the state-wide level in the past few years. The PP has ruled at the central level between 1996 and 2004, and the PSOE governs the country since the 2004 general election. The PP presently governs alone in 6 autonomous communities (Castile and Leon, the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands, La Rioja, the Madrid Community and Murcia) and in coalition in the Canary Islands (together with the Canarian Coalition). The PSOE governs the regions of Andalusia, Castile-la Mancha and Extremadura. It governs the major coalition party in Aragon, Asturias, Cantabria and Galicia. Its sister party PSC is also part of the Catalan governing coalition. Finally, the last state-wide party, IU, was considered too small: it won only three seats in the last parliament (down 5 seats from the 2000 election) and is only a small coalition partner in both Asturias and the Basque Country (with 4 and 3 seats respectively). It lacks the strength and in some cases degree of integration that would make it relevant throughout the whole country.

As a result, five parties were selected: the Labour party, the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats in the UK, the PP and the PSOE in Spain. In addition, the relationships between central and regional levels in these parties are studied mainly during the legislature that preceded the last general election: 2001-2005 in the UK and 2000-2004 in Spain. As a result, events that have occurred in the most recent years are not included.

## 3.2. Data collection

### *3.2.1. Documentary sources: party statutes and secondary literature on party organisation*

The data collection process was divided into several stages. First of all, the statutes of all the parties and their regional branches were analysed and compared. The party statutes gave a first indication of the internal party processes of the parties and the respective roles and powers of the central party and the regional party branches. Party statutes provide a first indication of the way the parties work, or at least the way they want to be perceived to work. Whereas Sartori (2005: 84) rightly argued that 'party statutes are seldom complied with beyond the extent that suits the interests of the interested parties', it is also true that they offer 'a fundamental guide to the character of a given party' (Katz and Mair 1992: 7). Moreover, party statutes are rare sources of comparable data on the rules that govern party life, and they constitute the framework of action of political actors (by allowing certain behaviours, constraining actors to a certain course of action and prohibiting other actions) within party organisations.

This first analysis of party statutes was then complemented by the literature on the British and Spanish parties and party systems. Some inequalities in the literature

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<sup>11</sup> The situation has changed after the 2007 Scottish and Welsh elections: Wales is governed by a Labour-Plaid Cymru coalition and Labour has lost power in Scotland to the SNP.

are evident from the start. First of all, the literature on Spanish political parties and the Spanish party system is more limited than the literature on British parties. The English-language literature on the topic is limited to a few authors such as Heywood (1995), Gibbons (1999), Magone (2004) and Balfour (2005) for introductions to Spanish politics. The focus on political parties is then on a number of specific aspect of Spanish politics, including ethno-regionalist parties, Catalan and Basque politics, the PSC in Catalonia. The Spanish-language literature is obviously more important, with a number of textbooks of a general nature on Spanish politics (Alcántara and Martínez 2001, for instance) and a larger number of sources on party politics at the regional level (see the annual *Informes de las Comunidades Autónomas* or Alcántara and Martínez 1998). With respect to the political parties, the literature is scarcer, with a clear bias towards the study of the Socialist Party PSOE rather than the Partido Popular.

The same bias can be observed with respect to the British political parties: the literature on the Labour party is much more abundant than that on the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats (see for instance Ludlam and Smith 2001, Shaw 1994 and 1996, and White 2001 for the Labour Party, McIver 1996 and Russell and Fieldhouse 2005 for the Liberal Democrats, Garnett and Lynch 2003 and Gamble 1994 for the Conservative party). Moreover, the literature on party organisation at the regional level is rather limited, again with more resources on Labour than on the other parties.

Because of this lack of available systematic data, a strategy of data collection through interviews was also adopted to complement the information on party organisation at both central and regional levels.

### *3.2.2. In-depth semi-structured elite interviews*

The nature of the data to be collected (description of intra-party processes) prompted the choice of an open-question format for the interviews. Open questions were necessary in order to leave respondents develop their own responses, follow their trail of thoughts and describe in details the internal procedures of their party (Denscombe 2000: 118-9). At the same time, the discussion had to have a certain level of structure to ensure that no aspect of the party organisation was forgotten and that the knowledge of the respondent was used in the best possible way. Consequently, a very detailed questionnaire was developed (see Appendix 2 for the questionnaire in English).

The detailed questionnaire provided the interviewer with a detailed checklist of topics to cover during the interview and broad categories for the transcripts. It also helped ascertain the areas of intra-party activity with which the respondent was most familiar, covered all the processes in relation to regional party affairs, and established the responsibilities of all the party bodies at the national and regional levels with respect to regional affairs. The aims of this questionnaire were to evaluate the level of involvement of the regional organs and leaders in the affairs of the state-wide party and the level of autonomy of the regional party branches in the management of the party's regional affairs, and to assess changes in the composition of the party organs, the distribution of competences and the way intra-party activities were managed. Because of the sheer amount of information necessary and the 'tailoring' of the questionnaire to the particular circumstances and experience of each respondent, it became necessary to realise face-to-face interviews rather than send questionnaires.

The type of information that was necessary guided the choice of the category of respondents. Most rank and file members are unlikely to have first hand knowledge of

the inner workings of their party's executive bodies, let alone of the more informal processes and discussions that can happen at a higher level. This consideration led to a choice of respondents from the mid- to higher levels of party organisation: members of the parties' bureaucracy, members of the parties' executive bodies and elected representatives from both national and regional levels.

The chosen method of interview is therefore the in-depth semi-structured elite interview (Johnson and Reynolds 2005: 271-5; Dexter 2006). The in-depth nature of the interviews took precedence over the structured aspect. Experience also showed that respondents often answered several questions at once and jumped from one part of the interview to another, as they would compare various aspects of party organisation.

The choice of the respondents was made from among each party's executive organs, members of parliament and sometimes party staffers. The selection of respondents was not based on probability sampling but rather on the personal qualities of each individual, as well as issues such as availability and access. Overall, 22 interviews were made with members of the British state-wide parties (6 in London, 7 in Wales, 8 in Scotland and 1 in Brussels). The distribution by party is as follows: 6 members of the Conservative party (2 in London, 2 in Scotland and 2 in Wales), 7 from the Labour party (2 in London, 3 in Scotland, 2 in Wales) and 9 from the Liberal Democrats (3 in London, 2 in Scotland, 3 in Wales and 1 in Brussels, with a member of a Scottish party). 27 interviews were carried out in Spain (10 in Madrid, 8 in Barcelona, 1 in Brussels with a Catalan MEP, 1 in Bilbao, 3 in Vitoria-Gasteiz and 4 in Santiago de Compostela), with 11 respondents from the Partido Popular and 16 from the PSOE (see appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews).

During the interviews every step was made to ensure the rights of the respondents were respected and that they were properly informed on the purpose of the interview and its subsequent use, from the introductory letters sent as first contact to the presentation of the researcher and the research project at the start of the interview.

### **3.3. Coding multi-level party organisation**

#### *3.3.1. Existing schemes coding party organisation in the party literature*

Attempts to code party organisation are rather rare. Katz and Mair's *Data Handbook* (1992) provides a wealth of numerical (albeit by now a little dated) information on political parties but does not provide any analytical categories. In this respect, Janda's *International Comparative Political Parties Project* (1980) is more interesting because it provides an extensive framework of analysis and codification. This wide-ranging analysis of political parties in 53 countries codes party organisation along a large number of categories.

The concept that comes closest to this dissertation's concerns is that of 'centralisation of power', which measures 'the location and distribution of effective decision-making authority within the party' (Janda 1980: 108). This concept is broken down into 8 variables. One of them is the centralisation of the party structure, which measures 'the hierarchical distribution of power without regard to the functional differentiation' (Janda 1980: 108). It measures the degree of (de)centralisation of party structures and hypothesises that federalism is likely to produce a separation between regional and central party levels. The concept of centralisation of power also includes such variables as the selection of the party leader and of candidates for state-wide

parliamentary elections, the formulation of party policy, the distribution of resources between levels and party discipline (Janda 1980: 109-16).

These coding categories are not, however, completely suited to our purposes. A first problem is that it is a very detailed description of all the party processes and that it takes all the party levels into account, down to the constituency level, while the focus of this study is on the respective powers of the central and regional levels of party organisation. The powers of other levels, such as the constituency level, are only important insofar as they impinge on or strengthen the power of the central or regional levels. The other problem is that the variables of the 'centralisation of power' category only refer to state-wide party processes and therefore only cover one part of the scope of the present analysis. The respective allocation of power between central and regional levels of party organisation in regional party processes also need to be taken into account. As a result, it became necessary to design a coding scheme for the specific purposes of this dimension of party organisation.

### *3.3.2. Coding the relationship between central and regional levels of party organisation*

The coding scheme developed for this dissertation aims at comparing the vertical dimension of party organisation of state-wide parties, with respect to the allocation of power between the central party organisation and its regional party branches. As explained in chapter 2, there are two aspects to this relationship: the involvement of the regional party branches in the state-wide party and the autonomy of the regional party branches in the management of regional party affairs and their own organisation.

This dual aspect translates into two groups of 5 variables, each group representing one of these dimensions. Each variable represents a party process. The first group of variables refers to state-wide party processes and the degree of involvement of regional party branches in these processes. These variables are (1) the selection of the leader of the state-wide party, (2) the involvement of regional party branches in the central party executive, (3) the selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections, (4) the formulation of party programmes, or manifestos, for state-wide parliamentary elections, and (5) the statutory guarantee of the powers of regional party branches and the involvement of the regional party branches in the process of amending the party constitution.

The second group of variables describes the degree of autonomy of regional party branches in the management of party processes at the regional level. These variables are (6) the ability of regional party branches to organise themselves freely, that is, to have an internal organisation that is not dictated by the centre, (7) the selection of regional party leaders, (8) the selection of candidates for regional elections, (9) the adoption of regional party programmes, or manifestos, and (10) the degree of financial autonomy of regional party branches.

Each party receives a code between 0 and 4 for each indicator. Table 3.4 below recapitulates the indicators and the meaning of each score. A score of 0 represents the most centralised form of organisation. This means that only the central party has responsibility over the party process and that the regional party branches are not involved in the decision-making process. As the value of the code increases, the degree of involvement of regional party branches in the central party (for indicators of the first group) or the autonomy of the regional party branches (for indicators of the second group) also increases. A score of 4 represents a situation in which the regional party branches have full power. This means that the central party, when it exists, is a

confederation of regional parties, and that the regional party branches are completely autonomous, without any central party to refer to (as in a case of split organisation).

For indicators of the first group, a score of 0 means that only the central party decides and that the regional party branches are not represented at the central level. A score of 1 represents a situation in which regional party branches are represented at the central level but have a limited influence, or a situation in which regional party branches or regional leaders are consulted without their opinion being formally binding for the central party. A score of 2 means that the regional party branches have a number of representatives in central party organs and an influence over state-wide processes similar to that of other party sectors, such as the membership, the parliamentary party, and affiliated organisations. A score of 3 signifies that regional party branches have a significant level of influence in central decision-making, through a sizeable representation in central party organs (set at one half of all members of the most important organ) and a strong influence over state-wide electoral processes. This strong presence at the centre amounts to a regional veto over state-wide matters. A score of 4 means that the central party is the sum of its regional parts: central party organs are controlled by the regional party units and regional branches have full control over state-wide electoral processes in their region.

For indicators of the second group, similar codes ranging between 0 and 4 are applied, with a similar increment in value representing an increase in the level of autonomy of the regional party units. A score of 0 represents a case in which the regional branches are mere administrative arms of the central party, which is in charge of all the decisions that affect regional organisation and regional elections. A score of 1 indicates that the autonomy of the regional party branches is limited by the direct involvement of the central party in regional affairs. The central party oversees the regional party branches and occasionally participates in the decision-making process at the regional level. A score of 2 indicates that the decisions taken by the regional party branches need to be approved by the central party, which has a *de facto* veto power over decisions made by the regional branches. A score of 3 means that regional party branches are autonomous and that the central party has no official influence over regional party matters. Because of the state-wide nature of the party, national considerations, informal discussions with other regions or the central party and examples from other regional branches can nevertheless influence the decisions of the regional party branches. A score of 4 represents a case of split organisation, in which a regional party of the same ideological family takes over the functions of a state-wide party in a region. The state-wide party ceases to be involved at the regional level, and the regional party is an independent recognised political party, organisationally distinct from the state-wide party of the same family.

To facilitate the comparison of political parties, the score of each indicator are added to make a total score and for both groups of indicators. The total score can give a numerical indication of the degree of centralisation of each party. The total by group of variables facilitates the comparison of party organisation at the central level and at the regional level. The codes reflect the situation of each party at the end of the period under investigation. As a result, they do not account for changes within the parties. They should be considered as a snapshot of the organisation of the state-wide parties at the moment of the last state-wide election in each country (2004 in Spain and 2005 in the UK).



**Table 3.5.** Organisational dimensions (indicators) and codes

<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>		
1. Selection of the party leader	0	By central party organs, with no regional representatives;
	1	By central party organs, but with a small number of regional representatives;
	2	By central party organs, with a number of regional representatives equal to that of other party sections;
	3	By central party organs, with necessary approval by regional party branches;
	4	By regional party branches.
2. Involvement of regional branches in central party executive	0	No regional representatives;
	1	Limited number of regional representatives among a much larger number of representatives of other party sections;
	2	Number of regional representatives similar to that of other groups;
	3	At least half of the executive is composed of regional representatives;
	4	National executive composed only of regional representatives.
3. Selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections	0	By central party organs only;
	1	By central party organs, with limited consultation of regional branches;
	2	By central party organs, with compulsory consultation of regional branches;
	3	By regional organs, with compulsory approval of central party;
	4	By regional party branches only.
4. Adoption of manifesto/ programme for state-wide parliamentary elections	0	By central party organs only;
	1	By central party organs, with some regional input;
	2	By central party organs, with a significant input or necessary approval of the manifesto by regional branches;
	3	By regional party branches, with necessary approval of central party organs and central coordination;
	4	Only regional manifestos.
5. Amending the constitution of the state-wide party (constitutional guarantee)	0	By central party organs without regional representatives;
	1	By central party organs including regional representatives;
	2	By central party organs, with consultation of regional party branches/leaders;
	3	By central party organs, with separate approval by regional party branches;
	4	By regional party branches.

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*Autonomy of regional party branches at the regional level*

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6. Organisation of regional party branches	0	Decided by the central party, the regional party branch does not have its own constitution;
	1	The regional party branch has its own constitution, but with organisational constraints from the state-wide party constitution and subject to approval of the central party;
	2	The regional branch makes its own constitution, subject to the approval of the central party;
	3	The regional branch organises freely, without any central oversight;
	4	By the regional party (split organisation).
7. Selection of regional party leaders	0	By the central party;
	1	The central party is involved alongside the regional branch;
	2	By the regional party branch, with necessary approval of the central party;
	3	By the regional party branch;
	4	By the regional party (split organisation).
8. Selection of candidates for regional elections	0	By the central party;
	1	The central party is involved alongside the regional branch;
	2	By the regional party branch, with necessary approval of the central party;
	3	By the regional party branch;
	4	By the regional party (split organisation).
9. Adoption of manifesto/ programme for regional elections	0	By the central party;
	1	The central party is involved alongside the regional branch;
	2	By the regional party branch, with necessary approval of the central party;
	3	By the regional party branch;
	4	By the regional party (split organisation).
10. Financing regional party branches	0	The central party centralises all the resources;
	1	The regional party branch has some independent resources but also receives support from the central party;
	2	The regional branch may receive occasional financial support from the central party;
	3	The regional party branch is financially autonomous from the central party;
	4	The regional party is financially autonomous (split organisation).

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Practice showed however that it could sometimes be difficult to make reality coincide with a code. The reality of party organisation and the actual practice is sometimes in contradiction with the party statutes. As a result, the question is whether a code should be attributed according to the distribution of competences stipulated in party constitutions or whether it should be given according to the party's practice at a given time. Indeed, practices may change, depending on the particular circumstances of a party or an election. The resulting codes are therefore an approximation designed to facilitate the comparison. They should be read in combination with the qualitative part of the study, which describes in great detail the organisation of the parties and the changing relationships between levels of party organisation.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the methodological problems posed by this particular topic and the manner in which this dissertation will try to solve them, or, more modestly, deal with them in order to present a methodologically sound study of party organisation. It was argued that the type of subject required an in-depth study of party organisation and a personal data collection via interviews. This, in turn, meant that only a relatively limited number of cases could be studied. The issue of the number of cases was addressed and the case selection supported by arguments of comparability and feasibility. This led to the selection of five state-wide political parties in two countries, with an emphasis on their organisation in the regions where the centrifugal forces were likely to be strongest and therefore influence party organisation the most.

The following chapters present the country cases and the empirical findings. For each country, one chapter presents the context in which state-wide political parties operate (history and form of state decentralisation, electoral systems and party systems), and another chapter describes and codes the organisation of the state-wide parties.

## CHAPTER 4. THE UNITED KINGDOM – INSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

This chapter studies the institutional and political framework in which British state-wide parties operate. The first section describes the devolved structure of the British state and the devolution reforms in Scotland and Wales. The second section explores the party systems in which these parties compete: the British party system and the Scottish and Welsh party systems. Finally, the last section looks at party finance and funding rules at the central and devolved levels.

### 4.1. Devolution in Scotland and Wales

#### *4.1.1. Devolution and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales*

##### *State formation, peripheral nationalism and devolution before the 1990s*

The UK is typically a 'union state' (Rokkan and Unwin 1985), that is, a state built through dynastic unions that incorporated Scotland and Wales into the United Kingdom. Unlike Wales, Scotland experienced united self-rule before its union with England. With the Treaty of Union, Scotland lost its parliament but retained its court system and its Church (Bogdanor 2003: 10-11). Wales was more fully integrated into the Union (Pilkington 2002: 23-5), which nevertheless allowed the Welsh to remain culturally different, cultivate their own language and be administered by local elites.

Calls for home rule spread from Ireland to Scotland and Wales in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and nationalist movements and parties emerged in these regions. The Welsh nationalist movement was mainly concerned with cultural and linguistic issues, while the issue of Scottish home rule was discussed but defeated 13 times between 1890 and 1914 (Bogdanor 2003: 110-2 and 144-8; Pilkington 44-8 and 57-8).

In the 1970s, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru increased their share of the vote, gaining votes from the Labour party in its strongholds. At the same time, Labour Prime minister Harold Wilson set up a commission to investigate constitutional reform. The Kilbrandon report, which advocated devolution in Scotland and Wales, was however shelved by the Conservative government that came into power in 1973. Labour came back into power in 1974 and the government passed two separate bills to devolve power to a Scottish legislative parliament and to a Welsh executive assembly. Devolution was to be finally endorsed by the peoples of Scotland and Wales in a referendum, with a requirement that at least 40% of those eligible to vote should vote 'yes'. Both referendums were held on 1 March 1979. In Wales devolution was massively rejected, with 79.8% of the votes against devolution and a turnout of just 58.8%. In Scotland 51.6% of the voters said 'yes' to devolution. With such a narrow victory and a turnout of 62.9 %, only 32.85% of the whole electorate voted in favour of devolution (Bogdanor 2003: 190). Devolution was then shelved.

### *The 1997 devolution referendums*

Devolution came back in the political debate in Scotland and Wales in a context of the Conservative domination of Westminster during Margaret Thatcher's premiership, which contrasted with Labour's electoral domination in both regions. The Conservatives also displayed a particular disregard for the political traditions and a strong lack of sensitivity with the peripheries of the union, exemplified by the government's decision to implement the poll tax in Scotland a year before it was introduced in England and Wales (Bogdanor 2003: 196).

The Labour party had remained in favour of devolution throughout the 1980s, mostly with regard to Scotland, but the issue still had some opponents inside the party. It is only at the end of that decade that Labour renewed its proposals for devolution in Wales. In 1992 under the leadership of John Smith, a Scot deeply committed to devolution, the party proposed to establish a Scottish parliament, a Welsh Assembly, an elected authority for London and 'a tier of regional government in the English regions' (Dale 2000: 230-1). Since 1989, Labour was participating in the Scottish Constitutional Convention, which also included the Scottish Liberal Democrats, local government officials, members of the trade unions and the church. The Conservatives, who did not support the idea of devolution, did not participate, and the SNP also refused to participate in a discussion that did not consider independence. The goal of the Convention was to place again devolution into Westminster's agenda. It produced two reports that proposed that the new parliament is elected by proportional representation with the additional-member system formula. The Convention did not go as far as ask for tax-raising powers for the new assembly (Bogdanor 2003: 196-8).

**Table 4.1.** Results of the 1997 referendums on devolution in Scotland and Wales

There should be a Scottish Parliament:			
	Votes	% of voters	% of electorate
Agree	1,775,054	74.3	44.87
Disagree	614,400	25.7	15.53
Total	2,389,445	100	60.40
A Scottish Parliament should have tax-raising powers:			
	Votes	% of voters	% of electorate
Agree	1,512,889	63.5	38.24
Disagree	870,263	36.5	22.00
Total	2,383,152	100	60.24
There should be a National Assembly for Wales:			
	Votes	% of voters	% of electorate
Agree	559,419	50.3	25.2
Disagree	552,698	47.7	24.9
Total	1,112,117	100	50.1

Sources: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

After Labour's 1997 general election victory, two referendums were held to ask the peoples of Scotland and Wales whether they agreed to devolution (Table 4.1 above). The Scottish referendum was held first and two questions were asked, one on the creation of a Scottish parliament and one on the tax-raising powers of the parliament. A week later the Welsh people was asked only one question on the establishment of a Welsh assembly. In order to avoid the situation that led to the failure of the 1979 referendum in Scotland, there was no minimal level of support from the whole electorate. Devolution was therefore accepted in Scotland, even though only 44% of the electorate voted in favour of the parliament and a mere 38%

in favour of tax-raising powers. The Welsh referendum was held a week after the Scottish one because its result was uncertain, and the government hoped that the likely positive result of the Scottish vote would influence the Welsh. The Welsh only agreed to the creation of an Assembly by a small margin, with fewer than 7,000 more votes in favour of the Assembly.

#### 4.1.2. *Institutional features of devolution in Scotland and Wales*

##### *The general framework of devolution*

It is true to say that the stakes of the two referendums were very different, as the chosen model of devolution is very asymmetrical. A highly integrative pattern of decentralisation was chosen in Wales, whereas devolution more closely resembles the dual model in Scotland. Devolution is far-reaching in Scotland, more limited in Wales and has bypassed England, by far the largest component of the Union.<sup>12</sup>

Devolution for Scotland and Wales was the result of separate legislations. The separate devolution settlements that created the devolved institutions and organised the division of powers between the centre and the regions were drawn up by the centre. A peculiarity of British devolution is the absence of any constitutional guarantee. The first reason is that the United Kingdom does not have a written constitution. The second reason is that devolution 'seeks to reconcile two seemingly conflicting principles, the sovereignty or supremacy of Parliament and the grant of self-government in domestic affairs to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland' (Bogdanor 2003: 1). Distinct from federalism, devolution does not divide but devolves the supreme power of Parliament (Bogdanor 2003: 3). Devolution is therefore a delegation of power from the centre to the regions (Hoods Philips *et al.* 2001: 89), a transfer and the sharing of powers between governing institutions within a legislative framework (Burrows 2000: 1). As a result, the Westminster Parliament remains sovereign and the only limit to its ability to legislate on devolved issues is political rather than legal (Trench 2004: 167).

Scotland and Wales are financed primarily by a central block grant determined using the so-called 'Barnett formula'. The formula adjusts automatically some elements of public expenditure in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to reflect budget decisions affecting other parts of the country (England). Devised in the late 1970s by Joel Barnett, the then Chief Secretary to the UK Treasury department, it allocates public funding to the component parts of the Union as a proportion of their population. Today, for every increase of public expenditure by £85 on services in England comparable to those contained in the Scottish and Welsh block grants, £10 would be allocated to Scotland, and £5 to Wales (Bogdanor 2003: 243; Swenden 2006: 137). The sums allocated to Scotland and Wales are not dependent on their needs but rather on changes in the level of public expenditures in England.

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<sup>12</sup> In 1997 Labour promised regional assemblies for the English regions that wished to have one but then failed to deliver its pledge. Labour reiterated its promise of voluntary devolution in England in 2001. Referendums were to be held in the regions that wished to have their own assemblies. The negative results of the referendum in the North-East have cast a shadow on the future of other referendums and potential devolution in other regions.

See Hélène Mulholland 'North-East voters reject regional assembly', *The Guardian*, Friday November 4, 2004 <http://society.guardian.co.uk/regionalgovernment/story/0,8150,1343801,00.html>, and also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/iloveny/devolution/postponement/index.shtml> on the postponed referendum in Yorkshire and the Humber.

If this method of allocation is often considered as an argument against the block-grant system, the formula has a number of advantages, starting with consistency and predictability, as the resources available to the Scottish and Welsh devolved authorities do not have to be negotiated with the central government. However, the central government is not obliged to follow this formula, as shown by the UK government's decision to increase the Welsh budget in 2000, whereas the strict application of the Barnett formula would have led to a reduction of this budget. While Scotland and Wales lack fiscal autonomy, this method of financing also gives them a large measure of freedom. The regions are free to spend the money given as a block grant on the areas and services they want (Trench 2004: 173). Scotland and Wales can find additional sources of funding in their control over local authority finances. Part of the block grant, 40% in the case of Scotland, goes to the financing of local authority expenditures. However, the devolved authorities have the power to define their spending priorities, and they could earmark some of these funds for other purposes and therefore increase their own resources.

Finally, as far as intergovernmental relations (IGR) are concerned, the formal processes of co-operation between the central government and the regions are very limited. Intergovernmental relations within the UK are mainly at the executive level. Institutional devices for vertical co-operation exist in the form of the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), which can bring together ministers and/or civil servants from both central and devolved levels. However, they have been little used and often take a rather ritualistic form that carefully avoids any public display of disagreement. Very little discussions actually happen in these meetings, and their formal dispute-solving function tends to be neglected in favour of more informal meetings, in particular between officials. The JMC appears to be too formal and this formality might have given rise to disputes that could be avoided in a more informal setting.

The other reason for the weakness of formal IGR is the political consensus between the central and devolved administrations. Labour has not only formed the British government since 1997 but also the Welsh Executive between 1999 and 2000 and again since 2003. Labour has also been the major partner in Wales between October 2000 and April 2003 and in Scotland since 1999 (in both cases, Labour's coalition partners were the Liberal Democrats). As a result, intergovernmental relations can take a more informal turn, as ministers on both sides of the negotiating table tend to be from the same 'family' (Trench 2004: 176-181). Inter-governmental relations are mediated through the Labour party, which channels informal relations between the governments.

Overall, the participation of the constituent regions of the UK in central decision-making is rather restricted. The British government includes Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales, but neither is selected from or by the corresponding regional government. The role of the Secretaries of State is rather peculiar and can also be confusing: his or her role is to speak 'for the UK government on matters relating to that territory' and to speak 'for the territory on matters on which it had dealings with the UK Government' (Trench 2004: 182). Representing alternatively the UK government and the region depending on the issue at stake, it is hard to see how this can be achieved without problems of legitimacy from a regional point of view. So far, the fact that Labour has been in power at both levels has certainly facilitated intergovernmental relations, but it will become more difficult when there is government incongruence between the national and regional levels. Moreover, both

positions have been somewhat undermined by their downgrading from full-time to 'part-time jobs' in 2003.<sup>13</sup> Just like the regions are not directly represented in Cabinet, neither are they represented in Parliament. The Scottish and Welsh governments and assemblies are not represented in Parliament like the German *Länder* are represented in the *Bundesrat* or, to a more limited extent, the Spanish regions in the Senate. Regional representation in Parliament is made virtually impossible by the asymmetrical character of the devolution process and the absence of any regional government in England.

### *The Scottish devolution agreement*

The Scotland Act 1998 established the Scottish Parliament, which consists of 129 members, and a Scottish Executive elected by the Scottish Parliament from its members. The Parliament is elected by the additional-member system of proportional representation, with 73 members (MSPs) elected in single-member constituencies with the plurality rule and the remaining 56 elected from top-up lists. The 73 members are elected from the 72 Westminster constituencies (before the boundary change of 2005) with Orkney and Shetland being split to form two constituencies. The top-up areas have the boundaries of the regional constituencies used in Scotland for the elections to the European Parliament until 1999 (Bogdanor 2003: 203).

The Parliament is elected for a term of four years. It can be dissolved if a majority of two thirds of the MSPs votes for dissolution or if the Parliament is unable to select a First Minister within 28 days. Unless the dissolution leads to an election within 6 months of the scheduled next elections, the new Parliament is only elected to complete the duration of the previous legislature, and the electoral calendar would remain the same. For instance, the last Scottish elections were held in May 2003. If the Parliament was dissolved before December 2006, the next elections of May 2007 would still be held. On the other hand, if the Parliament was dissolved between December 2006 and May 2007, then the May 2007 elections would be cancelled and the Parliament would be elected for a whole 4-year term.

The Parliament has a period of 28 days to elect a First Minister to lead the Scottish Executive, which is the government of Scotland for all devolved matters. The Scottish Executive should also comprise a number of ministers and junior ministers appointed by the First Minister and two law officers, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland.

The Scotland Act lists the powers retained by Westminster. The main reserved matters are the Constitution and the Union of Scotland and England, foreign affairs and the European Union, defence, immigration and nationality, national security, the civil service, fiscal and monetary policy, rules of market competition, financial services and markets, import and export control, transport not particular to Scotland, energy policy, social security, employment and industrial relations, and election rules (except local government elections, save from the franchise) (see Appendix 3 for a more

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<sup>13</sup> Between October 2002 and January 2008, Peter Hain has shared his responsibilities as Secretary of State for Wales with those of Leader of the House of Commons (June 2003-May 2005), Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (May 2005-June 2007) and finally Secretary of State for Works and Pensions. Today, Paul Murphy is exclusively Secretary of State for Wales. Alistair Darling (June 2003-May 2006) and Douglas Alexander (May 2006-June 2007) have both been Secretary of State for Scotland and Secretary of State for Transport. The current Secretary of State for Scotland, Des Browne, is also Secretary of State for Defence.



complete list of reserved powers). The Scottish Parliament can pass and implement legislation over any matter that is not contained in this list. Scotland is therefore responsible for health services (with a few restrictions), home affairs, local government, education, arts and culture, housing, transport, law and order (but not the courts), agriculture and economic development (Scotland Act 1998). The Scottish Parliament can also pass secondary (or subordinate) legislation as the need might arise from bills passed in Westminster (Pilkington 2002: 108).

The Scottish parliament has very limited fiscal autonomy in the sense that it has little independently raised resources. Most of its funding comes from a block grant from the central government, which the Scottish Executive may spend at its discretion. It has a tax-varying power of 3 percent of the state level of the income tax that has not been used yet. It is therefore very dependent on London for its resources.

### *The Welsh devolution agreement*

The National Assembly for Wales is a 60-member chamber. It chooses a Cabinet (the Welsh Executive) from its members. The National Assembly for Wales is elected for a period of four years with the additional-member system of proportional representation. 40 of its members are elected in single-member constituencies and 20 from regional lists. The single-member constituencies are the Westminster constituencies and the top-up areas are the regions formerly used as constituencies of the European parliamentary elections. Unlike the Scottish Parliament, the Assembly cannot be dissolved.

The Assembly was created as an executive body headed by a First Secretary and Assembly Secretaries, forming its executive committee. The corporate-body structure meant that legislative and executive functions were merged. The British Parliament remains responsible for primary legislation over all aspects of the government of Wales and secondary legislation over all the non-listed matters. The Assembly is only able to pass 'orders, rules and regulations which fill in the details of the framework set out in the primary legislation, the Act of Parliament' (Bogdanor 1999: 255).

It has powers of secondary legislation over the powers previously exercised by the Secretary of State for Wales: economic development, agriculture, education, local government, health and services, the environment, transports, arts and culture (Government of Wales Act 1998: Schedule 2; for a complete list of the fields transferred to the National Assembly, see Appendix 2). The first Transfer of Functions Order included a list of over 5,000 functions that were to be exercised by the Assembly. Unlike Scotland, Wales has been assigned a list of areas of competence, and Westminster has retained competence over the rest, including residual powers. Moreover, the National Assembly has no tax-varying powers and relies entirely on London's block grant, which it may use to define different spending priorities (Webb 2000: 27).

Initially designed as a 'corporate body' in which legislative and executive functions were merged, the National Assembly changed into a parliamentary body, the 'Welsh Executive' became the 'Welsh Assembly Government' in 2001 and the 'First Secretary' became the 'First Minister', like the Scottish First minister (McAllister 2000: 81; Osmond 2003: 18-9). One of the reasons for such a change was that the corporate mode of operation gave the impression that decisions were taken by the National Assembly as a whole, impression that both government and opposition were keen to dispel (Osmond 2004: 48). At the same time, this change allowed the Assembly to function along lines and following methods that were familiar to both the

AMs and the Welsh public, giving the Assembly a clearer profile and better recognition of how it works.

In practice, even though the Assembly only has powers of secondary legislation, its government and Welsh civil servants are actively involved in making primary legislation when Wales' interests are at stake, advising the Secretary of State, drafting proposals and scrutinising the legislative process to ensure the success of the bill (Osmond 2004: 63-4).

## 4.2. The British party system

### 4.2.1. *The Westminster party system*

The British party system has long been described as a classic two-party system. Following Duverger (1976), it was assumed that the single-member plurality (SMP) electoral system used in British general elections encouraged the emergence and then domination of two-party politics. Table 4.2 shows that since 1945, the period characterised by the domination of two political parties is relatively brief: if the combined share of the votes of the Labour and Conservative parties averaged 90% until the 1970s, it dropped below the 80% mark after 1974, reaching the all time low of 67.6% in 2005 and averaging 73.77% over the period 1974-2005. However, the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP), which is based on the parties' share of vote, suggests that the party system was more like a two-and-a-half party system in the 1960s and a three-party system after 1974. After that date, the ENEP went below 3 only once (in 1979) and rose to 3.47 in 2005.

The February 1974 election marked a change in the voting pattern of the British electorate, with better results for the Liberal Party (19.3% of the votes against 7.5% in the previous election). From then on, with the exception of the 1979 election, the Liberals never polled less than 15% of the votes. They managed to pass the 20% mark on three occasions, 1983, 1987 (the SDP-Liberal Alliance years) and 2005. During the same period, the share of the vote of 'others', which includes such diverse parties as regionalist parties in Scotland and Wales, the Green party, UK Independence party (UKIP), increased and reached levels between 5 and 10% nationally.<sup>14</sup> Whereas their share of the vote was between 4 and 6% between 1974 and 1992, it rose to around 9% in 1997 and 2001 and 10.4% in 2005.

Sartori (2005) considers that for a party system to be a two-party system, we should look at the parties' number of seats rather than their share of the vote. The key properties of a two-party system are that two political parties dominate the electoral competition, with each a chance of winning (expectation of alternation) and that one is able to govern alone. A two-party system is then a system in which (1) two parties are in a position of winning the absolute majority of the seats in parliament, (2) one of them manages to win said absolute majority, (3) the winning party wants to party govern alone, and (4) alternation, that is, government turnover, is to be expected (Sartori 2005: 165-7). Over the last 60 years, only two parties have been serious contenders for parliamentary majority. The effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP), which is based on the parties' number of seats, is consistently around 2, reaching an all-time low in 1966 (1.68) and its highest value in 2005.

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<sup>14</sup> The combined national share of the votes of the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru varies between 0.2% in 1945 and 2.5 in 2005, with a maximum of 3.4 in February 1974.

**Table 4.2.** General election results since 1945

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal		Others		Con + Lab	ENEP	ENPP	D
	% Votes	Seats (%)	% Votes	Seats (%)	% Votes	Seats (%)	% Votes	Seats (%)				
1945	39.7	210 (32.8)	47.7	393 (61.4)	9.0	12 (1.9)	3.6	25 (3.9)	87.4	2.53	2.05	11.90
1950	43.3	297 (47.5)	46.1	315 (50.4)	9.1	9 (1.4)	1.5	4 (0.7)	89.4	2.44	2.08	8.79
1951	48.0	321 (51.4)	48.8	295 (47.2)	2.6	6 (0.9)	0.7	3 (0.5)	96.8	2.13	2.05	2.87
1955	49.6	344 (54.3)	46.4	277 (44.0)	2.7	6 (0.9)	1.3	3 (0.5)	96	2.16	2.03	4.16
1959	49.4	365 (57.9)	43.8	258 (41.0)	5.9	6 (0.9)	1.0	1 (0.1)	93.2	2.27	1.98	7.27
1964	43.3	303 (48.1)	44.1	317 (50.3)	11.2	9 (0.9)	1.4	1 (0.1)	87.4	2.53	2.06	8.90
1966	41.9	253 (40.2)	47.9	363 (57.6)	8.5	12 (1.9)	1.7	2 (0.3)	89.8	2.42	1.68	8.44
1970	46.4	330 (52.4)	43.0	287 (45.6)	7.5	6 (0.9)	3.2	7 (1.1)	89.4	2.45	2.07	7.65
1974	37.8	297 (46.8)	37.2	301 (47.4)	19.3	14 (2.2)	5.8	23 (3.6)	75	3.10	2.24	15.51
Feb												
1974	35.7	276 (43.5)	39.3	319 (50.2)	18.3	13 (2.0)	6.7	27 (4.3)	75	3.12	2.25	14.99
Oct												
1979	43.9	339 (53.4)	36.9	268 (42.2)	13.8	11 (1.7)	5.4	17 (2.7)	80.8	2.85	2.15	11.64
1983	42.4	397 (61.1)	27.6	209 (31.2)	25.4	23 (3.5)	4.6	21 (3.2)	70	3.09	2.11	20.50
1987	42.2	375 (57.7)	30.8	229 (35.2)	22.6	22 (3.4)	4.4	24 (3.7)	73	3.06	2.17	17.74
1992	41.9	336 (51.6)	34.4	271 (41.6)	17.8	20 (3.1)	5.8	24 (3.7)	76.3	3.04	2.26	13.56
1997	30.7	165 (25.0)	43.2	418 (63.4)	16.8	46 (7.0)	9.3	30 (4.6)	73.9	3.14	2.11	16.73
2001	31.7	166 (25.2)	40.7	412 (62.5)	18.3	52 (7.9)	9.4	29 (4.4)	72.4	3.24	2.16	18.05
2005	32.4	198 (30.7)	35.2	355 (55.0)	22.0	62 (9.6)	10.4	30 (4.7)	67.6	3.47	2.44	17.12

Notes: '% votes' stands for 'share of the votes'; '*Liberal*' stands for the Liberal Party prior to 1979, SDP-Liberal Alliance in 1983 and 1987, and the Liberal Democrats since 1992; '*Con+Lab*' refers to the combined share of the votes of the two main state-wide parties, the Conservative and Labour parties; '*ENEP*' refers to the effective number of electoral parties and '*ENPP*' stands for effective number of parliamentary parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979)<sup>15</sup>; '*D*' refers to Gallagher's *least squares* index of disproportionality (Gallagher 1991)<sup>16</sup>.

Sources: House of Commons (2003); Electoral Commission (2005a).

<sup>15</sup> The effective number of parties is calculated by the formula:  $\frac{1}{\sum p_i^2}$  with  $p$  the fractional share of

the vote (ENEP) or of the seats (ENPP) (share /100) of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  party. Because the 'others' category is the sum of several party results, the effective number of parties is slightly underestimated. This bias increases as the share of votes or seats of this category increases.

<sup>16</sup>  $D$  is calculated by the formula:  $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i - s_i)^2}$  with  $v$  the share of the votes of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  party and  $s$  the share of the seats of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  party.

Instances of minority government have been a matter of exception in post-war British politics: the election of February 1974 is the only case of an election in which a party did not gain the majority of the seats. The last case of minority government is that of the Major government during the Eurosceptics' revolt between November 1994 and April 1995. As for the condition of the *will* to govern alone, there is only one case when government coalition seemed possible. After Tony Blair's accession to the leadership of the Labour party, there were talks between Blair and Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democratic leader, about a renewed Lib-Lab pact and Liberal participation in government, irrespective of what Labour's majority would be in 1997. Eventually, the sheer scale of Labour's majority on 1 May 1997 and the strong opposition from the Labour backbench meant that this project was not carried out (Dutton 2004:281-286). Overall, one-party government has been the rule of British politics, with regular alternation between the Conservative and Labour parties.

This assessment of the two-party nature of the British system has to be specified for the 1979-1997 period. During this period, the Conservative party managed to govern alone (with the exception of a brief period during which John Major had to rely on the votes of the Ulster Unionists in Parliament) and won 4 consecutive general elections. Four consecutive election victories place this period in the category of predominant-party systems, defined by Sartori as a party system in which 'its major party is consistently supported by a winning majority (the absolute majority of seats) of the voters' for at least four consecutive legislatures (Sartori 2005: 173-4). This does not change the two-party nature of the parliamentary system but shows the lasting electoral domination of one party. All the while, alternation remained possible. Since 1997, the Labour party has dominated British politics and managed to win three successive general elections. Because of the numerical criterion of 4 election victories, the period since 1997 still qualifies as one of competitive two-party system.

The continuation of this two-party domination in Parliament can to a large extent be attributed to the effects of the electoral system. While the ENEP averaged 3.12 over the period 1974-2005, the ENPP averaged a mere 2.21. The rise of the Liberal party and subsequent good electoral showings of the SDP and Liberal Democrats failed to be reflected in their number of seats. The index of disproportionality reflects the bias of single member plurality (SMP) in favour of the main parties and the difficulty for third parties to gain a share of seats in proportion with their share of votes, as it clearly increased after 1974.

The SMP electoral system managed a reasonably proportional distribution of seats in the 1950s and 1960s, when Labour and the Conservatives polled over 95% of the votes and each with over 40% of the votes. As voting patterns started to change, voters increasingly turned to the Liberals or other parties and the two big parties regularly scored under 40% (and as low as 27.6% for Labour in 1983). The electoral system then started to reach high levels of disproportionality. A typical effect of single member plurality is to give a bonus to the party with the biggest share of the vote and produce an even higher share of the seats. This is exactly what happened: between 1979 and 1992, the Conservatives won between 50 and 61% of the seats with shares of the vote between 41.9 and 43.9%. Likewise, the Labour party won the 1997 election with 43.2% of the votes and received 63.4% of the seats. In 2005, it received 55% of the seats with a mere 35.2% of the votes.

The big losers of the SMP system are the Liberals. They systematically see a large gap between their share of the vote and share of the seats. For example, in February 1974, they won 2.2% of the seats with 19.3% of the votes, and in 1983 they won 3.5%

of the seats with 25.4% of the votes. They received their highest share of the seats in 2005 (9.6%) with 22% of the votes.

#### *4.2.2. The Scottish and Welsh party systems for Westminster general elections*

This section describes the Scottish and Welsh party systems for Westminster elections and then analyses the results of the 1999 and 2003 elections to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales. It focuses on the specificities of each party system compared to national electoral trends and voting patterns. Finally, it discusses the nature of the Scottish and Welsh elections as elections in their own right or as second-order elections.

##### *The Scottish party system*

The Scottish party system has changed to a quite considerable extent since 1945, and it now displays rather different characteristics than that of the UK party system. These differences are principally of two kinds: first, Scottish voters have displayed different patterns of electoral behaviour, with electoral results often different from the national ones. At the same time, the politicisation of the issue of national identity has led to the formation of an additional political party, the Scottish National Party.

The electoral results of general elections in Scotland show distinct patterns of voting. First and foremost, table 4.3 documents the continuous decline of the Conservative party and the domination of the Labour party. Until the 1960s Scottish voters voted like the rest of the country. They started to diverge with the 1970 election, when they gave the majority to the Labour party, while the Conservative won the majority nationwide. By then, the Conservative party already polled under 40% and had lost votes in every election since 1955. This decline went on unabated in the following years. During the Thatcher and Major years of Conservative government, the Scottish Conservatives' share of the vote lost another 6 points and they polled as low as 15% in the 2001 and 2005 elections. They failed to return a single MP from Scotland in 1997, and returned only one MP in the last two elections. At the same time, the share of Labour's vote remained high, varying between 36 and 50%. The party had its worst results in the 1983 election, following the national trend, but it recovered faster in Scotland than in the rest of the country.

Table 4.3 also shows that the electoral system has produced increasingly disproportional results since 1964 and that this disproportionality has been to the exclusive advantage of the Labour party. With between 35 and 50 % of the votes, Labour has systematically won over 55% of the seats and up to over 75% in 1997 and 2001. This disproportionality becomes apparent when we compare the ENEP and the ENPP: while the ENEP has been increasing over the whole period and has been over 3 since 1974, the number of parliamentary parties has on the contrary decreased, going under 2 in each election after 1987. The Gallagher index confirms this increasing disproportionality of the results in Scotland.

The rise of the ENEP is in part a reflection of the revival of the Liberal movement. Scotland almost gave 25% of the votes to the SDP in 1983, and the party has followed the national trend in vote share since then. The Liberal Democrats have achieved better results than the Conservatives in the last two elections and have received a fairer share of the Scottish seats than the Tories.

**Table 4.3.** General elections results in Scotland, 1945-2005

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal		SNP		Others		Con+ Lab	ENEP	PENPP	D	L
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats					
1945	40.3	27	47.9	37	5.6	0	1.3	0	4.9	7	88.2	2.52	2,35	6.36	3.44
1950	44.8	31	46.2	37	6.6	2	0.4	0	2.0	1	91	239	2.16	5.05	2.545
1951	48.6	35	47.9	35	2.7	1	0.3	0	0.5	0	96.5	2.14	2.06	2.03	0.99
1955	50.1	36	46.7	34	1.9	1	0.5	0	0.9	0	96.8	2.13	2.05	1.25	1.125
1959	47.2	31	46.7	38	4.1	1	0.8	0	1.2	1	93.9	2.26	2.09	5.76	4.1
1964	40.6	24	48.7	43	7.6	4	2.4	0	0.6	0	89.3	2.45	2,06	9.95	6.685
1966	37.6	20	49.9	46	6.8	5	5.0	0	0.7	0	87.5	2.52	1.98	13.66	9.415
1970	38.0	23	44.5	44	5.5	3	11.4	1	0.6	0	82.5	2.79	2.04	14.83	11.55
1974 F	32.9	21	36.6	40	7.9	3	21.9	7	0.6	0	69.5	3.37	2.40	16.69	19.69
1974 O	24.7	16	36.3	41	8.3	3	30.4	11	0.3	0	61	3.42	2.44	18.73	27.26
1979	31.4	22	41.5	44	9.0	3	17.3	2	0.8	0	72.9	3.24	2.07	18.09	20.09
1983	28.4	21	35.1	41	24.5	8	11.8	2	0.3	0	63.5	3.60	2.37	19.25	17.96
1987	24.0	10	42.4	50	19.2	9	14.0	3	0.3	0	66.4	3.40	1.93	22.05	24.16
1992	25.6	11	39.0	49	13.1	9	21.5	3	0.8	0	64.6	3.56	1.99	24.97	23.96
1997	17.5	0	45.6	56	13.0	10	22.1	6	1.9	0	63.1	3.28	1.58	27.73	22.2
2001	15.6	1	43.3	55	16.3	10	20.1	5	4.7	1	58.9	3.56	1.66	27.28	20.62
2005	15.8	1	39.5	41	22.6	11	17.7	6	4.4	0	55.3	3.77	1.89	24.40	21.82

Notes: 'votes' stands for 'share of the votes' (%); 'Liberal' refers to the Liberal Party prior to 1979, SDP-Liberal Alliance in 1983 and 1987, and the Liberal Democrats since 1988; 'Con+Lab' refers to the combined share of the votes of the main two state-wide parties, the Conservative and Labour parties; 'L' refers to the Lee index of regional distinctiveness (Hearl, Budge and Pearson 1996: 169).<sup>17</sup>

Sources: House of Commons (2003); Burnside, Herbert and Curtis (2003); Electoral Commission (2005a).

The increase in the value of the ENEP also reflects the fact that Scotland counts one important party that hardly registers at the national level but plays an important role in the Scottish political arena, the Scottish National Party. Founded in 1934 from the merger of two small nationalist parties, the SNP's *raison d'être* was Scottish self-government (Garner and Kelly 1998: 285-7). With regard to the issue of Scottish independence, the party has been divided between a moderate wing, willing to accept devolution as a first step in the direction of self-government, and the hard-liners, who would not accept any reform to Scotland's government short of independence. After a period of opposition to Europe, the SNP has now adopted a position in favour of 'independence within a Europe of nations' (SNP 2003).

The party saw a sharp increase in its share of the vote in the 1974 elections. Its share of the vote decreased in the aftermath of the failure of the 1979 devolution referendum. It passed the 20% mark again only in 1992, only to fall back to 17.7% of the votes in 2005. It seems that devolution has not played in the party's favour, as its share of the vote has decreased again after 1997. The party is supported in its efforts by a strong feeling of regional identity.

<sup>17</sup> The Lee index of regional distinctiveness is calculated as one-half of the aggregate of (absolute value) differences in levels of party support between the national and regional voting for national elections and measures the extent to which regional election results are different from the national aggregate results (Hearl, Budge and Pearson 1996: 169).

**Table 4.4.** Feeling of Scottish national identity: (%)<sup>18</sup>

	1992 #	1997 #	1999	2000	2001 #	2001	2003	2005#
1. Scottish not British	19.2	23.1	32.3	36.9	44.9	35.6	32.2	31.8
2. More Scottish than British	40.1	38.8	34.2	29.7	14.7	30.5	32.5	29.2
3. Equally Scottish and British	32.8	25.9	22.5	21.0	11.3	23.2	22.4	25.4
4. More British than Scottish	3.3	4.1	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.0	4.3	4.0
5. British not Scottish	2.7	3.5	3.6	3.9	6.2	3.6	4.1	3.7
6. Other/none	1.1	3.5	3.8	4.9	19.3	3.9	4.5	5.7
n.a./d.n.	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0	0.1

Note: Years marked # refer to BES data.

Sources: British General Election Study 1992, 1997, 2001 and 2005 (<http://www.besis.org>), Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2003 (<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>).

Table 4.4 above reports the results of the so-called 'Moreno question', which identifies the source(s) of the respondents' identity (Moreno 2005a). It shows that the majority of the electorate has a dual identity, identify with varying degree with both Scotland and Britain. The proportion of people with a dual identity has however decreased since 1992, while the proportion of people declaring themselves 'Scottish not British' has increased from just under 20% to over 30%. Overall, the proportion of people declaring themselves only Scottish and primarily Scottish has increased to represent about two thirds of the population.

A number of obstacles come to limit the success of the SNP. One of them is the electoral system. With a rather dispersed vote, the SNP has failed to receive a number of seats in proportion to its share of the vote. With the recent reduction of the number of Scottish MPs following devolution, even with half of the Scottish seats, it would only make 30 MPs. Another obvious obstacle to the success of the SNP is the limited support for independence that prevails in Scotland. Table 4.5 shows below that support for independence of Scotland, whether in or outside of the European Union, has increased significantly over the years but still remains far below the 50% mark.

**Table 4.5.** Constitutional preferences in Scotland, 1997-2004<sup>19</sup>

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Scot not UK not EU	6.0	10.0	11.2	9.5	11.1	9.6	8.8
Scot not UK in EU	10.8	16.7	18.5	18.6	17.8	16.0	21.6
<i>Total independence</i>	<i>16.8</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>29.7</i>	<i>28.1</i>	<i>28.9</i>	<i>25.6</i>	<i>30.4</i>
Scot in UK own tax	38.6	50.8	46.8	53.0	43.3	48.4	41.1
Scot in UK no tax	14.9	8.8	7.6	5.6	8.2	6.8	4.7
Scot in UK no parl	22.1	8.7	11.7	9.1	13.2	12.8	18.1
d.n./n.a.	7.5	5.0	4.2	4.1	6.4	6.3	5.6

Source: Heath *et al.* 1999; National Centre for Social Research 2001, 2002, 2004a and 2004b; Scottish Centre for Social Research 2005 and 2006 (<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>).

<sup>18</sup> Response to the question 'Which of the following statements best describes how you see yourself'

<sup>19</sup> The SSAS question is: 'Which of the following statements comes closest to your view? Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union; Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union; Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has some taxation powers; Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own parliament which has no taxation powers; Scotland should remain part of the UK without an elected parliament.' In the 1997 BES, the question is 'An issue in Scotland is the question of an elected parliament - a special parliament for Scotland dealing with Scottish affairs. Which of these statements comes closest to your view?'. See <http://www.besis.org>

A final problem for the SNP is its close ideological position with the Liberal Democrats. Using expert survey data, Webb shows how in 1997 the SNP and the Liberal Democrats occupy very close policy positions both on the left-right continuum and on the issue of Scottish nationalism (Webb 2000: 19). The main difference between the two parties is their position on independence: the SNP advocates the independence of Scotland, while the Liberal Democrats prefer a federal Britain. The policy space on the left is rather crowded, with the Labour party closer to the centre and with a more moderate position on constitutional reform. On the other hand, the Conservative party stands alone on the right, with a unionist position.

Overall, the Scottish party system displays distinctive traits, as shown by the Lee index of regional distinctiveness (Table 4.3 above). The value of this index remained rather low until the mid-1960s and increased as the Conservative party started to lose ground in Scotland and the SNP became more successful. It has remained relatively stable since the mid-80s, varying between 20 and 25. These results only refer to the Westminster election. Scottish Parliament elections will be analysed after the analysis of Westminster election results in Wales.

### *The Welsh party system*

The Welsh party system also displays some unique characteristics. As in Scotland, the main state-wide parties receive shares of the vote that differ from the state-wide average. In Wales too a political party, Plaid Cymru, tries to attract voters on the basis of a reference to their distinct regional culture and right to regional self-government.

**Table 4.6.** General election results in Wales, 1945-2005

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal		Plaid Cymru		Others		Con + Lab	ENEP	ENPP	D	L
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Lab				
1945	23.8	4	58.6	25	14.9	6	1.1	0	1.6	0	82.4	2.37	1.81	12.78	17.77
1950	27.4	4	58.1	27	12.6	5	1.2	0	0.7	0	85.5	2.33	1.68	16.65	16.63
1951	30.8	6	60.5	27	7.6	3	0.7	0	0.3	0	91.3	2.14	1.67	14.32	17.43
1955	29.9	6	57.6	27	7.3	3	3.1	0	2.1	0	87.5	2.34	1.67	15.68	19.73
1959	32.6	7	56.4	27	5.3	2	5.2	0	0.5	0	89	2.33	1.66	16.55	17.5
1964	29.4	6	57.8	28	7.3	2	4.8	0	0.6	0	87.2	2.34	1.57	17.14	18.18
1966	27.9	3	60.7	32	6.3	1	4.3	0	0.9	0	88.6	2.21	1.25	24.61	16.59
1970	27.7	7	51.6	27	6.8	1	11.5	0	2.4	1	79.3	2.77	1.66	19.56	19.89
1974 F	25.9	8	46.8	24	16.0	2	10.8	2	0.6	0	72.7	3.09	2.0	16.45	18.83
1974 O	23.9	8	49.5	23	15.5	2	10.8	3	0.2	0	73.4	2.96	2.14	12.54	19.06
1979	32.2	11	47.0	21	10.6	1	8.1	2	2.2	1	79.2	2.92	2.29	9.95	16.94
1983	31.0	14	37.5	20	23.2	2	7.8	2	0.4	0	68.5	3.37	2.39	17.15	16.80
1987	29.5	8	45.1	24	17.9	3	7.3	3	0.2	0	74.6	3.05	2.20	15.73	20.56
1992	28.6	6	49.5	27	12.4	1	8.9	4	0.6	0	78.1	2.86	1.84	19.10	22.57
1997	19.6	0	54.7	34	12.3	2	9.9	4	3.4	0	74.3	2.75	1.36	26.14	19.95
2001	21.0	0	48.6	34	13.8	2	14.3	4	2.3	0	69.6	3.12	1.36	30.55	20.63
2005	21.4	3	42.7	29	18.4	4	12.6	3	4.9	1	64.1	3.57	1.83	24.33	19.8

*Notes:* 'votes' stands for 'share of the votes' (%); 'Liberal' stands for the Liberal Party prior to 1979, SDP-Liberal Alliance in 1983 and 1987, and the Liberal Democrats since 1992; 'Con+Lab' refers to the combined share of the votes of the main two state-wide parties, the Conservative and Labour parties.

*Sources:* House of Commons (2003); Electoral Commission (2003c); Electoral Commission (2005a).

Labour has been Wales' most successful party in every election since 1945, with shares of the vote varying between 37.5 and 60%. Over the period, Labour has



received on average 51.9% of the vote, but since 1970 the party has polled over 50% of the vote only once (in 1997). Its share of the vote fell to 42% in 2005, which is still 10 points above the state-wide results. As a consequence of the Westminster electoral system, these large shares of the vote were transformed in even larger shares of the seats. In its worst year (1983, when it received 37.5% of the votes), Labour still won 20 out of 38 possible Welsh seats. In 1997 and 2001, it won 89.5% of the seats with respectively 54.7 and 48.6% of the votes.

This disproportionality is reflected by the high values of the Gallagher index, which has been higher in Wales than at the state-wide level in all but 4 elections. The difference between the number of electoral parties and the number of parliamentary parties is particularly telling. The ENEP rose from slightly over 2 to 3 over the whole period, but at the same time the ENPP has had a value under 2 in every election, save for the period 1974-1992. This clear bias in favour of Labour is also reflected in the results of the other parties, as they all compete for a small share of the seats.

While the Conservative party has been losing ground since the 1950s in Scotland, the party has always been weak in Wales, arriving in second place in each and every election since 1945. The Welsh Conservatives achieved their best electoral results in 1979 but even then they failed to attract a third of the Welsh electorate. Like at the national level, they had their worst results in 1997, when they failed to return a single MP from Wales. The party failed again to win a single seat in 2001 but returned 3 MPs in the last election. Wales has always been a challenging territory for the party, and it was often a place where promising Conservative candidates were sent to in order to 'toughen up' before being sent to more winnable parts of the country (Jones and Trystan 2000: 4).

Wales also has a nationalist party, Plaid Cymru (The Party of Wales). Founded in 1925, the party started as a movement for the defence and promotion of the Welsh language and culture, only occasionally moving into politics. After 1945, *Plaid Cymru* became a social democratic party committed to self-government for Wales. Today the party campaigns on a left-wing, green and nationalist platform (Cunningham, 1998: 190-2) and, like the SNP, advocates 'self-government in Europe', sometimes shying away from using the word 'independence' by fear of frightening the Welsh electorate, which is in its majority against independence (see table 4.7 below).

**Table 4.7.** Constitutional preferences in Wales, 1997-2003

	1997 <sup>#</sup>	1999	2001	2001 <sup>#</sup>	2003
Independent	4.5	4.2	5.0	6.0	6.1
Independent in EU	9.2	5.4	6.5		7.5
<i>Total independence</i>	<i>13.7</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>13.6</i>
In UK parl/assem own tax	36.3	35.4	37.1	42.5	35.5
In UK assembly no tax	15.6	34.1	24.8	20.7	25.7
<i>Total devolution</i>	<i>51.9</i>	<i>69.5</i>	<i>61.9</i>	<i>63.2</i>	<i>61.2</i>
In UK no assembly	22.8	17.8	22.5	24.0	20.6
d.n./n.a.	11.6	3.1	4.2	6.8	4.6

*Note:* Years marked # refer to BES studies.

*Sources:* Heath *et al.* 1999; Clarke *et al.* 2003<sup>20</sup>; Jones *et al.* 2000, 2002 and 2004.

<sup>20</sup> The BES question was 'Which of these statements comes closest to your view... Wales should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union, Wales should be independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union, Wales should remain part of the UK but with its own elected assembly which has **some** taxation powers, Wales should remain part of the UK but

Table 4.7 illustrates the ambivalence of the Welsh *vis-à-vis* devolution and how little devolution has changed people's preferences. Over a third of the respondents would prefer a parliament with its own tax-raising powers like in Scotland. The proportion of respondents who declare that they would prefer Wales to be governed from Westminster is much higher than in Scotland. The weakness of the Welsh pro-devolution movement is not a new phenomenon. Jones and Scully (2003: 3) qualify the Welsh engagement with the issue as both 'shallow' and 'narrow', and they point to a number of reasons, from the 'culturalist' focus of Plaid Cymru to Labour's traditional lack of interest in devolution in Wales, and the absence of a separate constitutional history like in Scotland. Plaid Cymru also faces an electorate in which a high proportion of respondents declare themselves to be 'British not Welsh' (between 10 and 15%, against 3 to 4% in Scotland).

**Table 4.8.** Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself? ( %)

	1997 #	1999	2001 #	2001	2003	2005#
Welsh not British	13.2	17.8	16.2	23.3	21.4	16.0
More Welsh than British	29.1	19.6	21.7	22.0	25.4	18.9
Equally Welsh and British	25.8	34.9	31.1	19.0	29.8	32.7
More British than Welsh	10.4	7.4	8.8	11.1	8.7	10.7
British not Welsh	15.4	13.7	18.2	11.1	8.9	14.0
Other/none	5.5	6.2	3.5	3.5	5.7	7.6
n.a./d.n.	0.5	0.4	0.4	0	0.2	0.1
Sample size	182	796	488	1085	988	773

Note: Years marked # refer to BES data.

Source: Heath *et al.* 1999; Clarke *et al.* 2003 and 2005; Jones *et al.* 2000, 2002 and 2004.

The share of people who feel predominantly Welsh is lower than in Scotland, where it is close to two thirds of the population. In Wales, this proportion varies between 35 and 45%, and the proportion of people with a dual identity is high. Plaid Cymru is therefore challenged by the weakness of the exclusively Welsh identity. Moreover, in its programme it emphasises the issue of language in spite of the fact that only 25% of the Welsh population speaks Welsh (British General Election Study 2001).<sup>21</sup> Its heartland is the centre and eastern parts of Wales, where most of the Welsh-speaking population is concentrated.

Like the SNP, Plaid Cymru also suffers from the electoral system and the domination of Labour in Wales. Webb illustrates how the Welsh party system closely resembles the Scottish one, with Plaid Cymru replacing the SNP (Webb, 2000: 28-9). In Wales, 'the left [...] is quite a crowded place' (interview with Rob Humphreys). Plaid Cymru is a nationalist left-wing party, very close in the policy space to the Liberal Democrats, the main difference lying in their position with regard to independence. The Welsh Labour party is at the centre of the policy space, and the Conservative party is alone on the right, with a unionist position.

