Party Competition in Post-devolution Scotland

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the tactical choices political parties make in multi-level settings where a significant regional nationalist party operates. It presents an original account of the strategic options available to parties in that type of setting and then applies that framework to the case study of post-devolution Scotland. It argues that rhetorical strategy constitutes a distinct element in the tactical armoury available to political parties alongside the manipulation of policy position and issue salience. It also puts forward the idea that in circumstances where party competition takes place along a centre-periphery axis of competition alongside the ubiquitous left right one there exist two types of subsuming strategy where party spokespeople justify their party's position on one axis of competition by referencing its position on the other. It argues that there exists a positive subsuming strategy in which the position referenced on both axes is in line with the party's established policy identity and a negative subsuming strategy where one of the positions referenced is at variance with that established identity.

It applies this framework via a mixed method analysis of the language used by representatives of the main Scottish parties in sessions of First Ministers Question Time in the Scottish Parliament. In doing so it shows that changes in incumbency position at state-wide and devolved level within the multi-level setting can significantly impact upon the tactical choices political parties make. Similarly whether the next scheduled electoral contest is for the devolved or state-wide tier of government is also shown to have a significant effect.

The results of the analysis also demonstrate that the rhetorical justification political actors employ for their policy preferences represents a distinct element in party strategy. It presents evidence to show that this aspect of party strategy can be manipulated separately from policy position and issue salience, and that it can have a significant impact upon public perception regarding the ideological orientation of political parties. This finding extends existing scholarly understanding of how voters make judgements about political parties suggesting that they can respond to changes in rhetorical strategy by revising their judgment regarding to where political parties stand relative to their opponents.

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Introduction

This thesis aims to contribute to existing scholarly understanding of party competition in multi-level settings. It focuses on the case of post-devolution Scotland between 2000 and 2016, a period in which there was a dramatic turnaround in the electoral fortunes of two of the main Scottish parties. Scottish Labour declined from a positon where it had dominated the political scene for half a century to a position where it was merely the third largest party in the Scottish Parliament. Meanwhile the party's main regional nationalist opponent, the Scottish National Party rose to a similar level of dominance, and got closer than it had ever done before to attaining its ultimate goal of securing Scottish independence.

Although focused on the Scottish case the thesis presents an original framework of party competition that can be applied to all cases but in particular ones where a significant regional nationalist party operates. This framework aims to address a number of issues with existing theoretical conceptions of party competition. The thesis argues that in focusing on policy position and issue salience as aspects of party strategy existing work pays insufficient attention to the potentially significant impact of the rhetorical justification employed by representatives of political parties when discussing particular policy topics, justifying the party's policy stance and attacking the positions of their opponents. It argues that rhetoric has an important role to play in filling the gap between current ideas as to what strategic tools political parties employ and the opinions voters have with regard to their general ideological stance. This is important as there is a substantial amount of evidence showing that how political actors justify or frame their position matters in terms of influencing political outcomes.

Election candidates who utilise a more pessimistic form of rhetoric perform poorly relative to their opponents (Zullow & Seligman 1990, Conway et al 2012), while the use of rhetoric justifying policy choices on moral rather than pragmatic grounds has been shown to impact upon voter behaviour (Jung 2020). The type of rhetoric used by a US President in justifying a foreign policy intervention can limit the loss of popularity they experience should that intervention end in failure (Trager & Vavreck 2011). Meanwhile use of a particular form of rhetoric can arguably be helpful to ethno-religious groups in securing equal political rights (Krebs & Jackson 2007:48). In these examples it is the political actor's choice of rhetorical

strategy as distinct from their choice of position or the relative salience they give to particular issues that appears to be the crucial factor in determining the relevant political outcome. This thesis will investigate the rhetorical strategies employed by political parties operating in a multi-level constitutional setting where there exists a tier of government below the level of the nation state to which significant powers of legislation, taxation and spending has been devolved. It aims to shed light on how political actors use rhetoric to respond to factors such as changes in the identity of the incumbent party at the nation-state and sub-state level within the multi-level setting.

In the context of the thesis rhetoric is defined as the type of language political actors use in framing their policy position. To highlight a particular example, the message of a campaign against a particular military intervention can be broken down into its policy demands (that hostilities should cease immediately) and the framing of the issue (that the war is unjust and unnecessary) (Krebs & Jackson 2007:43). Choice of rhetorical strategy is an important aspect of how issues are framed. As such this study argues that it must be considered as an aspect of the image projected by political actors distinct from policy position and issue salience, even if the three elements are interconnected.

Rhetoric comes in many forms with some existing work having analysed the effect of language projecting a particular types of emotion such as positivity or negativity (Gerstle & Nai 2019) as well as that relating to a particular policy topic (Fleig & Tosun 2017). In common with earlier work (Laver & Garry 2000) this study argues that there exist particular sets of words and phrases that are particularly redolent of certain ideological stances which consequently tend to be used disproportionately by political actors with the relevant ideological affiliation. Importantly though there are occasions when a political representative might choose to use language more usually associated with the affiliation of an opponent. So a spokesperson for a party generally seen as occupying a left of centre stance can sometimes utilise rhetoric more typical of a spokesperson for a right wing party if they feel it might be strategically advantageous for them to do so. Why this type of disconnect between rhetoric and position might occur represents an important avenue of inquiry in the field of party competition, and one to which this thesis aims to contribute. In paying insufficient attention to the use of rhetoric much of the existing work on party competition succeeds more in outlining the goals parties pursue rather the strategies

available to them in pursuit of those goals. Conceiving of rhetoric as a distinct tool in the armoury of political parties alongside the manipulation of position and salience enables a fuller account of these strategic options and the impact they might have on the fortunes of political parties to be gained.

This thesis also argues that existing work on the multi-level setting underplays the significance of the overall coherence and credibility of the image a party projects to the electorate. The Scottish case represents an example of a multi-level setting in which the established state-wide parties that operate there are faced with a significant regional nationalist opponent. The presence of a significant regional nationalist actor creates a situation where party competition takes place on a centre-periphery axis in addition to the usual left-right one. The framework formulated for this study will add to existing accounts of the strategies pursued by parties in that type of setting by incorporating some consideration of the extent to which the language employed by a party relating to one axis of competition supports or complements that it uses relating to the other. Does, for example, the party justify its stance on the centre-periphery axis by referencing its stance on the left-right one? The framework will also take account of one of the strategic limitations that political parties operate within when choosing between different rhetorical strategies in the form of the party's established policy identity. Are the stances a party references via the language it uses in outlining its position on both axes each in line with the party's existing policy identity? In the same way that individual political actors might sometime for tactical reasons want to use language more usually associated with their opponents party spokespeople might occasionally want to linguistically distance themselves from the policy choices the party has made in the past.

The framework presented will set out how parties can go about using different rhetorical strategies that maximise their chances of appealing to a diverse range of voters. The thesis will explain how a message in which the image projected on one axis of competition reinforces that relating to another can help a party achieve this objective. It will also show how parties can use the different strategic options outlined as ways of partially circumventing the constraints within which parties operate when formulating strategy. The availability of different rhetorical justifications for the same policy position provides parties

with a greater degree of tactical flexibility than is available when parties are restricted to manipulating position and salience.

Much recent research has focused on the success of the SNP's strategic approach in the post-devolution environment. Explanations for the party's rise to prominence have included its success in portraying itself as a potential competent party of government at devolved level (Johns et al 2013, McAngus 2015:643), the effective use of anti-austerity rhetoric in the aftermath of the global financial crisis (Bennie 2017:26) and organisational reforms undertaken by the party that were effective in allowing the leadership to take a more pragmatic approach to the independence issue than that preferred by its activist base (Bennie 2017:29, Elias 2019:14). Far less attention has however been paid to how the SNP's main opponents responded to these tactics, with it generally being the case that more research has been done on the strategy of regional nationalist parties than that of the parties that oppose them. It may well be the case that the SNP's success owed as much to the strategic choices made by its opponents as to the strategy it employed itself. This study aims to contribute to the filling of that gap by tracking changes in the language used by representatives of the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Conservative Party as well as the SNP during the post-devolution era.

The main purpose of the thesis is twofold. In addition to shedding light upon how state-wide and regional nationalist parties behave in a multi-level setting it also aims to establish the importance of rhetorical justification or framing as an important element in party strategy. Evidence will be presented supporting the contention that the way a political party justifies its stance on the centre-periphery axis can impact upon voter perception regarding its position on the left-right axis. Where the issue of greater autonomy or outright secession for a sub-state region is a salient topic of party competition the extent to which parties frame their stance on the constitutional issue with arguments of a left leaning or right leaning nature is a significant factor influencing voter perception of a party's general ideological stance.

This thesis will begin by reviewing the existing literature on party competition in multi-level settings, the methodology used in those studies and research on the Scottish case. It will then introduce the Position, Salience, Rhetoric theory of party competition developed

specifically for this project but applicable to party competition in all settings. The framework will also introduce the notion of positive negative subsuming as ways of describing the options available to political parties when framing their policy stance on one axis of competition by referencing their stance on another. Chapter 3 will explain which of the available methodological tools were selected for use in this project and why. Chapters 4 and 5 will detail the results of the analysis with the former outlining the results relating to the strategic choices made by the SNP with the latter focusing on the SNP's main opponents. The final chapter will provide an evaluation of the study followed by a summary of its conclusions outlining how the study contributes to existing work on the topic. The latter will also offer some thoughts on possible future avenues of investigation indicated by the results of this investigation.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review

Theorising Party Competition

One of the earliest attempts to explain how political parties compete against one another for support came in the work of Downs (1957) who outlined the spatial theory of party competition. This conceptualised party competition as being an exercise in positioning the party along a particular continuum, such as a left/right axis. Just as retailers selling a product or service will attempt to position themselves within a market by cultivating the right image for their product to appeal to their target market, political parties will attempt to position themselves along the continuum in order that their policy platform will have maximum appeal to the voters they wish target. In its simplest form, with a single axis of competition, this would simply involve parties competing for those voters whose views lay at the centre of the continuum, with parties able to count on the support of those on the extremes due to their ideological estrangement from the policies of their opponents (Udehn 1996:124).

Down's assumption that the overriding goal of political parties is vote maximisation was subsequently called into question by Riker (1962) who argued that it is instead control of the executive branch of government that predominates, with this being linked to, but not identical to, the goal of vote maximisation. Later work by Strom and Muller incorporates these two considerations with the addition of policy considerations into a framework in which parties can aim at being vote seeking, policy seeking or office seeking (Strom & Müller 1999:5). The authors view these three strategic options as being supplementary to one another rather than one strategy being a possible substitute for the others. Thus they conceive of party competition as being a triangular space with each of the three strategic options occupying one corner. Parties strategise by moving within this triangular space, prioritising different goals in different situations (Strom & Müller 1999:12-13).

While certainly representing a more sophisticated conception of party competition than much of the preceding work, the latter framework arguably fails to capture the totality of the strategic options open to political parties in a way that is crucial for the purpose of the study presented in this thesis. A fourth strategic priority that influences the actions of political parties at various points in time is expressing or safeguarding the party's distinctive identity. Strom and Müller acknowledge this point in the conclusion to their work,

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highlighting the findings of D'Alimonte's study of the Italian Communist Party (D'Alimonte 1999). Party identity can include elements such as the core ideology the party exists to promote and the groups within a society whose interests it seeks to promote. The latter can be defined in a number of ways, but for the purpose of this study the need to be seen to be representing the interests of a particular sub-state region that defines itself as a nation within a state is of most interest. Particularly in cases where a significant regional nationalist party operates political parties must argue that their policy stance is the most conducive to upholding the interests of the region in which they are operating. Parties can either argue that the interests of the region are best upheld by influencing the actions of the government at nation-state level, by devolving power to the sub-state level or by having the region secede from the nation-state altogether.

This need to accommodate the latter set of tactical choices leads contemporary theory to conceive of party competition as taking place on multiple axes. It also takes account of the fact that parties are able to manipulate the salience of particular issues (the issues they talk about) as well as merely adjusting their policy position (what they say about the issues). In the context of the rise of niche parties of the regional-nationalist variety the existence of multiple axes of competition usually involves the addition of a centre/periphery dimension (what could alternatively be called the secessionist/federalist axis in the Canadian context or the unionist/nationalist dimension in Scotland or Northern Ireland) to a left/right one. The twin axes model allows for the possibility that in the multi-level setting parties will vary the extent to which they focus on the constitutional issue. Conceiving of party competition as taking place on this kind of dual axis enables a far more nuanced picture to be gained of what strategies are available to parties in all situations.

Meguid (2008) sought to build an explanation of the tactical options available to political parties by outlining the Position, Salience, Ownership (PSO) model of party competition. It is particularly aimed at explaining the performance of niche parties, and is founded upon the idea that the performance of those parties is not primarily a function of the institutional, sociological or economic characteristics of the country or region in which they operate, but is a result of the tactical choices they and their opponents make (Meguid 2008:22). Niche parties, including ethnic or regionalist parties, attempt to compete on a new issue that transcends the traditional left-right continuum. In the language of positional theory they

attempt to introduce a new axis of competition. According to Meguid, mainstream parties respond to this by attempting to manipulate the salience of the new issue, and where possible trying to challenge the niche party's ownership of that issue.

The PSO theory argues that a party gaining popularity on the basis of a particular issue depends on three goals being satisfied:

1.   The party's position on the issue must be seen as attractive.

2.   The issue must be seen as salient. Voters must see the issue as being relevant.

3.   The party must be seen as the rightful "owner" of that particular issue.

(Meguid 2008:22-23)

Meguid's theory holds that mainstream parties can afford for there to be some issues on which they don't satisfy all of the PSO criteria, as long as there exist other issues on which they do. What this means in terms of mainstream party's responses to the rise to prominence of a niche party is that they only have to undermine the niche party's credibility on one of the above criteria on its core axis of competition in order to limit the extent of its success. Meguid highlights three possible ways in which mainstream parties might attempt to accomplish this goal (Meguid 2008:30). A party can adopt a dismissive strategy, ignoring the issue that forms the basis of the niche party's platform. If successful this will undermine the salience of the issue (criterion number 2 in the above). It can adopt an adversarial stance in which it argues against the fundamentals of the niche party's stance on the relevant issue. If successful this makes the niche party's position less attractive to voters, thus undermining its credibility on criterion number 1. Finally it has the option of adopting an accommodative strategy in which it attempts to share the same policy space in the relevant policy area, thus undermining the niche party's ownership of the issue (criterion number 3).

A crucial part of Meguid's theory is that for a niche party to achieve success all of the above criteria outlined in the PSO theory must be satisfied on the issue that is its main focus. So a regional nationalist party must, if it is to achieve any degree of success, satisfy all of those criteria on the issue of regional autonomy. This does not however mean that regional

nationalist parties always base their strategy around their core issue. Recent research involving the content analysis of a sample of election manifestos published by regional nationalist parties in the UK and Spain has uncovered examples of regionalist parties focusing on both the economic and the regionalist dimension (Alonso et al 2015:851), and furthermore found that regionalist parties (at least in the context of regional manifestos) gave as much salience as state wide parties to economic issues (Alonso et al 2015:856). A similar picture is evident in the work of Mercenier et al (2015) who analysed party election manifestos in Quebec and Wallonia during the period 1994-2014. In the case of Quebec they found that over the course of the period studied a clear shift in emphasis took place in manifestos of the secessionist Parti Quebecois towards socio-economic issues and away from addressing the issue of possible secession (Mercenier et al 2015:55-58). Regional nationalist parties clearly do not operate as single issue parties. Instead they are actors that frequently compete with mainstream parties of the left and right on a left-right axis, not merely on a centre-periphery one.

The consensus of the work referred to so far is that party competition in multi-level settings involves two axis of competition on which parties compete by taking up positions and manipulating the salience of each axis, within which regional nationalist parties utilise a similar range of strategic options to their opponents. Later work has gone further in terms of providing a precise outline of what those strategic options are with one notable example outlining four available strategies (Elias et al 2015). Firstly, under a uni-dimensional strategy a party will look to only compete on one axis while attempting to reduce the salience of the other. This might take the form of a mainstream party attempting to reduce the salience of centre/periphery issues, instead appealing on a left/right basis. Alternatively a secessionist party might want to do the reverse, looking to take a distinct position on the centre/periphery dimension while attempting to avoid doing so on the left/right one. Alonso et al (2015:853) argue that the latter strategy is the default one for regionalist parties, but crucially also point out that they exhibit a tendency to depart from this default strategy when they see advantage in doing so. The second available strategy is the blurring strategy which involves parties taking up a clear position on one axis of competition but blurring their position on the other. Blurring can be characterised as avoiding presenting a stance on a particular axis altogether, or presenting a vague or contradictory position (Rovny 2013:6).

An illustrative example of this is when parties of the radical right take up a strong position on issues of immigration and national identity while blurring their stance on economic issues. The aim of this approach is to enable the party in question to mobilise the support of a group of voters who share its position on immigration and nationality, but who might have diverse views on issues relating to economic policy (Elias et al 2015:845). Such a strategy is of obvious value to any party that seeks to mobilise support mainly on the basis of its stance on the centre-periphery rather than the left-right dimension. It means that it has the option of appealing to voters who occupy widely differing positions on the left-right axis who nevertheless support the party's pro-periphery stance. This type of blurring on the axis of competition that is of secondary importance to a party has been shown to be a frequently employed tactic, with a blurred stance also often used as a means by which parties can deal with being deeply divided on an issue (Han 2018).

The third strategy Elias et al describe is the subsuming strategy introduced in earlier work (Rovny & Edwards 2012), under which parties attempt to reframe issues that are ostensibly part of one axis of competition so that they are relevant to another. This might involve parties making arguments in favour of their position on the centre/periphery continuum that are a form of restatement of their position on the economic left/right axis. The writers cite the example of the centre-right Partido Popular in Spain advocating the recentralisation of certain policy competencies on the grounds that they facilitate the goals of economic recovery and efficiency (Elias et al 2015:845). Alternatively ethnic/regionalist parties might interpret all issues in terms of the ethnic/national divide once they have successfully established the salience of the ethnic/regionalist dimension.

The final available strategy outlined in this work is the two dimensional strategy. This involves parties taking up a clear position on both axes of competition (Elias et al 2015:845). This is arguably difficult to distinguish from the subsuming strategy as both involve parties referencing both axes of competition in their discourse. The distinction lies in the extent to which references to each axis appear together in the same context. In a subsuming strategy those references are interspersed whereas in a two dimensional strategy a party will only reference its position on one axis at any one time.

In detailing this particular range of strategic options the research referred to above has attempted to provide a framework of party competition in which some account was taken of the fact that parties might want to present a deliberately vague position to the electorate, or that they might look to collapse the distinction between two axes of competition. Later work has built upon this by conceiving of another strategic option in which parties present different messages to different audiences at the same time. It highlights the example of the Social Democratic Party of Germany using its manifesto to appeal to its traditional base by having it contain traditional leftist proposals on the economy while using its choice of chancellor candidate to appeal to the median voter (Somer-Topcu 2015:842). This type of approach is characterised as the broad appeal strategy, and the author puts forward the idea that parties might accomplish this by using their manifesto to appeal to their core support in the manner of the SPD but using campaign rhetoric to appeal to the median voter (Somer-Topcu 2015:845).

This notion of rhetoric as a distinct tactical tool represents a genuine departure from existing conceptions of the tactical options available to parties, and one that is only just beginning to form a distinct avenue of scholarly enquiry. The role of rhetoric forms an important part of the study presented here because it provides a route by which parties can implement many of the strategic options outlined in the existing frameworks of party competition. The potential importance of rhetoric is highlighted in some of the work referred to above when the subsuming strategy is defined as being "…neither the same as positioning, nor is it the same as selective emphasis. It essentially requires rhetorically re-framing a new issue in terms of the dimension for which a party is perceived to be competent by the voters" (Elias et al 2015:842). So it is far easier to conceive of precisely how a party might implement a subsuming strategy if the manipulation of rhetorical framing is considered as a tool available to political actors alongside the manipulation of position and salience.

One recent study has investigated the relationship between political rhetoric and policy outcome finding in the context of Italy that rhetoric supportive of policies designed to raise the level of economic development in the underdeveloped south of the country has actually preceded the abandonment rather than the active pursuit of that policy goal in terms of practical action (Polverari 2013). These findings suggest that rhetoric supportive of a

particular policy position can be deployed even when there is little genuine commitment to the implementation of policy redolent of that position. In that scenario rhetoric is separated from position, with the implication that the study of party competition should acknowledge that separation. The distinction has indeed been utilised in recent work investigating the connection between party rhetoric and policy outcome (Bischof 2018), and research demonstrating that the rhetoric of environmental sustainability has become ever present in the manifestos of political parties irrespective of their general policy stance (Fleig & Tosun 2017).

It would be wrong to interpret these examples of the existence of a lack of connection between rhetoric and policy outcomes as evidence that rhetoric is not important. Instead they show the power of rhetoric as tool political parties can use to diffuse issues that might otherwise be problematic for a party, for example because the policy preference of the party's core support is at variance with that of the wider electorate. By adopting the rhetoric of environmentalism or promoting regional equality without firm policy commitments a party can potentially keep both groups happy. This study argues that rhetoric is important precisely because it exists as a campaigning strategy separate from specific policy commitments that has been shown to have significant effects on public perception. Recent work has looked at parties' use of moral rhetoric in articulating their policy stance (Jung 2020). The results of the latter investigation show that rhetoric that activates positive emotions succeeds in mobilising voters, in turn demonstrating that "…rhetoric is an important campaign tactic that has been overlooked in the comparative parties literature that focuses mostly on left-right position taking" (Jung 2020:351). The significance of rhetoric is therefore not that it necessarily acts as a predictor of policy action itself but that it enables the mobilisation of public opinion which can then in turn influence public policy.

Rhetoric also has significance in that it provides a way in which political parties can deal with the constraints they operate within when formulating strategy some of which have already been alluded to. For example parties cannot afford to take up a position that is too far away from their support base; that is their membership or activist base or their core support among the electorate. This has led some researchers to build upon the work of Meguid referred to above by distinguishing between policy stances that are supported by a party's

core support and those supported by the wider electorate. Criterion number 1 of the PSO theory states that for a party to gain popularity on the basis of a particular issue its position must be seen as attractive (Meguid 2008:22-23). Later work has qualified this by arguing that it must be seen as attractive by a party's core support as well as the wider electorate. Satisfaction of these two criteria makes the issue a "high yield issue" (De Sio & Weber 2014), with empirical evidence suggesting that parties that focus on high yield issues tend to be more electorally successful (De Sio & Weber 2020).

The issue yield framework points to the importance of the manipulation of issue salience as a strategic tool as distinct from policy position. However what the framework does not do is explain how parties deal with situations where they have to address low yield issues. Political actors do not have the freedom to totally ignore issues when it is tactically convenient for them to do so, or indeed to focus entirely on one axis of competition within the twin axes model referred to above. Their opponents will raise those issues in settings such as televised election debates or parliamentary question and answer sessions, meaning that they have to find a way of addressing those policy topics even if they would rather not do so. This study argues that using a particular rhetorical strategy in order to frame an otherwise awkward issue in a more advantageous way provides a method by which parties can deal with this situation. Examples of how a party might do this are discussed in the next chapter outlining the theory developed for this study.

This section has shown that the existing literature on party competition in multi-level settings conceives of party competition as taking place in a twin axis model where parties can adjust their position and manipulate the salience of each axis. They also have the options of blurring their stance on either axis, or adopting a subsuming strategy in which they frame their position on one axis by referencing their position on another. In addition parties are able to present more than one stance on an axis tailoring their message to particular audiences in the manner of the broad appeal strategy discussed above. What the existing research has yet to do is provide a full account of precisely how parties go about pursuing these various strategic options within the constraints in which they operate. This study aims to contribute to that area of research as part of the emerging trend towards conceiving of rhetorical strategy as a tool distinct from policy positioning and issue salience,

thus enabling a fuller impression of how parties go about pursing their tactical goals to be gained.

The next two sections review the existing literature specific to the main Scottish political parties, with the first detailing that relating to the SNP and the second dealing with the party's main opponents. They detail the development of the parties' policy identity in the pre-devolution era, a feature that is of considerable importance in applying the framework developed for this study to the Scottish case. They also show the relevance of the case of post-devolution Scotland to a study of how political parties behave in a multi-level setting, and the importance of rhetoric as a strategic tool in the Scottish case.

Party Competition in Scotland - The Scottish National Party

Prior to 1979 it would be accurate to describe the SNP's identity in left-right terms as somewhat indistinct (Lynch 2011:132). In the 1960s and 70s the party was reluctant to take up a clear position on this axis (Newell 1998:111), with considerable ideological divisions existing within the party during that period (Leith & Steven 2010:267). However the influx of former Labour Party members disillusioned with their former party's abandonment of a unilateralist policy on nuclear weapons in the early 1960s was the start of a gradual shifting of the SNP to the left over the course of several decades (Lynch 2011:148). Interviews with leading figures in the contemporary SNP confirm that unilateralism was an important part of what drew them to the party (Mitchell et al 2012:30). In addition the decline of the Scottish Conservatives post-1960 meant that the SNP increasingly saw Labour as its main opponent, leading it to adopt policies most likely to appeal to Labour voters (Lynch 2011:147). This shift in approach is reflected in the party's voting record at Westminster during the 1974-79 Labour government. Between 1974 and 1977 the party mostly voted with the Conservative led opposition, but voted mainly with the government in the latter part of that period (Mitchell et al 2012:27).

After 1979 the SNP came to define itself, and the nation it sought to represent, very much in terms of its opposition to a right wing Conservative government in Westminster. One aspect of this was the party supporting a campaign of non-payment of the Poll Tax introduced by the Thatcher administration in the late 1980s (Newell 1998:112). The SNP's strategy became one of attacking the Conservative Party on the basis of hostility to their basic principles,

while attacking Labour on the basis of its failure to live up to its fundamental principles (Newell 1998:114). This approach constitutes a good example of the "instrumentalist" set of arguments put forward by secessionist parties who argue that the stateless nation they purport to represent must secede from the larger political entity of which it is a part because that larger entity is preventing it from enacting a policy platform in line with its preferences (Dalle Mull & Serrano 2018). This is similar to the subsuming strategy that forms an important aspect of the line of enquiry adopted by this thesis whereby parties reference a position on the left right axis when making argument sin support of their position on the constitutional question.

Recent work by Henceroth and Jensen (2017) highlights the fact that that the policy stance of regional nationalist parties is in no small part influenced by the identity of the party in power at state level, but also by who is the regional nationalist party's principle opponent within the region. The authors use data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey to measure the ideological distance between a set of regional nationalist parties and the party historically dominant at the state and the regional level in the relevant country. They then proceed to analyse how that ideological distance impacts upon the level of success achieved in terms of share of the vote won in electoral contests. They found that regional nationalist parties always gain from putting ideological distance between themselves and the party historically dominant at state-wide level, and that the greater the distance the greater the benefit to the regional nationalist party. With regard to the historically dominant regional party the relationship is more complex. The regional nationalist party must place itself within a "sweet spot" where it is close enough in left-right terms to its main opponent to be a viable alternative for that party's voters, but not so close that it loses its distinct identity (Henceroth & Jensen 2017:7). This suggests that successful regional nationalist parties display a certain amount of tactical agility as they cannot afford to take up a position too far outside this sweet spot.

The existing research on the SNP suggests that it has indeed been willing to display this type of adaptability. However what it has not done has provided a full account of how the party implements a strategy formulated with those objectives in mind, with this also being the case with regard to research on regional nationalist parties in general. This thesis argues that the rhetorical framing of a party's policy position is a crucial part of explaining how

parties of that type can place maximum policy distance between themselves and the party dominant at state-wide level. This can be achieved via making rhetorical appeals that relate to more than one axis of competition at the same time. In this way ideological distance is expressed in multiple ways likely to find resonance with a broad range of voters. The utility of these types of appeal has been noted in earlier research on the topic (Brand et al 1994).

The other major shift in the strategy of the SNP in the decades preceding devolution in addition to it taking up a more overtly left wing stance in opposition to the Thatcher government was towards the use of a less exclusionary brand of nationalist rhetoric. The party's manifestos published in the mid-1970s bemoaned the fact that too many English students were studying at Scottish universities, and displayed a distinctly anti-English tone in general (Leith 2008:86). These exclusionary elements (including proposing restrictions on the ownership of land and the acquiring of Scottish based businesses by non-Scots) continued into the 1980s. Starting with the publication of the party's manifesto for the 1987 UK general election onwards this kind of language became infrequent before disappearing altogether in the 1990s (Leith 2008:87-88). At the same time the party embraced the idea of European integration envisioning Scotland going down a path of "independence in Europe" having previously opposed the UK's membership of what was then the European Economic Community in the 1975 referendum. In shifting towards a being in favour of what became the European Union the party was using pro-Europeanism as a device by which independence could be framed as a progressive, outward looking policy option rather than a reactionary, inward looking one (Dardanelli 2009). The calculation was that independence within what became the European Union would be a less scary prospect for Scottish voters than Scotland going it alone.

The examples discussed above demonstrate two things. Firstly that historically the SNP has adjusted the way it has framed its position on the centre-periphery axis. The portrayal of "the English as the other" (Leith 2008:86) displayed in the party's earlier manifestos represented more of a rhetorical strategy than a policy stance indicating the importance of rhetoric as a distinct tool of party strategy, and the party's willingness to change that rhetoric if it felt it would be tactically advantageous to do so.

The assumption that the SNP now takes a left of centre stance on the left-right axis is now widespread (Alonso et al 2015:856), with data from the wide ranging MARPOR project backing up that contention. On the latter's left-right axis (termed the "rile" scale) the five SNP manifestos coded by the project (those for the 1992, 1997, 2001, 2015 and 2017 UK general elections) all come out as left of centre, with the most recent of those documents scoring as the most left wing (Volkens et al 2018). McAnulla and Crines found in their study of the rhetoric used by then SNP leader Alex Salmond during the campaign leading up to the 2014 independence referendum that left leaning anti-Toryism and an emphasis on social justice formed an important part of the then First Minister's appeals to the electorate (McAnulla & Crines 2017:484 & 487). Similarly Clark and Bennie found SNP manifestos for the 2010 and 2015 UK general elections making much of their opposition to Conservative rule from Westminster (Clark & Bennie 2016:7).

There is however evidence suggesting that the SNP's identity as a left of centre party has not solidified completely. The party's manifestos for the 2003 and 2007 Holyrood elections contained elements that would not be out of place in a manifesto put forward by a party of the centre-right, supporting a strong stance on law and order and containing pro-business, pro-economic growth and anti-quango references (Lynch 2011:49-50). This type of stance on crime appears to have the support of party members (Mitchell et al 2012:128); indeed on the latest available evidence a significant proportion of members hold strikingly authoritarian views on that topic with 23 per cent supporting capital punishment for some crimes. The latter percentage is much smaller than the 54 per cent of Tory members who take that view, but much larger than the 9 percent of Labour members and 8 per cent of Liberal Democrats who support the death penalty (Bale et al 2018:13).

