



**LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
IN ENGLAND**
CENTRALISATION,
AUTONOMY
AND CONTROL

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Local Government in England

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Centralisation, Autonomy and Control

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PREFACE

It is commonplace for academics from England attending conferences with overseas colleagues to make strenuous claims that local government in our country exists in the most centralised system and experiences the greatest level of central control. We are used to winning these arguments hands down. One of the authors, however, recently attended a conference where colleagues from Portugal and Poland both developed a spirited—but ultimately futile—case that it was local government in their respective countries that experienced the greatest centralisation and central control. After a convincing England victory in that argument but leaving the encounter muttering under the breath ‘how dare they’, the decision was made to write this book.

The authors of this book are staunch defenders of the freedom of local government, all three of us have worked in local government and two of us have been councillors. Not only have we studied centralisation and its consequences, we have worked on a day-to-day basis in local government, politically and managerially, and have experienced the pernicious effects of centralisation. As academics we have also been able to lord it over our overseas colleagues at conferences by challenging anyone to a centralisation duel, as the English contingent always wins this fight. So, our Portuguese and Polish colleagues have thrown down a gauntlet we could not but do anything other than pick up.

There is, of course, a very serious reason for writing this book. Local government exists in an environment of constant pressure and control from the centre, and while the intensity of that environment can, and does, alter over time, it is never fundamentally challenged or changed.

As we wrote the book, we did so in the midst of yet another central government-inspired devolution exercise, with devolution deals being struck and undone as we continued to write. Through the process of putting the book together, an intense debate was taking place between central and local government and groups of councils as they negotiated complex deals and sought to forge new entities known as combined authorities. The debate also raged over whether or not the combined authorities should be headed by a directly elected mayor—a usual sticking point for councils in most of the negotiations.

What struck us throughout that debate was that the narrative used by the centre (and by local government) continued to reflect what we as academics detected as a centralist foundation and a desire to reshape and reformulate local government for central purpose. It was for that reason we decided to use the concept of policy narratives as a way of understanding why it is that not only can the centre promise to decentralise while simultaneously doing no such thing, but also how it can use devolution to exert even greater control over local government. The term devolution is a politically loaded one and may mean no more than the decentralisation of functions, responsibilities and some budgets, rather than the handing down of political and governing power and capacity. Understanding the narrative becomes important to understanding exactly what is going on.

We also wrote the book to explore and understand why it is that local government is so often complicit in its own demise, despite protestations to the contrary. In doing that, we decided to investigate how far the absence of a powerful alternative localist narrative meant local government was always particularly wrong footed when trying to articulate its position to the centre. As a consequence, we determined to develop a narrative of muscular localism that was not merely a response to centralist arguments and therefore shaped by them, but a narrative which set out a fundamentally different role for local government and a fundamentally different set of relationships between local and central government. In the book, we rest for the development of that narrative on our love of local government, and our normative approach is therefore an unashamed one. Not only have we sought to understand and articulate the pervasive and pernicious strength of the centralist view about local government, we are intent on providing local government with a method of reshaping the nature of the debate.

Centralisers and localisers exist across the political spectrum, but they vary in how far they would take their particular arguments, and of course,

they differ among themselves in the role they perceive that local government should have in the overall governing system. In developing our arguments and our vision of a muscular localism, we offer a localised state as the foundation for a new way of articulating the role of local government. We have no doubt that what we offer will frighten many, be unworkable to most and be of little practical use to others, or so it may seem. In developing our narrative, however, we borrow from different local government systems—most of what we argue exists somewhere to some degree: we have merely packaged it together to provide local government with a muscular localist narrative. In addition, we just enjoyed writing the stuff.

We are, however, in writing this book determined to provide local government and localists with something of value and use and something which they can employ to shape their arguments and strengthen their position. Our view is that there is a need for a radically new narrative to reformulate the working of government and from which the debates about the role of local government can take a different turn. We hope we have provided that material and a rationale on which it can rest. If so, then we would have provided some practical assistance to local government.

A few thanks to be made: first we would all like to thank Professor Steve Leach, who set us on the road to writing the book and whose advice and guidance throughout were invaluable to the project. Then from me, thanks to my wife Julia and two daughters, Emma and Harriet, for their support and also to my new grandson, Reggie, for not crying too much during the finishing stages of the book. Next from Rachel who would like to mention the unstinting support she has received from her father Garry and from her closest friend Stefanie which she found invaluable during the writing process. Mark wants to put on record his sincere thanks to his wife Sylvia for her patience and support and his three granddaughters Yasmin, Lucia and Riley, for being there.