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with its own assembly which has **no** taxation powers, or, Wales should remain part of the UK **without** an assembly?'. In 2001, the question was: 'Which of these statements comes closest to your view? Wales should become independent, separate from the UK, Wales should remain part of the UK, with its own elected assembly that has some taxation powers, Wales should remain part of the UK, with its own elected assembly that has no taxation powers, Wales should be part of the UK without an elected assembly?'

<sup>21</sup> Question BQ102A 'Can you speak Welsh?': 25.0% Yes, 75.0% No. <http://www.besis.org>

*Elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales: the electoral system*

As a result of the bargaining of the Scottish Constitutional Convention, Labour had agreed to introduce PR for the election of the devolved institutions. The chosen electoral system is the compensatory additional-member system (AMS). This is a mixed-member system of proportional representation in which a number of assembly members are elected nominally by first past the post and the remaining members are elected from regional lists in top-up areas (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001: 10). It combines the geographical link between citizens and their elected officials of the constituency system and the proportionality of the list system. Table 4.9 below describes the distribution of constituency and top-up seats for the elections of the Scottish and Welsh devolved assemblies.

**Table 4.9.** Composition of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly

	All seats	Constituency seats	Top-up areas	Top-up seats	District magnitude <sup>22</sup>	TU seats as % of all
Scottish Parliament	129	73	8	56	7	43.4
National Assembly	60	40	5	20	4	33.3

Source: Bogdanor 2003: 203 and 210.

In Scotland and Wales, the top-up seats are used to compensate the disproportionality of the plurality rule of the nominal ballot with a seat linkage (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005: 5, 12-3; Shugart and Wattenberg 2001: 13-6). Figure 4.1 provides a fictional example of the allocation of top-up seats in a compensatory AMS electoral system.

The system works in the following way: voters have two votes, one to elect a constituency candidate and one for a closed list in their region. Constituency seats are allocated first. The votes for each regional list are then counted and divided by the number of seats won in the first ballot in the region plus 1. The list with the highest ratio wins the first seat, then its number of votes is divided by its number of seats plus 1, and the party with the highest ratio wins the second seat, etc. until all the seats are allocated. The parties that win a large number of constituency seats are 'penalised' in the second ballot, as their ratio starts with the highest divisor.

**Figure 4.1.** Example of distribution of top-up seats under the AMS electoral system

30 seats are to be allocated, 20 with first past the post, and 10 in the regional, top-up (TU) list ballot.												
Distribution of seats after the constituency ballot:												
Party A: 3 seats; Party B: 5 seats; Party C: 11 seats; Party D: 1 seat.												
Number of votes in the second ballot:												
A: 200,000; B: 300,000; C: 500,000; and D: 200,000.												
The winning party of each round is highlighted in the table below.												
seat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TU seats	Total seats
A	50000	50000	50000	40000	40000	40000	40000	33333	33333	33333	2	5
B	50000	50000	50000	50000	42857	37500	37500	37500	37500	33333	2	7
C	41666	41666	41666	41666	41666	41666	38461	38461	35714	35714	2	13
D	100000	66666	50000	50000	50000	40000	40000	40000	33333	33333	4	5

<sup>22</sup> Gallagher and Mitchell (2005: 16) claim that 'higher-tier seats would need to amount only to a third of the total number in order to ensure something close to full proportionality when the lower-tier seats are filled with SMDs'. In this case, district magnitude is determined by the higher tier (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005: 17).

the deviation from disproportionality. For plurality system, deviation from disproportionality can be estimated at 25% (Taagepera and Shugart 1989: 110). With one third of the seats allocated to the higher-tier in Wales and above 40% in Scotland, the two systems are likely to be very proportional. The effect of district magnitude should also be taken into account. With district magnitudes of respectively 4 and 7, Scotland and Wales have comparatively low district magnitude (compare to Germany's magnitude of 41 for instance). With a district magnitude of 4, Wales has an effective threshold of 15%, and Scotland has an effective threshold of 9.375% with a district magnitude of 7.<sup>23</sup> Such effective thresholds make it relatively easy for medium-size parties to obtain representation but still represent a hurdle for the smallest parties. In any case, it makes it uneasy for a single party to win a majority of the seats.

*Are Scottish and Welsh elections second-order elections?*

A first factor to consider when evaluating the relative importance of a regional electoral contest in relation to the national general elections is the electoral cycle. Electoral cycle theory assumes that the timing of the elections to the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament in the overall electoral cycle and in particular in relation to Westminster general elections is crucial for the significance of the regional ballots. The two Scottish and Welsh general elections have taken place in the middle of the electoral cycle: general elections have occurred every four years since 1997, and the Scottish and Welsh elections have taken place in between, also every four years.

**Figure 4.2.** Electoral cycle, 1999-2005

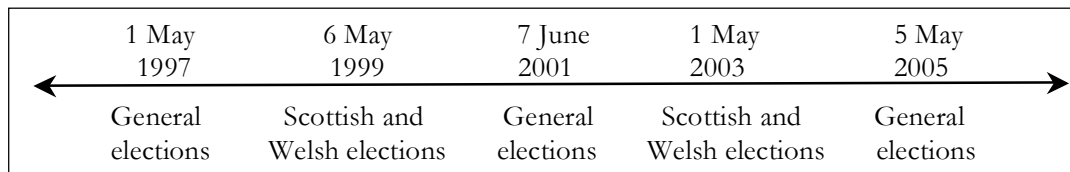


Figure 4.2 illustrates this regular alternation of general and regional elections. Elections occurring close to the mid-term point are assumed to represent an opportunity for opposition parties to transform regional elections into a referendum on the performance of the national government and government parties are expected to perform poorly (Pallarés and Keating 2003). It is also assumed that when regional elections happen together they take a national dimension. Taken together, the fact that the Scottish and Welsh elections are *horizontally simultaneous* and that they are in the middle of the electoral cycle suggests that regional elections should be rather nationalised and display elements of second-orderness, characterised by low turnout levels, poor electoral performance of the party in power at the national level and stronger results for opposition and small parties.

A first indicator of the second-order nature of regional elections is the level of turnout. It is assumed that in second-order elections, turnout rates will be lower than in first-order elections. Table 4.10 compares turnout rates for Westminster and devolved elections with European Parliament elections, which are the second-order election *par excellence*. The data show that turnout in devolved elections has been lower than in Westminster elections and has steadily decreased between the 1997 referenda

<sup>23</sup> The formula to calculate the effective threshold is  $T = \frac{75}{M + 1}$ , with  $T$  the effective threshold and  $M$  the district magnitude (Lijphart 1999: 153).

and the 2003 elections, even though there also seems to be a downward trend in turnout at the UK level. In Wales, even more people voted in the 2004 European elections than in the 2003 Welsh Assembly elections.

**Table 4.10.** Turnout in Scotland and Wales, 1997-2005

	General election 1997	Referendum 1997	Devolved election 1999	EU election 1999	General election 2001	Devolved election 2003	EU election 2004	General election 2005
Scotland	71.3	60.4	58.3	24.7	58.2	46.8	30.7	60.8
Wales	73.5	50.1	46.3	29.0	61.6	38.1	41.9	62.6
UK	71.4			24.0	59.4		38.8	61.4

*Notes:* The turnout rates given for the devolved elections refer to the regional ballot.

*Sources:* House of Commons (2003); Electoral Commission (2005b); <http://www.europarl.org.uk/guide/Gelectionfacts.htm> (UK Office of the European Parliament).

Both sets of elections display a number of common characteristics (table 4.11 below). Labour, the party in power in London in 1999 and in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff in 2003, remained the first party in Scotland and Wales. However, it performed relatively badly when compared to the general elections. In Wales, Labour lost 19.3 points between 1997 and 1999 and 12 points between 2001 and 2003.

In Scotland, the party's losses were also important: 12 points in 1999 and 13.9 points in 2003. The electoral system placed the party in a minority situation in 3 out of 4 elections, the exception being Wales after the 2003 election. In Scotland, Labour chose to enter a coalition together with the Liberal Democrats, while in Wales the party chose to run a minority government after two and a half years of coalition.

**Table 4.11.** Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly election results, 1999 and 2003

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal Dem.		SNP/PC		Other		Con + ENPENPP D					
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Lab					
Scotland	1999	15.4	18	33.6	56	12.4	17	27.3	35	11.3	3 <sup>24</sup>	49.0	4.09	3.35	8.70	
			(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 <sup>25</sup>	45.0	5.53	4.23	9.51	
		(3+15)	(46+4)	(13+4)	(9+18)	(2+15)										
	Change	+0.2	-	-4.2	-6	-0.6	-	-6.4	-8	+10.0	+14	-4	+1.44	+0.88	+0.81	
Wales	1999	16.5	9	35.4	28	12.5	6	30.5	17	5.1	0	51.9	3.83	3.02	8.4	
			(1+8)	(27+1)	(3+3)	(9+8)										
	2003	19.2	11	36.6	30	12.7	6	19.7	12	8.4	1 <sup>26</sup>	55.8	4.27	3.0	11.63	
		(1+10)	(30+0)	(3+3)	(5+7)	(1+0)										
	Change	2.7	+2	+1.2	+2	+0.2	-	-10.8	-5	+3.4	+1	+3.9	+0.44	-0.02	+3.23	

*Notes:* The share of the vote refers to the regional ballot. The figures in parentheses are respectively for the number of constituency MSPs/AMs and regional (top-up) MSPs/AMs.

*Source:* House of Commons (2003).

<sup>24</sup> The three 'other' MSPs are Dennis Canavan, who campaigned as an independent in the Falkirk West constituency after the Labour party, for which he had been an MP since 1974, rejected his candidacy; Tommy Sheridan for the Scottish Socialist party; and Robin Harper for the Scottish Green party.

<sup>25</sup> The 'other' MSPs are 7 for the Scottish Green party, 6 for the Scottish Socialist party, 1 MSP elected for the Scottish Senior Citizens party, Dennis Canavan and Jean Turner, both independents elected in a constituency seat.

<sup>26</sup> John Marek Independence party. John Marek, Labour MP for Wrexham from 1983 to 2001 and Labour AM 1999-2003, stood as an independent candidate after Labour deselected him in 2003.

However, the other two state-wide parties have benefited very little from Labour's weakness in terms of votes. In Scotland the Conservative party lost another 2 points between 1997 and 1999 and maintained its score in the next round of elections, while the Liberal Democrats lost 0.6 point between 1997 and 1999 and 4.5 points between 2001 and 2003. In Wales, the Conservative party also failed to increase their share of the votes (it lost 3.1 and 1.8 points) and the Liberal Democrats gained a mere 0.2 point in 1999 but lost 1.1 point in 2003. The different electoral system nevertheless allowed both parties to gain representation in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. This allowed the Conservative party to regain political visibility in Scotland and Wales, two years after they had failed to gain any single MP in both regions. In Scotland, the Conservatives won all their seats through the regional ballot in 1999 and all but 3 in 2003, while the Liberal Democrats managed to win 17 seats, mainly through the constituency ballot. In Wales, the Conservatives only won one of their seats (9 in 1999 and 11 in 2003) through the constituency ballot, and the Liberals won 6 seats in both ballots, have of which from the regional ballot.

In the 1999 election, the nationalist parties obtained a share of the vote that was significantly higher than what they had previously won. With 28% of the votes, the SNP failed to repeat its October 1974 results but came close, gaining 5.1 points compared to 1997. Plaid Cymru saw a bigger increase in its share of the vote, as it went from 9.9% to 30.5%. Both parties failed to repeat this success in the 2003 election, when they both lost ground. The SNP repeated its score of the 2001 general election (-6.4 points compared to the 1999 election) and Plaid Cymru won 5.4 points compared to 2001 but lost 10.8 points to 1999, when it performed much better than it had itself expected (McAllister 2004: 74).

**Table 4.12.** Index of dissimilarity for Scotland and Wales, 1997-2005

	Scotland	Wales
1997-1999	14.35	23.3
1999-2001	13.5	18.75
2001-2003	18.6	13.2
2003-2005	21.3	12.3

Table 4.12 records the level of divergence of the Scottish and Welsh elections compared to the general elections that came before and after.<sup>27</sup> It appears that in 1999 the Welsh electorate deviated more in its voting pattern than the Scottish electorate, while the Scottish electorate voted most differently in 2003. The increase in the Plaid Cymru vote explains most of the divergence in voting behaviour in Wales. The main difference in 2003 is the number of MSPs from small parties, whereas the Welsh party system has remained the same as for Westminster elections, with the three state-wide parties and Plaid Cymru. In the 2003 Scottish election, the Scottish Green party won 7 seats (compared to only one in 1999), the Scottish Socialist party 6 seats (+5) and two independents managed to win constituency seats.

The issue of the stakes of devolved elections and of their perception by the electorate is not easy to calculate. A first way to consider the stakes of the election is to look at the respective powers of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh National

<sup>27</sup> The index of dissimilarity compares the results of a general election in a region with the results of the election to the regional parliament of that same region nearest in time to the regional election (Jeffery and Hough 2003: 209). It is calculated as one-half of the aggregate of (absolute value) differences in levels of party support across the two electoral arenas (Jones and Scully, 2006: 132, n.5).

Assembly. As we saw earlier, the Scottish Parliament has powers of primary legislation over a large range of areas of competence and tax-raising powers, while the National Assembly has powers of secondary legislation over a more limited range of fields and no tax-raising powers. As a result, the stakes appear to be higher in Scotland than in Wales. The higher turnout in Scottish elections seems to confirm this hypothesis.

Survey questions that ask people which institutions they believe have the most influence over the way their region is run is a simple way to measure the relative importance that people give to national, regional, local and European institution, and can be used as a proxy to evaluate the perceived stakes of the devolved elections compared to UK general elections. It can be assumed that people will consider that the stakes are higher when they perceive the institution as having a greater impact on the way their region is governed. The elections to the most influential institution should then be considered as the first-order election. On the other hand, if the institution is perceived as being without influence, then the stakes are deemed to be low.

In Wales most people expected the Westminster parliament to remain the most important institution in 1999 and this position had gained strength by 2003. The National Assembly was considered to be the most important institution for Wales' government by 30% in 1999 and by only 21% in 2003. In Scotland a majority of respondents initially expected the Scottish parliament to become the most influential institution for the government of Scotland. However, by 2003 only one in 6 respondents shared this view and nearly two thirds believed that the Westminster parliament was the most influential institution. In both regions, the majority of people consider that the UK government in London is the most important one, making the UK general elections the first-order elections. The data suggests that there is a strong aspiration to self-government: over 50% of the Welsh respondents and over 2 in 3 respondents in Scotland consider that the devolved institutions should have most influence in the way Scotland and Wales are run.

**Table 4.13.** Most influential institutions in Scotland and Wales, 1999-2003

	Wales						Scotland					
	1999		2001		2003		1999		2001		2003	
	is	ought to be	is	ought to be	is	ought to be	is	ought to be	is	ought to be	is	ought to be
WNA/ SP	30.9	60.4	16.9	53.8	21.4	53.6	41.0	74.2	15.0	74.0	16.6	67.6
UK gov.	44.6	23.4	60.7	25.7	53.4	26.7	38.2	12.3	64.6	14.0	63.7	18.5
Local coun.	11.3	10.9	14.2	16.1	13.5	13.9	7.8	7.6	9.6	8.3	7.6	8.6
EU	6.7	1.1	2.9	0.6	4.4	1.1	4.7	1.6	6.6	1.0	5.4	1.1
d.n./n.a.	6.5	4.1	5.3	3.7	7.4	4.7	8.3	4.4	4.2	2.7	6.8	4.2

*Sources:* National Centre for Social Research 2001 and Scottish Centre for Social Research 2005; Jones *et al.* 2000, 2002 and 2004.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In 1999, the question was 'When the new parliament/National Assembly starts work, which of the following do you think will have most influence over the way Scotland/Wales is run... the Scottish Parliament/Welsh National Assembly, the UK government at Westminster, local councils in Scotland/Wales, or, the European Union?'. In 2003, the question was 'Which of the following do you think will have most influence over the way Scotland/Wales is run... the Scottish Parliament/Welsh National Assembly, the UK government at Westminster, local councils in Scotland/Wales, or, the European Union?'. For the preferred institution, the question started by 'Which do you think ought to have most influence over the way Scotland/Wales is run', giving the same possible answers as before.

Most of the data points in the direction of Welsh and Scottish elections being second-order elections: turnout is much lower in Scottish and Welsh elections than for UK general elections; the governing party sees its share of the vote decrease in devolved elections, though not to the point of slipping from its first position in both regions; smaller parties, in particular nationalist parties, gained a significant number of seats. This is confirmed by the fact that most Scottish and Welsh people consider that Westminster has remained the centre of government in spite of devolution.

The nationalisation of the Scottish and Welsh elections is harder to prove. The combined share of the largest two state-wide parties is just under 50% in Scotland and just over 50% in Wales. In Scotland, the share of the vote and the number of seats of the non-state-wide parties has increased in the second Scottish election, while it lost 7.5 points (but won one seat) in Wales. In terms of the media campaign, there was little of a UK-wide campaign in the sense that the London-based media demonstrated little interests in the Scottish and Welsh elections. In 1999, the UK media focused mostly on Scotland, largely ignoring Wales, where little surprise was expected to happen (Jones and Trystan 2000: 5). In 2003 the campaigns were overshadowed by the war in Iraq and the UK media barely mentioned the Scottish and Welsh elections. Both in Scotland and Wales, the visit of UK leaders, most notably Blair in Wales and Blair and Brown in Scotland, made front-page news, reviving campaigns that were often described as 'lacklustre' and that were dominated by the issue of voter apathy (Institute of Governance Report to the Electoral Commission, 2003: 7 and 35-42; Thomas, Jewell and Cushion 2003: 4 and 18-20). The media campaign can be a major problem in Wales, where the Welsh media are not people's main source of information (Osmond 2004: 67-8).<sup>29</sup> The Scottish media, and in particular the press have a larger readership, and it allows parties to campaign through the Scottish media and develop a Scotland-wide strategy. The problem for the parties in Wales is that the media campaign has little impact on the voters, and parties have to resort to local campaigning and more traditional campaign methods, like canvassing and leafleting (McAllister 2004: 74).

**Table 4.14.** Election issues for the Welsh and Scottish elections

	Wales		Scotland	
	1999	2003	1999	2003
Scottish/Welsh issues	41.7	50.4	52.6	56.6
British issues	31.9	32.2	30.9	25.8
Both equally	20.1	10.9	12.8	12.9
World/war	-	2.5	-	1.3
Other answer	5.2	3.6	1.9	2.3
d.k./n.a.	1.1	0.4	1.8	1.1

*Notes:* non-voters are excluded from all calculations. The answer 'what was going on in the world, war in Iraq' was only possible in 2003.

*Sources:* National Centre for Social Research 2001 and Scottish Centre for Social Research 2005; Jones *et al.* 2000, 2002 and 2004.

By using survey data that records the types of issues (British and/or Scottish/Welsh issues) that prompted people to vote, we can see whether people voted

<sup>29</sup> Osmond (2004: 65-6) reports that the BBC's *Wales Today* news programme recorded its highest rating with half of the available audience (when Alun Michael resigned) and that the Welsh daily press has a daily circulation of around 100,000 which pales in comparison with the circulation of the London-based press, in particular the tabloid press.



primarily on Scottish or Welsh issues or whether they were influenced by the UK political debate and the issues that were important in the UK as a whole at the moment of voting (table 4.14 above). In spite of the relatively low profile campaigns and the high prominence of the war in Iraq and news of the spread of the SARS epidemic, a clear majority of people declared that they voted on Scottish issues. This contradicts the nationalisation argument according to which concurrent regional elections occurring at the mid-term point should become nationalised. Whereas all the state-wide party leaders (Tony Blair, Iain Duncan Smith and Charles Kennedy) visited both regions in 2003, the campaigns were mainly fought on regional or local issues

To conclude, the use of the second-order election theory only partly explains Scottish and Welsh elections. Scottish and Welsh elections did have a lower intensity than Westminster elections, as witnessed by lower turnout rates. However, it is also true that there seems to be a more general trend toward lower electoral participation (McAllister 2004: 81). The lower intensity of these elections is also visible from the stakes that people attributed to the Scottish and Welsh elections. Survey data nevertheless show that Scottish and Welsh voters consider that their regional institutions should have more influence than Westminster, but also that people took Scottish and Welsh issues into account in their voting decision. Again, while it is true that the Labour party has scored lower in Scottish and Welsh elections than in Westminster elections, it seems that the results are specific to this context. Opinion polls on general election voting intentions at the time of the 1999 elections showed that Labour scored high all across the country. People may have therefore shown a 'specific disinclination to support the party [Labour] in this particular electoral contest' (Trystan, Scully and Jones 2003: 648). The level of regional identification appears to have an impact on voting behaviour, as turnout is higher in Scotland than in Wales and people vote more on regional issues in Scotland than in Wales.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the main characteristics of the institutional and electoral framework of the United Kingdom. As a union state in which parties emerged in a context of a centralised system of government, the UK should have engendered quite centralised state-wide political parties. The existence and persistence of regional differences, in the form of cultural particularisms but also via the administrative decentralisation of Scotland, leave open the possibility of intra-party regional differentiation. The asymmetrical form of the devolution settlement should strengthen the differences between Scotland and Wales in the organisation of state-wide parties. In Scotland, the dual form of devolution means that the regional branches are likely to demand more autonomy and assert their difference more than in Wales, where the National Assembly has fewer powers and is still highly dependent on the legislation passed by the Westminster parliament. The fact that regionalism and support for devolution are stronger in Scotland than in Wales is likely to strengthen this trend. Because devolution in Wales follows an integrative pattern, Welsh party branches should be more integrated into the party's central organs than the Scottish branches.

In terms of party competition, the Welsh devolved party system is very comparable to the party system for Westminster elections in the principality. The data shows that the patterns of voting between Welsh and UK elections have become more similar in 2003, while the opposite has occurred in Scotland. There, the party system is quite different, with regionally-based parties achieving representation in the Scottish Parliament. The low level of turnout would tend to support the argument that

Scottish and Welsh elections are second order. The survey data on the importance of the devolved bodies compared to the UK government suggest that voters consider that the UK government remain the most influential level of government. Even though they believe that the devolved institutions should be the most important level of government, their evaluation of the stakes of the devolved elections seems rather low. At the same time, half of the people surveyed in the Scottish and Welsh election studies declared that they voted on regional issues, against 25 to 30% who voted on UK issues. As a result, the second-order nature of Scottish and Welsh elections is difficult to confirm. Again, the most different patterns of voting of Scotland should translate into more demands for independence from the Scottish regional party branches.

Chapter 5 will describe the organisation of the British state-wide parties and will analyse the articulation between the central and regional levels of party organisation of the three main British state-wide parties.

## CHAPTER 5. PARTY ORGANISATION IN THE UK

The British state-wide political parties all have very old historical roots and are very well-institutionalised organisations. Unlike in most European states, where parties are recognised and regulated by law, the United Kingdom does not recognise an official role to its political parties and it has only recently established a register of political parties.

The UK is one of the European countries where the public funding of political parties is the least developed and party finance the least regulated (Casas-Zamora 2005: 19). The regulation of party funding was comprehensively reformed with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act (PPERA) 2000. The 2000 Act established the Electoral Commission, an independent body entrusted among other things with the control of campaign expenditure and donations and the administration of a new subsidy, the policy development grant. The PERA also introduced rules regarding political donations and spending caps (Fisher 2002: 392-3). Party finance still remains relatively unregulated, as there is no cap on donations and very generous spending limits. The PERA nevertheless constitutes a significant improvement with regard to the transparency of party finances.

State-wide opposition parties receive subsidies for their parliamentary activities (Short money in the House of Commons and Cranborne money in the House of Lords). The new Policy Development Grant is also made available to the governing party. There are no electoral subsidies in the UK. The devolved assemblies have developed relatively similar funding schemes, with support to opposition parliamentary groups in Scotland and to all the groups in Wales. The British parties, in spite of their crucial role in the UK and monopoly of representation in Parliament, receive relatively small amounts of public subsidies and must rely on private sources of funding for their extra-parliamentary organisation and campaign activities.

This chapter studies the history and organisation of the Labour party, the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. The formation and recent history of each party is detailed, as well as its main ideological tenets. Then the British organisation is described, with a special emphasis on the processes for the selection of the leader and party candidates for Westminster elections, the role and composition of the main executive party organs, the policy-making process for general elections and the redaction of the general election manifesto, and finally party finance and the distribution of resources between the levels. In each of the state-wide party functions, the role and representation of the regional branches is evaluated. Finally the processes of leadership and selection, candidate selection for Scottish and Welsh elections and policy-making for devolved elections are studied.

## 5.1. The Labour Party

### 5.1.1. History and change in the Labour party

#### *Party formation*

The Labour party was born from the will of the trade unions to achieve representation in Parliament. Keir Hardie's Independent Labour Party joined forces with some trade unions and the Fabian Society in 1900 to form the Labour Representation Committee (LRC), which became the Labour party in 1906. It initially co-operated with the Liberal party, so that the Liberals would reserve thirty constituencies to the Labour party. This continued the co-operation between trade unions and the Liberal party that had started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in industrial constituencies and provided electoral support for the new organisation. However, the Liberal party's failure to integrate working-class interests and its reluctance to select working-class candidates convinced Labour to run alone after 1918 (Ball 1987: 44-5). Labour's share of the vote thereafter rose steadily, eventually relegating the Liberal party into third position.

The party's birth under the auspices of the trade unions, Fabianism and liberalism influenced its doctrine. Labour was born as a moderate party that aimed at improving the living conditions of the working class in the respect of the British constitution and via democratic means. The trade unions' domination of the party also meant that the party was relatively immune to the influence of socialism and to the debates between reform and revolution (Shaw 1996: 3-6). Taylor (1997: 8) argues that 'Labour's ideological identity is fundamentally based on its practical politics'. As a result, most of its internal struggles revolved around the debate between power and principle, that is, between the principle of the defence of working-class interest and office goals (Taylor 1997: 8-9).

**Figure 5.1.** Share of the vote and share of the seats of the Labour party, 1900-2005



Labour officially organised in 1918, when it adopted its constitution, which set its standards of organisation but also included the party's political 'mission statement' in its Clause IV section 4.<sup>30</sup> In organisational terms, the 1918 constitution provided for

<sup>30</sup> "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service' (Ball: 72).

the development of an individual membership together with indirect membership through trade unions and socialist societies, the dominance of the unions in the composition of the conference and the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the establishment of local constituency parties as the basic unit of organisation (Ball 1987: 71). The leader (originally called Chairman) was initially considered as nothing more than the 'mouthpiece' of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) (McKenzie 1955: 301-2). The constitution states that the conference, which is largely dominated by the trade unions, is the sovereign party organ. However, as Michels predicted, a leadership emerged and managed to gain some autonomy from the rest of the party. MacDonald was to be the first to be named leader of the party after Labour formed the official opposition for the first time in 1923, and he enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom in the formation of his Cabinet in 1924 and 1929 (McKenzie 1955: 307-9). However, MacDonald's eventual betrayal of the Labour party in 1931 was to have a lasting effect on the party in terms of trust (or lack thereof) in the leader (Shaw 1996: 8).<sup>31</sup> The dialectics between leadership autonomy and principles of intra-party democracy are still ever present in the Labour party.

### *New Labour: contemporary party organisation and principles*

The transformation of the Labour party into 'New Labour' is the result of a long process that took place during the long years of opposition during the Thatcher and Major premierships. In the immediate years after Thatcher's 1979 victory, the Labour party lurched to the left, changing in the process the way the party selected its leader (by an electoral college rather than by the PLP) and imposing the compulsory reselection of parliamentary candidates, including sitting MPs (Shaw 1996: 163-4).

These changes prompted the departure of some social democrats from the party to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1981. This period of left-wing domination culminated with a second defeat in 1983. Derided as 'the longest suicide note in history', the 1983 manifesto promised full employment, improved public services, re-nationalisation of privatised industries, and withdrawal from the European Community (Shaw 1996: 166). Shaw (1996: 167) argues that the adoption of such a radical programme was a calculated move by the right-wing of the party, who hoped to discredit the left and prove that it was impossible to win on a left-wing platform.

True or not, the new leader Neil Kinnock considered that the party needed to move to the centre if it was to regain power (Taylor 1997: 6). Initially, Kinnock did not have the necessary control over the party to engage in any substantial reform. By 1987, while he had managed to end Trotskyist entryism and forged an alliance with the moderate elements of the left, Kinnock could only compromise with the so-called 'loony left' and the trade unions over the programme. At the same time, he had started to professionalise the party's organisation and campaign machine.

The move to the centre and the 'catch-allisation' of the Labour party were accelerated after the 1987 election. Kinnock launched the Policy Review, which produced four reports that led the way towards the party's right-wing shift. For Taylor (1997: 102), it represented

'a symbolic break from the historic concerns and values of the Labour Party. This suggests that the Review was not merely concerned with issue

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<sup>31</sup> MacDonald and other Labour members of Cabinet joined the so-called 'National Government' with the Liberals and Conservatives, relegating the Labour party in opposition. MacDonald and the other rebels were eventually expelled from the party.

voting, with presenting electable policies, but that it also saw its historic form of party identification, based largely on class, as being redundant'.

The Policy Review adopted an original framework, with policy commissions and at the margins of the party's official policy-making process. Kinnock increased the autonomy of the leadership, reduced the role of the NEC and increased the leader's policy role (Shaw 1996: 191). At the same time, 'the party had [...] come to unite behind the leader in the elusive search for electoral success, and factionalism within the PLP has become far less pronounced' (Garner and Kelly 1998: 137).

After the party's fourth consecutive electoral defeat in 1992, John Smith replaced Kinnock. The new leader launched the Commission on Social Justice, with a brief to review the party's approach toward social justice and social policy in an inclusive manner. However, Smith died before the Commission published its final report. The new leader, Tony Blair, launched a comprehensive process of reform of the party. At a programmatic level, he started by reforming Clause IV of the party's constitution. This change had two interests for a moderniser like Blair: ridding the party of 'outdated' notions such as collective ownership and symbolically signalling to the electorate that Labour was a changed party (Taylor 1997: 169). The reform was adopted via a consultation of the membership, and Blair managed to use his resources as leader to campaign in favour of the change (Taylor 1997: 176-7).

Blair inherited a party in which the influence of the left was much weakened while the leadership has gained considerable autonomy thanks to the introduction one-member-one-vote (OMOV), which effectively marginalised more radical middle-level activists, the reduction of the power of the trade unions, and the development of professionalised communications techniques (Driver and Martell 1998: 13). He extended the use of membership ballots for the adoption of the intermediary document *Road to the Manifesto* and changed the policy-making process (see below).

In terms of policy, New Labour represents for Jones (1996: 149) the culmination of the efforts of the 1950s revisionists to transform Labour into a social democratic party that endorses market economy. The party has now adopted market capitalism, neo-liberal macroeconomics and tax moderation, promising in 1997 to stick to the Conservatives' tax plans (Ludlam 2004: 1-2). These changes were eventually successful, as the party regained office in 1997 and was re-elected in 2001 and 2005. Modernisation became one of the party's key words, as it was to be the way forward to improve British public services. Often, it involved introducing the private sector in the running of public services (Prabhakar 2004: 170-2). A largely shared interpretation of New Labour is to view it as a centre-left version of Thatcherism (Heffernan 2001). It is a mix of social democratic aims, neo-liberal economic recipes and, increasingly, populist stances on law and order and immigration (Smith 2004: 220).

### *5.1.2. Organisation at the central level, state-wide party processes*

In general terms, there are three organisational levels within the Labour party: the constituency associations (constituency Labour parties, CLPs), the regional party offices and the national organisation. In Wales, there is a Welsh Labour party with a Welsh executive, in Scotland there is a Scottish Labour party with a Scottish executive, and there is a regional office with a regional board in each of the nine English regions. In this sub-section, we will only focus on the distribution of powers between the national and regional levels, the powers of the central party organisation over state-wide party processes and the distribution of financial resources across organisational levels.

### *Constitutional guarantee*

The general constitution of the UK party can be amended by the party conference, in which the votes of the affiliated organisations and of the CLPs count for 50% each. In theory, it remains possible for the UK party to decide the distribution of powers between the levels without the involvement and consent of the regional party branches. This means that the Labour party receives a code of 0 for the indicator relating to the revision of its constitution.

The constitution of the Labour party is rather unspecific on the exact distribution of powers between the UK party and the Scottish and Welsh regional party branches. The rules of the regional party branches are determined by the Scottish and Welsh party executives and are approved by the NEC. This translates into a code of 2 for the organisational freedom of the party's regional branches.

### *Selecting the party leader*

The last time the Labour party selected its leader (and deputy leader) was in 1994. Tony Blair was selected by an electoral college composed of three sections with an equal share of the vote. The first section is composed of the *ex officio* members: members of the NEC, of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and European Parliamentary Labour Party, the second of all the individual members of the party, and the third of the members of the affiliated organisations (trade unions and socialist or co-operative societies).

Until 1980, Labour leaders were elected by the party's MPs. Under the impulsion of left-wing activists, a change was initiated in 1981: instead, party leaders would be elected by an electoral college composed of the affiliated organisations (40% of the vote), CLPs (30%) and Labour MPs (30%) (Garner and Kelly 1998: 140). This division into three groups, and the weight of the trade unions, reflect the historical role played by the unions in the creation and support of the Labour party. Nevertheless, some changes have occurred, and the general trend towards less union involvement in the party that started in the 1980s and was confirmed in the 1990s has also affected the procedure for the election of the party leader. As criticisms rose against the extent of the trade union involvement in the party and the block vote, through which union leaders decided for their whole membership, party leaders in the 1990s tried to limit their weight in the party's voting procedure and enforced a system of internal votes of levy-paying trade union members prior to conferences and leadership conventions.<sup>32</sup> One member one vote (OMOV) was imposed to the trade unions in 1993 by John Smith (leader between 1992 and 1994). This rule also applies for the membership section of the party since 1989 (Garner and Kelly 1998: 143). The main effect of OMOV has been to strengthen the leadership's position and a parallel marginalisation of the leadership's critics, in particular the most left-wing faction of the party (Shaw 1996: 190-1).

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<sup>32</sup> Levy-paying members are those members of TUC-affiliated trade unions who have declared that they wanted to pay a 'political levy' to the Labour party. It entitles them to take part in Labour party elections. In 1994, 779,426 levy-payers participated in the election (out of close to 4 million levy-payers eligible to vote) (Garner and Kelly 1998: 144). Today, it is estimated that about a third of trade union members (6.7 millions) pay a levy to the Labour party. See Leader 'Power to the Workers', *Guardian* 12 September 2006

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/conferences/story/0,,1870111,00.html>

At the time of the last election, there was no formal regional input into the election of the party leader. The advent of devolution has led to a change in the composition of the first section of the electoral college, with the addition of the Labour members of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. There is still no formal role for the regional party branches or their leaders in the process. Moreover, the members of the Scottish Parliament and of the Welsh Assembly represent only around a hundred delegates in a much larger group and are outnumbered by the current Westminster Labour representation of over four hundred MPs. Consequently, the regional input in the election of the next Labour leader will be very limited. The weight of the regional parties is likely to be rather limited in the membership ballot as well, as the Scottish membership figures have traditionally been low in spite of the party's electoral strength in the region (Hassan 2004: 4; Lynch and Birrell 2004: 180-2). Besides, the membership section only constitutes one third of the votes.

As so far the selection of the leader has been made by a central party organ, the conference, without any input from representatives of the regional branches or regional executives, the party receives a grade of 0. In the future, the integration of Welsh Assembly members and Scottish Members of Parliament is unlikely to have a significant impact on the vote, unless if the Westminster parliamentary group is particularly small.

#### *Managing the party from the centre: the National Executive Committee*

The party is managed centrally by the National Executive Committee (NEC), which is, according to the party's constitution, the 'administrative authority of the party' (Clause II, art. 1). The NEC counts 32 members, 24 of whom are elected by the party conference. The members elected by the conference are distributed as follows: 6 members are elected by the CLP delegates, 12 by the trade unions, one by the other affiliated organisations (socialist societies, co-operative society, etc.), 2 members by the Association of Labour Councillors and 3 members of the PLP or the European PLP. For each section, provisions are made for the election of at least as many women as men. The remaining 8 members of the NEC are the leader and the deputy leader, the party treasurer, 3 frontbench MPs nominated by the Parliamentary Labour Party and two members elected by respectively the conference of the Young Labour movement and the Black Socialist Society. There is no direct representation of the Scottish and Welsh regional parties or the Labour groups of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly on the NEC. The Celtic fringes can only be represented indirectly, when Scottish and Welsh party members are elected by the constituency parties or the trade unions, or when Scottish or Welsh frontbench MPs are selected by the PLP or the conference.

The NEC is the party's ruling body between conferences. Its functions include making sure that the vote of the conference and the party constitution are respected in the day-to-day administration of the party and that the party has the necessary structure and level of organisation, in particular at constituency level, to run efficient election campaigns. It sets up the candidate panel that is responsible for the making of the list of approved candidates for general elections, ensures that all the constituencies have selected a candidate for the general elections and vets the selection procedure. The central party is also responsible for membership management and recruitment. Party members join at the central level. It is impossible to join the Scottish or Welsh Labour parties (Lynch and Birrell 2004: 181). In addition, the NEC has a policy role. It controls the workings of the National Policy Forum (NPF) and its policy



commissions. The members of the NEC participate in the NPF and in policy commissions. Its policy role has nevertheless been considerably reduced by new policy-making procedures.

The absence of regional representatives in the NEC means that the party receives a code of 0 for the indicator reflecting the involvement of regional branches in the central executive organ.

#### *Candidate selection for general elections*

The party used the need to establish selection rules for the new devolved bodies and the European Parliament to revise the rules for the selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates. Since 1993, locally affiliated trade unions have lost their collective right to vote in constituency sections. Candidates are then selected by postal ballot of the party members of each constituency (Seyd 1999: 388). The review of the selection procedures that took place in 1997 led to an increased role for the leadership and the NEC.

The selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates is now a two-stage process: first, applicants are interviewed by a national selection panel that operates a first screening of the candidates and produces a list of approved candidates from which Constituency Labour parties are strongly encouraged to choose their candidate. Each CLP then makes a shortlist from among the party members who applied to become a parliamentary candidate, and then the candidate is elected by the members of the CLP on the basis of one-member-one-vote. All the candidates elected by the CLPs have to obtain the final approval of the NEC. If the selected candidate is not on the national panel, she will have to be interviewed by the NEC, which can refuse to endorse the candidate and force the CLP to start a new selection procedure.

This first stage serves a number of purposes: to establish that the candidates do share the concerns and values of the party, to make sure that the candidates have the appropriate training, in particular in respect with campaigning techniques and media management, and to encourage the selection of candidates from more diverse social backgrounds as well as to increase the representation of women and ethnic minorities (Shaw 2001: 38).

This process is controlled and implemented by the NEC. The Scottish and Welsh executive committees run the panel interviews on behalf of the NEC, following the rules set out by the NEC (interview with Stuart Clark, Scottish Labour party treasurer). The WEC and the SEC then act in their role of regional office of the national party. For the 2001 election, candidates in a Scottish constituency were interviewed in Glasgow (where the party has its Scottish headquarters) by a panel that comprised a member of the NEC, a Scottish member of the Westminster PLP, a member of the House of Lords and a person with some expertise in PR. While there was a link with Scotland through the presence of a Scottish MP, the Scottish Labour party leadership was not involved in the process (interview with Iain Luke MP). In Wales the regional party only had a role in the last-minute selection of a number of candidates, in particular in a few constituencies in mid-Wales where the party's chances to win were very slim (interview with Michael Penn).

Constituencies are theoretically free to select any applicant included in the panel. In general, the constituency party organises one or several meetings in order to allow the candidates to be introduced to the party members and to provide members with an opportunity to question the various applicants. Finally, party members select their candidate by postal vote. The NEC must approve each selection. It therefore enables

the NEC to make sure that the candidates come from the panel and then vet any candidate that had not gone through the panel interviews. There have been a few cases of disputed candidates, as was the case with Shaun Woodward, a former Conservative MP who switched to Labour in 2000. His selection in the St Helens constituency led to considerable turmoil in the constituency party and even a protest candidate who left the party.<sup>33</sup>

The power of the NEC is even stronger in the case of a by-election. While for a normal election an applicant might be given the campaign and media training deemed necessary the NEC, a by-election candidate should already possess these qualities. As a result, the process is even more centralised in the case of a by-election.

We saw earlier that the NEC is under the influence of the parliamentary party, and the party leadership more in particular. This means that the selection process is very much controlled by the leadership and has become a more centralised process. The regional branches are not involved in the process, and the party therefore receives a code of 0 for the indicator of the regional branches' involvement in candidate selection for general elections.

#### *Making party policy: Partnership in Power, the National Policy Forum and the Conference*

The annual conference is the 'sovereign body' of the party. It elects two thirds of the NEC and it is responsible for amending the party's constitution. It also adopts the party programme and decides the general orientation of the party. Conference delegates with general voting power are mainly appointed by the affiliated trade unions and the Constituency Labour parties. The number of *ex officio* members (without voting power unless they are part of a constituency or trade union delegation) is rather large. It includes the members of the NEC, the PLP, the European PLP, General Secretary of the party and the candidates for Westminster and European elections whose candidatures have been approved by the NEC. The regional parties are not represented directly at the conference for the vote of the national programme. The members of the Labour groups of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly can attend the conference as *ex officio* members without voting power. Scotland and Wales are represented through their constituency delegations, but there appears to be a tendency, more pronounced in Scotland, towards declining levels of interest and presence from both regions.<sup>34</sup> First of all, party conferences are generally held in the south of England, so going to the conference represents for a Scottish, but also for a Welsh delegate a considerable investment in time and money. Moreover, with devolution, a large number of issues discussed in the annual national conference are of no direct concern and consequence to Scotland and Wales. The incentives for Scottish and Welsh delegates to go to the national conference are therefore rather limited.

The conference, a very important time in the political year, represents the image of the party leadership being held accountable to its members and other party sections via their delegates and a time when these delegates meet to decide on party policy.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See BBC News Online "'I'm a Labour Man Now" – Woodward', 14 May 2001  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/newsid\\_1329000/1329410.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/newsid_1329000/1329410.stm)

<sup>34</sup> Ann Black's website: Regarding the 2005 conference held in Brighton, 'Press reports claimed that only two-thirds sent delegates, and Scotland had just 28, including five from a single CLP!' [http://www.annblack.com/nec\\_Oct2005.htm](http://www.annblack.com/nec_Oct2005.htm) (Ann Black has been a member of the NEC since 2000).

<sup>35</sup> 'The traditional theory of Labour's intra-party democracy focused upon the input from below by which resolutions were submitted from affiliated associations, debated at the Sovereign Party

Once a year in September, like the other two state-wide parties, Labour party delegates take over a seaside town to discuss and vote on party policy. Traditionally, the conference represented a unique opportunity for the delegates as representatives of the party at large to measure their strength and authority over a parliamentary party that also asserted its right to decide independently from the party conference. However, this image of intra-party delegation democracy should be mitigated, as the leadership and trade union bosses often agreed beforehand and managed to control conference proceedings while the chances for each delegate to be heard in a debate were often slim.

After the party's third consecutive defeat in 1987, Neil Kinnock embarked on a Policy Review in order to transform the party's policies. One of its conclusions was that the policy-making process also needed to be reformed. The conference was then where policy was proposed, discussed and voted. When the party was divided like in the 1980s, conference easily became a battleground between the warring sections of the party and gave the public the image of a party deeply divided and unfit for government (Seyd 1988: 3). A more consensual policy-making process was therefore preferred by the party leadership, which became the main source of party policy and started to sideline the NEC along with the other party organs (Shaw 1996: 188-191).

The reform started in the early 1990s, with the end of the block vote, the introduction of OMOV, and the reduction of the weight of the trade unions in decision-making (they used to count for 90% of the vote, they now hold 50% of the votes). The idea of a national policy forum in which policy proposals would be discussed all through the year was introduced in 1991 and it started to work in parallel with the conference in 1993, meeting occasionally and advising the NEC (Faucher 1999: 7). Introduced in 1997 after Labour's landslide victory, *Partnership in Power* transformed the conference into an arena where policy was mainly voted rather than discussed. Members, constituency parties and trade unions are consulted beforehand, and new policy is only discussed during conference if a new topic emerges and has not been included in consultation documents. Conference delegates are called in to vote on the consultation documents that are put to them by the NEC. The conference was transformed from an arena of often intense policy debate, public displays of policy divergence or plain disagreement into a much more stage-managed event to demonstrate that the party is united and provide the leadership with an opportunity to explain its policies in front of television cameras (Shaw 2004: 59).

The policies discussed at Conference are policy documents drafted by the National Policy Forum (NPF), a policy-making body created after the adoption of *Partnership in Power* (1997). The NPF is a 180-member strong commission with the function of overseeing the development of a two-year rolling programme. The NPF counts 55 members elected by the CLPs, 30 by the trade unions, the 32 members of the NEC, 22 representatives from the regional parties, 9 MPs, 6 MEPs, 8 members of Government, 9 representatives from local government, and 9 representatives from the socialist societies, co-operative society and Black Socialist Society.<sup>36</sup> The representation of the regional parties is therefore very narrow, while the parliamentary representation

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Conference and then became party policy as a result of the votes of the mandated delegates' (Minkin 1991: 398 – quoted in Faucher 1999).

<sup>36</sup> At its creation, the NPF counted 175 members: 54 elected by constituency parties, 18 elected by regional parties, 30 elected by affiliated trade unions, 9 elected by Labour MPs, 6 elected by Labour MEPs, 8 ministers, 9 elected by local government, 9 elected by socialist societies, the Co-operative party..., 32 members of the NEC (*ex-officio* members).

reaches close to 25 members (MPs, members of Government, the leader and deputy leader, 3 frontbench MPs and 3 members of the PLP or the EPLP from the NEC). The NPF is responsible for establishing a number of policy commissions on particular issues, and these commissions are composed of 3 representatives of the government, 3 representatives of the NEC and 4 representatives of the NPF. During the first year of policy development, a number of policy commissions elaborate draft policy documents, which are then debated in local policy forum by party members, affiliated and external organisations. The views and ideas expressed during these meetings are added to the reports of the policy commissions, which are then presented to the annual conference. The annual conference votes the reports and possible amendments. However, the expression and inclusion of alternative views is made rather difficult by a number of procedural 'gateways' in the hands of the NEC (Shaw 2004: 56).

The second year is an internal process. The documents voted by the conference are amended by the Policy Forum. The membership and affiliated associations can comment on these policy proposals. They can also submit one motion on a topic which is either not substantially addressed in the reports to conference or by the NPF or the NEC, or which has arisen since the publication of these reports. The policy commissions make the final reports with all the contributions. The NEC presents these documents to the annual conference, which votes the programme of the party. The strategic oversight of this process is the responsibility of the Joint Policy Committee (JPC), which is composed of 8 members of the government, 8 members of NEC, 8 members of NPF and 6 *ex officio* members, including the Prime minister, who chairs the committee (Labour 2005a: 48).

The party programme is only a basis for the manifesto. The manifesto is drafted by the Joint Executive Committee, which includes the Prime Minister, Cabinet members and members of the NEC and of the NPF. The manifesto takes the party programme as a starting point. The issues emphasised in the manifesto and in the campaign are chosen by the Cabinet and parliamentary leaderships, informed of the larger party's preferences by the programme voted at Conference.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the main general election manifesto, there are also Scottish and Welsh general election manifestos. These documents have been produced in parallel with the main manifesto for close to 30 years. Whereas they only used to include the sections of the UK manifesto that were of special relevance to either region, they started to be more consequent documents with an emphasis on the impact of the national campaign themes on the region in 1992. With devolution, these regional manifestos have become separate documents that are quite different from the UK manifesto. While they use similar campaign themes, slogans and identical layouts, they cover Westminster issues and how they might affect the region, the way the regional executive sees these policies as developed in the region. It is mainly a shift in emphasis, as the position of the UK party is intended to be the same all over the country.

Regional manifestos for state-wide elections are mainly drafted in the regions by a policy officer of the relevant regional executive, but the ultimate policy responsibility

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<sup>37</sup> See Clause V.2: 'The NEC and the Parliamentary Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) shall decide which items from the party programme shall be included in the manifesto which shall be issued by the NEC prior to every general election. The joint meeting of those two committees shall also define the attitude of the party to the principal issues raised by the election campaign which are not covered by the manifesto'.

for these manifestos rests with the secretary of state (interview with Michael Penn). The regional manifesto is the result of a co-operation with the Scottish or Welsh executives, the NEC and senior Westminster members (interview with Rosemary McKenna MP). The secretary of state and his advisors are heavily involved in the process, and he writes a preface to the document (in addition to the preface written by the party leader). The Scottish and Welsh manifestos nevertheless address the different policies of the regional party and the different needs of the regions, therefore also mentioning policy differences. For instance in Scotland, the 2005 election manifesto contained a number of policies that differed from the policies of the UK party: smoking ban (the UK party proposed a more limited measure), health policy focus (because of the special needs of Scotland in terms of cancer and heart diseases), free personal care for the elderly, etc. (interview with Stephen Lawther). The Scottish and Welsh manifestos would also emphasise economic issues, public services, the level of investment proposed by the UK party and their consequences on the funding of Scottish services and the amount of money made available to the Scottish executive (interview with Bristow Muldoon MSP).

The national process is very much in the hands of the national leadership. Local policy forums provide opportunities for local activists and party members to discuss policy, but also for the party leadership to explain the government's policies and the constraints of power. The whole structure of the NPF and its policy commissions is designed to enhance the dominance of the party leadership, even though the old conference system should not be too romanticised at a time when the leadership was kept in checks by the party on the ground. With 4 representatives in the NPF each, the Welsh and Scottish parties have again a very limited influence over central decision-making. The party leadership has a rather large autonomy and room for interpretation in the elaboration of the party manifesto. Through the Secretaries of state for Scotland and Wales, it is also involved in the drafting of the general election manifestos for the regions. While differences from the national manifesto can appear, these are differences that the national leadership is willing to accept or based on existing policies in the regions. The party's impulse to produce a homogenous message all across the country remains very strong. Moreover, the regional policies described in the Scottish and Welsh manifestos are for regional government and not for the UK government, which is not constrained by these proposals.

Because of the existence of regional manifestos, the party receives a score of 1. The Scottish and Welsh party branches are otherwise not involved in the process of policy-making for general elections, and the pledges of the Scottish and Welsh manifestos do not bind the state-wide party.

### *5.1.3. Organisation in Scotland and Wales, powers and autonomy of the regional party branches*

The Labour parties of Scotland and Wales are not completely autonomous parties that operate far from the gaze of their UK party leadership. The sub-sections below describe the party processes of the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties and how the central party leadership has had to come to terms with devolution and the potential for divergence it creates.

#### *Selecting the Scottish and Welsh party leaders*

There is officially only one leader in the Labour party: the leader of the UK Labour party. The Scottish and Welsh parties nevertheless have a *de facto* leader in the person

of their First Ministers. Since 1997, both parties have had three leaders selected through different methods.

In Scotland, the main problem has been the little time that the party has had to select its leader, as the leader of the Labour group of MSPs is also the First minister. The first leader was Donald Dewar. Seen as the 'father of devolution' and in his position of Secretary of State for Scotland, his candidacy to be the first Scottish First minister was rather evident. The new leader was elected from among the prospective MSPs by an electoral college composed of three sections, like for the election of the UK leader: CLPs, trade unions and Scottish MPs. Dewar was the only candidate and his selection was confirmed at the 1998 Scottish conference.

When Dewar died in October 2000, the party needed a new leader and Scotland a new First minister. The rules of the Scottish Parliament stipulate that the Parliament has 28 days to select a new First minister. It rapidly became clear that it would be impossible for the party to select a new leader within 28 days and follow the party rules. It was then decided to limit the electoral college to the Labour MSPs and the members of the Scottish Executive Committee (SEC), which makes close to 80 people. To be nominated a candidate needed the support of at least 7 MSPs, and two fairly uncontroversial candidates stood (Hopkin and Bradbury 2006: 141). After a short campaign, the electoral college convened and held a vote (interview with Bristow Muldoon MSP). Henry McLeish won against the former general secretary of the Scottish Labour party, Jack McConnell.

In November 2001 Henry McLeish resigned after a scandal regarding the expenses of his constituency office. The party was faced with the same problem after only one year, and the same electoral college was reconvened. This time with only one candidate (Jack McConnell), they held a for-or-against vote.

The formal influence of the state-wide party on this process is limited to the number of MPs included in the SEC. It can also be said that the UK party could have influenced the selection through its prior selection of Holyrood candidates. Indeed, even though there is no reported evidence of direct attempts to influence the MSPs, only New Labour candidates obtained the nomination. In 2001, two left-wing MSPs declared their intention to participate in the contest but failed to secure the necessary 7 nominations from their colleagues (Birrell 2002). Hassan and Warhurst (2001: 222) report that Gordon Brown, Scotland's most prominent UK minister, who tends to view Scotland as *his* territory, failed in his attempt to influence the process in 2000 so that McLeish would get elected without a contest. McLeish was nevertheless elected, and Brown has also been involved in the appointment of a number of party officials in Scotland. The relationships between McLeish and the UK party however turned out to be rather problematic at times (he once described John Reid, the then Scottish secretary, as a 'patronising bastard'). Today, relations seem to run more smoothly, but this does not mean that McConnell has become a puppet of the central party.<sup>38</sup>

In Wales, a first consensual candidate was elected by a special conference in 1998. Ron Davies, like Dewar in Scotland, was the Secretary of state. The conference worked in the same way: one section for the CLPs, one for the trade unions and one for the people on the panel of candidates. The trade unions did not have to ballot their members, and a party official declared that this caused 'some controversies at the

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<sup>38</sup> 'I'm my Own Man, McConnell Tells Stormont Gathering', *The Scotsman*, 23 May 2006. <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=1331&id=762742006>

time'. In October 1998, Ron Davies resigned as secretary of state and as Labour leader in Wales.

The party had to elect a new leader 6 months before the election to the Welsh Assembly. Rhodri Morgan, who had just lost to Davies, stood again but was rejected by the party and Tony Blair, who thought Morgan was too 'old Labour'. The central party supported Alun Michael, a junior minister from the Home Office seen as a 'safe pair of hands' (Shaw 2001: 43). Rawnsley (2000: 250) quotes a conversation between Tony Blair and John Prescott and comments:

'Blair responded: "What do I do if he [Rhodri Morgan] wins?", to which Prescott countered: "Say it's democracy, for Christ's sake. That it's a triumph for democracy!" This argument, excellent though it was, could not budge the Prime Minister'.

The party then resorted to use the 'old Labour' methods that Blair and his allies had so much criticised when they were building and promoting their own 'new' Labour. The electoral college that elected the Welsh candidate as First secretary was not based on full 'one member, one vote'. Michael was rather unpopular within the party at large (he lost the constituency vote to Morgan) but he won the candidates vote and the trade union. The largest unions voted as a block for Michael when it appeared that those trade unions that balloted their members would choose Morgan (Shaw 2001: 43). Michael was then elected leader of the Welsh party and became First secretary in 1999, until a vote of no confidence was scheduled against him by his parliamentary party. He resigned the day before the vote, in February 2000.

For the third time, the Welsh Labour party had to select a leader. Because it was an emergency procedure (the new party leader would then become Wales' new First secretary), the leader was elected by the Welsh Executive Committee (WEC). Rhodri Morgan stood unopposed and became Welsh Labour's third leader in two years. New rules have been established since then, and the new procedure stipulates that any new Labour leader would be elected through OMOV. Morgan had started to campaign in favour of OMOV already in October, but the WEC had rejected the change.

The eventual accession of Rhodri Morgan to the position of First minister illustrates the limitations of the centralised approach initially adopted by the London party. The heavy-handed backing of Michael eventually played against him: the party performed rather poorly in the 1999 Welsh election, he lacked the support of voters, party members, and increasingly of Assembly Members. Michael's proximity with the central party and his failure to use this proximity to Wales' advantage ended up being the source of his downfall.

The central leadership has shown some signs of involvement in the selection of the party leader in both Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, it was more a matter of the interest of one party heavyweight and potential future party leader (Gordon Brown), and it did not lead to any particular clash. On the other hand, the central party's reluctance to see the Welsh party select a candidate who did not belong to the leading party group was perceived as a form of heavy-handed involvement, eventually backfired, with the accession of Morgan to the leadership and contributed to the new Labour leadership's image as 'control freaks'. Because the regional branches are formally free to select their own leaders, the Labour party receives a score of 3 for this indicator. A 3 leaves open the possibility of central organs to try and influence the selection process via informal party channels. This is what the national leadership has done in Wales in 1998.

*Candidate selection for elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales*

Prior to the first regional elections, the NEC established a number of rules for the selection of candidates to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly. As part of this process, the Scottish and Welsh Executive Committees (respectively SEC and WEC) appointed selection panels that were to interview all the prospective candidates. This selection panel comprised 5 members of the NEC, 5 members of the Scottish or Welsh Executive Committees, 5 party members and 5 independent advisors with no voting right.<sup>39</sup> Each interviewing sub-committee of 3 to 4 people also included a member of the NEC (interviews, February 2005). The panels established a list of approved candidates, which was subsequently put to the approval of the Scottish and Welsh Executive Committees. Constituency associations (CLPs) could choose their candidates from among these lists. In 2003, the CLPs could choose a candidate who was not on the approved list but her pre-selection would then require the consent of the regional party executive. CLPs were therefore strongly encouraged to make their choice from among the lists (Laffin, Taylor and Thomas 2003: 9). Another constraint was placed on the CLPs in order to increase the number of women selected as candidates. Gender parity was to be enforced through a 'twinning' of constituency parties so that each pair selected one male candidate and one female candidate (Brown 1999).

The selection process for the 1999 election was crucial, as the party had to select a large number of people at once. Accusation of political bias marred this process in Scotland. The Scottish panel has been accused of evicting those applicants who were not 'new Labour' enough. The chair of the panel, Rosemary McKenna was a moderniser, as were a number of other members of the panel (Shaw 2001: 39). Some people, who felt they were not 'New Labour' enough, also dropped out of the process believing that they would not be selected (interview with Rosemary McKenna MP). If the selection process was established to produce a group of professional and high-calibre candidates, it was also aimed at selecting candidates who 'understood the Labour government's objectives' and 'whose background would not embarrass the party' (interview with Rosemary McKenna MP). Indeed, a number of left-wing applicants did not make it to the list. The most famous case of a rejected application is that of Dennis Canavan, the sitting Labour MP for Falkirk West. Canavan went on to stand as an independent candidate and was elected to the Parliament against the official Labour candidate.

In the end, Scottish CLPs only had 167 names to choose from (for 129 candidates to file) (Laffin, Shaw and Taylor 2004: 6). However, in spite of the factionalism that had characterised the Scottish Labour party in the past, most of its top figures were not altogether hostile to New Labour in the first place (Lynch and Birrell 2004: 188). Moreover, a number of left-wingers such as Cathy Jamieson and Malcolm Chisholm were included in the panel, and they both became members of the Scottish executive.

In Wales, the selection process produced more or less the same results as in Scotland (exclusion of prominent local figures and left-wingers) but provoked less high profile protest. The main problem of the CLPs was of a different kind, as they tended to object to the 'twinning' of constituency parties established to achieve gender

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<sup>39</sup> E-mail communication with Rosemary McKenna MP, chair of the Scottish Candidates Selection Panel.



balance. Overall, the central party did not expect many problems in Wales and did not oversee the process with the same attention as it did in Scotland (Shaw 2001: 43).

Although the pre-selection of constituency candidates could be modelled after existing Westminster practices, the procedures for composing the regional party lists had to be established from scratch. A Welsh party officer acknowledged that the party 'struggled with that [ranking candidates on the ballot paper]'. The same thing could be said in Scotland, where the SEC was made responsible for ranking candidates in the 1999 elections. In 2003, the ranking was established by a vote of the party members, subject to the consent of the SEC, which could intervene to enforce gender-equality. In Wales, the 1999 list rankings were established by closed party meetings of delegates from the CLPs of each top-up area. Organised following a 'sort of conclave principle', that is, 'they were kind of locked in a room until they came out with an agreement', these 'consensus meetings' turned out to be quite the opposite of consensual, as delegates fought over the candidates and their ranking (interview with a Welsh party officer). The difficulty of the process led to a change before the subsequent election. Ultimately, the WEC decided who got on the lists, ranking the candidates already selected in constituencies and adding minority candidates. Eventually, the lack of democracy of the process was fairly uncontroversial, as most people realised that the party had little chance of winning top-up seats. A new system is likely to be adopted for the next election, as the Richard Commission on the reform of the National Assembly proposed that constituency candidates should not be on the lists. It is likely that the new system will involve the direct participation of party members through postal ballot like in Scotland.

Labour party statutes require that the NEC approves the lists established by the regional party, but there is no evidence of any problem arising at that stage of the selection process. This provision still makes a potential heavy-handed involvement of the national party possible and could also convince the regional parties to make sure that the candidates presented to London are likely to pass the confirmation stage.

It seems, overall, that the attempts to influence the selection process were not repeated in 2003 and that the central party chose to give more leeway to its Scottish and Welsh branches in 2003 (van Biezen and Hopkin 2004). This may be as a consequence of the protests that emerged after its interventions in 1999 and because of the new legitimacy of the Scottish and Welsh parties, gained through four years of regional government. The other reason may be found in the fact that the existing pool of potential candidates was already influenced by the central party, and the odds that the party was going to win many more seats in both regions were rather slim. In the end, it was also not in the interest of the central party to involve itself in the selection of new candidates in Scotland and Wales. Moreover, the heavy-handed involvement of the central party in 1999 had shown its limits, as it has not prevented the emergence of policy divergence between the Labour-led UK government and the Labour-led devolved institutions (Parry 2002: 315-6).

Because of the requirement that the NEC should give its approval to the regional candidate lists, the party receives a code of 2 for the selection of regional elections candidates.

### *Making party policy for Scottish and Welsh elections*

The UK *Partnership in Power* document was adapted to the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties. Each region established a Policy Forum, thematic Policy Commissions and a Joint Policy Committee (JPC – composed of an equal number of members of the SEC

or WEC and Scottish or Welsh ministers). They are in charge of developing a two-year party rolling programme. Following *Partnership in Power*, party members, CLPs and affiliated organisations must be consulted extensively on policy issues. The Policy commissions prepare draft policy documents, which are sent for discussion to the Policy Forum and Joint Policy Committee. The JPC must give its approval to the consultation documents and then forwards them for discussion to the CLPs and affiliated organisations so that they can send remarks to the relevant Policy Commission. On the basis thereof, the conference votes the party programme.

