DEVOLUTION AND THE REBORDERING OF THE UK STATE: REIMAGINING THE ANGLO-SCOTTISH BORDER

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Abstract: In an increasingly globalised world, borders have become the focus of renewed attention. Much of this debate has centred on the influence of globalization on debordering. Yet, globalization is being accompanied by the rescaling of political institutions, the effect of which is also leading to rebordering. This paper explores the implications of political rebordering arising from the rescaling of the UK state. Specifically, through the example of devolution in the post-1997 UK state, the paper discusses the implications arising from the reinscription of the border dividing England and Scotland. As an example of a process of regionalization that has been emergent elsewhere in Europe, the process of devolution is raising the salience of the border in everyday life. Borders, it is argued, have everyday meaning in two main ways – materially, and in popular imagination as delineating difference. Through specific examples it shown that in both senses, materially and in popular imagination, the border (between England and Scotland) is linked to a sense of increasing national difference and the decentring of the UK (British) state and its national identity.

Keywords: rebordering, Anglo-Scottish border, globalization

1. INTRODUCTION

In an advertisement published in a London paper a picture of two elderly women, the one Scottish the other presumably English, was complemented by the caption 'Which side of the border would you rather be on?' If both women are of similar age and are enjoying a cup of tea, it is the differences between them that are the more stark. For the Scot life-chances have evidently been enhanced through the implementation of free care for the elderly, contrasting with the despondency of her English counterpart. If some of the other differences – the caring presence of a nurse, the plate of cakes, the knitting –have been included for exaggeration, their effect is to underline the contrasts in quality of life resulting from personal care provision. For the Scottish elderly quality of life is evidently better; the question as to which side of the border it would be better to live on is rhetorical.

The advertisement was placed in UK national newspapers to coincide with the implementation of enhanced care provision for the elderly in Scotland. From July 2002 free personal care provision has been extended to all those aged over 65 and over[1], a reform approved by the Scottish Parliament in spite of considerable opposition to its introduction by the UK (Labour) Government

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[1] In fact the provisions fall short of providing universal and comprehensive free personal care for the elderly. But they do address the entitlements sought for in the Royal Commission on Long Term Care set up by the UK Labour Government in 1997 and which reported in 1999 (Royal Commission on Long Term Care, 1999)

(Woods, 2002). As a devolved matter health care is a 'sovereign' concern of the Scottish Parliament. Yet in England the cost of providing free personal care for the elderly was considered a sufficient enough obstacle to its implementation. Tellingly, though, the advertisement had been placed by Unison, the major public service union whose territorial remit covers both England and Scotland.

In an immediate sense the advertisement declares that geography matters; as such it provides only further demonstration of what a considerable amount of research by political and other geographers, as well as by some political scientists has shown, namely that how public services are delivered varies spatially. Such differences in turn, raise issues of spatial equity and social justice that contribute to the play of territorial politics. But more poignantly the advertisement highlights the difference a border makes, whether one (as an elderly woman) is inside or outside, and the bearing this has on everyday practices. It is in this blatant appeal to border imaginations that the pictures are designed to have their more direct impact, particularly (it might be assumed) for the English reader/citizen.

A similar story could be told of a growing number of issues affecting everyday life and the differences the implementation of regional/national autonomy is making in the UK; how, to put it alternatively, the border matters. Yet, care should be taken not to exaggerate the policy differences that have become apparent following the few years since devolution. Indeed, the extension of personal care entitlements to the elderly in Scotland is cited as one of the relatively modest number of policy differences introduced by the Scottish Parliament[2]. Furthermore, prior to the creation of Scottish autonomy (in 1999) it needs to be said that administrative practices in Scotland were in many ways distinct from England and elsewhere in the UK state. It was not just that Scotland had a separate administrative apparatus (Kellas, 1995), but that within a diverse range of areas such as education, local government, physical planning, licensing laws and a host of other issues affecting everyday lives there were often nuanced, sometimes more substantive, differences from England. For the UK Parliament there was a rationale for/to the separateness of Scotland, as there was within popular imagination in England that Scotland different, even if this was at times articulated through stereotypes. Regional devolution, the reinstallation of an elected Scottish Parliament, rendered political legitimacy to the administrative apparatus of decentralisation (the Scottish Office) whose remit encroached on so many aspects of daily life but which lacked direct electoral accountability to the population it served. The rationale for its implementation was popularly supported in almost equal measure in England as devolution was to be in the referendum in 1997.