Finally the three of us would like to say thank you to our colleagues, Filipe Teles from Aveiro University Portugal and Pawel Swianiewicz from Warsaw University Poland, for throwing down the challenge to see which of us has the most centralised system and where local government suffers the most. After reading this book, you will see that we win.

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Centralisation: The Constant Struggle

INTRODUCTION

To understand the value of local government and what centralisation means to the relationship between a nation-state and its disparate geographical communities of place, we must understand the purpose of local government. To understand the purpose of local government, a simple starting point is to understand those words that used to describe sub-national, politically representative bodies: local government. The reasonable assumption is that it will be ‘local’ that is connected to, based in or reflective of, identifiable geographical communities of place, and that it will be government, that is, it will be politically representative and with sufficient governing power and capacity to be able to take authoritative and binding decisions within its field of competence. In other words, local government is a product of a governing system which has grown from the bottom up, rather than as a result of from devolution from the centre, or from the mere decentralisation of functions, tasks and responsibilities (see Bogdanor 1999, 2001, 2009; Hazell 1999, 2010; Hoggett 1987; Burns et al. 1994). While the growth of a state-wide governing system from the bottom up may reflect a process of nation and state building that is now confined to the past, with more modern states, for example, those emerging out of post-communist Eastern Europe or African states (Mann 1986; James 1996), taking a more top-down approach, assuming a bottom-up development provides a context within which to explore centralisation and localism.

Such an initial and simple attempt to set up a dichotomy from which to explore the purpose of local government will be developed and examined throughout the book so as to understand, particularly in the English context, the process, effects and implications of a centralised governing system over a localised one. It will also help explain how, in England, we have lost any real sense of local government being about the government of identifiable communities of place, to such an extent that the in vogue term ‘place shaping’ is seen as something local government must do, rather than what it is—a unit of government shaped by its place (see, Lyons 2007). In addition, understanding the tussle between centralisation and localism and between centralists and localists, as a way of defining the purpose and value of local government, is the contribution local government makes, or can make if it is allowed, to broader concepts such as liberty, good governance and local self-government—the latter can be seen as distinct from representative local government (Toulmin Smith 2005) and will be explored in more detail in Chap. 3.

Throughout the development of local government in England, there has been a constant tussle between pressures of centralisation and localism (Chandler 2007), and some of those pressures are ideological or attitudinal, rather than generated by economic, social, moral, political or technological factors. The pressures which provide a centralising or localising direction in government will be explored in more detail throughout the book, but those pressures also include globalisation, urbanisation, Europeanisation, austerity, increasing public demand and economic downturn, all of which have often resulted in the institutional restructuring of local politics (Kersting and Vetter 2003; Berg and Rao 2005; Denters and Rose 2005; Magre and Betrana 2007; Elcock 2008; Wollmann 2008). That restructuring of local politics and government is inspired by the centre and where the centre cannot control—because it lacks the constitutional and legal powers—it can cajole, through financial and other inducements.

While the book tracks the international pressures that result in a centralising or localising response from political communities at the local, regional and national level, it focuses its main attention on local government in England. The book leans on the nature of political interaction in unitary and federal states, to illuminate and elucidate the debate and to provide an understanding of how the arguments about centralisation and localism can travel across and within national boundaries. Moreover, the antidote to centralisation we develop unashamedly lends from thinking of

local government as a form of very local state, as will be seen particularly in Chaps. 6 and 7.

The book has been written for seven reasons. First, the current Conservative government (and its predecessor coalition Conservative and Liberal Democrat government, 2010–2015) placed devolution at the centre of its policy towards local government. During the passage of the coalition government’s (2010–2015) devolution Bill into law, Greg Clarke, then minister of state at the department of Communities and Local Government, made the following statement in the House of Commons, which is worth repeating at length:

For the best of a century, most Bills that have passed through this House have taken power from communities and councils and given more power to Central Government, or in some cases to European government. This is an historic Bill, not just for the measures it contains but for what it represents. It is about striking out in a different direction. Power should be held at the lowest possible level. We want this to be the first Parliament for many years that, by the end of its Sessions, will have given power away.