Like for the state-wide party, the Scottish and Welsh conferences are officially the most important policy-making organs of the regional branches. However, like in the state-wide party, the conferences are rather constrained in their agenda, and the discussions are more controlled. The manifesto for regional elections is then drafted by the Joint Policy Committee on the basis of this programme voted by the regional conference. There is a rather important room for manoeuvre left to the JPC to adapt the party programme as voted by conference into an election manifesto.

The rules of *Partnership for Power* are nevertheless quite easily bypassed. For instance, in Scotland, the 1999 manifesto was in fact produced by a small elite group within the Scottish Labour party (Lynch and Birrell 2004: 183). Even in the Policy Forum framework, the regional party elites can leave their stamp through their strong presence in the Policy Commissions and in the regional Joint Policy Committees (Laffin *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, in this whole process, the central party can make its influence felt through the presence of the Secretary of state in the SEC, WEC and the JPCs. There is, however, no provision for direct involvement of the national leadership. The role of the NEC is fulfilled by the Scottish and Welsh Executive Committees and the programme voted by the Scottish and Welsh annual conferences. This, evidently, does not mean that the regional and national leaderships do not communicate frequently outside official intra-party channels. In particular, party leaders at both levels are also heads of government at their respective level.

Again, a difference can be observed between 1999 and 2003. In 1999 the central party clearly involved itself in the policy-making process and the subsequent campaign, emphasising the party's 'New Labour' agenda and the threat posed by the SNP. On the other hand, in 2003, the regional parties were much more autonomous. In the meantime, McConnell had started to emphasise the party's 'Scottishness' and adopted controversial positions on tuition fees and free care for the elderly, and Morgan declared that there were 'clear red water' between London and Cardiff in their approach to public services, moving closer to Plaid Cymru's more socialist agenda (Hopkin and Bradbury 2006: 144).

The regional branches make their own policies, even though the secretaries of state are involved in some regional party organs. Overall, the balance of responsibility lies in Scotland and Wales. As a result, the party receives a score of 3 for regional policy-making.

#### *Funding of the regional party branches*

Resources are shared across the various levels of the party. The party constitution states that all membership fees for each individual member shall be collected by, or on behalf of, the head office and then divided between head office, the relevant regional office, or the Scottish or Welsh office (as the case may be), and the relevant CLP. The division of the subscription fee goes as follows: two thirds for the head office and one third for the CLP. The national level of the party also receives donations from

individual and corporate donors. Trade unions also contribute to the party's budget, although in a less massive scale than they used to. While they contributed to up to 50% in the early 1990s, trade unions contribute today to approximately one third of the party's income. As Labour leads the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments, it is the party that receives the least public funding (only the policy development fund and Welsh funds).

There is a clear disparity between the resources of the national party and those of the regional branches. The Scottish and Welsh parties are in competition with the national party over funding campaigns and appeals to the membership. The central party receives most of the donations, both from the trade unions but also from companies and individual donors. Most of the campaign funding is centralised, mainly because of the way donors, and in particular the trade unions, give money to the party. As a result, the regional parties are highly dependent on the central party for their funding. On the other hand, the regional parties fund their regional election campaigns themselves. They still receive support from the national party through extra personnel and funding.

**Table 5.1.** Resources and income distribution in the Labour party (£)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Total income</b>	35,534,000	21,184,000	26,940,000	29,312,000	35,304,000
Scottish Labour	663,980	352,622	858,547	318,609	523,523
Wales Labour	304,899	309,952	478,523	279,691	-
<b>Total donations</b>	12,111,681	11,126,340	14,652,822	15,818,808	21,724,167
to national party	10,297,478	9,936,766	13,258,596	13,147,236	18,742,000
to Scottish Labour	101,396	51,868	206,379	65,925	155,481
to Wales Labour	43,230	45,320	85,889	51,301	92,726
Share donations to central party	85.0%	89.3%	90.5%	84.8%	86.3%
Share trade union donations to central party	87.0%	86.6%	85.0%	91.0%	84.8%
<b>Membership fees</b>	3,399,000	3,093,000	3,345,000	3,492,000	3,685,000
In Scotland #	67,974	68,974	329,376	41,977	51,794
In Wales #	29,437	30,873	161,226	86,177	-
<b>Public subsidies (PDG)</b>	492,000	448,000	439,000	440,000	440,000

*Notes:* # include affiliation fees and a contribution from the national party relating to fees paid by party members resident in the region and that was collected by the national party; PDG: Policy Development grant

*Sources:* Labour Party (2003, 2005b, 2006); Scottish Labour Party (2003, 2004, 2006); Welsh Labour Party (2003, 2004) and Wales Labour Party (2005).

The regional offices are staffed by people employed and paid by the UK Labour party. The Scottish regional party paid two members of staff in 2004 and three in 2005 (Scottish Labour Party 2006) and the Welsh party none. With devolution, the regional parties have seen their staff number increase. This is somewhat a mixed blessing for the Scottish and Welsh parties. On the one hand, they gain more staff and more resources. On the other, these are employees of the state-wide party paid by the state-wide party, and the general secretary of the Scottish and Welsh parties are selected by London. As a result, their loyalty can be shifting, not only with the electoral agenda but also because of the organic link with London. Moreover, the Scottish office of the party remains in Glasgow, while the Scottish Parliament is in Edinburgh. This may

help maintain and strengthen the divide between the party in central office in Scotland that depends on the UK party and the party in public office at the regional level. On the other hand, in Wales they are all in Cardiff, which certainly encourages co-operation between these two faces of the party.

The regional party branches are therefore particularly dependent on the central party for their resources. As a Welsh party executive reported, 'the money has to be allocated out to priorities that the head office defines rather than giving the WLP a sum of money and saying "get on with it"'. The reasons he identified for this centralised party funding are the way donors still contributed mainly to the central party and modern campaign techniques.

### *Conclusion*

The Labour party has become a catch-all party, with a centralised organisation for all state-wide operations. The leadership now enjoys considerable freedom in the determination of party policy and has gained a large influence over the selection of political personnel. The party has had some difficulties to adapt to devolution. It found itself in a rather paradoxical situation: on the one hand, it introduced devolution to Scotland and Wales. On the other hand, once in power, it found it difficult to accept that the parties of Scotland and Wales would adopt different policies. Table 5.2 recapitulates the codes given to the party.

**Table 5.2.** Coding of the organisation of the Labour party

	Scotland	Wales
<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>		
1. Selection the leader of the state-wide party	0	0
2. Involvement of regional party branches in the central party executive	0	0
3. Selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections	0	0
4. Adoption of the manifesto for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1
5. Amending the constitution of the state-wide party	0	0
<i>Sum involvement</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Autonomy of the regional party branches</i>		
6. Organisational freedom of the regional party branches	2	2
7. Selection of the regional party leaders	3	3
8. Selection of candidates for regional elections	2	2
9. Adoption of the manifesto for regional elections	3	3
10. Funding of the regional party branches	1	1
<i>Sum autonomy</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>

Overall, there is now a rather clear separation between the levels of party organisation. The Scottish and Welsh party branches have very little input in the state-wide party. This may partly be compensated by the strong Scottish and Welsh presence in the PLP. However, as interests and policy priorities change because of devolution, the interests of the Scottish and Welsh MPs on the one hand, and MSPs and AMs on the other, may come to diverge fundamentally. The Labour party initiated the devolution process by a strong involvement in the selection of the new political personnel in all the devolved bodies. However, once it started to backfire and when the party leadership were once again accused of being 'control freaks', they started to accept that devolution might go hand in hand with divergence. The Scottish and

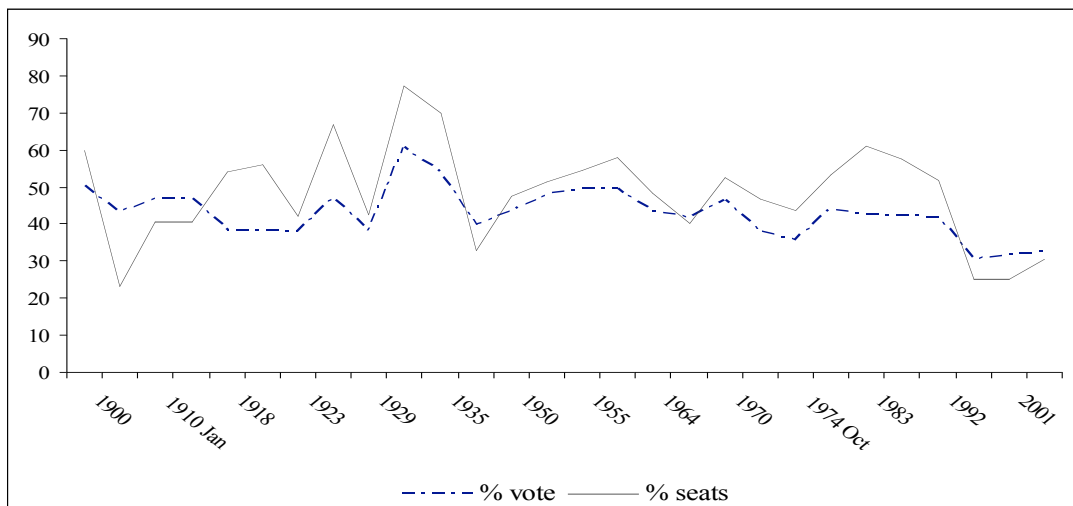
Welsh parties nevertheless remain dependent on the London party for funding and personnel, and this is likely to be an important card in the hands of the national leadership, who can also oversee the selection of candidates.

## 5.2. The Conservative party

### 5.2.1. History and change in the Conservative party

The Conservative party has without any doubt been the most successful political party of 20<sup>th</sup> century British politics. When John Major was defeated in 1997, the party had been out of power for only 29 years since 1900 (Garner and Kelly 1998: 56). This is an even more considerable feat when we consider that this party, associated with wealth and privilege, has managed to survive and even benefit from the enfranchisement of the working-class, which did not at first seem to be natural Conservative constituency.

**Figure 5.2.** Share of the vote and share of the seats of the Conservative party, 1900-2005



The Conservative party is the heir of the Tory party, one of the ruling parties of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its official name is the Conservative and Unionist Party, a legacy of the merger with the Liberal Unionist Party in 1912 as a result of the party's opposition to Home Rule and the independence of Ireland. The party is now commonly called the Conservative party, but the term 'unionist' was still used in Scotland until 1965, where the Scottish Unionist party was the face of the conservatism.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the party was originally associated with the landed aristocracy and its core values were tradition, hierarchy, natural inequalities and order. These beliefs were shaken under Peel's government (1841-6): contrary to the interests of the landed gentry, Peel repealed the Corn Laws, which supported agricultural revenues by imposing import limits but increased the price of grain (Leach 1996: 108). As a result, Peel attracted a new and much needed electoral base to the party, the middle classes that believed in self-reliance (rather than state protection), individualism (instead of hierarchy) and thrift. As a result, the Conservatives came to represent the 'haves' of the country (Garner and Kelly 1998: 59).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Disraeli managed to open the party's appeal even wider with his brand of 'One nation' Conservatism. By emphasising state intervention and state provision of services to improve the condition of the poorest and at the same time strengthening the party's patriotic message around the defence of the

institutions and the empire, Disraeli managed to attract a new working class constituency to the Conservative party (Norton 1996: 76-7; Garner and Kelly 1998: 60-1). This strategy transformed the Conservative party into the most working-class party in Britain until Second World War.

The party consolidated its structure during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, first by establishing central headquarters in order to coordinate candidates in 1852 and then by linking constituency associations and their membership throughout the country (Rasmussen 1998: 1). The creation of the National Union of Conservatives and Constitutional Associations in 1867 was the first example of a national party organisation in Britain and was a consequence of the extension of the franchise in that same year. The National Union aimed at integrating the working class in support for the then government and organising the party on the ground. In 1870 the party's Central Office was created (Blake 1970: 2).

### *Conservative party: contemporary organisation and principles*

Between 1945 and 1997, the Conservative party has been in power for a total of 35 years. It has largely dominated British politics first shortly after Second World War (1951-64) and then during the Thatcher and Major premierships (1979-1997). These two periods stand in sharp contrast to one another. While the Conservative party contributed to the maintenance of the post-war consensus on the welfare state and Keynesian economic management in the 1950s and up to the 1970s, the second period was dominated by what was to be called Thatcherism, which is a mix of monetarist, pro-market economic policies, authoritarian social values and strong leadership style (Gamble 1994: Chapter 3; Norton 1993: 31-2).

In 1997, the Conservative party became an English party without a single MP from either Scotland or Wales. After this defeat the party entered a period of instability. The party changed leader three times between the 1997 and 2005. John Major resigned after the 1997 election and the parliamentary party elected William Hague, a young MP with only two-year Cabinet experience, to replace him. His leadership period has been rather harshly described as the party's 'most futile period in Opposition in the last one hundred years' (Collings and Seldon 2001: 60). The fact is that he failed to provide the party with a clear set of coherent policies and to establish himself as a potential prime minister. At the same time, the party publicly displayed its divisions between Eurosceptics and Europhiles, Thatcherites and 'wets', social traditionalists and libertarians (Ashbee 2003: 45). As the 2001 election only brought one extra MP to the Conservative parliamentary group, Hague resigned.

The leader elected under the new rule (see below) was Iain Duncan Smith, who was most famous for having been one of the rebels against John Major over Europe. He adopted some themes from the US Republicans, most notably the notion of 'Compassionate Conservatism' but failed to seize on the governments' increasingly visible weaknesses. He then tried to position the party on the issue of social justice but this new strategy failed to produce any headway in the electorate (Norton 2006: 38). The 'quiet man', as he described himself in his 2002 Conference speech, never managed to establish himself as an indisputable leader and failed to renew the party's electoral appeal. The parliamentary party did not leave him the time to be tested at the poll, and he lost a confidence vote in October 2003 (BBC News Online 29 October 2003).

Former Home Secretary Michael Howard then replaced Duncan Smith. Both Hague and Duncan Smith unsuccessfully followed the same strategy: they started by

presenting new policies but lurched to the right when these policies appeared not to produce the expected results in the polls (Watt 2003). Michael Howard failed to fare any better than his predecessors, his policies sometimes seemed at odds with Conservative principles (opposition to the introduction of university tuition fees) or his previous positions (most notably on gay rights), and the party strategy changed from positive campaigning to a negative, tough form of opposition (Norton 2006: 41-2; Seldon and Snowden 2005: 729-31). Again, when the election approached and the party appeared to lag behind Labour in the polls, Howard veered to the right.

The 2005 election marked a very limited progress for the Conservative party. They won 32 seats but only one seat in Scotland and three in Wales, and they failed to improve their share of the vote in the Midlands and the North of England. In many ways, Biffen's prediction made in 1974 has been confirmed:

'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).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been described as the 'Conservative Century' (Seldon and Ball 1994), but the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> looks rather grim. However, the party has proved to be a survivor. It has often proved pragmatic on policy in order to increase its electoral potential. However, in order to return into power, the Conservative party will have to expand its electoral appeal beyond the limits of Southern and rural England.

### *5.2.2. Organisation at the central level, state-wide party processes*

The Conservative and Unionist Party underwent a wide-ranging process of re-organisation after Hague's accession to the leadership. The document that led to the reform, *The Fresh Future*, 'amounted to the most significant restructuring of the party's internal structure since the Maxwell Fyfe reforms of 1945' (Butler and Kavanagh 2002: 42). The most crucial change was the unification of the party. The Conservative party did not exist as a legal entity until 1997. There were a National Union of Conservative Associations (the voluntary party), the parliamentary party and Conservative Central Office (Kelly 2003: 82), but the Conservative party had no legal existence. The reform of the Conservative party first and foremost consisted in unifying these different branches under a single entity. The other aims of this reform were to democratise the party and encourage membership participation, which it has only managed to do to a very limited extent.

In terms of territorial organisation, it maintained the special status of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist party, which is affiliated to the Conservative party, participates in UK-wide party processes but organises independently and manages its own internal processes. In Wales, the *Fresh Future* created a Welsh organisation integrated in the Conservative party.

### *Constitutional guarantee*

The constitution of the Conservative party does not describe in detail the division of powers between the UK party and its Welsh and Scottish branches. The only exception is to be found in schedule 6, where it is stated that the provisions for candidate selection for Westminster elections do not concern Scotland (Conservative

Party 1998a). The party constitution can be amended by the party's constitutional college, which comprises the members of the national convention (which is the body that represents the voluntary party with the chairmen of all the constituency associations and the regional chairmen<sup>40</sup>), the party's MPs and MEPs and members of the House of Lords (Schedule 9, Conservative Party 1998a). In theory, the UK party could decide the distribution of powers between the levels without the involvement and consent of the regional party branches. However, the constitution is relatively difficult to change: an amendment can be adopted if it is accepted by 66% of those voting and at least 50% of those eligible to vote. For provisions regarding the leadership, the board, ethics rules and changes to the constitution, a qualified majority of two-thirds of the members of the National Convention, two-thirds of MPs voting and 50% of those eligible to vote is required.

The Scottish party has a special status in the overall party structure. Its voluntary organisation only affiliated to the National Union in 1976 but remained autonomous thereafter. *The Fresh Future* (Conservative Party 1998b) stated that the Scottish party's failure to return any MP and the forthcoming devolution of power to Scotland required that the Scottish party reformed its organisation following the organisational principles of the party in the rest of the UK. The constitution submits members of the Scottish Conservative party to its rules for the processes that relate to the participation of Scotland in the UK party. For the rest, Scottish party members are subject to the rules of the Scottish party, and the Scottish party can elaborate its own rules.

There is no such provision for Wales, which is completely integrated in the UK party, of which it has always been a weak element. However, the *Fresh Future* established a Welsh Conservative party with its own power structure, as a consequence of the party's electoral weakness in the region and in anticipation of devolution. The constitution of the state-wide party does not contain any information as to how the Welsh party should be organised, and the Welsh party has developed its own structures and chosen its own procedures, which are however very similar to those of the state-wide party.

The Conservative party therefore receives a score of 0 for the process of revision of the constitution and a code of 3 for organisational freedom (even though the Scottish and Welsh branches have a different status within the party, both were free to organise as they wished).

### *Selecting the party leader*

Originally, Conservative party leaders used to 'emerge' from among the parliamentary party. Until 1963, an informal process of consultation run by senior party figures led to the appointment of the leader by the parliamentary party (Punnett 1992: 27). In 1965, the party adopted written rules for the selection of the leader after the selection of Lord Home caused controversy in all sections of the party (Punnett 1992: 41-9). Between 1965 and 1997, the parliamentary party was in charge of electing the party leader. Rules established in 1975 also provided for the possibility of a contest in the case of a vacancy or at the beginning of a parliamentary session. Initially, a contest could occur simply if a challenger emerged. After the challenge to Thatcher's leadership, a new rule required that at least 10% of the parliamentary party should

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<sup>40</sup> The regional chairmen chair the party's organisational sub-units of England, Scotland and Wales.



support any challenger (Punnett 1992: 54). Successive ballots were held until a candidate obtained the absolute majority and a 15% lead over the second candidate.

In 1997, as part of the wider process of party reform, the Conservative party changed its procedure of leadership selection. The constitution states that the leader is elected by party members. The presentation of candidates to the party is the responsibility of the 1922 Committee (Conservative backbench MPs, together with frontbench MPs when the party is in opposition). This provision has been interpreted by the 1922 Committee and the party executive (the Board) as a right of the parliamentary party to select the candidates who are presented to the vote of party members.

The new procedure was used for the first time in 2001 to replace William Hague, who resigned after the party's second consecutive defeat. The leadership campaign lasted a whole three months. The candidates reflected the various ideological strands of the party: Michael Portillo appealed to the party's neo-liberals and the so-called 'damps' (the party's left wing, economically moderately statist, socially liberal and pro-European); Ken Clarke represented the party's 'wets', that is, the economic statist, socially conservative and pro-European strand; David Davis and Iain Duncan Smith both represented the social conservative Thatcherite wing; and Michael Ancram, the party chairman, represented a consensus candidate (Norton 2006: 35-6).

In the third ballot, Portillo was narrowly defeated (53 votes), and party members were left to choose between Duncan Smith (54 votes) and Clarke (59 votes). The two candidates then toured the country, campaigning to attract the votes of party members. However, Clarke had little chance of winning in spite of his popularity among the electorate. His pro-Europe position made him unelectable: a large part of the rank and file disagreed with him, and his election could split the party very deeply. Duncan Smith therefore won with 61% of the votes (Norton 2006: 38).

Duncan Smith failed to impress the electorate and opposition to his leadership rapidly mounted among some sections of the rank and file and the parliamentary party. Stuart Wheeler, a very important party donor, went public saying the leader had to go (Ahmed 2003). A vote of confidence was triggered and MPs voted on 29 October 2003.<sup>41</sup> Duncan Smith had used the argument that a leadership battle would be too divisive to save his own leadership (Katz and Haggold 2003). While it failed to save him, Tory MPs still listened to the argument. They all rallied behind Michael Howard, whose name had been mentioned as a potential replacement for many months. Ironically, while OMOV had been introduced in the selection process, Conservative MPs returned to the old ballot-free method of candidate selection. Michael Howard 'emerged' from among the parliamentary party as the consensus candidate (Kelly 2004: 401). As a result, they saved the party from another leadership campaign that would have publicly displayed the party's internal divisions once again. In the process, they deprived party members of their right to choose their leader, even though many may have been relieved to see an end to the infighting (Freeland 2003).

The regional branches are at no point involved in this process. It is mainly in the hands of the British parliamentary party, in which Scotland and Wales are weakly present. As a result, the Conservative party is given a code of 0.

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<sup>41</sup> The party leader can only be removed after losing a vote of confidence of party MPs. A vote of confidence can be triggered by 15% of the parliamentary party. With 166 MPs, it meant that only 25 members were needed.

### *The party's central executive: the Board*

The reform of party organisation established a new executive body in charge of managing the extra-parliamentary party. It counts at least 14 members, five directly elected by the National Conservative Convention (the Chairman of the NCC acts as deputy chairman of the Board), three directly appointed by the party leader (the party chairman, someone who acts deputy chairman and the treasurer), the elected chairman of the 1922 Committee, the Conservative leader in the House of Lords, the elected deputy chairman of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist party, the co-ordinating chairman for Wales, the elected chairman of the Conservative Councillors Association, a senior member of staff of the party appointed by the chairman, and up to two additional members appointed by either the board or the leader (Conservative party 1998). The Board is in particular responsible for the management of the party with regard to party organisation, appointment of senior party staff, campaigning, fundraising and finance, membership and the maintenance of a national list of candidates for England and Wales.

Part of Hague's strategy to improve internal democracy and involve lower level activists into the party, 'the board was supposed to bring a bit more party democracy to party headquarters' (Kelly 2004: 401). However, none of the members of the Board is actually directly elected by the membership. Moreover, the Board can easily be marginalised by the party leader. For instance Iain Duncan Smith appointed a number of party staff himself and created new positions, placing some of his allies in key positions without the Board's assent. The leader's managerial rule for manoeuvre therefore remains large in spite of the new rules. The role of the representatives of the Scottish and Welsh parties is therefore very limited. The party receives a score of 1 for the presence of one representative each for Scotland and Wales.

### *Candidate selection for Westminster parliamentary elections*

Candidate selection has always been the key function of constituency organisations, and Hague's organisational reform has maintained the main characteristic of candidate selection in the Conservative party, constituency-level autonomy, even though a central screening system was established.

Since 1998, the party board appoints a Committee on Candidates responsible for establishing and maintaining a list of approved candidates for Westminster parliamentary elections. Constituency associations in England and Wales must select their candidate from among this list. While this indeed implies a certain centralisation of the candidate selection process, McKenzie (1955: 250) reported that it was not uncommon for constituency chairmen to go to Conservative Central Office when a vacancy emerged. They would then inform Central Office about the type of candidate they were looking for and Central Office would in return provide support and suggest promising candidates.

Constituency selection committees make a shortlist of around 20 candidates from which three are selected after interviews. These three candidates are then interviewed by the executive committee of the constituency association, which votes to put forward to the vote of party members at least two of them. Finally, a general meeting of the constituency association (meeting of the party members) is held and a vote taken to select the candidate.

Candidate selection remains principally a prerogative of the constituency associations, and the leadership and Central Office find it difficult to influence constituencies. Kelly (2004: 402-3) gives the example of former Foreign Secretary

Malcolm Rifkind as an illustration of the limited authority of the central party over candidate selection: supported by the central party, Rifkind applied for selection in the Windsor constituency and failed to even make it to the short-list. Central Office has also been unable to influence the composition of the parliamentary party and has often struggled to persuade constituency parties that they should be more open to young, female and ethnic minority applicants. For instance, at the same time as William Hague was declaring that he wanted to make the Conservative party more inclusive for women, not a single female candidate was selected in conservative-held seats where the sitting MP was retiring (Taylor 2003: 231).

The selection procedure is similar in Scotland, with the exception that the list of approved candidates is established in Scotland. People who want to be considered as Conservative party candidate apply to the Scottish Candidates Board (which includes a chairman of the Candidates Board appointed by the Scottish Executive, the party chairman and two other members). They are then interviewed by three members of the candidates board and then, if approved, placed on a reference list for constituency associations (interview with Mars Goodman). The rest of the procedure at the constituency level is similar to that for the rest of the UK.

Because of the asymmetry of the process, the Scottish and Welsh branches receive different codes: 3 for Scotland and 0 for Wales.

#### *Policy-making, making the manifesto for general elections*

Policy-making in the Conservative party has always been characterised by a large degree of leadership autonomy. Little has changed since McKenzie (1955: 297) wrote that 'the Conservative Leader has sole ultimate responsibility for the formulation of policy and is not formally bound by the decisions of any organ of his party either inside or outside of Parliament'. The party constitution declares that 'the Leader shall determine the political direction of the Party having regard to the views of Party Members and the Conservative Policy Forum' (Conservative party 1998).

While other party organs are also involved in policy debates, the leader is under no obligation to follow the resolutions or policy papers debated and approved by the conference and the policy forum. As McKenzie (1955: 63) put it,

"The leader also has exclusive responsibility for the formulation of party policy. He may consult whom he wishes; he may (and obviously does) pay attention to the resolutions passed by the various organs of the party, but he remains, (as the Maxwell Fyfe Committee put it in its review of the Conservative Party structure), "the main foundation and interpreter of policy".

Before the 1998 party reform, party conferences were the only forums in which party members, via their constituency representatives, had a voice over party policy. However, the sheer size (in 1996 about 11,000 party members attended the conference; Faucher-King 2005: 249) and format of Conservative party conferences limit the possibility of in-depth policy debate. Party conferences have remained relatively unchanged. Constituencies from all over the country can send up to seven representatives (the chairman, two deputy chairmen, the agent or secretary, and three representatives, of which one must be from a recognised organisation representation party members under the age of 30). Can also attend current and former Board

members, members of area management executives and area chairmen<sup>42</sup>, MPs, MEPs, MSPs, AMs, Conservative peers, selected parliamentary candidates, candidates on the approved lists, representatives from recognised affiliated organisations and university branches, and leaders of the Conservative groups elected at the local level. Scottish and Welsh elected members can therefore attend but they are clearly outnumbered by representatives from England.

Traditionally, Conservative party conferences have been considered as large rallies in which party members socialised, informally discussed policy and displayed support to their leaders. Unlike Labour conferences, Conservative conferences are not considered as policy-making events in the sense that party activists do not vote binding policy resolutions. McKenzie (1955: 66-7) nevertheless argues that the party leader cannot remain too isolated from the rest of the party because he owes his position to the parliamentary party and, to a lesser extent, the rank and file. As a result, Conservative leaders have to listen to the rest of the party to maintain their position. Kelly (1989) also argues that Conservative autumn party conferences, together with other conferences held throughout the year, represent an occasion for the leadership to listen to the opinions of the membership. While the conference's influence may not result from its constitutional status, it is nonetheless real and does have some informal impact over policy formulation.

*The Fresh Future* established a Conservative Policy Forum (CPF) designed to provide party members with opportunities to participate in policy debates inside the party in a structured manner. The policy forum is organised into policy-oriented discussion groups at the constituency level co-ordinated by a General Council, which commissions six 'discussion briefs' every year. In 2005 the party counted about 400 such groups (interview with Scott Kelly). It is difficult to measure the participation in these groups, as there is a level of cross-membership. Constituencies can send reports to the director of the CPF, who then summarises the reports and send them to the Shadow Cabinet. Relevant shadow ministers then reply to the constituencies and would often include references to these submissions in their conference speeches. Kelly (2001: 333-4) reports some evidence of constituency influence via CPF submissions.

However, party leaders have remained strongly in control of the agenda. While Hague did use the CPF in some policy areas, he also made use of membership ballots to consolidate his position. He used a membership ballot at the very beginning of his leadership to reform the party. The question party members were asked was: 'Do you endorse William Hague as leader of the Conservative Party and support the principles of reform he has outlined?'. This 'back me or sack me' ballot resulted in a rather poor turnout (44%), with 80% of those returning their ballot papers in favour of the party reform. Party members were not, however, balloted on the precise reform but rather on a number of principles (unity, democracy, decentralisation, involvement, integrity and openness) highlighted by Hague in a speech in July 1997 (Kelly 1999: 28). In 1998, he used a membership ballot on party policy over Europe. However, the whole process was characterised by a lack of any real internal debate, a short campaign period and an intensive campaign led by the leadership to muster support (Taylor 2003: 236). The leadership's position (no entry in the EMU for the current parliament

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<sup>42</sup> England and Wales are divided in a number of areas, which have a co-ordinating role for finance, membership and campaigning, and provide constituency-level support.

and the next) was then adopted by 84.4% of those voting, with a 60% turnout. He organised a third ballot to have his pre-manifesto endorsed by the membership.

All these mechanisms still remain advisory, and the leadership keeps a large degree of autonomy in making policy and setting up the party's agenda. For instance, Iain Duncan Smith's promotion of 'compassionate conservatism' at the 2002 Spring Forum was not preceded by any form of consultation and was the product of cogitations in the leaders' circle of advisers. Subsequent papers were also produced without consulting the party at large and without any reference to the work of the policy forum, which used to be consulted more under Hague's leadership (Kelly 2004: 400). Under Howard, the policy forum remained relatively unused and policy was elaborated mainly by the leader's advisers. Hague's successors have been less eager to use the party's official policy-advisory organs and have had a more traditional vision of the role 'the popular organization of the Conservative party *outside* Parliament [...] as a servant of the Party *in* Parliament' (McKenzie 1955: 147).

The regional versions of the general election manifesto can be quite different as the Scottish version is written in Scotland and the Welsh version in London. The Welsh version of the general election manifesto is drafted by the UK party and the Welsh shadow secretary more in particular, with some input from the Welsh party. As a result, the Welsh general election manifesto tends to cover the UK agenda closely and focuses on non-devolved areas (interview with David Melding). The Scottish party is much more involved in the elaboration of the Scottish general election manifesto. In fact, the manifesto is made in Scotland, with the Scottish party adding its own policies on devolved matters to the UK party's policies for reserved matters. As a result, in its Scottish version the UK manifesto is 'scotticised' so that the party describes what it would like to be done by the Scottish parliament and focuses on issues such as inter-governmental relations (interview with David McLetchie).

Because of the existence of regional manifestos in which the regional parties have a significant input, the Conservative party receives a code of 1 for the involvement of regional party branches in the elaboration of the general election manifesto.

### *5.2.3. Organisation in Scotland and Wales, powers and autonomy of the regional party branches*

The regional organisation of the Conservative party has not been studied in much detail. In his study of party organisation, what McKenzie described as the regional organisation was what corresponds to the area structure of the party. The two regional branches started the devolution era from two very different positions: while the Scottish Conservative party has a long history of autonomy (and even independence until 1965), the Welsh Conservative party was a weak organisation with no previous experience of autonomy. A Conservative member of the National Assembly for Wales went as far as writing that under the Thatcher and Major periods, 'the Conservative Party in Wales became an utterly derivative entity without even the modest autonomy usually given to a branch franchise' (Melding 2005: 35-6). A Welsh party official declared that with devolution, 'the party moved beyond the status of a glorified region to that of a party proper'. Both however started with one thing in common: having lost all Westminster representation, they relied on the devolved bodies, which they opposed in the first place, to re-build their electoral fortunes. To mark this new electoral reality, the Welsh party branch was renamed Welsh Conservative Party.

### *Selecting the Scottish and Welsh party leaders*

Constitutionally, there is only one leader in the Conservative party, the leader of the UK party. In Scotland, in practice, there is a party chairman appointed 'jointly by the Scottish Executive and the Leader of the Party' (Strathclyde Commission 1998) and a leader of the Conservative group in the Scottish Parliament.

In 2004-2005, the party chairman was Peter Duncan, who was an MP between 2001 and 2005. Peter Mundell replaced him in 2005. As the only Scottish Conservative MP of the parliamentary group, both have held the position of Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland. The first leader of the Conservative group in the Scottish Parliament, David McLetchie, was chairman of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association, became leader of the party in the run-up to the first Scottish elections after the election. He was chosen to lead the campaign by MSPs and the party leadership and was asked to continue as leader once the parliament started working (interview with David McLetchie). After McLetchie resigned as leader of the Conservative group in the Scottish Parliament in 2005 over allegations over his expenses claims, a leadership contest was triggered. Two candidates were expected to stand, Annabel Goldie, the deputy leader, and Murdo Fraser. Instead, they agreed to form a joint ticket, with Goldie as leader and Fraser as deputy leader.<sup>43</sup> As no other Conservative MSP stood against them, she automatically became leader, and the party did not organise a membership ballot.

In Wales, the leader of the party group in the National Assembly is elected by ballot of party members for a term, and there is no procedure to de-select the leader. The first ballot was held in autumn 1998 and opposed Rod Richards to Nicholas Bourne, who was regarded as Hague's preferred candidate for the job.<sup>44</sup> The first won, led the campaign, and briefly led the Conservative Assembly group. He was forced to resign in August 1999 after allegations of assault on a young woman (Norton 2002: 92). Bourne was the only candidate to succeed him and became leader of the Conservative group shortly after. The Welsh Management Board is chaired by the chairman of the Welsh Conservative party. Unlike in Scotland where the chairman is appointed by the UK leader and the Scottish executive, the chairman of the Welsh Conservative party and his deputy are elected by the party's annual general meeting.

Focusing on the choice of the leader of the parliamentary party, which is more powerful than the chairman, who has a more administrative role, the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives receive a score of 3.

### *Selecting candidates for Scottish and Welsh elections*

The selection of candidates for Scottish and Welsh elections is a process managed at the regional level following rules similar to those used by the UK party for Westminster elections. The Scottish Conservative party already used to select its own candidates for Westminster elections, but the Welsh party had to start from scratch. Both regions are free to select their own candidates and the UK party is not involved in the process.

In Scotland, the Candidates' Board composed of four members of the Scottish party, including the chairman, is in charge of establishing the centralised list of

<sup>43</sup> BBC News Online (2005) 'Goldie "ready to wield handbag"', 8 November 2005

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/scotland/4416194.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/4416194.stm)

<sup>44</sup> BBC News Online (1999) 'Rod Richards: a Profile, 6 August 1999

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/413392.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/413392.stm)

approved candidates for Scottish Parliament election. Applicants have to fill in a form, in which they have to describe their experience and the competences that would make them suitable candidates, as well as references and details on their character and possible sources of embarrassment to the party.<sup>45</sup> They are then interviewed and, as most were motivated candidates, were placed on the list from which constituency associations can choose their candidates. If a constituency backed a candidate who was not on the list, this candidate would then be interviewed by the candidates board for approval. The support from a constituency association would be a good reason for the board to select the candidate.

In Wales, the process was relatively informal in 1999. When someone expressed interest in being a candidate, her background was checked, she was interviewed in order to ensure her suitability and motivation. The process was kept short for a number of reasons: first of all, the Welsh party structure was a new one, as the Welsh-wide structure was created by the *Fresh Future* reforms. Second, the party had to recruit 60 candidates from a relatively limited pool of applicants. It was particularly challenged when it came to selecting female candidates (interview with Paul Valerio). The Welsh party decided to adopt a more professional approach to candidate selection for the 2003 election, with a full written application and thorough interviewing of the candidates. Eventually, the party approves 73 people, including 18 women on the list. Constituency associations could then select a constituency candidate from among this list.

In both Scotland and Wales, to appear on one of the party's lists, a candidate had to have been selected as a constituency candidate. The reason for this is to motivate the candidates, who are much more likely to be elected on the regional ballot than at the constituency level (interview with Paul Valerio). In 1999, the ranking of the Welsh lists was established by vote of those members who attended the special general meeting designed to introduce the candidates to party members. Due to protest from the base, the party extended the voting rights to all party members, and a postal ballot was organised. Candidates were ranked according to the number of votes they had received. The same method was used in Scotland for the 1999 and 2003 elections (interview with Mars Goodman).

The Welsh and Scottish Conservatives are able to select their candidates for regional elections freely. They receive a score of 3 for this indicator.

#### *Policy-making for elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales*

Both regional parties are free to elaborate their own policy platforms for elections to the Scottish Parliament and Assembly elections. They follow the same logic as the UK party, with a strong policy role for the elected politicians and not formal role for the membership or other party groups.

After its 1997 defeat in Scotland, the party launched its own review process. While the Strathclyde Commission reviewed party organisation, the Rifkind Commission addressed policy issues. After over 400 meetings were held, the commission produced a report 'Scotland's Future', in which it emphasised the Scottish party's need to adapt Conservative principles to the Scottish context (Seawright 2004: 8-9). Policy is made by the conservative group in the Scottish Parliament, with a strong dominance of the leader. Like at the UK level, there is a Scottish policy forum,

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<sup>45</sup> A copy of this form is available online on the party's website:  
[http://www.scottishconservatives.com/pdfs/candidates\\_application\\_form\\_final.pdf](http://www.scottishconservatives.com/pdfs/candidates_application_form_final.pdf)

but respondents declared that it had not worked very well. The Scottish conference as well as the Scottish Council (Scottish equivalent of the Conservative Convention) has a consultative role over policy. However, the Scottish leader in the Scottish Parliament was keen to admit that the conference was more a showcase for the press than a policy-making body.

The manifesto for election to the Scottish Parliament is drafted by the Scottish group, based on the party's past policy in the Scottish parliament and new proposals from the parliamentary group. The draft is then sent for consultation to the constituency associations and their members, candidates and the executive of the Scottish party. Goodman argued that little policy discussion actually took place during Scottish Board meetings due to lack of time and busy agendas. Policy on reserved areas would be taken from the UK party's line, but the Scottish party is free to adopt its own policies with regard to devolved areas.

In Wales, the policy process is relatively similar. For the 1999 election, the UK leader William Hague appointed a number of spokespersons on different issues to develop policies for the future Welsh Assembly and consult with the wider party in Wales. The party manifesto was then drafted by the Welsh party leadership. The 2003 manifesto was elaborated by the party's policy director (David Melding AM) based on documents produced by the party's Assembly spokespersons and under the authority of the party leader. Two conferences were then held, one in south Wales and one in North Wales, to provide an opportunity for party members to give their opinion on the draft. The official manifesto has to be approved by the Welsh Board before being presented to the UK party. Melding argued that 'there [was] something of a self-constraint [...] on the policy process' in terms of the extent of policy difference that the Welsh party allowed itself, but that there had not been any direct interference by the central party on the policy process. The national assembly manifesto is written in Wales, and the approval by the central party never proved problematic. At the same time, there is a feeling of belonging to the same party and recognition that high-profile divergence with England might work at the benefit of political opponents and embarrass the UK party.

Because the Welsh party has to send the manifesto to the central party for approval, it receives a score of 2 while the Scottish party is given a score of 3.

### *Party finance*

After having been the richest party in Britain for a very long time, the Conservative party is now the second richest after Labour. It draws most of its income from donations, from both individuals and corporations. The party receives a number of large donations from party members. For instance since 2001 party treasurer Stanley Kalms (Lord Kalms since 2004) has donated over £600,000 to the party. Just before the 2001 election Paul Getty donated £5 million and John Wheeler £2.5m. Public money represents the party's second source of income. However, between the 2001 and 2005 elections, only one donation exceeded £1m and the party received close to 30 donations between £250,000 and £500,000.

The Scottish and Welsh Conservative parties are not accounting units registered with the Electoral Commission. It is therefore impossible to evaluate the distribution of resources. It seems however that it is rather centralised. Party funding in Scotland and Wales goes to the parliamentary party in the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly, but it does not provide funding for ordinary and campaign expenses.



**Table 5.3.** Conservative Party accounts, 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Income central party</b>	31,222,000	23,294,000	13,619,000	22,264,000	24,227,000
<b>Total donations</b>	21,457,000	12,172,000	7,647,000	13,336,000	13,574,000
<b>Membership fees</b>	n.a.	713,000	689,000	803,000	843,000
% of total income	-	3.1	5.1	3.6	3.5
<b>Public funding (as reported in accounts)</b>					
Policy development grant	38,000	403,000	449,000	419,000	408,000
Short money*	3,439,066	3,459,536	3,566,927	3,666,885	4,206,057
Cranborne money*	227,597	390,555	402,662	413,131	426,351
Scottish Parliament grant	n.a.	91,000	101,000	101,000	104,000
% of total income	11.9	18.6	33.2	20.7	21.2

\* correspond to years 2001/02, 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06.

Sources: Conservative Party (2002, 2003, 2004 and 2006); Register of donations to political parties, <http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk>; Kelly (2006)

The register of party donations of the Electoral Commission only reports two donations to the Scottish Conservative party in 2001, for an amount of £9,000 from the same individual and none to the Welsh party. Articles in *The Scotsman* in 2003 however reported that most of the resources of the Scottish Conservatives came from the donations from a single Scottish businessman based in Monaco (MacDonell 2003a and 2003b). At the time of the article, it was reported that Irvine Laidlaw's donations (£37,000 a month) amounted to up to 80% of the party's income. This individual donor also contributed to the party's staff and equipment.

The electoral weakness of both regional parties is also a problem in terms of fundraising. As a result, the UK party sometimes has to step in and provide funding for electoral campaigns. While the Scottish party funds itself its campaigns for Holyrood elections, the UK party occasionally provides some help. For National Assembly elections, the Welsh party is also in charge of funding its own campaign, but the UK party also provides resources, mainly in terms of staff. The UK party also pays the salaries of the staff of area campaign directors and sends money for the management of the area level (interview with Raymond Monbiot). The Welsh Conservatives are highly dependent on the UK party for their finances and lack resources to develop research at the Welsh level (interview with David Melding).

Today, the party still has a staff of 13 in Edinburgh (plus 8 working for the parliamentary party). The party's accounts report that the party employed in its regional offices 18 staff in 2001, 14 in 2002, 36 in 2003, 37 in 2004 and 44 in 2005. Most of the staff in Wales is paid by the UK party.

Scotland appears to be a little more independent in terms of its resources and staff. As a result, the Scottish Conservatives receive a score of 2, while the Welsh Conservatives are given a score of 1 to reflect their higher financial dependence on the central party.

### Conclusion

With *The Fresh Future*, Hague created a national party overseen by a Board mainly composed of members appointed by the leader (only 5 of its 17 members are elected by the membership, in fact the National Convention). This effectively ended the dichotomy between the party on the ground, Central Office and the parliamentary party. In effect, the Conservative party was created in 1998, as until then it was not a legally recognised entity (Kelly 2003: 83). The reform introduced membership participation in the election of the party leader but did little to enhance membership

participation and actually influence overall. In practice, the reform reduced the previously extensive autonomy of the constituency associations and implied a greater centralisation of the party.

**Table 5.4.** Coding of the organisation of the Conservative party

	Scotland	Wales
<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>		
1. Selection the leader of the state-wide party	0	0
2. Involvement of regional party branches in the central party executive	1	1
3. Selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections	3	0
4. Adoption of the manifesto for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1
5. Amending the constitution of the state-wide party	0	0
<i>Sum involvement</i>	5	2
<i>Autonomy of the regional party branches</i>		
6. Organisational freedom of the regional party branches	3	3
7. Selection of the regional party leaders	3	3
8. Selection of candidates for regional elections	3	3
9. Adoption of the manifesto for regional elections	3	2
10. Funding of the regional party branches	2	1
<i>Sum autonomy</i>	14	12

There is a clear asymmetry between the Scottish party, which is autonomous and affiliated to the UK party, and the Welsh party, which is a more recent entity and has more the status of a party branch. While they have the same nominal autonomy in terms of establishing policy and selecting their leaders and candidates, the Welsh party's room for manoeuvre is limited by the lack of historical experience of autonomy, a lack of autonomous resources that would enable it to develop an autonomous structure and staff, a majoritarian culture that tends to consider that Wales is not so different from Wales, and a stronger reluctance to accept devolution.

### 5.3. The Liberal Democrats

#### 5.3.1. From the Liberal Party to the Liberal Democrats

##### *Party formation*

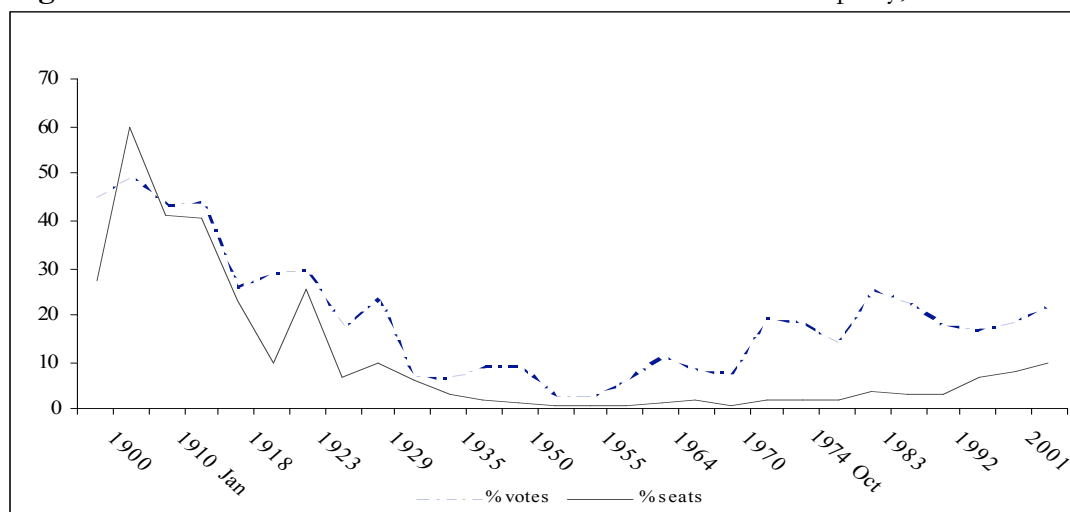
The Liberal Democrats are the last, contemporary incarnation of the Liberal party, which was born in 1859 as the merger of the free trade Peelites, Whigs and Radicals. The party incarnated the new middle class of business men and merchants that emerged from the industrial revolution. The core beliefs of the party were individual liberty (civil and religious rights, opposition to arbitrary government) and free trade. Liberals believe in man's conscience and individual capacity to reason but not with the optimism of the socialists, as they distrust power, which they see as a corrupting force. As a result, Liberals want government authority to be limited by constitutional constraints that would limit potential abuses of power and create 'checks and balances' (Heywood 1998: 41). In its early configuration, the party was a rather broad church, mainly united by a defence of non-conformism against the established Anglican Church (Curtice 1988: 94). The Liberal party represented the forces of change against the Conservatives' defence of tradition.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the party represented the new bourgeoisie and the

newly enfranchised sections of the urban working class. It adhered to a classical form of liberalism, which advocated a form of freedom that is often described as 'negative freedom', that is, 'freedom from' constraint. This belief goes together with the doctrine of the 'minimal state' both with regard to the political realm and the economy.

With the rise of the working class and its progressive enfranchisement at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century appeared a new 'branch' of liberalism. 'New' or 'social' liberalism recognised the need for government intervention in order to satisfy growing demands for social justice. The party tried to appeal to working class voters by being the party of freedom (in particular of religion and also freedom to work) and the party of cheap food, through their opposition to, and eventual abolition of, the Corn Laws.

**Figure 5.3.** Share of the vote and share of the seats of the Liberal party, 1900-2005



As a number of trade unions were seeking political representation, the Liberal party endorsed some union-sponsored candidates, in particular in mining constituencies (Dutton 2004: 7). After the formation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, representatives from both parties reached a secret agreement whereby they would not contest the same seats. The Liberal party was then convinced that it could integrate the working class in its ranks and absorb the trade union movement in order to create a progressive coalition of the centre-left (Garner and Kelly 1998: 161).

The party's organisational development started at the local level and culminated in 1877 with the establishment of the National Liberal Federation, which created a democratic system of representation and provided major powers to the party's annual conference. This extra-parliamentary side of the party was nevertheless relatively powerless over the parliamentary wing, which predated the emergence of the party organisation and had its own organisation, the Liberal Central Association (Ball 1987: 28-9). This dichotomy provided the parliamentary party with a great deal of autonomy over policy-making. On the other hand, the constituency associations were reluctant to follow the objectives of the parliamentary party, in particular with respect to the selection of working-class candidates (Ball 1987: 30-1).

The years before the start of First World War were characterised by a growing social distance between the Liberal and Labour parties. As the Liberals failed to select sufficient number of working-class candidates, Labour was consolidating its support among the working-class electorate. At the 1918 general elections, the party came into third place after the Conservatives and Labour.

After a temporary reprieve in 1923 when the party re-united around the issue of free trade (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005: 19), the Liberal party entered a long-lasting crisis. Its last government participation is the wartime coalition cabinet between 1940 and 1945. While the Liberal party heavily influenced the post-war years with for instance the Beveridge report that inspired the creation of the National Health Service and the whole social security system, and John Maynard Keynes' impact on post-war economic policies, the Liberal party kept losing votes as well and members and organisational resources (Curtice 1988: 98).

### *The Liberal Democrats: contemporary organisation and principles*

The Liberal's chance of a realignment of the left seemed to occur in 1981, when the 'Gang of Four' defected from the Labour party to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Dissatisfied by the growing influence of the far left in the Labour party, Shirley Williams (former Labour MP and former Cabinet member), Roy Jenkins (former MP and Cabinet member, and then President of the European Commission) and MPs David Owen and Bill Rodgers tried to unite the social democratic wing of the party that was sidelined by the left-wing radicalisation of the Labour party. 28 Labour MPs and one Conservative MP joined the new party.

From the beginning, the SDP and the Liberal party co-operated in general elections, not contesting the same constituencies and proposing a common manifesto. After the 1983 and 1987 elections in which the SDP-Liberal Alliance performed well in terms of the vote (respectively 25.4 and 22.6% of the vote) but poorly in terms of seats (23 – 17 Liberals and 6 SPD – in 1983, and 22 – 17 Liberals and 5 SPD – in 1987), the issue of a merger of the social liberals and social democrats was raised within both parties. David Owen, who had replaced Jenkins as leader of the SDP, was fiercely opposed to the merger, but a majority within the SDP was in favour of joining forces with the Liberals. Owen resigned as leader, leading a faction of anti-merger members with the intention of keeping the SDP to themselves.

The merger negotiations lasted between late September 1987 and mid-January 1988. After much acrimony that did little to improve the new party's image in the electorate, both parties agreed to a new constitution, a short policy document based on the 1987 election manifesto of the Alliance, and a new name, the Social and Liberal Democrats (SLD) (Crewe and King 1995: Chapter 21). This name was shortened to the Democrats in September 1988 and then changed to the Liberal Democrats in 1989 (Steed 1996: 58).

Former Liberal Paddy Ashdown was then elected leader of the new party. The party's immediate results were disappointing. While the Alliance recorded an average 26.9% of voting intentions in Gallup polls during the whole 1983 legislature, the SLD polled a mere 11.7% between March 1988 and the 1992 election (Crew and King 1995: 441). Confronted with SDP candidates wherever it stood, the SLD failed to impress in by-elections and came fourth in the European elections of the same year, behind the Green party (Dutton 2004: 269-70). However, the competition for third party started to wane, as the Green party had disappeared and the SDP became increasingly irrelevant. The party started to fare better in by-elections and local elections, and Ashdown affirmed himself as a charismatic leader for the new party.

The party lost two seats in 1992. It was as usual disadvantaged by the electoral system, but also suffered from the process of policy change initiated by Neil Kinnock in the Labour party. Ashdown led the party until 1999. In the intervening years, he had been one of the strongest believers in a possible alliance with the Labour party.

This collaboration started in the late 1980s with the Scottish Constitutional Convention but did not go further until Blair took the reins of the Labour party. Ashdown continued the party's collaboration with Labour in the Joint Consultative Committee after Labour's 1997 landslide, mainly to discuss constitutional issues. However, after 1998 and the government's burial of the Jenkins report on the electoral system reform, the party started to question Ashdown's collaboration with Labour, and while the JCC remained until 2001, it only met infrequently (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005: 40-3).

Ashdown's successor was a former member of the SDP, Charles Kennedy. Kennedy's victory marked the end of the policy of collaboration with Labour, at least at the central level. During his leadership, the party saw its share of the votes increase to 18.3% of the votes in 2001 and 22% in 2005 and its number of seats increase from 46 in 1997 to 52 in 2001 and 62 in 2005.

Under the influence of Ashdown, the party moved toward a more pro-market economic policy in the early 1990s. The Liberal Democrats' message was articulated around 5 'E's: economy (less interventionist policies, independence of the Bank of England), environment, education (one of the most noticed policies of the party was its proposal to increase the income tax in order to finance extra investments in education), electoral and constitutional reform, and support for the European Union (Brack 1996: 88-9). The party has since remained broadly faithful to these policies. Today, it remains rather left-leaning. Its belief in free-market economics is tempered by a perception that the market can achieve sub-optimal results at the individual level. These imperfections of the market should then be corrected by some level of state intervention. The Liberal party went from a 'negative' definition of freedom to a 'positive' definition of freedom ('freedom to'). This is reflected in their belief in equality of opportunities, that is, that people cannot be free if poverty, sickness and unemployment hold them back.

The Liberal Democrats kept the flame of liberalism burning in British politics and revived a party that seemed to be on the brink of electoral extinction in the 1950s and 1960s. If they have failed so far to recompose the left-of-centre in Westminster, they have achieved better results in Scotland and Wales, where they have managed to be coalition partners with Labour. Most notably, the Scottish Liberal Democrats have been in coalition with Labour since 1999.

### *5.3.2. Organisation at the central level, state-wide party processes*

The party is a federation of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, the Welsh Liberal Democrats and the Liberal Democrats in England (called 'State Parties'). The Liberal Democrats inherited this federal structure from the Liberal Party (Curtice 1988: 104). At the time of the merger between the Liberal party and the SDP, Scottish Liberals advocated the permanence of the federal structure, supported by their Welsh counterparts (Ingle 1996: 114). The constitution of the 'federal party' declares that the 'state parties' are sovereign and are entitled to exercise any power not reserved to the Federal party. In the terminology of the Liberal Democrats, 'regional parties' are subdivisions of the state parties and correspond to the boundaries of former constituencies for European parliamentary elections (which have become top-up areas in Scotland and Wales). However, to remain consistent with the terms used for the description of the other parties, the word 'regional' will be used to refer to the Scottish and Welsh organisational units. Finally, the lower geographical unit of organisation is at the level of Westminster constituencies (called 'local parties' by the Liberal

Democrats). Their organisation and supervision is a competence of the regional party branches.

The party expresses a commitment to a number of organising principles: decentralisation and principle of subsidiarity, by which decisions are taken at the lowest level compatible with party efficiency, proportional representation in party elections (single transferable vote), membership participation and gender parity (Ingle 1996: 114).

### *Constitutional guarantee*

The constitution of the UK Liberal Democrats stipulates that the regional party branches are responsible for any power not attributed to the federal party in the constitution. In its article 2, it lists the functions reserved to the UK party: policy in a number of areas, the party's overall strategy, preparations for UK and European parliamentary elections, presentation and image of the party and international relations. The constitution describes the procedures relative to UK-wide party processes, such as the functioning of UK party organs, the election of the leader of the British party, the policy process for general elections, the selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates and the party's relations with external organisations. The federal constitution can be amended by a vote of two thirds of the delegates voting at the federal conference. Any change in the respective powers of the UK and regional parties has to be accepted by the regional parties through their own procedures.

The regional parties in Scotland and Wales are free to organise and are responsible for the management of their own affairs. As a result, the Liberal Democrats receive a score of 3 for the input of regional branches in the revision of the party constitution and a score of 3 for the organisational freedom of the regional branches.

### *Selecting the party leader*

The election of the leader of the Liberal Democrats is a rather straightforward process. An election is called after the resignation, death or incapacitation of the leader, if the leader requests an election or loses her seat in the House of Commons, in the case of a vote of no confidence by the House of Commons parliamentary party, at the petition of at least 75 constituency parties or one year after a general election if a leadership elections has not yet taken place. Only members of the Commons parliamentary party supported by some of their colleagues and at least 200 party members from at least 20 local parties can be candidates.

Like the leader of the SDP, the leader of the Liberal Democrats is elected by the party members (Punnett 1992: 140-6). The party is generally committed to electoral reform in the UK in order to replace the plurality rule by proportional representation. It has started by implementing PR in its own internal elections. The chosen formula for all intra-party elections is single transferable vote (STV). Party members are consulted via postal ballot.

As a result, there is no special role for the Celtic fringes, but there is no special role for any particular section of the party in the process. All party members, be they English, Welsh or Scottish, simple party member or Member of Parliament, have the same weight in the election of the party leader. The results have however been quite favourable to Scotland. Charles Kennedy, the party's second leader, was an MP

representing a Scottish constituency, as was his deputy, Menzies Campbell.<sup>46</sup> However, a Scottish party officer recognised that having a Scottish leader in London did not always mean that the party understood better devolution and Scotland: 'the fact that the leader is Scottish can also create difficulties at times, when he [Charles Kennedy] seems to ignore the realities of Scottish politics', as has happened on a few occasions.

The selection by party members is a way to strengthen the legitimacy of the leader from potential rivals and intermediate-level activists and increase the leader's autonomy (Punnett 1992: 147-8). A leader with a popular public image enjoys a rather high level of autonomy in terms of policy and strategy. Ashdown and Kennedy both benefited from a good image and were clearly the most famous faces of their party. As a result of media exposure and in a context where party leaders play a crucial role in parliamentary debates, the party leader becomes the party itself. Such dominance clearly translates into intra-party dominance over other members of the parliamentary party and party structures (Ingle 1996: 119).

The method used to select the party leader means that there is no organised influence of the Scottish and Welsh parties over the process. As a result, the party receives a score of 0.

### *The Federal Executive*

The Federal Executive (FE) is the most important party committee. It manages the party on a daily basis and is 'responsible for directing, co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Federal party' (Liberal Democrats 2004). It comprises the party president<sup>47</sup>, who is elected for two years by postal ballot of party members, three vice-presidents (each is appointed from among its officers by a regional party branch), the party leader, two MPs, one peer, one MEP, two local councillors, one representative from each regional party branch, 15 members elected by the federal conference<sup>48</sup> and 5 non-voting members (the Chief Whip, the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee – the FAC, the party treasurer, the chief executive of the federal party, a representative of the party staff and the chair of the Federal Policy Committee). Out of 29 members, the FE counts 6 representatives from the regional party branches (England, Scotland and Wales).

The FE sets up the FAC, which is in charge of the finance and staff issues of the party. The FE has a potentially powerful power: it can conduct consultative ballots of party members on any issue it considers important enough in terms of the party's values and objectives or if it deems that the party's interests are at stake. It means that in theory the FE can try and overrule the party conference or even the Federal Policy Committee (FPC). Considering the implications the use of this power could have on the party's finance and cohesion, it is more a 'nuclear dissuasion' kind of power.

Unlike the Conservative and Labour parties, the executive committee of the central party is not responsible for the maintenance of the membership list and membership actions. It is the responsibility of each regional party branch to establish and maintain a register of party members. The FE has access to these lists, but it is a Joint State Membership Committee comprising two representatives from each

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<sup>46</sup> Campbell was elected leader in 2006.

<sup>47</sup> The party president has a rather administrative role within the party, as chair of a number of party organs, while the leader also has a political role and represents the party.

<sup>48</sup> The number of elected members has changed from 14 to 15. It must be equal to the number of members otherwise appointed or elected +1.

regional branch that is responsible for the co-ordination and promotion of party membership. However, the Welsh party has delegated this function to the central party (interview with Stephen Smith). It is possible to join the party at the regional level and the membership card refers to the regional affiliation of the member.

Both Scottish and Welsh party branches are always represented in state-wide party organs and they have two representatives each. The party receives a score of 1 for the involvement of regional branches in the central executive.

### *Candidate selection for Westminster general elections*

Like the other two parties, the Liberal Democrats provide for the selection of general election candidates by their constituency parties from a list of approved candidates established by a candidates committee. Unlike the Conservative and Labour parties, this process is a responsibility of the regional party branches in Scotland and Wales and in English regions. The UK-wide party has no responsibility over candidate selection.

Each regional party establishes a candidates committee that provides lists of approved candidates for Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections, co-ordinate and regulate the selection procedures and provide the adequate training to prospective candidates. The state-wide party's constitution provides a list of considerations that should inspire the candidates committees in their selection, such as experience within the party, adherence to the party's values, gender balance and the representation of social diversity in the pool of approved candidates. In England, the party organises an 'approval day' in which all the prospective candidates come together and are evaluated by panels of four people. Candidates were tested on their knowledge of party policy, their campaigning capacity and their performance in a press test (interview with Jeremy Hargreaves). Candidate selection is the main function of an otherwise weak English party. The procedure was the same in Scotland and Wales, where applicants were invited to a 'development day', where they were evaluated before being placed on the list of approved candidates.

The constitution also describes the selection process in great detail. Whereas the state parties can approve prospective candidates following their own rules, local parties have little room of manoeuvre over the actual selection process. The rules state that the local parties or their executive committee should establish a short-list of candidates that respects gender equality and the principle of representation of ethnic minorities. Local parties must then organise hustings meetings in which candidates can introduce themselves and party members can question them. A postal ballot of party members in each constituency then decides. Like for all party elections, the electoral system is STV. They have, however, complete freedom over the choice of their candidate, and there is no final approval of the selected candidates by either the regional party or the UK party.

In Scotland, the party was confronted to the problem of having to fill more positions than it had approved candidates. As a result, the 'best' seats, that is, the most winnable ones, had the 'best' candidates. For the rest, a 'licensing' system was established, by which local parties could select a candidate first and then have her approved by the Scottish Campaigns and Candidates Committee (interview with Douglas Herbison).