The direct influence the SNP membership had on policy and tactics was much reduced by the organizational reform the party underwent in the aftermath of what was seen as a disappointing 2003 Holyrood election. Those reforms empowered the leadership at the expense of the local branches (Mitchell et al 2012:34-54). However their likely impact on party strategy in the post-devolution environment is debatable given evidence suggesting that party members took a pretty pragmatic attitude in terms of what they thought party strategy should be around this time. Polling of party members indicates that the party had significant room for maneuvre in terms of the strategy it adopted on both the centre-

periphery and left-right axis of competition. Survey evidence for the lead up to the 2011 Holyrood election showed 86 per cent of members saying that the party should prioritise making devolution work rather than pushing for independence (Mitchell et al 2012:135). A significant portion of that percentage might well have felt liberated from that constraint after the party succeeded in winning an overall majority at Holyrood in that election, however this still stands an indicator of a party base willing to show a high degree of tactical flexibility.

There is also evidence to suggest a willingness on the part of the SNP to manipulate the salience of the constitutional issue, and that this formed part of the party's strategy of making a valence based appeal based on fostering an image of economic competence. To this end it went into the first election to the Holyrood parliament in 1999 downplaying its core territorial policy (Elias 2019:8). There are also indications suggesting that the SNP's campaigning since devolution has focused more on governing competence than on Scottish independence (Carmen et al 2014:98) with this contributing to the impression that the SNP's victory in the 2011 Holyrood election was in large part due to positive public perceptions of the party's governing competence rather than any widespread desire for radical constitutional change (Johns et al 2013, Carmen et al 2014:79). Later work has confirmed that securing power via this route was a key element in party strategy. In anonymised interviews with leading SNP politicians from the time the party came to power in the Scottish Parliament in 2007 SNP MSPs interviewed speak of their desire to establish an image of the party as "grown up", "no longer a single issue party" and having long since shed any "fringe or Mickey mouse party" characteristics (McAngus 2015:642). The long term aim of this strategy was to facilitate the SNP's central goal of independence by inspiring confidence in the ability of its politicians to govern an independent Scotland competently (McAngus 2015:643). More recent research has highlighted the low attention given by the party to the constitutional issue during the run up to the 2015 UK general election, while also noting that it took a clear, left of centre anti-austerity stance during that campaign (Massetti 2018:946).

The work of Alonso suggests that a study such as that presented here should not necessarily expect to find that the introduction of devolution has led the SNP to de-emphasise or moderate its stance on the centre-periphery axis. If anything devolution can intensify rather

than neutralise a regional nationalist party's demand for regional autonomy (Alonso 2012:40), by introducing a built in tendency towards the radicalisation of the peripheral agenda. The author puts forward the view that when parties of that type become governing parties at devolved level the potential is there for them to benefit both from an increased perception of governing competence among the electorate, but they also have the opportunity "…to influence voters' preferences on the centre periphery dimension through the implementation of nation-building public policies" (Alonso 2012:48-49). However Scotland already had many of the trappings of nationhood at the time the SNP came to power. In that sense the new administration did not have to build a nation in precisely the way referred to by Alonso. However other existing work has highlighted the fact that, certainly in the period when the SNP lacked a majority in the Scottish Parliament, the party paid more attention to promoting the independence agenda outside parliament rather than inside it (Harvey & Lynch 2012).

This section has shown the extent to which the SNP has been willing to vary its strategy on both the centre-periphery and left-right axes of competition in the post WW2 era. In doing so it at various times utilised many of the tactical tools that will form important elements in the theoretical framework used in this project. The party shifted from an ambiguous stance on the left-right axis to a gradually more left of centre one in the decades leading up to the introduction of devolution for Scotland at the end of the 20th century. There is also some evidence of a willingness to tone down its left of centre stance in the early post devolution era. On the centre-periphery axis its formal position has been unchanging, but the amount of salience it gives to that axis and the rhetoric it uses in arguing in favour of its position has exhibited some variation.

The party appears to have been keen to adopt a more inclusive brand of nationalism from the late 1980s onwards with the increased use of pro-Europeanism as a device to project a more moderate form of nationalism, and the disappearance of any anti-English tone in its discourse. The freedom the party has to make these tactical choices is arguably enhanced by the streak of pragmatism that exists in the beliefs of the party's support base as evidenced by surveys conducted into the attitudes of party members. Although left of centre overall they exhibit some right of centre tendencies, and have demonstrated a willingness to take a gradualist approach to achieving the party's ultimate goal of Scottish independence.

This study aims to detail party strategy in the post-devolution era in which the party achieved an unprecedented level of electoral success. In doing so it will provide the type of study of how a regional nationalist party goes about achieving the strategic objectives outlined in much of the literature, and how such a party responds tactically to certain changes in circumstances within the multi-level setting.

Party Competition in Scotland - The SNP's Opponents

The existing literature on party competition in multi-level settings focuses more on the strategies employed by regional nationalist parties than those employed by their opponents. The Scottish case is no exception to this with far more having been written about the Scottish National Party than Scottish Labour or the Scottish Conservatives. This study aims to contribute to redressing that balance, in particular because the example of Scottish Labour provides an excellent case study of a state-wide party seemingly failing to find an effective strategic response to the electoral threat posed by a regional nationalist party in a region that it dominated electorally for half a century. In introducing a an original theoretical framework for analysing party competition this study enables a fuller picture to be gained of how the two main UK state-wide parties responded to the threat posed by the SNP in post-devolution Scotland.

In the early post WW2 period both Labour and the Conservatives gave low salience to the centre-periphery axis of competition. Neither saw the SNP as a threat, and so paid little attention to the issue of greater political autonomy for Scotland. For Labour this strategy first began to be called into question when the party lost the previously safe seat of Hamilton to the SNP in a by-election in 1967. This combined with decent SNP performances in Scottish local elections in the same period led the Labour government to set up a Royal Commission (later called the Kilbrandon Commission) in order to look into options for constitutional change, including the devolution of power to Scotland. However, following what was widely seen as a disappointing election for the SNP in 1970, it was not until the mid-1970s, following the SNPs capture of the previously safe Labour seat of Glasgow Govan in another by election in 1973 that the major UK parties really began to take the devolution issue seriously. That by election, combined with an increase in vote share and seat numbers in the subsequent general election of February 1974, saw both major parties (including the

hitherto sceptical Conservatives (Mitchell et al 2012:22) switch to a strategy that involved beginning to entertain the notion of Scottish devolution.

After the February 1974 UK general election Labour began to come around to the idea of devolution with party leader and Prime Minister of the incoming minority government Harold Wilson (albeit without the existence of a prior manifesto commitment) deciding to use the post-election Queen's speech to propose devolution. Some authors argue that this came in response to what turned out to be unfounded rumours of a MORI opinion poll showing Labour at severe risk of losing seats to the SNP in what many assumed would be an imminent second general election given the inconclusive outcome of the February '74 contest (McLean & McMillan 2005:184-185). Whatever the precise reasons for this shift the somewhat rushed nature of this it meant that there had been no time for there to be a serious debate within a party that was divided and disorganised on the issue. A thinly attended meeting of Labour's Scottish Executive in June voted by a single vote against the principal of devolution, only for this decision to be reversed a month later at a special conference (McLean & McMillan 2005:162). Outside Scotland many Labour politicians from the north of England opposed devolution on the grounds that it might lead to a Scotland that already in their view did better in terms of allocation of central government funding than northern England getting even more preferential treatment (McLean & McMillan 2005:164-165). Labour's position on the centre-periphery axis in this period therefore lacked coherence. Only with the benefit of hindsight is it possible to view Labour's late 1970s flirtation with devolution that was opposed by significant sections of the party as the start of a process that was to see the party later establish an identity that is anti-independence but pro-devolution.

Meanwhile on the left-right axis Labour's response to the SNP's leftward shift from late 1970s onwards was to question its authenticity with the accusation that the SNP were really "Tartan Tories". The SNP's lack of a clear rhetorical identity on the left right axis in the 1970s and its voting with the Conservatives in the 1979 confidence vote that brought down the a minority Labour administration (Hassan 2009:148-149) gave this line of attack a minimum level of credibility even though the SNP's policy platform was identifiably left of centre. However the "Tartan Tory" jibe was to become a less effective line of attack during the course of the 1980s and 90s as the SNP increasingly aligned its rhetoric with its left of centre

policy stance defining itself in opposition to the Conservative administration that governed the UK in that period. This example illustrates the importance of the rhetorical aspect of the message put out by a political party, a key argument put forward by this thesis.

In the decades leading up to devolution Labour's Scottish strategy can therefore be summarised as placing itself between the SNP and the Conservatives on the centre-periphery axis and more authentically left of centre than the SNP on the left-right axis. This can be seen as being well suited to the pre-devolution situation where the party was able to use its position as the main opposition party to a right wing Conservative government at Westminster as way of embellishing both its left of centre and pro-Scottish credentials. The party could attack the Tories for being both right wing and (at least after Labour fully came around to the idea) for opposing devolution. However once the Tories were voted out of power and devolution was introduced this strategy became no longer viable.

While Scottish Labour arguably managed to establish issue ownership of the constitutional question in the decade leading up to the introduction of devolution it was to find this much more difficult after the Holyrood parliament had been established. The party seems to have struggled to formulate a consistent strategy with regard to the SNP on the centre-periphery axis. The party's manifesto for the 2011 Holyrood election virtually ignored the SNP, concentrating instead on attacking the Conservatives (Hassan & Shaw 2012:144). After the election at least one leading figure within the party lamented in an anonymised interview the fact that the Labour did not raise the independence question enough during the campaign on the grounds that they should have been talking about what the SNP did not want to talk about (Hassan & Shaw 2012:147). This illustrates the problems state-wide parties face when formulating strategy in the face of a regional nationalist threat. The framework presented in the next chapter will aim to incorporate consideration of those tactical challenges.

The gradual decline in electoral significance the Scottish Conservative experienced in the second half of the 20th century may well be one factor that has led to them receiving far less scholarly attention than either Labour or the SNP. That long drawn out electoral decline has been variously attributed to the decreased significance of the "orange vote" that had previously seen the party win much sectarian based support among working class

protestants who recoiled from the left leaning preferences of the catholic population, and their embrace of new right economics estranging them from a Scottish electorate opposed to that type of platform (Kendrick & McCrone 1989). The party's decision in 1964 to cease formally labelling its candidates as "Unionist" has also been cited as a factor (Seawright 1996), but in reality the label was probably irrelevant at the time it was dropped in any case (Dyer 2001:30-31). The latter author however argues that aside from the label the fact that in Scotland conservatism without unionism had little appeal probably was a major reason for the party's decline (Dyer 2001:40). This illustrates the importance of parties projecting a clear identity on each axes in the multi-level setting where the one identity reinforces or complements the other in the manner envisaged in the subsuming strategy referred to elsewhere in this thesis, and which forms an important part of the theoretical framework introduced in the next chapter. However having flirted with supporting devolution in the 1970s the post-1979 party took up a position implacably opposed to the policy and continued to decline electorally. This suggests at least that unionism opposed to any devolution of power as distinct from unionism content merely to preserve Scotland's status as a part of the UK did not have enough appeal to counteract Scottish opposition to Thatcherite economic policies.

Having opposed devolution the Conservatives were in a difficult position once the Holyrood parliament had been established. Its pro-centre, anti-devolution stance had been soundly rejected by the Scottish electorate, with similar also being the case regarding its stance on the left-right axis. This platform had seen it decline to the point of outright extinction at Westminster level in the decade prior to the introduction of devolution. This initially led the party's policy stance as judged by its manifesto to become more similar to the stance of the other Scottish parties (Pogorelis et al 2005:1004). A debate also occurred within the party during the period leading up to the 2011 election for the party's Scottish leader as to where exactly it should position itself on the centre-periphery axis. One of the four candidates in that election, MSP for Mid-Scotland & Fife Murdo Fraser, not only supported the idea of more powers for the Scottish Parliament but also entertained the notion of the party's Scottish section becoming semi-detached from the UK wide party (Convery 2014).

But ultimately at that point the party had little incentive to greatly vary its pro-union and right of centre stance and enter what was a crowded market inhabited by rival parties that

were all left of centre and pro-periphery to varying degrees, all of whom had greater credibility the minds of voters in terms of occupying that type of position than the Conservatives would ever have. Carlaw was defeated in the leadership election by Ruth Davidson, who stood on a platform proposing a much less radical adjustment of the party's strategy.

In the succeeding years the Conservatives did go on to support the measures extending the powers of the Scottish Parliament included in the 2012 and 2016 Scotland Acts (Ross 2014). However the party's electoral revival at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election came after a campaign that made much of the party being the natural party of the union (Anderson 2016:560). Arguably then the party shifted slightly towards a more pro-periphery position while at the same time emphasising its support for the union via its election campaign rhetoric. This highlights the phenomenon this thesis aims to study of political parties using rhetoric and position as distinct tactical tools often to communicate a different message.

Many factors contributed to the fact that the two largest UK state-wide parties failed to stem the rise of the SNP. The previous section of this chapter has detailed the options those parties had available to them, but certainly in the period leading up to the SNP's creditable performance in the two UK general elections of 1974 neither party seems to have adopted any of those strategies with any great level of intensity for any sustained period of time. Part of the reason behind this may well be that so many of those options come with substantial risks attached to them. Seeking to ignore the centre-periphery axis by adopting the one dimensional strategy on the twin axes model is of questionable viability. Such a strategy is providing the regional nationalist party with a unique selling point as being the only party that addresses the constitutional issue. As a result of this evidence suggests that where there exists a regionalist threat state-wide parties tend not to ignore that axis, and this is the case even when the regionalist parties in question are quite insignificant in terms of the number of elected representatives they manage to get returned (Alonso et al 2015:857).

The long term viability of an accommodative strategy has also been called into question (Alonso 2012:22-23). Can state-wide parties ever really challenge a regional nationalist party's ownership of the latter's core issue? The example of the Scottish Labour Party's

policy on devolution in the 1970s suggests that this objective is difficult to achieve. The party's policy always amounted to a defensive reaction against the SNP. At no point during the period where the party attempted the accommodative strategy (during the failed attempts to introduce devolution during the late 1970s) did it manage to establish anything like the kind of issue ownership conceived of in Meguid's theory (Dardanelli 2009:58).

For Alonso this is entirely unsurprising. She argues that parties in any case do not really aim at the kind of "issue ownership" envisaged by Meguid in areas that are outside their main axis of competition. Instead they aim to neutralise other party's positions on that axis by gaining a minimum level of credibility themselves that nonetheless falls well short of outright issue ownership (Alonso 2012:40). Even looking at Meguid's own account of how the major UK parties responded to the entry into the political arena of the SNP casts doubt on the extent to which they were seriously intent upon challenging the SNP's issue ownership. Both parties over time repeatedly switched between the dismissive, accommodating and adversarial approaches (Meguid 2008:190-193), and these shifts were largely a result of short term tactical considerations rather than forming part of a plan to fundamentally challenge the SNP's ownership of the devolution issue.

The idea that mainstream parties can challenge a regional-nationalist party's ownership of the issue of regional autonomy is more convincing when applied to the 1990s. There is a case for saying that in this period Labour had successfully established ownership of the centre-periphery axis, with the result that when devolution eventually came it was they rather than the SNP who were voted into power at the newly established devolved level. This suggests that there are in fact circumstances in which a mainstream party can (at least temporarily) establish ownership of the autonomy issue via an accommodative strategy as per the theory of Meguid.

The framework presented in the next chapter will argue that such an approach is certainly risky as it involves according the arguments put forward by the pro-periphery opponents of those parties a degree of validity that could result in greater demands for regional autonomy, and consequently more support for regional nationalism. It also involves making arguments that are at variance with the established policy identity of a state-wide, pro-centre party. This study will argue that this is inherently problematic in terms of the

credibility constraints within which parties have to operate when presenting an image to the electorate.

With regard to how mainstream, state-wide parties such as Labour and the Conservatives are likely to behave in a post-devolution setting, Alonso argues that devolution creates a new arena of competition in which state wide parties can shift towards a periphery orientated stance free of what the author refers to as the "credibility constraints" that inhibit them from adopting that kind of stance at national level (Alonso 2012:46). A state wide party that either governs, or aspires to govern, at national level is severely inhibited in the extent to which in can adopt a periphery orientated stance in state-wide contests. Such a party cannot position itself solely in terms of winning support among the periphery in the way that a party that operates only at the periphery can. However the peripheral section of that party when competing for power at devolved level does not face that kind of constraint.

Following on from this Alonso points to evidence suggesting that state-wide parties do shift their stance on the centre-periphery axis at state-wide level when in opposition, in particular when they need to maintain their distinctiveness due to having shifted towards a less distinct position on the left-right axis. She cites the Labour Party of the 1990s as an example of this happening (Alonso 2012:35). Labour's motivation for adopting this strategy of course went wider than this. Electoral geography meant that finding a response to the threat of the SNP was a matter of some urgency if it wanted to govern at UK level, as it needed to win Scottish seats where the SNP was its main opponent in order to secure a majority in the House of Commons.

In a situation such as this parties can end up conveying the impression of multiple policy stances to the electorate, partly as a reflection of the different points of view existing within the party. The lead up to the October 1974 election sees what might be the first example of the sub-state section of a UK political party putting out a different message to the electorate to that being conveyed by the national party. A Labour party election broadcast aired on the regional TV channels broadcast only in Scotland (also on the tiny Border channel that broadcast to the far north of England) promising a Scottish Parliament (not merely the "Scottish Assembly" mooted by many of the devolution proposals of this time) "… primed by

North Sea Oil so that the benefits of oil go to the ordinary working people of Scotland". In contrast the party's UK manifesto spoke only of setting up "… new development agencies in Scotland and Wales, financed by the UK exchequer, with extra funds to reflect the revenue from offshore oil". The latter pledge was very similar to one also appearing in the Conservative manifesto of the time (McLean & McMillan 2005:189-190). This represents an example of a party tailoring its message to different audiences in a manner redolent of the broad appeal strategy referred to above, but also of the use of different rhetorical strategies pursued in support of the same policy stance. This supports one of the central contentions of this thesis that rhetoric represents a distinct tactical tool alongside policy position and issue salience.

This section has highlighted several examples of the two main unionist parties in Scotland varying their strategy in relation to the centre-periphery axis of competition. This has included some evidence of the adoption of strategic approaches involving different rhetorical justifications of the same policy position. This demonstrates the value of a project that aims to study the use of these strategic tools in the post-devolution multi-level setting. The surge in support for the SNP and the Labour decline are the two major trends evident in the results of elections at both levels during the period of this study (the Scottish Conservative revival coming just after the end of that period). By studying the major party's use of the strategic tools detailed in the next chapter outlining the theoretical framework this study aims to demonstrate the utility of that framework as a tool for analysing party competition in a multi-level setting. It also aims to contribute to existing understanding of which strategic approaches are more likely to deliver electoral success for parties operating in that setting.

Chapter 2 - The Position, Salience, Rhetoric Framework of Party Competition

This chapter outlines a framework of party competition in which there are three types of strategic option open to political parties in any setting. Firstly, parties are able to adjust their formal policy position. Secondly they are able to adjust levels of issue salience; that it is what issues they talk about as distinct from what they say about the issues. Finally they are able to adjust the type of rhetoric they use in delivering their message to the electorate.

The chapter will explain why conceiving of party rhetoric as being distinct from positioning or issue salience allows a fuller picture to be gained of how parties go about implementing the strategic choices they make than is possible using existing theories of party competition. It explains that such a framework is especially suited to the investigation of how parties go about pursuing several of the strategic options outlined in the existing literature; the blurring strategy in which parties seek to present a deliberately obscure policy position, the broad appeal strategy in which they present different positons to different audiences, and the subsuming strategy in which a party's position on one axis of competition is framed in the context of its position on another.

In addition the chapter will build upon this general framework in order to present an outline of the strategic options available to parties specifically within the type of multi-level setting that forms the focus of this project. It will argue that there exist two types of subsuming strategy rather than the one outlined in the existing literature, distinguished from each other by the extent to which the image presented by the party is in line with its established policy identity. The reasoning behind the theory will where appropriate be supported by references to existing research outlined fully in the literature review chapter.

Part of the aim of this chapter is to provide an outline of the main strategic tools available to political parties in any type of setting. Much of the older literature on party competition succeeds more in outlining the goals parties pursue rather than the means by which they go about pursuing those goals. These strategic objectives have in the past been characterised as including positioning the party as close as possible to the median voter on a single axis of competition (Downs 1957) and winning control of the executive branch of government (Riker 1962). Later work has conceived of party competition as taking place in a triangular

space where parties are able to choose between prioritising influencing policy outcomes, winning office or winning votes (Strom & Muller 1999).

A large part of the purpose of researching party competition is to find out how successful parties act in particular situations so that a body of knowledge can be built up that goes some way to providing an outline of the optimum strategy for particular types of party particular sets of circumstances. With this information an assessment of the likelihood of future success for a party following a particular strategic approach can be made. Outlining the goals successful parties tend to pursue in the way that much of the existing work does is only part of that story, with the strategies parties adopt in pursuit of those goals being the other part. Consequently later work has frequently sought to provide precisely that kind outline of the strategic tools available to political parties.

One example is the Position, Salience, Ownership (PSO) theory discussed in the literature review in which party success is seen as depending upon its position on particular issues being seen by voters as attractive, the issue being seen as salient, and the party being seen as having "ownership" of the issue (Meguid 2008:23-24). Arguably by itself this framework has still not made the transition from outlining party goals to providing a menu of strategic options. The positon and issue salience evident in a party's pitch to the electorate can be manipulated by the party, but issue ownership is more an objective of strategy and a result of previous strategic choices the party and its opponents have made than it is a strategic choice in itself. The theory presented here takes a further step towards outlining strategies rather than goals by arguing that parties have a further option in their tactical armoury in addition to the manipulation of position and salience: adjusting the rhetoric they use when conveying their message to the electorate. Rhetoric is defined in this context as being the language political actors use when justifying their policy stance, or attacking that of their opponents. It encompasses general statements of philosophy, ideology or worldview that frequently accompany statements of policy preference. When a political spokesperson uses terms such as "austerity", "inequality", "enterprise" or "wealth creator" they are using words and phrases that act as indicators of a general ideological leaning rather than a specific policy position, with the first two generally seen as indicative of a left leaning stance and the latter two indicating a more right of centre ideological bent.

This classification of certain aspects of language as being used more often by political actors occupying a particular space on the political spectrum is the assumption behind some of the earliest academic work proposing tracking party positioning via the analysis of text (Laver & Garry 2000). However no linguistic devices are used exclusively by political actors with a similar policy stance, so it seems sensible that researchers should investigate when and why political actors might use language more usually associated with their ideological opponents. The study of rhetoric as distinct from position and salience makes this possible by allowing for the possibility that a political actor representing a particular party might sometimes use rhetoric more usually associated with a different policy position to that they formally occupy.

There are three main reasons why such a strategy might be pursued. Firstly a party might want to obscure its true stance adopting what has been referred to as a "blurring" strategy in which its true policy identity is rendered opaque. Secondly it might want to project multiple identities in the hope of appealing simultaneously to different groups of voters with diverse views. Finally the party might use rhetoric as a way of framing its policy stance in such a way that it might attract support from voters sceptical of certain aspects of its policy platform. An example of the latter would be where a party that supports higher taxes and public spending might adopt the language of fiscal rectitude normally used by those opposed to such a policy. So the policy might be justified as one of sound investment that will reap financial rewards in the future rather than as being a means of redistributing wealth or promoting social justice.

There exists a substantial amount of recent evidence showing that parties can and do adopt a strategic approach where the rhetoric used by party spokespeople does not reflect the party's formal policy position. In 2007 UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown spoke of the need to create "...British jobs for British workers" (Parkinson 2007). His use of this rhetorical device did not mean that the British Labour Party had suddenly become an anti-immigration party. At no point did it adopt a policy involving giving British citizens privileged access to a particular set of employment opportunities (a policy that would have been illegal at the time under EU law in any case). Instead the statement represented an attempt to reassure voters who might have deserted the party on the basis that its stance on immigration was too favourable that it had some awareness of the nature of their concerns regarding the

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impact immigration might have on the number of employment opportunities available, and some intention of addressing those concerns. Importantly though this attempt at reassurance fell short of the party adopting a particular policy to back up its rhetoric. It is also questionable whether the statement accompanied a general increase in the general level of salience of the immigration issue in party discourse.

This represents an example of a party attempting to appeal to voters that on the face of it do not share the policy preference of the party on a particular issue by creating a deliberate disconnect between rhetorical strategy and formal policy stance. The use of this type of strategy has been highlighted by recent research (Somer-Topcu 2015). Characterised as a "broad appeal" strategy it could for example involve a party using its manifesto to appeal to its existing core support while using the campaign rhetoric used by its prominent spokespeople and campaign material to appeal to the median voter (Somer-Topcu 2015:845). In this way parties can indeed "beguile voters with their strategies" convincing diverse groups of voters that they are the party they should support on the grounds of ideological proximity (Somer-Topcu 2015:852). Such a tactic is viable because a significant number of voters are low information, with the result that the decisions they make are based on general policy cues of the type that make up party rhetoric rather than on the basis of specific policy commitments (Rabinowitz & Stuart 1989). The existence of this broad appeal strategy provides justification for conceiving of the manipulation of rhetoric as a tactical option distinct from the adjustment of position and salience in the manner outlined in the PSR theory. It is more realistic to conceive of parties as being able to adopt an approach where they can present different messages to different audiences if they have the option of employing a rhetorical strategy where they use language that is not normally associated with the policy position they occupy.

The notion that party rhetoric exists as a tactical tool separate from position and salience is also supported by the results of recent investigations into the connection between rhetoric and policy outcomes. It would appear that the former is not always a reliable predictor of the latter. In Italy political rhetoric supportive of reducing the level of economic inequality between the north and south of the country has preceded the abandonment rather than the active pursuit of that goal (Polverari 2013). Existing frameworks of party completion arguably fail to capture the possibility that there might be some disconnection between

party rhetoric and reality, and that this might sometimes be a deliberate tactical choice taken by a party. They all too readily assume that policy rhetoric and policy position or outcome will always be in sync with one another. The framework presented here allows for the possibility that this might not always be the case.

The study of rhetoric as a distinct aspect of party strategy is an element of the study of party competition that has only recently come to the attention of researchers in this area. One of the latest studies of that type has focused on political party's use of "moral rhetoric" in their manifestos (Jung 2020). The study makes a distinction between parties justifying their policy stance on moral as opposed to pragmatic or instrumental grounds; arguing that the course of action they recommend is not merely the best way of achieving particular goals but is the morally just course to take. In making this distinction the study aims to shift focus from the arena of policy goals indicated by political positioning to the tactics parties employ in pursuit of those goals. It is precisely this type of expansion in the focus of research on party competition that the PSR theory aims to accommodate. It aims to take account of the fact that rhetoric is an important campaign tactic that has until recently been overlooked in the comparative literature on political parties (Jung 2020:351).

The challenges parties face when formulating strategy

This section will explain how conceiving of party strategy as taking place in a framework where parties can manipulate position, salience and rhetoric allows for full consideration to be given to the fact that political parties do not have complete freedom in terms of the strategic approaches they adopt. Contextual factors and the need to respond to the behaviour of other political actors limit their room for maneuvre, as does the imperative to be seen as a potential competent party of government. The section concludes by presenting a comprehensive outline of how parties pursue the goals of policy, office and votes using the strategic tools available within the PSR framework, but taking account of the limitations and challenges they face.

Parties are constrained by their ideology and identity; something that is connected to the policy stances of their activists and core voters, and the history of the party. No party can

estrange itself too much from the policy stance of its base, or take up a stance so at variance with its historical position that it lacks credibility. Similarly parties are also limited in that they cannot afford to be seen as adopting a stance that is seen by voters generally as being too "extreme", with this creating a "zone of acceptability" outside of which parties are less likely to achieve electoral success (Rabinowitz & Stuart 1989:108). Parties are also constrained in terms of issue ownership. Where a party enjoys a long standing reputation for credibility on an issue it would be ill advised to adopt a strategy that imperils the strategic advantage it enjoys in that policy area. Distinguishing between position, salience and rhetoric as strategic tools incorporates the constraints parties operate within by offering a list of options available to parties where they have different amounts of room for manoeuvre.

Shifting its formal policy stance is something that is difficult for parties to do within the constraints outlined above. For example it would be hard for the support base of a regional nationalist party to accept a significant diminution of its stance supporting greater autonomy for the sub-state region in which it operates. The raison d'être of parties of that type is promoting the interests of their particular sub-state nation or region, with them usually supporting either greater political autonomy or outright independence for that region. Most political parties have these core issues that define the party's identity where a shift in policy stance would be problematic. Similar is the case for parties with regard to issues they have ownership of. It would be a tactically reckless move for a party to shift its policy position on an issue where it enjoys the advantages associated with issue ownership.

This theory argues that the above constraints are less important with regard to the manipulation of issue salience by parties. While a party's support base might be reluctant to accept the abandonment of a policy commitment based upon its core identity or ideological stance, it might well be more willing to accept a downward shift in the salience of that policy area if felt that would be a tactically advantageous option to take. A shift in issue salience will not fundamentally challenge a party's core identity in the way that a shift in policy would. This diminished effect of a shift in salience also applies to issue ownership. The literature on issue ownership usually conceives of it as to an extent being something that political parties establish over an extended period of time (Petrocik 1996, Pogorelis et al 2005:994-995). A temporary shift in salience is therefore less likely to imperil a party's

ownership of the issue than a shift in policy position. This is not to say that parties enjoy anything like total freedom when it comes to manipulating salience. If a downward shift in issue salience becomes long term then a party's ownership of an issue could be called into question. The point is that a party has more freedom for manoeuvre in this respect than is the case with shifting policy, not least because shifts in salience can be a temporary tactical choice in a way that shifts in policy cannot be. A party cannot shift policy position too often without damaging its long term credibility with voters.

The theory presented here goes on to argue that parties have even more freedom to make different strategic choices with regard to changes in the party's rhetoric than is the case with either the policy or salience aspect of their strategy. Use of particular rhetorical strategies can be carefully calibrated to appeal to particular audiences at particular times, or even different audiences at the same time; the development of new media having made the latter type of tactic easier to employ than ever before. The same is true to an extent with regard to salience, but is not true with respect to policy position. Assuming the party takes up a position that position can be obscured via a blurring strategy, but the true position behind the blurring is itself not open to ambiguity.

Parties enjoy much more freedom in terms of the rhetorical justification of their policy position, with the relative freedom parties enjoy in that respect being illustrated by the evidence cited above showing that a deliberate disconnect between rhetoric and policy can form part of a strategy aimed at broadening a party's appeal to the electorate. The same strategy can be used in pursuit of "blurring" where parties either avoid presenting a clear stance in a particular issue, or present a vague or contradictory position (Rovny 2013:6). The aim of these strategic manoeuvres is to misrepresent the policy distance between the party and particular groups of voters creating a situation where significant numbers of voters might support the party despite disagreeing with one or more of its formal policy stances, enabling the party to appeal to a wide range of voter types.