In spite of these differences the (only to be anticipated) consequence of regional autonomy is to magnify the sense of difference – of them and us – whose demarcation is represented by the border. As a physical entity the border has been unchanged by devolution; as an imagined geography it is being (re)created. Perhaps the Anglo-Scottish border was never as one of the more prolific political geographers of an earlier generation (Pounds, 1964) described it, a relic, a feature traceable in the landscape but of purely historical significance. Certainly it has continued to have symbolic as well as often juridico-administrative

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[2] There has been considerable debate on the extent to which there has been policy divergence. See, for example, Keating (2002a and b), Mooney and Poole (forthcoming) and Parry (2002)

significance following Union; what this paper aims to demonstrate is that following devolution the meaning of the border has become politicised and is being given renewed significance for the citizen on both sides of it. In those cases in which the difference devolution makes impinges on the mundane –probably no more the case than where it affects differences in welfare provision – the reconfiguration of territorial politics accentuates the border in popular imagination, and of the differences either side of it.

Several types of border study have developed and are emergent (Donnan and Wilson, 1999)[3]. Put simply these centre on the border as a physical and an imagined entity. Recent work on the border as part of the imagined cartography of the state and supranational organisations and globalisation discourse complement more established lines of enquiry in which the physicality of the border has been prime, through (for example) the study of border landscapes (Rumley, D and Minghi, J.V., 1991). In fact political borders always have both a physical and an imagined presence, but it is particularly for those living in border regions, and for those crossing the boundary, that both meanings have particular significance. For those in which the daily routine is lived at a distance from the boundary – typically the majority in the case of national boundaries – its significance is more imagined. Yet this is not diminish the significance of the border as both territorial container and divider and the implications it has for daily life.

In this paper I deconstruct the meanings of the advertisement, drawing connections between how the re-bordering of the British state is challenging inherited notions of its territorial oneness, both in material and symbolic practice. Clearly, how the elderly are cared for has become an integral part of the welfare state, or in the more elevated language of Unison 'the way elderly people are treated is a measure of a civilised society' (Unison Press Release, November 6, 2001). Certainly, the political (as well as economic) significance of caring for the elderly has become more salient in recent British politics, not just because of the ageing of the population but also because of the ability of the elderly in mobilising themselves as a pressure group. These re-bordering effects need to be attentive to the complexities of an old (but invented) state-nation such as Britain, its multinational composition and the complex and intertwined processes of state restructuring, state resealing and national identities. I begin by looking at the changing meaning of national boundaries under the twin processes of globalisation and localisation, matched respectively by the de-bordering and re-bordering of the nation states. The intention here is to draw wider connections between the story of re-bordering represented by the picture, and the processes of de-bordering linked to the overarching processes of globalisation and the territorial resealing of governance. While, then, substate re-bordering is the primary focus of attention here it needs to be seen as the flip-side to the processes of globalisation and de-bordering. Both relate to the changing spatialities of the (old) nation states - part of what Jessop (1995) has termed 'the hollowing out of the state'- and to challenges to the inherited meanings of national citizenship. In the following sections I return more directly

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[3] The 'rediscovery' of the field by political geographers is exemplified by conferences devoted to the subject, benchmark papers such as Newman and Paasi (1998) and the establishment of borders research centres in universities in Nijmegen, Copenhagen and Belfast. Other social sciences have similarly renewed their interest in boundaries, including anthropologists (Donnan and Wilson, 1999), as well as some political scientists (including Anderson (1996)

to deconstructing the picture against the context of this resealing and its implications on and for national identities in the restructured British state.