The exception to this procedure is in the case of a by-election. Because of the media attention that a by-election attracts, the Scottish party selects the candidate rather than the local party. In the words of a party official, 'no party trusts its local



party to just choose somebody local for something that they see as important as a by-election'.

Even though the selection is made by the local parties, the Scottish and Welsh parties are responsible for the oversight of the process and initial vetting of candidates. Moreover, the federal party is not involved in the process. As a result, the Liberal Democrats receive a score of 3 for this indicator.

### *Policy-making for general elections*

The Liberal Democrats have two policy-making bodies: the Federal Policy Committee (FPC) and the conference. The FPC is composed of the party leader, one MP elected by Liberal Democrat Ps, one MP from an English constituency, one MP representing a Scottish constituency and one MP from Wales, one Liberal peer, one MEP, the party president, three local councillors, one representative of each regional party and members elected by the annual conference so that they outnumber the members listed above by one.

The party tries to find a form of balance between internal party democracy and leadership autonomy, and its organisation 'combines leadership authority with substantial rank and file checks' (McKee 1994: 1006). The conference is the supreme policy-making organ of the party. The FPC is in charge of researching and developing policies, setting up working groups, presenting policy proposals to the annual conference and making the party manifesto. The leader is also an important source of policy proposals (Brack 1996: 97). The majority of the policy proposals debated at the conference come from the FPC, so the power of conference is quite limited in that respect (Garner and Kelly 1998: 176). 'As such, it is possibly the most influential body within the party' (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005: 58). There have nevertheless been cases of policy proposals being rejected by the conference (Brack 1996: 99).

The manifesto is built from conference motions and policy papers elaborated by the FPC and official parliamentary spokespersons (Liberal Democrats equivalent of shadow ministers). The 'timetable means that [...] some policy-making and 'updating' have to be done by the FPC' (interview with Matthew Taylor). The FPC presents a pre-manifesto draft for approval to the conference in the year preceding a general election. Tensions can nevertheless arise between the need to have policies that have been democratically elaborated and accepted by the party and the party's need to react quickly to current events or changes (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005: 59).

The Scottish and Welsh parties have a limited role in the elaboration of UK policy, even though 'it is always ensured that there are Scottish and Welsh people around the table' (interview with Jeremy Hargreaves). The main area of discussion is actually about what is devolved and what is not, rather than about policy. There seems to be a trend toward a growing distance, reported by several respondents, between the UK and regional levels. The regions have their own policy-making organs and their own conference for devolved issues. As a result, decreasing numbers of party members from Wales and Scotland attend the UK conference (interviews with Jenny Randerson). In the end, most of the discussions happen either at staff level or between the leaders. Informal links are especially important in Scotland, as the leader and deputy leader are Scottish. However, policy discussions have mainly to do with the distribution of competences and making sure that the UK manifesto does not clash with what has been done by the Scottish Liberal Democrats in their governing coalition with Labour. Scottish and Welsh parties are consulted on the wording of

specific sections so as to avoid embarrassment as the party may have different policies in Holyrood.

The Scottish and Welsh manifestos for general elections are elaborated by the Scottish and Welsh parties. Long before devolution, the party had separate Scottish and Welsh general election manifestos, which covered a wide range of issues that the party considered as the areas of competence that Wales would have in a federal UK (Deacon 1998: 476). Because 'the federal party has to make sure that the manifestos are compatible', Scottish and Welsh manifestos are released a little after the UK manifesto (interview with Matthew Taylor). For devolved issues, the Scottish and Welsh parties are free to elaborate their own policies. In both parties, a regional policy committee is responsible for drawing up the manifesto. As a party official said, 'no one from the federal party has the right to come and tell the Welsh party that they should put in their manifesto.' The distinction between the areas of competence of Westminster and the devolved bodies is reflected in the composition of the regional manifestos:

'The Welsh party would take more or less word for word federal party policies on Westminster issues. And then they would add on their own the Wales-relevant policies. The Welsh party would make clear what they would do if they were in control of Welsh Assembly.'

A very similar argument was made in Scotland, where the situation is further complicated by the party's coalition with Labour and the policy record of the coalition:

'The federal party has devised a number of lead lines about the campaign. These are things like abolition of council tax, abolition tuition fees, provision of free personal care, more police on the beat, etc. most of which [...] are lines which had a great deal to do with what we've actually done in Scotland. They don't match our headline. The trouble is that if Charles Kennedy gives interviews about the manifesto on television and says things about what they're going to do about tuition fees, free personal care, it doesn't quite fit the Scottish position. He's going to be very careful to say 'as we've already done in Scotland' [...]. There are difficulties there, in presentational terms, which we're struggling with, to be quite honest' (interview with Robert Brown).

However, the Liberal Democrats are really conscious of these difficulties and they have been quite careful to stress these differences. They have also little qualms about the reality of devolution meaning that the party in Scotland or Wales can adopt its own policies. In addition to this acceptance of diversity, the party is characterised by a good degree of representation of the Scottish and Welsh parties in the state-wide party's decisional organs. However, the evidence shows that the Scottish and Welsh parties contribute relatively little to the debates of the state-wide party, except to remind the state-wide party of the limits of its competences. Moreover, Scottish and Welsh activists tend to be less interested in the federal party, as 'the centre of gravity of Welsh politics has shifted to Cardiff, and Edinburgh for Scotland' (interview with Rob Humphreys).

The input of the regional branches in the elaboration of the state-wide manifesto is limited to a number of informal meetings and the presence of Scottish and Welsh representatives in central party organs such as the Federal Policy Committee. They have a larger room for manoeuvre with respect to the elaboration of the Scottish and Welsh manifestos for general elections. As a result, the party is given a score of 1 for this indicator.

### *5.3.3. Organisation in Scotland and Wales, powers and autonomy of the regional party branches*

Within the organisation of the Liberal Democrats, the Welsh and Scottish Liberal Democrats are autonomous 'state' parties that are free to organise and whose activities are not overseen by the central party.

#### *Selecting the Scottish and Welsh party leaders*

Like for the UK party, the leaders of the Scottish and Welsh parties are elected by postal ballot of all party members in each region.

In Scotland, the party constitution requires that the party leader should be a member of the Scottish Parliament and the deputy leader a member of the House of Commons representing a Scottish constituency. The threshold of participation in the contest is very low, as the support of only one of their peers is necessary to obtain nomination. The leader (and her deputy) is then elected by postal ballot of party members. As is the rule with the Liberal Democrats, the electoral system is single transferable vote. The leader is 'responsible for the political direction of the party and for promoting its cause in Scotland', while the deputy has a co-ordination role, liaising between Scotland and London. Finally, the party president, who is also elected by the party members, has a more administrative role and is described in the Scottish party's constitution as the 'guardian of the Constitution'. The position of leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats is now crucial, as Jim Wallace and then Nichol Stephen (since 2005) have been deputy First minister of Scotland. As a result, Jim Wallace has held the position of First minister on several occasions, in replacement of Donald Dewar and then Henry McLeish.

In Wales, the leader does not have a deputy, but there are two different leaders: a party leader and a leader in the National Assembly for Wales. Both are elected by postal ballot of party members, from among the Welsh party's MPs, AMs or MEPs for the former and from among AMs for the latter. To obtain nomination, a candidate for the party leadership must gain the support of one member of either Houses of Parliament and thirty party members from at least 6 constituencies. For the leader in the National Assembly, a candidate needs the support of one Assembly Member and 30 party members, with at least 5 party members by region.

At the moment, the party leader, Lembit Öpik, is an MP. There is therefore a separation of competences between Öpik, who speaks for the party as a whole and is 'the public face of the party', and Michael German, the leader of the Liberal Democrat group in the National Assembly, who speaks for devolved matters. In this respect, the party president's role has increased with devolution, as it serves a role of mediation and co-ordination. The president cannot be an elected official (MP, peer, AM or MEP) and represents the voluntary party (interview with Rob Humphreys). It is certainly convenient for the party to have an MP as leader because of the particular difficulty of addressing an electorate that relies mostly on English-UK media. It would therefore be difficult for German to gain access to UK media, in particular as the Liberal Democrats came only in third position in the last election.

The Liberal Democrats have not had the same issues as the Labour party with regard to the choice of the Scottish and Welsh party leaders. On the contrary, the central party has let its regional branches chose its leaders without intervening in the debates. As a result, the party receives a score of 3 for this indicator.

### *Candidate selection for elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales*

Just like the Scottish and Welsh parties are free to select their Westminster parliamentary candidates, they can select their candidates for elections to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly without any interference from the UK party.

In Scotland, like for Westminster elections, there is a two-tier process whereby winnable seats are attributed to candidates who have gone through the centralised approval process overseen by the Scottish Campaigns and Candidates Committee, and candidates for more hopeless seats can be selected locally before being vetted by the Scottish party. The list of approved candidates is established after prospective candidates have gone through a 'development day'. Overall, 40 candidates were approved out of 43 or 44 applicants (interview with Derek Barrie). Any party member leaving in Scotland can apply.

Regional lists were made of people who were on the list of approved candidates and people who had applied to a constituency in the region or to the region itself. Party members in each region were asked to vote in order to establish the order of the candidates on the list.

In Wales, the selection of candidates for constituency seats is also very close to that for Westminster parliamentary elections, with one exception: candidates have to live in Wales. The party uses the same criteria and the same list is used for both elections. The party organises 'development days', during which the political awareness of prospective candidates, their policy knowledge and media 'compatibility' are evaluated. Additional training can be required before candidates can be fully approved (interview with Jenny Randerson).

The elaboration of the regional lists is overseen by regional committees consisting of representatives of the constituencies in each region. After several hustings meetings, a ballot of party members in the region is organised either at the hustings or by postal ballot. People are placed on the list in the order in which they come out after the vote.

The Liberal Democrats have a completely autonomous process of selection of their candidates for Scottish and Welsh elections and they receive a score of 3.

### *Making party policy for Scottish and Welsh elections*

In both regions, it is the regional policy committee that is responsible for the elaboration of the election manifesto. These policy committees set up policy groups, which lead consultations and produce policy papers, which are then presented to the conference for approval. The conference is for the Liberal Democrats an important policy-making organ of the party. As Jenny Randerson put it, 'they are not just shop-windows by any means'. The manifestos are elaborated by the Welsh and Scottish Policy Committees on the basis of the policies adopted by their respective conferences.

However, the need to be reactive to political events means that AMs and MSPs have an important role in policy-making. In such a case, AMs co-ordinate their response with the Welsh Policy Committee. With devolution, the role of the Scottish Executive Committee (SEC) is also less political and more administrative, as the policy centre of the party has shifted to the Scottish Policy Committee (SPC) and the Scottish parliamentary party (interview with Derek Barrie). In particular in the context of the coalition with Labour, the MSPs become important sources of policy expertise, and the convener of the SPC regularly meets with the Deputy First minister.

The central party has a role in the process in the sense that the commitments of the UK party in terms of budget and finance have an impact on the finance of the regions. The Liberal Democrats are careful to stress the link between the UK financial commitments and the resources that will be made available to the regions. Even though they would like to see the current financial aspect of devolution reformed, their regional manifestos use the UK framework to finance their proposals in Scotland and Wales (interview with Jenny Randerson). In this way, Welsh MPs are consulted on the Welsh elections manifesto, mainly over financial issues (interview with Roger Williams). Robert Brown reports that liaison with Scottish MPs is sometimes difficult because they are more focused on Westminster issues, but the issue of finance is one where the levels tend to co-operate. Overall, the regional parties 'don't really pay much attention to what the English party is doing. We're a federal party. That's what federalism means' (interview with Rob Humphreys).

The Liberal Democrats of all levels emphasise the fact that they share the same principles but that differences can happen because of different circumstances. As Randerson puts it, 'in most areas, Welsh policies are different but not dissimilar' because there is a lot that is relevant in Wales but is not in England and vice versa. This might lead to limited policy differences. For instance, the Welsh party 'is less inclined 'to support private sector involvement in the NHS than the UK party (interview with Rob Humphreys). The same added that 'the Welsh party is quite fiercely protective of its own policies'.

The Liberal Democrats receive a score of 3 for this indicator because of the independence of the Scottish and Welsh parties in the making of regional policy and the elaboration of their manifestos for regional elections.

### *Party finance*

Table 5.5 below shows that there is, like for the Labour and Conservative parties, a clear disparity between the resources of the central party and those of the Scottish and Welsh parties. The table also shows that the majority of donations go to the federal party. The exception is 2001, when a large share of the donations went directly to the local parties for constituency-level campaigning.

The main sources of income of the Scottish and Welsh parties are membership fees, policy development funding from the central party and donations from the party's elected representatives. After the PEERA introduced the Policy Development Fund, the regional parties negotiated the distribution of this fund with the central party (interview with Rob Humphreys).

Before devolution, the Welsh Liberal Democrats did not have a budget (Deacon 1998: 476). They started the devolution period with policies elaborated by an influential conference and a highly motivated group of activists and members of the Welsh Policy Committee (Deacon 1998: 477). It initially relied heavily on the central party for its resources and has since managed to raise some money for its own activities. The Scottish Liberal Democrats ceased to be eligible for public funding from the Scottish Parliament after the 2003 election because its number of ministers increased above the one fifth of the parliamentary group ratio of eligibility. It now counts 5 ministers from a group of 17 MSPs. For regional elections, the central party increases its financial support to the Welsh and Scottish parties (interview with Derek Barrie).

**Table 5.5.** Resources and income distribution in the Liberal Democrats (£)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Income central party</b>	5,033,286	3,694,525	4,096,280	5,060,121	8,582,035
Income Scottish LD	n.a.	253,360	485,206 <sup>#</sup>	314,181	360,469
Income Welsh LD	96,913	139,204	335,750	175,280	187,111
<b>Membership fees</b>					
Central party	589,699	680,032	680,170	709,539	768,450
Scotland	n.a.	108,558	163,532	137,961	138,359
Wales	42,814	48,067	49,313	49,004	93,394*
<b>Total donations</b>	2,689,245	1,019,506	1,406,176	2,099,818	5,443,036
To central party	684,112	521,759	574,652	1,134,431	3,848,243
Scotland	n.a.	26,100	139,039	54,940	50,420
Wales	15,020	8,866	10,235	59,192	21,087
Share donations to central party	25.4%	51.2%	40.9%	54.0%	70.7%
<b>Public funding</b>					
Policy development grant	253,890	456,333	445,317	427,804	422,050
Short money <sup>§</sup>	1,155,583	1,174,410	1,210,901	1,244,855	1,536,220
Cranborne money <sup>§</sup>	68,278	195,000	201,045	206,272	212,873
Scottish Parliament assistance <sup>§</sup>	68,224	n.a.	9,677	0	0
<b>Policy development grant received from central party</b>					
Scotland	n.a.	18,859	32,537 <sup>†</sup>	25,011	27,608
Wales	8,053	25,405	32,795	21,677	39,492 <sup>°</sup>

<sup>#</sup> includes income of the Scottish Liberal Democrats Parliamentary group income (£73,273 in 2003 - £38,764 of public funding). The accounts of the SLD parliamentary group of the subsequent years were not available.

\* Together with income from research services, AM and MP donations, donations and appeals

<sup>§</sup> correspond to years 2001/02, 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06.

<sup>†</sup> includes £5,769 of PDF money for the Scottish LD Parliamentary Group.

<sup>°</sup> includes a grant from the federal party ('Policy officer development').

Sources: <http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk>; Liberal Democrats (2002, 2004, 2006); Scottish Liberal Democrats (2004, 2005, 2006); Scottish Liberal Democrats Parliamentary Group (2004) and Welsh Liberal Democrats (2003, 2005, 2006).

The Scottish and Welsh parties found extra resources in 2003 for the funding of their election campaigns. This is most evident for the Scottish party, which managed to significantly increase its income from donations. However, none of the parties receive donations from big donors or trade unions, and they both count together donations and appeals to the membership. This probably distorts the picture, as the Electoral Commission's register of donations reports only two donations from individuals for that year, for a total of over £9,000. The donations reported to the Electoral Commission by the Welsh party are nearly exclusively from the party's AMs.

The number of staff of the Scottish party has increased from 7 to 9 since 2002, while 6 people work for the Welsh party (albeit in 2005 4 of them worked part-time). One of the Welsh party's members of staff is paid by the central party to assist the party's policy development. The party also provides technical assistance, for instance by maintaining the Welsh party website.

The Liberal Democrats receive a score of 1 for the funding of its regional branches because of their rather limited resources and the fact that the state-wide party supports them with staff and/or additional financial resources.

### Conclusion

The Liberal Democrats gives complete autonomy to their Scottish and Welsh regional branches. The party at the central level is characterised by 'an absence of the centralised structures of the SDP, while similarly improving on the ill-disciplined organisation of the old Liberal party' (McKee 1994: 1006). The autonomy of the regional branches has led to some level of policy divergence, often based on the particular needs of the region rather than on a divergence in principles. For instance Rob Humphreys declared that 'philosophically, it would be wrong to say we [the Welsh Liberal Democrats] are a completely separate party from London. We share the same positions in life about liberalism, social justice and so on, so we're never going to depart'.

**Table 5.6.** Coding of the organisation of the Liberal Democrats

	Scotland	Wales
<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>		
1. Selection the leader of the state-wide party	0	0
2. Involvement of regional party branches in the central party executive	1	1
3. Selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections	3	3
4. Adoption of the manifesto for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1
5. Amending the constitution of the state-wide party	3	3
<i>Sum involvement</i>	8	8
<i>Autonomy of the regional party branches</i>		
6. Organisational freedom of the regional party branches	3	3
7. Selection of the regional party leaders	3	3
8. Selection of candidates for regional elections	3	3
9. Adoption of the manifesto for regional elections	3	3
10. Funding of the regional party branches	1	1
<i>Sum autonomy</i>	13	13

Overall, while there are organs to co-ordinate party activities and the Scottish and Welsh parties are integrated in central party organs, the attendance of Scottish and Welsh members of the central organs is often low (Deacon 1998 provides the example of Wales). A number of respondents reported that there was now 'a certain distance' between England on the one hand, and Scotland and Wales on the other.

### 5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has described the organisation of the three British state-wide parties. It appears that all three have taken devolution into account to diverse degrees and with various levels of facility.

As the party that most supports devolution and that would even favour a federal United Kingdom, the Liberal Democrats are the party that has granted the highest level of autonomy to both its Scottish and Welsh branches. It had adopted a 'federal' form of organisation even before devolution as a part of its Liberal heritage. The Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats are free to organise, choose their leaders and candidates and elaborate their own policies without the intervention of the central party. Divergence is considered as an inevitable consequence of devolution which the party has to accept and adapt to. The level of vertical integration of the party is relatively limited. While the Scottish and Welsh parties are integrated in central party

organs, both regions and their members now tend to focus more on the regional level and participate less in the activities of the state-wide party.

The Conservative party clearly has an asymmetrical organisation. The Scottish Conservative party has a long history of autonomy from the UK party and has remained a more autonomous entity within the Conservative party than its Welsh counterpart. The Welsh party was created when it appeared that a Welsh Assembly would be created. The feeling of a separate identity is less pronounced there than in Scotland, and the Welsh party is more dependent on the UK party than the Scottish one, in particular with regard to its funding. Respondents recognised that divergence would be possible, in particular because of the opposition status of the party, and some divergence between the central party and the Scottish and Welsh parties has occurred (Fabre *et al.* 2006: 22). This has rarely led to high-profile disagreement, and the central leadership has remained relatively outside of Scottish and Welsh party disputes.

Finally, the Labour party has been the party that has had most difficulty adapting to devolution despite being the party that has devolved power to Scotland and Wales. The central party has involved itself in the selection of candidates and party leaders to control the devolution process and limit the potential for policy divergence. This has produced mixed results. While it has indeed been influential in the selection of candidates in Scotland, it was eventually unsuccessful in its attempts to control the leadership selection process in Wales. It has also failed to prevent policy divergence, and the Welsh party in particular has been eager to prove its Welsh distinctiveness. Finally, these attempts to controlled processes that were supposed to be left to the choice of the regional parties led to internal disputes that harmed the party's image and strengthened New Labour's image as 'control freaks'. More recent developments show that the central party is now much less involved in the affairs of the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties, which are now freer to adopt their own policies.



## CHAPTER 6. THE *ESTADO DE LAS AUTONOMÍAS* AND THE SPANISH PARTY SYSTEMS

This chapter looks at regionalisation in Spain, with first a historical overview and a focus on the autonomous communities of Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia. The first section looks at the formation of the Spanish state, the transition towards democracy, the ensuing process of regionalisation and the debates around the territorial structure of the state. The second section describes the various party systems in which these state-wide parties compete: the Spanish party system and the Catalan, Basque and Galician party systems. It will focus on the evolution of the vote for state-wide parties since 1977 in the Spanish and regional elections of these three autonomous communities and will discuss whether regional elections can be characterised as second-order elections or whether they are elections in their own right, with their own stakes and patterns of voting.

### 6.1. Decentralisation in Spain

#### *6.1.1. The long road toward democracy and decentralisation*

*State formation, the dominance of centralism in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Spain and the Republican experiment*

Spain was formed by the progressive Reconquest of the territory from the Moors. During the period that spanned over eight centuries, a number of regions developed separately and acquired their own social norms, laws and institutions. For instance, Catalonia was able to have its own institutions, developed and codified its own language and established itself as an economic and political power centre and developed its own local government (Moxon-Browne 1989: 47). Whereas the Basque country never experienced this form of political unity, its provinces developed their own institutions and acquired special rights (*fueros*) (Lecours 2001b: 216-7). Finally, Galicia did not experience similar levels of self-government. The *Junta del Reino de Galicia*, created in 1528, had very limited powers and cannot be considered as a real organ of government and representation (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguerra 2001: 40-1).

Even after the unification of the country in 1469, Spain remained a 'loose arrangement of multiple semi-autonomous areas' until the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Lecours 2001b: 216). Regions, provinces and municipalities were allowed to retain their codes of law and special rights. The Spanish monarchy did not initially develop centralised institutions and adopted instead a rather confederal structure (Payne 1991: 479). This changed under Philip V (who ruled between 1700 and 1746). He and his successors tried to emulate the French centralised administrative system but failed to undermine local elites, and attempts to regulate public life led to popular revolts (Magone 2004: 2).

Most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were characterised by centralism and authoritarianism (Aja 2001: 229-30). Payne (1991: 480-1) argues that Spanish nationalism is a relatively late invention and that instead a 'Spanish ideology' based on the defence of Catholicism 'served as the ideological and functional equivalent of a kind of nationalism in the pre-modern and pre-national era'. The Spanish national identity was later strengthened by the common opposition to the Napoleonic invasion (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguerra 2001: 16-7). Navarre, the Basque provinces and Catalonia are the regions where this opposition to the centralisation of the state was the most pronounced. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of various movements of opposition to the centralisation of the state and the political mobilisation of peripheral identities. This mobilisation was stronger in Catalonia and the Basque country than in Galicia, where regionalism took a more culturalist turn and was less socially valued. These forms of regionalism were to remain unsuccessful for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was characterised by different attempts to resist external influences on the Spanish polity and to quash the moderate liberal movement that was born during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in particular during the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) (Di Febo and Juliá 2003: 35, 54-6).

The Second Republic was in this respect an exception. The Republic adopted a regionalised structure, albeit with some limits to regional self-government (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 113-6). The issue of the type of organisation of the Republic was already being debated when Macià (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*) proclaimed Catalonia as a republic within the Spanish federal republic. This forced the debate on the organisation of the state to move forward, but the new Republic curtailed the autonomist ambitions of ERC, and the Spanish parliament adopted a watered-down version of the Statute of autonomy approved in Catalonia (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 124-7). In the Basque country, the contents of the Statute proved more controversial and the debate in the Basque country and then in Madrid lasted until 1936. The Statute of autonomy was finally approved in October 1936. The region enjoyed a brief but successful period of self-government until March-April 1937, when the Francoist forces attacked the region (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 147-9, 152-4). Galicia followed a similar trajectory: its initial Statute of autonomy was approved in 1932 but it was only finally approved in June 1936. The start of the Civil War prevented its adoption by the Spanish Parliament (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 161-3). Other regions also initiated a process of elaboration of their Statute of autonomy. Whereas these efforts were unsuccessful in the Balearic Islands and Aragon, Andalusia, Castile and Valencia were all waiting for the Spanish Parliament to approve their Statutes when the Civil War started (Núñez Seixas 1999: 109-11, de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 117-22).

The Franco regime imposed a centralised system of government and actively promoted a unitary conception of the Spanish state and identity (*hispanidad*) based on Catholicism, a common language (Castilian), Spanish culture and traditionalism (Di Febo and Juliá 2003: 29). This Spanish nationalism led to brutal attempts to harmonise the national culture, prohibited the expression of regional identities and enforced a strong repression against regionalist movements. This repression extended to regional languages and dialects and non-Castilian cultural practices and manifestations (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 165-6; Moreno 1997: 75).

This repression of regional movements and identities produced opposite results to those expected by the regime. Instead of weakening their strength after the exile of the most prominent nationalist figures and the prohibition of regional traditions and

practices, it transformed regional identities into forms of resistance to the dictatorship, so that regionalism became more radical and spread to regions where it was previously weak (de la Granja, Beramendi and Anguera 2001: 167; Moreno 1997: 76-7). Eventually, the Spanish identity was identified with the authoritarian regime while regionalism was assimilated to the defence of liberties and the struggle for democracy (Lecours 2001b: 220).

#### *Democratic transition and the establishment of the Estado de las Autonomías*

After the death of Franco, Spain had to engage in a process of democratic transition and adopt a new constitution. The transition came from within the system, under the impulsion of the king Juan Carlos, who was chosen by Franco to succeed him, and his Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, and under the pressure of society (Linz and Stepan 1996: 88). Spain is a case of 'regime-initiated' transition, called *ruptura pactada* because it resulted from an agreement between the elites of the old regime and the opposition. In order to avoid the revolutionary pattern of the Portuguese transition to democracy, the Spanish transition was negotiated between the Francoist elites and the main opposition parties (Magone 16-7). The outcome was the constitution adopted in 1978 and the creation of a decentralised parliamentary monarchy. In spite of the strong popular support in favour of political change, the transition process was very much elite-driven, with a special emphasis on consensus and party control (Holliday 2002: 251).

The organisation of the state was one of the most important issues of the transition. Linz and Stepan (1996: 99-107) argue that Spain's resolution of its problems of 'stateness' is one of the reasons for its successful democratic transition and consolidation. The transition process occurred in a context of popular mobilisation in favour of democracy and decentralisation, and renewed nationalism in Catalonia and the Basque country, where ETA's violence was escalating.<sup>49</sup> Adopted by referendum in 1978, the constitution was nevertheless rejected or ignored by a majority of the Basque electorate (Conversi 1997: 145). While 70.24% of those who cast a ballot voted in favour of the text, abstention reached 55.35% of the electorate.

The constitution does not define the new democratic state as either federal or unitary. It recognises the 'indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation' while at the same time acknowledging that Spain is made up of 'nationalities and regions' that had a special 'right to autonomy' (Article 2, Constitution). The regions, or autonomous communities (*Comunidades Autónomas*), were to achieve autonomy through bilateral negotiations of their statute with the central government. It was decided to create autonomous communities all over the country rather than just satisfy the demands from Catalonia and the Basque country (Guibernau 2006: 62).

The Constitution provided for two routes to autonomy, a 'fast' route for the 'historic nationalities' (Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia) through Article 151, and another 'slow' route for the other regions (via the article 143). The fast route allowed the three historic nationalities to achieve full autonomy relatively rapidly and by approval of their statutes of autonomy by referendum. In contrast, Article 143 provided that the other regions, should they wish to establish themselves as autonomous communities, would first have a more limited autonomy through statutes

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<sup>49</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996: 99) mention that while ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, Euskadi and Freedom) had killed 43 people between the moment of its creation in 1960 and Franco's death, it caused 65 deaths in 1978, 87 in 1979 and 96 in 1980.

that needed to be approved both by the *Cortes* (the Spanish Parliament) and the population of the region through a referendum (Gibbons 1999: 18).

By 1981, four autonomous communities had been established through Article 151 (Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia and Andalusia, although the latter is not considered as a historical nationality but used the mechanisms of art. 151 to force the adoption a more favourable statute). The other regions obtained statutes with fewer powers through Article 143 (Magone 2004: 118-9).

The status, powers and autonomy of the Spanish autonomous communities are guaranteed by Article 2 and Title VIII of the constitution. Moreover, the statutes of autonomy have a secondary constitutional nature, which mean that they cannot be amended by a simple law by either central or regional government, but also that they prevail over central and regional laws (Aja 2001: 234). They can only be changed by procedures determined by the statutes themselves and after a referendum within the community.

### *6.1.2. Institutional organisation of the State of the Autonomies*

#### *Distribution of competences between central and regional government*

The constitution does not provide clear, undisputable criteria of separation of powers between central and regional governments (Pérez Moreno 1980: 30). Instead, regionalisation is an open process of asymmetrical regional government with an arbitrating role for the Constitutional Tribunal (Moreno 2001: 61). The Constitution provides a list of powers that are exclusive to the central government, leaving residual powers (i.e., those that are not listed in a region's statute of autonomy) to the central government except in five regions (Watts 1999: 30, 126). The shared areas of competence are quite numerous (Fossas 1999: 13), as the Spanish parliament can develop central framework legislation in any policy area. The competences of the autonomous communities are to be found in the statutes of autonomy, as each statute was elaborated by the region and agreed with the central government. The autonomous communities have generally included in their statutes all the competences that they were able to claim, but in some cases a region refused to be responsible over a particular field or 'forgot' a competence (Aja 2003: 122).

The regions that acceded to autonomy via the 'fast route' (Catalonia, the Basque country, Galicia, Navarre, Andalusia) were given a larger range of competences, important transfers of services and corresponding financial resources via article 149 of the constitution. The other autonomous communities were to comply with article 148 of the constitution, which lists the competences that can be regionalised and provides that this represents a maximum for at least five years after the adoption of their statutes. This difference between two categories of regions derives from the principle of 'differential facts' (*hechos diferenciales*) based on a combination of historical, ethnic and institutional factors, that differentiate the three historic nationalities and Navarre from the other Spanish regions (Moreno 2001: 94; Aja 2003: 172). On the one hand, these regions are aware of their distinctiveness and consider it as an argument in favour of a 'preferential' treatment that gives them more powers and resources, and on the other hand, developments in Andalusia and the higher status of the historic nationalities provides incentives for the other regions to demand their own statutes of autonomy and obtain the largest possible degree of autonomy, following the principle of 'comparative grievance' (Moreno 2001: 97). Via its ability to transfer legislative and executive competences without reforming regional statutes of autonomy, the

**Table 6.1.** Major types of competences of the state and the autonomous communities

Exclusive competences of the ACs	Concurrent competences	Shared competences	Exclusive competences of the state	Other type of competences*
Autonomous institutions	General organisation of the economy	Labour legislation	Defence and armed forces	Culture
Agriculture and farming	Education	Commercial and penitentiary law	International relations	Denomination of origin
Tourism	Local government	Intellectual and industrial property	Nationality, immigration and asylum	Public companies (participation)
Social services	Health services	Legislation over pharmaceutical products	Foreign trade	Public order
Language**	Credit and saving banks		Currency	Regional television
Hunting and fishing	Public administrations and civil service		Organisation of credit, banks and insurance	
Trade and consumer policy	Environment		External health care	
Industry	Media and communications		Criminal law	
Urban planning and housing			Civil law***	
Railways, transports, water supplies, ports and airports, museums and libraries <i>of the AC</i>			Police****	
			Railways, transports, water supplies, ports and airports, museums and libraries <i>of the state</i>	

\* Special cases that require the agreement of both central and regional governments (denomination of origin), or that can be exercised by both levels indistinctly (culture).

\*\* Balearic Islands, Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia and the Valencian Community.

\*\*\* Some aspects of civil law are exclusive regional competences in the communities that had their own civil law tradition before the Civil war: Aragon, the Balearic Islands, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Navarre and the Valencian Community.

\*\*\*\* The communities of the Basque country, Catalonia, Galicia and Navarre were allowed to establish their own police forces.

*Source:* adapted from Aja 2003: 129-131.

Parliament granted the Canaries and the Valencian Community such powers that they achieved a level of self-government comparable to that of the most powerful regions in 1983 (Morata 2001: 124).

Early on, the Spanish government tried to limit the open-ended nature of this process of regionalisation and reduce the asymmetry between the regions. After the 1981 attempted coup by some elements of the military, the government tried to bring

order to and limit the regionalisation process by introducing the Basic Law of Harmonisation of the Autonomous Process (*Ley Orgánica de Armonización del Proceso Autonómico*, LOAPA) in 1982. It was designed to harmonise the statutes of autonomy but also to limit the autonomy of Catalonia and the Basque country (Conversi 1997: 146). The autonomous communities mobilised against the text and presented a request against it to the Constitutional Court (*Tribunal Constitucional*), which declared that 14 of its 38 articles were unconstitutional (Magone 2004: 120), and the law was eventually abandoned.

The expression '*café para todos*' (coffee for everyone) refers to the preference for institutional symmetry between the regions. It is often used as a derogatory term by nationalist movements from the historic nationalities to reject the symmetry between all the regions and re-emphasise their entitlement to a special status because of their 'differential facts'. The 1990s represented a new phase in the reduction of the asymmetry between regions. After 10 years of practice, the 'slow route' autonomous communities that had not already benefited from any transfer of competence started to demand more powers. In 1992, the PSOE and the PP reached an agreement to increase the level of competence of 10 communities in a uniform manner and bring their level of autonomy closer to that of the 'fast route' communities (Basic Law 9/1992 over the transfer of competences to the autonomous communities that acceded to autonomy via article 143). In 1993 these autonomous communities gained responsibility over, among other things, the functions relative to the management of education at all levels, including the transfers of the necessary staff and resources, social services and the environment (Morata 2001: 137). This reform established quasi-total symmetry in the *Estado de las Autonomías*, except in the areas that relate directly to 'differential facts' such as language, *foral* rights and insularity (Soto 2005: 299).

After the 1996 general elections, the Partido Popular found itself in the same position as the PSOE three years earlier. In need of the support of nationalist parties, and with a pivotal role for *Convergència i Unió*, the PP conceded new transfers of powers to the autonomous communities: assignment of 30% of the income tax to all regions in function of their level of competence and resources, transfers of competence with regard to employment and ports, and new policing powers for Catalonia (Morata 2001: 140-1). Eventually, education and health also became responsibilities of the autonomous communities (Magone 2004: 120).

As a result, the original asymmetry of the system has been considerably reduced (Moreno 2001: 64-5; Morata 2001: 143-4). The seventeen autonomous communities are responsible for agriculture, education, health policy, regional economic development, culture and research, among other things. However, the bilateral nature of the negotiation of the statutes of autonomy means that each statute is unique and each region has its own list of powers.

Aja (2003: 127-31) makes a distinction between four types of distribution of competence: competences exclusive to the state (central government), competences exclusive to the autonomous communities, concurrent competences (the state can enact framework or general legislation and the autonomous communities can pass secondary legislation and have the executive competence), and shared competences (the state passes legislation and the autonomous communities execute national legislation) (Table 6.1). However, there remain some grey areas, in particular in relation to the degree of detail compatible with the exercise of the central government's competence to enact framework legislation, or with regard to the central government's ability to regulate in order to ensure the equality of treatment of all citizens across the country.

### *Intergovernmental relations*

The Spanish regions have a very limited input in central decision-making. The upper chamber of the *Cortes*, the Senate (*Senado*), is only partly a chamber of territorial representation. The bulk of the *Senadores* are elected at the provincial level,<sup>50</sup> and the autonomous communities appoint 51 out of the 259 members of the Senate. Intergovernmental relations generally take the shape of thematic conferences (*sectoral conferences*), in which the advisers or regional ministers (*Consejeros*), of the various autonomous communities meet with the corresponding Spanish minister (Law 12/1983 on the Autonomous Process, art. 4). The scope of these conferences was extended by the 1992 autonomic pacts. However, thematic conferences meet only irregularly, and they seem to be rather disregarded by ministers (Magone 2004: 121) as well as by the historic communities, which prefer to deal with the central government through bilateral relations (Roller 2002; Grau i Creus 2000). This lack of 'shared rule' has contributed to a conflictive approach to central-regional relationships and the use of unilateral demands as a bargaining strategy (Máiz 1999: 179).

Given this limited regional input in central decision-making, the central government has frequently engaged in specifying central laws beyond what the regions deemed acceptable (Börzel 2002: 94). Conversely, the regions have sometimes implemented central legislation as they saw fit. This led to quite numerous conflicts, in which the Constitutional Court has often played a crucial role in clarifying the respective areas of competence of the state and autonomous communities (Grau i Creus 2005: 266).

### *The territorial distribution of resources*

In parallel to the increased competences of the Spanish autonomous communities, their share of public expenditures has considerably increased as well. Today the expenditures of the autonomous communities represent over a third of all public expenditures (see table 6.2 below).

**Table 6.2.** Territorial distribution of public expenditures (%)

	1979	1984	1987	1990	1996	1999	2002	2005
Central government	90.0	75.6	72.6	67.5	65.5	61.3	51.0	51.2
Autonomous communities	—	12.2	14.6	19.2	22.6	26.0	32.5	36.0
Local authorities	10.0	12.1	12.8	13.3	11.9	12.7	16.5	12.8

*Sources:* Morata 2001: 131; Swenden 2006: 109; Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda 2006.

Two systems of regional finance coexist within the Spanish system: on the one hand, the Basque provinces (Alava, Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa) and Navarre are able to fix and levy most of their own taxes. They then send a share of their fiscal revenues to the central government to compensate for its services and contribute to the solidarity fund. The Basque provinces also send part of their revenues to the Basque government to finance its services and the tasks it performs (Aja 2001: 235). Every five years, the government and the regions negotiate an agreement with each region (called the *concierto autonómico*) that stipulates the amount of money attributed to the Spanish government in compensation for the services it provides (Gunther, Montero

<sup>50</sup> The provinces are one level below the Autonomous Communities, except in the case of the uniprovincial regions: Principality of Asturias, Cantabria, Madrid Community, Murcia Region, Navarre, La Rioja, and the Balearic Islands.

and Botella 2004: 298). The *foral* regime provides the two autonomous communities with sensibly more funds than the common regime.

On the other hand, the general regime gives the central government the ability to raise the majority of taxes and then redistribute part of these revenues to the autonomous communities for the funding of their competences (Aja 2003: 135). The autonomous communities draw their finance from three sources: revenues raised in the region, share of the central state resources and transfers from the solidarity funds (Aja 2001: 235-7). The 1993 reform of the financial arrangement allocated 15% of income tax to autonomous communities in order to reduce the discrepancy between the communities' capacity to spend and their capacity to raise their own resources following the principle of fiscal co-responsibility (Soto 2005: 299-300).

**Table 6.3.** Sources of income of the autonomous communities of the general regime (2002) (%)

	Income tax	VAT	Special taxes	Transferred taxes	Compensation fund	Health guarantee	Total
Andalusia	13.5	17.2	11.6	9.0	48.6	0.2	100
Aragon	21.3	18.7	13.8	13.1	32.6	0.5	100
Asturias	19.4	19.6	11.1	10.9	38.3	0.7	100
Balearic Islands	26.9	49.1	21.1	13.9	-12.8	1.8	100
Canary Islands	16.3	0.0	1.4	11.0	71.3	0.0	100
Cantabria	17.6	17.6	11.8	9.1	43.9	0.0	100
Castile and Leon	15.6	16.5	13.0	9.5	44.6	0.8	100
Castile-La Mancha	12.3	14.6	14.8	7.2	51.0	0.2	100
Catalonia	29.6	22.1	14.9	16.0	17.0	0.3	100
Valencian C.	20.9	21.3	15.6	15.0	27.2	0.0	100
Extremadura	9.2	12.8	9.2	5.5	62.7	0.6	100
Galicia	14.4	16.3	10.7	8.3	49.5	0.7	100
Madrid	41.1	25.7	15.5	21.5	-3.7	0.0	100
Murcia	15.8	18.9	16.2	8.3	40.8	0.0	100
La Rioja	18.9	16.7	11.8	10.4	41.3	0.9	100
<i>Average</i>	<i>21.5</i>	<i>19.1</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>12.5</i>	<i>33.5</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>100</i>

*Source:* Ruiz-Huerta Carbonell and Herero Alcalde 2005: 579.

Some indirect tax income has been partially or totally assigned to the autonomous communities, and the regions are also able to regulate these taxes: inheritance tax, succession and donation tax, VAT, taxes on fuel and electricity. Other tax transfers were established to cover the costs of services provided by the autonomous communities on the basis of their needs and a number of socio-demographic indicators (López Guerra 2003b: 363-4). The system is now unconditional, partly based on the regionalised collection of indirect taxes (Ruiz-Huerta Carbonell and Herero Alcalde 2005: 559). Overall, the bulk of the regions' revenues come from central-state revenue transfers. The 2001 reform has nevertheless contributed to increasing the share of autonomously raised resources.

The common system of regional finance remains a debated issue, in particular in the communities that are net contributors to the system such as Catalonia (Ruiz-Huerta Carbonell and Herero Alcalde 2005: 557). On the one hand, net contributors such as Catalonia, Madrid, the Balearic Islands and the Valencian Community use the fact that they provide more to the community than they receive to demand more fiscal responsibilities. On the other, the regions that receive more than they contribute to the system object to any reform and emphasise the importance of the principle of inter-territorial solidarity, which help finance basic services in the poorer regions



(Sánchez 2004).

Overall, the Spanish regions enjoy considerable legislative and executive powers, but one of the main obstacles against calling Spain a federal state is its 'lack of any effective mechanism for collegiate representation of the autonomous communities' (Heywood 1995: 162). As mentioned earlier, the Spanish Senate has not yet been reformed so as to operate as a chamber of representation of the autonomous communities (on the model of the German *Bundesrat*), nor is there a highly developed web of intergovernmental conferences. Nevertheless, the constitutional debate is far from over: on the one hand, Senate reform is on the agenda of the current socialist government, which however lacks a majority to reform the constitution in this sense; on the other, both the Basque Country and Catalonia demand more autonomy and a reform of their statutes.

## 6.2. The Spanish party systems

This section describes the Spanish party systems and compares the party system for state-wide parliamentary elections to regional elections in Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia. It considers the impact of regionalisation on electoral party competition in these autonomous communities, using the second-order-election framework. The proliferation of regionally-based parties, often regionalist parties, is a first consequence of the downward decentralisation of power. This is most obvious in two of the regions studied here, Catalonia and the Basque country, while regionalism is weaker in Galicia.

### 6.2.1. The Spanish party system

One of the most remarkable achievements of modern-day Spain has been the consolidation of the democratic institutions established after almost 40 years of authoritarian rule. This stability has also rapidly become a feature of the party system, in spite of some predictions that expected Spain to revert to some form of polarised pluralism (Linz 1967: 2000-1; Sartori 2005: 146).

The *Congreso de los Diputados* (Congress of Deputies) is the lower chamber of the legislature. The electoral system for its election is proportional representation with the d'Hondt method of seats distribution, combined with a legal threshold of 3% at the constituency level. The electoral constituencies are the provinces, except in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, where members of Congress are elected in single-member districts with the plurality rule. The electoral law was designed by Suárez in 1978 with the aim of initiating the return to democracy but also to ensure the continuing support of the autocratic regime for the reform process. The Francoist elites, and former Franco minister Manuel Fraga Iribarne in particular, had a preference for a majoritarian electoral system, from which they believed they would benefit, while the democratic opposition advocated a proportional system. As a result, Suárez's compromise solution was a proportional system with majoritarian results (Hopkin 2005: 376). Another reason for choosing an electoral system that tends to benefit the largest parties is the past experience of instability and polarised pluralism of the Second Republic (Linz 1967: 264; Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 29-37; Hopkin 2005: 377).

**Table 6.4.** District magnitudes and effective thresholds in elections to the Congress of Deputies, 2000

District magnitude	Effective threshold	Frequency (number of districts)	Seats allocated in districts of that magnitude
1	37.5	2	2
3	12.5	9	27
4	10	9	36
5	8.3	9	45
6	7.1	5	30
7	6.25	5	35
8	5.6	3	24
9	5	4	36
10	4.5	1	10
11	4.2	1	11
12	3.8	1	12
16	2.9	1	16
31	1.6	1	31
35	1.4	1	35
Total	—	52	350

*Source:* Hopkin 2005: 379; effective threshold: own calculation.

In practice, the electoral system has a high effective threshold. District magnitude varies between 2 and 35, with a mean district magnitude of 6.73 (Hopkin 2005: 379). Table 6.4 shows that only three provinces have an effective threshold below the legal threshold. On the other hand, 44 provinces have an effective threshold above 5%, of which 20 are above 10%. These thresholds have had two consequences: the reduction of the effective number of parties, both in terms of votes and in terms of seats, and the domination of two state-wide parties. However, the disproportionality of the electoral system has diminished over time (table 6.5). Several periods can be distinguished since the country's transition to democracy: a first, founding period with the 1977 and 1979 elections; a second period characterised by a domination of the socialist party; and a third period of partisan realignment and of normalisation of the right, with two minority governments, led by the PSOE first and then the PP, and a PP majority government, until the 2004 election that brought the PSOE back into power in dramatic circumstances (Linz and Montero 1999; Colomer 2005; Torcal and Rico 2005).

It is generally considered that the Spanish transition lasted until 1982. During that time, institutions and political parties were established and three elections were held. The Spanish Workers' Party PSOE was legalised on 17 February 1977 and the PCE (Spanish Communist Party) on 9 April 1977, just before the first parliamentary election that took place on 15 June 1977 (Soto 2005: 81, 83; Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986: 44-50). The 1977 and 1979 elections were won by Suárez's UCD, with the socialist party in second place. The new party system mainly consisted of new political formations: only four of the 33 parties that gained representation in 1977 had won seats in the 1936 parliament: the PCE, the PSOE, the Basque nationalists of the PNV and the Catalan republicans of ERC.

The originality of the Spanish party system is its absence of any real 'succession' party like the communist parties in Eastern Europe, for instance. This is in particular due to the fact that in the eve of the first election, Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez dissolved the official party and transferred its assets to the state. Moreover, the right became represented by the moderates of the UCD (*Unión del Centro Democrático*) led by Suárez and the *Alianza Popular* (AP), which accepted the new democratic regime. As

a result, the extreme-right was very fragmented and remained weak (Linz and Montero 1999: 4-5). The *Alianza Popular* did include elements of the old regime, but it lost its most reactionary and extreme-right-wing members early on, when party founder and former Franco minister Manuel Fraga decided that the AP should be a centre-right party and accepted the constitution and the new democratic regime (Gunther 1986: 36).

**Table 6.5.** General election results since 1977

	UCD/CDS		PSOE		AP/PP		PCE/IU		Other		SWP	ENEP	ENPP	D
	% votes	Seats (%)	% votes	Seats (%)	% votes	Seats (%)	% votes	Seats (%)	% votes	Seats (%)				
1977	34.5	166 (47.4)	29.3	118 (33.7)	8.2	16 (4.6)	9.3	20 (5.7)	18.7	30 (8.6)	63.8	4.47	2.89	10.68
1979	34.8	168 (48.0)	30.4	121 (34.6)	6.1	10 (2.9)	10.7	23 (6.6)	18.0	28 (7.9)	65.2	4.32	2.81	10.62
1982	9.6	13 (3.7)	48.1	202 (57.7)	26.4	107 (30.6)	4.0	4 (1.1)	11.9	24 (6.9)	74.5	3.23	2.33	8.31
1986	9.2	19 (5.4)	44.1	184 (52.6)	26.0	105 (30.0)	4.6	7 (2.0)	16.1	35 (10.0)	70.1	3.63	2.68	7.53
1989	7.9	14 (4.0)	39.6	175 (50.0)	25.8	107 (30.6)	9.1	17 (4.9)	17.6	37 (10.7)	65.4	4.15	2.85	9.14
1993	1.8	–	38.8	159 (45.4)	34.8	141 (40.3)	9.6	18 (5.1)	15	32 (9.2)	73.6	3.52	2.67	7.04
1996	–	–	37.6	141 (40.3)	38.8	156 (44.6)	10.5	21 (6.0)	13.1	32 (9.2)	76.4	3.27	2.72	5.57
2000	–	–	34.2	125 (35.7)	44.5	183 (52.3)	5.5	8 (2.3)	15.8	34 (9.7)	78.7	3.12	2.48	6.10
2004	–	–	42.6	164 (46.9)	37.7	148 (42.3)	5.0	5 (1.4)	14.7	33 (9.4)	80.3	3.05	2.50	5.13

*Notes:* The results of the PSOE include those of the PSC-PSOE; '% votes' stands for 'share of the votes'; 'SWP' stands for the combined share of the vote of the two largest state-wide parties (UCD+PSOE in 1977 and 1979, PSOE+AP/PP since 1982).

*Source:* Ministerio del Interior <http://www.elecciones.mir.es>

The AP replaced the UCD on the right in the 1982 election.<sup>51</sup> The electoral 'earthquake' produced by this election brought the socialist party into power with an absolute majority of the seats in Congress. The failure of the UCD was the result of a combination of factors: internal tensions within the party and disputes between its various 'barons', process of moderation of the PSOE and abandonment of its Marxist rhetoric, and improved image of the leaders of the PSOE and the AP (Gunther 1986; Hopkin 1999). This election also marked the start of the decline of the Communist party and the domination of the PSOE on the left. The union of the PCE with other left-wing and green movements to form *Izquierda Unida* (IU) in 1986 led to a temporary improvement of the party's results. However, because of the electoral system, its share of the seats in the Congress generally amounts to half their share of the vote or less.

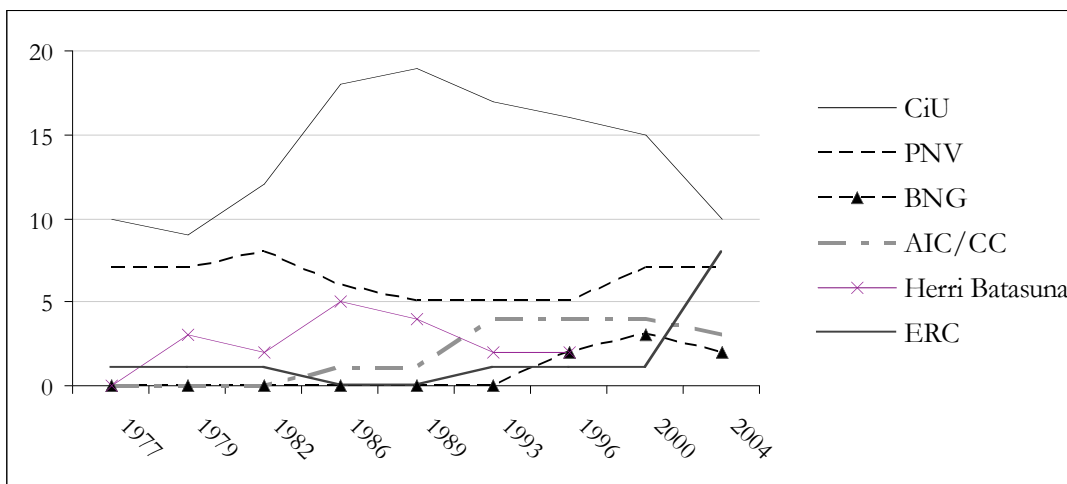
After the 1989 election, the AP underwent a process of reform and a change in its leadership in order to overcome '*el techo de Fraga*' (Fraga's ceiling), that is, Fraga's inability to lead the party beyond a certain threshold that would enable it to gain executive office. After three consecutive elections in which the AP had won 25% of the vote and under the leadership of José María Aznar, the Partido Popular (PP), the

<sup>51</sup> For more information on the rise and fall of the UCD, see Hopkin 1999.

PP become a serious contender in 1993, forcing the PSOE into a minority government (Magone 2004: 92; García Guereta 2001: 134-62).

In 1993 and 1996, first the PSOE and then the PP formed minority governments. In both cases, regionalist and nationalist parties played a central role in supporting the government. Table 6.5 shows that regionalist and nationalist parties, which form the 'other' category, have controlled around 10% of the seats in parliament since the mid-1980s, and figure 6.1 below shows the number of seats of the most important non-state-wide parties. Parties like the Catalan CiU and the Canarian *Coalición Canaria* have managed to exchange government support for transfers of competence and resources for their respective regions.

**Figure 6.1.** Number of seats of non-state-wide ethnoregionalist parties in state-wide elections (Congreso), 1977-2004



In this respect, the effective number of parties can be misleading. Instead of having a third party, as the ENEP suggests, the Spanish party system is a party system with two parties that are able to form government and a constellation of smaller parties, which can become relevant parties with coalition or blackmail potential (Sartori 2005) when none of the large state-wide parties manage to win the absolute majority in the Congress. The regionalist parties that have managed to gain representation in the Congress of Deputies are mainly from Catalonia (CiU and ERC), the Basque country (the PNV and Herri Batasuna), Galicia and the Canary Islands. In spite of the rather large number of parties represented in the Congress of Deputies, the effects of the party system and the concentration of the vote for third-parties means that Spain qualifies as a case of two-partism, as it generally follows the mechanics of two-party systems (Sartori 2005: 164-70).

The following section looks into details at the party systems for regional elections in three of these regions: Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia, and compare the patterns of voting and party systems of the regions to those of the rest of the country. The three historic nationalities based their argument in favour of a special status within the *Estado de las Autonomías* on their differential facts, which have also often served as a basis for the creation and electoral support for regionalist or nationalist parties. These are therefore likely to create more specific party systems and bring about divergent patterns of party competition.

### 6.2.2. Are autonomous elections second-order elections?

This section addresses the issue of the status of autonomous elections as first- or second-order elections. To this purpose, it looks at the position of autonomous elections in the overall electoral framework, evaluates turnout levels in different types of elections and compares patterns of voting for regional elections. In a first time, it compares national trends and compares the historic nationalities with the other regions, and then it looks at the three regions in turn.

#### *Catalan, Basque and Galician elections in the general context of regional elections*

Table 6.6 compiles the dates of autonomous elections in two categories of regions: the four autonomous communities established via Art. 151, which are allowed to fix the timing of their elections within the limit of four-year legislatures, and the 13 other autonomous communities, which hold their election on the same day. Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia are the only regions where autonomous elections do not coincide with an election in another region or at another level (as is the case for Andalusia in 4 out of 7 autonomous elections).

**Table 6.6.** Dates of state-wide and regional elections

	Election dates							
State-wide	01.03.79	28.10.82	22.06.86	29.10.89	06.06.93	03.03.96	12.03.00	14.03.04
13 ACs		08.05.83	10.06.87*	26.05.91	28.05.95	13.06.99*	25.05.03	
Basque country	09.03.80	26.02.84	30.11.86	28.10.90	23.10.94	25.10.98	15.05.01	
Catalonia	20.03.80	29.04.84	29.05.88	15.03.92	19.11.95	17.10.99	26.11.03	
Galicia	20.10.81	24.11.85		19.12.89	17.10.93	19.10.97	17.10.01	19.06.05
Andalusia	23.05.82		22.06.86	23.06.90	12.06.94	03.03.96	12.03.00	14.03.04

*Notes:* are not included the Basque election that took place on 15 April 2005 and the Catalan election of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006; \* Concurrent with European parliamentary elections.

*Source:* Pallarés and Keating 2006: 104.

Most elections to the Basque parliament have occurred around the mid-term point of the state-wide election cycle. The theory assumes that they are likely to be considered as mid-term elections and therefore be important for the state-wide parties. The last 3 Catalan elections have been within one year to a few months before the state-wide election. This may contribute to a greater national attention to the Catalan contest and a certain level of nationalisation of the election. Finally, in Galicia, the first two regional elections have taken place in the year before the elections to the Congress of Deputies, the next two occurred just after, and the other ones over a year after the state-wide election. We would expect the early elections to have been influenced by their proximity with the state-wide elections, and therefore to be rather nationalised, while the other ones should be less influenced by national considerations.

Table 6.7 below shows that turnout in regional elections has been lower than turnout in state-wide parliamentary elections but higher than in European elections, which are the classic second-order election (Reif and Schmidt 1980). It therefore places regional elections in a somewhat intermediary situation. The lower turnout supports the second-order thesis and places regional elections in the category of elections with a lower intensity than state-wide elections. Arguments according to which turnout might be encouraged by higher levels of regional autonomy or higher levels of regionalism are not confirmed: turnout in the 13 autonomous communities that hold their election on the same day is higher than in the three historic nationalities. The nationalisation of the stakes may therefore increase turnout. The

exceptions are the 1998 and 2000 elections in the Basque country, where turnout has steadily increased over time, suggesting that the stakes have become more important for Basque voters. The same trend can be observed in Galicia, a region where participation is traditionally low but where turnout has increased significantly. This may confirm the expectation that Galician regional elections have become more important and less dependent on national considerations. In Catalonia, the average turnout for regional elections is 60.8% against 73.0% for state-wide elections.

**Table 6.7.** Turnout in general, regional and European elections in Spain, 1977-2004

	Basque Country	Catalonia	Galicia	Andalusia	13 AC	Spain
1977 G	77.2	79.5	60.7	78.5	80.5	78.3
1979 G	66.0	67.6	49.2	68.6	71.6	68.4
<b>1980-3 A</b>	<b>59.8</b> (1980)	<b>61.4</b> (1980)	<b>46.3</b> (1981)	<b>66.2</b> (1982)	<b>69.1</b> (1983)	—
1982 G	79.3	80.8	63.7	78.5	81.6	80.0
<b>1984-5 A</b>	<b>68.5</b> (1984)	<b>64.3</b> (1984)	<b>57.4</b> (1985)	—	—	—
1986 G	67.6	69.0	57.9	70.8	72.1	70.5
<b>1986 A</b>	<b>69.6</b>	—	—	<b>70.7</b>	—	—
1987 E	67.1	68.4	57.1	65.7	71.1	68.5
<b>1987-9 A</b>	—	<b>59.4</b> (1988)	<b>59.5</b> (1989)	—	<b>71.6</b> (1987)	—
1989 E	58.5	51.5	42.7	52.8	56.6	54.7
1989 G	66.9	67.6	60.1	69.3	71.3	69.7
<b>1990-3 A</b>	<b>61.0</b> (1990)	<b>54.9</b> (1992)	<b>64.2</b> (1993)	<b>55.3</b> (1990)	<b>66.1</b> (1991)	—
1993 G	69.7	75.4	69.6	76.2	77.8	76.4
1994 E	52.3	51.9	50.3	67.2	59.8	59.1
<b>1994-5 A</b>	<b>59.7</b> (1994)	<b>63.6</b> (1995)	—	<b>67.3</b> (1994)	<b>72.3</b> (1995)	—
1996 G	71.5	76.5	71.4	78.0	78.1	77.4
<b>1996-9 A</b>	<b>70.0</b> (1998)	<b>59.2</b> (1999)	<b>62.5</b> (1997)	<b>78.1</b> (1996)	<b>66.7</b> (1999)	—
1999 E	64.5	54.8	60.8	63.6	66.0	63.1
2000 G	63.8	64.0	65.0	68.8	70.4	68.7
<b>2000-4 A</b>	<b>79.0</b> (2001)	<b>62.5</b> (2003)	<b>60.2</b> (2001)	<b>68.7</b> (2000)	<b>70.6</b> (2003)	—
2004 G	75.0	76.0	71.0	74.7	76.0	75.7

*Sources:* Ministerio del Interior <http://elecciones.mir.es>; Archivo Histórico Electoral, Presidencia de la Generalitat Valenciana <http://www.pre.gva.es/argos/archivo/index.html> (Argos).

With regard to the performance of national government and opposition parties in regional elections, table 6.8 shows that when it was in government, the PSOE generally performed better in state-wide than in regional elections, and the same applies to the PP between 1996 and 2003. On the other hand, non-state-wide parties always have better scores in regional elections, in which they are more likely to make a real difference and even, in many instances, participate in government. Contrary to the second-order hypothesis, national opposition parties do not systematically perform better in regional elections (Pallarés and Keating 2003: 247), in particular in the regions with a strong regionalist party. The 1995 autonomous elections fit the second-order thesis: as a precursory sign of the general election that took place a year later, the PP increased its share of the vote and appeared as the great winner of the poll.

However, there has not been any general tendency to consider autonomous elections as a trial test for national elections, and the state-wide parties have rarely used autonomous elections to advance their interests nationally, preferring instead to focus on regional issues. This is probably in part due to the absence of a territorial chamber of representation on the model of the Bundesrat, which implies that the link

between regional and state-wide politics is rather limited (Pallarés and Keating 2003: 248).

**Table 6.8.** Summary of electoral results in state-wide and regional elections, 1982-2003.

	AP/PP	UCD/CDS	PSOE	PCE/IU	NSWPs
GEN-82	25.6	9.8	47.2	4.0	9.1
AUT-83	25.5	5.3	43.4	5.8	16.9
GEN-86	25.6	9.1	43.4	4.6	11.4
AUT-87	22.6	9.3	36.6	7.7	18.4
GEN-89	25.6	7.8	39.3	9.0	12.3
AUT-91	26.4	3.5	38.0	7.8	20.2
GEN-93	34.6	1.7	38.6	9.5	12.4
AUT-95	37.2	0.2	30.5	11.7	17.8
GEN-96	38.6	0.0	37.4	10.5	11.2
AUT-99	36.6	0.1	35.4	6.6	17.8
GEN-00	44.2	0.1	33.9	5.4	12.6
AUT-03	41.6	0.1	34.6	5.7	21.0

*Note:* NSWPs: non-state-wide parties.

*Sources:* Pallarés and Keating 2006: 107; for 2003, own compilation from Argos and Oñate 2004.

Table 6.9 provides some electoral indicators for all the autonomous communities for the 1999 and 2003 elections. The 1999 elections took place 9 months before the election that gave the PP the absolute majority and the 2003 elections occurred 10 months before the 2004 state-wide election that returned a PSOE minority government. If the second-order hypothesis was to be confirmed, we should see the governing party sanctioned and opposition and small parties gain regions. The table assesses this point by looking at changes in governing coalitions in the regions.

The table shows that there has been no overall rejection of the governing party (PP) between 1999 and 2003. On the contrary, after the 1999 election, the PP controlled 9 autonomous communities, either alone or in coalition, and it only lost one region in 2003 (Cantabria) and gained one (the Balearic Islands). The 2003 election did not record any significant improvement for the PSOE, which failed to win any of the regions that the PP held with an absolute majority. The close proximity between state-wide and regional elections may explain the good results of the governing party, as it tends to nationalise the stakes of regional elections and provide state-wide parties with a sort of test election. These results are consistent with the 'Dinkel curve', which shows that the results of national governing party display an inverted bell curve over the course of a legislature. At the end of the cycle, the results in regional elections tend to recover and be close to those of the following state-wide election.