Post-Stokes (1963) literature on party competition has incorporated a distinction between valence and non-valence issues, with the former encompassing topics where the ultimate objectives of policy are widely shared by politicians and people. On valence issues parties compete to convince voters that it is they rather than their opponents that are best placed

to achieve a goal that is widely shared, such as being the party most likely to reduce crime rates or the one that has the most competent leadership team. How parties go about making a valence based appeal is likely to vary on the basis of party type. Political parties need to overcome any existing negative perceptions voters might have with regard to their valence credentials. How they need to go about doing this will vary depending on the historical and ideological baggage the party carries in the minds of voters. How parties go about achieving a valence based advantage will therefore be a response to their judgment as to where their existing valence disadvantage lies. For example a party of the left might need to overcome negative voter perception of their ability to manage the economy and tax revenue in a responsible manner, while a party of the right might need to reassure voters that it can be trusted with maintaining the welfare state and public services to acceptable standards. Furthermore a regional nationalist party might need to convince voters that it has the ability to act as a competent party of government within any devolved structure that might exist in the region in which it operates at the same time as campaigning for greater political autonomy for that region. The latter might involve reducing the salience of the centre-periphery axis of competition, or reducing the use of rhetoric redolent of a pro-periphery position.

There may however be some strategic tools used in the pursuit of a valence advantage that are common to all party types. There exists some evidence demonstrating that the closer a voter is to a party's ideological stance the more likely the voter is to perceive that party as being competent (Sanders et al 2011, Zacharova & Warwick 2014). It would appear then that as far as projecting an image of competence goes the Downsian spatial model of party competition (Downs 1957) would have much to commend it, with the result that if parties want to appear competent to the largest section of the electorate then they should take up a stance as close to that of the median voter as possible. This message is reinforced by research showing that the perception among voters that a party holds an extreme position on the left-right axis of competition negatively effects voter perception of that party's level of competence (Johns & Koln 2020).

This study argues that this creates a general incentive for all parties who want to appear competent to reduce their use of language redolent of the extremes of a relevant axis of competition. In a similar way parties who want to overcome existing negative voter

perceptions of their valence credentials might choose to adjust the rhetoric they use in order that they sound more like their opponents who are not encumbered with the same negative perception. This kind of strategic manoeuvre, for reasons discussed above, is easier for parties to do by adjusting their rhetoric than by altering policy position or manipulating issue salience.

A framework in which parties can adjust rhetoric without necessarily also shifting policy position or issue salience is therefore well suited to uncovering how parties go about pursuing a valence advantage. In particular in allowing for the possibility that party rhetoric may not align with formal policy position it acknowledges the possibility that a party might use a deliberate disconnect between rhetoric and policy in pursuit of a valence advantage. A party might use this type of tactic in order to accomplish the goal of convincing voters that it is not wedded to one of the extremes of a particular axis of completion thereby enhancing its image as a competent party. Similarly where it appears that it is a party's main opponent that has the advantage in terms of a particular valence issue a party might look to use some of the rhetorical devices used by spokespeople from the opposing party. To refer back to one of the examples highlighted above, a party of the left opposed by a centre-right party that appears to have an advantage over it in terms of public perceptions of economic competence might want to adopt some of the language of fiscal rectitude in an attempt to neutralise that advantage. This may be accompanied by a shift in policy position, or it may not.

In arguing for the importance of distinguishing between position, salience and rhetoric in party competition the preceding sections have offered several examples of how parties might adopt an approach involving the manipulation of one or more of these three strategic tools. This section will expand upon that by outlining what factors might reasonably be expected to influence the strategic choices parties make within that framework within the type of multi-level setting that forms the focus of this research project. For the reasons outlined above the assumption is that parties will be more easily able to adjust rhetoric and salience, with formal policy position being the most stable aspect of party strategy.

Factors that are considered to impact upon party strategy in general will in all likelihood also be important. These might include shifts in public opinion (Adams et al 2004, Romejin 2018),

shifts in policy undertaken by political opponents (Adams & Somer Topcu 2009) and party organisation in terms of the balance of power between activists and the party leadership (Schumacher et al 2013).

Table 1 combines the PSR framework with the policy, office, votes outline of the goals parties pursue formulated by Strom & Muller (1999) in order to show how conceiving of rhetoric as a distinct element in party strategy can provide a clearer outline of how parties might go about pursuing those goals. It also presents a view regarding what are the most important contextual factors that parties need to consider in pursuit of those objectives and the strategic options available to them within the PSR framework.

Regarding policy the first preference of any political party is likely to be arguing for policies that reflect the party's policy identity in terms of its ideology, history and the preferences of its activists and supporters. So ideally a party would take up a position in line with its established identity, give high salience to those policy topics most relevant to that identity, and support that stance using rhetoric that most accurately reflects the core ideological identity of the party. However the authors of the policy, office, votes framework highlight the fact that the pursuit of policy requires prioritisation and bargaining that may cause the party to experience policy sacrifice (Strom & Muller 1999:7). They cite the example of a party operating as part of a coalition that due to opposition from its coalition partners is unable to implement some of its policy platform, or has to argue in favour of policies that it would not otherwise support. Parties might also experience policy sacrifice in the form of having to drop certain policies in the face of opposition from a significant portion of the electorate they are targeting.

The framework presented here outlines two strategic options available to parties that have experienced policy sacrifice. Firstly they can lower the salience of the relevant policy topic and push for policy gains in other areas in the hope that they can downplay the significance of the concessions they have had to make and make policy gains in other areas that can then be emphasised. Secondly they may have the option of using rhetoric that frames the policy concession as being in line with the established policy identity of the party.

Table 1: Strategic options available to parties in pursuit of the goals of policy, office and votes within the PSR framework

Goal	Key Consideration	Strategy		
		Position	**Salience**	**Rhetoric**
Policy	**Policy Identity**	▪ Argue for a policy position that reflects the party's policy identity.	▪ Give high salience to policy positions that most reflect the party's policy identity. ▪ Give lower salience to issues where the party has experienced policy sacrifice.	▪ Argue for policy positions using a rhetorical strategy that most reflects the party's policy identity. ▪ Where the party has experienced policy sacrifice use rhetoric that frames the new policy in the context of the party's existing policy identity.
Office	**Public opinion/Valence**	▪ Argue for a policy stance likely to give the party a valence advantage.	▪ Give higher salience to policy topics where the party enjoys a valence advantage.	▪ When the party has to refer to issues where it does not enjoy a valence advantage use rhetoric similar to that of an opponent that does enjoy such an advantage.
Votes	**Public opinion/Valance**	▪ Argue for a policy stance that enjoys popular support or provides a valence advantage.	▪ Give high salience to policy topics where the party's position enjoys public support, or where it enjoys a valence advantage.	▪ Use rhetoric redolent of the more popular aspects of the party's policy platform, or aspects where it enjoys a valence advantage. ▪ Where the party's position does not enjoy popular support use rhetoric redolent of a different position. ▪ Employ rhetoric redolent of a different policy position to that it occupies in pursuit of a broad appeal strategy.

The recent example of the policy sacrifice made by the Liberal Democrats in the UK can provide an illustration of how a party might use either of those two options. The party had contested the 2010 general election on a platform of abolishing university tuition fees for undergraduate students, but after forming a coalition government with the Conservatives the party instead voted to increase rather than do away with those fees (Butler 2020). Tactically the party had the choice of either downplaying the salience of the issue in the hope that the u turn would go relatively unnoticed, or framing the new policy favourably in the context of the party's general policy identity. It could have argued that free undergraduate tuition would constitute a less progressive policy than the existing one of charging fees to students after they graduate when they begin earning above an income threshold. The argument would be that the main beneficiaries of the former policy are graduates who earn above the income threshold rather than undergraduates or graduates on low pay. In doing so the party would have been adopting a rhetorical strategy that framed the policy sacrifice as being in line with the party's generally progressive policy identity, thus potentially limiting the damage of that sacrifice.

In the pursuit of office it is likely that securing a valence advantage over their opponents will be a crucial factor influencing party strategy. In order to be entrusted with office parties must establish an image of competence; something that will influence their policy positioning and the relative salience they give to each policy topic. As table 1 illustrates, conceiving of the manipulation of rhetoric as distinct strategic tool enables some consideration to be given to how parties deal with issues where they do not have a valence advantage. Parties have the option of using rhetoric relating to a particular issue that is similar to that used by an opponent that does enjoy a valence advantage; such as in the example referred to above where a party of the left uses the language of fiscal rectitude in order that it can neutralise the advantage parties of the right tend to enjoy in that policy area.

Gaining a valence advantage is also likely to be an important consideration in the pursuit of votes in addition to projecting an image that accords with public opinion in general. Parties can use rhetoric to draw attention to those policy areas where it enjoys a valence advantage, to blur its stance when it perceives itself to be on the wrong side of public opinion, or appeal to voters with diverse views in pursuit of vote maximisation.

The Multi-level Setting

The extent to which the multi-level setting that forms the focus of this study is distinct from other arenas of party competition is likely to depend upon the general salience of the constitutional question within the political discourse of the region, which will in turn be a result of the relative strength of regional nationalist parties within that region. Certainly where a regional nationalist party is a realistic contender for power the factors peculiar to the multi-level setting are likely to be particularly important.

Multi-level settings can involve competition between two or more state-wide parties and one or more regional nationalist parties. The former is pretty much a universal feature, while the latter is a feature of some sub-state regions but not others. For example none of the German states has a significant regional nationalist presence, but regions such as Scotland, Wales and Catalonia do. As it is the Scottish case that is the focus of the project this section will relate to examples of the multi-level setting where there is a major regional nationalist presence. It will focus on the rhetoric aspect of the PSR framework while also providing an original account of the strategic options available to parties that are peculiar to that type of setting.

The presence of a significant regional nationalist party within a multi-level setting creates a situation where party competition takes place on the type of twin axes model envisaged in much of the literature. Within that model parties are able to adopt a subsuming strategy where they combine the use of language that references a position on one of those axes with language suggestive of a particular position on the other (Massetti & Schakel 2015:872). Subsuming was initially conceived of as a method by which regional nationalist parties can frame their pro-periphery position by referencing a position on the left or right of the left-right axis of competition. It encapsulates the idea that there are a set of left leaning and right leaning arguments that regional nationalist parties can utilise in justification of their pro-periphery position, in doing so subsuming a position on the left-right axis with the party's position on the centre-periphery one (Massetti & Schakel 2015:873). The elements of rhetoric outlined above enable a party to implement this strategy via its spokespeople interspersing language redolent of one side of the centre-periphery axis with language redolent of one side of the left-right one. Ideally these two

rhetorical themes run complementary to one another, both contributing to the party presenting a coherent and credible image to the electorate. That coherence and credibility stems from both the position and the supporting rhetoric relating to both axes being in line with the party's established policy identity. For example a left of centre regional nationalist party might subsume the twin themes that greater political autonomy for the region is good and left wing policies are good by arguing that greater political autonomy would enable the region to adopt more left wing policies than it is currently able to.

This strategy in that example is calculated to appeal to a broad range of voters; all voters who do not have a strong preference for right wing and/or pro-centre policies. Voters who have a weak preference for either of those positions are open to being won over by a subsumed left of centre/pro-periphery appeal in a way that they might not be were those two appeals delivered separately. The research introducing the notion of the broad appeal strategy supports the latter contention, showing as it does that parties tend to benefit from a strategy aimed at appealing to ideologically diverse groups of voters (Somer-Topcu 2015:850-851). The precise causal mechanism at work has yet to be fully investigated empirically, but this study puts forward the view that a combination of two things are happening. Firstly voters are likely to view a party that appears to be appealing to a broad section of the country's population positively in valence terms as it gives the impression of it being a party prepared to govern in the interests of the whole country, not just the segment of the population that forms its core support base. There may also be an element of confirmation bias at work in which voters who are open to being persuaded to supporting a range of parties have a tendency weigh elements of agreement with a party's message more heavily than elements of disagreement when multiple messages are presented together.

The result of this is that successful implementation of a subsuming strategy is likely to be seen by those who determine party strategy as having the potential to be electorally beneficial in a multi-level setting. In the example discussed above where a regional nationalist party subsumes its pro-periphery stance with a left of centre one a voter with a weak right of centre leaning but a strong pro-periphery preference can be won over by that party interspersing its use of left of centre language with rhetoric suggestive of a pro-periphery stance. In that example the voter will be more attracted by the pro-periphery element in the party's message than they are repelled by the left of centre element. The

author who tested the utility of the broad appeal strategy suggested that the strategy might also work across different axes of competition (Somer-Topcu 2015:852). This study argues that in the form of a subsuming strategy it does, but within the limitations dictated by the credibility constraints within which all parties operate.

This study builds upon the existing conception of subsuming by distinguishing between positive and negative subsuming strategies; a distinction that acknowledges those credibility constraints. In doing so it takes account of one of the important contextual limitations of party strategy referred to in the previous section; a party's established policy identity. In positive subsuming the position suggested by the party's rhetorical strategy on both axes are in line with the established identity of the party, while in the case of negative subsuming one of those positions is at variance with that identity. So in the case of a left of centre regional nationalist party positive subsuming consists of party spokespeople combining the use of rhetoric suggestive of a pro-periphery stance with that redolent of a left of centre position. Were the same party to combine rhetoric redolent of a right of centre position with that emphasising its pro-periphery stance it would be engaging in negative subsuming as only one of the stances referenced by the rhetoric used would be in line with its established identity.

A further distinction can be drawn between two types of negative subsuming depending in whether a party is departing from its established policy identity on the left-right or centre-periphery axis. This would give a framework incorporating three types of subsuming:

1. Positive – a party blends together language redolent of its established policy identity on both the centre-periphery and left-right axes of competition
2. Negative centre-periphery – a party blends together language redolent of its established policy identity on the left-right axis with language redolent of a position it does not occupy on the centre-periphery axis
3. Negative left right – a party blends together language redolent of its established policy identity on the centre-periphery axis with language redolent of a position it does not occupy on the left-right axis

These three strategic options can be implemented using any of the three tools outlined in the position, salience, rhetoric framework. A party can downplay or draw attention to its

established policy identity on either axis by shifting or reemphasising its policy position, increasing or reducing the salience of either axis or by adopting a different rhetorical justification of their position. These strategic options represent ways of dealing with many of the issues parties face discussed previously such as policy sacrifice, a particular policy being unpopular with voters, or an opposing party enjoying a valence advantage in a particular policy area.

What precisely constitutes positive and negative subsuming for a party will vary depending on its established policy identity, with the consequence that this can change over time. Although as discussed above parties operate within credibility constraints meaning that an established identity cannot be changed quickly such a change is possible. The existing literature on Scottish labour referenced above shows how the party in the pre-devolution era switched from an indifferent or ambivalent policy identity on the constitutional issue to one that by the 1990s was resolutely pro-devolution. In contrast the Conservative's brief flirtation with devolution was too brief and half-hearted to impact upon their established unionist policy identity.

Empirical Expectations and Hypotheses

The previous section has put forward a framework detailing the strategic options available to political parties when pursuing policy, office and votes generally (the PSR framework) and more specifically in the multi-level setting that forms the focus of this study (positive and negative subsuming). This section will outline what factors are likely to influence how parties behave within that framework, with the resulting discussion generating a set of hypotheses for this study.

Existing work discussed above (Massetti & Schakel 2015:872-873, Henceroth & Jensen 2017) shows that ideological distancing from the centre is almost always an advantageous tactical option for a regional nationalist party to take. This suggests that when the identity of the party in power at the centre changes it is legitimate to expect the strategy of a regional nationalist party to shift in response to that. However, as discussed above, all political parties operate within certain credibility constraints that restrict the extent to which they

can alter their identity in response to contextual changes. It is therefore unlikely that parties of the type will be seen to radically adjust their policy platform with the ebb and flow of parties being voted into and out of power at the nation state level. The overall strategy of regional nationalist parties is to construct an argument in favour of greater autonomy for the region that is appealing to voters whoever happens to hold power at the nation state level at any one time. They are therefore unlikely to construct a policy platform that has to be adjusted radically when there is an incumbency change at state-wide level thus damaging both the party's credibility and potentially by association the case for greater autonomy for region in which they operate.

What a party of that type can be expected to do instead is to adjust the rhetorical framing of their policy stance and the relative salience of each axis of competition. They are likely to adopt a strategy where the rhetoric they employ emphasises (or even exaggerates) the extent of the policy difference between themselves as representatives of the region and the party in power at the centre; for example being more likely to use a left of centre framing when a centre-right party holds power at that level. This reasoning generates the first hypothesis.

H1 – Regional nationalist parties will use rhetoric to distance themselves on the left-right axis from the ideological identity of the party in power at nation state level

The theory presented here is of the view that parties have less room for manoeuvre with respect to position than is the case with salience or rhetoric. This is likely to be particularly true for regional nationalist parties in relation to their stance on the centre-periphery axis of competition. The latter forms the core of a regional nationalist party's identity, and it is an identity which is deeply connected with notions of national identity. This reinforces the notion that major shifts in position are unlikely. However there is reason to believe that regional nationalist parties might sometimes look to manipulate the salience of their stance on that axis, or adjust their use of rhetoric associated with that stance. This is because the stronger regional nationalist parties aspire to govern at the sub-state level and need to project an image of themselves as a potential competent party of government at that level. Where regional nationalist parties aspire to govern valence considerations are likely to be more important when competing in sub-state elections than in state-wide elections as

parties of that type are more likely to be contenders for power at the devolved level. Consequently the type of electoral contest that is upcoming is likely to have an impact on party strategy. Presenting an image as a potentially competent party of government at sub-state level is likely to be particularly important for regional nationalist parties in the lead up to elections to that level of government in a way that it is not when contesting elections at the state-wide level. Consequently they are likely to reduce the level of salience of the centre-periphery axis of competition during these periods where winning power at devolved level constitutes their main strategic goal. This leads to the second hypothesis.

H2 – Regional nationalist parties will reduce the salience of the centre-periphery axis when the next scheduled electoral contest is for the sub-state level of government.

These valence based considerations are likely to be more important to the party when it is in opposition at devolved level than after it has attained office. Of course a regional nationalist party will still want to project an image of competence after winning power, but that consideration is likely to exist alongside using that power to work towards its ultimate objective of winning some degree of greater political autonomy for the region in which it operates. Part of the reason parties seek office is to influence public opinion (Strom & Muller 1999:6). This can be a particularly important consideration for regional nationalist parties voted into power at sub-state level as gaining power can allow them to pursue "nation-building public policies" that seek to shape public opinion in a way that is conducive to achieving their long term goal (Alonso 2012:49). Consequently regional nationalist parties are likely to increase their focus on their core policy after gaining power as pursuing their long term goal increases in importance. This will likely manifest itself in an increase in the salience of the party's pro-periphery stance, and in the use of rhetoric associated with their pro-periphery position; the reasoning behind the third hypothesis.

H3) Regional nationalist parties will increase the salience of the centre-periphery axis after winning power at devolved level.

Regarding the state-wide opponents of regional nationalist parties, position on the constitutional question is likely to be of less importance to the former than the latter. Consequently positional movement on the centre-periphery axis is more likely for state-wide parties. Such a party facing a serious challenge from a regional nationalist party might

well choose to take a more pro-periphery position coming out in favour of the devolution of power from the state-wide to the sub-state level in the hope that such a concession to regional nationalism will convince voters that it is no longer worth supporting a regional nationalist party. This conviction will lead the party to supplement this positional movement on the centre-periphery axis with a greater use of pro-periphery rhetoric. This imperative to respond to the rise of a regional nationalist party is likely to be a particularly significant motivating factor when the regional nationalist party has been able to win power at devolved level. This reasoning generates the fifth hypothesis.

H4 – State-wide parties will be more likely to shift towards a pro-periphery position when a regional nationalist party wins power at sub-state level.

Office seeking tends to be a powerful motivating factor for state-wide parties that should bring in to play the established tendency of parties to shift position after losing power (Schumacher et al 2015). There is evidence to suggest that poor electoral performance is associated with more moderate position taking (Schumacher & Elmelund-Præstekær 2018:344), which in the context of a twin axis model of party competition means that party losing office will cause a party to rethink its strategy and make it less confident in terms of emphasising its established policy identity. As implementation of a positive subsuming strategy involves a party interspersing references to that established identity in relation to both axes of competition it is likely that loss of office will make a party less likely to utilise positive subsuming. Having lost an election the party in question is likely to conclude that some aspect of the image it was projecting to the electorate was on the wrong side of public opinion. A shift in policy, salience or rhetoric is likely to take place that has the effect of distancing the party from its established policy identity.

One important consideration when predicting party behaviour in the multi-level setting is the extent to which party behaviour will be more influenced by changes in circumstances at the nation state or devolved levels of government. H3 anticipates that the strategy of regional nationalist parties will be heavily influenced by incumbency status at devolved level. I argue that the opposite is likely to be the case for state-wide parties who are more likely than regional nationalist parties to direct tactical focus towards the nation state level. For this reason it is anticipated that loss of office at the nation-state level will have a more

significant effect on the strategy employed by a state-wide party than loss of office at devolved level. This leads to the final hypothesis.

H5 – State-wide parties will be less likely to employ a positive subsuming strategy after losing power at the nation-state level.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter will outline the methodology to be used in applying the position, salience, rhetoric theory of party competition to the case of post-devolution Scotland. It will begin by providing an overview of the methodological options that are most suited to uncovering instances where political parties change any of those elements of their strategic approach. The chosen approach will involve analysing a large body of text which represents instances of spokespeople for the main Scottish political parties making statements outlining and justifying their policy position and attacking that of their opponents. The objective in selecting the methodology was to conduct an analysis broad enough to cover such a large body of text but nuanced enough to determine when parties were using each of individual tactical tools outlined in the theoretical framework. The chapter will conclude by summarising the precise research design that will be used in the project.

Arenas of Party Competition

The main purpose of the theory presented in the preceding chapter is to provide a tool for analysing party competition that is able to incorporate all of the tactical options that parties might use. Gaining a wider and deeper impression of the way political parties behave necessitates conceiving of party competition as taking place over a wider range of settings than has been evident in much of the existing research. Those settings must include arenas where parties have a substantial degree of freedom with regard to what they say about the issues (position) the issues they talk about (salience) and rhetoric (the language they use when giving their particular take on the issues). As shown elsewhere in this project a great deal of research attention in the recent past has been devoted to the study of election manifestos. This study argues that the undoubtedly valuable insight that can be gained via the study of manifestos must be supplemented by the study of other settings in which parties set out their message to the electorate. The idea behind the theory presented in the preceding chapter is very much that the strategic options available to political parties need to be conceived of in as broader sense as possible in order that a full picture of how and why they do what they do can be uncovered. There are crucial limitations on parties' freedom of manoeuvre within the manifesto setting that necessitate also looking at how they behave in other contexts.

In producing a manifesto there is a general expectation that parties will address a representative cross section of issues, meaning that they are constrained in the extent to which they can reduce the salience of any major issue. There are issues such as the economy; education and healthcare provision that parties almost have to refer to in a manifesto, even if they would sooner make their appeal to the electorate on the basis of other issues. For example it would be difficult for any party contesting elections in a multi-level setting to avoid addressing the issue of the constitutional status of the region in which the relevant election is taking place. At the same time this statement of the party's position on what might be called the border question is likely to take up only a small part of a document primarily devoted to outlining a general programme of government.

There may however be some variation in the amount of freedom parties have in this respect dependent on party type. Some parties will not be realistic contenders for office in every (or indeed any) electoral contest; with for example regional nationalist parties tending not to be contenders for office at the state-wide level. Therefore parties that are not primarily office-seeking (Strom & Muller 1999) will have a greater level of freedom with regard to the content of their manifesto, being freer to express their identity without the constraints associated with presenting a detailed programme of government. Conversely parties that are office seeking will be inhibited by that constraint, meaning that in their case manifestos might not be a particularly good guide to the issue salience of the party's message, or the extent to which they use rhetoric redolent of either side of a particular axis of competition.

In a sub-state level election, in particular one conducted under a proportional or semi-proportional system where overall majorities are likely to be rare, all major parties will be aware that there is a chance that the parliamentary arithmetic will put them in a position where they have some influence on policy. Manifestos therefore will tend to constitute statements of the policies they believe whatever government emerges at devolved level should be enacting more than they constitute statements of their position on, or the salience they wish to give to, the centre-periphery axis of competition. This is particularly relevant in the Scottish case that forms the focus of this study given that the powers of the Scottish Parliament increased during the period being studied, and with it the number of policy areas that a party would feel the need to address in its Holyrood manifestos. Quite

simply in that context manifestos are not an ideal indicator of the level of salience parties give to centre-periphery issue.

Manifestos do however have value. Specifically relating to the study of party competition in multi-level settings they can help distinguish the different strategic choices make in preparation for elections to different levels of government; the state-wide and the sub-state. This is important because parties might position themselves differently for different types of election. In the language of one of the most well established theoretical frameworks of party competition (Strom & Müller 1999) they might be office seeking at devolved level but not at state-wide level. They might have a different principle opponent at one level compared with the other. This necessitates conceiving of party competition within an integrated framework that can incorporate both state-wide and sub-state levels. It also provides another reason for looking at party competition outside as well as inside the confines of the manifesto due to the fact that party strategy evident in each type of manifesto might partly be a function of the context in which the manifesto has been produced within the multi-level setting.

Parties do not enjoy an equal level of freedom to make different strategic choices in these different types of election. For example there is evidence suggesting that regional section of state wide parties enjoy more freedom to tack towards the periphery end of the centre-periphery axis of competition when competing at devolved level than is the case when they are competing at state wide level (Alonso 2012:46). Similarly a regional nationalist party competing in a state-wide election enjoys a greater level of strategic freedom in terms of the content of its manifesto than it does when contesting a devolved contest. It is more likely that in the latter type of contest the party will be a realistic contender for government, so it must set out a credible plan for government with all the restrictions in terms of issue salience that entails. These contextual factors suggest party strategy in one type of manifesto should be analysed separately from another. This creates a situation where there are long gaps between elections of the same type when study of party strategy is problematic. This highlights another reason why party competition must be conceived of as taking place outside as well as inside the manifesto; manifestos cannot tell us anything about party strategy between elections.

Benoit and Laver's "big" model of party competition distinguishes between the electoral and the inter-electoral phases of party competition (Benoit & Laver 2006:37). The manifesto-centric focus of much recent research has resulted in the neglect of the inter-election phase, leading to a situation where party positioning in readiness for an election has been conceived as being evident mainly in the content of the manifesto published during the campaign. In reality parties also make political choices between elections, with these choices contributing to the "policy records" that voters can use retrospectively to make electoral choices (Field & Hamann 2015:21). So the image a party projects to the electorate is formed by the strategic choices it makes before the writing of the manifesto as much as by the contents of that document.

So manifestos can be informative, but they cannot tell the whole story. Existing work that has aimed at analysing rhetoric in particular has focused on certain "rhetorical events" that constitute activities where the objective of political parties is "…persuading the public, or to share information on a party's position with citizens" (Bischof 2018:317), such as speeches by party representatives, press conferences, tweets or election campaign events. What is said in parliament also has an impact upon this wider political discourse. Political ideas discussed in parliament are circulated by the mass media, thus having an impact upon the wider political world (Bayley 2004:12). Recent research has documented the fact that even a century and a half ago parliamentary actors understood that they were communicating their ideas to the wider electorate as much as they were communicating them to their colleagues and rivals in parliament. Ministerial speeches in the UK House of Commons began to utilise less sophisticated language in the years after the UK electorate was substantially expanded by the passing of the 1867 Reform Act, thus demonstrating that even in the Victorian era parliamentary actors endeavoured to ensure that their statements of their political position were intelligible to the wider electorate (Spirling 2016). Similarly in modern times the fact that a session of parliamentary questions is to be televised has been shown to have a significant effect in terms of which representatives choose to participate, with representatives from wealthier districts and those who are higher ranking or electorally vulnerable being more likely to take part if they know they have the chance of getting mass TV exposure (Datta 2008). Question time sessions of the type prevalent in the UK have been shown to have an effect on the wider population in promoting higher levels of political

knowledge, partisanship, and turnout (Salmond 2014). Moreover recent evidence from the Netherlands demonstrates how parties use question sessions as strategic tools, with parties focusing on issues they see as salient to them in an attempt to cement "ownership" of those issues, while also targeting for hostile questioning representatives of parties they see as being their primary competitors in terms of winning votes (Otjes & Louwerse 2018:509). Parties can also use parliamentary debates as a forum in which to express their ideological identity (De Saint Laurent 2014:45).

The parliamentary setting also has the advantage of being one where it is possible to analyse the strategic choices parties make in the same setting over a considerable period of time, incorporating both the election and the inter-election phases of party competition. The impact of a variety of factors on those strategic choices can be measured secure in the knowledge that the influence of context will be relatively stable. How parties respond strategically to events that take place between elections can be studied. This type of approach also makes it possible to compare how parties position themselves for different types of election in a multi-level settling. For these reasons this study has chosen to focus on the words spoken by party representatives in parliament as in indicator of the party's general strategic approach.

Studying Party Competition

The literature review chapter detailed current scholarly understanding of the framework in which political parties operate, and the strategic options available to them within that framework. This section considers how researchers have gone about analysing the strategic choices political parties make within those frameworks. Conducting that type of analysis necessitates some type of measurement of the extent to which a political actor is utilising one or other of the available strategic options. Just as the previous section argued that existing theoretical frameworks pay insufficient attention to rhetoric as a distinct strategic tool this section puts forward the view that much of the existing empirical work has utilised methodology that has resulted in insufficient attention being paid to that aspect of party strategy. This omission creates a situation where the output of the strategic choices parties make is incomplete, with the result that an assessment of the causes and consequences of what parties do is difficult to determine.

Methods that have been used in existing research to measure the positioning of political parties have included expert surveys, elite surveys and the manual coding of political texts. Expert surveys, the most prominent of which is the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Bakker et al 2015), involve asking a sample of usually academics (but sometimes journalists, lobbyists or civil servants) to position political parties on a continuum in response to a range of questions. For example respondents might asked to quantify the extent to which a particular party supports or opposes a policy of restricting immigration on ten point scale with ten being the most supportive and zero being the least. The aggregated responses to the survey can then be used to position parties on the basis of one or more axes of competition. There is in addition at least one example of the use of expert surveys to measure the nature of election campaign rhetoric (Gerstle & Nai 2019), but the usual purpose of surveys is to provide a measure of positioning.