That is true for many of the Bill’s provisions—the community right to challenge; the community right to bid for assets of public value; the abolition of regional spatial strategies; the introduction of neighbourhood planning—but nowhere is it more significant than in clause 1, which deals with the general power of competence. The general power of competence changes the default position. Currently, local government exists to do the things that central government requires it to do. Clause 1 turns that default position upside down. Local government can do the things that it thinks are right, unless they are positively banned. What is not forbidden is permitted. The question for councils is not, “Can we do this?” but, “How can we make it happen?”. (Greg Clark, House of Commons, 7th November 2011)

Indeed, Part one, chapter one, clause one, section one of the Act boldly states that: “A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do”.

We use a concept of policy narrative developed from Roe (1994) throughout this book, and when a Conservative government was returned in 2015, George Osborne the Chancellor of the Exchequer continued to be one of the most powerful and vocal narrators of the ‘devolution’ and the regional ‘Powerhouse’ storyline. In his speech to the Conservative Party conference in October 2015, Osborne made a statement in praise of

devolution, which, as we are interested here in exploring the language and reality of devolution, is also worth repeating at length:

There's a building, not too far from here that reminds us of what local government used to mean.

Look at Manchester Town Hall, in all its neo-gothic splendour.

It was built as a place of power—a great civic cathedral, where the decisions affecting this city would be taken—not remitted to a committee in London.

But over the decades, the wings of local government were clipped again and again by all parties, most especially ours.

Almost everything, from the amount they could spend...

... to the taxes they could keep...

... to the work they undertook...

... was determined in Whitehall.

It's time to face facts.

The way this country is run is broken.

People feel remote from decisions that affect them.

Initiative is suffocated.

Our cities held back.

There's no incentive to promote local enterprise.

It's time we fixed it.

And I'll work with anyone, from any political party, to make that happen.

That's why we're devolving more power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

That's why the people of Greater Manchester will elect their first ever Mayor, in just eighteen months' time.

That's why just last Friday we reached agreement on a new elected mayor across the whole of South Yorkshire.

We're putting the power into the Northern Powerhouse.

But we can go much, much further, here in the north and around the country.

While everyone knows this country has to live within its means—and that means savings in local as well as national government—I want to make sure that as we make these necessary savings we use this moment to undertake far-reaching reform.

Right now we have the merry go-round of clawing back local taxes into the Treasury and handing them out again in the form of a grant.

In my view, proud cities and counties should not be forced to come to national government with a begging bowl.

So I am announcing this:

Today I am embarking on the biggest transfer of power to our local government in living memory.

We're going to allow local government to keep the rates they collect from business. That's right, all £26bn of business rates will be kept by councils instead of being sent up to Whitehall.

Right now, we collect much more in business rates than we give back in the main grant.

So we will phase out this local government grant altogether.

But we will also give councils extra power and responsibilities for running their communities.

The established transfers will be there on day one, but thereafter, all the real growth in revenue will be yours to keep.

So this is what our plan means.

Attract a business, and you attract more money.

Regenerate a high street, and you'll reap the benefits.

Grow your area, and you'll grow your revenue too.

And to help local people do that I want to make another announcement today.

We're going to abolish the uniform business rate entirely.

That's the single, national tax rate we impose on every council.

Any local area will be able to cut business rates as much as they like...

...to win new jobs and generate wealth.

It's up to them to judge whether they can afford it.

It's called having power and taking responsibility.

And for those big cities with elected mayors, like London, Manchester and now Sheffield, I will go even further.

Provided they have the support of the local business community, these mayors will be able to add a premium to the rates to pay for new infrastructure and build for their cities' future.

Yes, further savings to be made in local government, but radical reform too.

So an end to the uniform business rate.

Money raised locally, spent locally.

Every council able to cut business taxes.

Every mayor able to build for their city's future.

A new way to govern our country.

Power to the people.

Let the devolution revolution begin.

(<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2015/10/full-text-george-osbornes-2015-conservative-conference-speech/>)

The Cities and Devolution Act rapidly followed and was granted Royal Assent in January 2016. So, we now have a Localism Act and a devolu-

tion Act, the direction of travel, however is clearly top down. Given the priority placed on devolution as a policy tool, it is necessary therefore to test the veracity and strength of the ‘devolution revolution’ as it is being implemented in England and to assess if it is indeed a revolution or simply revisionism shaped by a policy narrative. Indeed, given historical trends in England (Chandler 2007), we need to know if the current government’s devolution revolution is a historical hiccup or whether, as the current political debate could lead one to believe: we are all localists now.