2. **DE-BORDERING/RE-BORDERING**

The changing functionality and meanings of national boundaries is an outcome of the wider processes of state restructuring linked to the emergence of the dominant neo-liberal paradigm and its handmaiden, globalisation. Critically these processes are reconfiguring the territorial basis of the state and the resealing of the spaces of governance. Regulation theorists have sought to highlight how the breakdown of what Jessop (1999) has termed North Atlantic Fordism (or the Keynesian Welfare National State) and the shift towards neo-liberalism has recast the relationships between the triumvurate of state, society and market. Wheareas, then, under North Atlantic Fordism the state had acted as a critical space in which the economy and society could be managed, deepening crises in its ability to sustain the mode of regulation brought into question its own centrality. The resolution of the crises, the spread of the neo-liberal discourse of 'less state and more market' has had multiple consequences for state sovereignty. For our purposes two particular consequences need outlining, the impacts on state boundaries and on the restructuring of the welfare state.

As part of the wider discourse of globalisation the notion of an increasingly borderless (or de-bordered) world has gained a foothold in popular imagination as well as among social scientists. Borderlessness has multiple impacts; from multinational capital underwriting processes of homogenisation (the production of 'non-places' of globalised sites of consumption (Auge, 1995) to the dynamic of capital investing and disinvesting in space to the flows of international migrants, processes evocatively captured in Castell's (1996) term 'global space of flows'. In its original formulation by the Japanese management guru Kenichi Ohmae (1991) the borderless world was couched in economic terms, particularly of how multinationals would need to reorient company strategy to be competitive. Thus though state boundaries defined the world political map, states had become redundant, 'the major obstacle for (its) people to have the best and cheapest from anywhere in the world (Ohmae, 1990, p.11). In what is an unashamedly neo-liberal treatment a borderless world was beneficial for both capital and consumers.

While Ohmae's account clearly exaggerates recent trends as part of the overarching processes of globalisation it has become conflated with the wider debates relating to the decline of the state and the end of territorial sovereignty (Camilieri and Falk, 1992); Held et al, 1999). For Ohmae a borderless world has normative connotations; state boundaries are anachronistic to multinational capital, their dissolution a target particularly where they are linked to barriers limiting free trade. For political hyperglobalists the dissolution of boundaries reflects what is; the reality of ecological/environmental crises, of transnational crime, of global terrorism demonstrates the reality of the borderless world as it does the myth of the state being able to claim territorial sovereignty.

While its dismissal as 'fantasy' (Anderson, 2002) may be to ignore contemporary changes, we need to be cautious before accepting the notion of a borderless world as the new reality. Its binary logic underscores the multiple, often subtle, ways in which boundaries are reconfiguring the political world. It assumes that in the periodisation of capitalism a borderless world is logical to

the needs of late capitalism. Thus the heyday of the nation state in the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning decades of the twentieth century and of territorial sovereignty was matched to the needs of emergent industrial capitalism, whereas as sceptics of globalisation have suggested such linearity is by no means apparent. The world was at least globalised towards the end of the phase of industrial capitalism as it in the present day (Hirst and Thompson, 1995). Further, it conflates the economic with the political while paying little more than lip-service to the role of cultural markers as signifiers of territorial differentiation and of their possible brake on processes of homogenisation. Finally, if state boundaries are becoming more porous, in different ways 'new' boundaries at substate and suprastate level are appearing one (substate) example of which we are concerned with here. Nor, of course, are these boundaries, both positively and more negatively, unrelated to the economic globalisation Ohmae's analysis is concerned to champion.

These are complex debates, more grey than the black and white of binary logic, the nuances of which have become apparent as the discourse of globalisation has come under critical scrutiny. Yet the sense that the world, if not boundaryless, has become at least to a degree de-bordered has become part of the popular imagination of the contemporary order. Certainly, popular representations, expressed through the media, of transnational processes undermining the territorial sovereignty of states provide powerful images of de-bordering.