The reliability of survey based methods depends to a large extent on respondent's interpretation of the questions asked, and of the fundamental concepts that underpin their judgement as to a party's positioning (Krouwel & van Elfrinkhof 2014:1459). The results obtained depend in no small part upon the respondent's precise interpretation of these fundamental concepts. Similar problems are associated with positioning parties on the basis of voter or party member surveys, with the motivation behind the judgement of survey respondents also being difficult to ascertain. Elite surveys (questionnaires administered to leading figures within political parties) meanwhile suffer from the fact that for many reasons respondents could decide to give strategically influenced responses rather than honest and open ones. Krouwel and van Elfrinkhof highlight an instance of the leader of the Dutch Christian Democrats positioning his party on the other side of the spectrum to that which the party's policy platform warranted on multiple issues with the aim of representing broad public opinion rather than the official party position (Krouwel & van Elfrinkhof 2014:1460).

Given these disadvantages associated with survey based methods of analysing party positioning it is perhaps unsurprising that much of the work done in this area has involved the coding of naturally occurring political texts, usually election manifestos but often political speeches or debate transcripts. The most prominent exponent of this type of approach is the well-established Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR) project (Volkens et al 2018) which analyses party manifestos published in the lead up to

elections at nation state level, and the similar Regional Manifesto Project (Gomez et al 2018) that focuses on elections for sub-state tiers of government. This type of analysis can be done conducted either via hand coding, or by automated or semi-automated content analysis. In the case of manual coding the text is generally broken down into units of analysis (such as the "quasi sentence" used by the MARPOR Project) and each unit categorised as, for example a positive or negative reference to federalism, free markets or the European Union. For reasons of practicality manual coding usually involves analysing a very limited amount of text, or using a large team of trained coders with inevitable logistical and financial implications.

The problems associated with manual coding by humans are not limited to logistical issues. Different experts coding different texts in different years make analysing positional trends over time and across different countries problematic. Slapin and Proksch highlight the fact that the Manifesto Project "Rile" ratings that attempt to quantify how left wing or right wing a particular manifesto is seem to uncover major changes in the positioning of the major political parties in Germany during the 1990s that on the face of it are inconsistent with most standard accounts of German politics during that period (Slapin & Proksch 2008:716). The data for 1990 locates the centre-right CDU-CSU closer to the Greens than to any other political party, including the classically liberal Free Democrats with whom the CDU-CSU were in coalition at the time. Furthermore it suggests that the centre-left SPD over the course of the decade shifted from a position close to that of the former communists to one closer to the centrist Free Democrats, bypassing the Greens in the process. This example seems to highlight the pitfalls associated with the inevitably partly subjective judgments that are an unavoidable feature of human coding.

These negative aspects of the human coding method can be mitigated to an extent by transparency. As long as the coding system the annotated text and the results of tests for inter-coder reliability are made available alongside the output of any research project utilising the method then the results can be interpreted with these issues in mind. Furthermore manual coding is arguably well suited to analysing the rhetorical justifications employed by political actors, as is essential in applying the theoretical framework formulated for this project. Human coders with the necessary background knowledge are well suited to the task of highlighting and classifying the parts of a text that constitute the

rhetorical justification of a statement of policy position. Manual coding however has one major flaw in that it is a time consuming process meaning that only relatively small amounts of text can be processed.

In an attempt to overcome some of the difficulties associated with manual coding much recent work has utilised methods of Computer Assisted Textual Analysis. Some of this has involved the compilation of a dictionary of words typically used disproportionately often by those occupying a particular space on the political spectrum. Laver and Garry (2000) conducted a study estimating political positions of political parties in the UK by analysing text using a dictionary compiled using the manifestos of the Conservative and Labour parties published in the run up to the 1992 UK general election. The observed frequencies of certain words in those documents led them to classify them as being particularly "Labour" or "Conservative" words. This enabled the compilation of dictionaries that could be applied to any text using CATA software in order to estimate the political positioning of the text. Similar dictionary based studies have been conducted by Pennings (2011) who compiled a dictionary aiming to reproduce the coding scheme used in the Manifesto Project, and Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) who attempted to measure the level of populism in a political text using a dictionary of terms redolent of that phenomenon. A more recent study has used a dictionary to measure political parties' use of "moral rhetoric" in their election manifestos (Jung 2020). The use of the dictionary method in that study highlights the fact that the method can be successfully utilised to provide a more general impression of a text than that achieved via manual coding. The latter method involves tagging and counting certain features of the text while the aim of applying a dictionary is to quantify the extent to which the entire text constitutes an example of the phenomenon being investigated, be that populism, anti-immigration sentiment or anti-capitalist discourse.

The usefulness of a dictionary based analysis rests in no small part upon the compilation of the dictionary. In choosing to include some words and omit others the researcher is engaging in a process of judgement that will inevitably restrict what the research can find. Small adjustments in the content of the dictionary can make a significant difference to the results obtained. In basing their dictionary on the results of an analysis of a particular set of election manifestos Laver and Garry doubtless attempted to ensure that the compilation of their dictionary had a good degree of empirical rigour, rather than it merely being the

product of the judgment of the research team. Results obtained using dictionaries have the advantage of being easily replicable, but the compilation of the dictionary should be transparent and rigorous and the results validated using other methods wherever possible (Grimmer & Stewart 2019).

Later research (Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003) has substituted the dictionary with a particular set of reference texts with a known political position representing the extremes of a particular axis of competition. The Wordscores software package was developed to count words in the text under analysis; these counts were then compared with that produced by applying the same method to the reference texts. This enabled the researchers to calculate the political position of the text under analysis relative to the reference texts. This study argues that the use of reference texts has an important advantage over the use of dictionaries in that the researcher is not prejudging what words are reliable indicators of the phenomenon being studied to the same extent with the former as with the latter. The researcher is selecting a set of reference texts on the basis that they represent examples of the variable being studied, but it is the political actors engaged in producing the reference text that have taken the decision as to what words are indicative of that phenomenon. This of course assumes that the researcher's contention that the reference text being used is a reliable indicator is well founded.

Assessments of the reliability of Wordscores have produced mixed results with substantial variation depending on the case being studied (Brauninger et al 2013, Bruinisima & Gemenis 2019). Much indeed seems to depend on the reference texts being a reliable source for the measurement of the quantity being scaled (Bruinisima & Gemenis 2019:12), which may well necessitate selecting reference texts on the basis of existing empirical evidence relating to their political positioning where possible. As Slapin and Proksch (2008:707) point out scholars can reasonably disagree about what exactly constitutes the extremes of political space in a particular context, and therefore on the validity of the selection of the reference texts. Consequently they put forward an approach based on a scaling algorithm called Wordfish that aims to estimate the positioning of sets of texts relative to one another based on word frequencies without the need for a reference text, or a researcher compiled dictionary.

Unfortunately Wordfish has been shown to be not entirely reliable, with one test of the method positioning the major political parties in Canada finding that it delivered questionable results (Kaal et al 2014:41). More generally it has been suggested that scaling methods of this type can position parties due to stylistic rather than ideological differences, particularly if much of the language in the relevant text is non-ideological (Grimmer & Stewart 2013:291-292). Later work, including by the same researchers who pioneered the Wordfish method, has confirmed that the method is best suited to scaling texts created with the definite intention of expressing a particular ideological stance (Slapin & Proksch 2014:132, Hjorth 2015). The method is therefore not suited to the analysis of texts produced in a context where expressing ideological identity is not always the main intention of the participants, for example in parliamentary debates, or where the relative presence or absence of language indicative of political positioning might be relevant to the analysis. The latter might well be relevant in a study that aims to gain an insight into when and why political parties might sometimes deliberately avoid presenting a clear position.

All of the computer assisted methods referred to above exhibit two limitations. Firstly they are insensitive to the context in which particular words are being used, which can lead misleading conclusions to be drawn when an analysis is based upon simple counts of how many times a word occurs in a particular document. For example the word "tank" has a very different meaning when used in the context of discussing aquariums compared with that of discussing wars (Bohlat et al 2015:10). Secondly they treat all words as being of equal value in determining the general meaning of a text. The latter issue can be mitigated to an extent by removing stop words (common words that are of limited value in themselves in conveying the meaning of a text such as "and" "of" or "the") from the document, but this step does not represent a complete solution.

The first issue has led to much recent research utilising methods that analyse each word with some sensitivity to the context in which it appears. One notable example is the Alceste programme that uses the R software environment. The application is also available in freeware form as Iramuteq (Ratinaud 2009). Illia et al (2014:354) classify it as a Keyword in Context (KWIC) mode of analysis, in contrast to a Keyword Out of Context (KWOC) type of analysis such as the dictionary approach or Wordscores. This means that for Alceste/Iramuteq a single word is only of significance to the extent that it tends to occur in

the text together with certain other words to a statistically significant extent. The value of the technique rests upon the idea that the context in which a particular word or phrase is used is crucial, and upon the assumption that word co-occurrence is a suitable basis for representing the meaning of a text (Illia et al 2014:355).

The units of analysis used by Alceste are known as the Elementary Context Units (ECU). The programme determines these automatically using a hierarchy of punctuation symbols, such as commas, full stops, colons and semi-colons. Once a text has been uploaded to the programme, and an analysis has been initiated, the programme begins by attempting to divide the text into two cluster (the software uses the term "classe" as its default language is French) maximising both the similarity of the ECUs within each cluster and the difference between the clusters. It attempts to find a partition within the text that minimises the number of words that appear in more than one cluster. Once the programme has divided the text into two clusters in this way, it then looks within each cluster to determine whether splitting that cluster into two would increase the level of similarity of the words within the clusters. If that is the case then a new cluster is created. This process continues until a stage is reached where dividing any of the clusters would no longer result in the creation of a new cluster that is statistically distinct from an existing one (Bohlat et al 2015:12). The output of the programme includes a graphical representation of this process of descending hierarchical classification in the form of a dendrogram. These word clusters (usually there are between three and six produced by most texts) represent something similar to a set of word clouds that together make up the building blocks of the text. Were the software used to analyse, for example, a television debate that took place between party representatives during an election campaign it might be expected that the clusters cover particular policy areas. The application of the method in that example would make it possible for a researcher to gain an impression of the type of language used by each debate participant, thus providing an insight into the type of image each participant was seeking to project to the viewer during the debate.

As well as dividing the text into these clusters Alceste produces a list of the words that make up each cluster ranked by their Chi squared statistical significance within the cluster. The programme also allows a researcher studying a text, such as a debate transcript, to tag certain significant features of the text such as the party affiliation of the person speaking. If

the text has been tagged in such a way the output of the programme will include a p value indicating whether there is a statistically significant relationship between one or more of the clusters and the discourse of speakers with a particular party affiliation. This provides an indication of the distinctive type of language used by elected representatives of each party in each debate.

Much recent research has utilised this software, for example to analyse the arguments put forward by British and French parliamentarians on the subject of using referendums to ratify EU treaties (Bicquelet 2009). In the context of the US the method has been used to study the type of language used by elected representatives when debating abortion (Schonhardt-Bailey 2008), or that used by members during deliberations of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Federal Reserve (Schonhardt-Bailey 2013).

Before using the software some minimal preparation of the text is required to eliminate initialisms, acronyms, and non-letter symbols such as pound or dollar signs from the text. The researcher also needs to tag the text in the manner described above depending on what features of the text are of interest. Notwithstanding these steps one major advantage of an Alceste/Iramuteq analysis has is that the process as a whole involves minimal researcher intervention, certainly compared with that involved in the preparation of a dictionary, the selection of a set of reference texts or with manual coding. This limits the extent to which the results obtained can be influenced by researcher intervention. The disadvantage of this minimal researcher involvement at the input stage is that there is a chance that the output may not be meaningful in the context of the research question. Only astute selection of the text to be analysed can influence the extent to which this is the case. Much of the existing research using Alceste has studied the language used by speakers within debates on a single topic, so it could be the case that outside that type of context the software might be of limited use as a standalone method. However it still represents a useful exploratory tool that can guide the researcher to particular relevant features or patterns within the text that might not be immediately obvious.

As noted above Alceste/Iramuteq represents a method of CATA that attempts to analyse text while taking some account of the context in which words appear. Other methods have been developed that deal with the other methodological issue that not all words should

necessarily be treated as equally meaningful in highlighting the distinctive features of a text. One of these is cosine similarity which can be used to generate a quantitative measurement of the relative levels of similarity of a set of documents that is not influenced by document length (Bohlat et al 2015:9-10, Martoccia Diodati et al 2018:524). It has for some time been a common method used in the field of information retrieval (McGill & Salton 1983), and has been used as the basis of many internet search engines by providing a method of determining which web pages have the greatest level of similarity with a particular search query.

In measuring the level of similarity between documents in this way rather than simply comparing counts of words in various documents as the dictionary method and Wordscores does, cosine similarity uses the tf-idf (term frequency-inverse document frequency) weighting of each word within each document. This gives greater weight to terms that appear frequently in some documents but infrequently in others on the grounds that they are likely to be the ones indicative of the differences between the documents (Bholat et al 2015:9). Thus rather than giving equal weight to all words in a set of documents tf-idf directs focus towards those that distinguish one document from another. These tf-idf scores form the input to a vector space model that calculates the cosine similarity between the documents. The result of this is that the cosine similarity method is sensitive to the context in which words appear. To use the example referred to above, cosine similarity would not classify documents on the topic of wars as being similar to ones discussing aquatics because both included frequent use of the word "tank" as the word would be deemed to be not be useful in distinguishing between the documents. The similarity rating would instead be primarily a result of the other terms in the text that did highlight the difference between the texts.

The measure of cosine document similarity has hitherto been a rarely utilised method in the field of political science, but in a couple of recent examples it has been used successfully to measure policy distance between political actors via the analysis of parliamentary discourse (Martoccia Diodati et al 2018, O'Grady 2019). The ability of the method to measure policy distance means that it can also be used to scale documents between two reference texts that represent different sides of a particular axis of competition. In using reference texts this method borrows from the approach used in Wordscores but with the added benefit of using

a method of calculating similarity that does not operate under the questionable assumption that all words are of equal importance in determining levels of document similarity.

This section has highlighted the main types of methodology used in existing research involving the strategic choices political parties make that uses text as data. Employment of these methodological tools has enabled an impression to be gained as to the factors that influence the strategic choices political parties make, and importantly the limitations within which they operate when making those choices. However the insight provided by these studies is more often than not inhibited by the very limited way in which they seek to identify shifts in political parties' strategic approach. Many use the large dataset produced by the MARPOR project referred to above whose left-right ratings are founded on the twin assumptions that parties are severely inhibited by their past positions in the extent to which they are able to adjust their ideological stance, and that they consequently compete via differential issue salience rather than taking up different positions (Budge 1994:457-458). The idea is that there exists a set of issues that parties of the left habitually focus on and a separate set that parties of the right tend to emphasise. The extent to which a party focuses one set of topics or the other determines whether it can be said to be occupying a left wing or right wing policy space.

This focus on salience rather than positioning makes sense in the context of other research showing party positioning as measured by expert and voter placement to be relatively stable over time (Dalton & McAllister 2015:777), and that voters do not adjust their perception of party position in response to policy statements during election campaigns (Adams, Ezrow & Somer Topcu 2011). Clearly however there are some issues with this it. Political parties do take up opposing positions, and the significance of the positions they take in the minds of voters may not be proportional to the number of times they are alluded to in party discourse (Gemenis 2013:5). The use of salience measures to generate a spatial calculation in the manner of the left-right ratings derived from the MARPOR is also problematic given that valence mechanisms relating to party performance and leadership evaluations have been shown to have a more significant impact on voter choice (Sanders et al 2011).

In general many of the methods of analysing party strategy discussed in this section have been developed with insufficient attention paid as to what factors drive the opinions voters have regarding political parties. It is almost as though methods of measurement have been created so that researchers can apply labels to particular parties or strategic options without much consideration being given to whether those labels are of any relevance to the electorate. In the post-results section of this study it is intended that the findings will be analysed in the context of relevant opinion polling in order to assess whether any tactical shifts that may be uncovered appear to have had an impact on public opinion. This necessitates conceiving of party strategy as encompassing elements beyond position and salience that there is a legitimate reason to believe are relevant to voter assessment of political parties.

Consequently this thesis argues that the negative issues associated with existing methods of identifying tactical shifts in party strategy discussed above can be addressed in two ways. Firstly by incorporating some consideration of how political actors frame or justify their policy preferences and attack the views of their opponents as distinct from the positions they articulate and the relative salience they give to certain topics. Tracking party strategy in this way takes account of existing evidence that significant numbers of voters are low information with the consequence that their preferences are driven by general policy cues rather than specific policy statements (Rabinowitz & McDonald 1989:94-95). Voters of that type do not follow the pronouncements of political actors closely with the consequence that their preferences are driven to a greater extent by an impression that a party stands for a particular set of values that make it distinct from its opponents. How a party frames its position is likely to have a significant effect on these types of generalised impressions. The definition of rhetoric outlined for the purpose of this study represents an attempt to track the different policy frames political parties use over an extended period of time.

Secondly the study argues that some consideration should be given to the overall coherence of a party's message, the reasoning behind this being that voters respond positively to a policy platform with an overarching theme more positively than they would to a series of seemingly unconnected policy statements. In the context of the multi-level setting that forms the focus of this project this means that the image a party projects on the left-right axis should reinforce its identity on the centre-periphery one.

All the methods used in existing studies of party competition have their various advantages and disadvantages in terms of a project that aims to investigate the positioning, issue salience and rhetorical strategies employed by political parties. Only survey methods can direct focus unambiguously towards one of those elements as respondents are specifically asked to give their view of the policy position the party occupies. Methods aimed at the classification of political texts such as manual coding, dictionary based analyses or scaling methods such as Wordfish (Slapin & Proksch 2008) can provide an indication of the general ideological leaning of a text, with the latter type of method being particularly useful in that it facilitates the examination of large volume of text.

Within a political text ideology is tangible but irreducible (Rheault & Cochrane 2020:114). There also exists no absolute measurement of party position to which all other methods can be compared. Certainly it has long been argued that the MARPOR and Regional Manifesto Project left-right ratings that convert measurements of issue salience into positional ratings track changes in the issues parties choose to emphasise from one election to the next more than they represent a true measure of policy position or ideological orientation (Pelizzo 2003). Ratings of that type then should arguably not be studied in isolation but interpreted with reference to how they have been generated by the documents being studied.

This means in the case of MARPOR-type ratings examining the annotated text in order to gain an impression of why a party appears to have shifted in one direction or another over the course of a series of elections. In the case of the more automated methods such as those utilised in this study it means examining the texts that appear to generate particularly extreme left wing, right wing, pro-centre or pro-periphery ratings. This is partly in order to verify that the chosen method has not classified those texts for spurious reasons, but also to determine whether the method has picked up changes in the language used by political actors that constitute statements of position, adjustments in issue salience or changes in rhetorical strategy.

The methodology of this study will follow precisely that analytical process. Two methods of computer assisted text analysis (Alceste/Iramuteq and cosine similarity) will be employed to provide a general measurement of the extent to which at a particular point in time party representatives used language redolent of a particular side of the two axes of competition

being studied. This will highlight particular instances where parties appear to have been particularly keen to express a left wing, right wing, pro-centre or pro-periphery identity. Those texts can then be subjected to a qualitative analysis in order to determine whether that ideological identity stems from statements of policy position, changes in issue salience or adjustments in rhetorical strategy.

One or more of the methods to be employed outlined in this chapter might well detect a change in the language used by political actors from one of the parties being studied, but it will not be immediately evident whether that indicates a shift in policy position, issue salience or rhetorical justification until the qualitative analysis has taken place. Consequently the term "language" or the phrase "language redolent of…" a particular side of an axis of competition will be used as an overarching term to refer to patterns within the data that could be indicative of changes in policy position, issue salience, rhetoric or the use of positive or negative subsuming. Those phrases will be used in that way for the remainder of the thesis.

Research Design

This study will utilise the two CATA methods referred to above and apply those to a set of documents consisting of the contributions made by representatives of the major Scottish parties to debates in the Scottish Parliament. An initial exploratory analysis of each document using Alceste/Iramuteq will be followed by a process involving calculating the cosine similarity of the texts with a set of reference texts that represent each side of the two main axes of competition that exist in the example of a multi-level setting that forms the focus of the project. The aim of this is to provide a general indication of the extent to which at any one time party representatives were using language redolent of the left, right, pro-centre or pro-periphery axes of competition. The output of this analysis will then be used to direct the qualitative analysis outlined above. The latter can then in turn be used to judge the extent to which parties are manipulating the position, salience and rhetoric aspects of the message they project to the electorate.

The intention in selecting the sample of parliamentary discourse included in the analysis is to minimise the influence of contextual factors such as the topic of the debate. The decision was therefore taken to focus on one regular, set-piece parliamentary occasion that because

it receives a decent amount of media coverage would be a setting in which it would be reasonable to expect that parties would be aiming to convey a particular image to the wider electorate: sessions of First Minister's Question Time in the Scottish Parliament. Debates on other specific topics were felt to be too context sensitive for use in a study that aims to study party strategy over a significant period of time. The precise legislative programme being put forward by the party in power would in all likelihood influence the nature of the debate to an extent that would make comparisons over time problematic.

FMQs sessions were chosen because they afford debate participants a substantial amount of leeway in terms of the topics they raise, thus making them a good method of ascertaining the relative salience party representatives wish to give to particular policy topics. In a Westminster-type setting of which the Scottish Parliament is an example it is mostly the main opposition parties that choose the initial topic of a session as it is they who are allocated the majority of the questions. However regular viewers of parliamentary question and answer sessions of this type will note that government spokespeople tend to be adept at focusing attention on the topic they want to talk about almost irrespective of the question that has been asked.

The selection of the reference texts when using a method involving their use is a crucial decision; one that where possible should be influenced by existing empirical data. The key requirement in the selection of the reference texts for this project was that they be documents produced with the demonstrable intention of expressing an ideological stance indicative of one or other side of each axis of competition. Election manifestos as the documents used to determine the measurements of positioning and salience in projects such as the Manifesto Project and its regional equivalent are suited to this task. The idea behind the method is that election manifestos represent the concentrated distillation of the language used by parties when projecting a particular ideological identity. A manifesto classified as particularly left wing or right wing on the basis of the MARPOR ratings can be said to represent the language a party uses when it wishes to express that particular ideological identity. Measuring the extent to which what parliamentary representatives say is similar to documents of that type gives some indication of the extent to which they are trying to project that identity.

Mention was made of the fact that ideally reference texts used to scale other documents should be selected on the basis of existing empirical data where possible. With that in mind the reference texts used to measure left-right positioning were chosen on basis of the ratings given to recent UK manifestos by MARPOR (Volkens et al 2018). The reference texts used to measure left wing positioning were the Green Party manifesto from the 2017 election (the most left wing UK manifesto of the 21st century according to the MARPOR data), the Labour manifesto from the same election (the most left wing since 1992) and the Labour manifesto from the 1992 UK general election. To measure right wing positioning the 2001 UKIP manifesto (the most right wing UK manifesto published since 1945) and the Conservative manifestos from 1992 (the fourth most right wing since 1945) and 2010 (the most right wing Conservative manifesto of the 21st century) were used. An additional imperative in selecting these documents was for there to be some spread in terms of the date when the documents were published relative to the period being studied in an attempt to account for the possibility that the type of language used by individuals occupying various positions on the political spectrum might change over time. For this reason the reference texts encompass documents published before, during and after the 2000-2016 period of the study.

The selection of texts to measure centre-periphery positioning was more problematic. The Regional Manifesto Project has coded manifestos published by the main Scottish parties in the lead up to Holyrood elections on the basis of centre-periphery positioning and salience (Gomez et al 2018). However they show little variation on either of those measures throughout the period studied with the consequence that there is little to choose between them in terms of the extent to which they represent examples of the language used by the parties when expressing particular policy identities. It was therefore decided to use documents that in their entirety constitute examples of the main Scottish political parties arguing a specifically pro-centre or pro-periphery case. The document published by the Scottish Government setting out the case for Scottish independence in the run up to the 2014 referendum (Scottish Government 2014) was chosen as part of the pro-periphery reference text, along with the extracted sections of SNP manifestos published since 1997 that argued an explicit pro-periphery position.

For the pro-centre reference texts the text of two speeches by then UK Prime Minister David Cameron (Dearden 2014) and former Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Mudie 2014) made in support of maintaining the union in the course of the 2014 referendum campaign were used along with an example of campaign literature published by the pro-union campaign (Better Together 2014). In addition the sections of the 1997 Labour (Labour Party 1997) and Conservative (Conservative Party 1997) manifestos for that year's general election relating to Scotland were included. At that election both parties used language supporting the union even though they had opposing views on the desirability of devolution. The pro-centre reference text therefore incorporated examples of language used by parties on the left and right of the left-right axis in justifying a pro-centre position.

The text of the written record of all FMQs sessions that took place in the Scottish Parliament from when the first session of that type took place in 2000 up to the 2016 Holyrood election was divided into four quarters for each year. Sessions that took place in January, February and March formed the first quarter, those that took place in April May and June the second quarter and so on. This decision to do this was taken in order to ensure that each measurement was a result of the analysis of a decent portion of the words spoken by party representatives, but that enough measurements were taken during the period studied for any adjustments in party positioning to be evident. Minor adjustments were made in order to ensure that the documents represented samples of the language used by party representatives of roughly equal size, and that a clear measurement of all independent variables was possible. The text for each quarter was then divided up on the basis of the party affiliation of the person speaking. This process resulted in the compilation of a total of 61 documents for each of the three main Scottish political parties containing their contributions to FMQs sessions in each quarter of every year from 2000-2016.

The documents were then prepared for the analysis using Alceste/Iramuteq. That process involved converting all upper case letters to lower case, and the removal of certain non-alphabetical signs such as dollar or pound signs that can interfere with the smooth running of the analysis. Once that analysis had been completed they along with the reference texts were tokenised; a process that enables each word to be analysed separately by the software being employed. In addition all stop-words such as "and" "of" and "the" were removed as existing research has demonstrated that removing these enhances the ability of a

computerised method to detect language relating to a particular ideological stance (Rheault & Cochrane 2020). Using the R software environment tf-idf scores for each word in each document were calculated and these used to compute the cosine similarity of each document with the left, right, pro-centre and pro-periphery reference texts. The R code used in implementing these steps is detailed in appendix 3.

Each measurement of left-right positioning was taken by subtracting the cosine similarity of each document and the left reference text from the equivalent figure for the right reference text to give a net right wing rating. A similar calculation was done in order to obtain the measurements of centre-periphery positioning with the cosine similarity of each document and the pro-centre reference text being subtracted from the equivalent figure for the pro-periphery reference text to give a net pro-periphery rating. In order to reduce the impact of outliers in the large number of measurements taken using the data from FMQs sessions a rolling average was calculated in which each measurement was added to the preceding and succeeding measurement and divided by 3. By this method a total of 60 net measurements of the extent which party spokespeople used language redolent of each side of both axes of competition were taken using the FMQs data.

A measurement of the positive subsuming strategy for each party was also generated using the ratings generated via the calculation of cosine similarity. As detailed in the previous chapter what constitutes positive subsuming for each party is different. It involves using language redolent of the party's established identity on one axis of competition in close conjunction with language redolent of its established identity on the other. With this in mind the positive subsuming measure was obtained by combining the similarity figure for the party's established position on one axis with that relating to the other. So the SNP's positive subsuming rating was calculated by adding the similarity rating for each quarter with the left reference texts with the similarity rating for the pro-periphery reference text. Similarly the Conservative's positive subsuming rating is the sum of the cosine similarity of the words spoken by its representatives with the right reference text with the equivalent figure for the pro-centre reference text.

Calculating a measurement of positive subsuming for Scottish Labour is less straightforward than doing the same for the Conservatives or the SNP. As outlined in the literature review

chapter by the advent of devolution Labour's established policy identity on the centre-periphery axis was not so much pro-union in the manner of the Conservatives but pro-devolution. The party therefore can be said to be occupying a position on that axis between that of the SNP and the Tories. A true measure of positive subsuming for Labour would therefore involve measuring the extent to which it reinforced a pro-devolution stance with a left-of-centre one. The problem with this in terms of using automated methods of text analysis is that that the distinction between the type of language used by pro-devolution Labour and the pro-union Conservatives is in all likelihood too subtle to be detected by computerised methods. There would be a substantial amount of overlap between the type of language used by representatives of both parties as well as important differences. Use of separate pro-devolution and pro-union reference texts was therefore rejected in favour of the use of the single pro-centre reference text described above which incorporates samples of speeches delivered by both Labour and Conservative representatives when addressing the constitutional issue. A measure of similarity with this text combined with a similar measure of similarity with a left wing reference text can be said to provide a measure of the extent to which Labour utilised language redolent of the left when addressing the constitutional issue even if does not incorporate a perfect definition of Labour's established policy identity on the centre-periphery axis. It can provide a guide to the qualitative analysis of the text that is then able to assess the true extent of Labour's use of positive subsuming.

With these issues in mind a quantitative measurement of Labour's use of positive subsuming was generated by adding together the cosine similarity scores for the left and pro-centre reference texts with the documents containing the written record of words spoken by the party's representatives in each quarter. How the quantitative measurements of positive subsuming were calculated for each of the three main parties is detailed in table 2.

Table 2: Measurement of positive subsuming strategy used for Scottish Labour, the Scottish Conservatives and the Scottish National Party

Party	Measurement of Positive Subsuming
SNP	Cosine similarity score for left reference text + cosine similarity score for pro-periphery reference text
Labour	Cosine similarity score for left reference text + cosine similarity score for pro-centre reference text
Conservative	Cosine similarity score for right reference text + cosine similarity score for pro-centre reference text

Assuming that each measurement generated in this way is indicative of the general strategy employed by parties at the relevant point in time does involve use of the unitary actor assumption that the entirety of a party follows a similar strategy at the same time. This study argues that this is a legitimate assumption given the parliamentary question and answer sessions that are the subjects of the analysis. The vast majority of contributions to those sessions come from the leading representatives of the largest parties. Consequently the unitary actor assumption is a legitimate one in the context of the investigation presented here even if it might not be in work analysing rhetoric in other parliamentary settings.

The resulting measurements of the extent to which party representatives used language redolent of a left-wing, right wing, pro-centre and pro-periphery stance were subjected to two stages of analysis. Firstly OLS regression was applied to the net pro-periphery, net-right and positive subsuming scores in order to ascertain the effect of a set of independent variables on the language used by party representatives that provide an initial test of the hypotheses. These variables were based on incumbency status at Holyrood and Westminster and whether the session took place in the lead up to a Westminster or

Holyrood election. The aim of this was to provide some indication of how the parties responded tactically to these different sets of circumstances.

All independent variables are simple binary ones. For the Holyrood incumbency (HI) variable a value of 0 is applied to measurements taken when a Labour led administration was in power at Holyrood and a value of 1 to ones taken when the SNP formed a government. Similarly the Westminster incumbency (WI) variable applied a value of 0 to measurements taken when Labour held power at UK level and a value of 1 to readings taken when the Conservatives were in government.