The second reason for writing the book is that the international trends identified above create conditions within which debates about the value of centralism and localism can be located and developed and which can embolden centralists, within whichever type of political system they inhabit. Thirdly, it has become commonplace for commentators to narrate England as the most centralised country across the globe. It is necessary therefore, to explore if centralisation is so extensive, if we have done it so well and so completely and if it is a process and a way of governing that has damaged local government and democracy. After than exploration we then need to examine what solutions can be developed to reverse centralism as a governing and political doctrine. Especially as it can be a policy narrative which suits both major political parties: Conservative and Labour. Fourth and linked to this last point, one of the authors was involved in an exchange on twitter in which he made the comment ‘England is the most centralised country in Europe’. That comment was challenged by a colleague who tweeted in reply the comment: ‘no, Portugal is the most centralised country’; another colleague tweeted in reply: ‘come to Poland’. That twitter exchange has prompted an exploration and justification of why England is the most centralised state and what can be done about it.

Fifth, we need to understand the nature of the debate between centralisation and localism and the nature of the narratives and storylines which have developed around the two concepts. Moreover, we need to understand how the narratives of centralism and localism are deployed by the supports of both concepts to influence public and policy thinking. By understanding the power and use of the competing policy narratives, we may be able to predict the outcome of the ongoing debate between centralisers and localisers. As a consequence we can assess whether we are seeing the revitalisation of English local government so that it becomes both more local and more like a government, or whether the slow demise of local government, local politics and local democracy is likely to continue. Sixth, as academics operating in our Research Excellence Framework

driven world, we obviously want to add to theory, knowledge, conceptualisation and modelling (but do not let that put the non-academic reader off of progressing beyond that statement). Above all we want to influence how local government is perceived by the public, the media, policy-makers and by local government itself, and we want to strengthen the role of local government in the government of the country. No mean feat, then!

Before moving on, we need to quickly review, in the next section, the purpose or point of local government, a question which will be addressed more fully throughout the book, so as to provide a context for our exploration of centralism and localism. Differing views to that purpose and point find different expressions and deploy different language as a way of convincing others of a particular case, and it is those cases we seek to explore in depth. The third section examines, again briefly, the nature of the debate and key policy narratives of localism and centralism, to produce a definition of these two concepts that will be employed throughout the book. The fourth section sets out the structure of the book

WHAT'S THE POINT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

English local government is a dual-purpose institution. It provides an additional layer of democracy, political representation and engagement to Parliamentary politics, and it allows for the diversity of political views and opinions expressed by communities to find outlet in an authoritative and elected body. Moreover, as thinkers such as De Tocqueville, Mill, Toulmin Smith and the Webbs have variously argued, to differing degrees and from different ideological and time-bound perspectives, that local governing institutions are essential to freedom, liberty, a potential protective barrier to an over powerful central state. Moreover, they are an integral part of any democratic system. Within a representative system of government, representative institutions have a premium over a wider interpretation of local democracy—that is the myriad of interactions that take place between citizens and communities within the confines of the boundaries of any one council. Local democracy is a linked but distinct concept from local government, both with a place in the overall democratic fabric of a society. But, those bodies legitimised by the public vote (councils) and their members—councillors—are in a legitimised governing position to make a choice between competing demands and about the reconciliation of competing views within the locality. It is therefore necessary to separate, not conflate local government and local democracy.

As well as a politically representative and governing institution, local government is also responsible for the provision of public services vital to nations where the state has taken the major responsibility for social welfare, social cohesion and the development of infrastructural integrity. Councils, of course, need not be direct providers of public services, and the neo-liberal policy narratives that pervade much thinking about local government have seen councils experiment with a range of delivery options and agendas such as commissioning, outsourcing, shared services delivery agreements between councils and shared chief executives to co-ordinate joint working as well as reduce salary commitments. Whatever innovations are made in the delivery of public services by councils, they are made more often as a necessity rather than a policy choice that, everything remaining equal, reflected a political choice taken by any one council. In other words, financial, political and legal controls by the centre direct the political choices taken by local government.