De-bordering challenges not only the state territorial sovereignty but also the inherited links that were explicit in the advanced economies between the welfare state and national citizenship. If it is the case, as it is argued here, that the re-bordering of the UK state has brought into focus the decentring of (old) national identities, de-bordering has had similar effects. Under North Atlantic Fordism the welfare state was defined in relatively closed terms in which entitlements were restricted to those who had national citizenship. A globalising economy challenged the notion of national citizenship, no more so than where it encouraged the movement of labour across territorial boundaries. Immigration has decentred inherited understandings of national identities – the meaning of Britishness, for example – fostering more inclusive interpretations. It has not been an uncontested process as the recent debates over the controlling of asylum seeking immigrants readily demonstrates, a trend which both emphasises both the porosity of national boundaries and the contradictions which arise from attempts to restrict welfare rights to those who have national citizenship.

The de-bordering of the state is being accompanied by the re-bordering of the political map. Within Europe the trend is apparent at two main scales, through the definition and redefinition of its external boundaries and internally at substate level, in particular through the fostering of the region. Official encouragement by the EU of the regional (substate) dimension has been accompanied by a plethora of institutions representing the regions, ad hoc through to centrally positioned overarching institutions such as the Council of Regions. Some programmes have fostered the political visibility of specific types of regions (border, special economic regions) and more local units, including cities. Arguing from the experience of Europe Brenner (1999) expresses the trend in terms of the 'resealing of governance' in which powers of the member states have been shifted upwards to suprastate agencies and 'downwards' to substate

spaces. Critically, for our purposes here, the re-territorialisation of substate political spaces is defined spatially by re-bordering.

It is the regional scale that has been identified by the European Commission (2001) as the most flexible territorial unit likely to embrace the ideals of integration. In its recent White Paper on European governance the region was singled out as the appropriate scale to meet economic innovation, administrative efficiency and local empowerment. Further, regions offer the potential for cross-cutting member state boundaries and EU policy areas both fundamental to the achievement of the wider aim of integration. The ambitions of the White Paper and the language through which it (including how the 'advantages' of using regions) is expressed clearly for calls for critical assessment, but the point to emphasise here are the links between regionalisation and re-bordering. Support for the region by the EU is not new and spending on ERDF programmes is second only to that of the CAP. Equally, the Commission has fostered a network of Euroregions and transnational spaces as building blocks of a connected Europe (European Commission, 1999). Nor has the trend towards regionalisation been fostered solely by the EU. Whether for reasons of meeting the political demands of territorial minorities (Keating, 1996) or more for reasons of 'neo-liberal decentralisation' most member states have sought to regionalise their national space.

Within Europe the UK was a reluctant regionaliser; until the late 1990s it was alone among the larger member states not to give political recognition to the region (and even then it was to have only restricted territorial coverage). The replacement of Conservative rule, with its commitment to 'the Union', by 'new Labour committed to a programme of constitutional reform was to herald the implementation of regional autonomy initially to the peripheral nations. While the commitment was to be met early in the first Labour administration as far as the peripheral nations were concerned, in England the process has been more halting. Only in early 2002 was a White Paper submitted setting out proposals for the English regionalisation, the political demands for which are uneven. It is in those areas where the border effects of devolution are more pronounced and in which problems of economic restructuring are acute – the perceived advantages autonomy gives Scotland for economic regeneration – that elite demands for a similar decentralisation package have been the most vocal. Re-bordering the UK state through the granting of regional autonomy to the peripheral nations has rekindled the question of English regional identities. But English regionalism does not raise issues of national identity[4], and in any case its implementation is likely to give much more circumscribed political powers than devolution implemented particularly in Scotland.