A single binary variable was applied to the measurements generated by the written record of FMQs sessions in order to ascertain the effect of whether the next election due to take place was a Holyrood or Westminster contest. 0 indicates a session that took place when the next scheduled election was a Westminster one and 1 a session that occurred when the next election due was an election to the Holyrood parliament. The reasoning behind formulating the election variable in this way is that pinpointing at precisely which point between elections party strategy is likely to be influenced by the upcoming election is problematic. It was therefore decided that no attempt to do this would be made and that the relevant variable should assume that party strategy would be influenced by the type of election next scheduled even if that was several years in the future. No elections during the period studied took place outside the normal sequencing of Westminster and Holyrood contests. An account of the calculations involved in generating all variables is detailed appendix 1.

Some of the independent variables detailed above impact upon the net right, net pro-periphery and positive subsuming scores generated at the same time, for example with the majority of the period when the SNP held power at Holyrood coinciding with the Conservatives being in government at Westminster. Consequently all multivariate regression models incorporated a test for multicollinearity in the form of the calculation of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each independent variable in an effort to ascertain whether the results obtained were impacted by this issue.

The next stage in the analysis was to return to the texts and examine instances where the quantitative analysis suggested that parties were using language particular redolent of one

side of either of the axis of competition, or where documents appeared to generate particularly high or low levels of positive subsuming. The purpose of this was twofold. Firstly to provide verification that the measurements generated were indeed due to party spokespeople making statements aimed at projecting a particular ideological identity. Secondly where that was the case the text was examined in order to determine whether those statements could credibly be described as statements of policy position or examples of rhetorical justification. In addition the cosine similarity method was run on some extracted segments of the written record specifically relevant to the hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter. This step served to both provide additional validation of the method employed and to provide additional information regarding the hypotheses. As an additional indicator of salience some simple word counts were run on the text using the Nvivo software package in order to capture the extent to which representatives were focusing on the centre-periphery axis.

In summary this project will apply three methods of analysis to one set of documents. The written record of First Minister's Questions sessions will be analysed via Alceste/Iramuteq and cosine document similarity. This process will generate a series of indicators of the strategic choices the main Scottish political parties made in the immediate post devolution era by analysing the language used by the elected representatives of each party. This enables an assessment to be made as to what factors influenced those choices, including but not limited to how they responded to changes in incumbency position at state-wide and sub-state level and how they positioned themselves in readiness for different types of elections. It also enables an assessment to be made of the strategic choices that tend to bring electoral success in the multi-level setting.

Chapter - 4 Results

This section will present the results of the project, consisting of the Alceste/Iramuteq cluster analysis, the results obtained via cosine document similarity analysis and the word counts conducted using Nvivo. The chapter will be structured around the six hypotheses outlined in chapter 2. Hypotheses 1-3 relate to the strategic choices made by regional nationalist parties, consequently the first substantive section will focus on the SNP. The other two hypotheses consider the behaviour of the state-wide opponents of regional nationalist parties, so the subsequent section will consider the results relating to Scottish Labour and the Scottish Conservatives. Prior to those two sections an introduction to the results obtained by the cosine similarity analysis relating to all parties will be provided as the general trends evident relate to several of the hypotheses.

Figure 1 shows the fluctuating net right scores for all parties over the course of the period studied. Even with the use of rolling averages party scores exhibit a high degree of volatility with there being a number of outlying measurements for all parties. This suggests two things. Firstly that the language used by party representatives varies considerably over time. Secondly that the quantitative measurement employed may be less precise than might be hoped for. The former is arguably to be expected given the nature of the parliamentary debates included in the analysis. Over the course of a decade and a half of question and answer sessions a wide range of topics will be discussed not all of which are conducive to reliably classifying the language used by participants as being left wing, right wing, pro-centre or pro-periphery. The latter raises more fundamental questions regarding the utility of the method. These issues will be considered in the evaluation section towards the end of this thesis.

Despite these methodological issues there are some patterns within the output of the analysis that are relevant to the hypotheses. The main one is the contrast between the first and second half of that period. Prior to 2007 parties are clustered closely together with little to choose between them on this measure. After that point there appears to be a greater degree of polarisation. The Conservatives are more often than not seen to use language redolent of the right of the relevant axis of competition while the SNP is seen to adopt more left leaning language. The pattern for Labour is much less distinct with little evident trend

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over the course of the period studied. The consequence of that is that the SNP appears to outflank Labour on that axis of competition using language more clearly redolent of the left.

The pattern relating to the SNP is relevant for H1. The party appears to use more left wing language in the latter part of the period studied, however the shift towards that strategy appears to predate the change in incumbency at Westminster in 2010 when the Conservatives were voted into power. On the basis of this initial impression the importance of that change in causing the SNP to use more left wing language is open to question.

Figure 1: Net right scores for parties in FMQs sessions 2000-2016 generated via cosine similarity method
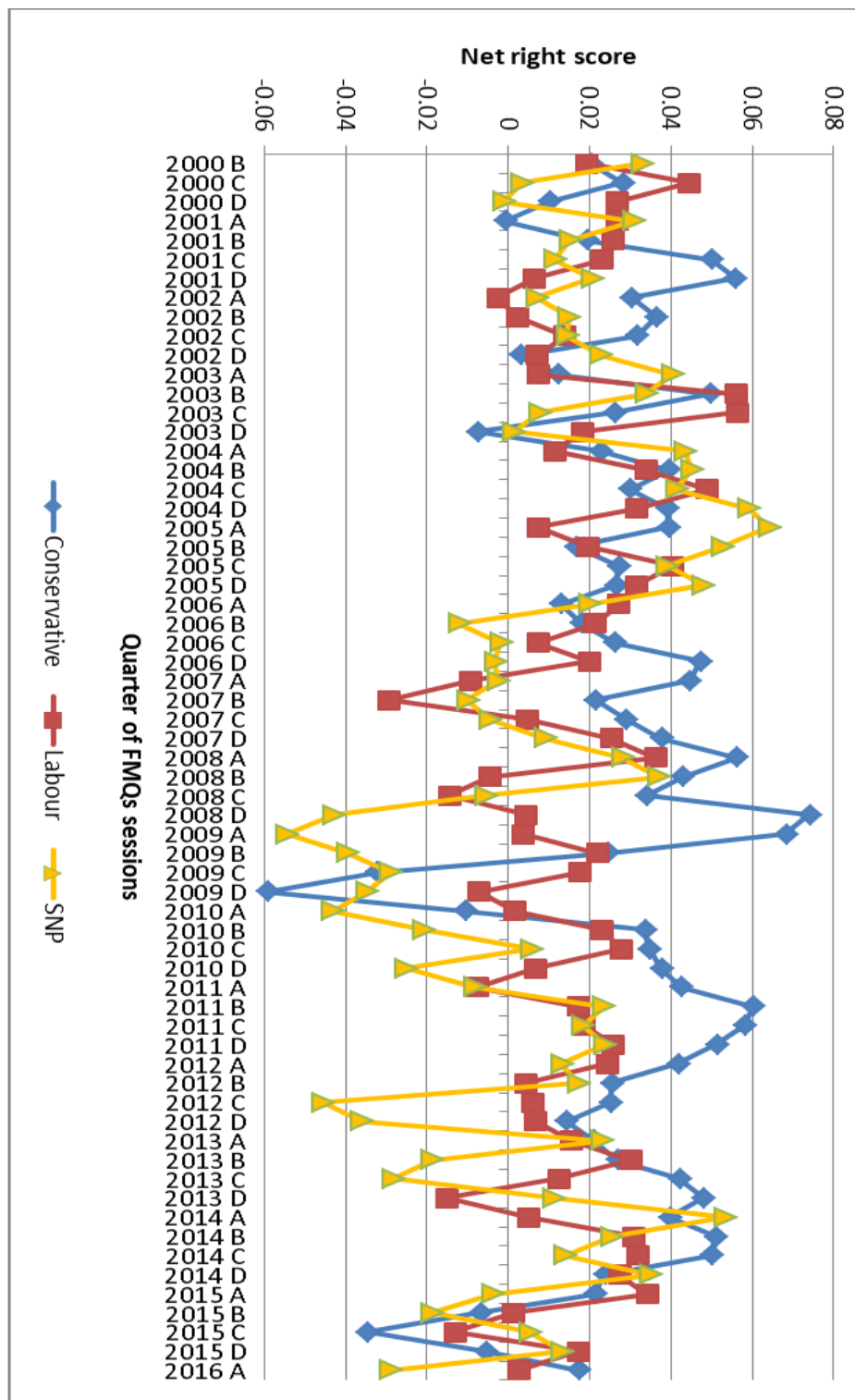
The main pattern evident in the results detailed in figure 2 relating to the centre-periphery axis of competition is of a general clustering of all parties towards the pro-periphery side in the middle of the period studied. This shift appears to take place in the period immediately after the SNP were voted into power at Holyrood, thus offering some support for H4 that state-wide parties will react to a regional nationalist party coming to power by taking steps to reconcile themselves with the voters who have made that happen. In contrast there is no evidence at this stage in the analysis to support H2 or H3 that regional nationalist parties will reduce centre-periphery salience when the next election due is at the devolved level, or that they increase the level of salience of that axis when voted into power.

Figure 2: Net pro-periphery scores for parties in FMQs sessions 2000-2016 generated via cosine similarity method
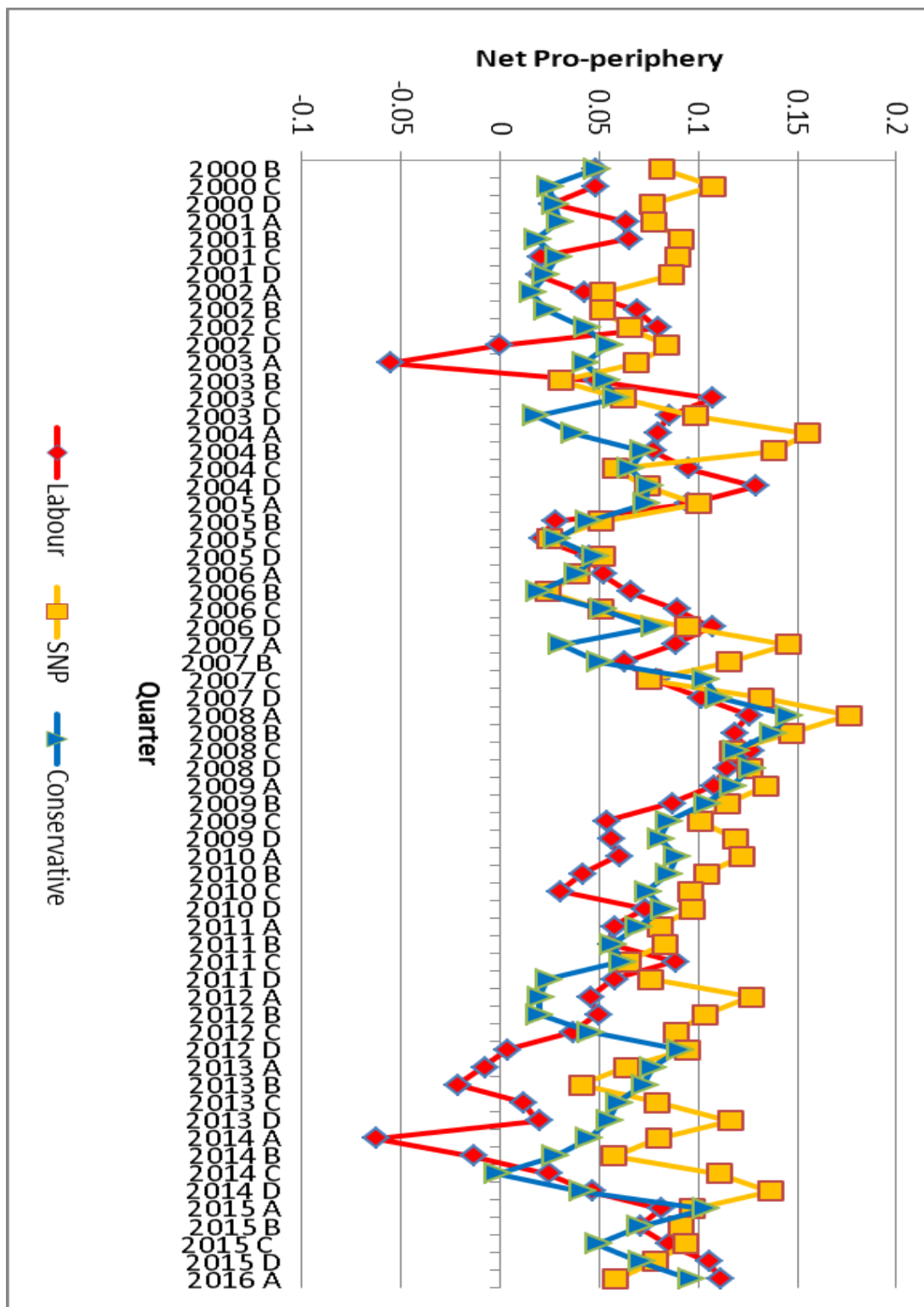
The clearest pattern evident in all of the initial presentations of the cosine similarity results using the measures of positive subsuming detailed in the previous chapter. It shows a substantial shift in Labour and the SNP's relative use of positive subsuming coinciding with the change in incumbency at Holyrood. The start of the shift in strategy appears to slightly precede the May 2007 Holyrood election when the change in incumbency at took place, and is well before May 2010 when the change in incumbency at Westminster occurred. The evidence with regard to H4 and H5 suggesting that the effect of incumbency status would be a significant factor influencing this aspect of party strategy is therefore inconclusive.

Figure 3: Positive subsuming scores for parties in FMQs sessions generated via cosine similarity method
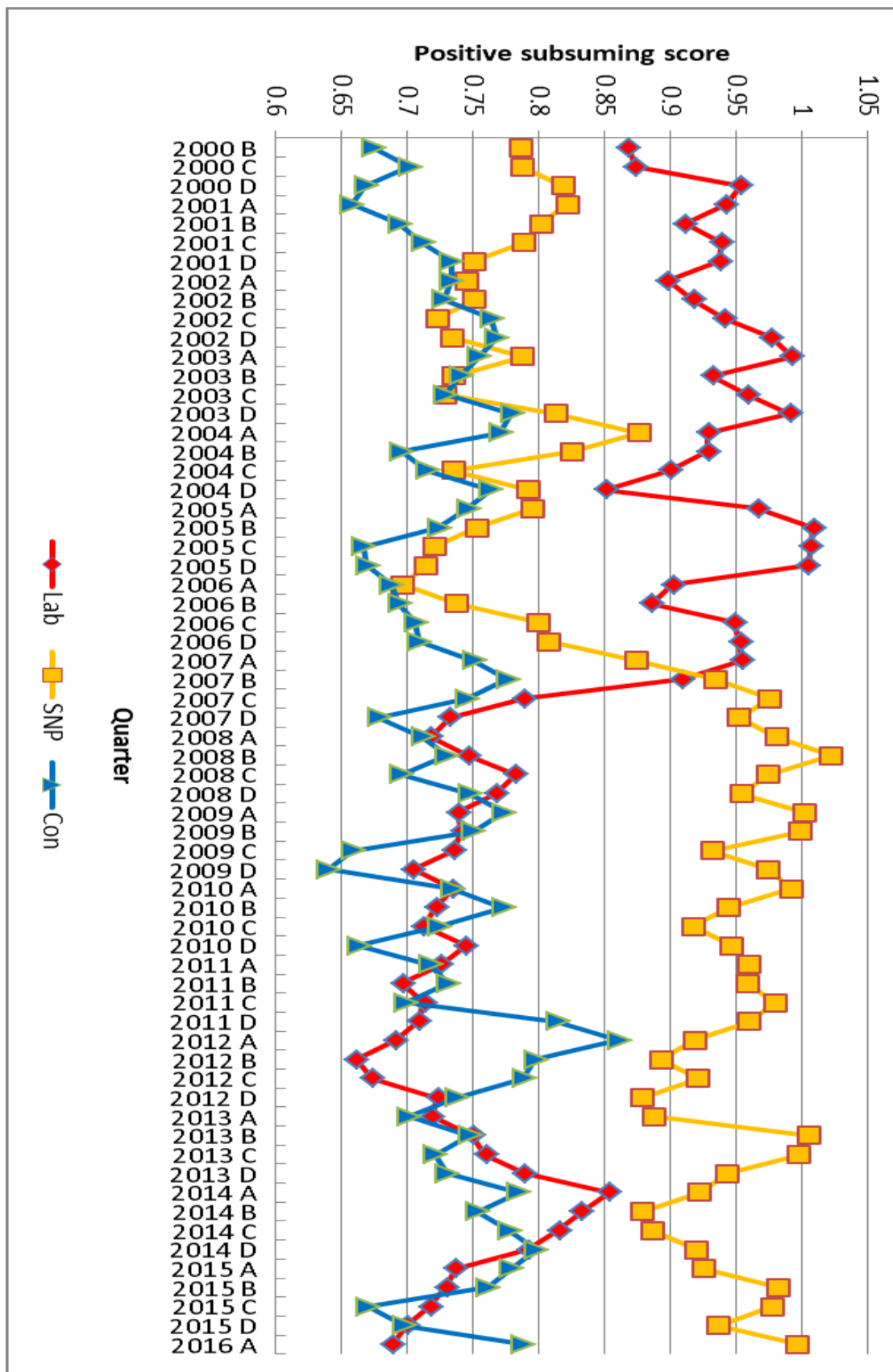
The Scottish National Party

The Alceste/Iramuteq results provide some support for H1 in that the SNP appears to have been more likely to use language redolent of a left wing stance in the later part of the post devolution period when the Conservatives held power at Westminster. Table 3 shows the results relating to this hypothesis with the remaining results appearing in appendix 2 for reasons of space. The top ten words in each cluster are given in order of their chi squared statistical significance within the cluster. In the third quarter of 2013 the SNP is associated for the first time with a cluster including the word "poverty". The same happens in the first quarter of 2014, while in early 2015 the party is also associated with a cluster including the word "austerity". "Poverty" is a word traditionally used disproportionately by those on the left of the political spectrum, as evidenced by the fact that it is included in the left wing section of the main dictionary formulated to measure left-right positioning in the context of British politics (Laver & Garry 2000). "Austerity" does not appear in the Laver & Garry dictionary but is a word adopted more recently by opponents of cuts in government spending on the left of the political spectrum.

However the fact that this shift in strategy by the SNP is not apparent until 2013 calls into question the importance of the change in incumbency at Westminster as a causal factor. Other results for the same quarters suggest that the party winning an overall majority in the Holyrood parliament and legislating for a referendum on independence might be a more important factor.

Table 3: Alceste/Iramuteq results relevant to hypothesis 1

Quarter	Word cluster and party associated with that cluster
2013 Q3	**Labour and Conservative** Minister, reference, coverage, royal, mail, bell, Alex, college, write, John **SNP** Health, patient, safety, care, palliative, ratio, mobile, improvement, age **SNP** Child, poverty, welfare, foster, household, action, aware, allocation, government, Glasgow **SNP** Police, officer, station, visit, community, business, survey, counter, operational, crime **Labour** Oil, fiscal, fund, commission, spend, billion, civil, invest, stabilization, servant
2014 Q1	**SNP** Community, poverty, child, local, support, ensure, wage, fund, childcare, school **Labour** Coverage, question, rest, currency, minister, answer, Johann, Standard, life **SNP** Past, year, oil, revenue, billion, sea, north, off, investment, borrow
2015 Q1	**SNP** School, education, child, attainment, community, ensure, council, parent, work, teacher **SNP** Secretary, Smith, clause, commission, justice, cabinet, proposal, Willie, Rennie, parliament **Labour and Conservative** Oil, Barnett, autonomy, ask, fiscal, formula, minister, confirm, price, bulletin **SNP** Labour, cut, austerity, Tory, Tories, Westminster, vote, alternative, party, future **Labour** NHS, wait, hour, health, patient, emergency, accident, year, fee, tuition
2015 Q2	**Labour and Conservative** Exam, pupil, qualification, high, numeracy, standard, sit, maintain, math, numb **Conservative** Education, young, childcare, system, parent, Ruth, local, Davidson, attainment, information **SNP** Poverty, UK, cut, welfare, unite, kingdom, budget, Westminster, vulnerable **Labour** Labour, Party, referendum, Tories, SNP, reference, coverage, autonomy, election, fiscal **SNP** Domestic, support, abuse, company, crime, victim, affect, secretary, incident, Glasgow,

These results also appear to suggest that during the latter part of the period studied the SNP wanted to express clearly a left of centre identity relative to its main opponents. The party would have been assisted in achieving this goal by the fact that there appears to have been some similarity between the language used by Labour and Conservative representatives. In three of the four quarters summarised in table 3 the latter two parties are associated with the same cluster of words suggesting that there was some overlap in terms of the language used by representatives of those parties. Criticising Scottish Labour on the grounds that they were too close to the Conservatives became a key element in the SNP's strategy during the latter part of the period studied, with First Minister Alex Salmond at one point accusing Labour leader Johann Lamont of being "…in alliance with the Conservative Party" (SP OR April 25th 2013 Col 19020).

The impression evident in the Alceste/Iramuteq results that the SNP's shift towards the use of more left wing language predates the coming to power of a Conservative led government in 2010 is confirmed when a regression analysis is conducted on the party's net right scores generated by the cosine similarity analysis. Table 4 below shows that the strongest correlation between any of the independent variables and the SNP's net right score is a significant negative one with the Holyrood Incumbency variable. In the multivariate model a weaker positive correlation is shown with the Westminster Incumbency variable suggesting that the SNP actually adopted language more redolent of the right after the Conservatives came to power directly contradicting H1. The latter correlation however disappears in the relevant bivariate model.

Table 4: OLS regression analysis of SNP Net right scores for FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.053 (0.676)			-0.143 (0.216)	1.145
Westminster Incumbency		0.132 (0.299)		0.367 (0.015)*	1.857
Holyrood Incumbency			-0.458 (0.000)***	-0.764 (0.000)***	2.027
Adjusted R squared	-0.013	0.002	0.197	0.274	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05 * = p value <0.005 *** = p value <0.0005

The impression that the change in incumbency at Holyrood is more important than the change at Westminster is confirmed when the cosine similarity results detailed in figures 1-3 are used to direct a qualitative examination of the debate transcripts. The SNP's highest scores on the net pro-periphery and positive subsuming measures are in the early part of 2008; the year after the party was voted into power at Holyrood. The following contribution by then First minister Alex Salmond is an example of the type of language SNP representatives used during that period:

> "One thing indicates the difference between our approach to public services and the approach that Margaret Thatcher's Government pursued and Gordon Brown's Government is pursuing: we believe—and we will hold to this—that we can make those efficiency savings across the public sector with no compulsory redundancies. The trade unions appreciate that deeply, just as they deprecate the policy that has been introduced from Westminster".

> First Minister Alex Salmond MSP

> SP OR April 17th 2008 Col 7688

There are three elements in the above passage that are of relevance in the context of the framework of this study. Firstly the statement is expressing distance from the centre in

decrying the policies of the current Westminster government and its predecessors. This can be seen as a rhetorical device supporting the accompanying statement of a left leaning policy position in stating opposition to compulsory redundancies in the public sector. The favourable mention of the trade unions is arguably also a left wing rhetorical element. Combined those elements represent an example of positive subsuming as the SNP is seen to be framing a left of centre policy position in the context of hostility to the policies of successive Westminster governments, with that reinforced by a further left leaning rhetorical element. It is passages such as this that cause the analysis of SNP contributions from this period to deliver such a high pro-periphery and positive subsuming score.

The importance of the change in incumbency at Holyrood rather than Westminster in leading the SNP to adopt the strategy outlined above is reinforced by the results of the regression analyses detailed in tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: OLS regression analysis of SNP Net Pro-periphery scores for FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.399 (0.001)**			-0.249 (0.032)*	1.155
Westminster Incumbency		-0.014 (0.727)		-0.450 (0.003)*	1.834
Holyrood Incumbency			0.365 (0.003)*	0.581 (0.000)***	2.034
Adjusted R squared	0.145	-0.014	0.119	29.8	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05 N = 63 ** = p value <0.005 *** = p value <0.0005

Table 5 details evidence to suggest that all the independent variables had a significant effect on the SNP's net pro-periphery score, but again it is Holyrood Incumbency one that has the strongest effect. A significant positive correlation is shown with that variable that is present in both the multivariate and the relevant bivariate model. A significant negative correlation

is also shown with the Holyrood Election variable which provides support for H2. The SNP does appear to have reduced its use of language referencing its position on the constitutional issue when the next scheduled election was a devolved one in which it was a realistic contender for power rather than a Westminster election where it was not.

The results presented in table 6 reinforce the impression that coming to power at Holyrood prompted an adjustment in the SNP's strategy in terms of the party becoming more likely to use positive subsuming. A strong positive correlation is shown with the Holyrood Incumbency variable that is present in both the multivariate and the relevant bivariate models.

Table 6: OLS regression analysis of SNP Positive Subsuming scores for FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.334 (0.007)*			-0.051 (0.368)	1.145
Westminster Incumbency		0.503 (0.000)***		-0.152 (0.040)*	1.857
Holyrood Incumbency			0.902 (0.000)***	0.987 (0.000)***	2.027
Adjusted R squared	0.097	0.241	0.811	0.823	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

 * = p value <0.05 * = p value <0.005 *** = p value <0.0005

Weaker correlations are shown with the other variables, with the Westminster Incumbency variable showing a significant positive correlation in the bivariate model but a negative one in the multivariate model. This may indicate an issue with multicollinearity with the two incumbency variables, even though the VIF scores indicate that there should be no such issue. Because the two variables overlap with the majority of years in which the SNP held power coinciding with the Conservatives holding power at Westminster it could well be the case that when analysed by itself the Westminster Incumbency variable is mainly picking up

the impact of the Holyrood Incumbency one. This type of issue is to an extent inevitable when analysing the impact of incumbency in a multi-level setting as it is impossible to analyse one incumbency effect completely in isolation from the other. However the totality of the results presented in this chapter are clear enough to suggest strongly that it was the change in incumbency at devolved level that had the greater effect on the SNP's strategy.

Examination of the debate transcripts can provide an insight into precisely how the SNP implemented the shift towards greater use of positive subsuming and pro-periphery language evident in the results presented above in the context of the framework presented for this study. Along with the early 2008 period discussed above the second two quarters of 2013 represents a period where the SNP positive subsuming score is particularly high. The following two passages come from that period:

> "It is important to learn lessons. The key lesson that I would learn from the years of Margaret Thatcher is that political parties that go into coalition with the Conservatives in campaigns in Scotland will have exactly the same fate as the Conservative Party. Johann Lamont, in believing that she can campaign hand in glove with better together but that people in Scotland will not draw the obvious conclusion about the direction of her politics, is living in a fantasy land. She and her party will pay the highest price for their joint cabal and campaign with the Conservative Party. That is a certain conclusion that the people of Scotland will draw".

> First Minister Alex Salmond MSP (SNP)

> SP OR April 18th 2013 Col 18727

> "Does he agree that the misguided economic policies of the UK Government are the greatest threat to that progress, and that having the fiscal levers of independence would allow us to build further on it?"

> John Mason MSP (SNP) SP OR April 17th 2013 Col 18732

The first passage constitutes a similar example to that referred to above of the SNP seeking to distance itself from the centre while at the same time seeking to contaminate its main in-

region opponent by association with the centre. It contains no reference to a specific policy or policy area indicating that the pro-periphery shift on the part of the SNP evident in the results presented above was largely based on the manipulation of rhetoric rather than references to actual policy differences. The second passage meanwhile constitutes a clearer example of positive subsuming. A favourable reference to Scottish independence is preceded by reference to a particular policy area; the implication being that successful implementation of the SNP's policy on the centre periphery axis would enable Scotland to benefit from the implementation of its policies relating to the left-right one.

This section has presented clear evidence that the SNP were more likely to utilise positive subsuming after being voted into power at Holyrood. H1 is not supported. While there is plenty of evidence of the SNP using rhetoric to distance itself from the centre, the anticipated importance of the identity of the party in power at the nation state level in determining the extent to which the party adopts that strategy is not evident. Instead incumbency position at Holyrood appears to have been more important. The quantitative analysis details a shift towards a more overtly left of centre and pro-periphery strategy starting around the time of the May 2007 Holyrood election. The analysis of debate transcripts informed by the quantitative results has detailed how this strategic shift incorporated both rhetorical and policy positional elements.

The other two hypotheses relating to regional nationalist parties (H2 and H3) both specifically refer to centre-periphery salience. Investigation of them therefore necessitates distinguishing salience from the other elements of party strategy. In an effort to uncover variations in the relative salience parties give to the centre-periphery axis a simple text search was conducted using Nvivo in order to determine the number of times party representatives used the word "independence". Closely related terms were included in the search using the software's stemming function.

There are a couple of issues associated with the use of this method. Firstly it is possible that representatives might use these terms when not referring to the constitutional issue, or conversely that they might refer to the constitutional issue without using that word. Secondly the dynamics of the parliamentary setting can mean that governing parties have the opportunity to make more debate contributions than opposition parties. Parties

governing alone (as the SNP did post-2007) monopolise the contributions allocated to the government while those allocated to the opposition are usually shared out among a number of parties. Despite these issues the method still has some utility in terms of determining the salience of an issue as long as these limitations are borne in mind.

Figure 4: Use of the word "independence" and related terms in FMQs sessions 2000-2016
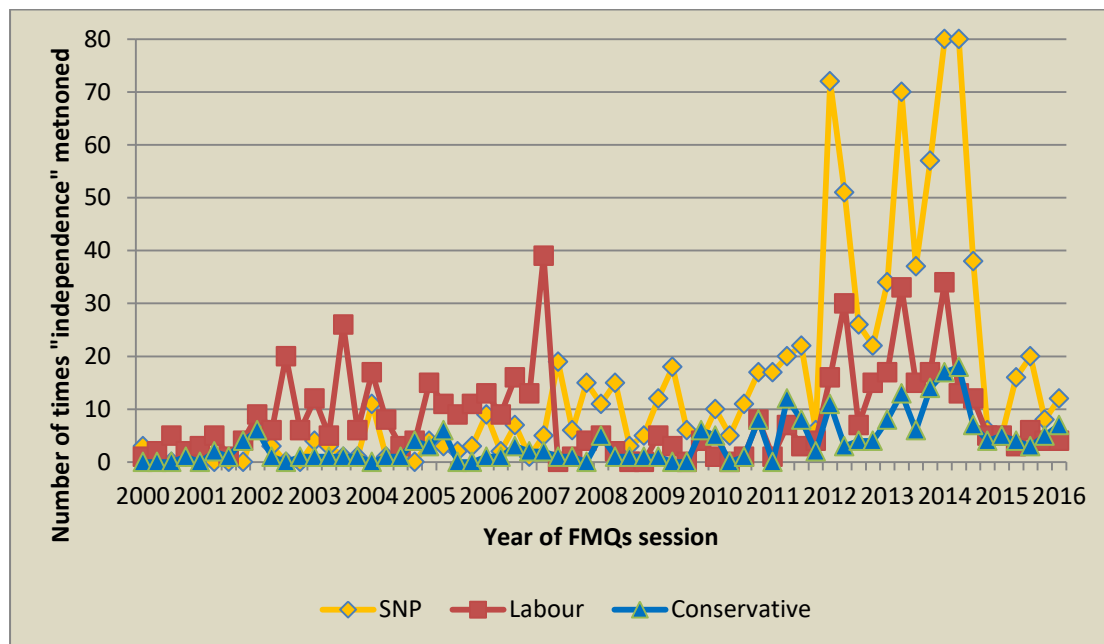
The result detailed in figure 4 echo the pattern of the majority of the others presented in this chapter suggesting a shift in the SNP's strategic approach around the time it was voted into power at Holyrood. Initially there is a small rise in the number of references to independence made by the party's representatives succeeded by a much larger rise in the years immediately preceding the referendum on independence in 2014. There is no evidence of the party reducing the salience of the constitutional issue in the lead up to Holyrood elections in the manner envisaged by H2. This study therefore argues that the negative correlation between the Holyrood Election variable and the party's net pro-periphery score detailed in table 4 is primarily the result of a reduction in the use of pro-periphery rhetoric by the party's representatives rather than a reduction in issue salience.