In addition, the dual role of governor and public service provider generates a tension, as it cannot be assumed that the roles are mutually compatible or that they respond to the same stimuli. Nor can it be assumed that political representation, governing and decision-making, or the expression of local values and views, can be achieved through a set of institutions designed primarily to administer, oversee and be responsible for the provision of public services. It is the assumption that local government, in England, is about the provision or oversight of services, almost to the exclusion of its wider political and governing role and that the latter is less important than, or indeed only possible because of, the former, that is itself the cause of much of what is currently wrong about the debates about the purpose of local government. Indeed, it is such assumptions shaped by the dominant policy narratives that have already resulted in terms such as ‘unviable’ being banded about around the financial problems being experienced by West Somerset Council and other district councils. The sounds can be heard of the exponents of ever larger local government sharpening their knives to hack away at that part of England to pursue the chimera that larger local government is inherently better. Such a one-dimensional view of local government ignores its governing and representative functions.

It is the notion that local government is primarily, if not exclusively, about the provision of public services that has served to hinder the development of English councils as politically powerful local centres of government that are meaningful and relevant to local people and that matter as

institutions of government to local communities. Moreover, it is that narrative tapping into the erroneous assumption that bigger is better that has resulted in England having some of the largest units of local government in Europe. Moreover, rather than representing geographically distinct and identifiable communities, many council boundaries pull together a number of communities and distinct geographical areas to collect together in one place the size of population deemed necessary for the provision of efficient and effective public services.

The consequences of these dominant narratives and their taken-for-granted assumptions about local government have resulted in a disjuncture between councils and communities and, ironically, a central concern about levels of engagement between communities and councils, which central government has itself created. As political representation and government has, in this country, a clear geographical link—MPs elected for constituencies, councillors elected for wards or divisions (not at large elections across a council)—then a premium must be placed on local government as the reflection of identifiable geographical communities. It is not for that reason alone that local government should reflect clearly identifiable communities. If councils are to be meaningful entities that reflect a popular perception of a place that councils then can shape as a governing body, that place has to be a recognisable one, one that responds to a reality of place—not an administrative convenience that is narrated in technocratic rather than democratic terms the issue and discourse of place, mergers and local government size is explored fully in Chap. 4. It will be argued in that chapter that it is almost as though there is a deliberate policy to remove councils from place, people, culture, history, and traditions, so these factors are no longer displayed as councils continue the journey to being simple providers or overseers of public services and not politically representative and governing institutions. An added bonus to some is that the more and more meaningless local government becomes, the easier and easier it is to continue the policy of mergers and amalgamations until those seeking big local government are satisfied. But, the question remains at what scale will the promoters of big local government become satisfied, and when they are, we will any longer have a system that could be called ‘local’ government.

As we are exploring ‘localism’, one feature must give us concern, how do we make our councils local and why are we constantly following a path that takes us in the opposite direction. A direction which takes us further from concepts of local and localism and which refuses to give all but the

scantest regard to the ‘government’ in ‘local government’. We have seen how local government is a dual-purpose organisation: responsible for the provision of public services while at the same time providing opportunities for political involvement and the expression of political diversity from the centre. Yet, these two roles are not treated equally, and the tension between the needs for efficient and effective service provision has overshadowed the role of councils in the governing fabric of the nation. We have arrived at the current shape of English local government through a number of government-inspired investigations into local government. The Herbert Commission (1960) and the Maud (1967), Redcliffe-Maud (1969) and Widdicombe (1986) Committees sought to reconcile the competing tensions between questions of service delivery and management and the democratic and political role played by local government.

While not ignoring nor minimising the careful balancing act which these government-inspired reviews had to undertake and the analysis and debates that they conducted about the appropriate population size for councils which allowed for efficient and effective services as well as providing community cohesion and democratic control and accountability of local authorities, the result of any subsequent central government-inspired re-organisation was the same—larger councils created by a process set in motion, by central government. But, it is a process in which local government is often complicit, and it is a process which has a supporting narrative which reflects centralist views—held nationally and locally—and which is met by an opposing more localist set of storylines. It is necessary therefore in order to understand the possible future of local government in England, and what general lessons can be drawn from that for local government more broadly, to understand the ways in which localism and centralism are narrated. Indeed, for clarity in the book, we need to briefly set out the possible interpretations and meanings of the terms to construct a definition that will be employed in the book. We need to do that to understand the principles which form the bedrock of arguments about the role, purpose and place of local government within the overall governing system and set within the modern context. In so doing we can see whether there is a consistent set of views about local government held by policy-makers and politicians, locally and nationally, and if there is, how are those views identified when they may be couched in a new language or discourse to suit shifting circumstances. We now turn briefly to examine the nature of the debate between localism and centralism to provide a definition that will underpin the rest of the book.

