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Abstract

This article explores the construction of national identity in the coverage of policy issues during the first two general elections after devolution, in Scottish and in English/UK daily morning newspapers. It focuses on a sample of the coverage of the most mentioned reserved and devolved issue in the 2001 and 2005 campaigns and examines the use of markers of location and deictic references to a national context. It finds that the distinction between reserved and devolved matters is not decisive in how these topics are constructed. The Scottish and English/UK coverage of the Iraq war, taxation and health debates at Westminster is relatively similar, written and presumed to be read in Britain. However, Scottish titles differentiate their output by constructing their readers as having little participation in these 'UK' issues, and by emphasizing the Scottish relevance of topics such as fiscal autonomy for Scotland and waiting lists at Scottish hospitals. Even in that coverage though, the relevant national context occasionally shifts between Scotland and Britain. By contrast, newspapers written in England consistently report from an Anglo-British perspective, making no allowance for the changes brought by devolution.

Keywords

banal nationalism, deixis, discourse analysis, newspapers, Scottish devolution, UK elections

Introduction

Devolution and the establishment of the Scottish parliament were significant milestones for political life in Scotland. For some they marked the much-anticipated conclusion of

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many decades of debates, for others the beginning of a road toward independence. The arguments for Scottish devolution were partly based on a perception of the historical and cultural distinctiveness of the Scots, a separate national identity, expressed politically through this new constitutional arrangement.

Since devolution, there have been two parliaments deciding for different aspects of life in Scotland: the Scottish parliament deals with devolved issues, such as healthcare, education and law and order; and the UK parliament deals with reserved areas, such as foreign policy, defence and broadcasting while, importantly, it raises taxation and provides the Scottish parliament with its share of state budget, to be spent on its devolved functions.¹ The Scottish electorate participates therefore in Westminster elections, to choose the government that will control reserved matters for Scotland (as well as all matters for England), and in Scottish elections where devolved matters are (or should be) the decisive issues.

This article is part of a wider study which compared a large corpus of coverage of the first two Westminster elections after devolution, in newspapers produced in Scotland and in England,² and also consulted Scottish political editors on the challenges of covering Westminster elections after devolution. The article specifically examines the construction of national identity in the coverage of the most mentioned devolved and the most mentioned reserved issue in each election. It identifies similarities and differences in the way newspapers on the two sides of the Scottish border articulate the relevance of the issue reported for a specific community, and construct their own and their readers' national identity.

This analysis adds to existing research which addresses Connell's (2003: 188) call for an examination of how Scottish papers 'engender a sense of Scottishness' through the way they address a Scottish readership. At the same time, it considers the performance of the English and 'national' UK press in a devolved British context and delivers insights into the construction of national identity in the press on both sides of the border.

National identity as a discursive construct

Of central concern in this enquiry into newspaper output at a point of political transition in the UK is the role of the press in forging and maintaining a national community (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995) and at the same time establishing a collectivity which can debate issues of common interest (Habermas, 1989; Peters, 2008).

Nations and nation-states are widely seen as relatively recent sociological constructs (Anderson, 1983; Balibar, 1991; Simmel, 1997), whose boundaries are defined with reference to space (Simmel, 1997: 143). Similarly, national identity is also seen as a socially constructed classification, shaped and reproduced through discourse (Bourdieu, 1991: 221; Hall, 1992: 292–3). Perhaps because of its nature as a construct, the definition of any specific national identity is a contested field of struggle between social groups (Bourdieu, 1991; Tomlinson, 1991; Billig, 2009). This is particularly true in the case of the UK, where British and Scottish, English, Welsh or Northern Irish identities interact, contrasting or coexisting with each other.

The maintenance of a certain degree of national belonging, though, is important not only for the survival of a nation-state like the UK (Wallerstein, 1991), but also for the existence of a national debate on issues of public life and governance. As Peters (2008)

remarks, one of the conditions for democratic debate is that its participants should think that they share enough to have common problems to resolve.

Although a public sphere (Habermas, 1989) as an arena of public debate in a society need not necessarily have a national basis (Schlesinger, 2000), national identity becomes particularly relevant as a unifying element in the public sphere of a national election. For this reason, the focus of this article is on the construction of national identity in the mediated electoral debate.

The role of the media, and the press in particular, in this process resides in the aforementioned perception of national identity as a *discursively* constructed classification, reproduced through communication in its various forms: through standardized languages, within the family, at school and in the media. Although many works on national identity discuss the role of communication in creating national cohesiveness (Deutsch, 1953; Gellner, 1983), Benedict Anderson shifted the focus specifically onto the role of the media. Anderson (1983) argues that the complexity of industrial societies makes it impossible for people to have a personal experience of the entire community in which they live. The media help reproduce a sense of national belonging by encouraging people over large geographical areas to imagine fellow readers, viewers or listeners simultaneously consuming the same media products.