Clearly the SNP did not shift its position on the centre-periphery axis during the period studied having consistently supported independence for Scotland ever since the party came into existence. Taken together the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that after

winning power at Holyrood the party increased the salience of the centre-periphery axis and increased its use of rhetoric redolent of its pro-periphery position. The latter formed part of an increase in the use of the positive subsuming strategy. The example passages highlighted show that after winning power the party's strategy aimed at distancing from the centre via the use of left of centre and pro-periphery positioning and rhetoric. It also adopted a strategy of attempting to associate Scottish Labour as its main in-region opponent with the centre. The party did this in two ways; by both criticising the shortcomings of Westminster Labour administrations and by highlighting the fact that Labour occupied the same side of the centre-periphery axis as the Conservatives and was frequently deploying identical pro-centre arguments to those put forward by the Conservatives.

The latter can be seen as a particular form of the positive subsuming strategy. The SNP was seeking to embellish its left of centre credentials and place distance between itself and Labour on the left-right axis by using the latter's position on the constitutional issue as a way of associating it with the right-of-centre Conservatives. The aim was to lead erstwhile Labour voters to doubt whether it was Labour that presented the most credible left of centre option in Scotland. Much of the rest of this study will detail why the tactical choices made by Labour helped create a situation where this aspect of the SNP's approach proved to be particularly effective.

The SNP's Opponents

The Cosine similarity results relating to party net pro-periphery scores presented in figure 2 offer some support for H4. As noted in the first section of this chapter, all parties appear to cluster together on the basis of this measure in the period after the SNP won power at Holyrood with their debate contributions generating a high net pro-periphery rating. The highest pro-periphery scores for the two unionist parties occur on the first half of 2008, and examination of that section of the debate transcripts provides a number of explanations as why the analysis produces this result. Both parties made clearly pro-periphery references during this period, with even the traditionally sceptical Conservatives making a positive reference to the idea of devolution (SP OR January 17th 2008 Col 5192). But it was Labour that undertook the most radical shift in approach with then leader Wendy Alexander

arguing in favour of an immediate referendum on independence in this set of questions to First Minister Alex Salmond:

> "The First Minister has been a nationalist all his political life. I am giving him the opportunity to resolve this issue. Why will he not take it? This is far too serious a matter to jest with. We believe that the uncertainty is damaging Scotland. I and my colleagues have therefore offered our support to bring the issue forward now. We believe that Scotland deserves a choice sooner rather than later. The First Minister tells us that more than 80 per cent of Scots want a referendum—so why are we still waiting?
>
> I have no doubt that the judgment of history will be between those, such as me and my colleagues, who wanted to let the people speak and those who wanted delay in order to foment grievance and to fray the relationship, because they feared the result. The uncertainty is damaging our country. Uncertainty costs jobs. Last night Iain McMillan of the Confederation of British Industry Scotland said that it was time to lance the boil. I have offered Labour's support for an early referendum. The First Minister has spurned that offer. Why will he not bring the bill on?"
>
> Wendy Alexander MSP (Lab)
>
> SP OR May 8th 2008 Col 8425-8426

This attempt to take on the SNP on the centre-periphery axis by moving towards its stated position, expressing support for the idea of a referendum on independence on the basis that the unionist side should be confident of inflicting a defeat on the nationalists, never had the necessary support within the Labour Party for it to become a consistent line of attack (Hassan & Shaw 2012:133). However it does provide evidence to support the idea of a shift towards a pro-periphery position on the part of Labour in response to the SNP coming to power, thus supporting H5.

The two largest unionist parties at this time also supported the setting up of the Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution with the aim of looking into changes in the existing constitutional arrangements relating to Holyrood (SP OR December 6th 2007 Col 4134). Part of the purpose of the commission was to "address the case for greater financial

accountability" for the Holyrood parliament (SP OR December 6th 2007 Col 4135) indicating that Labour and the Conservatives were willing to entertain the notion of it being granted a greater level of fiscal responsibility.

While the Conservatives were prepared to engage in the Calman process they sought to distance themselves from Labour's more radical shift towards a pro-periphery stance. In the same session as Wendy Alexander outlined her "bring it on" approach to a referendum on independence Conservative leader Anabelle Goldie indicated Tory disapproval of the strategy asking:

> "Who would have thought that a Labour Prime Minister and a Scottish Labour leader would be the SNP"s greatest allies in breaking up Britain?"

> Anabelle Goldie MSP (Con) SP OR May 8th 2008 Col 8427

The fact that the Conservatives did not follow Labour in adopting a pro-referendum stance raises the question as to why the two parties are seen to be so close together on the pro-periphery cosine similarity measure during this period. Partly this appears to be a result of the fact that Tory representatives were willing to make positive references to the notion of devolution; something that they were unwilling to do in the earlier post-devolution period. In May 2009 Anabelle Goldie accused Alex Salmond of wanting to wreck devolution in order to win independence rather than make the existing settlement work:

> "There are two types of politician in the Parliament: those who, like the public, want devolution to work, who are in the majority; and those who, like the First Minister, want to wreck devolution, who are in the minority. Perhaps Alex Salmond cannot rise to the challenge of being a responsible First Minister. Perhaps he will always be a separatist party leader with a wrecking agenda".

> Anabelle Goldie MSP (Con) SP OR May 21st 2009 Col 17734

The other part of the explanation for the evident pro-periphery shift of the two unionist parties appears to have been their raising of the issue of local taxation. In early 2008 both parties expressed opposition to the SNP's plans to replace the locally set and raised Council Tax with a local income tax that would have to be set and raised nationally. The SNP was

later to abandon the policy partly on these grounds (Taylor 2016), and it was this perceived flaw in the policy that formed an important element in the two unionist parties' attacks on the SNP on this issue in the early part of 2008 (SP OR March 13th 2008 Col 6947-6951, SP OR February 28th 2008 Col 6451-6453, SP OR March 20th 2008 Col 7191-7193). The salience of this issue therefore led to the two main unionist parties taking what could be described as a pro-periphery stance within Scotland attacking reforms that they argued would centralise power.

The Labour and Tory shift in a pro-periphery direction after the SNP won power is therefore probably more nuanced than the presentation of the results in figure 2 would suggest with party discourse incorporating an element of a within Scotland centre-periphery axis as well as a UK-wide one. This impression is confirmed by the results of the regression analysis of the parties' net pro-periphery scores. Table 7 shows the two incumbency variables having opposing effects on the Conservative's score by that measure, with the Holyrood Incumbency variable showing a significant positive correlation while the Westminster Incumbency variable shows a weaker negative one that is only present in the multivariate model. This suggests that the party used language more redolent of a pro-periphery position in response to the SNP winning power before using more pro-union language after it won power itself at Westminster.

Table 7: OLS regression analysis of Conservative Net Pro-periphery scores

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.249 (0.047)*			-0.002 (0.980)	1.155
Westminster Incumbency		-0.068 (0.594)		-0.692 (0.000)***	1.834
Holyrood Incumbency			0.488 (0.000)***	0.944 (0.000)***	2.034
Adjusted R squared	0.047	-0.011	0.226	0.484	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05 * = p value <0.005 *** = p value <0.0005

Table 8: OLS regression analysis of Labour Net Pro-periphery scores for FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.051 (0.692)			0.018 (0.890)	1.153
Westminster Incumbency		-0.306 (0.014)*		-0.538 (0.001)**	1.834
Holyrood Incumbency			-0.008 (0.950)	0.353 (0.040)*	2.034
Adjusted R squared	0.014	0.079	-0.016	0.119	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05 ** = p value <0.005

The analysis of Labour net pro-periphery scores in table 8 shows a similar picture, except that in the case of that party it is the Westminster Incumbency variable that has the strongest effect. This shift echoes that evident in the Alcetse/Iramuteq results showing an increased tendency on the part of both parties to use language relating to the constitutional issue in the latter part of the period studied. The results presented in table 9 below show that this is particularly the case for Labour with the party associated with a cluster suggestive of such a strategy in the 2011 Q3, 2013 Q2, 2013 Q3 and 2014 Q1 segments of the written record of those sessions. The clusters the party is associated with in 2013Q2 and 2014Q1 both contain the word "currency"; as does the cluster the Conservatives are associated with in 2012A.

Table 9: Alceste/Iramuteq results showing Labour and Conservatives representatives using language relating to the constitutional issue

Quarter	Word cluster and party or parties associated with that cluster
2011 Q3	**Conservative and Labour** Euro, renewable, energy, state, rest, report, obligation, unite, European, engineer **SNP** Port, fund, government, provide, Dundee, industry, carer, security, ensure, respite **Labour** Gray, referendum, Iain, person, coverage, independence, question, Scots, election, session **SNP** Legislation, crime, justice, knife, criminal, lord, law, survey, sectarianism, court
2013 Q2	**Conservative** Health, meet, secretary, ensure, board, cabinet, family, importance, review, receive **Labour** Minister, pension, John, currency, rest, kingdom, union, independence **SNP** Labour, Johann, party, Lamont, tax, increase, Conservative, corporation, policy, Darling
2013 Q3	**Labour and Conservative** Minister, reference, coverage, royal, mail, bell, Alex, college, write, John **SNP** Health, patient, safety, care, palliative, ratio, mobile, improvement, age **SNP** Child, poverty, welfare, foster, household, action, aware, allocation, government, Glasgow **SNP** Police, officer, station, visit, community, business, survey, counter, operational, crime **Labour** Oil, fiscal, fund, commission, spend, billion, civil, invest, stabilization, servant
2014 Q1	**SNP** Community, poverty, child, local, support, ensure, wage, fund, childcare, school **Labour** Coverage, question, rest, currency, minister, answer, Johann, Standard, life **SNP** Past, year, oil, revenue, billion, sea, north, off, investment, borrow

This question of what currency an independent Scotland would use represented an important part of the line of attack used by the two unionist parties on the centre-periphery axis. It was an issue that they perceived the SNP were vulnerable on given that a newly independent Scottish state would seemingly be choosing from a set of unappealing options that either involved using an existing currency (Sterling or the Euro) with the negative implications for Scottish sovereignty that would entail, or setting up a new currency. The latter is a course of action not without its difficulties, and one that had little support within the SNP leadership at the time (Mitchell et al 2012:122). The results presented in figure 4 suggest that this is a manifestation of a general increase in the salience of the constitutional issue in the latter part of the period studied coinciding with the SNP winning an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament and negotiating for a referendum on independence to take place.

In terms of the framework formulated for this study Labour undertook what appears, at leat on the basis of party contributions to FMQs sessions, a brief positional shift towards the pro-periphery side of the centre-periphery axis. There is also some limited evidence of the Conservatives being more willing to speak favourably of devolution than was the case before the SNP came to power. Together this offers support for H4, however that support should be qualified. Labour's support for an independence referendum was short lived. Furthermore the increased use of pro-periphery language on the part of the two unionist parties around 2008 evident in figure 2 is probably exaggerated as a result of the debate over local taxation that took place at that time. This is an inevitable issue when using automated or semi-automated methods of text analysis to investigate party competition, with mention having already been made of their insensitivity to context. In this case methods of that type are unable to distinguish between arguments against power being centralised at devolved as opposed to local authority level and arguments against power being centred at the state-wide level.

The picture with regard to H5 is on the face of it clearer than that relating to H4, at least regarding the results relating to Scottish Labour. The regression results in table 10 show a significant negative correlation between the Labour positive subsuming score and the Holyrood incumbency variable, reinforcing the impression created by figure 3 that Labour's

use of the strategy declined dramatically around the time it lost power at Holyrood to the SNP.

Table 10: OLS regression analysis of Labour Positive Subsuming scores in FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Incumbency	0.274 (0.028)*			0.027 (0.649)	1.145
Westminster Incumbency		-0.643 (0.000)***		-0.093 (0.221)	1.857
Holyrood incumbency			-0.900 (0.000)***	-0.831 (0.000)***	2.027
Adjusted R squared	0.060	0.404	0.808	0.806	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05 *** = p value <0.0005

A weaker significant negative correlation is shown with the Westminster Incumbency variable, but this is only present in the relevant bivariate model disappearing when all variables are included. As mentioned with regard to some of the regression results presented in the previous section, this may reflect the existence of some level of multicollinearity between the two incumbency variables involving one picking up the effects of the other when the variables are considered separately. The reason why there appears to be this dramatic decline in Labour's use of the positive subsuming strategy can be uncovered by looking at the party's strategic approach to each axis of competition separately, and by a detailed examination of the debate transcript.

Table 11: OLS Regression analysis of Labour Net Right scores for FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.167 (0.186)			-0.337 (0.007)*	1.145
Westminster Incumbency		-0.105 (0.409)		0.291 (0.063)	1.857
Holyrood Incumbency			-0.330 (0.008)*	-0.621 (0.000)***	2.027
Adjusted R squared	0.012	-0.005	0.094	0.192	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05 * = p value <0.005 *** = p value <0.0005

Table 9 shows that of the variables studied the Holyrood Incumbency variable had the most significant effect on Labour's net right score. A significant negative correlation is shown with that variable that is present both in the multivariate and the relevant bivariate model. A weaker negative correlation is shown with the Holyrood election variable suggesting some tendency on the part of the party to adopt more left leaning language when the next scheduled election was a devolved rather than a state-wide contest.

This study measures positive subsuming by combining measurements of the extent to which parties use language redolent of their established policy identity on the centre-periphery and left-right axes. As outlined in the previous chapter the measurement of positive subsuming for Labour employed in the quantitative analysis for this study involves classifying the party as left–of-centre and pro-centre notwithstanding the issues associated with the latter classification. Usually where a left of centre pro-centre party increases its use of language redolent of a left of centre stance it would be legitimate to expect its positive subsuming score to also increase. That pattern is not evident in the results presented in this section for two reasons. Firstly, as discussed above, in the period immediately after Labour lost power at Holyrood the party's strategy relating to the centre-periphery axis incorporated a shift towards a pro-independence referendum position. Secondly when the party switched back to projecting a clearer pro-centre, pro-union stance in the years leading

up to the referendum on independence the rhetorical justification it used for its pro-centre stance undermined its attempts to project an accompanying left of centre identity. The latter aspect of the language used by the party's representatives forms a key element in the contribution of this study.

In the early part of the post-devolution period Labour framed elections to the Scottish Parliament as a contest between social justice and separatism, and spoke of Scottish politics as being a contest between "nationalists and internationalists" (Hassan 2009: 156). The party also emphasised the cultural ties inherent in the union, and frequently spoke disparagingly of the SNP's position as representing "narrow nationalism" (Hassan 2009:157). In doing this the party was attacking the SNP on the basis that in supporting Scottish independence it was putting a divisive and inward looking platform before the Scottish electorate; questioning whether a policy that would involve enhancing the significance of a particular line on a map could be described as in any way progressive, and arguing that the policy would diminish Scotland's influence on the world stage.

Use of this line of argument is reflected in the party's approach to FMQs sessions in the early part of the period studied. The very highest Labour positive subsuming scores (as shown in figure 3) occur in 2005. During that period Labour argued that an independent Scotland would be damaged as a result of not being able to access the network of UK embassies and consulates around the world:

> "That network [of Scottish Development International offices] ensures that we in Scotland have direct representation in many countries throughout the world. We also have the benefit of direct Scottish representation through the many British embassies and consulates. Of course, the direct impact of Mr Neil's political position would be that we would no longer have access to 200 or so embassies and consulates and Scotland's industries and companies would lose out".

> First Minister Jack McConnell MSP (Lab)

> SP OR April 14th 2005 Col 16041

The party also scorned the parochialism of the SNP in questioning the cost associated with ensuring adequate security when Scotland hosted a summit of the leaders of the G8 group

of leading industrialised nations rather than celebrating what the presence of a group of world leaders said about Scotland's relevance on the world stage:

> "I have to say that, given the importance of the issues that will be debated at the summit and given the importance of bringing the world's top table to Scotland, the Scottish National Party's ability to revert to an introverted, insular and inward-looking position and to be concerned about any potential for the odd penny to go astray in Perth and Kinross Council or Angus Council is depressing for Scotland. Nationalist parties the world over would be delighted with the opportunity to have the world's leaders on their nation's doorstep. We in the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrat party—and maybe even members in the Conservative party—are delighted that those leaders are coming to Scotland: I wish only that the SNP, too, was delighted".

> First Minister Jack McConnell MSP (Lab)

> SP OR May 19th 2005 Col 17039

Labour also argued that Scotland had heightened influence within the European Union as a result of it being part of the UK:

> "It is precisely because of the way in which Scotland's interests have been represented over the eight years of devolution, in this devolved Government and at UK level, that we have seen the many successes through changes in European Union legislation and decisions that have been important to Scotland".

> First Minister Jack McConnell MSP (Lab)

> SP OR January 25th 2007 Col 31576

At one point it accused the party of trying to cynically exploit the issue of the availability of air rifles in order to make political capital on the constitutional issue:

> "It is absolutely shameful to use the death of youngsters and incidents that damage the lives of youngsters and others in Scotland to return—as Miss Sturgeon did at the end of her questions—to the issue that matters most to the Scottish nationalist party: the United Kingdom's constitution and how further tension and dispute

between the Scottish Parliament and the Parliament in London can be created. That should not happen—we should treat the issue more seriously than that. Even its central desire to make air-guns into an argument about the Parliament's powers rather than to take action on them was not mentioned in any representations to the Home Office by the party's members of Parliament or its members of the Scottish Parliament".

First Minister Jack McConnell MSP (Lab) SP OR June 9th 2005 Col 17782-17783

The party also framed its anti-nationalist stance as supporting the best route by which Scotland could enjoy the benefits of progressive, left of centre policies. In a clear example of positive subsuming Labour argued that Scotland was better able to tackle the issue of child poverty as part of the UK, and that focus on the constitutional issue would be a damaging distraction in that respect:

"I believe that Scotland's future lies not in separation or stagnation, but in education and learning to give our population the best possible start in life and the best possible chance in the face of international competition. I am certain that that view is shared by the majority of Scots.

The actions of this devolved Government and of the United Kingdom Government over the past 10 years have made a significant difference to child poverty in Scotland. We are leading the way in the UK in tackling child poverty and if members had any soul, they would be proud of that. The reality is that we have lifted more than 100,000 Scottish children out of relative poverty and more than 200,000 of them out of absolute poverty in those years. We know that one in three people in Scotland lived in poverty in 1997, but today only one in four live in poverty, and that figure is coming down year after year.

Those are the solutions, not the nonsense that we get from the Scottish National Party, which, rather than tackling child poverty and giving people the education that lets them get on in life, wants to waste all its efforts over three or four years on an independence bill and a referendum".

First Minister Jack McConnell MSP (Lab)

An important part of Labour's strategy of challenging the ideological basis underpinning the SNP's pro-independence stance was referring to the latter by the "nationalist" label that the party looks to distance itself from (Cramb 2017). This makes a simple count of the number of times the party's representatives used that term one way of tracking the extent to which Labour adopted that strategy during the period studied.

Figure 5 shows the results of that analysis, along with a similar count of the words "poverty" and "currency". Poverty is a word traditionally used disproportionately by those on the left of the political spectrum, as evidenced by the fact that it is included in the left wing section of the main dictionary formulated to measure left-right positioning in the context of British politics (Laver & Garry 2000). Currency is included in the analysis as indicator of the extent to which Labour adopted the strategy referred to previously of questioning the economic viability of Scottish independence by referring to the issue of what currency the newly independent country would adopt. The results presented in figure 5 below provide an illustration of how the rhetorical justification for its pro-centre, pro-union position employed by Labour changed after it was replaced in power at Holyrood by the SNP.
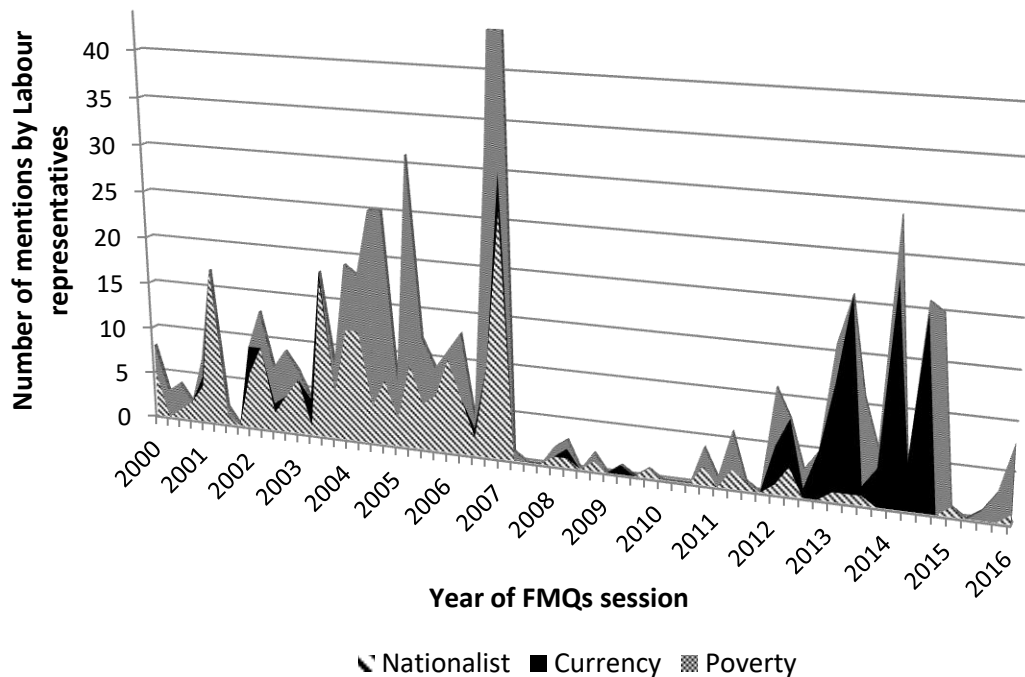
Figure 5: Number of uses of the terms "nationalist", "currency" and "poverty" by Labour representatives during First Minister's Questions Sessions in the Scottish Parliament 2000-2016

The post incumbency collapse in Labour's use of the term "nationalist" largely mirrors the decline in the party's positive subsuming score in the latter part of the period studied, with use of the term "poverty" following a similar pattern. In contrast references to the currency issue begin to increase towards the end of 2011. On losing power at Holyrood Labour seems to have abandoned a critique of independence centred on it being a parochial, inward looking project that would be a distraction from pursuing progressive goals in favour of a set of arguments increasingly centred on economics. Rather than attacking the fundamental ideology behind the SNP's stance Labour appears to have switched focus to questioning the potential economic cost of independence.

During one FMQs session in March 2014 (the year the referendum on independence took place) Scottish Labour Leader Johann Lamont referred to a recent decline in the amount of tax raised via the oil industry asking "if Scotland were independent, how would the First Minister cope with that revenue drop—by cutting services or by raising taxes?" (SP OR 13th March 2014 col 28900). In doing this Labour was attacking the SNP in the same way that

parties of the right often attack parties of the left; by accusing them of adopting an economic policy that would leave them unable to fund their spending commitments without tax increases or cuts to other public services. Similarly the party also accused the SNP of being anti-business as a result of its stance on independence. An example of this line of argument came in an earlier session of FMQs in the same year:

> "This week Alex Salmond, John Swinney, and Nicola Sturgeon have been asked repeatedly to put a figure on the transaction costs to Scottish business of giving up the pound in the event of a yes vote, but they have refused to come up with an answer. The Scottish Parliament information centre has come up with some numbers. Transaction costs for the rest of the UK—the so called George tax—work out at £9 per head for people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, if the Scottish Government's own figures are to be believed, the cost in Scotland would be £75 a head, which is eight times greater. No wonder they would not answer the question. Given that that would be the consequence of the First Minister's plan to break up the United Kingdom, why should Scottish business pay the Alex tax?"
> Johann Lamont MSP (SP OR February 20th 2014 Col 27959)

In order to test the impact of the language used in this passage on the cosine similarity measures used in this study the same method used to determine the net right and net pro-periphery scores for all parties detailed in figures 1 and 2 was run on the above extract. As might be expected the passage generates a low net pro-periphery score; lower than in all but 9 of the 180 pro-periphery scores generated for all parties using the text of FMQs sessions. It also generates a very high net right score with only 2 scores among all the net right scores generated for all parties using the text of the FMQs sessions being higher, and they being scores generated by contributions from Conservative MSPs. This study argues that these results show that when Labour attacked the SNP in this way it was using a rhetorical justification for its pro-union stance that was redolent of the right of the left-right axis of competition.

It is possible to argue in favour of an alternative interpretation with regard to the nature of the rhetorical justification highlighted. Firstly the line of argument could be interpreted as Labour being a valence based rather than particularly right wing appeal based on the notion

that the SNP's policy was economically reckless. However a valence based appeal can still have a left or right wing flavour, and this thesis argues that in particular the focus on taxation evident in the debate transcript quoted above is more right leaning than left leaning. The Laver & Garry (2000) dictionary referred to previously places "taxes" in the economic right section evidencing the fact that politicians of the right tend to refer to tax more often than politicians of the left. Secondly it could be argued that questioning the SNP's ability to deliver quality public services in the likely economic circumstances that would prevail in a newly independent Scotland is not necessarily right wing. This is a legitimate issue that will be returned to in the evaluation section of the study, but the fact remains that the method employed for this study shows that when Labour representatives used the economic line of argument they were using language that is shown to have a high level of similarity with a set of unarguably right of centre political texts.

The economic line of attack was a recurring theme for Labour representatives, particularly in the years after the SNP won an overall majority at Holyrood in 2011. In early 2013 Johann Lamont attacked the idea of independence on the basis that it would leave Scotland ill prepared to mitigate the effects of economic shocks such as the global financial crisis of the late 00s.

> "The last time that our banking sector hit crisis, a Labour Government immediately rescued our banks so that ordinary families in this country could still get money out of the cashpoints. That included Scottish banks, of course. There was no question, no hesitation and no negotiation. It was the kind of action that the Greeks and the Irish can only dream of. Our banking system was saved by one of the most successful economic unions in history—the United Kingdom. Is not the real lesson of the euro crisis that you cannot share a currency and have monetary union without a fiscal union and a political union?"
>
> Opposition Leader Johann Lamont MSP (Lab)
>
> SP OR May 24th 2012 Col 9364

On one occasion the following year Lamont did attempt to give a left wing flavour to an attack based on the currency issue by arguing that continuing to use sterling post-

independence would give more power to the government of the remaining UK, and therefore potentially more power to a Tory government.

> "That is the difference between Alex Salmond and me. I want to get rid of the Tories and keep the union; he wants to get rid of the union and keep the Tories in charge of the economy".

> Opposition Leader Johann Lamont MSP (Lab) SP OR April 25th 2013 Col 19019

However later in the same session she reverted to the more financial based line of argument rather than one more clearly referencing a left of centre stance arguing that the SNP's plan for independence had the potential to plunge Scotland into a sovereign debt crisis.

> "John Swinney told the BBC that Scotland might leave the United Kingdom without paying any debts at all. It seems that while there are some who say that an independent Scotland might end up like Greece, John Swinney wants us to start off like Greece, by defaulting on our debts".

> Opposition Leader Johann Lamont MSP (Lab)

> SP OR April 25th 2013 Col 19020

In response to this the SNP repeated the tactic referred to previously of trying to damage Labour's left of centre credentials by pointing to the fact that they were occupying the same side of the argument as the Conservatives on the constitutional issue (SP OR April 25th 2013 Col 19020). This exchange was more or less repeated the following week (SP OR May 2nd 2013 Col 19308-19312), with Alex Salmond again adopting the above strategy by noting the distinct similarity in the arguments being put forward by Labour and Conservative representatives when raising the constitutional issue (SP OR May 2nd 2013 Col 19314). The impression is created of Labour using language that played into the SNP's hands; adopting a critique of Scottish independence that sounded right of centre at the very time the SNP were trying to portray them as being too close to the Conservatives.

The regression results presented in table 9 show a significant negative correlation between the Holyrood Incumbency variable and Labour's net right score providing some evidence to

suggest that the party adopted more left leaning language after it lost power to the SNP. However a comparison with the equivalent score for the SNP shows that the extent of this shift was not enough to ensure that Labour presented a clearly left of centre image relative to the SNP, and that this was a result of its increased use of the economic rather than the ideology based justification for its pro-centre, pro-union stance.

Figures 6 and 7 show the difference between Labour and the SNP's net right and net pro-periphery scores generated by the analysis of FMQs sessions. Figure 6 unsurprisingly shows the SNP almost always using language more redolent of a pro-periphery position than Labour. With regard to the other axis of competition, after the third quarter of 2008 the SNP's net right score is seen to be more often than not lower than Labour's. So although Labour increased its use of language redolent of a left of centre stance after losing power at Holyrood it was still less left wing than that used by the SNP. In summation Labour projected a more left wing image than it had done previously, but it was still one that was to the right of that projected by the SNP. I argue that this was largely due to the fact that the rhetorical strategy it used to justify its stance on the centre-periphery axis made the party sound more right wing on the left-right axis relative to the SNP than the formal position of the respective parties would suggest. Consequently Labour was engaging in negative rather than positive subsuming as it was projecting an identity on the left-right axis of competition that was at variance with its established policy identity.