The overall picture is one in which a majority of regions have a party system that closely resembles the national party system, with a two-party configuration and a high concentration of the vote for the two state-wide parties. In addition, these party systems often include small, often regionalist or nationalist parties, which become especially significant when none of the state-wide parties has achieved the overall majority of the seats (Ocaña and Oñate 2000: 206). Unlike at the national level, governing coalitions are far from uncommon at the regional level.

**Table 6.9.** The party systems of the Spanish regions (1999 and 2003 elections)

	ENEP		ENPP		% of votes PP + PSOE		% regionalist parties		Governing coalition	
	1999	2003	1999	2003	1999	2003	1999	2003	1999-2003	change
Castile la Mancha	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.9	95.2	95.8	—	—	PSOE	no
Extremadura	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.1	89.5	91.6	—	—	PSOE	no
Murcia	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.0	90.0	92.1	—	—	PP	no
Madrid Com.	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.3	89.4	88.4	—	—	PP	no
La Rioja	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.2	88.5	88.4	5.9	6.9	PP	no
Castile and Leon	2.6	2.7	2.1	2.1	85.9	87.2	5.2	5.1	PP	no
Galicia*	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.5	72.6	74.7	25.1	23.0	PP	no
Valencian Com.	2.8	2.8	2.2	2.2	83.0	84.4	9.4	7.8	PP	no
Asturias	2.9	3.0	2.5	2.4	79.5	81.5	9.9	4.8	PSOE	PSOE-IU
Andalusia 2000	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.4	78.7	83.4	6.7	7.5	PSOE-PA	no
Cantabria	3.1	3.2	2.6	2.7	77.5	74.0	17.0	19.7	PP-PRC	PRC-PSOE
Catalonia	3.1	4.2	2.8	3.9	47.8	55.5	46.8	37.0	CiU	PSC-ERC-ICV
Canary Islands	3.3	3.8	3.0	3.3	52.0	56.8	37.5	33.3	CC-PP	no
Aragon	3.5	3.7	3.1	3.3	70.5	70.2	24.8	25.4	PSOE-PAR	no
Balearic Islands	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.1	71.7	70.5	19.4	15.7	PSOE-PSM-IU	PP
Navarre	4.0	4.1	3.6	3.0	63.2***	64.2***	28.6	15.4	UPN	UPN-CDN
Basque Country*	5.2	3.6	5.0	3.4	37.7	41.0	55.6	52.8	PNV-EA	PNV-EA-IU
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>2.6</i>	<i>74.9</i>	<i>76.5</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>15.0</i>	—	—
Spain 1996-2000	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.5	76.4	78.7	11.1	11.9	PP min	PP maj

Notes: \* Elections in Galicia took place in 1997 and 2001.

\*\* Elections in the Basque country took place in 1998 and 2001.

\*\*\* includes the UPN (*Unión del Pueblo Navarro*), which is in an electoral coalition with the PP.

Sources: own compilation from Argos; ENEP and ENPP 1999 elections from Ocaña and Oñate 2000.

In this respect, Galicia fits into the mainstream category, with a low number of parties and over 70% of the votes for the PP and the PSOE. However, unlike the other region of this group, Galicia is in fifth and fourth positions in terms of support for regionalist parties. Catalonia and the Basque Country display a higher level of fragmentation of their party systems and a much higher proportion of the vote in favour of several regionalist and nationalist parties. Their government includes non-state-wide regionalist parties, either alone (in the Basque Country and in Catalonia between 1999 and 2003) or in coalition with other parties (the PSC-PSOE is in coalition with a nationalist party and a regionalist party).

### *Regional elections in Catalonia*

The Catalan party system displays a number of characteristics that distinguish it from the Spanish party system: strong ethnoregionalist parties, comparative weakness of the state-wide parties and especially of the Partido Popular, and a high number of parties.

The ethnoregionalist party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) has received the highest share of the vote in every autonomous election except the 2003 election. In 1999, it only fell into second place because the PSC entered an electoral coalition with *Ciutadans pel Canvi* (Citizens for Change), a federalist, left-wing civic platform created that same



year, and Initiative for Catalonia-Green (ICV), a left-wing green party. Catalans vote more for regionalist and nationalist parties in regional elections than in state-wide elections: the combined share of the vote of the state-wide parties has remained 10 to 15 points below its value for state-wide elections in spite of its steady increase (see appendix 5 Table 1 for the results of state-wide parliamentary elections in Catalonia). Only in 2003 did a coalition of the PSC, ICV and the nationalist ERC managed to push CiU out of government.

**Table 6.10.** Autonomous elections in Catalonia, 1980-2003

	UCD/CDS		PSC-PSOE		AP/PP		PSUC/IC		CiU		ERC		SWP	ENEP	ENPP	D	ID
	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)					
1980*	10.7	18 (13.3)	22.6	33 (24.4)	2.4**	0	18.9	25 (18.5)	28.0	43 (31.9)	9.0	14 (10.4)	35.7	5.5	4.5	4.7	17.4
1984	—	—	30.3	41 (30.4)	7.7	11 (8.1)	5.6	6 (4.4)	47.0	72 (53.3)	4.4	5 (3.7)	38.0	3.1	2.6	5.3	24.5
1988	3.8	3 (2.2)	30.0	42 (31.1)	5.4	6 (4.4)	7.8	9 (6.7)	46.0	69 (51.1)	4.2	6 (4.4)	39.2	3.3	2.7	4.4	13.2
1992	0.9	0	27.9	40 (29.6)	6.0	7 (5.2)	6.6	7 (5.2)	46.7	70 (51.9)	8.1	11 (8.2)	34.8	3.3	2.7	4.7	19.6
1995	—	—	25.1	34 (25.2)	13.2	17 (12.6)	9.8	11 (8.1)	41.4	60 (44.4)	9.6	13 (9.6)	38.3	3.8	3.4	2.8	19.5
1999	—	—	38.2#	52 (38.5)	9.6	12 (8.9)	2.5	3 (2.2)	38.1	56 (41.5)	8.8	12 (8.9)	47.8	3.9	3.7	5.0	15.6
2003	—	—	31.4	42 (31.1)	12.0	15 (11.1)	7.4	9 (6.7)	31.2	46 (34.1)	16.7	23 (17.0)	43.4	4.2	3.9	2.5	12.1

Notes: 'votes' stands for 'share of the votes'; 'SWP' refers to the combined share of the vote of the three state-wide parties with government experience (UCD/CDS+PSC-PSOE+AP/PP).

\* are not included two seats (2.7% of the vote) for the *Partido Socialista Andaluz* (PSA).

\*\* *Alianza Popular/ Solidaritat Catalana*

# In coalition with *Ciutadans pel Canvi* in Barcelona and with *Ciutadans pel Canvi* and *ICV-Verds* in all the other constituencies.

Sources: Argos <http://www.pre.gva.es/argos/archivo/index.htm>

The Catalan party system has more actors than the Spanish party system because of the rather low disproportionality of the electoral system and the strength of regionalist parties in the region. State-wide parliamentary elections in Catalonia have displayed very stable results since 1977. The combined share of the vote for state-wide parties has mostly been between 50 and 60% (the vote for the PSC-PSOE is included in the count of state-wide parties, as it is related with the PSOE). The PSC has systematically been the party with the largest share of the vote, followed by CiU. The PP, in contrast, is particularly weak. While its share of the vote has increased over time, it has managed to attract over 20% of the votes only once. The party system displays a higher level of fragmentation than the Spanish party system. The results of state-wide parliamentary elections in Catalonia show a large degree of differentiation from state-wide voting patterns, as evidenced by the high value of the Lee index.

In regional elections, the combined share of the vote for state-wide parties has been 10 to 15 points below its value for state-wide elections, but the gap between regionalist and state-wide parties has decreased steadily over time. This increase in the vote share of state-wide parties, visible in the value of the index of dissimilarity, means that Catalan voters tend to vote more and more similarly in state-wide and regional elections. However, the Catalan electorate vote more for regionalist parties in elections to the Catalan parliament. Nationalist-regionalist parties (*CiU* and *Esquerra Republicana*

*de Catalunya*) have attracted between 20 and 35% of the votes in state-wide elections. In recent years, the vote for CiU has tended to decline slightly while the vote for ERC has increased. This trend is less remarkable in autonomous elections, where the vote for ERC has only soared in the last election.

CiU is a federation of the Christian-democratic *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* and the social-democratic *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (Culla 1989 and 1990). On the other hand, ERC is a left-wing nationalist party that has a long history that goes back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic, when *Esquerra Republicana* played a major role and its leader Lluís Companys became President of the Generalitat (1933-1940). ERC has a more extreme regionalist position than CiU and is in favour of the independence of Catalonia.

**Table 6.11.** Feeling of Catalan national identity, 1992-2005 (%)

	1992	1996	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Only Spanish	20.0	13.3	13.0	10.5	11.5	8.5	12.6	8.0
More Spanish than Catalan	8.1	5.7	7.6	11.4	7.8	4.1	6.1	9.0
As Spanish as Catalan	34.8	46.6	43.1	44.4	42.2	40.9	28.3	40.0
More Catalan than Spanish	19.8	19.6	23.4	18.7	22.9	27.2	25.8	25.0
Only Catalan	15.0	12.8	11.5	13.5	13.1	16.4	14.7	12.0
d.k./n.a.	2.3	2.0	0.4	1.4	2.6	2.8	2.6	7.0

*Sources:* CIS 1992 (2033) and 1998 (2286); ICPS 1997 (for 1996); Observatorio Político Autonómico 2006 (2001-05).

Vote for regionalist parties is supported by a strong identification with the region's culture and identity. The table above shows that the proportion of respondents who identify mainly with the Spanish identity has substantially decreased, while the share of those who feel more Catalan or exclusively Catalan has increased slightly. In the year of the last Catalan election, this last category represented over 43% of the respondents. The Catalan nationalist parties therefore have an important pool of potential voters, while a Spanish party that identifies – and is identified – mainly with Spain, as is the case of the PP, has a narrow base of support in terms of identity politics.

### *Regional elections in the Basque Country*

The Basque country is a very special region of Spain. As we saw earlier, it has a long history of regional rights, its own language, the experience of self-government during the Second Republic and a nationalist movement that organised politically at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During Franco's dictatorship the Basque movement took a radical turn. ETA (*Euskadi 'ta Askatasuna*, Basque Homeland and Freedom) was created in 1959 by the young generation of Basque nationalists out of frustration against the repression and what they perceived as the apathy of the traditional nationalist movement and the PNV. As it developed and attempted to gain new recruits, ETA adopted a Marxist ideology in order to facilitate the inclusion of members from a non-Basque background (Conversi 1997: 89-98). The late 1960s marked the beginning of the armed struggle. ETA's most spectacular action is the 1973 assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco, who was expected to succeed Franco after his death. A cycle of action-repression between the police and the branches of ETA characterised the last years of the regime (Conversi 1997: 98-108).

The return to democracy did not solve the problems of the Basque country. In particular, the new political system lacked legitimacy in the region, as the constitution failed to gain a majority of the votes in the referendum. The continuing political

violence in the Basque country 30 years after Franco's death and the strong network of political and social organisations that surround ETA have had a polarising effect of the region's political system and represent a clear limit on the consolidation of the institutions in the region, which in this respect stands in sharp contrast with the rest of the country (Pérez Nievas 2002; Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 186-7).

**Table 6.12.** Autonomous elections in the Basque country

	UCD/CDS		PSE-PSOE		AP/PP		PCE/IU		PNV		HB/EH		EE		EA		others	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
1980	8.5	6 (10.0)	14.2	9 (15.0)	4.7	2 (3.3)	4.0	1 (1.7)	38.1	25 (41.7)	16.6	11 (18.3)	9.8	6 (10.0)	-	-	4.1	0
1984	-	-	23.1	19 (25.3)	9.4	6 (8.0)	1.4	0	42.0	32 (42.7)	14.7	11 (15.7)	8.0	7 (9.3)	-	-	1.4	0
1986	3.5	2 (2.7)	22.1	19 (25.3)	4.9	2 (2.7)	0.6	0	23.7	17 (22.7)	17.5	13 (17.3)	10.9	9 (12.0)	15.8	13 (17.3)	1.0	0
1990	0.7	0	19.9	16 (21.3)	8.2	6 (8.0)	1.4	0	28.5	22 (29.3)	18.3	13 (17.3)	7.8	6 (8.0)	11.4	9 (12.0)	3.8	3 (4.0)
1994	-	-	17.1	12 (16.0)	14.4	11 (15.7)	9.2	6 (8.0)	29.8	22 (29.3)	16.3	11 (15.7)	-	-	10.3	8 (10.7)	2.9	5 (6.7)
1998	-	-	17.6	14 (18.7)	20.1	16 (21.3)	5.7	2 (2.7)	28.0	21 (28.0)	17.9	14 (18.7)	-	-	8.7	6 (8.0)	2.0	2 (2.7)
2001	-	-	17.9	13 (17.3)	23.1	19 (25.3)	5.6	3 (4.0)	42.7	33 (44.0)	10.1	7 (9.3)	-	-	-	-	0.6	0

Source: Argos <http://www.pre.gva.es/argos/archivo/index.htm>

The Basque party system is characterised by a clear domination of the nationalist parties. The PNV has received the highest share of the vote in every regional election and in all but one Spanish parliamentary election (see appendix 5 tables 2 for the results of Spanish parliamentary elections in the Basque country). Table 6.13 below shows that the share of the vote for state-wide parties is rather low, even though the last two elections demonstrate a clear increase in the vote for these parties, mainly due to the increase in the vote for PP.

**Table 6.13.** Electoral indicators, Basque elections, 1980-2001

	SWP	ENEP	ENPP	D	ID
1980	27.1	4.8	4.0	4.1	18.3
1984	32.1	3.8	3.5	2.7	10.8
1986	30.1	5.8	5.2	3.4	16.85
1990	28.4	5.7	5.3	2.8	10.1
1994	30.8	5.7	5.7	3.1	9.55
1998	37.0	5.4	5.0	2.9	9.35
2001	40.5	3.6	3.4	2.5	13.35

Notes: 'SWP' refers to the combined share of the vote of the three state-wide parties with government experience (UCD/CDS+PSC-PSOE+AP/PP).

With the exception of the first regional election, in which the political branch of ETA, *Herri Batasuna* (HB), came second, it is always the party in power in Madrid that has received the second highest share of the vote. Hence, between 1984 and 1994, the PSE-EE was the second party, followed by the political branch of ETA. In the 1998 and 2001 elections, the PP came into second position. In the meantime, the share of the vote for the PSOE remained constant. As a result, the share of the vote for state-wide parties increased. Similar patterns of voting are observable in Spanish parliamentary elections in the region. As a result, the value of the index of dissimilarity is relatively low. The Lee index, which evaluates the deviation between regional and state-wide voting patterns in state-wide parliamentary elections, however shows high values (see appendix 5 table 3).

The party system is also characterised by a rather large number of parties, both at the electoral level as in terms of parties with elected representatives, partly because of the low disproportionality of the electoral system. The number of parties has nevertheless diminished, as the moderate left-wing nationalist party EE (*Euskadiko Ezkerra*) merged with the PSE to form the PSE-EE, and EA (*Eusko Alkartasuna*), which was formed by former *lehendakari* (president of Basque autonomous community) Carlos Garaicoetxea as a splinter party from the PNV in 1986 (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 187), entered an electoral coalition with the PNV. Finally, in the last election the Union Alavesa failed to return any member in the regional parliament. The 2001 election also marks a sharp decline in the vote for Batasuna. However, the illegalisation of Batasuna did not have immediate effect in the region, as the PNV government refused to respect the 2002 *Ley de Partidos* (Law on Political Parties) that facilitated the ban of Batasuna and its associated organisations.

The vote for nationalist parties is supported by the strong level of identification with the Basque identity. Basque nationalist parties can draw support from those who feel exclusively Basque and those who feel more Basque than Spanish. This represents a considerable reserve of votes for nationalist parties. In the mid-1990s, the level of identification with the Spanish/ Castilian identity has dropped significantly (in 1979, this figure was 37%), and Basque residents who feel only Spanish today represent a very small fraction of the population (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 184-5). The share of respondents who declare that they feel equally Spanish and Basque has remained stable at around a third of the population, and the share of people who feel exclusively Basque has increased by 12 points to represent a third of all respondents. This distribution of the feelings of regional identity means that a party is unlikely to draw a lot of support by emphasising its Spanish identity.

**Table 6.14.** Feelings of regional/national identity in the Basque country

	1992	1996	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Only Spanish	9.0	6	4.9	3.6	4.7	5.5	5.8	2.8
More Spanish than Basque	8.5	5	3.3	6.3	6.4	5.7	5.8	5.6
As Spanish as Basque	34.5	30	38.0	36.8	36.0	34.5	32.4	32.5
More Basque than Spanish	19.8	25	24.6	27.4	19.3	23.4	18.7	22.3
Only Basque	20.1	29	24.1	19.8	25.2	27.1	33.4	32.2
d.k./n.a.	8.2	5	1.9	6.1	8.4	3.8	3.9	4.7

*Sources:* CIS 1992 (2040), 1998 (2286); Euskobarómetro (for 1996); Observatorio Político Autonomico 2006 (2001-05).

The state-wide parties, which tend to be associated with Spain and the central government, compete for a smaller share of the electorate. Over time, their share of the vote has nevertheless increased. It is in particular the share of the vote of the PP that has increased while the vote for the PNV was decreasing. As a result, under the influence of the new leadership and the new *lehendakari* Juan José Ibarretxe, the PNV abandoned its coalition with the PSE and its moderate nationalist stances. Instead, it radicalised its position at the end of the 1990s, coming closer to the position of the Basque 'liberation movement' (close to ETA) in order to woo Batasuna voters in the 2000 general election and beyond. The Estella/Lizarra Pact (1998), concluded between all the nationalist parties, was part of this radicalisation of the Basque nationalists. It proposed that ETA violence should end with the settlement of the institutional question, the domination of nationalist political forces, the marginalisation of state-wide parties, the dissociation from the Spanish government, and the implementation of a strategy designed to push the Basque country toward

independence. The political translation of this pact is the 2002 Plan Ibarretxe, which proposed to transform the Basque country into an 'associated free state' with Spain (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 190-1 and 309-10).

### *Regional elections in Galicia*

Galicia is the third region that was awarded the status of historic nationality and therefore granted special autonomous rights. Unlike the other two historic nationalities, Galicia had no previous experience of regional self-government. There were other obstacles to the construction of a strong nationalist movement in the region: historically, Galician elites, having managed to gain positions in the central administration and other public bodies, had effectively adopted the Castilian culture, while the bulk of the population consisted of poor peasants under the influence of local notables and a conservative clergy. As a result, the region lacked self-sufficient Galician elites that could have contributed to building a Galician identity against Madrid's centralism and that could have mobilised the population against the centre on the basis of identity or comparative grievances (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 41).

The region's cultural traditions and language have nevertheless remained very strong. At the time of the transition, Galego was the most widely spoken of all the regional languages, with nearly 90% of Galicians declaring in a survey that they could speak the language (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 178). This translates into very low levels of exclusive or predominant identification with the Spanish culture. A majority of the population feels equally Galician and Spanish, and the size of this category has increased over time. Identification with the Galician culture tends however to be moderate rather than exclusive, and the proportion of Galician residents who declare that they feel more Galician or only Galician has decreased a little since the early 1990s (Table 6.15).

**Table 6.15.** Feelings of regional/national identity in Galicia

	1992	1996	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Only Spanish	6.6	13	6.3	4.9	3.8	3.2	3.9	3.8
More Spanish than Galician	6.1	44*	5.4	4.5	5.8	6.3	4.3	3.3
As Galician as Spanish	53.5		47.1	59.7	58.0	57.6	64.6	65.8
More Galician than Spanish	24.7	43*	30.3	20.5	23.4	27.1	22.2	20.9
Only Galician	7.0		8.7	6.5	6.9	4.8	3.8	5.3
d.k./n.a.	2.1	1	1.3	3.9	2.2	1.0	1.2	0.8

\* collapsed categories

Sources: CIS 1992 (2036), 1998 (2286); Moral 1998: 40 (for 1996); OPA 2006 (2001-2005).

The Galician party system is characterised by an undisputable domination of the centre-right. The UCD was rapidly replaced by the Alianza Popular/Partido Popular. The AP/PP governed the region throughout the whole period under investigation. Similarly, the centre-right has systematically returned the highest number of members of the Congreso and in the Galician Parliament, and an absolute majority of the seats in both houses since 1989. The PSdeG-PSOE came into second place in every election to the Spanish parliament and in all Galician election until 1997. That year and in 2001, the BNG replaced the socialist party as the second party in terms of votes.

The *Bloque Nacionalista Gallego* (BNG) is a moderate left-wing nationalist party. In the late 1990s, it brought together most of the nationalist groups and signed the Declaration of Barcelona with the PNV and CiU in 1998, that advocated the collaboration between nationalists in order to ensure a confederal-type of reform of

the *Estado de Autonomías* (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 312). The nationalists peaked in 1997 with 25% of the votes.

**Table 6.16. Autonomous elections in Galicia, 1981-2001**

	UCD/CDS		PSdeG		AP/PP		PCG/EU		BNG		PSG-EG		CG		ENEP	ENPP	D	ID
	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)				
1981	27.3	24 (33.8)	20.9	16 (22.5)	30.5	26 (36.6)	2.9	1 (1.4)	6.3	3 (4.2)	3.3	1 (1.4)	–	–	4.8	3.3	7.9	22.1
1985	3.3	–	28.9	22 (31.0)	41.2	34 (47.9)	0.8	–	4.2	1 (1.4)	5.7	3 (4.2)	13.0	11 (15.5)	3.8	2.9	6.8	13.45
1989	2.9	–	32.8	28 (37.3)	44.2	38 (50.7)	1.5	–	8.0	5 (6.7)	3.8	2 (2.7)	3.7	2 (2.7)	3.3	2.5	6.7	9.85
1993	–	–	23.9	19 (25.3)	52.6	43 (57.3)	3.1	–	18.5	13 (17.3)	–	–	0.4	–	2.8	2.4	4.7	15.95
1997	–	–	19.7	15* (20.0)	52.9	42 (56.0)	0.9	–	25.1	18 (24.0)	0.9	–	–	–	2.7	2.4	3.1	16.8
2001	–	–	22.2	17 (22.7)	52.5	41 (54.6)	0.7	–	23.0	17 (22.7)	0.7	–	–	–	2.8	2.5	2.6	5.35

Notes: \* includes two seats from EU/EG-Os Verdes (in coalition with PSOE).

Source: Argos <http://www.pre.gva.es/argos/archivo/index.html>

The success of ethnoregionalist parties is also limited by the attitude of the PP in the region. Led by Manuel Fraga, who ruled the region since his retreat from national politics in 1989, the party adopted a pro-regionalist stance that they describe as *Galeguismo* and that they distinguish from nationalism by its loyalty toward the Spanish state. While the party was initially reluctant to accept the *Estado de las Autonomías*, its successes at the regional level, and in particular in Galicia, at a time when the PSOE dominated Spanish politics convinced the AP and then the PP that decentralisation could have some advantages. In Galicia, the party encouraged regional culture, promoted the full development of the statute of autonomy, and encouraged the extension of the region's competence.

Like in Catalonia and the Basque country, voting patterns in state-wide elections in Galicia vary more with respect to voting in state-wide elections in the whole country than in comparison with elections to the Galician Parliament. Also like in the other two regions, Galician voters tend to vote more for regionalist parties in elections to the regional parliament than in state-wide parliamentary elections. The level of support for regionalist parties, and in particular for the BNG in the last decade, is the main distinguishing feature between state-wide and regional elections, as the results for state-wide parties do not follow the pattern of variation assumed by the second-order election theory.

### 6.3. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the territorial cleavage has played an important role in the formation of the Spanish state and in the construction of the contemporary democratic system. The establishment of the *Estado de las Autonomías*, which provides the Spanish regions with a considerable level of autonomy compared to most of their European counterparts, has also contributed to creating separate arenas of party competition. The high level of autonomy of Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia suggests that the regional branches of the state-wide parties in these regions should be quite autonomous. Because the Basque country enjoys more autonomy than the other two regions, we can also expect the Basque branch of the PP and the PSOE to be more autonomous than the Catalan and Galician branches. However, the rather important number of shared and concurrent competences, as well as the capacity of

eth central government to legislate over any issue may strengthen the central level of party organisation at the expense of the regional branches. The top-down management of the transition may also have contributed to the development of a strong central organisation before the emergence of regional elites and therefore strengthened central control over the party's development at the regional level.

Party competition at the regional level is influenced by two opposite trends: the nationalisation of the stakes and role of the state-wide parties in creating a link between the two levels, and the strength of peripheral nationalist and ethnoregionalist parties, which creates centrifugal tendencies and produces a set of distinctive issues and stakes for regional elections. Most regions follow the first logic, in which state-wide parties dominate the regional political arena. Smaller ethnoregionalist parties may be present but they generally contribute only marginally to modifying the regional debate and differentiating the autonomous political system. Galicia is such a regional party system: the AP/PP has dominated the region, forming government after each election except the last and the strength of the regionalist movement has never exceeded 25% of the votes. On the other hand, in regions like Catalonia and the Basque country, non-state-wide nationalist parties dominate the party system and consistently form government, albeit sometimes in combination with state-wide parties, as is currently the case in Catalonia. This means that patterns of voting tend to be more constant in Galicia, but also that they tend to be closer to the national pattern of voting than in the other two regions.

These characteristics mean that political parties are more likely to be decentralised in the regions where the political trends differentiate the regional arena from the Spanish patterns of voting. We should expect the regional party branches of the PP and the PSOE to be more autonomous in the Basque country and Catalonia than in Galicia. Terrorism in the Basque country and the importance of this issue in state-wide politics may nevertheless contribute to a greater involvement of the central parties in this region. The next chapter will describe the territorial organisation of these two parties, focusing on the organisation of the central level and the regional branches in Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia.

## CHAPTER 7. ORGANISATION OF THE SPANISH STATE-WIDE POLITICAL PARTIES

This chapter looks at the organisation of the two main state-wide parties in Spain, the Spanish socialist party PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*) and the conservative Partido Popular (PP). These two parties have monopolised government positions at the central level since 1982 and have governed most of the autonomous communities either alone or in coalition since their creation.

Political parties have played a crucial role in facilitating the transition to democracy, and the resulting institutions strongly favour them (Holliday 2002: 251). The constitution recognises their role in the new democracy as instruments of political participation.<sup>52</sup> Other constitutional provisions strengthen political parties. For instance, the closed-list PR electoral system clearly favours political parties rather than their candidates. Within the Congress of Deputies, parliamentary groups play a very important role at the expense of individual members (Blanco Valdés 1990: 130-5). Parties were also granted significant powers of patronage through public appointments, and 'many core institutions of government have been colonized and are substantially controlled by parties' (Holliday 2002: 248). In recognition of their inherent weakness after 40 years of dictatorship and of the role they play in the democratic system, political parties were granted generous public funding and large-scale free access to the media during election campaigns (Aja 2001: 248).

Public party funding is the main source of party finance in Spain. Parties receive public subsidies for the exercise of their ordinary activities, for the support of parliamentary groups and for election campaigns for all types of elections (Congress, Senate, autonomous, provincial and local elections). The computation of the amount of the subsidies is based on the parties' number of seats and votes (Blanco Valdés 1990: 193-6; Álvarez Conde 2005: 374-400; Holgado González 2003). As a result, the system, and in particular the public subsidy for ordinary activities, favours the largest parties (Blanco Valdés 1990: 198). Initially designed to compensate for the weakness of the parties and their membership, the extensive provision of public subsidies to political parties has contributed to entrenching the position of the main political parties and maintaining them in a situation of dependence on public money.

The Spanish political parties have also had to adapt to the development of the State of the Autonomies (*Estado de las Autonomías*). The first section of this chapter will look at how the socialist PSOE has organised its central organs and its regional branches. The second part studies the organisation of the Partido Popular.

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<sup>52</sup> 'Los partidos políticos expresan el pluralismo político, concurren a la formación y manifestación de la voluntad popular y son instrumentos fundamentales para la participación política' (art. 6 Spanish Constitution).



## **7.1. The Socialist Workers' Party, *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE)**

### *7.1.1. History and change in the PSOE*

#### *Party formation and reformation at the end of the Franco dictatorship*

The PSOE was created in 1879 by Pablo Iglesias. Under his influence, the party rapidly consolidated, and it can be said that it had an early institutionalisation in the sense that the party's main goal became to maintain its organisation rather than defend a strict Marxist ideology (Magone 2004: 94-5). This became a necessity under the regimes that ruled Spain at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The party achieved its first success with the advent of the Second Republic, but the Civil War put a rapid end to this period.

The Franco dictatorship all but wiped out the party's organisation. After the Civil War, most of the socialist leadership was either in exile or jailed in Spain, with some of the most prominent leaders shot without trial by the Francoist troops. In the last years of the dictatorship, the party only counted a few thousands members and was organised locally in barely half of the provinces (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2005: 243).

While in the 1960s the party was dominated by the party in exile, the 1970s were characterised by a leadership change. A group of young party leaders from Andalusia led by Felipe González, a young lawyer from Seville, started to criticize Llopi's leadership from exile. The October 1974 congress held in Suresnes (France) (XIII congress in exile) marked a generational change in the party when Felipe González took over its reins. Even before its official legalisation 1976, the PSOE managed to organise its XXVII congress in Madrid. The party adopted a formally federal organisation and set up the Federal Congress, the Federal Executive Committee and the Federal Commission.

González, aided by Alfonso Guerra, inherited a very weak organisation, which counted 2,548 members in 1974 and a mere 9,141 in 1976 (Soto 2005: 80). The party initially benefited from a strong support from the Socialist International and the German SDP in particular (Romero Salvadó 1999: 174). With the start of the process of democratisation and the rapid organisation of elections, the party had to focus on organising the party to compete in the 1977 elections. The re-organisation of the PSOE was mainly conducted from the centre and through the incorporation of the other socialist groups. The central control over the establishment of provincial party branches facilitated the centralisation of power within the party. The González-Guerra alliance intended to build a cohesive, disciplined party (Soto 2005: 81). The regional branches were also set up from the centre, once the provincial branches were organised to fight state-wide parliamentary elections. This pattern of centralised formation in the absence of organised local and regional elites facilitated central control over the regional party branches (Méndez Lago 2000: 136-7; Méndez Lago 2005: 171-2).

The process of national integration of all the socialist federations however failed in Catalonia, where an independent PSC (Catalan Socialist Party) was formed in 1978. The new party, under the name PSC-PSOE, integrated all the socialist groups of the region to promote a socialist and Catalanist agenda. Historically, the PSOE has always had problems in Catalonia, where it faced the opposition of a strong anarchist movement and the growth of the nationalism (Gillespie 1989; Roller and van Houten 2003: 10). By allowing the formation of a separate party in the region, the PSOE

hoped to counterbalance these two political traditions and increase its chances of electoral success. The PSC is linked to the PSOE via the 1978 Unity protocol (*Protocol d'unitat de la FSC (PSOE), PSC-C i PSC-R en el Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC-PSOE)*). The protocol states that the PSC-PSOE is sovereign for its organisation and policies within Catalonia. It joins forces with the PSOE to coordinate national policies and campaigns. To that effect, it sends representatives to the Federal Congress and the Federal Executive Commission of the PSOE.

The programme adopted by the PSOE in 1976 defined the party as a 'class party' and as a 'democratic, Marxist, mass party'. The party positioned itself clearly on the left of the political spectrum in order to counter the Communist party, which was then stronger and better organised. As a sign of the importance of the working-class movement in the PSOE, party members were required to affiliate to the trade union UGT (*Unión General de Trabajadores*, General Workers' Union) (van Biezen 2003: 90). In the first democratic elections, the PSOE became the main opposition party and the leading party on the left.

In order to expand its potential electorate and win the next general election, González wanted to move the party to the centre. Such was his aim at the 1979 congress. The party rejected this move, but González presented his resignation in opposition to the Marxist orientation of the party. His dominance over the party was such that he was re-elected at the extraordinary congress that followed, and the congress endorsed his strategy of political moderation. In the interim period between his resignation and the extraordinary congress, Alfonso Guerra implemented a number of organisational reforms that strengthened the power of the leadership and facilitated central control over the composition of the congress and over the votes of regional and provincial delegations (Méndez Lago 2005: 173-5). The 1979 extraordinary congress has been described as the PSOE's own 'Bad Godesberg', in the sense that it marked the party's transformation into a more pragmatic party, its departure from Marxist references and its adherence to social-democratic principles (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 244).

#### *Contemporary organisation and principles*

Between 1982 and 1996, the PSOE formed the Spanish government. For the first 11 years (until the 1993 election), it governed with an absolute majority of the seats in Congress. Throughout the 1980s, the party acted as an electoral machine at the service of the government. González led the government while Guerra controlled the party organisation. Méndez (2005: 179) argues that 'from end of the 1970s and during the 1980s internal control and discipline prevailed over any other organisational concern'. Control from the centre was facilitated by 'the large attributions of the Federal Executive Commission, the majoritarian electoral system in internal elections to the party congress, and the proportional system with closed lists for general elections' (Maravall 1992: 14). The party rapidly transformed Spanish society, adopting market-friendly economic policies and implementing a strict programme of structural reforms in order to ensure Spain's entry into the European Community and eventually its membership in the European single currency zone (Gibbons 1999: 47; Méndez Lago 2005: 177).

The 1990s were characterised by internal division between two groups, the *renovadores* and the *guerristas*. The first group sought to increase intra-party democracy while the other insisted on keeping a strong central hold on the party organisation as had been done by Alfonso Guerra since the party's refoundation. In policy terms, the

former were social democrats and the latter supported and more social and populist agenda (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 246). While Guerra won the debate in the 1990 congress, the internal struggle continued and the party focused inward on its divisions instead of focusing outward, on maintaining or improving its electoral potential (Méndez Lago 2005: 183-6). The stability of the party was ensured by the increasing participation of the party's regional '*barons*' in central party affairs. Those regional leaders, often presidents of autonomous communities, acted as referees to keep the party running during this dispute. In return, they obtained a certain level of party decentralisation (Gunther, Montero and Botella 2004: 245).

The last González government (1993-96) was a difficult period for the party. Placed in a minority position in parliament, it needed the support of nationalist parties, and in particular CiU. Moreover, the party faced a series of difficulties that led to its eventual defeat in 1996: corruption scandals and the GAL case<sup>53</sup>; tensions between the PSOE and the trade union UGT, facilitated by the end of the compulsory double membership between the PSOE and the UGT in 1990; and internal tensions over economic and social policy (Gibbons 1999: 46; Méndez Lago 2005: 190).

After the party lost the 1996 state-wide election, the PSOE changed leader. González supported Joaquín Almunia, a key member of the *renovadores*, as his successor. In practice chosen by a handful of party grandees, Almunia decided to introduce primary elections for the selection of the party's candidate to the post of Prime minister (President). To his surprise and that of most party leaders, Almunia lost the primary election to Catalan left-winger Josep Borrell. The party then entered a period of double leadership, and strong tensions between Almunia and Borrell emerged rapidly. Again, regional barons played a role as intermediaries and 'referees' in this internal conflict (Méndez Lago 2005: 188). Borrell was forced to resign in 1999 after a corruption scandal involving people close to him. Almunia became the party's candidate but failed to appeal to the electorate, which was also confused by the last-minute decision to collaborate with *Izquierda Unida* (reformed communists).

This second defeat precipitated a change in the party's leadership. Almunia stood down and a challenger, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, won against José Bono, the president of Castile La Mancha and preferred candidate of the party leadership and regional barons. The new leader adopted a strategy of 'constructive opposition' over terrorism and the reform of the judiciary and of 'frontal opposition' over social issues such as education and the Iraq war (Méndez Lago 2006: 432).

Under Zapatero's leadership, the PSOE has put an end to the internal disputes and focused instead on its electoral strategy. It has emphasised its social democratic agenda and social policies, on housing, education, women's rights and the rights of homosexual couples to marry and adopt. In economic terms, relatively little has changed, as the PSOE focuses on economic stability and compliance with European single currency criteria. The party has become more decentralised in its practice, and the new leader consulted regional leaders more often, in particular via the Territorial Council. Institutional reform also became part of the party's programme, with pledges to reform the Senate to transform it into a real chamber of regional representation and to facilitate the revision of the statutes of autonomy of those regions that wished to do so (PSOE 2004).

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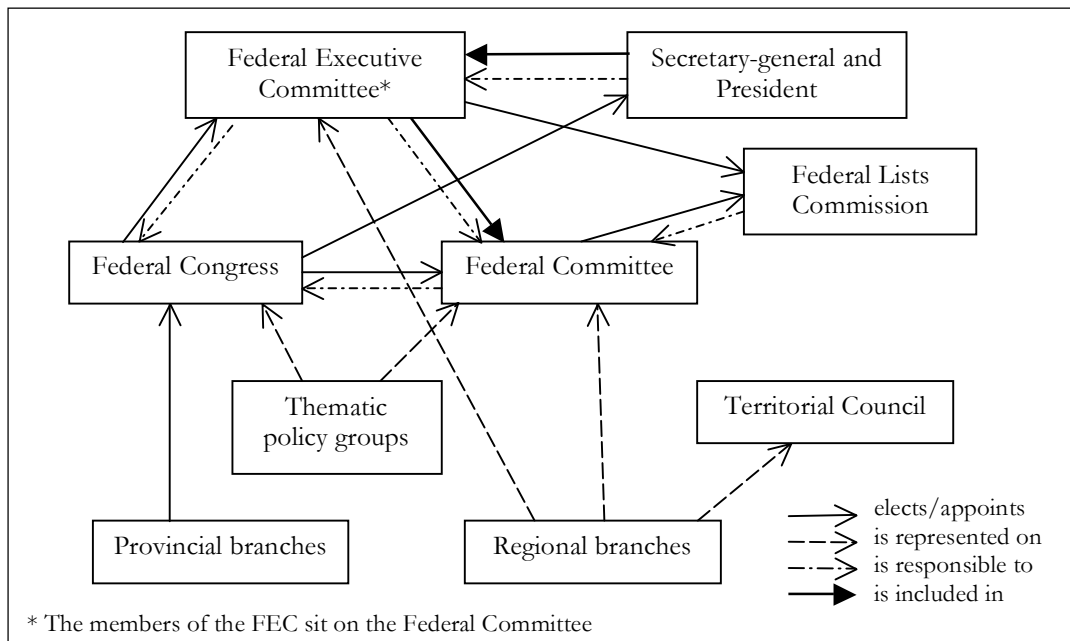
<sup>53</sup> The GAL were the Grupos Anti-terroristas de Liberación (Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups), a group created to counter ETA and killed ETA members (and innocent bystanders) in France (see Woodworth 2005).

This new strategy was nevertheless insufficient to improve the party's electoral prospects. In the run-up to the 2004 elections, opinion polls predicted victory for the Popular Party. The Al-Qaeda bombings in Madrid three days before the poll changed the situation. In the two days that followed, controversies rose over the government's handling of the information regarding the perpetrators of the attacks and its insistence to blame ETA while some evidence seemed to point in the direction of Islamist terrorism, seemingly leading to an increase in participation that benefited the PSOE (Méndez Lago 2005: 190-1; Torcal and Rico 2005). Rather unexpectedly, the PSOE won the election and Zapatero became prime minister.

### 7.1.2. Organisation at the central level, central party processes

The PSOE defines itself as a 'federal' party, with a central organisation and regional federations throughout the country. Lower party echelons include provincial and local party branches. In Catalonia, the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* PSC-PSOE replaces the PSOE. It is an independent party affiliated to the PSOE. The PSC presents candidates in Catalonia for state-wide and regional parliamentary elections and the PSOE does not contest seats in the region. Through its affiliation to the PSOE, the PSC sends representatives in the central organs of the PSOE and PSC members of the Congress of Deputies participate in the PSOE parliamentary group. Table 7.1 below presents a schematic view of the central organisation of the PSOE (called federal by the party).

**Figure 7.1.** Organigram, organisation of the PSOE at the central level



Source: own elaboration from the statutes of the PSOE, 2000.

### Constitutional guarantee

The party's statutes are debated and approved by the Federal Congress, which includes a minority of regional representatives. Proposals for change generally emanate from the federal executive rather than from lower party echelons. The PSOE thus receives a score of 1 for the indicator of revision of the constitution. The statutes of the regional party branches must receive the approval of the federal committee. Méndez (2000: 135

n.45) reports that this control is however quite unsystematic. Moreover, article 17 of the statutes of the state-wide party stipulate that the regional federations must include a congress, a regional committee and an executive commission (PSOE 2000). In practice, most regional branches mimic the national (federal) structure in their own organisation. This gives PSOE party branches a score of 1 for the indicator of organisational freedom. The exception here is the Catalan Socialist Party (PSC). Its organisation is not subject to any external constraint, as it is an independent political party. It nevertheless accommodates for the selection of representatives to the federal organs of the PSOE. As a result, it has a score of 1 for revision of the constitution and 4 for organisational freedom.

### *Selecting the party leader*

The PSOE has a secretary-general and a president. In practice, the secretary-general is the highest personal representative of the party. The position of party president is a rather honorific title. Unlike the president of the PP, the secretary-general is not an office in itself but a member of the Federal Executive Committee (FEC). The FEC is elected by the federal congress via a list-based system of proportional representation. The federal congress is composed of provincial representatives. Until 1990, provincial delegates tended, however, to vote together with the delegates from the same autonomous community via their block vote. The block vote allowed provincial and regional leaders to control all the votes from their area. This was however a period in the history of the party when the centre, under Guerra's control, had a strong influence over provincial and regional levels (Gillespie 1989: 323-4). Since the 1994 congress, the FEC is elected by secret ballot of all the congress delegates (Méndez-Lago 2000: 118-9).

The party has known three secretaries-general since the return to democracy. Felipe González was secretary-general between 1974 and 1997. Since the extraordinary federal congress of 1979, he added a deputy secretary-general. Alfonso Guerra held that position until the change of leadership in 1997. Guerra controlled the party's organisation while González was Prime minister and focused on government activities (Méndez-Lago 2005: 184). At the 1997 congress, after the party's defeat in the 1996 election, González unexpectedly announced in his opening speech that he would not seek re-selection as secretary-general and suggested Joaquín Almunia as a replacement. Almunia had been a minister in several of González's governments and was a key figure of the *renovadores*.

The issue of leadership was complicated by the introduction of primaries for the selection of the party's candidate to the position of prime minister. Almunia had been selected as secretary-general by the party elite. Election in a primary would provide him with a legitimacy that he lacked. The primary produced a shock result, with Almunia coming second to Josep Borrell, a left-winger from the PSC. The margin (55% to 44%) was clear and the party entered a period of double leadership, with clear tensions between the two leaders increased by the party elites' hostility towards Borrell and his lack of any official position within the party apparatus other than that of candidate (Hopkin 2001: 355). These tensions, together with the waves of a corruption scandal that involved some people close to him pushed Borrell to resign less than a year after the primaries, and Almunia stood as the party's prime ministerial candidate in the 2000 election (Méndez-Lago 2005: 187).

This new defeat led to Almunia's resignation. The 2000 federal congress counted four candidates: José Bono, one of the major regional 'barons' of the party and

president of Castile-La Mancha since 1983; Rosa Díez, a Basque MEP; Matilde Fernández, former minister for Social Affairs and *guerrista* candidate; and José Luis Rodríguez Zapataro, a simple backbencher since 1986, close to *Nueva Vía*, and little known within and outside of the party. Supported was by the party elite and regional barons, Bono was the clear favourite. In contrast, Zapatero appeared as a candidate that represented generational renewal rather than the continuation of the González era (see López Alba 2002: Chapter 13). Eventually, Zapatero won with a narrow lead (414 votes against 405 to Bono). In the run-up to the 2004 election, Zapatero declared that he would stand as candidate to the prime ministerial position, and no one else from the party proposed an alternative candidature. As a result, the party did not have to organise a primary election.

The introduction of primaries and the empowerment of individual congress delegates have reduced the influence of regional barons over the process. While they played a role in the consolidation of the González-Guerra leadership and then in the support for Almunia in the 1997 congress, Borrell's victory in the 1998 primaries and Zapatero's election in 2000 have demonstrated that the vote of individual members and individual delegates could produce results opposite to the preferences of the party's national and regional leaderships. As a result, the party receives a score of 1 for the role of regional branches in the selection of the party leader. The regions are represented in the congress and regional leaders can have some leverage over the votes of their delegation, even though the introduction of the personal vote certainly diminishes their control over individual delegates.

#### *The party executive*

The PSOE has two executive organs: the Federal Committee (*Comité Federal*), which is defined in the party's statutes as the most important party organ between congresses, and the Federal Executive Commission (FEC), which is the organ that executes the decisions taken by other party bodies and leads the party on a more day-to-day basis.

The Federal Committee is composed of the FEC, 49 members elected by the federal congress, the general secretaries of the regional party branches, a number of regional delegates which depends of the number of provinces and party members in each autonomous community, and the coordinators of the 'sectoral' organisations (thematic groups). Its official functions are to define the party's policies and its coalition strategies, supervise the statutes of the regional sub-units, control the action of the FEC, ratify candidate lists, designate the party's prime ministerial candidate and approve the party budget (art.35 of the federal statutes 2000). In practice, the Federal Committee has less influence than the statutes formally give it. It meets only three times a year and is a less cohesive organ than the FEC. It generally lacks the power to set the agenda and in practice ratifies the decisions of the FEC (Méndez Lago 2000: 124-5).

The real decision-making arm of the party is the FEC (Magone 2004: 98-9). The Federal Executive Commission is elected by the federal congress via a majoritarian, list-based electoral system. In practice, the election of the Federal Executive Commission has never been a competitive process. Only one list is presented by the party leader, and delegates can only register their discontent via abstention or blank/spoilt vote (Méndez-Lago 2000: 116). For instance, after Zapatero was elected as secretary-general in 2000, no other list was presented. The defeated leadership candidates did not present alternative lists. Instead, rounds of negotiation started in order to create an executive commission that reflected Zapatero's victory and

therefore included some of his supporters, such as Miguel Blanco as secretary for organisation, but also included people who had supported the other candidates (with the exception of Rosa Díez) and reflected some geographic balance (López Alba 2002: Chapter 14).

The FEC takes the most important decisions that affect the party and organises its daily life. While the position of president is simply honorific, the secretary-general is the most important position. During most of the González leadership, most of the political decisions were taken by the leader and at government level, with Guerra making the liaison between the government and the party. When Guerra was forced to resign from the government following a corruption scandal involving his brother, this link between the party in public office and the party in central office was partly severed. This was further strengthened by the adoption in 1984 of a rule that made holding an elective office incompatible with a position as secretary within the FEC. Only the president, secretary-general and deputy secretary-general are exempted from this rule. In practice, the FEC has often included members of government, as party secretaries were promoted to executive office (Méndez-Lago 2000: 128-9). After 1997 and during the party's period in opposition, the FEC regained a more important role in the decision-making process of the party, and the role and importance of the secretary-general became more limited by formal party structures (van Biezen and Hopkin 2005: 113).

The level of involvement of regional leaders in the FEC has varied over time. The PSC has historically always had a representative sitting on the FEC. The number of regional representatives has increased over time, as the number of representatives of regional party branches and presidents of regional governments in the FEC rose in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Regional 'barons' increased their presence in the FEC as a result of the increasing weakness of the leadership. They played a stabilising role in the party, arbitrating disputes, in particular during the period of double leadership by Almunia-Borrell. In return, they gained more autonomy at the regional level and increased their leverage at the centre. Méndez Lago (2006: 426) shows that in 1994 the FEC included 13 regional representatives. This number was reduced to 4 in 1997, but again Zapatero's first FEC included 7 heads of regional federations and 3 autonomous presidents. This trend was reversed in the following congress, in July 2004, after the PSOE's victory in the general elections. Zapatero deliberately chose to limit the number of regional 'barons' in the FEC, arguing that they could influence the central party via the *Consejo Territorial* (Territorial Council). After 2004, two strong 'barons' remained in the FEC: Manuel Chávez from Andalusia and Juan Carlos Rodríguez Ibarra from Extremadura. In addition, the PSC kept a representative in the FEC (José Montilla, who was then a member of the Spanish cabinet). For a regions Galicia and the Basque country, with lower levels of membership and no regional office-holders, it is difficult to have as much weight as very strong federations such as Andalusia and Catalonia.

Established in 1995, the Territorial Council includes the general secretaries of all the regional federations and the socialist presidents of autonomous communities (article 48). It is a consultative organ that discusses mainly the party's policy with regard to the State of Autonomies. It has gained visibility during the party's opposition period but has receded since the party has returned to power, meeting more irregularly than previously (Méndez Lago 2006: 427-8).

The federal executive always includes a number of regional representatives, often important leaders in their own autonomous community. Because of the large number of autonomous communities and of the necessary limited size of the federal executive,

it cannot include one member for each autonomous community. However, the presence of regional leaders and the past influence of regional 'barons' in the stabilisation of the party contribute to giving a score of 1 to the PSOE for the indicator of the involvement of its regional branches in the state-wide executive.

#### *Candidate selection for elections to the Congreso de los Diputados*

The selection of candidates for state-wide elections is a centralised process, with rules elaborated by the Federal Committee and very much controlled by the national leadership in spite of its formally bottom-up nature (van Biezen 2003: 100).

The candidate lists are in a first step elaborated at the provincial level, which coincides with the constituency level for general elections, from suggestions made by the local parties. Each provincial executive committee, or the executive of the regional branch in the case of a uniprovincial autonomous community, elaborates a list of candidates, which must be formally approved by the provincial committee (which includes representatives from all the local parties of the province). The provincial executive committees can set up provincial lists commissions to coordinate the candidate selection process and discuss with the local party branches. Each list must include as many candidates as seats to fill in the constituency and three to five substitutes (article 57 *Normativa Reguladora de los Cargos Públicos* 2004). Moreover, no gender shall represent more than 60% of the candidates (art. 30 of the same rulebook).

Provincial committees then send their candidate lists to the regional committee of their autonomous community party and to the Federal Lists Commission (CLF, *Comisión de Listas Federal*). The regional committees can send a report expressing their opinion on the lists and making their own recommendations to the Federal Lists Commission. The role of the regional branches is however limited and their recommendations non-binding. In Galicia however, the provincial level only makes proposals to the regional executive, when then liaise with the federal party. The Galician National Lists Commission (CNL) reviews the provincial lists, alternates male and female candidates on the lists and ensures that the different *comarcas* (local areas) are represented on the list. The *Ejecutiva Nacional* and then the National Committee must approve these lists before sending them to the federal party (interview with Francisco Carro Garrote).

The CLF (Federal Lists Commission) is the general coordinating organ responsible for the elaboration of candidate lists for all elections. It is composed of members designated by the CEF and members of the Federal Committee. The CLF elaborates the lists and proposes them to the approval of the Federal Committee. The lists try to find a balance between gender criteria, the representation of the various parts of the province and the inclusion of independents and experts, which is quite common in Spain. While the statutes describe candidate selection as a bottom-up process, a lot of informal discussion occurs between the provincial and central levels in order to ensure a level of 'co-decision' (interview with Óscar López Águeda). The federal party can change the lists presented to it, modify the order of candidates on the lists and add people that had not been proposed by the provincial or regional parties. In the Basque Country and Galicia, the CFL has used its capacity to modify the lists in order to implement the criteria of gender parity (interviews with Arantxa Mendizábal Gorostiaga and Ricardo Varela Sánchez). This ability to change the lists is also particularly important when the PSOE presents joint lists together with another party, as it did with the Green party in 2004 (interview with Óscar López Águeda).

The lists must eventually obtain the approval of the Federal Committee. This



means that the federal party has a veto power over the provincial lists for elections to the Congress. In practice, the level of central control over the composition of the list has varied over time (Méndez-Lago 2000: 139), with stronger central control during the period of González-Guerra leadership. The possibility of a central veto and the existence of informal channels of communication mean that the federal party can influence the composition of the provincial lists without appearing to intervene too directly. Overall, the lists established by the provincial parties can be changed at many stages, so that the final lists have little in common with the initial proposal (Méndez Lago 1998: 195). The regional party branches have in comparison a more limited influence over the selection of parliamentary candidates. Some respondents noted however that the regional federations had gained more influence in the process in latter years. In Galicia, Francisco Cerviño González described the process of list formation as one of 'co-management', as the weight of the federation has become more important.

In contrast, the PSC can choose its own candidates. The party's *Consell Nacional* (the Catalan equivalent of the Federal Committee) appoints 20 people to form an Electoral Commission, which elaborates the lists of candidates in coordination with the local parties, in a way that is very close to the method used in the PSOE and following similar criteria of gender parity, balance between the various areas of Catalonia and renewal (interview with José Zaragoza). The *Consell Nacional* must finally approve the lists presented by the Electoral Commission. Because of the PSC member of the Congress of Deputies integrate the PSOE parliamentary group, a certain level of influence from the PSOE can be expected to occur, but it remains informal.

The situation is asymmetric, with on the one hand the PSC, which is free to select its candidates (score of 3 because of the link with the PSOE), and on the other the remaining autonomous communities, in which the regional branches have only a limited input (score of 1).

#### *Policy-making for state-wide parliamentary elections*

The PSOE manifesto for general elections applies to the 16 autonomous communities where it presents candidates. The general party policy of the PSOE is defined by the federal party congress, which debates a 'framework policy paper' (*ponencia marco*). Until 1984 the policy-making process of the congress was a bottom-up process, with the local parties making policy proposals that were discussed by upper echelons up to the congress. This process subsequently became a lot more controlled by the centre, with draft policy proposals elaborated by the Federal Executive Commission and then sent to the local parties for their consideration (interview with Óscar López Águeda). Local parties can propose amendments that are voted upon at their provincial congress. Successful amendments can then be discussed by the federal congress, after approval by the congress organising committee (Méndez Lago 2000: 114-5).

However, the influence of the congress is relatively limited, in particular because congresses occur only once during the term of the legislature, every three to four years. Congresses moreover tend to focus on leadership concerns, through the election of the secretary-general and the Federal Executive Commission. In addition, the influence of the leadership is such that local parties are often 'disinclined to upset party policy as laid down by the centre' (Moxon-Browne 1989: 32). Even though the control of the leadership over the rest of the party is less strong today than during the years of González-Guerra leadership, the influence of party members and local parties remains limited.

The party has itself acknowledged that even its permanent sectoral organisations (thematic working groups) have been relatively deficient in their role as organs of bottom-up policy formation (Méndez, Morales and Ramiro 2004: 185-6). As a result, the PSOE organises political conferences that debate policy and provide the party with general policy guidelines. Created in 2000, two such political conferences have taken place in the run-up to the 2004 election. The first one took place in 2001 to present the party's new image and leadership and to launch the party's policy process in view of elaborating the programme. This led to the formation of hundreds of small policy groups. These groups made proposals that were then discussed in sectoral conferences. In January 2004 a second political conference was held in order to present the leadership and to adopt the election manifesto (interview with Óscar López Águeda).

The central party also organises meetings of regional executive secretaries over particular policy issues in order to involve the various parts of the party in the central decision-making process and coordinate party policy throughout the country (interview with Isabel Celaá Diéguez). Moreover, the Territorial Council is included in the elaboration of the party's autonomous policy. For instance prior to the 2004 elections, the Territorial Council's Santillana del Mar Pact 'determined the party's position' on the State of the Autonomies and defined the 'criteria of acceptability' of statutory reforms and the limits of the process of federalisation (interview with Agustín Baeza Díaz-Moreno).

The elaboration of the party manifesto is a rather elite-driven process. The party's executive organs appoint thematic working groups that include members of Parliament, people with government experience or special expertise. These groups meet with a large number of people in order to make the policy-making process as inclusive as possible (interview with Teresa Cunillera i Mestres). The final decision over which policy proposals to include is in the hands of the federal executive. For the 2004 elections, the leader of the socialist group in parliament, Jesús Caldera, was in charge of co-ordinating the elaboration of the manifesto. Occasionally, if the party still has some time before the election, some sessions will be organised at the local level in order to explain the party programme. These, however, are mainly top-down information sessions and lower party echelons or individual members have little say over what is included in the manifesto.

In Catalonia, the PSC produces its own manifesto, with no official oversight or influence from the PSOE. However, the unity protocol between the PSOE and the PSC stipulates that the parties coordinate their efforts to campaign at the state-wide level. This necessary coordination, combined with the joint PSC-PSOE parliamentary group in the Spanish lower chamber, contributes to increasing the convergence between the two parties. As a result, the programme of the PSOE is likely to have some influence over the PSC election manifesto. In addition, the link with the PSOE is seen as an advantage by a large portion of the PSC electorate in state-wide elections, as a large share of PSC voters have origins outside of Catalonia (Pallarés and Font 1994; Mercadé 1990). As a result, the parties have little interests in diverging too much. The PSC is however much more federalist than the PSOE (interview with Agustín Baeza Díaz-Moreno)

To reflect the increasing informal role of regional leaders and the necessity to coordinate between the levels through the Territorial Council but also through regular meetings between central and regional executive secretaries, the PSOE is given a score of 1. The PSC, on the other hand, elaborates its own programme, albeit with some political influence from the PSOE, and is given a score of 3.

### *7.1.3. Organisation in the autonomous communities, power and autonomy of the regional party branches*

The regional branches in the Basque Country and Galicia are '*federaciones de nacionalidad*' (national federations) as opposed to regional federations in the autonomous communities that are not historic nationalities. The organisation of the regional or national federations is very similar to that of the federal party, with two executive organs, including a small working executive headed by a secretary-general, a regional congress that elects the members of this executive and adopts policy statements. The regional federations are subject to the same rules that apply in the federal party, in particular with regard to internal voting procedures and gender parity.

#### *Selecting regional party leaders*

Regional party leaders (secretaries-general) are selected in the same way as the federal secretary-general: the secretary-general is elected by the regional congress and then forms his executive, which is also voted in by the congress. There is no formal intervention of the federal party in the process. Whereas it is not uncommon to read in the press that Ferraz (the name of the street where the PSOE has its headquarters in Madrid) has a preferred candidate, central interventions in the selection of regional candidates in the historic nationalities are rare.

Regional congresses must occur not longer than 60 days after the federal congress (additional amendment 2, Federal Statutes of the PSOE). Méndez Lago (2000) observes that the timing of congresses throughout the party (first the federal congress, then the regional congresses and finally the provincial congresses) facilitates the reproduction of the federal balance of power at the lower party echelons. As a result, regional leaders tend to be from the same wing or 'tendency' as the national leaders.

In Galicia, Emilio Pérez Touriño has been the party's secretary-general since 1998, when he replaced Francisco Vázquez, who resigned after the party's defeat in the October regional elections. The federal party's involvement in the election of a new secretary-general was limited to trying to limit the divisions and the number of lists competing in the regional congress. Failing to obtain an agreement between Pérez Touriño and Miguel Cortizo, it acted as a simple observer of the process and accepted Pérez Touriño's victory (Obelleiro 1998). Touriño was then selected by the PSdeG as candidate for the presidency of the Xunta de Galicia in 2000 and 2004. On both occasions, his candidacy was not contested, and in the absence of another candidate, the party decided not to hold primaries (El Mundo 2000b; Marín 2004).

In the Basque country, the party's situation is always a little more difficult because of the terrorist threat and the constant interest from the centre to what happens in this region. Historically, Basque party leaders have often come from the trade union movement (interview with Joana Madrigal Jiménez). Over the period under investigation, the PSE-EE has had two secretaries-general. Nicolas Redondo Terreros was elected by the Basque congress with 58% of the votes of the delegates in October 1997. He was later selected as candidate for the position of *lehendakari* (president of the Basque government) in a primary against Rosa Díez, with the open support of the central party (de la Calle 1998; Izarra 1998). During his time as secretary-general of the PSE-EE-PSOE, Redondo supported a strong anti-nationalist position and led the party's rapprochement with the PP. He was supported in this

strategy by Rodríguez Zapatero amidst divisions within the party over this strategy (Lazaro 2001).

He was reconducted as secretary-general by the Basque congress in November 2000 with a narrow score of 51%. Because of the narrow victory, he decided that primaries should be held to determine who would be the party's candidate to the presidency of the autonomous community, but his candidacy was uncontested and he automatically became the party's official candidate (Iturri and Urtasun 2000; El Mundo 2000c). Redondo resigned from the leadership after the 2001 election, which marked the failure of the anti-nationalist strategy. He was also protesting against the support of the PSE-EE in Biscay (Vizcaya) to the PNV-led local government over the budget of the province (Curruchaga 2001).

An extraordinary congress was held in April 2002. As in Galicia, the central party, via its secretary for organisation José Blanco, a Basque member of the Congreso, intervened in order to limit the number of lists presented to the delegates. The provisional executive that was established after Redondo's resignation and the Federal executive reached an agreement so that only two people could become secretary-general of the PSE-EE: Javier Rojo or Patxi López, who was the leader of the Biscayan PSE that facilitated the adoption of the budget of the province. Blanco subsequently met with the three provincial leaders to urge them to reach an agreement before the congress, so that only the candidate who could muster the largest support within the party would become candidate and present a list, while the other would back down (Sanchez 2002). Patxi López came out with the largest level of support, and Rojo did not present a list to the congress. López became secretary-general of the PSE-EE with 57% of the votes. While his election signified a shift in the party's strategy, Blanco expressed his support to the new leader, showing that the central party had no problem with López (Urtasun and Iturri 2002).

In Catalonia, the PSC selects its own leader. The first secretary (*primer secretario*) is elected by the congress of the PSC, and the choice of the PCS's candidate to the Presidency of the autonomous community is ratified by the *Consell Nacional* (National council), its executive body. The party may eventually organise primaries for the selection of the candidate to the Generalitat (Catalan government). The organic link between the PSOE and the PSC however means that the POSE has an interest in the personality and political inclinations of the Catalan party leader. There may therefore be some level of influence from the PSOE, in order to make sure that the leader of the PSC is compatible with the PSOE leadership.