3. RE-BORDERING IN A MULTI-NATIONAL DEMOCRACY

The domino effects of a re-bordered UK state are part of a wider process of the re¬emergence of territorial politics. It is both contributory to and an outcome of the new politics of place in which a dominant neo-liberal agenda has sought to foster local economic growth through the advocacy of interplace competition. One of the hallmarks of globalisation has been its uneven impacts across space,

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[4] With the possible exception of Cornwall in which separate national identity is claimed by a minority movement, though the continued inclusion of the area within the South West Region is likely to submerge nationalist demands

emphasising the need to tailor restructuring policies to meet local conditions. Locally, then, it is argued that regions (and cities) require institutions that have the capacity to foster economic and social regeneration, processes that foster fragmentation as well as competition. Regional decentralisation constructed on the basis of variable geometry, however much it is responsive to the different needs of individual regions, can exacerbate inter-regional tensions, problematising how the state can meet sub-state demands while maintaining overall stability. In Europe such questions are not confined to the UK; Spain, France, Belgium, and Italy all demonstrate the instabilities created by the processes of sub-state regionalisation and re-bordering which are aimed at accommodating the multiple and often contradictory demands of uneven development. Yet, what is clear from the diversity of experience in Europe is that the tensions are contingent on the historical, institutional and cultural specificities of the state in which regional autonomy is being implemented.

In the UK, as elsewhere in Europe, sub-state regionalisation has become a marker for federalisation. Its progress is most advanced in Spain and Belgium. In the UK there are more deeply embedded traditions of centralisation and unity, though in it too federal impulses underlie recent state restructuring. As Burgess (1995) has shown federal ideas have a long tradition in Britain though historically it was offered as a solution more 'to the Irish question than it was to the other peripheral nations of the state. For its advocates (as in the recent round of political restructuring) granting autonomy to Scotland and Wales was a federalising step necessary to maintain the territorial integrity of the larger nation, while for its opponents it marked the first step towards possible secession. The dichotomisation is crude, skating over the nuances of negotiation and compromise which characterise the calculus of secession in liberal democratic states (Barkus, 1999).

The particularities of the UK state and the manner in which regional autonomy has been created question whether in a formal (legal) sense federalism is an appropriate term to use. Sovereignty remains at the centre (the UK state) while the failure to date to extend regional devolution to England means that the separation of national-regional domains `normal' to federal states is absent. But formal definitions of the territorial division of powers fail to capture the interplay of territorial politics either between elites or as it is popularly perceived. If a centre-periphery division and mentality reflects reality for elites at the centre this is hardly so at the periphery where re-bordering has fostered the defence of territory as a constituent of identity politics amongst elites as well as popularly. The language of federalism fails to capture the nature of inter-regional and state-regional relations and tensions.

Recent work on what Gagnon and Tully (2001) describe as the multinational democracy offer an alternative interpretation of how to understand the interplay of territorial politics in complex multinational states. Limiting their analysis to Canada, Belgium, Spain and the UK (each ethno-territorially divided societies) Tully (2001) argues that each represents 'a new and distinctive type of political association that is coming into prominence at the dawn of the twenty-first century – multinational democracy' (p.1). The pathway to a multinational democracy is long (and presumably rocky); it is manifestly more than a federal state. It has several defining features. First, it is an association containing two or more national groups rather than a single nation that accommodates minority national rights. Each nation enjoys equal status; just as the majority nation

expect international recognition, so too in a multinational democracy members of a `minority' nation would aspire to aspire to recognition `to some degree' on international law. But such democracies are not confederations of independent nation-states; 'its citizens and their (elected) representatives participate in the political institutions of their self-governing nations, and the larger self-governing multination' (p.3, emphasis added). Critically, its legitimacy as a multinational democracy is (and should be) accepted by majority and minority national members. One outcome of this adherence is that such a democracy is multicultural, respectful of the rights underpinning cultural diversity and difference, a goal that involves struggle as well as negotiation. In brief, then, multinational democracies are complex, overlapping forms of democratic association, open to negotiation and compromise between (territorial) groups but respectful of the rights of each as equal partners both within the domestic as well, within agreed limits, on the international stage.