Figure 6: Difference between SNP and Labour pro-periphery scores in FMQs sessions 2000-2016
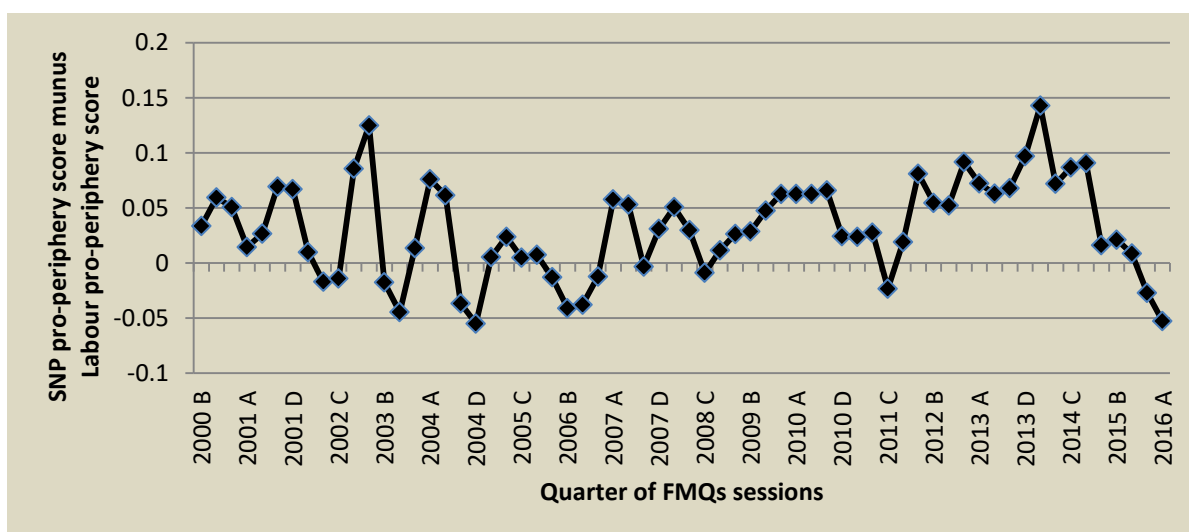
Figure 7: Difference between SNP and Labour net right scores in FMQs sessions 2000-2016
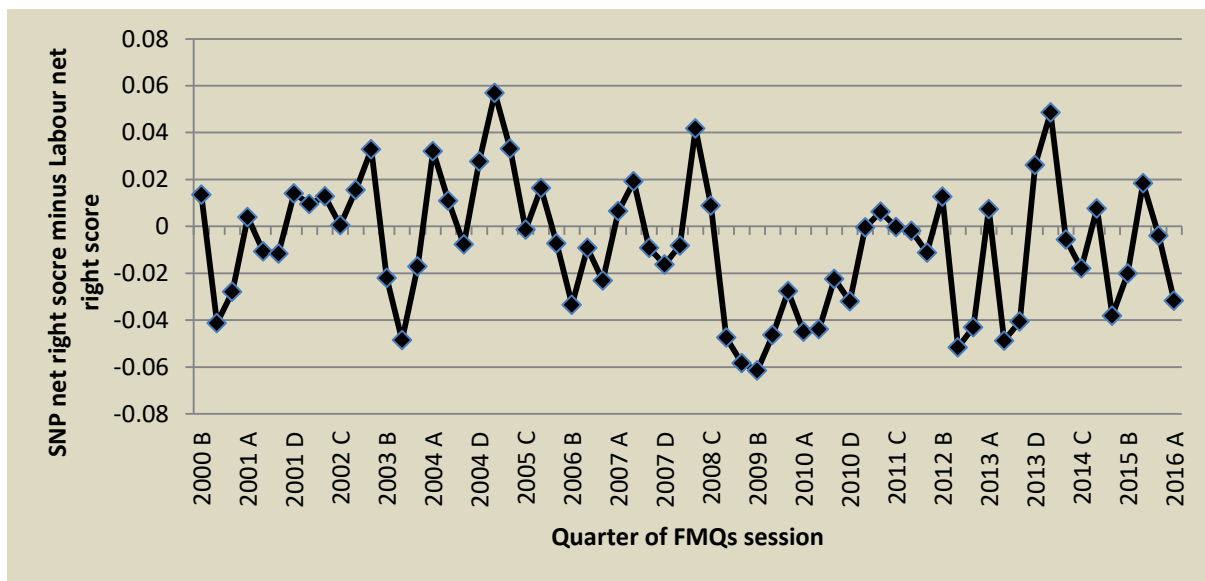
Mention has already been made of the similarities in the nature of the attacks made by Labour and the Conservatives on the SNP's core policy in the latter part of the period studied. While arguing that Scottish Independence represented an economically reckless course of action constituted negative subsuming for Labour, for the reasons discussed above the same strategy represents positive subsuming for a party of the right such as the Conservatives. It is therefore unsurprising that the regression results presented in table 12 below show a significant positive correlation between the Conservative's use of positive subsuming and the Westminster Incumbency variable.

Table 12: OLS regression analysis of Conservative positive subsuming scores in FMQs sessions 2000-2016

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	-0.195 (0.122)			-0.191 (0.142)	1.145
Westminster Incumbency		0.318 (0.011)*		0.331 (0.048)*	1.857
Holyrood Incumbency			0.242 (0.054)	-0.032 (0.852)	2.027
Adjusted R squared	0.023	0.086	0.044	0.091	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

* = p value <0.05

This appears to be driven by an increase in the salience of the constitutional issue within the contributions by Conservative representatives to FMQs sessions shown in figure 4. It does not appear to be driven by any increase in the use of language redolent of the right of the left-right axis. Figure 1 shows there to be little variation over time in the Conservative score on that measure, while the regression results in table 13 also show none of the variables studied having any significant effect on the party's score. The Conservatives therefore did not alter their use of language redolent of the right of the left-right axis but appear to have increased their use of pro-union language towards the end of the period studied.

Table 13: OLS Regression analysis of Conservative Net Right scores

Independent Variable					VIF Ratings
Holyrood Election	0.060 (0.637)			0.057 (0.679)	1.145
Westminster Incumbency		0.073 (0.569)		0.090 (0.608)	1.857
Holyrood incumbency			0.020 (0.877)	-0.023 (0.899)	2.027
Adjusted R squared	-0.012	-0.011	-0.016	-0.040	

Table shows standardised beta coefficients with p values in parentheses. N = 62

This chapter has presented evidence to show that the two largest unionist parties in Scotland at one time or another utilised all of the tools outlined in the position, salience, rhetoric framework during the section of the post devolution era included in this study. The SNP appears to have downplayed its use of pro-periphery rhetoric when the next scheduled electoral contest was a Holyrood as opposed to a Westminster election. In response to losing power at Holyrood Labour undertook a discernible positional shift towards the pro-periphery side of the centre-periphery axis when it argued in favour of a referendum on Scottish independence. This provides support for H4; however the evidence relating to the Conservatives is less clear. They made some limited references in support of devolution but their support for the Calman recommendations is not much in evidence in their contributions to FMQs sessions. Meanwhile in common with the SNP both unionist parties are seen to increase the salience of the constitutional issue in the years between the SNP winning an overall majority at Holyrood and the referendum on independence.

The clearest pattern in the results presented is the post-2007 decline in Labour's use of the positive subsuming strategy, which offers support for H5. That decline is caused by a shift in the rhetoric party representatives used in justifying a pro-centre, pro-union stance and attacking the pro-periphery stance of the SNP. Labour's strategic approach between 2000 and 2016 can broadly be divided into three periods. Prior to 2007 it was characterised by the party framing its pro-union stance with reference to its left of centre position, arguing

that remaining in the UK was the best way of Scotland benefitting from progressive policies, while variously characterising independence as a distraction from those progressive goals, and a policy that would leave Scotland as a diminished presence on the world stage. After losing power to the SNP at Holyrood it briefly flirted with endorsing a referendum on independence. Subsequently it switched to arguing an anti-independence case, but with a different rhetorical justification for its stance on the centre-periphery axis to that it had employed previously. It focused heavily on what it argued were the economic downsides of independence in the process undermining its ability to present a clear left of centre identity relative to the SNP. The consequences of this shift in strategy will form a key part of the discussion in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Results in the context of existing studies

This final section of this results chapter compares the findings of this study with the findings of existing research aimed at tracking party strategy that has incorporated consideration of the three parties studied here. It also compares the results obtained with relevant opinion polling conducted in Scotland that aims to track public perception of the ideological positioning of the main Scottish political parties. The latter is a crucial element in justifying a focus on rhetoric in the study of party competition. If the rhetorical framing of policy preferences by political actors can be seen to impact upon public perception then this potentially extends scholarly understanding of precisely how voters make judgements about parties.

The most significant existing work seeking to track the ideological positioning and issue salience aspects of party strategy consists of the MARPOR and Regional Manifesto Project studies of election manifestos and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey that aims to plot the left-right positioning of political parties. As discussed in the literature review chapter, the former two studies use issue salience as the input to a set of measures of party positioning while the latter asks experts to use their knowledge to place parties on an axis. This means that they have a slightly different objective to the study presented in this thesis that aims to track use of position, salience, rhetoric and subsuming as separate but related strategic tools. Conducting a comparison of the findings of this study with those that precede it will serve to highlight important aspects of the contribution made by this thesis.

Perhaps most important limitation with the MARPOR data in terms of studying Scottish politics is that at the time of writing the project has yet to code the SNP manifestos for the 2005 and 2010 Westminster elections. This means that there is a 14 year gap between 2001 and 2015 in which no measurement of the SNP's positioning or issue salience relating the centre-periphery or left-right axes is possible using that data. The data the project does have relating to the SNP echoes the results of this project in providing evidence to support the notion that the party was became keen to project a clearly left of centre identity as the post devolution era progressed. The Rile rating for the party's 2015 and 2017 UK manifestos is to the left of the equivalent figure for the 1997 and 2001 documents (Volkens et al 2018).
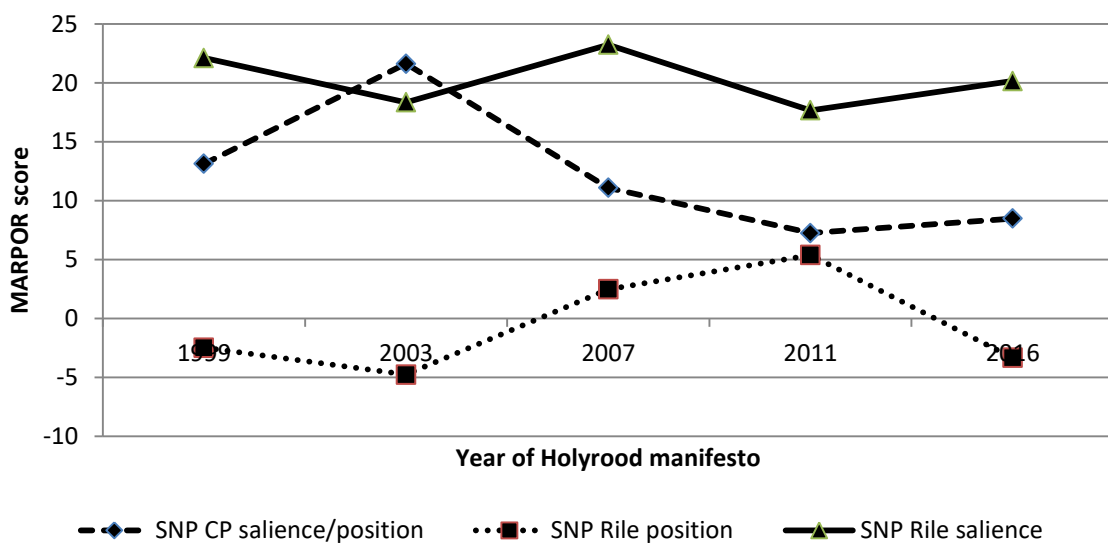
Figure 8: Regional Manifesto Project data for SNP Holyrood manifestos 1999-2016 (Gomez et al 2018) NB - centre-periphery salience and centre-periphery position are different measures used by the project, but the ratings on both measures for all five of the SNP manifestos detailed above are identical

Meanwhile the findings of the Regional Manifesto Project detailed in figure 8 also capture something of a shift to the left by the SNP between 2003 and 2011 on the project's Rile positioning measure. The same trend is to an extent evident in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey results with the 2014 and 2017 surveys positioning the party to the left of the 1999 survey (Bakker et al 2015, Polk et al 2017). Together these findings support those presented in this study that the SNP has projected a more distinctly left of centre identity in the latter part of the post-devolution era.

This study argues that this trend represents one aspect of the SNP's strategy of winning power on the back of a valence based appeal. When in opposition at Holyrood but aspiring to government expressing a distinct ideological identity on either axis of competition was arguably of secondary importance to projecting an image of competence, with the consequence that the party's essential character as a left of centre party was less evident in the period before it came to power. After the party won power this limitation was removed. However other factors were doubtless also important with recent research pointing out that the fallout from the global financial crisis of 2008 opened up opportunities for regional nationalist parties to capitalise on opposition to financial austerity (Massetti 2018:943-944). It is easy to see how this might have been a factor that enhanced the shift to the left of the SNP during the latter part of the post-devolution period. In addition three different individuals occupied the position of party leader during the period studied, with there already having been some evidence uncovered suggesting that the replacement of Alex Salmond with Nicola Sturgeon in 2014 was a factor in shifting the party to the left (Bennie 2017:27). However the results presented here suggest that this leftward shift predated the leadership change by some years with Sturgeon's predecessor Alex Salmond being seen to frequently employ left of centre language.

The finding that the SNP reduced the salience of the centre-periphery axis when competing at devolved level compared with when contesting state-wide elections also supports the findings of existing work. The Manifesto Project's "Federalism" measure (arguably the closest to a measure of centre-periphery positioning the project uses) shows almost no variation in this score in SNP's 1997 (11.828), 2001 (11.042) and 2015 (11.435) Westminster manifestos (Volkens et al 2018). However figure 8 shows that the Regional Manifesto Project's centre-periphery position and salience measure for the SNP declining between the party's 2003 and 2011 Holyrood manifestos, with only a minimal increase evident in the 2016 document. This suggests that while the SNP's desire to express a pro-periphery identity at Westminster elections remained constant it increasingly had other priorities when contesting Holyrood elections, such as making a valence based appeal centred around projecting an image as a competent party of government at devolved level and projecting a left of centre image via a pointing to a policy record and setting out policy commitments.
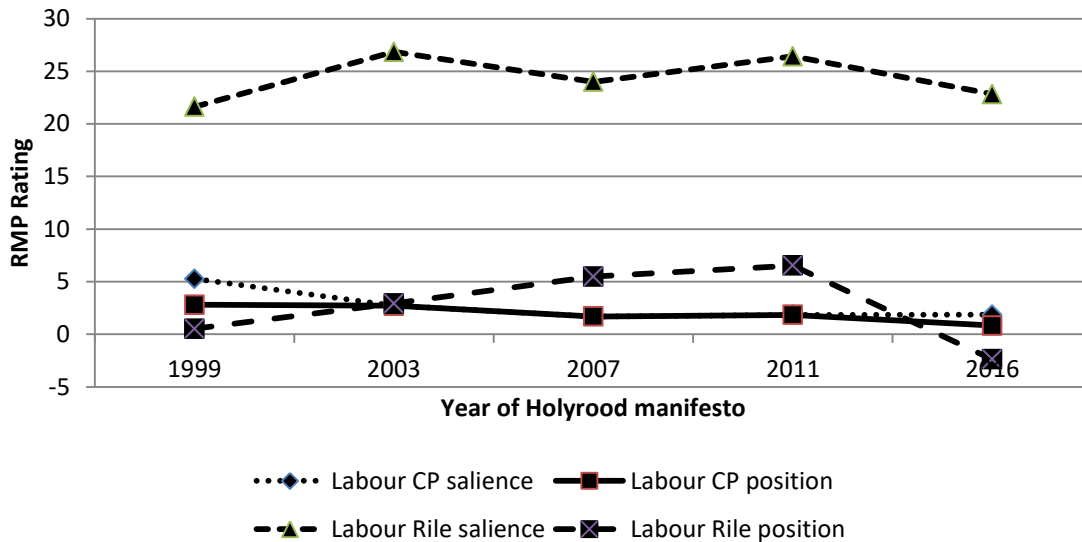
Figure 9: Regional Manifesto Project data for Labour Holyrood manifestos 1999-2016 (Gomez et al 2018)

Figure 9 details the Regional Manifesto Project data derived from the five manifestos for Holyrood elections published by the Scottish Labour Party to date. It shows minimal variation in terms of centre-periphery positioning or salience over the course of the period studied. Only the rile positioning measure indicates a shift in strategy, with the party being seen to shift to the left in its 2016 manifesto. This echoes the Chapel Hill Expert survey data with its 2014 and 2017 surveys placing the party to the left of its position in the preceding four (Bakker et al 2015, Polk et al 2017). Slightly more variation is evident in the RMP data relating to the Conservatives detailed in figure 10, with the rile and centre-periphery salience measures indicating a slight shift in focus towards the centre-periphery axis of competition. The data also indicates a small shift to a less pro-periphery position on the latter axis.
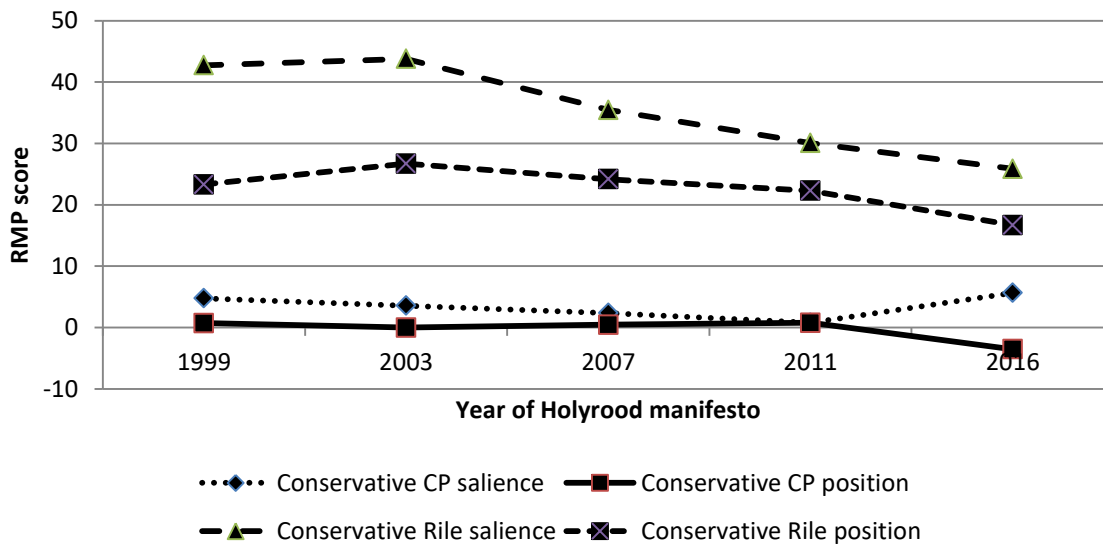
Figure 10: Regional Manifesto Project data for Conservative Holyrood manifestos 1999-2016 (Gomez et al 2018)

The strategic shifts in both sections of the RMP data detailed above largely confirm the results of the analysis conducted for this study. However neither picks up on the pro-periphery shift by the two main unionist parties in Scotland in period after the SNP first came to power at Holyrood. As detailed above, this saw both parties showing a willingness to argue for more responsibility to be given to the Scottish Parliament in supporting the Calman commission, while Labour went so far as to endorse a referendum on independence. The Manifesto Project's federalism ratings shown in figure 10 do indicate that the Labour and Conservative manifestos for the 2005 UK election were more federalist than the equivalent documents for the preceding election. However the net variation over the period for Labour is minimal and detailed examination of the annotated Conservative manifesto shows that the peak in the federalism rating for the Conservatives in that year is largely due to the manifesto supporting the devolution of some power to local councils (Volkens et al 2018).
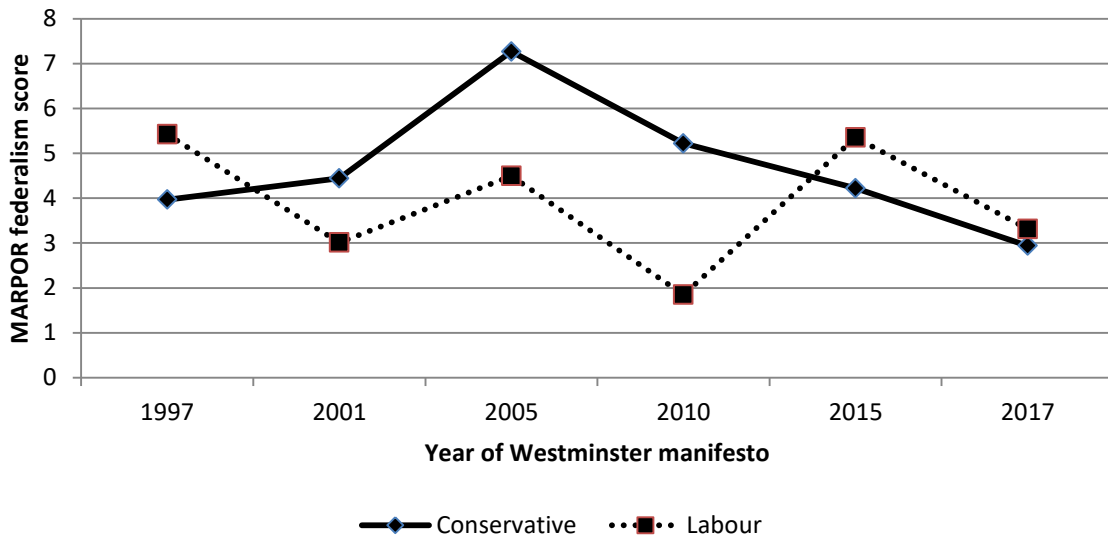
Figure 11: MARPOR Federalism ratings in Labour and Conservative UK election manifestos 1997-2017 (Volkens et al 2018)

Comparing the findings of this study with those of existing work demonstrates the potential of the methods employed here to provide a more fine-grained picture of the strategic choices political parties make than is evident in existing work. This is partly due to the advantages of the focus on parliamentary discourse as opposed to manifestos. However this thesis argues that the framework employed is also part of the explanation for this. Analysing rhetorical justification alongside position and issue salience allows for the study of changes in overall party strategy that would not be highlighted by existing approaches.

With regard to existing polling data this thesis argues that Labour's switch to a justification of its stance on the centre-periphery axis based on economics can help explain why Scottish voters were increasingly convinced that it was the SNP that constituted the more convincing left of centre option available to them. Polling from the lead up to the 2011 Holyrood election shows Scottish voters placing Labour to the left of the SNP on the economic axis (Carmen et al 2014:94). However data from the British Election Study shows that the Scottish electorate came to see the SNP as the more convincingly left wing party than Labour in the years after that election. In 2014 and 2015 several waves of the BES panel survey asked respondents to scale the main Scottish parties on a left right axis. In the May to June 2014 wave respondents on average rated Labour as the most left wing of the major

Scottish parties, however in subsequent waves when the question was included Scottish voters rated the SNP as the most left wing (Fieldhouse et al 2014, 2015).

The polling referred to above covers the period around the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence in which Labour's association with the critique of the idea of Scottish independence based on economics that it used in FMQs sessions would have been particularly prominent. This seems to have resulted in Scottish voters beginning to doubt whether the party represented the most left wing option available to them. The effect of this on Labour's electoral performance from 2015 onwards in its traditional heartlands was devastating.

Existing research has documented how the referendum on Scottish independence precipitated a realignment of voting patterns such that referendum voting choice became closely aligned with party support (Fieldhouse & Prosser 2018:19). The foundations for this switch stretch back into the 1990s it being already the case then that the two parties support base was geographically and demographically similar (Brand et al 1994:618). Labour was therefore faced with a situation where it could ill afford to be seen by any significant segment of its support base as being a less credibly left of centre party than the SNP as the two parties were both direct there appeals to a group of voters likely to view being seen as the most left wing option positively. On the evidence of this study, the type of rhetoric used by Labour in outlining the case against independence gave the impression that it was to the right of the SNP. Sharing a platform with the Conservatives during the referendum campaign no doubt did nothing to alleviate this impression. This provides evidence to support the contention that the rhetorical justification political actors use for their policy position has a significant effect on the electorate's view of the ideological position occupied by the party they represent. The introductory chapter to this thesis detailed the existing research on the effects of rhetoric on political outcomes. The effect of language on perceptions of ideology represents an avenue for future research.

The latter is particularly the case given that there is evidence to suggest that the type of shifts in rhetorical strategy detailed in this study have more effect on public perception of a political party's ideological stance than actual policy position. Other measures of the positioning of Scottish Labour and the SNP correlate less well with the shift in public

perception of the parties' left right positioning detailed in the polling referred to above. The RMP data rates all Holyrood manifestos published by the SNP slightly to the left of Labour, while the Chapel Hill Expert Survey rates the SNP as more left wing than Labour in the 1999-2014 surveys (Bakker et al 2015, Polk et al 2017). Those measures suggest that the SNP had occupied a position to the left of Labour for some time before the BES survey data began to indicate that Scottish voters viewed the SNP as the most left wing party. Consequently this study argues that it is the adjustment in Labour's rhetorical strategy in the form of its increasing association with the economic case against independence that is the main factor behind the shift in public opinion picked up in the BES data. Only with the advent of this rhetorical shift did public opinion begin to align with the existing measures of party position in viewing the SNP as the most left wing of the two parties.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion and Evaluation

This section will evaluate the methodology employed in the study in the light of the results obtained. It will also detail the theoretical, methodological and empirical contribution of the study. It will begin with a consideration of the utility of the theoretical framework presented in the light of the results obtained. It will then provide an assessment of how the results obtained might contribute to the future study of party competition, both in multi-level settings and more generally.

The results presented have shown that the rhetorical justification of a policy position is an important and distinct element in the message communicated by political actors. Scottish Labour's shift away from framing its pro-centre position in progressive left of centre terms towards the greater use of arguments based on the economic viability and desirability of the stance advocated by its opponents cannot credibly be described as a shift in policy position or issue salience. This aspect of the results also highlights the utility of the distinction between negative and positive subsuming. Researchers envisaged some time ago the utility of a strategic approach based on appeals relating to both axes in building a stable, non-diffuse support base (Brand et al (1994:617). The notion of positive and negative subsuming within the PSR framework offers a route by which parties can implement such a strategy that has the advantage of taking into account the limitations political parties operate within when attempting to formulate strategy. An approach that incorporates elements that are at variance with a party's established policy identity carries with it a particular set of risks in terms of the credibility of its overall message.

There are however some issues associated with implementing the framework formulated for this study that any researcher seeking to utilise it should be aware of. Use of the distinction between positive and negative subsuming is in no small part dependent on accurately determining what constitutes a party's established policy identity, and accurately classifying the rhetorical justifications or framing strategies utilised by that party. Scottish Labour's established identity as a party that supports the union in the sense of being opposed to Scottish independence but is pro-periphery in the sense of being supportive of devolution is more difficult to analyse than the equivalent identities of the SNP or the Conservatives who each sit at opposite ends of the centre-periphery axis. The nature of the

language used to reinforce a position in the middle of an axis is more difficult to determine than used to reference a position at the extremes. Moreover, as mentioned in the results chapter, it is legitimate to question whether the economic line of attack Labour increasingly pursued against the SNP can be accurately characterised as right wing notwithstanding the results of the cosine similarity analysis.

This thesis acknowledges that it would be wholly inaccurate to describe Scottish Labour as having adopted anything approaching a substantively right wing policy identity during the period studied. However it maintains that Labour representatives sounded more right wing than they needed to in articulating the economic arguments against the SNP's core policy. Parties of the left traditionally appeal to the electorate by arguing that they can have better public services. Parties of the right often argue the same but with caveats based around economic stability, limiting the "crowding out" effect of a bloated public sector and protecting "wealth creation" via having low rates of taxation. All too often in the latter part of the period studied Labour appears to have adopted language closer to the latter than the former.

The study has also highlighted another issue with the theory relating to operationalisation. How to conduct research that focuses on each individual element of party strategy encapsulated in the position salience and rhetoric framework. The analysis has uncovered several instances of adjustments parties appear to have made to those aspects of their strategic approach, but it has only been able to do so via the interpretation of a set of results obtained using four different methodological tools; Alceste/Iramuteq, cosine document similarity, simple word counts and the subsequent qualitative interpretation of passages of text highlighted by the more automated methods. The necessity of returning to the text after the implementation of the automated and semi-automated methods of textual analysis might be argued to be a limitation on the usefulness of the framework in terms of analysing a large volume of text. However it is clear that the method employed in this study can provide an insight into the tactical choices political parties make that is not evident in existing studies that aim to track those choices over an extended period of time.

In addition to highlighting some of the main strategic shifts undertaken by the main Scottish political parties in the post devolution era this study has also been able to provide evidence

regarding the factors that caused those shifts. Party strategy in a multi-level setting appears to be influenced by whether the next scheduled election is a sub-state or state-wide contest, and by changes in incumbency position at state-wide and devolved level. On the basis of the example of the SNP in the period studied here it appears that the tactical choices of regional nationalist parties are more influenced by changes in incumbency at devolved level. In the regression analyses conducted on the cosine similarity results the most significant variable influencing the SNP's net right, net pro-periphery and positive subsuming scores is the Holyrood Incumbency one.

In contrast the picture with regard to the two state-wide parties studied is more mixed. Westminster incumbency is seen to be the most important factor influencing the Conservative's use of positive subsuming and Labour's use of pro-periphery language. Meanwhile the Holyrood Incumbency variable has the most significant effect on the Conservative's pro-periphery score and Labour's positive subsuming and net-right score. Together these results suggest that the strategy of regional nationalist parties is more influenced by things that happen in the region, while that of state-wide parties can be influenced by state-wide events as well. This within region focus of regional nationalist parties means that distancing themselves ideologically from the party in power at the centre might not be as important an objective for parties of that type as some of the existing literature has made out, or as was anticipated in H1. Where a regional nationalist party feels it has a realistic chance of pursuing its ultimate objective via winning power at devolved level (as was the case with the SNP in the period studied) it may well be that its tactical focus is directed towards the sub-state arena of competition rather than attacking a hostile or indifferent government at the centre.

The most obvious impact of the incumbency variables appears to be the consequences stemming from the loss of incumbency experienced by the Labour Party. The relative importance of loss of office at state-wide or nation-state level is difficult to determine for the methodological reasons discussed elsewhere, particularly as in the case studied only three years separate the loss of incumbency at one level from the other. However the fact that there was a reaction around the period when those two events took place is difficult to gainsay. It appears to have encompassed an abandonment of the ideology-based critique of

Scottish Nationalism, and an accompanying (if short lived) shift towards the SNP's stance of supporting a referendum on independence.

Classifying the latter shift as one to a pro-periphery position, as this study has done, is open to question. Labour tacticians might well have argued that the strategy was one with a pro-union objective, the intention being to precipitate the comfortable defeat of the independence option in order to close down the constitutional issue for an extended period of time. What is important though is the fact that the positional shift deviates from the party's existing policy identity. It can be described as a tactical pro-periphery shift taken with the objective of securing a long term pro-centre or pro-union goal. However the strategy can only be termed a pro-union one with the benefit of hindsight, if the snap referendum called for does indeed deliver the desired result.

One other issue has been evident in terms of determining the impact of incumbency changes. Analysis of the effect of incumbency in a parliamentary setting inevitably picks up the effect of the different roles government and opposition play within that context. However this study argues that analysing question and answer sessions such as FMQs diminishes the impact of that factor as the roles played by the two sides are not as different as they are when legislation such as a budget is being introduced by a governing party. In the latter scenario a greater proportion of contributions by representatives of governing parties will be taken up with references to the detailed minutiae of the legislation thus limiting the extent to which they can express an ideological identity. The results showing that incumbency at state-wide level can sometimes be the most important variable encourages the impression that more is being uncovered than the differing roles played by government and opposition representatives in a parliamentary setting.