For the 1999 Catalan elections, the PSC chose Pasqual Maragall, the charismatic former mayor of Barcelona, as its candidate against the CiU president of the Generalitat Jordi Pujol. Whereas Maragall was the only candidate, the party decided that it should still hold primaries (Nogue 1999). The primaries were open to all, party members, supporters (*simpatizantes*) and simple voters, and provided Maragall with an opportunity to start campaigning around Catalonia (Maragall 1999). He became party president in 2000. Maragall stood for a more regionalist agenda than his state-wide counterpart Josep Borrell, another Catalan. In 2003, Maragall was returned as the PSC candidate to the Generalitat, and he led the party to victory, forming a governing coalition between the PSC, EUiA (former communists and Greens) and ERC (republican left).

In all three cases, the influence of the central party is quite limited. Whereas it was perhaps possible in the early days of decentralisation, it is today more difficult for the central party to impose a candidate. In most cases, the interventions of the central party were limited to trying to control the level of fragmentation of the party

branches by limiting the number of lists presented in congress. Even so, it has not always succeeded in pushing contenders not to stand or to co-operate and present joint lists. In Catalonia, the PSOE has little ability to control who is elected and can only try to influence from afar. In Maragall's case, the PSOE was not apparently involved in the selection process. The PSOE in Galicia and the Basque Country and the PSC receive a score of 3.

#### *Selecting candidates for autonomous elections*

The Federal Committee is responsible for ratifying the lists of candidates that are presented before it by the Federal Lists Commission for all types of elections. As a result, the Federal Committee also plays a role in the selection of regional parliamentary candidates. The whole process is formally very similar to the one used for the selection of candidates to the Congress of Deputies. The only difference is the formal involvement of the regional level in the process.

The first stage of the selection process is identical to the one for state-wide elections: the provincial parties elaborate a draft list of candidates from proposals made by the local parties. They then send these lists to the regional party branches. Regional committees can set up a list commission (*Comisión Regional de Listas*) to coordinate the selection and ranking of the candidates on the lists. In consultation with the chair of the party's regional parliamentary group, the Regional Lists Commission submits a list for each constituency to the approval of the Regional Committee.

The regional federations then send their lists to the Federal Lists Commission, which has the power to modify the lists, in consultation with the secretary-general of the regional federation and a representative from the Provincial Executive Commission. The lists of candidates to autonomous elections must finally be approved by the Federal Committee. Again, the federal party has a veto power over candidate lists (interview with Óscar López Águeda). In practice regional federations seem to be rather free to select the candidates for regional elections. Galician and Basque respondents declared that the federal executive did not change the lists that the regional federation sent to it, except to implement criteria of gender parity (interview with Ricardo Varela Sánchez). Joana Madrigal, member of the Basque Parliament, explained that the list for Basque elections in her province (Álava) was mainly made by the provincial executive from proposals emanating from lower party echelons, and that the upper echelons of the party then accepted the list as it was. Likewise, Francisco Cerviño González reported that the Galician federation had become more autonomous in the 1990s and that the central party did not intervene in the candidate selection process. However, the veto power of the federal party certainly represents a strong incentive for regional federations not to choose candidates that are likely to be rejected by the federal executive.

Again, the federal party has no formal influence over the selection of candidates for election to the Catalan parliament, as the PSC is a separate party. The method and criteria of elaboration are nevertheless similar to the ones used in the PSOE, with initial proposals made by lower party echelons and the final lists adopted by the PSC leadership (interview with Carme Figueras i Siñol). The absence of veto power from the central party certainly provides the Catalan party with a larger freedom than that enjoyed by the regional branches of the PSOE, but again some informal influence may still occur.

The PSOE in Galicia and the Basque Country receives a score of 2 because the central party retains a veto power, and the PSC has a score of 3 because it has a larger room for manoeuvre.

#### *Policy-making for autonomous elections*

The Federal Committee is responsible for 'coordinating and ratifying the electoral programmes of each regional branch with the federal programme' (art.5 Statutes 2000). For the 13 autonomous communities that hold their elections on the same day (and together with municipal elections), the PSOE drafts a framework programme (*programa marco*), which must inspire the manifestos elaborated by the regional federations. The programmes for autonomous elections in the Basque country, Galicia and Catalonia are not influenced by this framework programme, as elections in these autonomous communities take place on a different date (and in most cases in a different year).

Catalonia again is a special case, as the PSC makes its own programme without any official oversight from the Spanish PSOE. Its level of independence from pressures from the PSOE has varied considerably over time. Throughout the 1980s, the PSOE was in power in Madrid while the PSC failed to win Catalan elections. The PSC fared better in state-wide than in regional elections, with an electorate mainly composed of immigrants from other parts of Spain and their descendants. As a result, this electorate was attracted mainly by the PSC's link with the PSOE and was rather unsympathetic to Catalan nationalism. Moreover, with a number of ministers in the Spanish government and a common parliamentary group with the PSOE in the Cortes, the PSC found it difficult to present the image of an independent party (Roller and van Houten 2003: 12). The integration of the PSC within the PSOE forced the Catalan party to moderate its calls for greater decentralisation (McRoberts 2001: 88), as the PSOE was rejecting any further decentralisation.

In the 1990s, factional divisions and the leadership crisis in Madrid, as well as leadership change in Catalonia, changed the relationship between the PSOE and the PSC. The last years of the González government were characterised by an increased focus on controlling the damage at the centre, and the departure of Alfonso Guerra loosened the grip of the central party on the peripheries. At the same time, the PSC adopted a more Catalan profile, declaring in its 1996 congress that it was in favour of some form of federalism within the framework of the State of the Autonomies (McRoberts 2001: 88). The choice of former Barcelona mayor Pasqual Maragall as candidate to the Generalitat of the PSC also contributed to the shift in the PSC's strategy and its greater autonomy vis-à-vis the PSOE.

At the same time, a large share of the PSC's electorate values the link between the PSC and the PSOE (interview with Josep María Sala). The Catalan party therefore finds some electoral advantage in remaining politically close to the positions of the PSOE and has to strike a balance between having its own identity based on history, institutions and language (interview with Teresa Cunillera i Mestres) and being linked to the PSOE. This balance still has to be struck by the PSC, which has the final authority to adopt policies for Catalonia. Finally, the presence of representatives of the PSC in central party organs of the PSOE ensures that there is a common ground between the two parties.

The programme for autonomous elections in the other two regions must be approved by the federal executive, and there is a strong level of co-ordination between the central and regional levels during the elaboration of the regional programmes

(interview with Agustín Baeza Díaz-Moreno). In Galicia and the Basque Country, the regional federations nevertheless have considerable autonomy to adapt the party's strategy to the local context, but they have to remain 'loyal' to the general positions of the party and cannot be different from the central party line. Instead, it is more a matter of adaptation of the Spanish position to the regional context (interview with Lentxu Rubial Cachorro). Moreover, the regional federations have to follow the party line as defined by the federal party on issues that have a national importance (interview with Francisco Cerviño González).

Interviews in Galicia showed that the federation enjoyed a rather large degree of autonomy to elaborate their own programme and that 'there was no effective supervision' (interview with Francisco Carro Garrote). The Galician federation elaborates its own programme based on the works of regional thematic working groups, which include experts, interested party members and members of the Galician parliament. The manifesto is then submitted to the approval of the Galician National Executive Committee.

Overall, the party adheres to the policies of the federal party on issues of national relevance and adapts the socialist message to the economic, social and political situation of Galicia. The Galician federation enjoys a rather large degree of freedom with respect to Galician themes (interview with Carlos Pajares Vales). After a period in which the PSdeG-PSOE supported a rather centralist position in the 1990s, which resulted in poor electoral results and a transfer of votes from the PSdeG to the nationalist party BNG, the party, under Touriño's leadership, has adopted a more accommodative position toward regionalism (interview with Francisco Carro Garrote). While some respondents believed that the manifesto for regional elections was not sent to the federal party, the secretary for organisation Ricardo Varela Sánchez confirmed that it was indeed sent to the central party, but that there had not been any problem at that level. This certainly results from the conjunction of the more accommodative position of the central party vis-à-vis regional differences and the strong common ground between the levels.

The situation is relatively similar in the Basque country. The manifesto for regional elections is elaborated in a similar way by the Basque party. Whereas 'it is hardly the case that the PSOE intervenes in Basque affairs' (interview with Isabel Celaá Diéguez), it is also true that the most controversial issues in the Basque country, terrorism and the future of Euskadi in Spain, are mainly matters decided at the central level. Moreover, these issues have tended to be kept outside the normal political debate through the Anti-terrorism Pact between the PP and the PSOE, through which the parties pledged not to make any political gains from terrorism.<sup>54</sup>

This particular situation of the Basque socialists has also led the federal party to give some leeway to its Basque branch. Relations were sometimes a little difficult when Nicolas Redondo was secretary-general of the PSE. However, even though the policy of co-operation with the PP was not well understood in Madrid and contradicted the PSOE's state-wide strategy of opposition, the federal party respected the position of the PSE (interview with Arantza Mendizábal Gorostiaga). Today,

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<sup>54</sup> This has not stopped the PSOE from criticising the PP government when it felt that the government was making partisan use of the pact or threatened civil liberties (see Mata 2005: 104, n. 41). Likewise, the PP in opposition has often criticised the treatment of terrorism by Zapatero's government and accused it of being soft with ETA and Basque nationalism (see for instance ABC 3 July 2005 [http://www.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-03-07-2005/abc/Nacional/el-pp-critica-que-zapatero-e-ibarretxe-compitan-en-la-negociacion-con-eta\\_203560434938.html](http://www.abc.es/hemeroteca/historico-03-07-2005/abc/Nacional/el-pp-critica-que-zapatero-e-ibarretxe-compitan-en-la-negociacion-con-eta_203560434938.html)).

relations with Patxi López are easier, and there is more common ground between the central and Basque parties.

The Basque programme is elaborated by the Basque party, with a large autonomy over day-to-day topics that affect particularly the Basque country and a broad consensus with the state-wide party over issues of terrorism, territorial organisation and reform of the state, but also management of the economy and social issues. Overall, the federal party does not have to intervene in Basque affairs over the regional programme because there are not really any differences between the central and Basque parties. Any discrepancy comes from the context and specificities of the region, such as the population, the state of the economy, and the specific competences of the Basque autonomous community compared to the other regions (interview with Lentxu Rubial Cachorro). Isabel Celaá Diéguez declared that overall, there was 'a basic understanding within the party over most issues'.

As an independent party, the PSC chooses its own policies. The PSOE has no formal power to control the content of the PSC manifestos for autonomous elections, but the organic link between the PSOE and the PSC means that PSOE policies influence the programme of the PSC. As a result, the PSC receives a score of 3. In contrast, the Basque and Galician regional branches receive a score of 2 because the federal party is more heavily involved in the process of making the regional manifestos.

#### *Party finance*

The accounts presented by the PSOE to the *Tribunal de Cuentas*, the organ in charge of controlling the financial statements of all registered political parties, include the accounts of all the party levels down to the provincial level, plus those of some local branches (*comarcas*) in the Valencian Community, and the accounts of the parliamentary groups in the Cortes and the autonomous assemblies. Subsidies received at the local level and electoral subsidies (for all types of elections) are not included in the resources of the party. The data disaggregating the resources by autonomous community are unavailable, as are the transfers of money within the party and between levels. It is therefore difficult to evaluate the respective resources of the central party and of the regional federations and to evaluate who controls what because of the limited reliability of the information (Méndez Lago 2000: 138).

Table 7.1 below illustrates the dependence of the PSOE on public funding. Over 60% of the party's income comes from electoral subsidies. In comparison, membership fees represent a mere 10% of the party's resources. More than half of the subsidies received by the party correspond to the state subsidy for ordinary activities and the activities of the parliamentary groups in the Cortes. In addition, the table shows that the income of the federal party accounts for approximately one half of the total income of the party.

The membership fee is paid at the local level (*agrupación local*). This level keeps a portion of this fee and then sends the rest to the regional federation, which does the same and sends the remainder to the federal party. The amount listed as 'membership fees' does not actually correspond to the sum raised across the party because the accounts presented to the Tribunal de Cuentas do not include the accounts of the local branches.

In addition to the funds presented in the table above, the PSOE receives substantial electoral subsidies. The federal party receives and distributes the subsidies received for general and local elections. Via the Federal Executive Commission, it also



distributes a share of the subsidy for ordinary activities to the regional branches in function of the number of members in each.

**Table 7.1. Resources of the PSOE, 1999-2003**

	1999*	2000*	2001	2002	2003
Total income	48,129,049.32	46,235,861.19	51,715,376.76	54,545,401.29	56,873,287.15
Total donations and fees (members and office holders)	6,262,546.13	6,737,345.69	8,174,605.66	9,809,914.27	11,324,315.72
of which membership fees as % of income	3,643,813.22 7.6	3,674,784.58 8.00	4,719,445.58 9.1	5,634,702.12 10.3	6,475,195.81 11.4
Non-electoral subsidies as % of income	32,463,730.43 67.5	32,088,386.59 69.4	32,726,309.00 63.3	33,889,962.65 62.1	36,676,297.65 64.5
Electoral subsidies#	22,081,566.86	15,586,030.53	3,664,381.70	669,985.69	15,831,473.25
Income of national party of which subsidies	26,554,765.65 18,335,790.25	23,862,991.54 17,608,377.21	27,175,810.80 17,678,662.54	n.a. 17,678,661.51	n.a. 18,604,820.81
Subsidies to parliamentary groups in regional assemblies	10,214,322.71	11,018,099.17	11,630,003.50	12,441,245.42	13,210,788.63
Electoral subsidies for elections to regional assemblies	3,509,073.72	3,458,311.01	2,072,774.77	1,084,404.76	4,123,159.06
Non-electoral subsidy from the Basque government	547,923.35	657,508.02	647,197.26	641,168.23	702,319.00

\* To facilitate the comparison, amounts in pesetas have been converted into euros, with the official conversion rate of 166.386 Ptas for 1 euro.

# not included in the total income of the party declared to the party to the Tribunal de Cuentas.

n.a.: not available

Source: Tribunal de Cuentas 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2006.

The regional branches moreover receive subsidies for their participation in regional elections as well as ordinary subsidies from the regional institutions. These subsidies are given directly to the regional branches. As a result, the regional federations of the PSOE receive regular funding for their ordinary activities as well as to support the activities of their parliamentary groups. They are able to finance their own campaigns for regional elections. This is facilitated by the fact that autonomous institutions provide, like the state-wide government, advances on the basis of their results in the previous elections. The federal party can nevertheless supervise the finances of lower party echelons via the Comisión Revisora de Cuentas (Title 5, PSOE 2000).

While the central party has tried to exercise a certain level of control over the finances of its regional branches, in particular after a number of financial scandals, it has generally been quite unable to maintain such control. As a result, it can be said that the party is quite decentralised with respect to its distribution of resources. The public funding of party activities is in this respect the main source of the financial autonomy of the PSOE's regional branches. The central party provides some financial support to the regional federations (interview with Óscar López Águeda), but it is difficult to evaluate the actual scale of this assistance. The party therefore receives a score of 2 for the indicator of financial autonomy.

The PSC is a registered political party and it presents its own accounts to the electoral commission. Its resources also provide mainly from public funding. The Catalan Parliament provides the party with subsidies for its parliamentary group, and the Catalan government is responsible for providing the parties with an electoral

subsidy. In addition, the PSC receives a non-electoral subsidy from the Spanish government and a grant for its membership to the PSOE parliamentary group in the Congress. The table below details its sources of income.

**Table 7.2.** Resources of the PSC-PSOE, 1999-2003

	1999*	2000*	2001	2002	2003
Total income	8,504,792.83	8,117,236.32	9,044,011.26	9,388,576.78	12,064,768.98
Income of NEC	6,126,615.62	6,356,713.10	6,581,913.65	7,073,096.49	n.a.
Membership fees NEC	211,368.44	218,291.20	219,978.84	204,393.60	n.a.
Permanent subsidy (central government)	3,315,726.98	2,974,700.46	2,931,089.66	2,931,089.51	2,931,089.51
Subsidy to parliamentary group in Catalan parliament	1,017,777.72	2,314,313.15	2,761,733.84	3,376,051.02	3,645,939.41
Subsidies as % of income NEC	70.7	83.2	86.5	89.2	67.7#

\* To facilitate the comparison, amounts in pesetas have been converted into euros, with the official conversion rate of 166.386 Ptas for 1 euro.

n.a.: not available; # subsidies as percentage of total income of the PSC.

Source: Tribunal de Cuentas 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2006.

The only financial link between the PSOE and the PSC relates to the subsidy for the PSC members of Congress. The PSOE returns a portion of its subsidy for parliamentary activities in the Congreso to the PSC, as the members of PSC belong to the PSOE parliamentary group. The sum of this financial devolution was only made available for the year 1999. That year, the PSC received € 36,060.73. In spite of this financial link rendered necessary by the existence of a common parliamentary group, the PSC is financially autonomous from the PSOE because it is a separate registered party. As a result, it receives a score of 4.

### Conclusion

The PSOE has undergone a slow process of federalisation of its organisation. Many respondents noted that this shift in the federalisation of the party coincided with the strengthening of the State of the Autonomies and that the party now embraced a more federal conception of its organisation. For instance, Francisco Cerviño González noted that the federal party used to be much more 'Jacobin' in the 1980s, when it tended to dictate to the peripheries, but that the consolidation of the State of the Autonomies has strengthened the autonomy of the regional federations. At the beginning of the 1990s, with the consolidation of the State of the Autonomies, regional party leaders started to have more autonomy and local resources that strengthened their power autonomously from the federal party.

Table 7.3 below represents the organisation of the PSOE at the end of our investigation. Overall, the regional branches of the state-wide party are weakly involved in the central party in spite of the creation of the Territorial Council. Regional branches have played a crucial role at some point of the party's history, but their presence at the centre has recently diminished to leave more control to the federal leadership. The federal party enjoys a rather important degree of autonomy in the elaboration of the programme and controls the selection of parliamentary candidates. The regional branches have nevertheless gained a rather important level of autonomy over the party's strategy in regional elections.

**Table 7.3.** Coding for the organisation of the PSOE and PSC

	Basque Country	Galicia	Catalonia
<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>			
1. Selection the leader of the state-wide party	1	1	1
2. Involvement of regional party branches in the central party executive	1	1	1
3. Selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1	3
4. Adoption of the manifesto for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1	3
5. Amending the constitution of the state-wide party	1	1	1
<i>Sum involvement</i>	5	5	9
<i>Autonomy of the regional party branches</i>			
6. Organisational freedom of the regional party branches	1	1	4
7. Selection of the regional party leaders	3	3	3
8. Selection of candidates for regional elections	2	2	3
9. Adoption of the manifesto for regional elections	2	2	3
10. Funding of the regional party branches	2	2	4
<i>Sum autonomy</i>	10	10	17

## 7.2. The Popular Party, *Partido Popular* (PP)

The following section will first relate the formation and recent history of the Partido Popular since its formation as Alianza Popular in 1976. It will then describe the organisation of the PP for state-wide party processes and in the autonomous communities of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. The code for each indicator is presented in order to evaluate the degree of involvement of regional party branches in the central party and their autonomy at the regional level.

### 7.2.1. History and change in the *Partido Popular*

#### *Party formation*

The Alianza Popular (AP), the ancestor of the Partido Popular (PP), was created in 1976 by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who had been Minister for Propaganda and Tourism under Franco (1962-69) and Interior Minister in Arias Navarro's post-Franco cabinet (1975-76). Fraga theorised the project of 'pseudo-reformism' adopted by Arias, which aimed at creating a limited democracy that would combine part of the institutions of the old autocratic system with elements of democratic reform (Soto 2005: 54). However, this project failed and lost the king's support. Suárez then replaced Arias as Prime minister and started the process of democratic transition.

The Alianza Popular was founded as the federation of seven political formations that were often mere political vehicles for the ambitions of former Francoist ministers. The party expected to win a majority of the vote in the 1977 election, basing its expectations on a number of pre-electoral surveys and a misconception of where the centre of the political spectrum lay (Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986: 102-3). Its association with the Franco regime, as well as its initial qualms about the new constitution and its hostility towards regionalisation meant that the AP only achieved limited support in the first elections of the democratic period and was considered by the electorate as too far from the political centre (Gunther 1986: 50; Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986: 102-7). The AP was 'unable to overcome its lack of democratic legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate' (Montero 1988: 145).

Whereas Fraga wanted to create a centre-right catch-all party, AP was in fact a party of notables based on traditional clientelistic networks. In terms of policy, the party remained traditionally conservative, with values that were increasingly at odds with the rapid pace of change in post-Franco Spanish society (Montero 1998: 145). Partly thanks to Fraga's participation in the drafting of the constitution, AP eventually accepted the new system, even though it was broadly against the *Estado de las Autonomías*. The most extreme elements of the party rejected the constitution and protested against AP's acceptance of the new system by leaving the party (Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986: 196-7).

While the departure of the extreme-right wing of the party initially weakened AP, it eventually allowed the party to adopt a more moderate profile and stay clear of any reference to the Franco regime. Present in the 1979 election under the name *Coalición Demócrata*, the party started to reform its policies and adopt a more classical centre-right position, replacing its defence of neo-corporatism by a more classic adherence to neo-liberal principles (Gunther 1986: 36-7; Gunther, Sani and Shabad 1986: 199-201). The formation of *Coalición Demócrata* was nevertheless marred with conflicts between AP and its new partners, in particular over candidate lists and organisation. AP already had a well developed organisation at the provincial level, while the other parties were often rather weakly organised. Eventually, AP did not benefit from the alliance, as its new partners lacked organisation and networks to facilitate the party's electoral growth, and the coalition lost 7 seats.

The 1979 defeat of the Democratic Coalition, through which AP aimed at attracting centrist voters, represented a shock for the party. AP left the coalition and decided to stand alone in future elections, reshape its organisation into a single, presidentialised party under Fraga's leadership, and position itself as a democratic right-wing party. In the 1982 election, the AP, in coalition with a splinter group from the UCD and small regional parties, came into second place after the PSOE but failed to attract the whole electorate that had deserted the *Unión del Centro Democrático* (UCD). The emergence of centre-right regionalist parties in regions such as Catalonia and the Basque country also limited the potential progress of a nationally organised conservative party (Frain and Wiarda 1998: 202).

After another defeat in 1986, Fraga resigned as leader, and Senator Hernández Mancha was elected at a special congress in 1987. Support for the party however failed to increase and opposition to the new leader mounted inside the party, until he resigned at the end of 1988. In January 1989, the ninth party congress led to Fraga's temporary return as party leader and a reorganisation of the party that reduced membership power and increased leadership control and internal party cohesion (García-Guereta Rodríguez 2001: 163-5; Balfour 2005: 148-9). The party was renamed Partido Popular and included UCD members and other moderate right-wing movements, thereby coalescing all the democratic branches of the centre-right, conservatives, liberals, Christian democrats, monarchists, etc. After Fraga won the Galician regional elections and became President of the regional government, he supported José María Aznar, the then president of the region Castile and Leon, to replace him as party leader.

#### *Partido Popular: contemporary organisation and principles*

What came to be known as 'Fraga's ceiling' (*el techo de Fraga*), that is, Fraga's inability to win over 25% of the votes and therefore to transform AP into a credible government party (García-Guereta 2001: 135), was not broken in the 1989 election, but the

PSOE's majority was reduced to one seat. Under Aznar's leadership, the party sought to occupy the centre-right of the political spectrum that had been left vacant by the collapse of the UCD, and adopted a moderate profile designed to place the party in a position to win office and replace the PSOE as Spain's main party. At the same time, Aznar strengthened the centralisation of the party's structure and increased the party's internal cohesion and discipline (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2006: 401). Aznar also managed to use the increasing number of scandals affecting the PSOE to the PP's advantage. This strategy was soon rewarded with success, albeit a limited one, as the PP managed to force the PSOE into a minority government in 1993 (Frain and Wiarda 1998: 202-3).

The PP managed to form a minority government after the 1996 general elections, benefiting from the votes of regionalist parties to support its government, just like the PSOE had done in the previous legislature. The party won the absolute majority of the seats in the Congreso in the 2000 election. During its first term in office, the need to maintain the parliamentary support of Basque and Catalan nationalist parties and to win over centrist voters encouraged the party to adopt a moderate stance. In exchange for the support of parties such as CiU and the PNV, the government transferred more competences and tax revenues to regional governments. In economic terms, the government adopted a neo-liberal agenda, complete with privatisations and deregulations. A more conservative programme was carried out in the domains of education and health (Balfour 2005: 154-6). After the party's 2000 victory, government policy shifted to the right, with stronger stances on immigration, a controversial school reform making religious education compulsory, and a more uncompromising attitude toward peripheral nationalisms with the development of the notion of 'constitutional patriotism', which involved a sometimes exaggerated portraying of peripheral nationalisms and endorsed a more traditional form of Spanish nationalism (Balfour 2005: 158-9; Astudillo and García-Guereta 2006: 413).

The way the party has dealt with Franco's legacy and the dictatorship has sometimes been more ambiguous. Montero and Linz (1999: 4) describe the PP as a 'conservative party committed to the democratic constitution without fully rejecting the past'. This reluctance to address the recent past was again illustrated by the PP's refusal to condemn the civil war (until 2002) and the Franco dictatorship, as well as their protests against the removal of Francoist street names and symbols (Nuñez Seixas 2005: 124). In addition, soon after the PP won the 2000 election, the government awarded the Francisco Franco Foundation a very substantial subsidy as part of the funding for NGOs.

Aznar had declared that he would step down at the end of his second term. As a result, during part of the second term, speculations about his succession were focusing the attention of a number of party grandees and the media. Aznar chose his successor himself and he chose Mariano Rajoy Brey, a Galician who started in the Galician parliament. He was even briefly deputy president of the Xunta de Galicia (1986-7). He integrated the party executive at the moment of the formation of the PP. He entered the Spanish parliament in 1989 and led the 1996 and 2000 victorious election campaigns that had brought the party into government. He participated in every cabinet since 1996, first as minister for public administrations, then as education minister, minister for the presidency (co-ordinating role of the Cabinet, government spokesperson and any other role that the president of the government may assign to the function) and interior minister. After the 2000 election he also became deputy president of the government.

The PP was in shock after its defeat in the 2004 elections. Opinion polls predicted a victory for the PP, and the party felt robbed by what they perceive as the PSOE's campaign following the terrorist attacks. The personality of Rajoy as Aznar's appointed successor and the feeling of being a victim rather than a party defeated after a normal electoral process mean that the party is unlikely to change either organisationally or programmatically in the close future. The party has indeed adopted a posture of frontal opposition to the government led by Rodríguez Zapatero on issues such as gay marriage and institutional reforms.

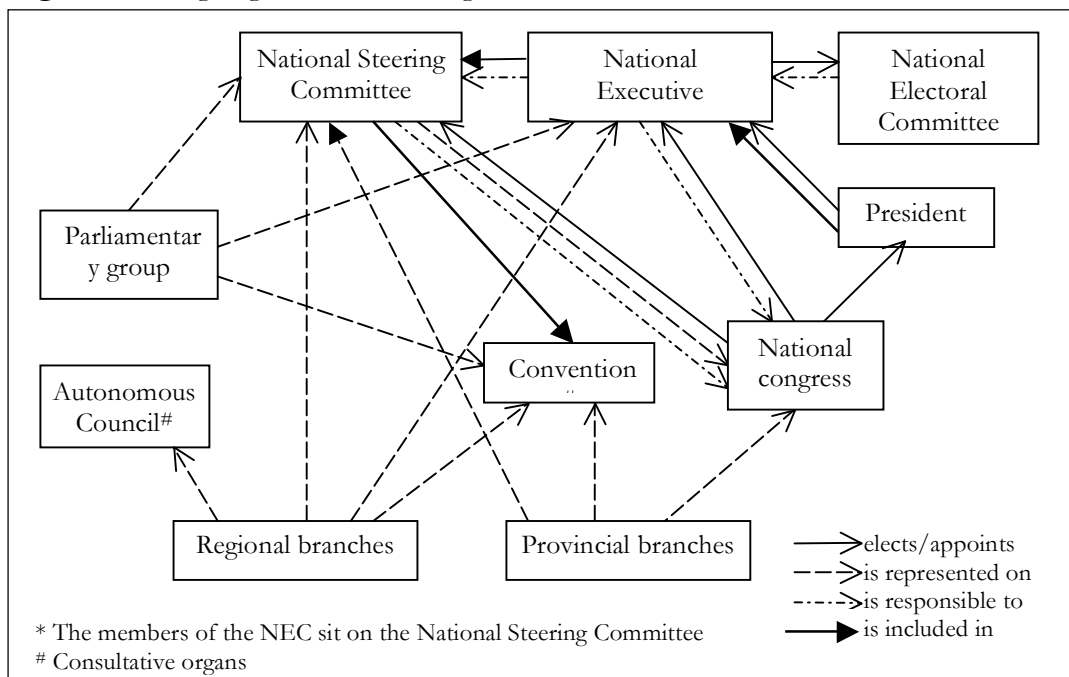
### 7.2.2. Organisation at the central level, central party processes

The Partido Popular defines itself as a national party with a 'regionalised and decentralised organisation' (Partido Popular 2002, Art. 17). The party is present in every region except in Navarra, where the UPN (*Unión del Pueblo Navarro*) stands for national and regional elections for the PP since 1990. The figure below schematically presents the organisation of the central level or organisation of the PP based on the party constitution and maps the relations between the main party organs. Lower party echelons have the same organisation, with the same organs adapted at their level and with the same sort of relationships.

#### Constitutional guarantee

The statutes of the state-wide party can be modified by the national congress, after proposal by the national executive committee. As a result, the balance of power between territorial units is by statute highly dependent on the central party. The statutes of the PP are rather prescriptive. While article 20 of the national statutes (PP 2002) stipulates that the territorial sub-units elaborate their own rulebooks and organise their own working rules, the statutes describe the general articulation of the party, stipulate the organisation and the type of organs that should be created at each

**Figure 7.2.** Organigram, national organisation of the PP



Source: own elaboration from statutes of PP, 2000 and 2004.

territorial level (regional and provincial), and the responsibility of each organ. As a result, the regional units have no discretion about their organisation. The party therefore receives a score of 1 for both indicators of revision of the party constitution and organisational autonomy of the regional branches.

### *Selecting the party leader*

The party leader, called President in the Partido Popular, is elected by the party National Congress, which is composed of delegates from the provincial party units. The number of delegates from each province is decided by the *Junta Directiva Nacional* (national steering committee, JDN) on the basis of each province's number of party members and past electoral results. In fact, the choice of the party president can coincide with the choice of a candidate for the position of President of the government, which is appointed by the JDN, in which regional party presidents and PP presidents of autonomous communities sit alongside members of the *Comité Ejecutivo Nacional* (CEN) and members of parliament. Since the party's transformation from AP to PP, it has changed leader only twice.

In 1989, Fraga had announced that his return to the party leadership would only be temporary. Fraga consulted the younger generation of party officials and came to the conclusion that from among those most likely to succeed him, Aznar was the candidate who would garner the most support. After Fraga announced his choice, Aznar's nomination was ratified by the CEN and then formally approved by the national steering committee (JDN) (García-Guereta Rodríguez 2001: 166-7).

In 1994, Aznar announced that he would stand down as party leader after two terms if he won the 1996 elections, and he kept to his word (Iglesias 2003: 14). After a long period of rumours and predictions, he decided that Mariano Rajoy should be the one to replace him. Iglesias (2003: 22-3) recalls how the leaders conducted talks with a large number of party grandees. A peculiar anecdote is that on the eve of announcing the name of the candidate to his succession, Aznar called a number of the party's most prominent figures, asking for their support but withholding the name of his chosen candidate. A reunion of the National Executive Committee (CEN) was called after the summer of 2003 for the purpose of endorsing Rajoy as the party's candidate to the Moncloa and secretary-general. Aznar's choice was approved by the party's national executive; and Rajoy later became secretary-general of the PP and finally President at the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of the party in October 2004. Aznar's succession followed a similar pattern to the one that had prevailed over his selection by Manuel Fraga in 1989.

In practice, the choice of the party president has been the sole prerogative of the leader, and the role of the party's executive organs has been to formally endorse this choice. As both examples show, this is a very centralised process in which there is no room for internal party democracy, even though the leader's choice is not made in complete isolation but resulted from his own observations and discussions with party 'grandees'. The PP receives a score of 0 for the level of involvement of the regional branches in the selection of the leader.

### *The central party executive*

The most important executive organ of the party is the *Comité Ejecutivo Nacional* (CEN), which is composed of 35 members elected every three years by the party

congress<sup>55</sup>, the president and the secretary-general, party leaders in the Congress, Senate and European Parliament, PP presidents of autonomous communities, regional party presidents, the presidents of the National Electoral Committee, the National Committee on Rights and Guarantees and *Nuevas Generaciones*, the party's youth organisation, deputy secretaries-general and executive secretaries, two representatives of the party abroad, and up to five members appointed by the leaders.

The CEN is responsible for the general coordination of the party, defining the overall party strategy and the general political line of the political action of the various PP groups around the country, appointing the leaders of the party's various parliamentary groups (*portavoces*), the secretary-general and deputy secretaries-general and executive secretaries, among others, resolve conflicts of competence between territorial units, and elaborating electoral programmes and pre-programmes and planning the campaigns.

In addition to the CEN, the national steering committee (JDN) also meets at least every four months. It is a larger organ that includes the members of the CEN, all the party's elected officials in the Congress, Senate and European Parliament, regional and provincial presidents, PP presidents and *portavoces* of autonomous communities, presidents of local communities and mayors of provincial and regional capitals, numerous representatives from the party's youth movement, government ministers and European commissioner, as the case may be. The JDN holds the executive committee into account and designates the party's candidate to the presidency of the government.

In practice, the CEN is largely dominated by the leader, who cannot only appoint five additional members but who is also able to replace some of the elected members and cumulates the positions of leader of the parliamentary groups in the Congress, Senate and European Parliament. Moreover, the 35 members elected at the congress are chosen from a closed list elaborated by the party president. In the past congresses of the PP, only one list was presented to the congress. The president moreover appoints the party's executive secretaries and secretaries, who form the smaller, working executive of the party (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2006: 408). As a result, the party leader has considerable influence over the executive (van Biezen and Hopkin 2005: 112). However, regional party presidents and presidents of autonomous communities represent approximately a third of the CEN. As a result, the PP receives a score of 2 for the indicator of participation in the central executive.

#### *Candidate selection for elections to the Congreso de los Diputados*

The process of candidate selection for elections to the Congress of Deputies is, in spite of the statutes' provisions, a very centralised process. According to the party statutes, provincial electoral committees (*Comité Electoral Provincial*) are responsible for the elaboration of candidate lists, which they then propose for approval to the national electoral committee. Electoral committees are composed of 8 members appointed by the executive committee of each level, as well as one additional member from *Nuevas Generaciones*. For instance, the members of the national electoral committee are appointed by the national executive committee, and the national executive of *Nuevas Generaciones* also appoints one representative to the national electoral committee.

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<sup>55</sup> In the 1996 statutes, the CEN included 20 members.



The composition of the lists does not follow any sort of rule and is the result of elite decisions. The composition of the lists generally reflects some sort of geographical balance to ensure that no part of the province absolutely dominates the list and the central party 'suggests [gender] parity' (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro) but does not impose it. Like the PSOE, the PP tends to include non-members in its lists in order to suggest 'openness'. These 'civil society' candidates can sometimes be imposed from above. The national party also tends to defend sitting members of parliament. A member of the national executive estimated that the turnover on the lists was around 40% between two elections. Ultimately, the National Electoral Committee has the last word on the composition of the lists (interview with Gabriel Elorriaga Pisarik).

In practice, provincial committees receive pressures from both regional and national levels to influence the selection of candidates and the ranking of these candidates on the list. The lists established by the provincial parties are in particular the object of discussions between the provincial branches and the central party, so that in the end, the list sent to the central party for approval has already been scrutinised by the national electoral committee (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2006: 21). For instance, the Catalan PP suffered from the pressures of the national party over the composition of lists for the 2000 election. The exclusion of former Catalan party president Vidal-Quadras by the central party produced a number of dissensions. In the end, the Catalan provincial parties decided not to enter into conflict with the national party, and the Barcelona branch sent to the central party a list that followed the criteria imposed by the centre. However, it added an annex that criticised this list (Rusiñol 2000).

Through informal discussions over the composition of the lists the party avoids open crises and facilitates central party control. Most of these conflicts remain hidden by the party, as provincial parties generally yield to the central party's wishes before the final stage of official transmission of the lists (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2005). As a result, the central party can in the end say that it has approved the lists sent to it by the provincial parties and use this as a sign that there is no disagreement within the party. The PP receives a score of 1 for the involvement of the regional branches in the selection of candidates to the parliament.

#### *Policy-making for state-wide parliamentary election*

A number of party organs at the national level are nominally involved in the policy-making process that leads to the elaboration of the party manifesto for elections to the Congress of Deputies. In practice, policy is determined at the top of the party by the president and a group of people that surrounds him.

The congress is 'the party's supreme organ' (art. 25 of the party statutes) and is responsible for shaping its basic policy principles and adopting any policy document that it may deem useful (art. 29). In practice, little policy is discussed during the party congress. Instead, the main issues at stake in PP congresses are the election of the executive and other party offices. It is the Junta Directiva Nacional, which counts up to 600 members and includes provincial and regional representatives, that approves the motions and issues that will be debated during the congress, upon proposals made by the national executive. This means that the national executive committee by and large controls the agenda of the congress, and policy is only a side issue in party congresses.

The national steering committee (JDN), which meets at least three times a year, also discusses policy and election programmes. Its wide-ranging composition means that it is a place where the various levels of the party can interact and where the leadership can take the pulse of the party on the ground and of the regional organisations. It is the national executive committee (CEN) and the president that are given the most important policy role in the party statutes, as the CEN is in charge of defining the party's political line and its programmes, while the president co-ordinates the party's political action and approves any political declaration made in its name.

In addition, the national convention is a consultative organ that meets every year to discuss policy proposed by the party executive. It includes all the members of the JDN, members of autonomous parliaments, PP members of autonomous governments, presidents or group leaders of local assemblies, mayors or group leaders of councils of cities with a population in excess of 15,000. It discusses the outline and the broad issues of the state-wide programme (interview with Gabriel Elorriaga Pisarik).

Day-to-day political activities and the main political decisions are discussed in non-official '*reuniones de maitines*' (matins reunions). These regular meetings gather around the leader a number of party grandees to discuss the most important issues that the party has to deal with. Josep Piqué, the president of the Catalan PP, is part of this group of people. His presence, along with that of Madrid Mayor Ruiz-Gallardón, has nevertheless less to do with his weight as regional leader than with the importance of Catalan politics for the national party (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2005). It should also be noted that both were important members of the central party before turning to respectively regional and local politics. However, Catalan respondents considered that participation in such meetings could be an occasion for Piqué to express the point of view of the Catalan PP.

The party manifesto itself is produced by the secretary for programmes and studies, who is chosen by the president. This position was occupied by Gabriel Elorriaga in the last general election. The secretary coordinates various thematic study groups, which include members of parliament and chosen civil society representatives (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro). A small group of 8 to 10 people around the secretary elaborates the programme on the basis of the conclusions of the thematic groups, impulses given by the president and proposals from members of Parliament (Méndez, Morales and Ramiro 2004: 185). The FAES (*Fundación para el Análisis y los Estudios Sociales*), a think-tank created in 2002 as a result of the fusion of a number of conservative groups, also contributed to the thinking that went behind the elaboration of the manifesto (interview with Gabriel Elorriaga Pisarik).<sup>56</sup>

There is no formal inclusion of regional party presidents or presidents of autonomous communities other than their presence in formal party organs such as the CEN and the national steering committee. The PP is given a score of 1.

### *7.2.3. Organisation in the autonomous communities, power and autonomy of the regional party branches*

Regional party branches have replicated the organisation of the central party at the regional level, following similar rules and procedures for the selection of regional

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<sup>56</sup> José María Aznar has been president of the FAES since 2004.

leaders and election candidates and for the elaboration of the programmes for autonomous elections.

### *Selecting regional party leaders*

Party statutes declare that regional party leaders (presidents) are selected by the regional congresses and that they do so autonomously. Over the course of the history of the PP, however, the involvement of the centre in the selection of regional leaders has been apparent. In particular, the leadership change at the centre in 1989 was followed by a number of changes at the regional (and provincial) level (Betanzo 2005). The central party intervenes in particular in order to avoid internal divisions in the regional parties (interview with José Luís Ayllón Manso). As a result, the role of the central party in this process is generally to iron out difficulties and prevent the public exposure of internal divisions before the regional congress (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro).

For instance, Jaime Mayor Oreja was imposed by Aznar in the Basque Country because he had a more centrist profile. This, however, did not go down very well with some sections of AP, which nevertheless had to accept the new regional leader (interviews with Fernando Maura Barandiarán and José Eugenio Azpiroz Villar). After Mayor was appointed as Home Secretary by Aznar in 1996, a new leader, Carlos Iturza-Gomara was chosen by the leadership to replace him. Mayor led the party's campaign in the 2001 Basque elections, but the PP-PSOE project of non-nationalist alternative failed to attract more votes than the nationalist parties. For the 2005 election and after the 2004 defeat in general elections, the party felt that it needed a new leader. To leave room for a new leader, both Mayor and Iturza-Gomara stood as candidates for European elections in 2004.

The choice of the new leader was not a straightforward choice, as the Basque PP was divided between two candidates: Loyola de Palacio, former Spanish minister and European Commissioner at the time, backed by the national leadership, and María San Gil, the leader of the PP in Guipuzcoa and leader of the PP group in the San Sebastian city council, seen by Mayor as his natural successor. Iturza-Gomara led a series of discussions with a number of party officials with the intention of presenting a single candidate for endorsement by the congress (Alonzo and de la Hoz 2004). The new leader, María San Gil, was chosen by a small group of people in the PP-PV (Mayor, Iturza-Gomara and the secretary-general of the Basque PP) on the basis of her moderate profile, local implantation in San Sebastian and her leadership capacities (interview with Fernando Maura). This choice was then presented to the congress of the PP-PV, and 88% of the delegates approved her candidacy (ABC 6 November 2004). Respondents say that the central party did not intervene in the process, even though it was certainly consulted and kept in the loop as discussions were going on. However, the choice of the new leader had to be acceptable to the central party, as the CEN approves the candidates to the presidency of autonomous communities. In fact, even though it supported de Palacio, the national party was not opposed to San Gil, who had been a member of the national executive committee since 1999, and accepted her not to embarrass the Basque party and give the impression that Madrid was dictating what the Basque PP had to do (Alonso and de la Hoz 2004).

The central party's interventions in the life of regional party branches are better exemplified by the change in leadership in Catalonia that followed the 1996 general election. The then leader of the Catalan PP was Alejo (Aleix) Vidal-Quadras, who stood for the more 'Castellan' vision of Spain that alienated part of the Catalan

electorate but at the same time presided over an increase in the party's share of the vote in the region. When the national party needed the support of *Convergència i Unió* for its minority government, Vidal-Quadras was replaced by Alberto Fernández, who was seen as more 'Catalan-compatible' and represented a more moderate opposition to Catalan nationalism (Marín 2006; Pallarés 2000: 710)). In the words of a respondent, Alberto Fernández was 'appointed and fired [in 2002] by Madrid'. Alberto Fernández was replaced by Josep Piqué, who moved from the national to the Catalan political scene. Again, this new leader was backed by the central party and represented the continuity in the party's Catalan strategy (Yanque 2003).

The issue of regional leadership selection was not really an issue on Galicia until 2005. After the party's reorganisation in 1989, Manuel Fraga retreated back to Galicia. He led the party to victory in the region and led the party until he organised his succession for the 2005 election (Blanco 2003). Fraga's personality, his status as party founder and honorary president, and his role in the selection of Aznar as party leader means that the Galician PP has had a rather special status within the party. On the one hand, Fraga understands the party's ethos of discipline and cohesion that he himself contributed creating. On the other hand, it would have been difficult for the central party, and even for Aznar, to overtly criticise Fraga's leadership of the party in Galicia and try and impose decisions on the party's former leader. In fact, the issue of Fraga's succession has been more or less on the agenda since 1993. It has however always been believed that Fraga would choose his successor himself, following the example set by Aznar for his own succession (interview with Jesús Carlos Palmou Lorenzo).

The PP shows significant levels of involvement of the central party in the selection of regional leaders. Galicia is a special case because it has not had any leadership change between 1989 and 2005.<sup>57</sup> In Catalonia, the choice of regional leaders has been dictated by the needs of the national leadership. In the Basque Country, the regional party seems to have had more autonomy in the selection of its last leader. The need for approval of candidates to regional presidencies by the central party however ensures that regional party branches are unlikely to select candidates that are not to the central party's liking. In addition, like in the PSOE, the central party tends to intervene when there is no agreement on a candidate in the region and to prevent internal disputes (interview with Carlos María de Urquijo de Valdivielso). The regional branches of the PP receive a score of 1.

### *Selecting candidates for autonomous elections*

The party rules state that regional electoral committees establish the lists of candidates for elections to regional parliaments and that the national electoral committee approves the lists they send. Provincial parties can propose names for the consideration of their regional party, but it is the responsibility of the regional parties to propose the candidate lists. Again, the central party plays a role in the process, as it must give its approval to the lists and pays careful attention to the choice of the candidate to the presidency of the autonomous community and to the top positions on the lists.

In Galicia, each province proposes a list of candidates. The regional direction, in collaboration with Fraga, then adapts these lists, with a number of criteria in mind: territorial balance to ensure that all the areas of the province ('comarcas') are

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<sup>57</sup> Fraga's successor, Alberto Núñez Feijoo, was elected in 2006.

represented; gender balance, albeit not to the point of absolute parity; and social diversity to include candidates from 'all the sectors of the social-economic life of Galicia' (interview with Jesús Carlos Palmou Lorenzo). Palmou also declared that it was the regional electoral committee that approved the final composition of the lists, emphasising the regional autonomy in the process.

In Catalonia, the list of candidates is generally the responsibility of the regional party branch, save for the candidates in first positions, and in particular for the party's candidate to the presidency of the Catalan government. The National Electoral Committee must give its approval to the choice of the head of list (interview with Santiago Rodríguez i Serra). Santiago Rodríguez and Joan López also emphasised the crucial role of the Catalan party leader Josep Piqué in the drafting of the lists. In the Basque country, the regional party establishes the candidate lists, and the provincial parties can make suggestions, which are in no way binding for the regional executive. Carlos María de Urquijo Valdivielso, who sits on the Regional Electoral Committee in charge of making the lists, reported that he could not remember a single case where the national party would have changed a list for regional elections.

In contrast, other regions and the national leadership mentioned the role of the central party in the vetting of candidate lists for autonomous elections. Again, like for national elections, there is a 'dialogue' between the national and regional levels and the central party can suggest and veto candidates (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro). This dialogue allows the central party to influence the selection process during the elaboration of the lists, which then allows the national party to claim unity and agreement between party levels (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2005). However, the central party is certainly more interested in the selection of the head of the lists and a number of people in eligible positions rather than in the detailed composition of the lists. The central party is overall quite involved in the selection of candidates for regional elections and the PP is given a score of 1 for this indicator.

#### *Policy-making for autonomous elections*

Making manifestos for regional elections is a responsibility of the regional party branches, but as for candidate selection, the national executive must give its approval to these manifestos. The party's secretary for studies and programmes oversees the elaboration of all the party's election programmes, including for those for autonomous elections (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro). The impulse to co-ordinate is higher in the 13 autonomous communities that celebrate their elections on the same day. For these elections, the national party produces a 'framework programme' that includes the party's proposals for autonomous and local elections. The regional party branches elaborate their own programmes but need the approval of the national executive. Because Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia hold their elections separately, they do not have to follow the framework programme, but their election manifestos also have to be approved by the national executive to make sure that they do not contradict the state-wide programme (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro).

García-Guereta (2001: 380) describes the ability of regional party branches to make their manifestos as a 'combination of autonomy to determine party policy at the regional level and obligation to follow instructions from the central party'. Regional party branches have nevertheless gained more autonomy in recent times to adapt the national party line to the regional context (García-Guereta 2001: 383). At the same time, the party's secretary for organisation Juan Carlos Vera Pro confirmed that a strong level of co-ordination ensured that the manifestos for regional elections did not

contradict the national programme. Relations with the regional branches take place during regular meetings with regional party presidents but also with regional working groups and the people in charge of preparing the regional manifestos (interview with Juan Carlos Vera Pro). Overall, the party distinguished between two types of issues: those that only affect the region and have no repercussion on the rest of Spain, which can be left to the regional branches to determine, and issues that affect the rest of the country, for which a position must be adopted in co-ordination with the national party (interview José Luis Ayllón Manso). In practice, it means adopting the position of the central party.

This contradiction between the discourse of autonomy of the regional party branches and the necessities of party cohesion became obvious in some interviews. José Luis Ayllón Manso argued for instance that 'the national leadership [did] not intervene in decisions at the regional level, except when these issues [could] affect national issues'. He added, however, that co-ordination between the central and regional levels was necessary because the PP was a party that had the same discourse all over Spain ('un partido que dice todo lo mismo'). This is illustrated by the creation, prior to the 1999 Catalan election, of an *ad hoc* organ to coordinate party strategies between the national direction and the PPC, including key members of the national and Catalan executives (El País 24 February 1999).

The regional parties mimic the organisation of the national party and copy another of its traits, specifically its presidentialism (interview with Rafael Luna). As a result, policy is not debated in detail during party congresses (interview with Joan López). For instance, in Catalonia, the change in party strategy at the end of the 1990s was accompanied in the 9<sup>th</sup> congress of the PPC by the vote of motions that endorsed more nationalist themes, such as the definition of Catalonia as a 'country', to support the new leadership (El Mundo 2000a). However, the following congress in 2002 did not discuss policy beyond the re-iteration of the policies adopted by the 2000 congress (Rusiñol 2002). The bulk of the party's policies are adopted by the executive, under the impulse of the leader of the PPC. In 2003, the strategy of the PPC focused on attracting the moderate, centrist and Catalanist vote, with the idea of attracting part of the most moderate and least nationalist part of the CiU electorate (Marín 2006). This change of strategy owed a lot to the Catalan leader Josep Piqué, who continued the policy change started by Alberto Fernández but contrasts with Vidal-Quadras's more centralist and anti-nationalist policy stances (interview with Santiago Rodríguez i Serra). This change in the strategy of the PPC was however made possible by the central party, which could therefore benefit from the parliamentary support by CiU.

The PPC wields a relatively modest weight in the PP because it represents a small part of the country, with two provinces where it has no elected members of congress (Lleida and Girona), a relatively low number of party members and a weak local anchorage, in particular in the two provinces mentioned above (interviews with Joan López and Rafael Luna). Some respondents consider that this weakness conditions the type of relationships that the PPC has with the national party and the fact that the national direction tends to intervene in regional party affairs. In policy terms, it is more a matter of 'nuances' rather than differences that exist between the central and regional levels (interview with Xavier García Albiol). José Luis Ayllón Manso added that his experience as secretary for studies and formation of the PPC showed that only four or five issues could be problematic and that such issues would be discussed with the central party before the final submission of the regional manifesto to Madrid.

The same can be said of the PP in the Basque Country (PP-PV). The Basque party also displays a rather high dependence on the national party. The particular situation of the autonomous community, with the terrorist threats to the organisation and its members, certainly plays a crucial role in the relationship with the centre and partly explains the weakness of the regional branch. The formation of the regional branch was also rather difficult: the AP had a provincial structure but no overarching regional organisation. The creation of this regional structure was initially resisted by the provincial leaders. The first priority of the new leadership supported by Madrid was then to 'create a regional dynamics in order to correct the excessive provincialism that plagued PP' (interview with Fernando Maura Barandiarán). In addition, the party's 'difficulty of identification' in the electorate has contributed to the tutelage ('tutela') of the PP-PV by Madrid (interview with José Eugenio Azpiroz). The importance of the region in the national political debate, with the issues of constitutional reform and terrorism, also means that the national party tends to focus quite strongly on the Basque situation. This then leads to a stronger level of supervision from the centre.

The Basque manifesto is elaborated under the supervision of a small group of people, generally from the regional executive and chosen by the regional president. They consult with various sectors within and outside the party and use interventions by members of the Basque parliament and other party documents drafted by thematic working groups (interview with Carlos María de Urquijo Valdivielso). In a regional manifesto, the number of potentially contentious issues remains limited and the party can adapt to the Basque context, in particular with regard to finance and social services (interview with Fernando Maura Barandiarán). However, Basque respondents stressed the importance of remaining close to the line established by the central party.

The PPdeG has enjoyed a higher level of autonomy in the way it has managed its affairs as a result of the combination of factors. First, the PP has traditionally been strong in the region, so the national leadership has not had to get involved in order to improve the party's results or compensate for its organisational weakness as in Catalonia. Second, Manuel Fraga has played a very important role in building the party as a whole and in the region. In Galicia, he managed to provide the party with a positive image of defender of the region's culture and identity. Fraga was able to develop a distinctly Galician identity for the PPdeG (interview with Jesús Carlos Palmou Lorenzo). The experience of power in the region and the PPdeG's continuous electoral success has certainly contributed to strengthening its autonomy. Against the more centralist position of the PP, the Galician PP has managed to foster its own identity, based on a moderate support for regional identity, culture and language.

Third, Fraga has at the same time refrained from diverging too much from the national party line, with the possible exception of the issue of the *Estado de las Autonomías*. As president of the Xunta, Fraga has contributed to strengthening the autonomy of the region and supported the principle of subsidiarity in the relations between autonomous communities and the state (Núñez Seixas 2005: 128-9). In this domain, he has often advocated a more regionalist position than the national party. Finally, the PPdeG has since 1999 reverted to a more conciliatory position towards the central party. Prior to 1999, the Galician secretary-general was in favour of a higher level of autonomy for the Galician party branch, advocating a maximalist position that would have reduced the level of co-operation with the central party. Since 1999 and the change of secretary-general, the PPdeG has renewed its links with the central party and enjoys good relations with the national leadership while maintaining its own brand of centre-right 'Galeguism' (interview with Jesús Carlos Palmou Lorenzo).

Even though the rules are the same for all the regional branches, there is a certain discrepancy between Galicia on the one hand and Catalonia and the Basque Country on the other. Catalonia and the Basque Country are the autonomous communities 'where the PP has the lowest level of support' (interview with Rafael Luna). This resulted in a lower level of influence within the party and a low level of autonomy. In comparison, Galicia has managed to gain some autonomy within the party and has used its resources as a government party to increase its autonomy vis-à-vis the national party.

There is nevertheless a strong emphasis on political cohesion. This is also perceived as a strategic imperative for the PP. As José Luis Ayllón Manso said, 'divergence within the PSOE is not perceived by society in the same way as divergence in the PP' (interview). As a result, there is a greater pressure for the party to ensure that it has as little divergence as possible. In another occasion, Xavier García Albiol stressed that the PP was 'the only party that [said] the same all over Spain' (interview). This point was emphasised by a large number of respondents. As a result, the party receives a score of 1 for the indicator of policy autonomy of the regional branches in Catalonia and in the Basque country, and a score of 2 in Galicia.

### *Party finance*

Like the PSOE, the PP includes in the records presented to the Tribunal de Cuentas the accounts of the central party, its regional and provincial branches and some local branches. The data is not disaggregated by autonomous community, and it is difficult to evaluate the transfers of resources between levels and how much funding the regional branches receive. Unlike the PSOE, the PP includes electoral subsidies in its resources.

Table 7.4 below details the income of the PP as a whole and of the central party. It also adds the subsidies received by the party at the regional level. The income of the national party represents approximately one half of the total income of the party. Some variations can be observed in 2000, with an increase in the resources of the national party, mainly due to higher electoral subsidies for the state-wide elections.

Astudillo and García-Guereta (2005) describe the finance of the PP as extremely centralised. Party statutes stipulate that the accounts of all the territorial units have to be approved by the president and secretary-general (Art. 46, PP 1996; Art. 52, PP 2000). Moreover, the national party, via its National Executive Committee, can decide the contribution of territorial units to the resources of the state-wide party in order to ensure a fair distribution of resources across the party (art. 51.3, PP 2000). For the first time in 2005, the Catalan PP presented its own separate accounts, with the approval of the central party (Astudillo and García-Guereta 2005). Accounts for that year have not been reviewed by the Tribunal de Cuentas yet and are not available.

Direct public funding provides the regional branches with some level of financial autonomy, as regional governments subsidise parliamentary groups. However, this money is not ring-fenced and transfers from the parliamentary party to the party in public office are common, even though financial statements as they are presented by the Tribunal de Cuentas do not give any indication as to the extent of intra-party movements of funds. Fernando Maura Barandiarán reported that the Basque party was relatively autonomous for ordinary activities, with resources from membership fees, surplus from the direct public funding of the parliamentary group in the Basque parliament and direct funding of political parties from the Basque government.



**Table 7.4.** Resources of the Partido Popular, 1999-2003

	1999*	2000*	2001	2002	2003
Total income	74,473,016.50	75,274,030.78	63,351,433.82	61,828,610.77	92,657,911.74
Total donations and fees (members and office holders)	10,420,435.04	10,368,324.64	11,910,860.70	11,668,424.43	13,023,914.85
of which fees as % of income	6,671,203.17 9.0	7,341,443.60 9.8	8,684,624.18 13.7	8,629,743.41 14.0	8,843,676.53 9.5
Non-electoral subsidies	40,369,726.86	45,022,896.93	48,042,481.58	49,056,605.47	63,261,457.82
Electoral subsidies	23,079,501.24	18,815,821.16	2,633,076.60	0.00	17,508,298.26
Subsidies as % of income	85.2	84.8	76.3	79.3	87.2
Income of national party of which subsidies <sup>#</sup>	40,495,271.59 39,863,380.12	45,499,254.46 44,119,020.93	29,010,012.67 27,530,768.02	29,014,174.97 27,530,766.45	n.a. n.a.
Subsidies to autonomous parliamentary groups	12,643,012.39	12,434,737.10	13,519,783.94	14,516,447.63	15,368,881.05
Electoral subsidies for autonomous elections	5,532,711.89	622,395.11	2,633,076.60	1,084,404.76	12,153,288.54
Non-electoral subsidy from the Basque government	626,618.39	751,939.66	822,773.00	863,379.59	945,723.00
Extraordinary subsidy from the Catalan Parliament	n.a.	55,059.04	401,801.04	403,501.02	574,001.48

\* To facilitate the comparison, amounts in pesetas have been converted into euros, with the official conversion rate of 166.386 Ptas for 1 euro.

<sup>#</sup> includes subsidies to the party and to its parliamentary group.

<sup>°</sup> advance payment for elections to the parliament of Andalusia.

*Source:* Tribunal de Cuentas 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2006.

He added that 'the Basque party negotiate[d] with the central party the money that the PP [would] advance for Basque elections'. Top-down transfers occur when regional branches need some support. For instance, the PP-PV (Basque Country) receives some support from the national party (interview with Gabriel Elorriaga Pisarik).

Because the party centralises some of the resources and because the central party sometimes supports regional branches, the PP receives a score of 1 for the variable measuring the financial autonomy of regional party branches.

### *Conclusion*

The Partido Popular is a recent party that has managed to become successful and become the hegemonic state-wide party on the right. It is a very centralised party dominated by its leader. The influence of regional party branches and their leaders at the centre is very limited, as the formal role of central party organs is often reduced to rubber-stamping the decisions taken by the party leadership. In this respect, the growing power of the country's autonomous communities has not allowed the party's regional branches to gain more power at the centre.

At the same time, their power in the regional arena is often relatively limited. The central party intervenes in the selection of regional leaders and candidates to regional elections. The PP has in particular shown a great deal of interest in the leadership of the Catalan and Basque parties. In terms of party policy, the PP emphasises policy cohesion and stresses the importance of having the same message in all the regions. The only margin that the regional branches have is to emphasise different issues in

different regions. The party however tends to ensure that the regional branches follow the party line on most issues. This leads to the party having a comparable image throughout the country. Galicia is the only one of the three regions investigated here that has managed to adopt a slightly different profile.

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**Table 7.5.** Coding for the organisation of the PP

	Basque Country	Galicia	Catalonia
<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>			
1. Selection the leader of the state-wide party	0	0	0
2. Involvement of regional party branches in the central party executive	2	2	2
3. Selection of candidates for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1	1
4. Adoption of the manifesto for state-wide parliamentary elections	1	1	1
5. Amending the constitution of the state-wide party	1	1	1
<i>Sum involvement</i>	5	5	5
<i>Autonomy of the regional party branches</i>			
6. Organisational freedom of the regional party branches	1	1	1
7. Selection of the regional party leaders	1	1	1
8. Selection of candidates for regional elections	1	1	1
9. Adoption of the manifesto for regional elections	1	2	1
10. Funding of the regional party branches	1	1	1
<i>Sum autonomy</i>	5	6	5

By and large, the party has only been marginally affected by the federalisation of Spain. The centralised and presidentialist nature of the party was retained and has efficiently managed to curb the potential aspirations of regional party branches to have more autonomy. Whereas respondents from the regional branches of the PP observed that the regions had now a little more autonomy than they used to, the extent to which they can adapt their own political strategies and policies remain very limited.

### 7.3. Conclusion

The Spanish state-wide parties are relatively centralised, and the central leadership of both the PP and the PSOE retain formal powers to intervene in regional party affairs. The centralisation of party organisation was facilitated by the pattern of party formation of these two parties, which were created (or re-created, in the case of the PSOE) from the centre. Van Biezen and Hopkin (2005: 11) observe that both parties proclaim to be decentralised parties but that 'in many cases[...], the autonomy of lower echelons is effectively negated by stipulating that their decisions, on financial matters, or the selection of candidates for sub-national public office, for example, actually require the approval of the national party leadership'. This is especially true for the

PP, which is the party that makes the most extensive use of its ability to control its regional branches because of its emphasis on party cohesion and programmatic unity. The central leadership has managed to control the development of regional elites and to contain the potential for divergence created by regional party competition.

The PSOE has been more affected by the transformation of the Spanish state. The regional leaders have used the weaknesses of the central leadership to gain more autonomy at the regional level but also more influence at the centre. The ability to influence the centre however seems dependent on the strength of the national leadership. When the PSOE was in opposition, their influence at the centre was more extensive. Since the PSOE is in government, the party in public office and the leader have regained more autonomy, and the newly instituted Territorial Council has met less frequently. The regional federations have however remained relatively free to select their candidates and programmes as they saw fit. The veto power of the centre certainly remains a powerful incentive to stay close to the party line, and the central party intervenes in case of conflict in the regional federations. While the party's slogan, 'la España plural' (Plural Spain), reflects the party's acceptance of Spain's regional differences, the organisation of the party now allows its regional federations to reflect this plurality of inclinations (Méndez Lago 2004: 47-8).

