

## Devolution and Multi-level Governance

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**Before the lecture ensure that you have read and précised Chapter 10 of 'Essentials of UK Politics'. Notes will be checked.**

## States

- When we study politics we usually talk about **states**.
- States are political areas which possess sovereignty inside defined boarders.
- The usual definition refers to '**nation states**'.
- Question: why should a coastline or man-made border define who we are?

## Returning to sovereignty....

- The doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty means that Britain is a unitary state. This is different from a federal state.
- However, since Labour introduced devolution we are now witnessing the creation of multi-tiered government in the UK.

## Discussion

- What is the difference between a federal state and a multi-level state?
- Recreate the diagram of the UK's multilevel governance on page 293 of the text book, include examples at each level. (Use two examples for local government.)

## Local government

- Break into two pressure groups, and using pages 294-297, create arguments both for and against the following question...

**'True democracy rests in giving power to local government.'**

## Devolution

- The official title of the British state is the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.'
- Great Britain has 3 nations.
- Every nation, other than England has a devolved institution.



## Nationalism

- Each of the Celtic nations have nationalistic political parties. Can you name them?

These parties have been pushing for further autonomy of their own nation. In 1979 the Labour government gave the Welsh and Scottish a referendum on devolution.

## 1979 referendums

- Wales- NO! because only 20% voted in favour of a devolved assembly.
- Scotland- no, 51.6% of those who voted were in favour of devolution however, needed a 40% yes from the entire electorate (only got 32.8%).

## 1997 referendums

- In 1997 the Labour party included a commitment to hold referendums on devolution in Scotland and Wales.

**Scotland:** (double yes vote) 74.3% in favour with a 60% turnout

**Wales:** (yes) 50.3% in favour and 50.1% turnout.

## Asymmetrical devolution

- The **Scottish Parliament** has Primary (and limited tax) raising powers
- The **Welsh Assembly** has only secondary power.
- The **NI Assembly** has some primary power but no control over tax.
- What is the difference between primary and secondary powers?

## Funding and responsibilities

- Funding is given to the devolved assemblies in the form of a 'block'. They can then spend that money as they please.

Their responsibilities include:

- › Agriculture, fisheries and food
- › Culture, media and sport
- › Economic development

## Responsibilities continued

- › Education
- › Environment
- › Health
- › Local government and housing
- › Social services
- › Transport

### Controversial Issues

- Has the UK now entered a phase of Quasi-federalism?
- Does asymmetrical devolution fuel calls for further political autonomy.
- Does devolution create more access points for pressure groups? Is this fair?
- West Lothian/ English Question

### The West Lothian Question

- Read 'Focus on.....' box on page 304 of 'Essentials'.

What is the West Lothian Question? Is it fair that Scottish students don't have to pay for university?

What is the 'Barnett Formula' and what role does it play?

### The English Question

- With 84% of the UK's population why don't the English have their own devolved institution?
- What are the RDA's and does England want its own assembly? (see page 306 of 'Essentials')
- The **Con-Dem**-Nation have removed funding for the RDA in the south of England