One final issue is that the input to the regression analysis was solely the output of the cosine similarity analysis, meaning that it was not possible to accurately quantify the extent to which any of the independent variables specifically impacted upon party position, salience or rhetoric. This highlights the general issue relating to operationalising the framework referred to above. Quantitative measurement of these specific aspects of party discourse is difficult within the limitations of current methodology. Certainly with regard to rhetoric only researcher interpretation of political texts can reliably uncover patterns in the rhetorical

justification of their position used by political actors as no automated method can have the necessary sensitivity to context. This inevitably places a limit on the size of the text that can be analysed, but perhaps researcher interpretation directed by automated or semi-automated analysis of the type used in this study can provide some sort of compromise between breadth of analysis and the type of depth of analysis required to fully apply the PSR framework.

The main distinguishing feature of the framework formulated for this study is conceiving of rhetoric as a distinct tactical tool in the armoury of political parties in addition to position and salience. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that the most significant contribution of the project relates to that element party strategy. The evident shift in how Labour justified its position on the centre-periphery axis in the latter part of the period studied compared with the pre-2007 phase can only realistically be described as a rhetorical shift. Comparing those two periods in isolation, no fundamental positional shift is evident. In both periods the party's position was pro-devolution and left of centre. A change in the nature of the arguments put forward justifying a position also cannot be described as a salience shift. This provides a clear indication of the utility of conceiving of rhetoric as an aspect of party strategy distinct from position and salience.

This study argues that the results it presents provide an indication as to why Labour's strategy in the latter part of the post-devolution era proved to be so unsuited to meeting the challenge posed to it by the SNP. The idea behind the distinction between positive and negative subsuming introduced in the framework for this study is to enable an assessment to made as to what extent the policy identity being expressed by a party on the centre-periphery and left-right axes of competition is at any one time coherent and credible in the light of the party's established identity. Post-2007 Scottish Labour failed that test of coherence and credibility. Even after having shifted away from the pro-referendum stance it briefly adopted immediately after losing power the party failed to fully address the lack of clarity in its positon on the centre-periphery axis. Polling conducted prior to the 2011 contest shows that by then voters perceived the party as lacking a clear identity on the constitutional issue placing the party almost in the centre of the centre-periphery axis; less pro-union than the Lib Dems and Conservatives but much less pro-periphery than the SNP (Carmen et al 2014:94). It was to further compound this ambiguity when the leader of

Scottish Labour Kezia Dugdale intimated that she might actually support Scottish independence if the UK as a whole voted to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum but Scotland voted to remain (Simpkins 2017:21).

On the left-right axis meanwhile it seems to have abandoned the strategy of arguing the progressive, left of centre case against Scottish independence replacing it with a set of arguments increasingly based on economics that made it far more difficult for it to project a clearly left of centre, progressive, social democratic identity relative to its main regional nationalist opponent. The negative aspects of this strategy were emphasised by the SNP at the same time pursuing a strategy aimed precisely at undermining Labour's left of centre credentials and associating them with the UK Conservative Party, while at the same time presenting a left of centre identity of their own.

Recent findings have shown that the rhetoric use by parties during election campaigns influences public perception of party positioning (Somer-Topcu et al 2020). This study argues that the distinction between positive and negative subsuming provides one explanation as to how the two variables of rhetorical strategy and public perception of ideological stance might be linked in a multi-level setting. A party combining references to an established policy identity on both axes in the manner envisaged by the positive subsuming strategy will increase the chances that voters will perceive it as having a distinct and coherent identity. On the other hand when party rhetoric deviates from its established policy identity as envisaged in the negative subsuming strategy voters will likely perceive its stance as lacking coherence, distinctiveness and credibility.

The results presented here placed in the context of the relative electoral performance of Labour and the SNP in post-devolution Scotland suggest that positive subsuming provides a more reliable route to success for parties operating in a multi-level setting than many alternative strategies. The reason for this may be that there is a high likelihood that the strategy will appeal to a broad range of voters. For example a left of centre, pro-periphery party successfully subsuming those twin themes is well placed to appeal to all voters who do not have a strong preference for right wing and/or pro-centre policies. Voters who have a weak preference for either of the positions outlined in the above example are open to being

won over by a subsumed left of centre/pro-periphery appeal in a way that they might not be were those two appeals delivered separately.

Existing general research does indeed show that parties tend to benefit from a pursuing a strategy aimed at appealing to ideologically diverse groups of voters (Somer-Topcu 2015:850-851). Work conducted specifically on niche parties such as regional nationalist parties also shows them they tending to reap electoral benefits from broadening their agenda beyond the centre periphery axis (Bergman & Flatt 2019). There are two plausible explanations for this. Firstly voters are likely to view a party that appears to be appealing to a broad section of the country's population positively in valence terms as it gives the impression of it being a party prepared to govern in the interests of the whole country, not just the segment of the population that forms its core support base. There may also be an element of confirmation bias at work in which voters who are open to being persuaded to supporting a range of parties have a tendency weigh elements of agreement with a party's message more heavily than elements of disagreement when multiple messages are presented together. This aspect of the impact of a subsuming strategy has yet to be investigated and represents a credible avenue for future research.

The power of a message in which an economic argument is subsumed with one relating to a border question is attested to in existing studies. Secessionist sentiment appears to be heightened in case where a divide over left-right policy comes to mirror a centre-periphery one. The Velvet Divorce of the two components parts of Czechoslovakia occurred in no small part due to free market based reforms to the former eastern bloc country being largely opposed by Slovaks but supported by Czechs (White 2015:109). The same work argues that there is potential for a similar situation to occur in Scotland where a weakness of the Labour left has led a significant number of Scots who oppose austerity to feel that they occupy permanent minority status within the UK with the consequence that Scottish secession represents the best route to the implementation of left of centre policies (White 2015:111). This study argues that the cause of this is not so much a weakness of the Labour left but a failure on the part of the party to argue a convincing case that left of centre goals can best be pursued within a UK constitutional framework. The party has argued the left of centre case and the case against independence but has failed to subsume the two into a coherent whole. Some attempts by leading figures on the left to do this have been made (Milne

2014), but they have been all too few. Anti-secession parties need to show that full political contestation can take place within the existing constitutional settlement. The notion of positive subsuming sets out a route by which this can be achieved.

Appendix One

Summary of Variables

Independent Variables

Holyrood Incumbency - Labour in power at Holyrood = 0, SNP in power = 1

Westminster Incumbency - Labour in power at Westminster = 0, Conservatives in power – 1

Next Scheduled Election - Holyrood Election = 0, Westminster Election = 1

Dependent Variables

Net right – Cosine similarity with right reference text minus cosine similarity with left reference text

Net pro-periphery – Cosine similarity with pro-centre reference text minus cosine similarity with pro-periphery reference text

Positive subsuming

SNP	Cosine similarity score for left reference text + cosine similarity score for pro-periphery reference text
Labour	Cosine similarity score for left reference text + cosine similarity score for pro-centre reference text
Conservative	Cosine similarity score for right reference text + cosine similarity score for pro-centre reference text

Appendix Two

Results of Iramuteq/Alceste analysis of sessions of First Minister's Question Time showing the word clusters with which each party has a statistically significant association.

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2000 A	**Conservative and SNP** Minister, coverage, reference, meet, ask, Scottish, discuss, secretary, comment, executive **Labour** Salmond, matter, few, day, mr, document, properly, McLetchie, business, access **Labour** Figure, unemployment, low, university, create, cost, students, site, Dumfries, youth
2000 B	**SNP** Home, decision, agree, parliament, unite, Brown, Ian, Secretary, debate, age **Conservative** Ask, Executive, discuss, Scottish, cabinet, reference, issue, coverage, intend, meet **Labour** Increase, health, manufacture, spend, rise, unemployment, million, acknowledge, low, know **Conservative** Mr, committee, chancellor, Wallace, liberal, common, stand, ministerial, vote, joint **SNP** Authority, right, human, accept, guideline, rule, obligation, convention, amendment, recommendation
2000 C	**Labour** Discussion, Sam, constructive, John, forward, problem, today, country, Galbraith, hope **Labour** Care, Health, service, community, money, fund, home, year, drug, spend **SNP and Conservative** Minister, act, coverage, cabinet, reference, state, meet, discuss, Labour, secretary

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2000 D	**Labour** Prison, ensure, railway, European, consultation, public, Europe, school, part, future **Labour** Snp, listen, billion, economy, situation, benefit, package, let, pensioner, statement, pre **SNP** Wait, list, leave, today, labour, cent, register, time, patient, health **SNP and Conservative** Meet, secretary, state, raise, prime, coverage, ask, minister, cabinet, discuss
2001 A	**Conservative** Question, Swinney, John, coverage, bite, colleague, progress, order, lot, reference **SNP** Fish, industry, fisherman, term, tie, decommission, measure, scheme, Rhona, Brankin
2001 B	**Conservative and SNP** Coverage, meet, ask, reference, executive, Scottish, plan, secretary, state, issue **Labour** Ensure, community, lifelong, part, interest, rural, term, consider, approach, work **Labour** SNP, Conservative, service, year, health, billion, cut, leader, talk, party **SNP and Conservative** Wait, list, patient, March, month, treatment, promise, figure, fail, election
2001 C	**Conservative and SNP** Ask, reference, meet, coverage, cabinet, minister, September, secretary, plan, discuss **Labour** Review, ensure, asylum, seeker, Sighthill, city, work, Glasgow, implement, visit
2001 D	**Labour** Young, person, education, child, job, area, abuse, rate, development, misuse, effective **SNP** Lost, wait, patient, health, close, hospital, letter, care, pass, treat **SNP** Meet, raise, coverage, discuss, reference, ask, issue, state, cabinet, secretary **Labour** Enterprise,transport, economy, tourism, lifelong, report, rural, energy, industry, learn

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2002 A	**Conservative and SNP** Coverage, reference, discuss, ask, minister, cabinet, meet, answer, prime, secretary **Labour** Support, sport, euro, curl, association, tenant, winter, loss, Glasgow, lab **Labour** Local, home, authority, partnership, sector, care, deliver, solution, private, negotiation
2002 B	**SNP** Coverage, reference, preside, point, question, answer, thank, officer, interest, fishery **Conservative** Meet, ask, secretary, minister, enterprise, McConnell, discuss, state, prime, transport **Labour** High, job, economy, expert, quality, report, growth, civil, servant, capital **SNP** Wait, time, patient, hospital, health, nurse, NHS, list, treatment, doctor **Labour** Bid, football, east, European, Union, club, championship, Ireland, local, agreement
2002 C	**SNP** Ask, meet, reference, secretary, executive, discuss, coverage, cabinet, regularly, plan **SNP** Question, answer, labour, know, constituency, interest, party, Swinney, mislead, ago **Labour** Part, industry, skill, construction, ahead, Inverness, job, modern, Scotland, city **Labour** High, resource, increase, level, Finnie, reform, achieve, knife, Ross, require
2002 D	**SNP and Conservative** Reference, coverage, meet, secretary, state, issue, cabinet, preside, officer, intend, point, minister, answer, ask **Labour** Health, Clyde, argyll, child, action, improve, key, wait, patient, service **Labour** Edinburgh, theatre, assistance, local, rail, authority, company, city, public, council

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2003 A	**Labour** Local, authority, city, investment, transport, provide, fund, public, stock, card **Conservative and SNP** Discuss, ask, meet, cabinet, reference, minister, coverage, prime, issue, intend **SNP** School, hospital, wait, standard, patient, promise, health, pupil, teacher, violence
2003 B	**Conservative** System, criminal, difference, drop, conservative, delay, fact, problem, strategy, remission **SNP and Conservative** Issue, meet, reference, coverage, cabinet, minister, prime, care, discuss, secretary **Labour** Local, nursery, service, nurse, authority, review, Karen, forward, provision, teacher **Labour** Behaviour, antisocial, tackle, young, tag, accommodation, electronic, introduce, consultation, measure
2003 C	**Labour** Economy, business, investment, low, high, Scottish, scheme, grow, England, water **Labour** Service, care, health, deliver, person, facility, board, young, community, project **SNP** Coverage, reference, ask, discuss, meet, minister, prime, executive, issue, intend **Conservative** Inquiry, sentence, Fraser, Lord, power, release, remission, automatic, refer, BBC
2003 D	**Labour** School, child, transport, improvement, local, scheme, ensure, island, financial, college, national, Glasgow, Highland, tackle, involve, travel, objective, programme, free, road, drink, thrive, environmental, fund, city, progress, **SNP** Wait, Mr, Scott, common, last, fishery, time, policy, clarify, secure, month, chamber, liberal, NHS, medium, position, party, average, long, bring, McLetchie, Fife, democrat, treatment, Shetland **Conservative** Reference, ask, meet, coverage, discuss, minister, issued, cabinet, raise, prime **Conservative** Westminster, England, fee, law, criminal, unite, act, police, offence, emergency

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2004 A	**Conservative** Student, university, high, England, rate, education, graduate, spend, fee, endowment **Labour** Behaviour, antisocial, person, tackle, crime, drug, community, school, officer, sign **SNP** Parliament, report, tell, debate, coverage, answer, minister, reference, Sheridan, review, independent **Labour** Industry, European, Edinburgh, GM, UK, crop, whisky, protect, country, Hogmanay, promote **Conservative** Meet, ask, discuss, cabinet, reference, coverage, house, plan, prime, affordable, intend
2004 B	**Labour** Party, financial, Swinney, sector, thing, McLetchie, budget, Mr, year, opus, money **Labour** Benefit, summit, franchise, rail, local, success, world, welcome, pensioner, lab, continue **SNP** Contract, prisoner, reliance, justice, release, court, penalty, safety, police, officer, prison **SNP and Conservative** Meet, ask, prime, issue, minister, discuss, BBC, Sunday, lord, coverage, inquiry **Conservative** Constitution, European, fishery, union, regional, fish, EU, common, referendum, sea, policy
2004 C	**Labour** Scotland, promote, country, image, world, international, Kingdom, unite, programme, oversea **Conservative and SNP** Coverage, reference, discuss, meet, prime, cabinet, officer, answer, ask, Scottish, preside **Labour** Health, local, service, patient, hospital, community, care, board, decision, change, centre **Conservative** Fraser, civil, lord, report, responsibility, servant, accept, standard, cost, inquiry, accountable

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2004 D	**Conservative** Reference, discuss, issue, coverage, meet, cabinet, ask, prime, minister, discussion, secretary **SNP and Conservative** Tax, pensioner, council, pension, cut, Sturgeon, Labour, cent, increase, Liberal Democrat **Labour** Community, authority, park, action, situation, loch, problem, Lomond, local, responsibility, behaviour **Labour** Teacher, school, world, person, young, talent, fresh, transport, class, sector, economy
2005 A	**Conservative and SNP** Coverage, reference, question, discuss, prime, motion, issue, meet, minister, answer, cabinet **Labour** School, education, teacher, year, government, benefit, charge, discipline, past, local, young **Labour** European, island, highland, fresh, talent, project, future, close, constituency, initiative, objective **SNP** Wait, patient, treatment, time, list, appointment, cancer, quarter, numb, bed, long
2005 B	**Conservative and SNP** Wait, patient, health, service, list, national, Labour, time, down, McLetchie, party **Labour** Scotland, initiative, employment, unite, Kingdom, renewable, talent, economy, impact, fresh, skill
2005 C	**Conservative** Bail, condition, breach, law, measure, court, package, apply, remand, accuse, human **Labour** Scotland, tax, increase, money, economy, skill, spend, challenge, world, job, year **SNP** Party, coverage, reference, officer, parliament, SNP, Scottish, power, place, committee, debate
2005 D	**Labour** School, industry, teacher, programme, high, effort, enterprise, staff, Malawi, aid, classroom **Labour** British, deportation, remain, country, chamber, company, lord, regiment, unite, advocate, system **SNP and Conservative** Coverage, issue, reference, executive, discuss, minister, cabinet, prime, meet, ask, office

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2006 A	**Labour** Staff, system, network, Kingdom, Unite, rail, part, Scotland, economy, removal, discussion **Conservative** Toll, bridge, proposal, road, Fife, Brown, Labour, Gordon, transport, SNP, decision **SNP** Inquiry, McKie, Lord, justice, case, Shirley, advocate, fingerprint, public, coverage, executive **Labour** Drug, school, education, young, youngster, parent, teacher, train, message, Mr, abuse
2006 B	**Labour** Young, person, local, need, ensure, service, treatment, child, student, health, drug **Labour** Committee, UK, Sturgeon, report, commission, Goldie, expert, recommendation, Tories, culture, enterprise **SNP and Conservative** Minister, coverage, reference, meet, discuss, prime, issue, ask, executive, cabinet, thank **Labour** Teacher, increase, SNP, unite, education, kingdom, classroom, water, economic, pupil, cost
2006 C	**Conservative** Budget, service, child, health, report, fund, local, authority, improvement, money, spend **SNP** Discuss, meet, question, prime, issue, coverage, answer, cabinet, leader, reference, minister **Conservative** Young, hope, involve, facility, opportunity, sport, prisoner, society, option, pupil, migrant
2006 D	**Conservative** School, ensure, programme, person, community, child, social, continue, drug, care, young **SNP** Issue, discuss, prime, coverage, reference, cabinet, trident, parliament, report, question, commission
2007 A	**SNP** SNP, Sturgeon, party, election, Labour, ms, trident, vote, answer, policy, nationalist **Labour** Child, increase, service, ensure, drug, work, young, family, poverty, investment, economy

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2007 B	**SNP** Issue, discuss, unite, view, election, kingdom, matter, paper, UK, attendance, allowance **Conservative** Tax, school, increase, class, sector, size, Conservative, support, income, fee, introduce **Labour** Employment, train, house, education, level, Glasgow, secretary, care, target, tenant, quality **Labour** Edinburgh, project, tram, rail, airport, link, Donald, Dewar, Swinney, auditor, vote
2007 C	**Conservative** Report, concern, inquiry, law, interest, government, issue, address, official, public, extremely **Conservative** Police, officer, Wendy, Alexander, scheme, budget, pensioner, set, target, community, recruitment **SNP** Care, health, patient, board, renewable, service, power, Gibson, practice, north, hospital **SNP** Secretary, cabinet, justice, Cathy, Jamieson, advocate, state, Goldie, Annabel, representative, move
2007 D	**SNP** Glasgow, ensure, project, area, airport, consideration, business, centre, economic, vital, Strathclyde **SNP** Tax, freeze, council, cent, budget, liberal, affordable, increase, year, university, house **Labour and Conservative** Police, officer, promise, class, size, break, federation, pledge, extra, wonder, recruit **Labour** Family, concordat, agreement, domestic, child, respite, care, violence, abuse, local, disable
2008 A	No Associations
2008 B	**SNP** Alexander, Wendy, Labour, year, school, project, profit, target, liberal, model, private **Conservative** Issue, Goldie, Annabel, recommendation, cabinet, health, matter, parliament, problem, prison, drug **Labour and Conservative** Ask, monster, reference, rest, coverage, engagement, question, officer, state, preside, meet **SNP** Quota, fish, union, industry, emergency, fuel, dispute, management, fan, facility, Manchester

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2008 C	No associations
2008 D	**SNP** Work, support, child, woman, effective, affect, community, abuse, crime, limit, violence Labour **Conservative** TSB, Lloyds, concern, climate, sector, state, difficulty, UK, business, job, HBOS
2009 A	**Conservative** Reference, coverage, meet, prime, discuss, state, secretary, cabinet, ask, engagement, minister **SNP** Sector, energy, financial, skill, company, manufacture, announcement, development, action, renewable, enterprise
2009 B	**SNP** School, education, student, Tavish, curriculum, excellence, support, Scott, financial, administration, improve
2009 C	**Labour** Budget, increase, project, cut, Glasgow, job, economic, finance, spend, year, reduction
2009 D	**Conservative** Child, health, free, price, minimum, alcohol, prescription, sentence, policy, Dungavel, malnutrition
2010 A	**Conservative** Service, health, care, Salmond, child, patient, Alex, problem, hour, access, NHS **Labour** Justice, officer, safety, criminal, crime, police, inquiry, transport, sentence, constituency **SNP** Cut, budget, Scott, Tavish, spend, year, recovery, public, Westminster, capital
2010 B	**SNP** Cabinet, Tavish, Scott, ensure, secretary, respect, work, meet, aspect, education **Conservative** Response, ask, minister, fund, rape, action, crisis, England, receive, NHS **Labour** Iain, Gray, target, renewable, emission, carbon, energy, achieve, jump, investment **SNP** Public, cut, service, London, spend, billion, institute, front, forecast, fiscal

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2010 C	**Labour** Teacher, post, school, day, council, curriculum, teach, excellence, board, nurse **SNP** Cut, Labour, Party, public, spend, year, finance, budget, election, talk **Conservative** Reference, prime, meet, coverage, question, minister, programme, cover, GP, forward **SNP** Police, officer, event, loan, gather, legal, company, tasers, court, lord
2010 D	**SNP** University, liberal, south, border, Annabel, Democrat, Goldie, question, answer, solution **SNP** Kingdom, rate, cent, business, economic, year, administration, increase, small, figure **SNP** Condition, winter, weather, person, exceptional, information, resilience, circumstance, improve, heat **Labour** Meet, secretary, cabinet, minister, prime, coverage, east, state, plan, industry
2011 A	**Conservative** Police, crime, officer, force, sentence, justice, Goldie, Annabel, patient, street **SNP** Sector, budget, business, local, public, fund, small, million, proposal, government **Labour** Day, council, north, Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, school, Milliband, leader, Edinburgh, City
2011 B	**Conservative** Question, Iain, Gray, Annabel, reference, Goldie, answer, coverage, day, euro **Labour** Health, college, service, university, nurse, NHS, protect, promise, merger, cabinet **SNP** Court, lord, supreme, law, criminal, McCluskey, advocate, appeal, review, Rennie

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2011 C	**Conservative and Labour** Euro, renewable, energy, state, rest, report, obligation, unite, European, engineer **SNP** Port, fund, government, provide, Dundee, industry, carer, security, ensure, respite **Labour** Gray, referendum, Iain, person, coverage, independence, question, Scots, election, session **SNP** Legislation, crime, justice, knife, criminal, lord, law, survey, sectarianism, court
2011 D	**Labour** Human, aware, traffic, charge, raise, close, inquiry, road, trade, ensure **SNP** Welcome, party, million, Willie, year, capital, spend, Rennie, chamber, billion **Conservative** Prime, Ruth, Davidson, council, advisor, industry, McGrigor, meet, minister, fishery
2012 A	**Labour** Job, investment, capital, figure, cent, woman, employment, spend, million, budget **SNP** Johann, party, Lamont, Labour, price, leader, election, liberal, minimum, vote **Conservative** Secretary, meet, ask, ensure, employee, minister, cabinet, police, information, action **Conservative** Davidson, Ruth, independence, independent, country, union, nation, monetary, currency, world
2012 B	**SNP** Fund, work, local, community, health, ensure, million, carer, government, child **SNP** Party, Labour, Davidson, Conservative, Ruth, campaign, learn, consultation, election, prefer **Labour and Conservative** Minister, Murdoch, coverage, reference, day, meet, Rupert, job, ask, tell **SNP** Inquiry, Rennie, Willie, police, lord, judicial, Leveson, criminal, lama, investigation

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2012 C	**Labour and Conservative** Minister, reference, coverage, Prime, day, ask, engagement, believe, deputy, fair **SNP** Johann, Labour, Lamont, party, speech, society, control, Tory, Westminster, bench **Labour** Million, economy, young, world, budget, capital, Mackintosh, Ken, cut, programme **SNP** Advice, legal, European, union, law, independent, code, ministerial, president, specific **SNP** Concern, wind, community, fish, draw, food, loss, work, company, tender
2012 D	**SNP and Conservative** College, million, student, budget, fund, tuition, university, capital, fee, full **Labour** Health, service, NHS, national, nurse, patient, board, general, auditor, Lothian
2013 A	**SNP** Police, community, reform, Salmond, Macdonald, Lewis, Scottish, Jim, Eadie, kingdom **Labour** Wait, Sturgeon, Nicola, health, list, service, treatment, auditor, hide, unavailability **SNP** NHS, care, ensure, board, health, patient, Tayside, doctor, process, medical **SNP** Party, Labour, campaign, Johann, Conservative, Lamont, liberal, Democrat, European, common **Labour and Conservative** Reference, coverage, minister, question, Willie, hope, Rennie, rest, ask, plan **Conservative** Oil, Davidson, Ruth, gas, money, NPD, north, sea, Swinney, million
2013 B	**Conservative** Health, meet, secretary, ensure, board, cabinet, family, importance, review, receive **Labour** Minister, pension, John, currency, rest, kingdom, union, independence **SNP** Labour, Johann, party, Lamont, tax, increase, Conservative, corporation, policy, Darling

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2013 C	**Labour and Conservative** Minister, reference, coverage, royal, mail, bell, Alex, college, write, John **SNP** Health, patient, safety, care, palliative, ratio, mobile, improvement, age **SNP** Child, poverty, welfare, foster, household, action, aware, allocation, government, Glasgow **SNP** Police, officer, station, visit, community, business, survey, counter, operational, crime **Labour** Oil, fiscal, fund, commission, spend, billion, civil, invest, stabilization, servant
2013 D	**SNP** Tax, revenue, economy, cut, billion, white, party, Labour. paper, vote **Labour** Health, service, staff, patient, NHS, nurse, care, local, Lanarkshire, national **Labour** Coverage, minister, reference, day, engagement, Alex, ask, Christmas, chamber, Salmond **Labour** Unite, kingdom, sentence, opportunity, Country, stay, student, own, person **Conservative** European, commission, Spanish, letter, professor, legal, prime, foreign, EU, negotiation
2014 A	**SNP** Community, poverty, child, local, support, ensure, wage, fund, childcare, school **Labour** Coverage, question, rest, currency, minister, answer, Johann, Standard, life **SNP** Past, year, oil, revenue, billion, sea, north, off, investment, borrow
2014 B	**SNP** Independent, country, Scotland, policy, UK, bank, Westminster, tax, society, unite **Conservative and Labour** Reference, coverage, ask, meet, minister, inquiry, issue, project, information, land **Labour** Health, service, patient, Johann, NHS, Lamont, Neil, emergency, national, care
2014 C	No associations

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2014 D	**SNP** Fuel, energy, poverty, figure, cent, Labour, Jackie, Ballie, person, control **Labour** Health, patient, NHS, staff, service, Grampian, nurse, drug, cancer, access **Conservative** Oil, industry, wage, north, live, Scottish, drink, tax, ago, low
2015 A	**SNP** School, education, child, attainment, community, ensure, council, parent, work, teacher **SNP** Secretary, Smith, clause, commission, justice, cabinet, proposal, Willie, Rennie, parliament **Labour and Conservative** Oil, Barnett, autonomy, ask, fiscal, formula, minister, confirm, price, bulletin **SNP** Labour, cut, austerity, Tory, Tories, Westminster, vote, alternative, party, future **Labour** NHS, wait, hour, health, patient, emergency, accident, year, fee, tuition
2015 B	**Labour and Conservative** Exam, pupil, qualification, high, numeracy, standard, sit, maintain, math, numb **Conservative** Education, young, childcare, system, parent, Ruth, local, Davidson, attainment, information **SNP** Poverty, UK, cut, welfare, unite, kingdom, budget, Westminster, vulnerable **Labour** Labour, Party, referendum, Tories, SNP, reference, coverage, autonomy, election, fiscal **SNP** Domestic, support, abuse, company, crime, victim, affect, secretary, incident, Glasgow,
2015 C	**Conservative** School, provide, foster, university, subject, stem, abuse, attainment, continue, science
2015 D	**Labour** Tax, cut, credit, income, restore, low, protect, family, Tories, household **SNP** Ensure, attainment, service, test, improvement, need, care, action, health information

Quarter	Classes associated with parties
2016 A	**SNP** Foster, cancer, university, live, access, wage, tackle, life, carer, person **SNP** Tax, income, pay, Rennie, Willie, budget, rise, Tories, billion, proposal **SNP** Kezia, Dugdale, Labour, answer, st, John, opposition, gray, listen, question **Conservative** Flood, industry, gas, company, business, oil, job, support, workforce, farmer **Conservative and SNP** Kingdom, government, north, unite, UK, Scottish, fiscal, agreement, cabinet **Labour** Cut, stop, powers, SNP, school, austerity, Kinross, figure, rent, Perth

Appendix Three

R code for Cosine Similarity Analysis

Centre-periphery

```
# Set libPaths.

.libPaths("C:\\Users\\User\\.exploratory\\R\\3.6")



# Load required packages.

library(janitor)

library(lubridate)

library(hms)

library(tidyr)

library(stringr)

library(readr)

library(forcats)

library(RcppRoll)

library(dplyr)
```

```
library(tibble)

library(exploratory)

library(bit64)



# Steps to produce the output

exploratory::read_delim_file("C:\\Users\\User\\Documents\\FMQs Text CP.csv"
, ",", quote = "\"", skip = 0 , col_names = TRUE , na = c('','NA') , locale
=readr::locale(encoding = "ISO-8859-1", decimal_mark = "."), trim_ws = TRUE
, progress = FALSE) %>%

  readr::type_convert() %>%

  exploratory::clean_data_frame() %>%

  rename(Debate = X1) %>%

  do_tokenize(Text, keep_cols = TRUE) %>%

  filter(!is_stopword(token)) %>%

  do_tfidf(Debate, token) %>%

  do_cosine_sim.kv(Debate, token, tfidf, distinct = TRUE) %>%

  arrange(desc(value))
```

Left-right

```
# Set libPaths.

.libPaths("C:\\Users\\User\\.exploratory\\R\\3.6")



# Load required packages.

library(janitor)

library(lubridate)

library(hms)

library(tidyr)

library(stringr)
```

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```
library(readr)

library(forcats)

library(RcppRoll)

library(dplyr)

library(tibble)

library(exploratory)

library(bit64)


# Steps to produce the output

exploratory::read delim file("C:\\Users\\User\\Documents\\FMQs Text LR.csv"
, ",", quote = "\"", skip = 0 , col_names = TRUE , na = c('','NA') , locale
=readr::locale(encoding = "ISO-8859-1", decimal_mark = "."), trim_ws = TRUE
, progress = FALSE) %>%

  readr::type_convert() %>%

  exploratory::clean_data_frame() %>%

  rename(Debate = X1) %>%

  do_tokenize(Text, token = "words", keep_cols = TRUE) %>%

  filter(!is_stopword(token, lang = "english")) %>%

  do_tfidf(Debate, token) %>%

  do_cosine_sim.kv(Debate, token, tfidf, distinct = TRUE) %>%

  arrange(desc(value))
```

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