## CHAPTER 8. THE ORGANISATION OF STATE-WIDE PARTIES IN SPAIN AND IN THE UK

This chapter compares the organisation of the state-wide parties in Spain and in the UK and then assesses the hypotheses of the framework presented in chapter 2 in the light of the cases presented in the chapters 4 to 7. It shows that the effects of the institutional environment and the type of regionalised arrangement are mediated by internal party factors such as the incumbency position of state-wide and regional leaders and the pattern of party formation. Electoral considerations are also important. The nationalisation or regionalisation of elections and their stakes influences the type of response that the parties have adopted. With few exceptions, the state-wide parties have only changed the balance of power between central and regional levels when the central leadership considered that it could increase the party's electoral prospects or increase the redistributive resources of the party via access to office and the advantages that come with it.

### 8.1. Party organisation in Spain and the UK

The vertical organisation of state-wide parties and the relationship between the central and regional levels of organisation of these parties consist of two elements: the integration of the regional branches in the decision-making processes and organs at the centre of the state-wide party and the autonomy of the regional party branches in the management of regional affairs. These two dimensions are observed here in turn. Table 8.1 below compiles the codes given to the organisation of the three British and two Spanish state-wide parties studied here and shows that a variety of forms of organisation can be found.

#### *8.1.1. Integration of the regional branches in the central party*

Overall, all the parties involve their regional branches in central decision-making to only a limited extent. In most cases, the central party has retained full responsibility over state-wide election processes (candidate selection and policy-making) and the regional branches are only weakly integrated in central decision-making organs. The level of integration of regional branches in the central party is more constant in Spain than in the UK, where there is a higher level of variation between the parties (see figure 8.1).

#### *The British state-wide parties*

The Liberal Democrats are the party with the highest score for the involvement of regional party branches in the central party (see table 8.1 and figure 8.1 below). This is mainly due to the fact that the Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats select the party's candidates for state-wide elections and can veto any change to the party constitution that would affect their competences. In sharp contrast, the Labour party barely includes its regional branches in central-decision making: they are not represented in

the National Executive Committee, do not participate in the selection of the party leader and of candidates for Westminster elections, and they have no say over reforms of the party constitution. The organisation of the Conservative party is asymmetrical. The Scottish and Welsh Conservatives both have a limited representation in the party executive and no role in the selection of the leader or in amending the constitution. Unlike the Welsh party, the Scottish Conservatives can select the party's candidates for state-wide general elections. They retained this function after the independent Scottish Unionist party integrated the UK Conservative party in 1965. The poor electoral performances of the Scottish Conservatives mean however that they cannot compensate their low level of representation in central party organs by their share of the Conservative parliamentary party in Westminster.

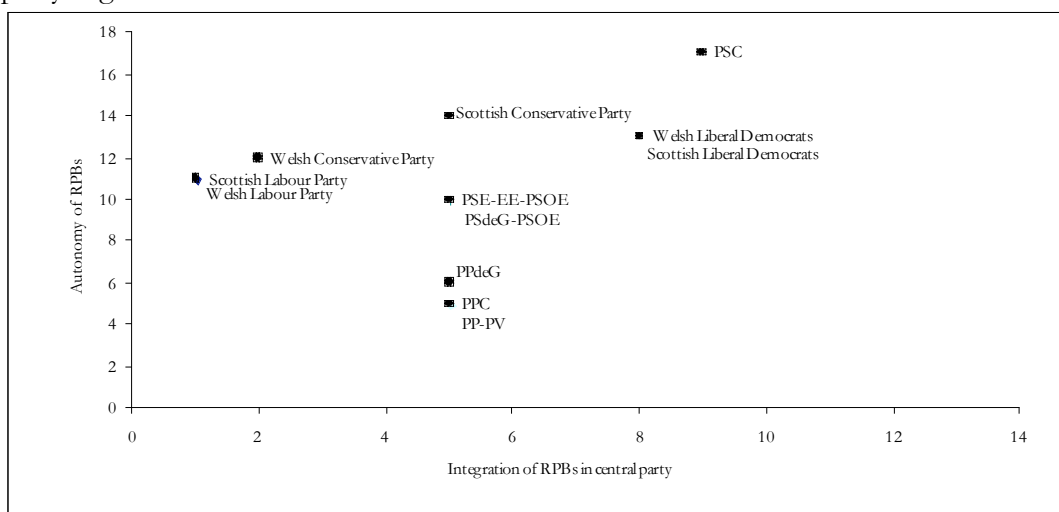
**Table 8.1.** Codes for the vertical dimension of the organisation of the British and Spanish state-wide parties

	Labour Party		Conservative Party		Liberal Democrats		PSOE			PP		
	Sco.	Wal.	Sco.	Wal.	Sco.	Wal.	BC	Cat.	Gal.	BC	Cat.	Gal.
1. Selection of the party leader	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
2. Involvement of regional branches in central executive	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
3. Candidates selection, state-wide elections	0	0	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	1
4. Adoption of manifesto, state-wide elections	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1
5. Amending the party constitution	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Involvement of regional party branches in the central party</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>
6. Organisation of regional party branches	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	4	1	1	1	1
7. Selection of regional party leaders	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1
8. Candidates selection, regional elections	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	1
9. Adoption of manifesto, regional elections	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	2
10. Financing regional party branches	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	4	2	1	1	1
<i>Autonomy of regional party branches</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

All three parties receive one point for the participation of their regional branches in the making of manifestos for general elections because of the existence of regional manifestos. These manifestos have a rather ambiguous role and a limited impact on

the campaign as a whole. Their function is to address directly the Scottish and Welsh electorates and to fit the proposals of the state-wide manifestos in the context of devolution. They tend to reproduce the policies included in the state-wide manifestos and to explain how these policies would affect the region. The regional branches also include proposals specifically for Scotland and Wales over devolved issues, as not mentioning devolved issue would leave education, healthcare and other crucial issues such as law and order out the election campaign. These proposals are however in no way constraining for the state-wide parties. The innovations included in the Scottish and Welsh manifestos for state-wide elections are therefore only marginally important in the campaign, which remain dominated by state-wide (and therefore often English) concerns.

**Figure 8.1.** Scores of the regional branches on the two dimensions of multi-level party organisation



The regions can be represented in state-wide party conferences via their constituencies, but the Scottish and Welsh delegations are always outnumbered by the English representation because of the number of constituency of each region. In addition, party conferences – in particular in the Labour and Conservative parties – have a limited role in the determination of party policy. Finally, the presence of Scottish and Welsh conference delegates has diminished over time, as British conferences mainly discuss English issues.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats count a number of Scots and a more limited number of Welsh people in top party positions, starting with their leaders. These high ranking party officials however own their position to the state-wide party and their election to the Westminster parliament. They are therefore more likely to represent the state-wide party and defend its interests over those of the regional branches. Gordon Brown is a case in point: as a high ranking Scottish member of the UK government, he keeps close tabs on the evolution of the situation in Scotland and tries to maintain his influence over the Scottish Labour party in order to ensure that the Scottish party remains close to his positions.

### *The Spanish state-wide parties*

The PSOE and PP have the same level of integration of their party branches (see Figure 8.1), but with rather different effects. The PSC-PSOE is a special case: as a separate party federated to the PSOE, it chooses its own candidates for state-wide

elections, develops its own programme for Spanish parliamentary elections and adopts its own constitutional rules. At the same time, the PSC is involved in the central decision-making organs and processes of the PSOE, with representatives in the PSOE congress and in its executive organs. This means that the PSC is far from immune from attempts by the Spanish socialist party to influence the course of Catalan politics and the choice of PSC leaders and policies. It is, however, much more autonomous than the party branches of the PSOE (see figure 8.1 above).

In the PSOE, regular regional party branches are weakly integrated in the central party. They have a role in all of the party's state-wide processes and organs, but their level of input is limited. The introduction of individual secret ballot in the party congress has reduced the ability of regional leaders to influence the votes of the delegates and hence the choice of the party leader. Regional federations have a limited input in the formulation of state-wide policy (except over institutional matters) and only a consultative role over the selection of candidates for elections to the Congress of Deputies.

The most crucial point of influence of the regional party branches in the central party is the party executive. In the Federal Executive Committee, powerful regional party leaders can affect the whole party. Their level of influence has varied considerably over time. A form of zero-sum game is being played between the state-wide and regional leaderships, so that every equilibrium sees the influence of state-wide or regional actors increase at the expense of the other (Ordeshook 1986: 144). During the first period of PSOE government in the 1980s-early 1990s, the central leadership controlled the whole party apparatus and regional party branches had little influence at the centre. The power of regional leaders at the centre has been greatest in the second half of the 1990s, when the state-wide leadership was weak and disorganised. The reinforcement of the central leadership after Rodríguez Zapatero's election as secretary-general has led to a retreat of the regional leaders from the centre stage of the party. Some regional leaders such as Manuel Chávez (Andalusia) and José Bono (Castile-La Mancha) are still influential at the central level, where they have used their regional prestige to become President of the PSOE for the former and Minister of Defence for the latter.

Meanwhile, regional party leaders, whether they are regional secretaries-general or presidents of an autonomous community, have gained an official role in the definition of the party's policy on the State of the Autonomies via the Territorial Council. The creation of this council has been a somewhat mixed blessing for the regional branches: it represents an improvement in their role at the centre, as they have a genuine role in the formulation of state-wide policy, but it has also served as an excuse for the central leadership to limit the presence of regional leaders in the FEC.

The regional branches of the PP are well integrated in the central party executive, but their role is rather limited. Regional leaders included in the central executive have not had the same role as the regional barons of the PSOE. The presidentialised nature of the Partido Popular means that the party president is powerful enough to set his own agenda and is relatively immune from external pressures. The presence of regional leaders in the National Executive Committee has mainly served as a way to integrate the peripheries in the state-wide party and ensure that their leaders shared the same interests and message as the central party.

Overall, the regional branches tend to have a limited level of involvement in all three British parties. In all three parties their influence at the central level is very limited, even when the parties have regional representatives in central party organs. In general, these regional representatives account for only a small fraction of the whole

body, but it also seems that the Scottish and Welsh members of the executive or conference delegates feel like these organs have little impact on them, as they mainly deal with English matters. The regional branches of the Spanish state-wide parties are somewhat more integrated in central party organs. This integration at the centre may serve to increase party cohesion and remind the regional branches that they belong to a larger whole to which they are expected to remain loyal.

### *8.1.2. Autonomy of the regional party branches*

Figure 8.1 shows that the level of autonomy of the regional branches of the British parties is relatively similar in the three parties. In contrast, there is a much greater degree of variation between the PP and the PSOE but also within the PSOE. The PP is the most centralised party, while the PSC has a great deal of autonomy from the PSOE.

#### *The British state-wide parties*

The three state-wide parties have relatively similar formal forms of organisation in Scotland and Wales, but the actual levels of autonomy of the regional branches can vary. The Labour party is the party that has been the most involved in regional party affairs. The central party has limited constitutional powers to intervene at the regional level, but the secretaries of state for Scotland and Wales (or shadow secretaries, when the Labour party returns to the opposition benches) are quite involved in the life of the regional party branches. Their presence in the regional executives and in the policy commissions responsible for drafting election manifestos allows them to serve as brokers between the central and regional levels, but also as vectors of the influence of the central party in Scotland and Wales.

The central party (the leadership, often via the NEC) has paid a particular attention to the selection of party leaders and candidates for the 1999 regional elections. By making sure that a majority of candidates to regional elections were from the same ideological group as the central leadership, the leadership of the state-wide party tried to make sure that the Scottish and Welsh parties would adopt similar policy platforms and refrain from diverging from state-wide party policies. The central party particularly intervened in the selection of the party leader in Wales, where it initially managed to prevent the election of Rhodri Morgan as regional party leader. In Scotland, the issue of leadership was less problematic, but the central party tried to control the selection of candidates by influencing the composition of the panel interviewing prospective candidates. These cases of blatant intervention from the centre were quite widely publicised and caused some uproar within the party and bad publicity outside the party. The central party seems to have been less involved in 2003, but it is true that candidate selection was not as crucial a point as in 1999, when the party had to produce an initial pool of candidates to fill all the positions. With regards to their electoral platforms, the Scottish and Welsh parties have been rather autonomous, but they have shown limited levels of divergence in their policies (Hopkin and Bradbury 2006).

In contrast, the other two parties have left their regional branches more free to organise and run their own affairs. The Liberal Democrats have for instance completely adapted to devolution, in practice allowing the Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats to exercise powers that were only theoretical until then. The party adopted a federal organisation at the moment of the merger of the SDP with the Liberal party, even though the British state was still centralised. The Scottish and Welsh regional



branches can select their candidates and elaborate their manifestos for regional elections without any direct central intervention.

The Conservative party was initially opposed to devolution. Yet, it rapidly adapted its organisation to the new structure of party competition. The central party has left its regional branches in Scotland and Wales a large degree of autonomy to select their leaders and candidates and to develop their own election manifestos. The Scottish party has more autonomy than the Welsh party, which is organisationally weaker and was only recently created. In spite of their organisational autonomy, the Scottish and Welsh branches of both parties have remained relatively close to the party line set out by the state-wide party (Bradbury 2006: 230-5).

The regional branches of the three parties are all rather dependent on the central party for their resources. Whereas the parliamentary groups in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly receive public subsidies, the parties in central office are quite under-funded. They tend to compete for the same donors against the central party and constituency associations. As state-wide general elections remain the core electoral level for a majority of donors, the Scottish and Welsh branches receive only a limited number of private donations. As a result, they tend to rely on transfers from the central party or occasional support in terms of staff during regional elections.

#### *The Spanish state-wide parties*

The Partido Popular is clearly an outlier, with a very strong involvement of the central party in regional party affairs. This is the corollary of the logic that pushes the PP to consider the involvement of the regional branches in the central decision-making as a way to ensure party cohesion and integration of the peripheries. This emphasis on party cohesion is reflected in the low level of autonomy of the regional party branches. The central party leadership is reluctant to see the regional branches depart from the party line and exert a relatively strong control over their strategies and selection of political personnel. The central party tends to intervene in all aspects of party organisation and the regional branches have only a limited margin for manoeuvre when it comes to choosing their leader, their candidates for regional elections and for drafting the manifestos for regional elections. The regional branches have to refer to the central party for all their decisions and the central party has a veto power over the acts taken by the regional branches. Overall, the central party intervenes at the regional level to make sure that the party remains cohesive, therefore encouraging the selection of leaders and candidates who belong to the same party faction or group and making sure that the manifestos for regional elections reflect the policies of the state-wide party. The central party has also managed to remain in control of the finance of the regional branches, even as they receive important amounts of public funding. Regional branches are often in need of financial support from the central party, in particular for regional elections.

The Galician PP has had a slightly greater level of autonomy during the period of Fraga's leadership of the PPdeG. This autonomy may not last in the post-Fraga period, in particular with a Galician party leader in Madrid. In Catalonia and the Basque country, the central party tends to intervene in order to make sure that the potential for divergence in these regions does not interfere with the party's message in the rest of the country. In Catalonia, in particular, the central party has been very much involved in the selection of party leaders in order to accommodate the strategy of the PPC to the needs of the national party.

The autonomy of the regional branches of the PSOE has increased over time. During the period that spanned between the democratic transition and the party's loss of its majority in the Spanish parliament, the federal (central) party, under the dual leadership of Felipe González and Alfonso Guerra, controlled the peripheries and managed to influence the various regional federations. Guerra's tight grip on the party's organisation enabled the central party to make sure that the regional elites did not interfere with the PSOE's overall strategy or contradict its message. After 1993, with the increasing tensions between the so-called *renovadores* and *guerristas* at the national level, the central leadership turned its attention away from the regional federations and focused instead on factional divisions among the national elite.<sup>58</sup>

The autonomy gained by the regional elites was strengthened by two factors: holding power for a certain period of time at the head of an autonomous community provided some regional federations with a strong power base and a strong level of democratic legitimacy, and the central party was weakened by the double pressure of poor electoral results and factional divisions. Regional 'barons' were integrated in the federal executive to act as referees in the national party and used this newly acquired leverage to increase their autonomy at the regional level. This situation however mainly benefited non-historic nationalities. The leaders of the Galician federation (PSdeG) have not benefited from office rewards, as they have been in the opposition for the whole period, while the Basque PSE-PSOE has been in coalition with the nationalists of the PNV between 1986 and 1998. PSOE strongholds have mainly been in non-historic nationalities, such as Andalusia, Extremadura and Castile-la Mancha. In these regions, the leaders (respectively José Bono, Manuel Chávez González and Juan Carlos Rodríguez Ibarra) have ruled their respective regions for long period of time and have become important players in the federal party.

After the election of Rodríguez Zapatero as secretary-general in 2000, the regional branches have retained their autonomy. Attempts to influence regional party branches have been rather rare, partly because those efforts could be fruitless and give the image of a divided party that cannot control its peripheries. Mostly, the federal party tends to limit its interventions into regional affairs to trying to prevent internal divisions and ensuring that regional congresses are run smoothly.<sup>59</sup> Regional federations moreover benefit from a substantial level of control over the public subsidies they receive.

The PSC is again in a special situation. It is officially a separate party, but it remains organically linked to the PSOE, through its presence in central party organs such as the Federal Executive Committee and the Territorial Council, but also through the common parliamentary group in the Spanish parliament. As a result, there are points of convergence between the PSC and the PSOE, and the PSOE can influence the PSC on political issues. The unity protocol that formed the PSC states that 'the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC-PSOE) is fully sovereign over those areas of competence that the socialists of Catalonia suggested for the political organisation of

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<sup>58</sup> Tensions between *renovadores* and *guerristas* also affected the party federations. Some regional leaders such as José Bono, while associated with the party's old elite, maintained their position in the party thanks to a timely change of allegiance in favour of the *renovadores*.

<sup>59</sup> Recent developments that fall outside the time period of this dissertation have shown that the PSOE in government was again trying to influence regional politics. The federal executive recently prevented the Navarre socialists from forming a coalition with Izquierda Unida and the Basque party Nafarroa Bai (see 'El PSOE ordena a los socialistas navarros que faciliten a UPN el gobierno foral', *El País* 4 August 2007).

our country, in agreement with the constitutional framework approved in the programme of the socialists of the whole state [Spain]' (art. 4, *Protocol d'unitat* 1978, author's translation). As a result, some sort of formal or informal agreement between the Spanish and Catalan parties becomes necessary in order to coordinate campaigns and facilitate party convergence in the parliamentary group. The Spanish party has mainly focused its interventions in Catalonia on leadership selection and party policy, two crucial elements for the convergence between the parties. The PSC has nevertheless gained in autonomy in the 1990s like the regional branches of the PSOE and also thanks to Pasqual Maragall's leadership.<sup>60</sup>

Figure 8.1 shows that a majority of party branches are clustered together between 10 and 15. The PP consistently limits the autonomy of its regional branches and controls the selection of regional leaders, candidates and party programmes. The PSC, thanks to its status as a federated entity of the PSOE, has more autonomy than regular PSOE regional branches, albeit less than the statutes of the party would suggest. The official independence of the PSC is limited by the need to co-operate with the PSOE and informal pressures from the PSOE in order to ensure a minimal level of programmatic cohesion between the parties.

## 8.2. Assessing the hypotheses

This section evaluates the impact of the various independent variables on the vertical organisation of the British and Spanish state-wide parties. To what extent does the environment, and in particular the institutional environment, influence the organisation of the state-wide parties? What is the impact of electoral factors such as the electoral system, the electoral cycle and the nationalisation or denationalisation of regional elections on party organisation? How do internal party factors influence the party's adaptation to external changes? These are some of the questions that this section tries to answer.

### 8.2.1. Party organisation and type of regionalised arrangement

#### *Historical evolution of state institutions and forms of regional party organisation*

The way a federation or regionalised arrangement came into being is expected to affect the organisation of central and regional competences in the state but also the organisation of state-wide parties. In chapter 2, two types of state-building processes were distinguished: 'federalism by decentralisation' and 'federalism by aggregation'. Each was expected to influence the degree of autonomy of the regional branches, so that the first state-building process would encourage the formation of centralised party structures and the second would facilitate the persistence of autonomous regional party branches in a decentralised party system.

Spain and the UK have very distinct historical experiences. The UK integrated the home nations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) under the authority of the Queen and the Westminster parliament, but there was never any deliberate attempt to quash regional identities or build a British identity that would unite the various parts of the Union. Scotland retained its justice and education systems, and the specificity of Scotland was strengthened by the existence of a form of administrative devolution via the Scottish Office. Because of its more limited historical

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<sup>60</sup> In 2006, the PSOE, in agreement with the PSC, encouraged the replacement of Pasqual Maragall by José Montilla, the secretary-general of the PSC, as candidate to the presidency of the Generalitat.

experience of self-government, Wales was more integrated in the British state structure. Yet, its regional identity remained strong, in great part because of the persistent use of the Welsh language. The state-wide parties created some level of regional party administration, with party office in Scotland and Wales, even though these regions did not have any government. The exception is the Welsh Conservatives, who were completely integrated in the English party. This reflects the general orientation of Conservative voters in Wales, who opposed devolution, are concentrated in the border area with England and have a very limited sense of regional identity.

In Spain on the other hand, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were mainly characterised by attempts to build a centralised state and create a Spanish nation. The Franco dictatorship was a culmination of these attempts: it created a strong centralised state in which Spanish nationalism was encouraged and expressions of regional identity were repressed. This is in this context that political parties were created at the start of the process of democratic transition. The circumstances of the transition, with the need to organise for state-wide elections first in a context of weak party organisations and low figures of party membership, facilitated the centralisation of party structures, and regional party structures were only created later, in the run-up to the first regional elections. However, the early formation of the state during the *Reconquista* and the subsequent type of decentralised government facilitated the persistence of regional differences and permitted the existence of regional specificities that remain important to this day and constitute grounds for the State of the Autonomies and demands of further decentralisation by ethnoregionalist parties. It is often in the most distinct regions that the regional party branches have the highest degree of autonomy or where the will to diverge is the greatest.

The pattern formation of the regionalised system has in both countries influenced the original organisation of the parties. Whereas the vertical organisation of the state-wide parties may have changed at a later stage under the influence of other factors, the cases of Spain and the UK show that the historical development of regionalism does indeed influence the formation of state-wide parties. Moreover, early regional differences tend to persist over time in the fabric of the institutional system but also in the organisation of the state-wide parties.

#### *Effect of regionalism and decentralisation on party structures*

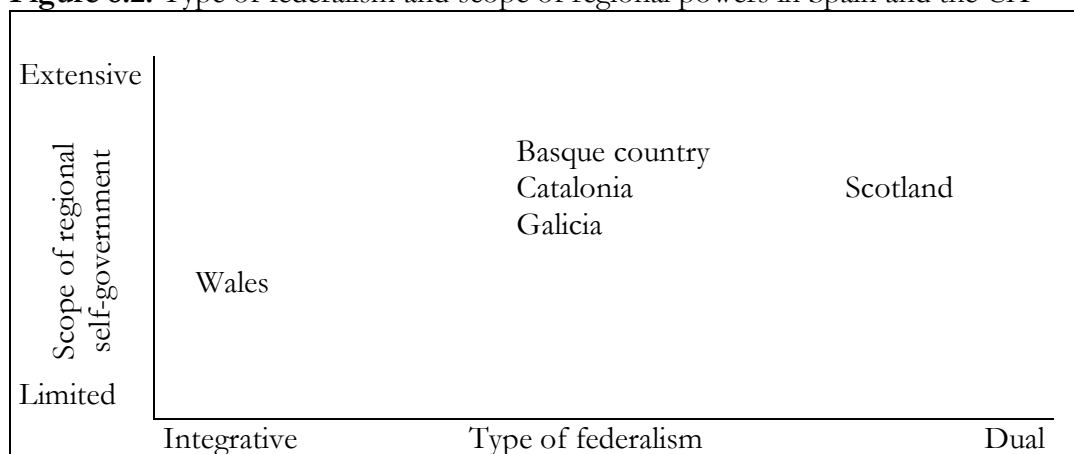
The type of distribution of competences between the central and regional levels of government is also expected to influence the organisation of state-wide parties. All things being equal, an integrative form of decentralisation is expected to limit the range of independent competences of regional party branches and to encourage cooperation between party levels through the participation of regional party branches in central party organs. In contrast, in a dual system, regional branches are expected to be highly autonomous and have limited stakes in the central decision-making processes of the state-wide party. With regard to the scope of regionalised competences, a positive correlation is expected between the scope of competences of regional governments and the scope of autonomous powers of the regional party branches.

Institutional asymmetry is also expected to be reflected in the organisation of the state-wide parties. It is therefore possible to find regional branches with more autonomy or with a better representation at the centre than others, and the regional branches in the most autonomous regions are likely to be more powerful than the

regional branches in less powerful regions. If it is the type of distribution of competences between the centre and the regions that is asymmetrical, we expect the relations between the centre and the regions within state-wide parties to vary according to the hypotheses presented above.

Devolution in the UK was imposed from above, albeit under the pressure of ethno-regionalist parties. A parliament with exclusive powers of primary legislation over a rather large range of areas was created in Scotland. The National Assembly for Wales had a more limited scope of powers and only enjoyed powers of secondary legislation. This means that devolution has taken an integrative form in Wales and a dual form in Scotland (see figure 8.2 above). In spite of these differences, Wales is not more integrated in central decision-making than Scotland. In fact, intergovernmental relations are quite limited and taken the form of inter-executive meetings and bilateral relations between ministers (Swenden 2006: 202-3).

**Figure 8.2.** Type of federalism and scope of regional powers in Spain and the UK



We expect this asymmetry to be reflected in the organisation of the regional branches of state-wide parties. The Scottish branches of the British state-wide parties should therefore be more powerful than the Welsh branches because of the dual nature of devolution in Scotland and because the Scottish Parliament has exclusive competence over a larger range of competences. The dual form that devolution has taken in Scotland means that the Scottish branches should be relatively free in the management of regional party affairs. In addition, they should have a limited level of involvement in central party organs and decision-making. In contrast, the Welsh branches are expected to be less powerful at the regional level and more integrated in central decision-making. The lack of historical experience of self-government means that Welsh party structures were likely to be relatively weak prior to devolution.

The Conservative party is the only British party to display some form of asymmetrical organisation, while the Scottish and Welsh branches of the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats have similar powers and the same level of involvement in central decision-making. The dual or integrative character of the institutional arrangement does not influence the level of involvement of regional branches in state-wide party organs. All the parties only allow a limited representation of regional interests at the central level and Wales does not enjoy a privileged position within the central decision-making organs of any of the parties. In the case of the Conservative party, it is actually quite the opposite that occurs, as its Scottish branch can select its candidates for general elections while the Welsh candidates are selected by the central party.

We see rather large degrees of variation in the level of autonomy of the regional branches of these state-wide parties. Overall, in spite of their relative financial weakness, the regional branches of the British parties are relatively autonomous from the central party. The multi-level organisation of the British parties corresponds more to the organisation expected for a symmetrical dual system and ignores the specificity of Wales.<sup>61</sup> The limited involvement of the regional branches in the central party mirrors the institutional arrangement as well as the previous practice of government of the union, in which Scottish and Welsh interests and representatives were only marginally included in the running of government.

In Spain, the three historical nationalities have a comparable level of autonomy. Their regional governments have legislative and executive competence over a large range of policy areas. The distribution of legislative competences between central and regional levels of government is however rather unclear and there is quite a large degree of shared competence. A number of areas of competence are shared, with the centre in charge of the legislation and the regions of the execution, and the constitution allows the central government to establish framework legislation (Aja 2003: 127-9). Through this framework legislation, the centre can actually restrict the legislative competence of the regions by choosing to adopt quite detailed legal frameworks. With the exception of finance, the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia have quite similar levels of self-government, with some exceptions due to historical specificities in each region (see figure 8.2 above). Regional governments are feebly integrated in central decision-making, as intergovernmental relations are quite weakly developed, the Senate is not a real chamber of regional representation, sectoral conferences occur irregularly and the bulk of intergovernmental relations occur through bilateral relations.

The type of distribution of powers and the large degree of regional autonomy enjoyed by these three autonomous communities mean that the regional branches of the PP and the PSOE in the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia should be quite powerful at the regional level, but poorly integrated in central decision-making. Because there is still a level of shared competence between the state and the regions and because the existence of framework legislation mitigates the dual character of the Spanish regional arrangement, we can expect a certain level of central oversight. Finally, the state-wide parties should be organised in similar ways in the three regions because they have very similar levels of self-government.

The only element of asymmetry in the organisation of the Spanish parties is the bifurcation of the PSOE in Catalonia. The Basque and Galician branches of the PSOE have the same form of organisation as the other regional PSOE branches. The PP is also organised symmetrically throughout the country (with the exception of Navarre, where it has contracted an electoral agreement with the *Unión del Pueblo Navarro*). The Basque, Galician and Catalan branches have the same level of regional autonomy and the same representation in central party organs.

Both Spanish parties are organised in relatively similar ways, with a level of autonomy of their regional branches lower than expected. The Partido Popular is the most centralised of the two parties. The party as a whole adheres to the idea that its credibility rests on its ability to maintain a coherent image and message. As a result, the central leadership oversees the decisions taken by the regional branches, intervenes

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<sup>61</sup> The evolution of the statute of Wales in a dual way after the Government of Wales Act 2006 means that the current organisation of the British parties now fits the hypotheses better.

in regional affairs when it sees fit and retains a veto power over candidate selection and regional manifestos. While the regional branches are included in central party organs, their role is rather limited and the autonomy of the central leadership is in no way constrained by their presence.

The PSOE is officially a federal party and is more decentralised than the PP. In practice, it is much more centralised than the party statutes would suggest. The central party retains a veto power over the decisions of the regional branches, in particular candidate selection and the making of manifestos for regional elections. The regional party branches and the PSC officially have the same role in central party organs. The existence of the Territorial Council however allows the regional branches to affect the party's institutional policy, even though it can also be used as a way to limit the input of regional leaders in the rest of the central party.

Overall, it is quite difficult to predict the organisation of state-wide parties from the organisation of the state. The type (dual or integrative) and scope of federalism do not seem to make a difference with respect to the degree of autonomy of the regional branches or their integration in central decision-making. Institutional asymmetry is rarely reflected in the organisation of the parties. All the parties have had to react to the institutional decentralisation of power and have adopted a structure with regional entities, but the level of autonomy of these regional sub-units rarely matches that of their respective regional governments. Regional party branches are relatively weakly integrated in central decision-making, suggesting that functional rather than territorial criteria prevail over the selection of conference delegates and members of the central executive. The regional branches of the British parties tend to be more autonomous than those of the Spanish parties, even though the British Labour party has displayed strong centralising tendencies. Even in the most decentralised parties, the principle of adherence to a single message and the belief in common political principles tend to limit the actual scope of intra-party divergence.

### *8.2.2. Impact of regional politics and regional differentiation*

#### *Regional identity and ethnoregionalist parties as challenges to the state-wide parties*

In these two countries, state-wide parties compete against ethnoregionalist or minority nationalist parties in regional elections. These regionally-based parties represent important threats to the established state-wide parties thanks to high levels of regional identification among the voting population and proportional electoral systems.

Chapter 4 has shown that nationalism and feelings of regional identity have historically been higher in Scotland than in Wales. Likewise, the Scottish National Party has always attracted larger shares of the electorate in state-wide elections than Plaid Cymru. Both parties have won only small numbers of seats in state-wide parliamentary elections because of the plurality electoral system and the small size of their electoral bases compared to the English electorate. In contrast, regional elections have represented clear opportunities for the SNP and PC to become key political players, as the electoral system for these elections (compensatory mixed system) increases their chances of winning seats.

The parties that are in the most direct competition with the SNP and PC are the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats, as the two ethnoregionalist parties are on the centre-left side of the political spectrum. These parties distinguish themselves from one another by their position on regionalism, with Labour the least regionalist and the SNP and PC the most regionalist parties. The Labour party and the Liberal Democrats are therefore the parties that are most likely to increase the level of autonomy of their

regional branches in order to adapt the party's message and image to the regional contexts. The evidence shows that the Liberal Democrats are the most decentralised party and that the Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats have been rather free to develop their own electoral strategies. In contrast, the Labour party has chosen to compete against ethnoregionalist parties by emphasising the advantages of voting for a state-wide party that rules the UK with a coherent message throughout the country. The example of the Labour party shows that there is more than one possible answer to the threat posed by ethnoregionalist parties and that parties can choose to increase their cohesion and emphasise the advantages of integrated parties instead of empowering their regional branches and increasing the risks of intra-party divergence.

The importance of the territorial cleavage in the political arenas of Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque country varies across the regions. It is of paramount importance in the Basque country, where the issues of terrorism and the status of the autonomous community within Spain dominate political debates. Ethnoregionalist and minority nationalist parties have scored between 60 and 70% of the votes in regional elections, and the Basque country has been ruled by the Basque nationalist party PNV either alone or in coalition without interruption since 1979. The scores of the nationalist parties have been supported by strong levels of regional identification in the electorate. In Catalonia, regional identification and electoral support for ethnoregionalist parties are also high. The issue is however less polarised than in the Basque country, with a higher proportion of the population with a dual identity. The region was governed by the nationalist party CiU between 1980 and 2004. A coalition of Catalonia-based parties led by the PSC governs the region since 2004.

Galicia is a region with a strong regional culture and a strong sense of identity, but only a small minority feels exclusively Spanish or Galician. Between 80 and 90% of the population considers itself Galician *and* Spanish. This strong level of dual identity may explain the more limited success of ethnoregionalist parties in Galicia. The region has been governed by the PP for all but 3 years, between 1987 and 1990, when a coalition between the socialist PSdeG-PSOE and the ethnoregionalist parties *Coalición Galega* and the *Partido Nacionalista Galego* pushed the then *Coalición Popular* (later PP) out of power. Manuel Fraga, the founder of the Partido Popular, then governed the Xunta (regional government) without interruption between 1990 and 2005.

The three regions therefore display quite different characteristics and different levels of support for minority nationalist or ethno-regionalist parties. We would therefore expect the Catalan and Basque party branches to be more autonomous. This is only the case in Catalonia for the PSOE. The Basque and Galician party branches have no special status in either the PSOE or the PP. Instead, the PP and, to a lower extent, the PSOE tend to focus on maintaining unified strategies rather than allowing their regions to develop different policies and compete against ethnoregionalist parties on their turf. Like Labour, they tend to place a premium on party unity. This is even more the case in the PP. The PSOE has to a certain extent come to accept regional diversity and the potential for policy divergence that comes with it.

### *Electoral systems and party centralisation*

Two types of effects of electoral systems were hypothesised in chapter 2. First, electoral systems can have a direct effect on the centralisation of political parties through their impact on candidate selection. Following Duverger (1976), list-based PR systems are expected to facilitate the centralisation of candidate selection procedures,



while single-member constituency systems are expected to enhance the autonomy of constituency-level party organisations. The case of the Spanish parties confirms this hypothesis. The central executives of both PP and PSOE control candidate selection for state-wide and regional elections. Even though the level of control over the making of lists for regional elections may be lower than for state-wide elections (in particular in the PSOE), central party executives have retained a veto power over lists of candidates and over the choice of candidates to the position of autonomous community president.

In the UK, the situation is more complex because different electoral systems are used in state-wide and regional elections: single-member plurality rule for the former and a mixed system for the latter. Whereas Duverger's hypothesis held true at the time of his writing, the 1990s have seen an increasing centralisation of candidate selection for Westminster elections via the development of candidate panels and pre-approval procedures. Constituency associations consequently lost part of their autonomy to the benefit of the central party for Labour and the Conservatives and of the regional party branches of the Liberal Democrats. For regional elections, the mixed system combines constituency candidates and regional lists. The same principle of panels and pre-selection was used by all the parties. Only in the Labour party did the central party intervene to oversee the procedure and vet candidates deemed incompatible with the new Labour party line. In addition, the National Executive Committee of the Labour party must give its approval to the regional lists. In contrast, the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats have empowered their regional branches for the selection of regional political personnel and candidates. Only the Labour party confirms Duverger's centralisation hypothesis, while the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats demonstrate that the coordination necessary to the elaboration of party lists can occur at the regional level.

The second possible effect of electoral systems on party organisation is an indirect one: proportional electoral systems facilitate the representation of small to medium-sized parties and increase the competitiveness of elections. If a proportional electoral system is used for regional elections, state-wide parties are likely to face the competition of a larger number of parties than with a less proportional system. In the cases of the regions selected in this study, it means that ethnoregionalist parties are more likely to win seats and to represent a threat to the electoral position of state-wide parties.

In both countries, ethnoregionalist parties find it easier to gain seats in regional parliament than in the Spanish and British parliaments. In Catalonia and the Basque country, they have ruled for most of the democratic period, relegating the state-wide parties in the opposition. Galicia has been mainly ruled by the PP, but the BNG has pushed the PSOE into third position 1997 and had the same number of seats as the PSdeG in 2001. Occasionally, state-wide parties have provided ethnoregionalist parties in government with parliamentary support. At the central level, the opposite (ethnoregionalist parties supporting a government led by a state-wide party) has occurred during the minority governments of González (1993-96) and Aznar (1996-2000). The SNP and Plaid Cymru have never played such a role in the UK, where minority governments have been very rare in the post-WW2 period. Whereas neither the SNP nor PC has gained enough seats to rule their respective regions in the 1999 and 2003 elections, the electoral system has forced the Labour party to form coalition governments with the Liberal Democrats in Scotland and Wales (only between 2000 and 2003). As a result, regional elections in the present cases present state-wide parties with stronger regional competitors.

There is no single party response to this challenge posed by ethnoregionalist parties. Evidence shows that the parties have adopted different organisational strategies to face the competition of these parties. This means that the effects of the electoral system and the party system on the organisation of political parties are mediated by other factors, particular factors directly related to the parties themselves.

#### *Effects of voting patterns and electoral cycles on party organisation*

The position and status of regional elections within the electoral cycle was also expected to play a role in the way state-wide parties consider the impact that regional elections have on their electoral strategy. When regional elections are second-order elections, the interconnection between central and regional elections is likely to induce central party authorities to try and retain some level of control over regional party branches in order to minimise the potential damage to the party's image. These conditions are best fulfilled when the electoral cycle links national and regional elections (close proximity, vertical or horizontal simultaneity), when the stakes of regional elections are low (Chhibber and Kollman 2004), when the region displays low levels of territorial identification (Jeffery and Hough 2003; Pallarés and Keating 2003), and/or when the results of regional elections affect central decision-making, as in integrative federations with a second chamber of territorial representation (Scharpf 1995). On the other hand, when regional elections are more self-standing, regional party branches are more likely to enjoy a large degree of autonomy. A regional elections is more important when its results are not affected and do not affect state-wide politics, when the stakes of the election are high (the regions has legislative capacity over a large range of competences), and/or when the region benefits from strong levels of identification.

The evidence presented in chapter 4 has shown that Scottish and Welsh elections were neither completely second-order elections nor first-order elections. Scottish and Welsh voters tend to vote on regional issues and consider that their regional institutions should have more influence over the way their region is run. On the other hand, voters consider that their regional institutions do not have as much power as they wish they did and then consider the Westminster parliament as the most influential institution. This lower intensity of the stakes of Scottish and Welsh elections is reflected by rather low levels of turnout. Turnout levels, as well as the wish to see the regional institution become more influential, are higher in Scotland than in Wales. Whereas Scottish and Welsh elections occur on the same day, there is no evidence that the horizontal simultaneity has led to a nationalisation of the stakes of these elections. Campaigns were run mostly on regional issues, with occasional visits from UK party leaders, and a very low level of interest from the UK media. As a result, in spite of the low turnout, Scottish and Welsh elections tend to be quite important by themselves and have little impact on national politics.

This absence of nationalisation of regional elections and the stakes of these elections suggest that state-wide political parties should adapt to the regionalised structure of Britain and provide their Scottish and Welsh branches with rather important levels of autonomy. The fact that Scottish elections seem more crucial than Welsh elections, as evidenced by higher turnout rates and higher stakes in the election, suggests that Scottish party branches should have more autonomy than Welsh party branches. As we have already seen, this is only the case in the Conservative party. The other two parties have a symmetrical form of organisation. The regionalisation of politics has led the state-wide parties to adapt to the new electoral context, albeit in

different ways, with the Liberal Democrats the most decentralised party and Labour the most centralised.

In Spain, there is a tendency for parties governing at the state level to fall back in autonomous elections. Contrary to the expectations of the second-order thesis (Reif and Schmidt 1980), state-level opposition parties do not always benefit from the poor results of the governing party, and the share of the vote of non-state-wide parties tends to increase in regional elections. There is also a variety of regional party systems: party systems that systematically diverge from the state-wide party system (such as the Basque Country), autonomous communities where voting patterns are similar in state-wide and regional elections (Galicia, for instance, but also the autonomous communities without ethnoregionalist parties such as Murcia, Madrid, Castile-la Mancha, Extremadura), and autonomous communities where voters vote differently in state-wide and regional elections (Catalonia, Aragon, Navarre, the Canaries) (Pallarés 1994; Pallarés and Keating 2006). Overall, Catalonia and the Basque Country are the regions where voting patterns tend to diverge the most from state-wide voting patterns.

As we have already seen, the asymmetry is only visible in the organisation of the socialist party in Catalonia. The PP has in contrast kept a strong level of control over its Catalan branch in order to make sure that the PPC supported the strategic choices of the central party. The Galician branches of both PP and PSOE are not especially autonomous, which can be explained by the important level of similarity in patterns of voting between regional and state-wide elections. The Basque branches of the PP and the PSOE are in fact quite supervised by their respective central organs. This can be explained by the issue of terrorism, which affects the whole country and not simply the Basque country. The results of elections in this autonomous community, the tone of the campaign adopted by the PNV and the level of support for both the PNV and the political wing of ETA are important for the state-wide parties and national politics because they condition the type of relationship that the central government will have with the Basque country. State-wide parties do not want to be seen as too soft on the issue of terrorism and what is perceived as extreme Basque nationalism. As a result, the stakes of Basque elections exceed the borders of the region, which explain why the Basque party branches are not more autonomous.

Overall, the regional elections studied here are quite self-standing, being neither completely second-order nor first-order elections. Spanish regional elections are more important for the state-wide parties and for state-wide electoral politics than Scottish and Welsh elections. This higher connection between the electoral arenas is reflected in the organisation of the parties: the central party is more involved in regional party affairs, be it the selection of regional political personnel or the development of regional party programmes, in Spain than in the UK. The exception in the UK is the Labour party, but the stakes have been higher for this party because of its position as incumbent at the central level. The electoral cycle is important only in combination with other factors that facilitate the nationalisation of regional elections, such as the influence of regional politics on state-wide politics, as in Spain. On the other hand, the horizontal simultaneity of Scottish and Welsh elections has not contributed to the nationalisation of the stakes of these elections because they have not particularly interested England and do not affect the government of the Union. As a result, regional politics are less important for the state-wide parties, which have fewer reasons to get involved in regional politics and can afford to give more autonomy to their regional branches (this is mostly valid for the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats).

### *The importance of incumbency*

The multi-level organisation of state-wide parties in Spain and in the UK shows the importance of holding government position at the central and/or regional level in the relations between the central and regional levels of party organisation. In the UK, the party in power at the central level (Labour) has tried to retain as much control as possible over the policy orientation of its party branches. Likewise, the federal organs of the PSOE had a much tighter grip over their regional branches when the party governed Spain than during the opposition period that started in 1996. Between 1989 and 1996, the PP endeavoured to become a governing party and focused on maintaining party cohesion. The centralisation of power at the centre was seen as an essential element of the party's strategy and the goals of the central party took precedence over those of the regional branches. The same logic applied once the party won office in Madrid in 1996.

Opposition parties tend to place less emphasis on party cohesion and can actually benefit from adapting their message to specific regional contexts. The media tend to focus on opposition parties less than on the party or coalition of parties governing at the centre. Moreover, if the regional branches of an opposition party adopt policies that diverge from the central party line, they only contract policy plans and proposals. In contrast, when the regional branches of a governing party diverge from the central party, they contradict government policy. As a result, the costs of intra-party variations are not as high for opposition parties as for governing parties.

In addition, parties in opposition at the central level may hold office in some regions. This has been the case of the PP between 1989 and 1996, of the PSOE between 1996 and 2004 and of the Liberal Democrats since 1999. Holding executive office provides regional leaders with some leverage within the party and a level of authority that may make them less susceptible to yield to the pressures of the centre. Occasionally, they may use these resources to increase their influence at the central level.

This has particularly been the case with PSOE regional leaders who became presidents of autonomous communities, such as Manuel Chávez in Andalusia and José Bono in Castile-La Mancha. The situation was quite different in the historic nationalities, where the PSOE has mainly been in opposition, except for brief periods at the creation of the autonomous communities in the Basque Country and Galicia. The Basque and Galician federations did not have the same weight in the central party as for instance the big Andalusian federation. The Catalan socialists have a special status in the party which grants them representation at the centre and autonomy at the regional level but they have generally followed the policies of the PSOE when it was in power in Madrid. Incumbency and the personal prestige of Manuel Fraga can explain why the Galician branch of the PP has managed to adopt a slightly distinct profile and adopt more regionalist, or Galicianist (from 'Galeguismo', which the PP opposes to nationalism as a way to promote Galicia within the Spanish community), policies.

In the UK, the Scottish and Welsh branches of the parties in opposition in London were able to select their leaders and candidates for regional elections and the central parties did not play any significant role in the making of election manifestos. In spite of these significant levels of autonomous decision-making authority, the regional branches nevertheless adopted policy positions that were very close to those of the central parties (Fabre et al. 2006).

Between 1997 and 2005, the Conservative party has been in a situation of crisis, with three different leaders in eight years, and the main concern of the central party has been to reorganise and develop new policies to regain power in London. In contrast, the central party has paid relatively scant attention to the electoral situation in Scotland and Wales. The Conservative party is very weak in the Celtic fringes and the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives could hardly do worse in regional elections than in the 1997 state-wide general election, when the Conservative party failed to return a single MP from either region. The electoral system also facilitated the election of Conservative candidates to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. As a result, the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives performed rather well, even though they were never in a position to gain executive office, while the state-wide party lost three consecutive general elections.

In 2003, the Liberal Democrats were in a situation where their Scottish and Welsh branches were in coalition with the Labour party, with a possible renewal of these coalitions after the elections. The Scottish and Welsh branches therefore had some autonomous power resources and a distinct political agenda adapted to their government experience. Central party authorities were moreover sympathetic to the goals of the regional branches and were supportive of their efforts without trying to intervene or encourage uniformity.

Incumbency seems to be the most significant political-electoral factor that influences the relations between the central and regional levels of party organisation. In particular, holding executive positions at the central level allows state-wide parties to wield more influence over their regional branches and prevent them from interfering in central party affairs. In contrast, when regional branches of a state-wide opposition party hold office, they can gain autonomy and even increase their influence at the centre. The presence of ethnoregionalist parties and the strength of the challenge they can pose to state-wide parties may facilitate party adaptation and divergence, but the territorial strategy of state-wide parties tends to be conditioned by the electoral considerations of the central party, in particular when it holds governmental power, as evidenced by the cases of the Spanish parties and the Labour party.

### *8.2.3. Party types and regional organisation*

#### *The importance of patterns of party formation and the durability of organisational practices*

It is widely accepted that the way political parties were formed tends to constrain their options for change (Panbianco 1988; van Biezen 2003). Existing forms of party organisation create power structures and organisational habits that can be hard to change. It can also be difficult to deprive some groups of people or party sectors of powers they exercise in order to empower another group of party actors. As a result, change can be complicated and may only happen when the party and its leadership feel that organisational inertia could hinder the achievement of party goals.

The organisation of the state-wide parties in both countries demonstrates the importance of the organisation adopted at the moment of party formation and the resilience of organisational practices. The Spanish parties are a case in point: their level of centralisation was facilitated by the way they were formed (Field 2004). The transition process forced the parties to rapidly create the structures necessary to compete in state-wide elections. They started by creating central and provincial levels of organisation. Their regional level was created later, after the central party was

already in control of the whole party organisation. The parties were moreover relatively weak organisations on the ground. As a result, the regional levels did not represent strong power bases for regional politicians. The central level of state-wide parties therefore managed to control the development of the regional branches and retain control over regional electoral processes, the selection of leaders and candidates and the policy platforms presented by the regional branches.

The presidentialised structure of the PP, which it inherited from the organisation of the Alianza Popular, prevented the later emergence of strong regional leaders able to contest the influence of the central party in regional affairs. The presidential nature of the organisation of the PP also restricts the role of regional representatives in state-wide party organs. Likewise, the regional party branches are reluctant to challenge the leader or central party policy, as it would undermine the leader's authority and the cohesion of the party. One of few exceptions is Manuel Fraga, who created a strong leadership in Galicia and was relatively immune from central interventions, partly also because he knew which limits not to cross. His case is however relatively unrepresentative, as Fraga was the PP's founder and its first leader. The central party of the PSOE resisted the increased autonomy of its regional branches but its weakness in the 1990s prevented it from controlling closely the regional federations. Once the regional branches managed to increase their level of autonomy, it became difficult for the central party to deprive them of powers they had once exercised.

Another sign of the lasting influence of previous organisational forms is the asymmetry between the Scottish and Welsh branches of the Conservative party. Until 1965, the Scottish Conservative party was a completely separate party from the UK Conservatives. Even after their integration in the UK party, the Scottish Conservatives retained their own organisation and the Scottish Conservative Union (extra-parliamentary party) remained separate from the rest of the UK party. While the Scottish party followed the policy determined by the British party, the Scottish Conservatives managed their own organisation and selected their own candidates for Westminster elections. No such organisation existed in Wales, which was run from the party's London headquarters and did not have a special status within the party.

The central level of the Labour party has also retained the ability to appoint regional members of staff and administrators. For instance, the secretaries-general of the Scottish and Welsh Labour parties are appointed by the National Executive Committee. This certainly facilitates the capacity of the central party to influence regional decision-making. In addition, the party has maintained its Scottish headquarters in Glasgow, which means that the administrative and parliamentary branches of the Scottish Labour party are in different cities, making it easier for the central party to keep influencing the Scottish party in central office. In addition, the organisation of the central party and the influence of the trade unions limit the ability of regional party branches to influence the central level. In particular, the organisation of the conference and the electoral college for the election of the leader and deputy leader restrict the possible influence of Scottish and Welsh constituencies and members.

Finally, the Liberal Democrats have adopted the federal structure of the Liberal party and have granted a high level of autonomy to their regional branches since their creation. The existence of a level of organisation before devolution provided the Scottish and Welsh branches with an experience of self-management but also meant that the central party was ready to accept regional autonomy.

### *Party models and regional organisation*

The form of party organisation and the relative importance of the three faces of party organisation can also have an influence on the ability of the regional branches to act autonomously and influence central decision-making. Chapter 2 presented some tentative links between existing party types and the ability of such parties to grant some autonomous decision-making authority to their regional branches. The Spanish and British parties clearly have different types of organisation: the Spanish parties are closer to the cartel party model, while the British parties have remained catch-all parties.

The Spanish parties are formally dominated by the party in central office. The autonomy of the parliamentary party of both the PP and the PSOE is restricted by party rules. Over the years, the party in central office has strengthened its grip over the party in public office (van Biezen 2000: 400-1). There is however a high level of overlap in the composition of the party in public office and the party executive. While the PP was in government in the 1990s, over 80% of the national executive was composed of members of the state-wide government or state-wide parliament. During the same period, over a half of the PSOE federal executive was composed of members of the Spanish Cortes (van Biezen 2000: 402-3). While the party was in power at the central level, the FEC also included members of the Spanish government, such as the secretary-general and his deputy. In addition, the rule preventing public office-holders (except the secretary-general and the deputy secretary-general) from holding a seat in the federal executive was bypassed on a number of occasions, when members of the executive were promoted to government positions (Méndez Lago 2000: 130-1). In both parties, the most important positions (in the PP the president, the secretary-general and the secretary for organisation; in the PSOE the secretary-general, the deputy secretary-general and the secretary for organisation) are occupied by members of the Cortes or of the Spanish government. By occupying a large number of positions within the central executive, the parliamentary branches of the Spanish state-wide parties have therefore managed to increase their power within the existing rules of the parties, which were initially designed to constrain them.

The parliamentary branches of the three British state-wide parties also dominate the party organisation. They are able to make their own rules and are financially independent from the rest of the party thanks to public subsidies directed to the parliamentary groups rather than the central party offices. The party in central office is moreover dominated by public office-holders or, failing that, members of parliament (Webb 1994). Party leaders have also gained a significant level of autonomy from the rest of the party. The Conservative party leader has always been quite autonomous from the pressures of the rest of the party, as long as he was able to win elections for the party. Labour leaders have sometimes been subject to larger levels of scrutiny from other party sectors but were often helped by the trade unions, which supported them in order to maintain party unity and ensure that the party. Even though he may be more subject to the scrutiny of the party conference and other party executive commissions, the leader of the Liberal Democrats can also enjoy a high level of autonomy, provided he has the support of the parliamentary party.

The party on the ground has seen its role change in a majority of parties. PP party members can participate at the local level and serve as a pool of potential candidates, but their direct role in the party is and has remained very limited. In the 1990s, the PSOE and the PSC started to involve their members more directly in the

choice of candidates for public office, such as the candidate for election to the position of Prime minister, president of an autonomous community or a local office. This trend of membership empowerment has been stronger in the UK, where party members are consulted for the selection of parliamentary candidates and party leaders, and, occasionally, to settle intra-party issues (like the membership ballots over the issue of changing Clause IV of the Labour party constitution in 1994, see Shaw 1996: 199-200, or over William Hague's re-organisation of the Conservative party in 1997).

There is a well-documented paradox to membership empowerment: membership ballots encourage an atomistic conception of party members as opposed to organised membership in local party sections. Membership ballots marginalise meso-level activists, who are supposed to be more extreme and active, and the leadership can address directly party members and have a better control over the type of information that party members have access to (Seyd 1999; Mair 1997: 113-4). As a result, the party leadership becomes more autonomous within the party organisation because it can claim a mandate from the membership and has weakened the power of party activists in the process.

The type of resources that the Spanish and British parties rely on clearly places them in different party types. The Spanish parties receive large amounts of public subsidies that constitute the quasi-totality of their resources. In contrast, British political parties receive limited amounts of public funding, relying instead on donations and, to a lesser extent, membership fees. In the case of the Labour party, ancillary organisations such as trade unions still contribute to an important share of the party's resources.

In spite of their closeness to the cartel-party model, the Spanish parties have not adopted a stratarchical form of organisation. Mair (1994: 17) wrote that in cartel parties 'it may also be the case that mutual autonomy will develop to a degree in which the local party will become essentially unconcerned about any real input into the national party (and vice versa), and will devote itself primarily to politics at the local level'. The Spanish parties demonstrate that upper party echelons remain very much concerned with regional party affairs and that the regional branches are also concerned with central party affairs.

The catch-all model did not take into account the vertical dimension of party organisation. The cases of the three British state-wide parties show a great deal of variety in the parties' ability and willingness to include their regional branches at the centre and give them autonomy at the regional level. Overall, party models do not wield much explanatory value.

#### *Party organisation, ideology and position on devolution*

The form of territorial organisation and the degree to which each party does (or does not) control its regional party branches can also be related to each party's stand on devolution and decentralisation. A party's position on decentralisation or its vision of the ideal form of state organisation may have an impact on the organisation itself. The party's position on this issue itself can be traced back to the ideological roots and history, and its organisation is expected to be decentralised when it is strongly in favour of decentralisation. Conversely, parties opposed to, or moderately in favour of, decentralisation are expected to be less decentralised. It is however rather difficult to 'label' the parties, as they may have been subject to different ideological influences throughout their history. There may also be differences between the official label or party family of a party and its policies once it is in power.



The Liberal Democrats are in favour of a federal United Kingdom. While remaining attached to the Union, they are in favour of granting more autonomy to all the constituent parts of the UK, including the English regions. The fact that the Liberal Democrats are in favour of decentralisation and even federalism is a consequence of the Liberal creed. The historical circumstances of the birth of liberalism in the UK engrained in the Liberal movement a strong distrust of power and a preference for decentralisation. They therefore believe that power should be dispersed throughout society, in particular at the regional level, via some decentralised or federal arrangement.

As an organisation, the Liberal Democrats have a 'federal' structure, and its component parts are exclusively responsible over such areas as policy formulation for matters relevant to their level and candidate selection. Moreover, the party constitution bases its organisation on a hypothetical federal organisation of the state. Its article 5.1 declares that the 'Federal Party shall determine the policy of the Party in those areas which light reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom'. The organisation of the Liberal Democrats is actually a good indicator of the organisation the party aspires to for the UK.

In comparison, Labour is in favour of devolution but is also strongly attached to the Union. In particular, Labour saw devolution as a way to save the Union in the face of growing electoral support for the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. Unionism is therefore very important in the Labour Party. Even in Scotland, devolution did not make the unanimity among party members and MPs. Moreover, the party's motives for first advocating and then implementing devolution in Scotland and Wales are complex. On the one hand, devolution has a long tradition in the party, with its founder Keir Hardie advocating Home Rule, James Callaghan's government organising the first referendums on the issue in Scotland and Wales in 1979, and John Smith (Blair's predecessor) involving the party in the Constitutional Convention on devolution along with the Liberal Democrats and representatives of civil society. On the other hand, New Labour has developed its own discourse on the history and beliefs of the party without much deference to tradition. There may therefore be other factors that can explain the party's commitment to devolution. Part of the explanation may come from the liberal influence on the party in its early days and another on the party's participation in the constitutional convention. In addition, the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales can be seen as an opportunistic strategy. Scotland and Wales are (for now) Labour strongholds, and during the long Thatcher-Major premiership period, both nations have consistently given the majority of their votes to the Labour party. Devolution is therefore a way to make sure that the party has some resources and a power base when it is out of power in at the UK level.

In organisational terms, Labour considers itself as a unified party and interviews have shown that it rejects the idea that its Scottish and Welsh branches are independent entities. In the same way, the regional branches tend to consider themselves as parts of a larger whole. Moreover, while the Scottish and Welsh parties have on paper a rather large level of autonomy over the management of regional issues, attempts by the central party to intervene in Scottish or Welsh affairs are now well documented. Finally, the state-wide party is very much in charge of the management of British electoral politics (policy-making process and candidate selection), and the regional branches do not have any influence over these matters.

The Conservative party also defines itself as a unionist party and it campaigned against devolution in Scotland and Wales. The party has however adapted to the

situation and now accepts the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. However, it rejects devolution in England and is divided over the issue of changes to the devolution settlements. The state-wide party is not particularly concerned by the issue but tends to reject any change to the situation. In Scotland and Wales, some Conservatives think however that some adaptations are necessary: alignment of the competences of the Welsh Assembly to those of the Scottish Parliament, financial powers to the Scottish and Welsh institutions so that regional governments would be responsible for the money they spend. The party has now chosen to focus its criticisms against the Scottish and Welsh governments rather than on devolution itself.

After its 1997 defeat in the UK general elections, the Conservative party underwent a process of reorganisation, which led to William Hague's *Fresh Future* and the reform of the party structure. The party's new organisation took devolution into account, thereby leaving the Scottish and Welsh parties a large room for manoeuvre to select their candidates and elaborate their policies. The extent of the autonomy of the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives can however depend on the will of the British leader to let them exercise their prerogatives. As a result of this reorganisation of the party and in a context in which the central party focused on rebuilding its state-wide appeal, the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives have until now enjoyed a rather considerable level of autonomy.

In Spain, the PSOE was in favour of a federal organisation for Spain at the moment of the democratic transition, but it had to compromise with the country's other political forces in order to reach an agreement over the new Spanish constitution. The party supported the development of the statutes of autonomy and is today open to discussions on the reform of some of them. However, the party remains committed to the territorial integrity of the country, rejects separatism, and is eager to see all the autonomous communities have similar – albeit not identical – powers rather than have some regions with a special treatment and more powers than others.

This duality is also visible in the organisation of the party. Nominally, the PSOE has a federal structure. In practice, as we have seen, the party is more centralised and the central party still intervenes in regional affairs. With the exception of the *Partit des Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC-PSOE), the PSOE has a symmetrical structure and its regional federations have the same powers and are controlled by the central party in similar ways.

Finally, the *Partido Popular* has now accepted the State of the Autonomies. Heir to the Franco regime, which rejected regional autonomy and repressed expressions of regional identity, the PP wants to maintain the institutional status quo established at the moment of the democratic transition. The party is very careful to stress that any further change in the statutes of autonomy should not undermine the existence and integrity of the country and places a particular emphasis on the Basque situation. As a result, the party has been very much opposed to reforming the statutes of autonomy and keeps a close eye on Zapatero's plans to reform some statutes of autonomy. The organisation of the PP is very centralised. The autonomous community level exists for practical reasons and the regional branches have some competences for regional elections. The regional party branches are subject to a strong level of central oversight and their decisions must be approved by central party organs.

Overall, we find that party ideology is a rather good predictor of the vertical organisation of state-wide parties. The most pro-devolution party (the Liberal

Democrats) is the most decentralised, and the party that is the least favourable to decentralisation (the PP) is the most centralised.

#### *Party finance and the distribution of resources across levels in state-wide parties*

Modes of party funding and the way public subsidies are distributed can affect the level of financial autonomy of the regional branches of state-wide parties. If state-wide elections remain the core level of electoral activity, private donations are likely to go directly to the central party and regional party branches may find it difficult to find resources from private donors. The level of allocation of party subsidies can also influence the degree of centralisation of state-wide parties.

In the UK, where state funding is relatively limited and is quasi-exclusively directed to parliamentary groups, central and regional party offices must find private resources for their ordinary and campaign activities. Donations to the three British state-wide parties are mainly directed to central offices or local party organisations to support constituency campaign efforts. In contrast, the Scottish and Welsh party branches receive very limited amounts of donations. Instead, they rely more heavily on public funding. Public subsidies are however limited to the funding of the parliamentary groups in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. Regional party offices are therefore rather under-funded and depend on the central party for assistance and staff.

The regional branches of the Spanish state-wide parties are rather more financially autonomous thanks to generous amounts of public subsidies for ordinary and campaign activities at the regional level. Provided by the regional governments and regional assemblies, these subsidies support both regional parliamentary groups and regional party offices. While the British legislation prevents central offices from using subsidies granted to parliamentary groups, the Spanish parties divert part of the funding given to parliamentary groups to fund their ordinary party activities. This takes place at both central and regional levels. Transfers from elected officials to party offices also occur via compulsory contributions by members of parliament and regional assemblies to the parties. The central parties of the PP and the PSOE have tried to control those important resources received at the regional level. The PP has been more successful than the PSOE in controlling the allocation and use of the resources of its regional branches.