CARE FREE   CARE FEE

From today in Scotland, the elderly will receive free personal care (help with bathing, dressing, going to the toilet and feeding). The elderly in the rest of the UK? They still have to pay.

WHICH SIDE OF THE BORDER WOULD YOU RATHER BE ON?

UNISON
the public service union

www.unison.org.uk

While the multinational democracy might be considered as an 'ideal-type' of flexible, democratic political association Gagnon and Tully (and their co-authors) are at pains to show how the construct is of relevance to (territorially) culturally diverse polities and the theoretical and political problems arising from its creation. Key to its achievement is the acceptance of the constitutional democracy of the association, and of the status equality of the national groups.

Evidently the politics of such an association, however much a form of politico-territorial compromise, will entail tensions and contradictions which are a threat to its overall stability. It is at this point that it is possible to return to the advertisement. Re-bordering (of the UK state) exposes the tensions to which a territorially segmented political association will encounter. Having acceded autonomy the spatially unequal benefits to which decentralisation gives rise become the source of conflict. In a relatively centralised state in which one of the defining characteristics of the welfare state was that its delivery should at least in intent be ageographical, the reform, however legitimate, was a denial of an entitlement of UK (national) citizenship.

4. DEVOLUTION, STATE 'DISBUILDING' AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE MULTINATIONAL STATE

The picture tells a more profound story than the denial of what are deemed to be the entitlements of citizenship. Underpinning the production of the image is the assumption told by its author, Unison, that the welfare state — and specifically its entitlements —should be available to all (the elderly in Britain), and not just to be enjoyed by those living in a part of it. This in turn raises fundamental questions about the nature of the welfare state in Britain and its territoriality, its links with the nation state and national identity. I want to suggest that in turn the contradictions posed by the re-bordering of the state are part of a wider set of processes in which political institutions and processes are being resealed.

Theoretical accounts of nationalism point suggest that national identity provides the essential building block for the project of state welfarism (Miller, 1995). With its redistributive purpose the shared sense of solidarity a national identity provides provides the necessary support. The lack of such social solidarity implies that citizenship would be based more on rational self-interest in which the benefits of membership of political association would be measured more proportionally to the contributions made by the individual (through, for example, the system of taxation) rather than on a redistributive principle. It is an argument that can be reversed as McEwen (2002) has shown recently in suggesting that particularly in post-war Britain the welfare state was used purposively as nation-building project.

In fact the arguments are not mutually exclusive. Nation states in which a national identity is already established provide a (not unproblematic) basis for redistributive welfare policies. Equally, both as discursive and material practice, a redistributive welfare system can be invoked as a nation-building exercise. Both provide plausible explanations for the moment in the immediate aftermath of 1945 when the reach of the welfare state was to be greatly extended. The commitment to social welfarism of the post-war Labour Government was accompanied by a strong appeal to national solidarity founded on the need for, and expectation of, social reconstruction and redistribution. But equally, extending the principles of Beveridge could become a nation-building project in a

Britain whose status as both imperial and global power had been diminished, a means of cementing national cohesion at a time when Britain's global role was diminishing. In ways very different from some several decades later, state welfarism mediated through the nation state connected the domestic sphere with the international.

What the welfare state came to represent was a project which bound the state, welfare and the people into a shared set of understandings. Those people able to enjoy the entitlements of the welfare state were members of the nation. Constructed on the basis of a defined nation, and contributory in turn to its cementation, the welfare state became a means of forging the 'national popular' of nation and people (Gramsci, 1971). As constructions, terms such as 'nation' and 'people' become contested, arising in particular from Britain's post-war immigration experience which challenged inherited ideas of what constituted Britishness.

While the picture too raises the connections between British national identity and the welfare state, the origins of the conflict lie in two particular attributes of British state welfarism as it was to develop in the post-war period, its emphases on rights and its universality. Roche (1992) and others have accentuated how in Britain the Fordist welfare state regime emphasised rights-claiming, particularly through the greater accessibility to key services. Improved accessibility of health care, the expansion in the provision of social housing and of education alongside a system of social security –though only a partial definition of what constituted post-war Fordism - became essential components of the social wage. Yet, to the degree that the welfare state emphasised the rights of those in need, and against a long term trend of rising expectations, the crisis of Fordism and the breakdown of the post-war consensus was to rapidly demonstrate the conflictual nature of reform.