CENTRALISM AND LOCALISM: THE NATURE OF THE DEBATE

As one of the tasks of the book will be to examine the policy narratives which have developed and been employed around the concepts of centralisation and localism, it is necessary to set out how those terms will be defined for the purposes of the book. Constructing a definition is particularly necessary because few argue overtly for centralisation by employing the term ‘centralisation’ itself. While the word localism is used freely and interchangeably with devolution and decentralisation—the latter again often being used with little distinction in meaning (devolution and decentralisation are explored in Chap. 5 where we examine the current government’s devolution policy in more detail). A distinction needs to be made between the competing concepts of centralism and localism because localism provides a conceptual counter-point to centralism in a way that the term decentralisation or indeed devolution does not. Indeed, decentralisation is not the opposite of centralism; rather it is a reaction to it.

Devolution and decentralisation are concepts which are often conflated and used interchangeably in policy and academic literature providing for unhelpful differing and overlapping definitions for both terms. Where some scholars (Bogdanor 1999, 2009; Hazell 1999; Burns et al. 1994) have provided explanations of devolution and decentralisation which allow the two terms to be perceived as separate concepts, others such as Crook and Manor (1998) have similarly conceived devolution to be the transfer of powers, but position devolution alongside deconcentration (the relocation of administrative functions) underneath an overarching umbrella of decentralisation. For the purposes of this book, the terms devolution and decentralisation will be viewed as separate and differing concepts, where devolution implies a substantial transfer of political power and autonomy as a result of a significant shift in the relationship between central and local government and decentralisation describing only the transfer of authority to exercise functions, responsibilities, tasks and finances from one tier to another in accordance with national policy objectives and motives of political expediency within central government.

Devolution

Much of the literature on devolution examines the concept through the lens of particular political events, perhaps the most prevalent being devolution to the home nations of the United Kingdom. It is here that the

words of the former Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, become particularly relevant, in which he stated that ‘devolution is a process, not an event’ (1999). Interestingly, the word devolution has frequently been used to describe particular events, yet attempting to clarify what devolution means in principle remains challenging, resulting in a rather stark lack of consensus on what the word devolution really describes in theoretical terms. Does the term devolution simply explain the transfer of administrative functions, or does it go beyond this and imply substantive devolution of power from the centre? Rather, do we actually mean a significant shift in the relationship between the two tiers of government?

The devolutionary trend witnessed in many European states was resisted in the United Kingdom until the 1990s (Keating 1998; Hazell 2000). Devolution in the United Kingdom developed over the course of the twentieth century in two key dimensions: administrative, followed by political. Administrative devolution in this period can be traced back to the establishment of territorial government departments for both Scotland and Wales, exercising a considerable range of responsibilities in relation to their respective nations under the supervision of Westminster. Political devolution, by comparison, has since resulted in (for Scotland only) the formation of a devolved institution with legislative powers. The Scottish government has its own First Minister, Cabinet and Civil Service. England meanwhile enjoyed only limited administrative devolution during this period in the form of Regional Development Agencies and Regional chambers (Mackinnon et al. 2010). Within this context, a political definition of devolution has developed which centres on territorial and constitutional relations between two different levels government, where the term devolution can be understood as the transfer of power(s) from one political authority to a subordinate political authority on a geographical basis, in order to provide a degree of self-government (Bogdanor 1999, 2009; Agranoff 2004).

The process of evolution in the United Kingdom is designed to be a policy response to particular political pressures of the 1990s, namely, a rising nationalist sentiment, within Scotland and Wales and Scotland in particular, to establish a Scottish Parliament and a long period of Conservative government through the 1980s and 1990s which gave a spur to Celtic nationalism (Trench 2007). For Trench, this process embodied a significant shift in the constitutional and territorial landscape of the United Kingdom, wherein elected political entities were established, possessing a substantial degree of political and administrative power and autonomy.