This relative financial autonomy of the regional branches of the Spanish parties has not, however, provided them with higher levels of independence. On the contrary, on average, the Spanish parties are more centralised than the British parties. The level of financial autonomy of the regional branches is therefore a poor indicator of their overall autonomy.

### **8.3. Conclusion**

Overall, most of the parties have a regionalised form of organisation, with some level of regional autonomy and a degree of interconnection between the central and regional levels of organisation. This interconnection means that we do not find any form of stratarchical organisation, as the regional branches are represented in central decision-making and central party organs keep some oversight over or ability to intervene in regional party affairs. The Liberal Democrats are the only party that can be described as having a federal form of organisation, as its regional branches are free to select their candidates and leaders and to develop their own policy platforms.

The British state-wide parties are characterised by low (Labour and the Conservatives) to moderate (for the Liberal Democrats) levels of integration of their Scottish and Welsh branches in central decision-making and moderate to high levels of autonomy of their regional branches. The British parties tend to be more decentralised than the Spanish parties and they gave some level of autonomy to their regional branches faster than the Spanish parties.

The regional branches of the Spanish parties have a limited input in central decision-making and low (PP) to moderate (PSOE) levels of autonomy. The PSC is an outlier in the PSOE, with a larger level of autonomy from the federal party than any of the PSOE regional branches. While the PP and PSOE originally had similar levels of centralisation, the current level of autonomy of the regional branches of the PSOE is closer to that of the British parties than to that of the Partido Popular.

The low level of integration of the regional party branches in central decision-making reflects a willingness of central party leaderships to retain their autonomy and be unconstrained by regional leaders but also a dominance of functional rather than territorial criteria in the composition of central decision-making organs. In the UK, the representation and participation of Scottish and Welsh leaders is further complicated by the demographic dominance of England, the absence of devolution in England and what has become known as 'the West Lothian question', that is, the participation of Scottish and Welsh MPs in decisions that affect the government of England while the English cannot affect decisions in Scotland and Wales.

All the parties have had to react and adapt their organisation to the creation of multi-level institutions and the emergence of a regional level of politics. The detailed hypotheses on the role of the type and scope of decentralisation were not confirmed. Regionalism and decentralisation have an impact of party organisation in the sense that they forced the state-wide parties to adopt a multi-level organisation. Electoral considerations and the incumbency status of the central and regional party levels play an important role in the way state-wide parties have responded to the development of regional institutions. Electoral factors (electoral system, electoral cycle, nationalisation of regional elections, strength of regionalism and ethnoregionalist parties) work better in combination than individually to explain party change. It is when they contribute together towards either the nationalisation or the denationalisation of voting patterns and electoral stakes that electoral factors influence the vertical organisation of state-wide political parties.

Patterns of party formation and the type of organisation that the parties had at the moment of devolution affect the ability of the parties to adapt to the regionalisation of institutions and elections. Party ideology and party positions on regionalisation are often mirrored in the organisation of the parties. Finally, party leaders at both levels, in particular incumbent leaders) are crucial factors that contribute towards an explanation of the way parties respond to the challenges of regionalisation and to the level of centralisation or regional autonomy. Indeed, it is through the actions of party leaders that party organisations change or on the contrary that organisational forms are maintained while environmental factors change. On the one hand, central party leaders seem to prefer to maintain a certain level of control over lower party echelons in order to ensure the ideological coherence of the party. On the other, regional party leaders, in particular when they are in office or when the regional party system differs from the state-wide party system, prefer a certain level of autonomous decision-making. The outcome of this power struggle is the main trigger of party change or on the contrary organisational stability.

## **CONCLUSION: PATTERNS OF PARTY ORGANISATION IN MULTI-LEVEL SETTINGS**

This dissertation has investigated an oft-overlooked aspect of party organisation: the vertical dimension of party organisation in multi-level countries, that is, the relationship between central and regional levels of organisation. It has tried to elaborate a general framework of analysis, bringing together elements from the tradition of comparative federalism and elements from the literature on party organisation. To compensate for the rather deterministic expectations of the federalist literature, they were integrated into a larger framework of party change that took into account the influence of environmental and institutional settings, of the structure of electoral competition and intra-party factors. Finally, the ability of political parties to change and adapt to changes in their environment was expected to be mediated by the pattern of party formation and the natural reluctance of political parties and their leaders to change. All these factors were described in order to assess their impact of party organisation and party change.

To test this framework and research how parties changed to accommodate multi-level settings, the organisation of state-wide political parties in Spain and in the UK was compared. Ten party processes were described in order to evaluate the level of participation of regional party branches in central decision-making and the level of autonomy of the regional branches in the management of regional affairs. The in-depth nature of this analysis of party organisation meant that only a limited number of cases could be studied. Whereas it is possible to extrapolate from the cases of the Galician, Catalan and Basque party branches to the whole of Spain, it is difficult to extrapolate to other countries from only two countries.

This dissertation has however demonstrated a number of points: party decentralisation is not something that comes naturally to most state-wide parties and the decentralisation of power to regional governments has led to a variety of organisation responses from the parties; the integration of territorial interests in central decision-making can be a problematic issue, as functional cleavages remain dominant; and party change is a complex phenomenon in which a variety of factors play a role.

### *The difficulty of party decentralisation*

The cases presented here show that a majority of state-wide parties have had some troubles with the consequences of devolution. The main issue has been the level of autonomy that the parties should give to their regional branches and whether central party leaderships should leave the regional branches free to make their own decisions. A former senior official of the Labour party, Matthew Taylor, explained this dilemma in these terms:

'Ever since referenda in 1997 made devolution to Scotland and Wales a reality the Labour Party has studiously avoided the central question it

raises: should a political party devolve as much autonomy to its members in Scotland and Wales as Westminster has done to the Scottish and Welsh people?' (quoted in Laffin and Shaw 2007: 55).

All the British and Spanish state-wide parties have had to deal with this issue. The Spanish parties have had more time to face the problem and have more experience of institutional decentralisation and the potential problems it can cause for integrated parties: internal divisions, policy divergence, coalition incongruence, etc. Interviews have demonstrated that granting high levels of autonomy is considered by most parties as a source of possible policy divergence between levels and across regions, and therefore as a threat to party cohesion. The comparison has also shown that different forms of organisation could be found within the same political system.

The study has shown, however, that the state-wide parties have adopted different organisational strategies. The Spanish parties have kept a rather tight grip on their regional branches, as they both require that the central party approves the lists of candidates and the manifestos for the regional elections. Still, the regional branches of the PSOE enjoy more real autonomy than those of the PP, even though their level of autonomy is often dependent on the position of the central party in power or in opposition. The regional branches that have gained the most autonomy are often those with long-standing social-democratic presidents of autonomous communities, whose personal prestige and political clout at the regional level free them, at least partially, from central pressures.

Within the PP, the presence of strong regional 'barons' is a more important factor than the institutional autonomy of the region, even though they may coincide, as in Galicia (Hopkin 2003: 233). The central party however has the upper hand over regional party affairs. Regional party branches can adapt the party's message to the regional context, but it is more a matter of emphasis than content. Party cohesion and the interests of the central party always prevail, and regional party branches have integrated this in their strategies and relationships with the centre.

In contrast, the Liberal Democrats have had a very smooth adaptation to devolution. Their statutes already contained the principles of federalism and the party had no problem leaving its regional branches select their leaders and candidates and make their own party manifestos for Scottish and Welsh elections. The Liberal Democrats are the party that comes closest to the stratarchical model of party organisation: the central party focuses mainly on state-wide politics and the regional branches on regional politics. Each level could work quasi-independently from the others.

The Conservative party has also left its Scottish and Welsh branches rather free to adapt to the new devolved reality of British politics. The Scottish party is however more developed and independent than the Welsh party, which was only recently created and is organisationally closer and more dependent on the central party. The central party has focused on state-wide politics since the Conservative party lost the 1997 general elections. For the Conservative party, the conquest of power starts in England, which is crucial because of its demographic weight and the number of MPs it elects, but also because England, and in particular southern and rural England, is the party's stronghold. Scotland and Wales are regions where the Conservatives have come in second or third position for a long period of time. As a result, Scottish and Welsh politics have not been a major concern for the state-wide party.

The case of the Labour party is well known and is the best documented because the party has been in power in central government since 1997 and has found it

difficult to leave its regional branches autonomous. The Labour party has also governed Scotland in coalition with the Liberal Democrats between 1999 and 2007 and Wales also with the Liberal Democrats between 2000 and 2007 and with Plaid Cymru since 2007. The interventions of the central party in regional party affairs often made the state-wide party appear hypocritical, as it was Labour that implemented the devolution reforms in Scotland and Wales. After the party suffered from internal disputes in the 1990s to such an extent that it lost four consecutive general elections, the party underwent organisational reforms that contributed to increasing the power of the central party leadership. The leadership was unwilling to see this situation change once it returned into power in 1997. The fact that Labour was expected to win the elections in Scotland and Wales represented an additional incentive for the state-wide party to make sure that Scottish and Welsh party elites would adopt the same policies as the central government.

The adaptation to devolution has often been met with some reluctance because parties tend to fear the effects of party decentralisation on party cohesion. Evidence shows however that intra-party decentralisation does not always lead to increased intra-party divergence. For instance, the cases of the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative party show that while the regional branches are able to make their own election programmes for Scottish and Welsh elections and adapt the state-wide party's policy to the regional context, divergence has been very limited. On the contrary, interviews have shown that there is a strong sense of loyalty to the state-wide party, which is reflected in a high level of policy convergence with the central party line. The Scottish and Welsh party branches adapt party policy to the regional necessities of their region but abide by the same principles and political beliefs as the central party. The parties with government experience at the central level (Labour, the PSOE and PP) have been more reluctant to risk intra-party policy divergence, as they fear that they could be accused of having different messages in different parts of the country. In Spain the PP has often used this argument against the PSOE, emphasising instead the fact that it was a unified party with the same message across the country.

#### *Problems with the integration of territorial interests in state-wide decision-making*

Overall, it appears that the adaptation of the state-wide parties to the multi-level context is more important with respect to regional autonomy than for the integration of the regional branches in central decision-making. The Liberal Democrats are the party that allows the largest degree of involvement of its regional branches in central party organs and decision-making processes. It remains, however, that the central (federal) party is much more concerned with English affairs, as there is no devolution there and England represents over 80% of the electorate. In addition, as devolution became a more ordinary feature of political life and devolved institutions started to function properly, Scottish and Welsh party branches started to become less interested in state-wide politics. As a result, party conferences have seen the number of delegates from Scotland and Wales decrease.

The same phenomenon was observed in the Labour and Conservatives parties. Their Scottish and Welsh branches have a very limited input in central decision-making. In the Labour party, regional party branches do not have any special representation in the executive committee nor are they involved in candidate selection for state-wide elections. Their role in policy-making is moreover marginal. The party, in power at the central level, has also concentrated power at the centre since the mid-1990s. As a result, the central party has focused on increasing party cohesion and

placed the interest of the central, state-wide party above those of the regional branches.

The situation of the Conservatives is rather particular. The party is officially a unionist party. In practice, its representation in Westminster is quasi-exclusively English. In 1997, the party did not return any MP from either Scotland or Wales; in 2001 it only returned 1 Scottish MP and failed to win a single seat in Wales; and it won one seat in Scotland and three in Wales in 2005. Compared to 165, 166 and finally 194 English MPs, this means that the Conservative party in Westminster is an English party. This English predominance is reflected in the party's discourse on the union. Since 1999, it has raised the issue of the 'West Lothian question', that is, the participation of Scottish MPs in central decision-making over issues that are devolved in Scotland, on many occasions. In a way, it has become the spokesperson of English nationalism in the aftermath of devolution in Scotland and Wales.

The Spanish parties also display limited levels of integration of their regional branches in central decision-making. In both PP and PSOE regional party branches are somehow involved in central party organs and processes, with a number of representatives in party conferences and executive commissions. However, their impact is limited either because of their small number or by the dominance of the party leadership. In the PP, the integration of regional branches in central party organs serves mainly as a means for the central party to control its peripheries.

The participation of regional branches (federations) in the PSOE was originally rather limited, mainly because the pair Felipe González-Alfonso Guerra kept a tight grip on the party organisation and because strong regional leaders had yet to emerge in the early days of the democratic, decentralised system. Regional leaders were however called to play an important role within the central party in the mid-1990s, when the central party was weakened by internal divisions, and they played the role of a referee between the factions of the central party. However, once the disputes were settled and a new leader was elected in 2000, the role of the regional leaders at the centre decreased. The creation of the Territorial Council provided regional party leaders and socialist presidents of autonomous communities with an arena where they can discuss the party's institutional policy. At the same time, the state-wide leadership used this institution as a justification to limit the number of regional representatives in the much more powerful central executive.

Overall, this lack of effective integration of regional representatives in central party decision-making leaves state-wide leaders relatively free to determine state-wide party policies, which influence regional policies to a great extent. In addition, state-wide politicians and party leaders often try to impose these policies on the regional branches in order to maintain party cohesion. In Spain, the interests of the state-wide party often prevail over territorial interests in the choice of party policy. In the UK, the difference in size between England on the one hand, and Scotland and Wales on the other, and the absence of devolution in England strengthens the English bias of the central organs of the British state-wide parties.

Even when there is a certain level of representation of regional branches, territorial interests are rarely channelled to the central level in an efficient way. In both countries, the institutional system is rather deficient in terms of integrating regional interests in central decision-making. Intergovernmental relations are under-developed in the UK, but formal institutions such as the Joint Ministerial Committee are more rituals than real forums where policy is discussed, and legal disputes over the allocation of competences and resources have been very scarce (Trench 2004: 175-6).

Political convergence between the governments at the centre and in Scotland and



Wales has allowed inter-governmental relations to take a rather informal style in which leaders of the same party discuss topics and discuss contentious issues. The state-wide parties, and Labour in particular, are not actually organised to deal systematically with territorial issues. The party has instead relied on informal networks and discussion.

In Spain, intergovernmental relations also suffer from a lack of regularity and regional representatives only form a minority of Senators. The issue of competence attribution has led to a higher number of conflicts, in particular when the systems was being set in place in the 1980s (Aja 2003: 155), while intergovernmental meetings are irregular and autonomous communities sometimes prefer direct bilateral relations with the central government to multi-lateral discussions. Like in the UK, the Spanish state-wide parties are not organised to compensate for the lack of participation of regional governments or representatives in central decision-making.

In both countries, this lack of effective representation of territorial interests either within the institutions of government or within state-wide parties can be counterproductive for the state-wide parties. Spain and the UK are two countries where territorial issues have become very important over the last 30 to 40 years. Ethnoregionalist or minority nationalist parties have seen their share of the vote increase, and they have become significant players at the regional level, occasionally even replacing state-wide parties as first parties at the regional level. Ignoring territorial interests can therefore be dangerous for state-wide parties, as this strengthens the argument of ethnoregionalist parties according to which they are the only true representatives of regional interests.

#### *The complexity of party change and the importance of party factors and agency*

This dissertation has examined the multi-level organisation of state-wide political parties in Spain and in the UK up to 2005. This study started with one contention: that the literature on federalism was certainly overestimating the influence of institutional factors and of federalism in particular on the vertical organisation of state-wide political parties. In order to evaluate the influence of a larger range of factors, the framework was relatively agnostic with regard to which factors should wield the most influence on the way parties organise and on the way they change. The framework nevertheless believed that the institutional bias common in the literature on federalism failed to grasp the complex nature of party organisations and the multiple factors that contribute to party change.

The study has shown that the decentralisation of power to regional units of government and the development of regional political arenas with strong ethnoregionalist parties forced state-wide parties to adapt their organisation. Different types of responses can however be observed. Some parties, and the Liberal Democrats are the best example of this organisational strategy, have decentralised party structures and given relatively large levels of organisational and decisional autonomy to their regional branches. Others have preferred to maintain party cohesion through central party oversight or control of the regional branches, emphasising the advantages of a unified party with a coherent message throughout the country. This is the case of the Spanish Partido Popular but also of the British Labour party.

Environmental factors (institutional factors such as the regionalisation of the state and the institutional asymmetry, but also electoral factors such as the electoral rules and the voting patterns in state-wide and regional elections) seem to have an effect when they all go in the same direction rather than individually. For instance, they appear to have a larger impact on the parties when the regions enjoy a large

degree of autonomy, when regional voting patterns differ from state-wide voting patterns and when state-wide and regional election have their own, separate stakes. This combination of factor is likely to have a greater impact on party organisation and facilitate the devolution of power to the regional branches. However, the fact that the political parties of a same country can display different forms of organisation shows that the parties themselves play a role in processes of organisational adaptation.

The type of organisational response to the challenges posed by institutional regionalisation and regional party politics depends on the parties themselves: the historical conditions of their formation, their ideology and their perception of decentralisation, and internal party relations. The cases studied here provide compelling examples of the importance of party formation and the context of party institutionalisation. The parties in both countries still display organisational characteristics that reflect the historical circumstances of their birth and prove the lasting effects of early forms of organisation: the organisation of the party conference and the role of trade unions in the Labour party, the separate status of the Scottish Conservatives, the leadership-driven birth of the Partido Popular.

This dissertation has shown that political parties were more than simple elements of the institutional framework. In the first place, they are actors that can shape the institutional system by their own actions. They are also complex organisations shaped by their own history, their members and the balance of power between the various groups and interests that compose them. More particularly, it has shown that party organisations, and especially party leaders at the central level, filtered the effects of changes in the environment to make sure that their positions remained secure and that the achievement of the party goals remained possible. Political parties and their leaders were expected to be adverse to change, preferring instead to maintain existing power structures to unknown organisational practices. Party change was therefore expected to occur when the central leadership accepted the need for change, either under the pressure of other party sectors or in order to attain party goals, or has to change the organisation in order to maintain the party's ability achieve its goals or to maintain the stability of the party.

The empirical research has shown that unless the party culture was compatible with decentralisation of power, which is the case of the Liberal Democrats, party leaders were rather reluctant to change their organisation and decentralise power internally when the state becomes decentralised. Central party leaders tend to try and limit the possibilities of party decentralisation and empowerment of the regional branches. However, the development of regional political arenas has led to the constitution of regional elites, which have proved instrumental to the success of processes of organisational change. In this respect, incumbency plays a crucial role in the relationships between the levels, as holding office provides party leaders at either level with important resources that they can use inside the party to further their interests and those of their organisational level.

It has indeed been easier for national party leaders to keep a tight rein on the regional party branches when they were in power. When the party is in power nationally, the incentive to maintain a level of central control is higher, as the central leadership does not want to see its policies contradicted by the party's regional branches. The cases of the Labour party and the PSOE show that when the party is in power it is better able limit the autonomy of its regional branches. The PSOE is also demonstrates that when the central party is in the opposition the regional leaders, especially those who hold executive power, attempt to (and often succeed in) increasing their level of autonomy. Overall, the effects of incumbency on the

relationships between central and regional levels of party organisation expected in table 2.3 (p. 51) were verified. The British Liberals and Conservatives also show that when a state-wide party is in the opposition centrally, its regional branches can be quite autonomous, even though they may not always use this autonomy to adopt a different strategy to that of the central party.

The approach used throughout the dissertation and the choice of independent variables and indicators were intended to provide conclusions that assured a high level of internal validity to the results. The framework also provides a template for the study of other state-wide political parties in other countries. This framework, but also approaches that focus on leadership behaviour such as that of van Houten (forthcoming), as we have seen the importance of agency and leadership impulse in processes of party change, can help further our understanding of multi-level party organisation. A larger number of cases, such as for instance Italy, Germany, Austria or Canada, may be necessary to wield firmer conclusions about the causal links between independent variables and between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In this case, other in-depth studies would be necessary, as the data is not always available and many aspects of party organisation are to be taken into account. The dissertation has shown that combining historical and institutional perspectives with a model that includes room for agency can improve our understanding of how political parties adapt to multi-level governance and also how political parties change.



## APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF INTERVIEWS

### Conservative Party

Scott Kelly	07/02/2005, London	Member of the Conservative Party Policy Unit
Raymond Monbiot	09/02/2005, London	Member of the Board, of the Finance Committee, Chairman of the National Convention
David McLetchie	26/01/2005, Edinburgh	Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP), leader of the Scottish Conservative Party 1999-2005, MSP
Margaret Goodman	09/06/2005, Edinburgh	Deputy leader of the Scottish Conservative Party and member of the Board 2001-2005
Paul Valerio	31/01/2005, Cardiff	Chairman of the Assembly Candidates Panel
David Melding	30/06/2005, Cardiff	Member of the Welsh Assembly (AM)

### Labour Party

Iain Luke	08/02/2005, London	MP (Scottish constituency)
Rosemary McKenna	09/02/2005, London	MP (Scottish constituency), member of the Scottish Executive Committee, responsible for the Scottish candidate selection panel in 1999
Bristow Muldoon	25/01/2005, Edinburgh	MSP, chairman of the Scottish Policy Forum
Steven Lawther	10/06/2005, Edinburgh	Scottish Labour polling co-ordinator,
Stuart Clark	28/01/2005, Edinburgh	Treasurer of the Scottish Labour Party, member of the Scottish Executive Committee, party organiser of 1999 campaign
Michael Penn	01/02/2005, Cardiff	Head of office for the Labour group in the National Assembly for Wales, Welsh Labour party
Chris Roberts	01/02/2005, Cardiff	Organiser of the Welsh Labour Party

### Liberal Democrats

Matthew Taylor	08/02/2005, London	MP, campaign manager in the 1997 election
Roger Williams	09/02/2005, London	MP (Welsh constituency)
Jeremy Hargreaves	10/02/2005, London	Member of the Federal Policy Committee and Federal Conference Committee, candidate in 2001 elections
Robert Brown	25/01/2005,	MSP, member of the Scottish

	Edinburgh	Executive Committee and Scottish Policy Committee
Douglas Herbison	12/12/2004, Brussels	Treasurer of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, candidate in 2005 Scottish election
Derek Barrie	26/01/2005, Edinburgh	Chief of staff of the Scottish Liberal Democrats
Jenny Randerson	02/01/2005, Cardiff	AM, former Welsh minister and former Deputy First Minister, member of Candidates and Campaigns Committee, Policy Committee, Welsh Liberal Democrats
Stephen Smith	30/06/2005, Cardiff	Chief executive, Welsh Liberal Democrats
Rob Humphries	30/06/2005, Swansea	President of the Welsh Liberal Democrats

#### **PSOE**

Óscar López Águeda	11/10/2005, Madrid	Member of Congress, co-ordinator of the Secretariat for Organisation and Electoral Action of the PSOE
Agustín Baeza Díaz-Moreno	10/10/2005, Madrid	Co-ordinator of the Secretariat for Institutional Relations and Autonomous Policy
Xavier Carro Garrote	14/02/2006, Madrid	Member of Congress (from Galicia), member of the Executive Commission and the National Executive Committee of the PSdeG
Arantxa Mendizábal Gorostiaga	14/02/2006, Madrid	Member of Congress, member of the Executive Committee of the PSE-EE
Lentxu Rubial Cachorro	15/02/2006, Madrid	Senator (Basque country), member of the Federal Executive Committee
María Isabel Celaá Diéguez	09/01/2006, Bilbao	Member of the Basque Parliament, member of the Executive Committee of the PSE-EE, Secretary for Social and Sectoral Policy
Joana Madrigal Jiménez	09/01/2006, Vitoria	Member of the Basque Parliament, member of the Executive Committee of the PSE-EE
Ricardo Varela Sánchez	22/02/2006, Santiago de Compostela	Regional Councillor (minister) for Labour; Secretary for Organisation of the PSdeG
Francisco Cerviño	22/02/2006, Santiago de C.	Member of the Galician Parliament
Carlos Pajares Vales	23/02/2006, Santiago de C.	Secretary for Education and Innovation in the Executive Committee of the PSdeG

**PSC**

Teresa Cunillera i Mestres	10/10/2005, Madrid	Member of Congress, member of the Federal Executive Committee of the PSOE, former member of the Consell Nacional of the PSC
José Zaragoza	9/11/2005, Barcelona	Secretary for Organisation and Finance
Josep María Sala	9/11/2005, Barcelona	Member of the Executive Commission, Senator for Catalonia 1989-1997, Secretary for Organisation 1982-1995
Carme Figueras i Siñol	10/11/2005, Barcelona	Member of Catalan Parliament since 1995, former member of Congress, 1993-1995
Daniel Fernández González	11/11/2005, Barcelona	Member of Congress, co-ordinator of PSC members of Congress, member of the National Executive Commission
Maria Badia i Cutchet	19/10/2005, Brussels	Member of the European Parliament, member of the National Executive Commission, Secretary for European and International Affairs

**Partido Popular**

Juan Carlos Vera Pro	11/10/2005, Madrid	Member of Congress, Secretary for Organisation, Executive secretary for Territorial Organisation 1990-2004
Gabriel Elorriaga Pisarik	11/10/2005, Madrid	Member of Congress, Executive secretary for Communication, co-ordinator of Studies and Formation, former secretary of State for Territorial Organisation
José Luis Ayllón Manso	14/02/2006, Madrid	Member of the Executive Committee of the PP, Executive secretary for Analysis since 2004, Secretary for Studies and Formation 2002-2004, member of the Catalan Parliament 2000-2004
Xavier García Albiol	8/11/2005, Barcelona	Executive secretary for Organisation of the PPC since 2004, Secretary for Local policy 2002-2004, Deputy secretary for organisation 2000-2002
Joan López	9/11/2005, Barcelona	Member of the Catalan Parliament, Executive secretary for Participation since 2002
Rafael Luna	10/11/2005, Barcelona	General secretary of the PPC since 1996, Member of the Catalan Parliament
Santiago Rodríguez i Serra	11/11/2005, Barcelona	Member of the Catalan Parliament

José Eugenio Azpiroz Villar	15/02/2006, Madrid	Member of Congress (Basque country), former President of the PP-PV 1989-1992
Carlos María de Urquijo Valdivieso	12/01/2006, Vitoria	Member of the Basque Parliament, member of the Executive Committee of the PP-PV, member of the National Steering Committee
Fernando Maura Barandiarán	10/01/2006, Vitoria	Member of the Basque Parliament, member of the Executive Committee of the PP-PV, former Secretary-general of the PP-PV 1989-92
Jesús Palmou Lorenzo	22/02/2006, Santiago de C.	Member of the Galician Parliament, General-secretary of the PPdeG 1999-2006, member of the National Executive Committee (PP) and Executive Committee of the PPdeG



## APPENDIX 2 - QUESTIONNAIRE (BRITISH PARTIES)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Can you please start by telling me a little bit about yourself as a member of the [NAME OF PARTY]/ party official [TITLE]/ member of the administrative staff of the [NAME OF THE PARTY]/ elected official, describing briefly your evolution within the party?

1.2. Can you please describe the position(s) you have held within the party since \_\_\_\_\_?

1.3. Since \_\_\_\_\_, have you ever been:

**- A member of the [NEC/ Board/ FEC]? YES NO**

When?

In what position?

**-A member of the [SCOTTISH/ WELSH] executive? YES NO**

When?

In what position?

**-Involved in the selection of the Scottish/Welsh party leader (i.e. voting member)? YES NO**

**-Involved in the selection of candidates for general election? YES NO**

As a member of the candidate selection commission in charge of establishing lists of approved candidates [OFFICIAL NAME]?

As a member of your constituency candidate selection committee?

As a prospective candidate?

**-Involved in the selection of candidates for Scottish/Welsh elections? YES NO**

As a member of the candidate selection panel [OFFICIAL NAME] for the regional elections

As a member of your constituency selection committee?

As a prospective candidate?

**-Involved in policy-making at the national level? YES NO**

As a member of the [NPF/ CPF/FPC]?

As a member of the national party conference?

**-Involved in policy-making at the Scottish/Welsh level? YES NO**

As a member of the [Sc/W PF/...]?

As a member of the Scottish/Welsh party conference?

**-Involved in election campaigns? YES NO**

At the national level?

At the Scottish/Welsh level?

At the constituency level?

**-Involved in matters regarding party discipline, as a member of the disciplinary committee? YES NO**

When?

In what quality?

**-Is there something you would like to add at this point, for instance, some party position that I have failed to mention in this list?**

## 2. MEMBER OF STATE-WIDE EXECUTIVE

2.1 To what extent is the [NEC/ Board/ Federal Executive] responsible for Scottish and Welsh affairs?(In general)

2.1.1 What is the extent of the [NEC/ Board/ Federal Executive]'s involvement in the selection of the Scottish and Welsh party leaders?

2.1.2 How has this changed with devolution?

2.1.3 How much is the [NEC/ Board/ Federal Executive] responsible for candidate selection in Scotland and Wales?

-for general elections?

-for Scottish/Welsh election?

-Who is responsible for the screening process (establishing lists of approved candidates)?

2.1.4 How has this changed with devolution?

2.1.5 To what extent is the [NEC/ Board/ Federal Executive] responsible for making policy for Scottish/Welsh elections?

2.1.6 To what extent is the [NEC/Board/FE] involved in preparing the manifestos for Scottish and Welsh elections?

2.1.7 To what extent is the [NEC/ Board/ FE] involved in the making of the Scottish and Welsh manifestos for the general elections?

2.1.8 With devolution, have there been any changes in the way the [NEC/ Board/FEC] intervenes in the preparation of Scottish and Welsh manifestos for the general and Scottish/Welsh elections? And since?

2.1.9. To what extent is the [NEC/ Board/FE] responsible for organising the campaign for Scottish and Welsh elections?

2.1.10. How has this changed with devolution? And since devolution?

2.2 Are the regional party branches involved in the National Executive?

2.2.1. Are there some regional representatives in the national executive?

2.2.2. Are there some other, maybe more informal, ways in which regional interests are represented in the party's executive?

2.2.3. Have there been any changes in the representation of the Scottish and Welsh parties in the national executive since 1997/99?

2.2.4. To what extent are the Scottish and Welsh party branches involved in the preparation of the manifesto for the general elections?

2.2.5. How has this changed with devolution? Has it changed after that?

2.2.6. To what extent are the Scottish and Welsh party branches involved in the campaign for general elections?

2.2.7. How has this changed with devolution? Has it changed after 1999?

2.2.8. Have there been any changes in the way regional party branches influence the party as a whole?

### 2.3. Party Finance

2.3.1. Does the national/federal party contribute to the budget of the Scottish and Welsh parties?

2.3.2. What proportion of their budget does this contribution represent?

2.3.3. How is the contribution provided? (block grant, or needs-based?)

2.3.4. Who decides how much money is attributed to the Scottish and Welsh branches?

2.3.5. How has this contribution evolved since devolution?

2.3.6. Whose responsibility is it to pay for regional electoral campaigns? Does the British party pay for election campaigns for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly?

2.3.7. Are there some differences between the financial situation of the party in Scotland and the financial situation of the party in Wales?

2.3.8. Has the financing of the Scottish and Welsh party branches changed with devolution?

### 3. MEMBER OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

#### Presentation

3.1. What are the most important responsibilities of the [Scottish/Welsh] executive?

3.1.2 How important is the management function, that is, management of the daily affairs of the [Scottish/Welsh] party branch?

3.1.3. What is the role of the [Scottish/Welsh] in the preparation of the manifesto for regional elections?

3.1.4. What is the role of the [Scottish/Welsh] executive during the campaign leading to [Scottish/Welsh] elections?

3.1.5. What is the role of the [Scottish/Welsh] executive during the campaign leading to general elections?

3.1.6. How important is the linkage function between the British party and the [Scottish/Welsh] branch?

3.1.7. Have the responsibilities of the [Scottish/Welsh] executive changed since devolution?

3.2. Involvement of national party in Scottish and Welsh affairs

3.2.1. Are there some representatives of the national party in the [Scottish/Welsh] executives?

3.2.2. What is their role? How do they affect the decisions taken?

3.2.3. In general, how much is the British party (national executive, leadership, other) responsible for or involved in [Scottish/Welsh] affairs?

3.2.4. Who, in the national party, intervenes most in [Scottish/Welsh] affairs?

3.2.5. To what extent is the British party involved in leadership selection in Scotland and Wales? Change?

3.2.6. To what extent is the British party involved in candidate selection in [Scotland/ Wales]? Change?

3.2.7. To what extent has the British party been involved in adopting party policy in [Scotland/Wales]? Change?

3.2.8. To what extent is the British party involved in drafting and adopting party manifestos for regional elections in [Scotland /Wales]? Change?

3.2.9. And what about general election manifestos? Change?

3.2.10. To what extent is the British party responsible for the organisation of the campaign for general elections in [Scotland/Wales]? Change?

3.2.11. And what about [Scottish/Welsh] elections? Has there been any change since 1999?

3.2.12. Overall, has the level and/or type of involvement of the national party in [Scottish/Welsh] affairs changed since devolution?

3.3. How are the interests/ demands/ proposals of the [Scottish/Welsh] parties channelled/ transmitted to the British party?

3.3.1. Are there official representatives of the [Scottish/Welsh] branches in the some organs of the British party?

3.3.2 How significant is their input in the British party?

3.3.3. Is there any other, more informal, way, in which [Scottish/Welsh] branches are represented in the SWP?

3.3.4. Has the representation of [Scottish/Welsh] interests at the national level changed within the party since devolution?

3.3.5. Can you give examples of Scottish and/or Welsh influence on the national party, in the domain of policy making, for example?

3.3.6. Has this influence changed since 1999?

3.4. Party Finance

3.4.1. What are the sources of the funds used by the [Scottish/Welsh] branch?

3.4.2. What is the proportion of funds coming from the [CAs/ CLPs/ LOCAL PARTIES] and individual membership fees in the overall budget of the [Scottish/Welsh] party branch?

3.4.3. What is the proportion of funds coming from the British party in the overall budget of the [Scottish/Welsh] party branch?

3.4.4. In what form are these funds distributed? (block grant or needs-based)

3.4.5. How has this been changing since devolution?

- 3.4.6. What is the proportion of funds coming from other sources (LABOUR: trade unions) in the overall budget of the [Scottish/Welsh] party branch?
- 3.4.7. How are campaigns for the general election funded in [Scotland/Wales]?
- 3.4.8. How are the campaigns for election to the [Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly] funded?
- 3.4.9. Has the financing of the [Scottish/Welsh] branch changed since devolution?

#### **4. SELECTION OF THE REGIONAL LEADER**

##### 4.1. Selection process

- 4.1.1. What are the stages of the selection process?
- 4.1.2. Does a party member need the support of MPs and/ or Members of the [Scottish/Welsh] parliament in order to become a candidate?
- 4.1.3. How is the electoral college composed?
- 4.1.4. Since devolution, has the way the [Scottish/Welsh] party leader is selected changed?

##### 4.2. Influence of the British party

- 4.2.1. Is the British party formally involved in the selection process?
- 4.2.2. Are there some informal ways in which the national party can intervene in the selection process?
- 4.2.3. Has there been any change to the selection procedure with/since devolution?
- 4.2.4. Do you think that the composition and internal balance of the national (Shadow) Cabinet has some impact on the selection of the [Scottish/ Welsh] leader?
- 4.2.5. Do you think that the personality and preferences of the [Shadow] Secretary of State for [Scotland/ Wales] has any impact on the selection of the regional leader?

##### LABOUR

- 4.2.6. How does the system of double leadership (Secretary of State for Scotland/ Wales + leader of the Scottish/Welsh parliamentary party) affect the party?

## 5. SELECTION OF CANDIDATES – GENERAL ELECTIONS

### 5.1. Member of candidate screening commission

#### LABOUR AND CONSERVATIVE

5.1.1. To your knowledge, how many of the member of the \_\_\_\_\_ come from [Scotland/ Wales]?

5.1.2. For an applicant who wishes/d to be a prospective candidate in Scotland or Wales, how important was his/her position on devolution?

5.1.3. For the selection of prospective candidates for Scotland or Wales, were the Scottish or Welsh leaderships consulted on the selection criteria or individual personalities?

5.1.4. At what stage of the selection process was the regional leadership consulted?

5.1.5. Has there been any change in the selection process since devolution?

#### LIBERAL DEMOCRATS (SCOTLAND AND WALES):

5.1.6. During the selection process, was the federal leadership or some other central party organ consulted on some aspect(s) of the process?

5.1.7. Was the federal party consulted on the suitability of specific candidates?

5.1.8. Has this changed with devolution?

5.1.9. Did the federal party try to intervene in the selection process without being specifically asked to?

#### LIBERAL DEMOCRATS (FEDERAL PARTY)

5.1.10. Is the federal party in any way involved in the process of candidate selection?

5.1.11. Has this changed with devolution?

### 5.2. Member of Constituency Selection Committee

5.2.1. How many people were on the list approved by the [NEC/ CCO/ State Party]?

5.2.2. How many prospective candidates were included in the shortlist established by [CLP/ CA/ Local party]?



5.2.3. What were the selection criteria? Who established them?

#### IN SCOTLAND AND WALES

5.2.4. Was the [Scottish/ Welsh] leadership consulted on the proceedings at any stage of the selection process?

5.2.5. Was the [Scottish/ Welsh] leadership kept informed of the evolution and results of the selection process?

5.2.6. Did you experience or do you know of attempts of the [Scottish/ Welsh] leadership to get involved in the selection process?

5.2.7. What about the British leadership, was it consulted on the proceedings during the selection process?

5.2.8. Did you experience or do you know of attempts of the British leadership to get involved in the process?

5.2.9. According to you, what weighs more on the vote of party members for a candidate for the general elections? The support of the central leadership or that of the [Scottish/ Welsh] leadership?

5.2.10. Has the selection process changed with devolution?

#### 5.3. Prospective candidate

5.3.1. Can you describe your experience with the candidate screening commission (commission in charge of establishing lists of approved candidates)? What can you tell me about your hearing?

5.3.2. Can you describe the various steps of the selection process at the level of the constituency?

5.3.3. At any stage of the selection process at constituency level, did you feel that the central leadership was trying to influence the selection?

5.3.4. Did you feel that (or know that) the regional [Scottish/ Welsh] party was trying to influence the selection?

5.3.5. Has the selection process changed with devolution?

## 6. CANDIDATE SELECTION – REGIONAL ELECTIONS

### 6.1. Member Candidate Selection Panel

- 6.1.1. What are the criteria used in the selection process?
- 6.1.2. Who established them?
- 6.1.3. Is the approval of the candidates by the British party necessary?
- 6.1.4. How easy is it to get it?
- 6.1.5. Were there any candidates who had been selected at the local level but were subsequently rejected by the British party?
- 6.1.6. Does the fact that the British party has to approve the selection in some ways constrain the selection at the regional level? (e.g., self-imposed rules because they know that the central party would not accept a candidate?)
- 6.1.7. Did the British party try to intervene in the selection process without being specifically asked to?
- 6.1.8. Has the selection process changed with devolution?

### 6.2. Member of Constituency Candidate Selection Committee

- 6.2.1. How many people were on the list of approved candidates?
- 6.2.2. Was the [Scottish/Welsh] leadership/executive kept informed of the proceedings at any stage of the selection process?
- 6.2.3. Did you experience or do you know of attempts of the [Scottish/Welsh] leadership/executive to get involved in the process?
- 6.2.4. Was the British leadership/executive kept informed of the proceedings at any stage of the selection process?
- 6.2.5. Did you experience or do you know of attempts of the British leadership to get involved in the process?
- 6.2.6. Has the selection process changed since 1999?

### 6.3. Prospective candidate

- 6.3.1. Were you applying to be a constituency candidate or a list candidate?
- 6.3.2. Can you please describe your experience with the candidate screening commission? (What can you tell me about your hearing?)
- 6.3.3. Has the process changed between 1999 and 2003?

#### CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATE

6.3.4. Can you please describe the various stages of the selection process at the constituency level?

6.3.5. At any stage of the selection process at constituency level, did you feel (or know) that the central British leadership was trying to influence the selection?

6.3.6. Did you feel (or know) that the regional [Scottish/ Welsh] party was trying to influence the selection?

6.3.7. Have you noticed any change in the process between 1999 and 2003?

#### LIST CANDIDATE

6.3.8. Can you please describe the process that led to the constitution of candidate lists?

6.3.9. Did the British executive (or some other central party organ) try to influence the composition of the top-up lists?

6.3.10. Do you think that the Scottish/Welsh executive tried to influence the composition and order of the top-up lists?

6.3.11. Has the selection process changed between 1999 and 2003?

### **7. FORMULATION OF STATE-WIDE POLICY**

#### 7.1. Participated in NPF/CPF/FPC

7.1.1. At which level of the party (local/regional/central) were you involved?

#### REGIONAL LEVEL

7.1.2. Can you please describe the consultation process for the [NPF/Con PF/ FPC] at the regional level?

7.1.3. Were you consulted on proposals formulated at either the local or central level?

7.1.4. Could you make alternative proposals?

7.1.5. Could you develop your own policy proposals?

7.1.6. Did you feel your proposals were taken into account by the central party?

7.1.7. Are the Scottish and Welsh leaderships specifically consulted during the process?

7.1.8. Overall, what do you think really is the role of the Scottish/Welsh party branches in the development of national policy?

7.1.9. How has the role of the Scottish and Welsh party branches changed with devolution? And since then?

## CENTRAL LEVEL

7.1.10. Can you please describe the proceedings of the [NPF/CFE/FPC]?

7.1.11. Who is in charge of making the original policy proposals?

7.1.12. Can you please describe the involvement of the Scottish and Welsh parties in the formulation of national party policies?

7.1.13. Are the Scottish and Welsh caucuses involved or consulted during the whole process?

7.1.14. Has this changed since devolution?

7.1.15. Can you please give me a recent example of a policy proposal successfully put forward or amended by either the Scottish or Welsh party branch that became party policy?

## 7.2. DELEGATE AT PARTY CONFERENCE

7.2.1. Can you describe the proceedings of the party conference?

7.2.2. Who is in charge of making the proposals put forward to the conference?

7.2.3. Can you please describe the involvement of the Scottish and Welsh party branches?

7.2.4. Do the Scottish/ Welsh leaderships or regional executives play a role during the conference?

7.2.5. Now, think about the most recent policies adopted by the party. How much say did the Scottish and Welsh parties have had in the formulation of these policies?

7.2.6. Has the role and involvement of the Scottish and Welsh parties changed with devolution?

7.2.7. How significant are the policies adopted by the conference with regard to the policies contained in the party manifesto?

## **8. FORMULATING REGIONAL POLICY**

8.1. Member of [Scottish/ Welsh] Policy Forum/ Policy Committee

8.1.1. Can you please describe the proceedings of the [Scottish/ Welsh] policy forum?

8.1.2. Who made the policy proposals that you were considering? (constituencies/ *ad hoc* committees/ national party)

8.1.3. How are [Scottish/ Welsh] policies adopted?

8.1.4. Has this since changed between 1999 and 2003?

8.1.5. What was the impact of the contents of the manifesto for the [2001/ 1997] general elections on the making of [2003/ 1999] the programme?

8.1.6. What was the input of the British party in the process of making [Scottish/ Welsh] policy?

8.1.7. Did some member of the British party make direct interventions in order to influence the content of the [Scottish/ Welsh] programme?

8.1.8. Has there been any change in this part of the policy-making process since devolution?

## 8.2. Member of [Scottish/ Welsh] party Conference

8.2.1. Can you describe the proceedings of the conference?

8.2.2. Who made the proposals that you were considering?  
(Constituencies/ *ad hoc* committees/ national party)

8.2.3. What was the impact of the contents of the manifesto for the general elections on the making of the [Scottish/ Welsh] programme?

8.2.4. What was the input of the British party (executive, leadership, (shadow) Cabinet) in the proceedings of the [Scottish/ Welsh] conference?

8.2.5. Have the proceedings of and decisions taken by the [Scottish/ Welsh] conference changed since devolution?

8.2.6. Who makes the regional manifesto?

8.2.7. How close did you find the manifesto to be to the policy proposals that you had discussed and voted upon?

## 9. MAKING ELECTION MANIFESTOS

### 9.1. General elections manifesto

9.1.1. Who in the party is formally in charge of making the election manifesto?

9.1.2. How were the most prominent issues of the manifesto chosen?  
How was it decided that some issues should be more prominent in the manifesto than others?

9.1.3. How close to the programme adopted by the party conference was the manifesto of the last general election?

9.1.4. Are the [Scottish/Welsh] party branches consulted during the process?

9.1.5. What about when the manifesto contains provisions about areas that have been devolved?

9.1.6. How does your party feel about the issue of devolving more powers to Scotland and Wales?

9.1.7. Are there any Welsh and Scottish general election manifestos?

## 9.2. Regional manifestos for general elections

9.2.1. Who is in charge of making the Scottish and Welsh general election manifestos?

9.2.2. How are they made?

9.2.3. To what extent is the [British party/ Scottish or Welsh party branch] involved in the process?

9.2.4. To what extent is the [Scottish/ Welsh] version of the general election manifesto adapted to the [Scottish/Welsh] context?

9.2.5. How was it decided that some issues should be more prominent in the manifesto than others?

9.2.6. Were there issues that were emphasised in [Scotland/Wales] and that were not in the main manifesto?

9.2.7. How important was the issue of devolving more powers to [Scotland/Wales]?

## 9.3. Manifestos for [Scottish/Welsh] elections

9.3.1. Who in the party is responsible for making the manifesto for the [Scottish/ Welsh] elections?

9.3.2. How is the manifesto for [Scottish/Welsh] elections made?

9.3.3. How is it decided that some issues should be more prominent than others?

9.3.4. How close to the programme adopted by the [Scottish/Welsh] party conference was the manifesto for the last [Scottish/Welsh] election?

9.3.5. How important was the issue of devolving more powers to [Scotland/Wales]?

9.3.6. Is the British party consulted or involved in the making of the [Scottish/Welsh] manifesto?

## 10. CAMPAIGNING

### 10.1 General election campaign

10.1.1. Who is in charge of making the manifesto?

10.1.2. Are they also the people who run the campaign?

10.1.3. Who is responsible for running the campaign?

10.1.4. What were the main issues that you tried to emphasise during the campaign?

10.1.5. How important was the issue of devolving more powers to Scotland and Wales?

10.1.6. Were the Scottish and Welsh parties involved in the general elections campaign?

10.1.7. Did the Scottish and Welsh parties have any role in the campaign in Scotland and Wales?

### 10.2. General election campaign in Scotland and Wales

10.2.1. Who is in charge of making the manifesto?

10.2.2. Are they also the people who run the campaign?

10.2.3. Who is responsible for running the campaign?

10.2.4. What were the main issues that you tried to emphasise during the campaign?

10.2.5. How important was the issue of devolving more powers to [Scotland /Wales]?

10.2.6. Were the Scottish and Welsh parties involved in the general elections campaign in [Scotland/ Wales]?



10.1.7. Did the Scottish and Welsh parties have any role in the campaign in Scotland and Wales?

10.3. Regional election campaign

10.3.1. Who is in charge of making the manifesto?

10.3.2. Are they also the people who run the campaign?

10.3.3. Who is responsible for running the campaign?

10.3.4. How was the campaign devised?

10.3.5. What were the main issues that you tried to emphasise during the campaign?

10.3.6. How important was the issue of devolving more powers to [Scotland/ Wales?

## APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF RESERVED POWERS

(SCOTLAND ACT 1998, SCHEDULE 5)

- (i) the Constitution: the Crown, the Union of Scotland and England, the Parliament of the United Kingdom.
- (ii) the registration of political parties.
- (iii) foreign affairs and relations with the European Union (exception: implementing international obligations and assisting Ministers of the Crown).
- (iv) the civil service.
- (v) defence.
- (vi) fiscal and monetary policy (exception: local taxes to fund local authority expenditure).
- (vii) currency.
- (viii) financial services and markets
- (ix) elections and the franchise for local government elections (exception: other rules regarding local government elections).
- (x) firearms legislation.
- (xi) immigration and nationality.
- (xii) extradition.
- (xiii) emergency powers.
- (xiv) rules of business associations and insolvency.
- (xv) market competition, import and export control, consumer protection.
- (xvi) telecommunications and the Post Office.
- (xvii) energy policy.
- (xviii) essential aspects of transport policy.
- (xix) social security (with few exceptions), child support and pensions.
- (xx) employment, industrial relations, and health and safety.
- (xxi) abortion, surrogacy, medicines.
- (xxii) broadcasting.
- (xxiii) equal opportunities (exception: measures to encourage equal opportunities).

## **APPENDIX 4 – COMPETENCE FIELDS TRANSFERED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES**

(GOVERNMENT OF WALES ACT 1998, SCHEDULE 2)

- (i)* agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food
- (ii)* ancient monuments and historic buildings
- (iii)* culture
- (iv)* economic development
- (v)* education and training
- (vi)* the environment
- (vii)* health and health services
- (viii)* highways
- (ix)* housing
- (x)* industry
- (xi)* local government
- (xii)* social services
- (xiii)* sport and recreation
- (xiv)* tourism
- (xv)* town and country planning
- (xvi)* transport
- (xvii)* water and flood defence
- (xviii)* the Welsh language

## APPENDIX 5 – GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS IN CATALONIA, THE BASQUE COUNTRY AND GALICIA

**Table A.1.** Results of elections to the Congress of Deputies in Catalonia, 1977-2004

	UCD/CDS		PSC-PSOE		AP/PP		PCE/IC		CiU		ERC		ENEP	ENPP	D	L
	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)				
1977	16.9	9 (19.2)	28.6	15 (31.9)	3.6	1 (2.1)	18.3	8 (17.0)	22.6	13 (27.7)	4.7	1 (2.1)	5.6	4.6	6.1	30.7
1979	19.4	12 (25.5)	29.7	17 (36.2)	3.7	1 (2.1)	17.4	8 (17.0)	16.4	8 (17.0)	4.2	1 (2.1)	5.4	3.9	6.9	22.2
1982	2.0	-	45.8	25 (53.2)	14.7	8 (17.0)	4.6	1 (2.1)	22.5	12 (25.5)	4.0	1 (2.1)	3.5	2.7	6.7	23.4
1986	4.1	1 (2.1)	41.0	21 (44.7)	11.4	6 (12.7)	3.9	1 (2.1)	32.0	18 (38.3)	2.7	-	3.5	2.8	6.1	27.7
1989	4.3	1 (2.2)	35.6	20 (43.5)	10.6	4 (8.7)	7.3	3 (6.5)	32.7	18 (39.1)	2.7	-	4.0	2.8	7.9	28.2
1993	0.8	-	34.9	18 (38.3)	17.0	8 (17.0)	7.5	3 (6.4)	31.8	17 (36.2)	5.1	1 (2.1)	3.8	3.2	4.6	29.5
1996	-	-	39.4	19 (41.3)	18.0	8 (17.4)	7.6	2 (4.4)	29.6	16 (34.8)	4.2	1 (2.2)	3.5	3.1	4.8	28.6
2000	-	-	34.1	17 (37.0)	22.8	12 (26.1)	3.5	1 (2.2)	28.8	15 (32.6)	5.6	1 (2.2)	3.9	3.2	5.1	28.0
2004	-	-	39.5	21 (44.7)	15.6	6 (12.8)	5.8	2 (4.3)	20.8	10 (21.3)	15.9	8 (17.0)	4.0	3.4	4.5	30.5

Notes: 'votes' stands for 'share of the votes'; 'ENEP' refers to the effective number of electoral parties and 'ENPP' stands for effective number of parliamentary parties; 'D' refers to Gallagher's *least squares* index of disproportionality; L stands for the Lee index of regional distinctiveness.

Sources: <http://www.eleweb.es>

**Table A.2.** General election results in the Basque country, 1977-2004

	UCD/CDS		PSE-PSOE		AP/PP		PCE/IU		PNV		HB		EE		EA	
	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)
1977	12.8	4 (19.1)	26.3	7 (33.3)	7.1	1 (4.8)	4.5	-	29.3	8 (38.1)	-	-	6.1	1 (4.8)	-	-
1979	16.9	5 (23.8)	19.1	5 (23.8)	-	-	4.6	-	27.6	7 (33.3)	15.0	3 (14.3)	8.0	1 (4.8)	-	-
1982	1.8	-	29.2	8 (38.1)	11.6	2 (9.5)	1.8	-	31.7	8 (38.1)	14.7	2 (9.5)	7.7	1 (4.8)	-	-
1986	5.0	-	26.3	7 (33.3)	10.5	2 (9.5)	2.2*	-	27.8	6 (28.6)	17.7	4 (19.1)	9.1	2 (9.5)	-	-
1989	3.5	-	21.1	6 (28.6)	9.4	2 (9.5)	3.0	-	22.8	5 (23.8)	16.9	4 (19.1)	8.8	2 (9.5)	11.2	2 (9.5)
1993	.8	-	24.5	7 (36.8)	14.7	4 (21.1)	6.3	-	24.1	5 (26.3)	14.6	2 (10.5)	-	-	9.9	1 (5.3)
1996	-	-	23.7	5 (26.3)	18.3	5 (26.3)	9.2	1 (5.3)	25.0	5 (26.3)	12.3	2 (10.5)	-	-	8.2	1 (5.3)
2000	-	-	23.3	4 (21.1)	28.3	7 (36.8)	5.5	-	30.4	7 (36.8)	-	-	-	-	7.6	1 (5.3)
2004	-	-	27.2	7 (36.8)	18.9	4 (21.1)	8.2	-	33.7	7 (36.8)	-	-	-	-	6.5	1 (5.3)

\* PCE+IU

Sources: Ministerio del Interior <http://elecciones.mir.es>

**Table A.3.** Electoral indicators, general elections in the Basque country, 1977-2004

	ENEP	ENPP	D	L
1977	5.38	3.37	10.47	32.95
1979	5.77	4.05	8.72	46.55
1982	4.40	3.22	6.61	48.4
1986	5.00	4.05	6.36	48.65
1989	6.40	4.96	6.61	53.4
1993	5.72	3.80	11.81	42.75
1996	5.47	4.46	7.10	39.9
2000	4.25	3.14	8.85	33.15
2004	4.25	3.14	9.63	38.25

**Table A.4.** General electoral results in Galicia, 1977-2004

	UCD/CDS		PSOE-PSG		AP/PP		PCE/IU		BNG		ENEP	ENPP	D	L
	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)	Votes	Seats (%)				
1977	53.6	20 (74.1)	15.5	3 (11.1)	13.1	4 (14.8)	3.0	–	2.0	–	2.98	1.72	15.52	23.35
1979	48.2	17 (63.0)	17.3	6 (22.2)	14.2	4 (14.8)	4.2	–	6.0	–	3.44	2.13	12.81	23.9
1982	17.7	5 (5.5)	32.8	9 (33.3)	37.6	13 (48.2)	1.6	–	3.0	–	3.54	2.65	8.19	21.6
1986	8.6	2 (7.4)	35.8	11 (40.7)	39.2	13 (48.2)	1.1	–	2.1	–	3.39	2.47	8.15	16.5
1989	7.8	1 (3.7)	34.6	12 (44.4)	39.0	14 (51.9)	3.3	–	3.6	–	3.54	2.14	12.74	15.35
1993	1.5	–	36.0	11 (42.3)	47.1	15 (57.7)	4.7	–	8.0	–	2.78	1.95	10.98	15.55
1996			33.5	9 (36.0)	48.3	14 (56.0)	3.6	–	12.9	2 (8.0)	2.75	2.22	7.14	17.6
2000	0.1	–	23.7	6 (24.0)	54.0	16 (64.0)	1.3	–	18.6	3 (12.0)	2.61	2.08	8.54	23.75
2004	0.1	–	37.2	10 (41.7)	47.2	12 (50.0)	1.8	–	11.4	2 (8.3)	2.67	2.32	8.54	16.3

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## RESUME

Alors que de nombreux pays ont aujourd'hui adopté une forme d'organisation décentralisée, les questions du fédéralisme, de la gouvernance multi-niveaux et du régionalisme sont devenues d'importants objets de recherche. Cette thèse doctorale applique la perspective multi-niveaux à l'étude des partis politiques et demande comment les partis nationaux, c'est-à-dire les partis qui présentent des candidats pour les élections nationales et régionales sur l'ensemble du territoire, organisent les rapports internes entre niveau central et branches régionales. Les partis nationaux ont un problème particulier dans les systèmes décentralisés: d'une part, ils doivent présenter un front uni et un message cohérent sur tout le territoire national lors des élections nationales, et ils doivent d'autre part s'adresser aux électeurs régionaux et à leurs intérêts particuliers lors des élections régionales. L'existence de différents niveaux de gouvernement et d'élection pose donc un problème de coordination verticale aux partis nationaux.

Cette thèse cherche à répondre à cette question à travers l'exemple de trois partis britanniques (le Parti travailliste, le Parti conservateur et les Libéraux Démocrates) et deux partis espagnols (le Parti Populaire et le Parti Socialiste Ouvrier Espagnol). L'articulation entre niveaux national et régionaux se compose de deux dimensions: l'intégration des branches régionales dans les processus décisionnels centraux et l'autonomie des branches régionales dans les processus décisionnels régionaux. Cette étude se concentre sur l'organisation des partis nationaux dans seulement trois des dix-sept communautés autonomes espagnoles (Catalogne, Pays basque et Galice) et sur l'organisation des partis britanniques en Ecosse et au Pays de Galles.

Ces cas permettent de tester qualitativement un nombre d'hypothèses tirées d'un cadre théorique néo-institutionnel large qui inclut un ample éventail de facteurs à même d'influencer la façon dont les partis s'organisent dans un cadre multi-niveaux: facteurs institutionnels d'abord (type de structure de l'Etat, niveau de compétence des institutions régionales), facteurs sociaux ensuite (clivages sociaux, régionalisme et identification régionale des électeurs), puis facteurs relatifs à la compétition électorale au niveau national et au niveau régional, et enfin facteurs propres aux partis, tels la façon dont ils se sont formés, leur type et leur idéologie.

L'étude empirique montre une variété de formes organisationnelles. Les partis d'un même pays ne sont pas forcément organisés de la même façon, de même que les branches régionales d'une même région n'ont pas toutes le même niveau de compétence. De manière générale, il semble que le cadre institutionnel n'importe que dans la limite où il crée une structure d'opportunité dans laquelle des structures régionales peuvent se développer au sein des partis nationaux. Le type et le niveau de compétence des régions ne sont pas reflétés dans le degré d'autonomie des branches régionales ni dans leur intégration dans le parti central. En revanche, les facteurs propres aux partis, que ce soit leur idéologie, la façon dont ils ont été créés ou le statut de parti de gouvernement ou d'opposition de chaque niveau s'avèrent être particulièrement importants. Le rôle des chefs de parti nationaux et régionaux est ainsi crucial, et une position de pouvoir exécutif est une ressource importante dans les relations de pouvoir entre les niveaux. Cette thèse montre ainsi l'importance des facteurs propres aux partis et le rôle déterminant des acteurs dans les processus de changement organisationnel.

## SAMENVATTING

Aangezien een talrijke groep van landen vandaag de dag één of andere vorm van decentralisatie heeft aangenomen, zijn vragen rond federalisme, meerlagig beleid en regionalisme belangrijke onderzoeksobjecten geworden. Deze doctoraatsthesis past het meerlagig perspectief toe op de studie van politieke partijen en onderzoekt hoe nationale partijen – dit zijn partijen die kandidaten voor nationale en regionale verkiezingen presenteren over het gehele territorium - de interne relaties organiseren tussen het nationale niveau en de regionale partijafdelingen. De nationale partijen worden geconfronteerd met een specifiek dilemma in gedecentraliseerde systemen: aan de ene kant dienen ze zich tijdens nationale verkiezingen met een coherente boodschap voor het hele nationale territorium als één front te presenteren en aan de andere kant moeten ze zich tijdens regionale verkiezingen richten op een regionaal electoraat met haar eigen specifieke belangen. Het bestaan van verschillende beleids- en verkiezingsniveaus stelt de nationale partijen dus voor een probleem van verticale coördinatie.

Deze doctoraatsthesis probeert deze vraag te beantwoorden via de voorbeelden van 3 Britse partijen (de Socialistische partij, de Conservatieve partij en de Liberaal-democratische partij) en 2 Spaanse partijen (de Conservatieve partij en de Socialistische partij). De koppeling tussen het nationale en regionale niveau bestaat uit twee dimensies: de integratie van de regionale partijafdelingen in de centrale beslissingsorganen en de autonomie van de regionale partijafdelingen in de regionale beslissingsniveaus. Deze studie concentreert zich op de organisatie van nationale partijen in slechts 3 van de 17 autonome gemeenschappen in Spanje (Catalonië, Baskenland en Galicië) en op de organisatie van de Britse partijen in Schotland en Wales.

Deze studie staat toe om kwalitatief een aantal hypotheses te testen die geformuleerd worden in een ruim theoretische neoninstitutioneel kader en die een brede waaier aan variabelen bevat die de manier beïnvloeden waarop de partijen zich organiseren in een meerlagig kader: ten eerste institutionele variabelen (type van staatsstructuur, niveau van regionale bevoegdheden), ten tweede sociale factoren (sociale breuklijnen, regionalisme en regionale identificatie van het kiezerspubliek), vervolgens variabelen die verbonden zijn met de electorale competitie op het nationale en regionale niveau en tenslotte factoren die de eigenheid van de partijen illustreren, zoals de manier waarop ze gevormd werden, het partytype en hun ideologie.

De empirische studie toont een verscheidenheid aan organisatievormen. Partijen in eenzelfde land zijn niet noodzakelijkerwijze op dezelfde manier georganiseerd, net zoals regionale afdelingen in eenzelfde regio niet altijd hetzelfde bevoegdheidsniveau hebben. Over het algemeen lijkt het institutionele kader enkel een rol te spelen in de mate dat het de kansen creëert waarbinnen de regionale structuren zich kunnen ontwikkelen te midden van de nationale partijen. Het type van staatsstructuur en het regionale bevoegdheidsniveau worden niet weerspiegeld in de mate van autonomie van de regionale partijafdelingen en ook niet in hun integratie in de centrale partijorganen. De factoren die de eigenheid van de partij bevestigen aan de andere kant, zoals hun ideologie, de manier waarop ze gevormd werden en hun plaats binnen het huidige politieke landschap, op ieder beleidsniveau, als zijnde regeringspartij of in de oppositie blijken bijzonder belangrijk te zijn. Zo blijkt de rol van de nationale en regionale partijleiders cruciaal, en blijkt een regeringspositie een belangrijk hulpmiddel te zijn in de machtsverhoudingen tussen de verschillende beleidsniveaus. De doctoraatsthesis toont op deze manier het belang aan van de factoren die de eigenheid

van de partij beklemtonen en de bepalende rol van de spelers in het proces van organisationele verandering.