The universality of the post-war welfare state contained a (largely taken for granted) spatiality; it was in a sense ageographical, the principles, and practices, of which should apply regardless of location within the UK state. As McEwen (2002) points out, the connections with national identity were explicit – the Ministry of National Insurance, the National Health Service, where national referred to Britain. This is not to deny that in practice the implementation of the national welfare state did not involve spatial differences. Some parts of the project – the social security system, for example – could be effectively nationalised. Other parts, by their 'incremental nature', involved service provision that was frequently uneven, all the more so because the delivery of welfare state had been decentralised to systems of local government which retained (to a degree) discretionary powers. Yet, as much as these inequities became politicised their impact was often confined to the local arena. This is not to deny that larger questions of inter¬regional differences in public spending have not become the source of public debate. Indeed, devolution has rekindled the debate over the Barnett Formula, and the extent to which particular regions, including Scotland, are favoured by the system of allocation. Yet the extent to which the territorial politics of public spending allocations has entered into the popular imagination is more questionable. Lacking the specificity over the perceived advantages territorially discrete groups may enjoy following the reform of a particular welfare state programme, the Barnett Formula remains a somewhat too 'blunt' issue to have captured the popular imagination.

The restructuring of the welfare state was to change the set of understandings linking state, welfare and the people that had formed the basis

of the post-1945 settlement. Though initiated earlier in the 1970s it was under Thatcherism that the rewriting of the contract between state and society was to become explicit. As Hall (1983) was to argue Thatcherism was to redefine the British identity alluding explicitly to the social disbenefits of the 'nanny welfare state' and appealing to the virtues of self-reliance and personal responsibility.

Such arguments have been well rehearsed, though less so the implications for the substate nations of the new twist Thatcherism gave to British national identity. Reform of welfare services – initially through privatisation in flagship measures such as the Right to Buy – were to emphasise principles that were not to gather the level of support in Scotland that they did in England. Thus, opt-out rights for schools under the 1988 Education Act were barely taken up in Scotland compared to the situation in England; similarly Right to Buy sales were at a consistently lower level in Scotland than was the case in England. These differences were interpreted as reflecting - in spite of the essentialism of the argument -that there exist fundamental differences in national attitude and preferences for collectivist policy between Scotland and England. In fact the survey evidence for such differences is not unequivocal. As far as the experience of the 1980s and 1990s is concerned such differences could be interpreted in partisan terms and through the perceived denial of Scottish difference under Thatcherism as much as any greater national preference for collective provision in Scotland. The New Right project sought not just to reform the nature of the welfare state but to do so through rescripting the text of Britishness in ways which undermined the universality of state welfarism.

Results from the Scottish and British Election Surveys taken variously at the beginning and the end of the eighteen years of Conservative rule and since the devolution referendum demonstrate the shifts of national and class identities (Tables 1 and 2). The first measure demonstrates the shifts in the identity respondents felt most closely as describing their national identity. In both Scotland and England there was a decline in the feeling of Britishness, particularly so amongst the Scots in which their primary claim to British identity is at a markedly lower level than is the case in England. Paralleling such trends has been the rise in Scottish, and English, identities, more pronounced in Scotland and continuing to rise following devolution. These shifts towards Scottishness are reinforced through the rise in cross-class affinities between Scots and the decline in cross-border solidarities (Table 2). Both sets of data suggest that devolution has weakened the feeling of membership of the UK. Though less consistent during the 1990s the evidence suggests too that in England there has been a decline in feeling British.

Table 1. Forced-Choice National Identity, Scotland and England 1979-2000 (%)

	1979	**1992**	**1997**	**1999**	**2000**
England					
English		31	34	44	41
British		63	59	44	47
(Base)		*2442*	*3150*	*2718*	*2887*
Scotland					
Scottish	57	72	72	77	80
British	39	25	20	17	13
(Base)	*661*	*957*	*882*	*1482*	*1663*

Sources: Scottish/British Election Surveys, cited in Curtice and Seyd (2001).

Table 2. National/Class Solidarities by Class Identity, Scotland 1979 and 1997 (%)

1979	Middle Class	Working Class	No class identity
England, same class	35	43	25
Scotland, opposite class	34	22	30
No preference stated/depends	28	24	24
N	72	168	296
1997			
England, same class	30	29	20
Scotland, opposite class	53	47	51
No preference stated/depends	8	12	17
N	95	280	305

Source: Scottish Election Surveys, 1979 and 1997, cited in McEwen (2002)

These shifts assist in interpreting the picture, the impacts of re-bordering. The Royal Commission, together with pressure groups representing the elderly, had proposed the case for care provision to be extended throughout the UK, a proposal that as far as the Treasury was concerned would be too costly. The passage of enabling legislation through the Scottish Parliament – a reform whose implementation, it needs to be said, was by no means straightforward being opposed by the Labour led Executive in the first instance -challenged the (geographical) universalism of the welfare state in a way that those excluded by the reform could hardly ignore. There have been other policy differences resulting from devolution which have decentred the meaning of the national welfare state. Yet, arguably, it is this reform through its involvement in such a sensitive policy area, and one likely to have implications for all, or most, citizens, in the future if not in the present, that was the more likely to highlight the contradictions resulting from re-bordering. The principle of universalism affects those on both sides of the border, and there has been concerted lobbying by interest groups and trade unions, notably Unison, to ensure that the territorial injustices created by the Scottish reform is matched south of the border. Yet, by definition, devolution has put in tow a process of nation state disbuilding of substate nation building, in turn reterritorialisng the politics of the multinational state.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Re-bordering has had several predictable (and less predictable) effects. First, it has contributed to the reterritorialisation of politics, raising the salience of the border and, as with all borders, its ability to denote difference. A word of caution is necessary here. Clearly, the temptation to generalise from the story behind a single policy change carries its own caveats. As Mooney and Poole argue, looking at the social policy field at large, the evidence for the emergence of a distinctively Scottish welfare state is hardly evident from the experience of devolution to date. Several explanations are possible, not least of which is the dominance of New Labour in Scotland and a continued commitment to the more old Labour ideals enshrined in the post-1945 welfare settlement. Where a commitment to the ideals of the post-1945 welfare state persist on both sides of the border, as Keating (2002) has argued, this is likely to be a brake on social policy divergence. Yet, even if it remains to date exceptional, it was precisely because of the radical nature of the Scottish legislation, and the fact that its introduction affected only a part of the UK, that the border was able to assume a political meaning largely denied prior to devolution.

Two further factors define re-bordering in the contemporary UK. Devolution was premised on its necessity to ensure the stability of the larger multination state. It was the means of placating minority nationalist demands. But granting devolution was not conceded so much on the grounds that the separate nations comprising the UK were equal, arguments closer to the definition of the multinational democracy offered by Gagnon and Tully. Rather, devolution was seen more as a form of politico-territorial compromise. But national identities are deeply embedded, the reinvention of which is sustained by legitimising discursive and material practices linking the state and citizen.

The rescaling of systems of government and governance – what Jessop has termed the `hollowing out of the state' – with an increasing emphasis on the 'downwards' and `upwards' shifts of power and institutional restructuring, challenges the privileged position of the nation state. As the argument here has sought to show resealing will challenge 'old' constructions of national identity. Yet, this is not to deny the continued importance of the national state. Notions of de-bordering continue to be played against a backdrop of states as powerful 'territorial containers'; similarly where in multinational states re-bordering recasts intra-state and inter-nation relations, the national state (as in the UK devolution settlement) may function as the dominant partner.

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