Even if, in a postmodern world of multiple identities, media audiences do not imagine singular, homogeneous communities, this does not affect the possibility that mediated discourse addresses them as communities. Such addresses may be rejected or interpreted in many ways, but as Dahlgren suggests, 'whether such "communities" are "authentic" or not is another matter, but media-based interpretive communities are a precondition for sense-making in a modern public sphere' (1991: 17).

The specific ways in which media, and newspapers in particular, may address interpretive communities through their discourse is the object of my analysis, and to this end, Billig's (1995, 2009) contribution to the discussion of imagined communities offers a useful analytical tool. Billig describes how national identity may be reproduced in mediated discourse in ways that go unnoticed, through a process he calls 'banal nationalism'. He suggests that national identity in the press does not necessarily need to be marked with words such as 'Britain' or 'British'. It can also be unmarked, when linguistic deixis locates readers within a national context, assuming that the writer and the reader of the text belong to the same nation.

Deixis, which means pointing in ancient Greek, includes the ways a text points to its context, and is realized through personal pronouns ('I', 'you', 'we'), demonstratives ('this', 'those') and markers of time and place ('here', 'now', 'today') (Fowler, 1991: 63). Even the use of the definite article can function deictically in noun phrases such as 'the nation' or 'the Prime Minister', pointing to the country where the utterance takes place (Billig, 1995). The reader is expected to identify which nation is referred to because s/he belongs to the same national community. Such implicit references maintain and reproduce nationhood through a process of 'homeland-making' (1995: 108–9). The analysis of deixis, and particularly of personal pronouns, has often been identified as a significant tool for exploring how texts construct identities for their audiences (Brunt, 1990; Tolson, 1996; DeCillia et al., 1999; Wodak et al., 1999).

However, researchers studying the Scottish press (Law, 2001; Higgins, 2004a, 2004b; Rosie et al., 2004, 2006) argue that Billig's approach needs to be qualified in the case of

nations such as Scotland. They suggest that there is no such thing as a homogeneous British press which banally points to Britain as its point of reference. Scotland has its own indigenous papers as well as editions of English titles produced especially for a Scottish audience.

Law (2001) found that for indigenous Scottish titles, such as *The Scotsman* or *The Herald*, Scotland rather than the UK is often the relevant national context and this tends to be emphasized explicitly rather than banally implied. An explicit articulation of Scottishness was also found by Higgins (2004a, 2004b) in his study of the coverage of the first election to the Scottish parliament. His study also found a use of personal deixis to address readers within an inclusive rhetoric; a developing political lexicon where locations in Scotland are used metonymically and their interpretation requires background knowledge of Scottish politics and culture; and a relationship between the discourse of individual titles and their attitudes on devolution and independence.

Rosie et al. (2004) argued that newspapers sold in the different regions of the UK 'wave' different flags to their readers, while the use of deixis in Scottish papers is not straightforward: deictic terms do not always point to Scotland as the relevant context but also to Britain. In fact, the nation pointed at may shift even within the same article:

Deictic language may indeed point toward the national but that national may be multiple (British and Scottish) and newspaper articles may be pointing, sequentially or simultaneously, at different nations. (Rosie et al., 2006: 340)

Therefore, previous studies of Scottish national identity in the press found that Scottish newspapers flag their identity more openly than UK papers (Law, 2001; Higgins, 2004a) and produce material to suit the demands of a Scottish audience (Rosie et al., 2004). During Scottish elections, they address readers as members of a Scottish community, emphasize the Scottish character of the election and assume a common background shared by their readers (Higgins, 2004a), but at other times their discourse shifts between a Scottish and a British context (Rosie et al., 2004, 2006).

The question raised in this context is how Scottish papers deal with national identity when they report on UK elections: in this case, they still need to address a Scottish readership but they need to provide it with information on a British political event in which this readership participates. Does marked Scottishness remain a characteristic of Scottish coverage? How do Scottish papers deal with national identity when covering reserved and devolved issues, given their different significance for the Scottish electorate in a general election context? How do newspapers produced in England construct national identity in their coverage? Do they take into consideration the post-devolution context when reporting on devolved and reserved issues, given that some of these titles are sold in the same edition throughout the UK? These are the main questions addressed in the rest of this article.

Method

The analysis is based on four one-day samples of coverage of the most mentioned reserved and devolved issues in the 2001 and 2005 elections. These issues were identified through a content analysis of all the coverage of the respective campaigns, from the day

of the announcement of the election date until the day of the election,² in seven Scottish daily morning titles and five English/UK ones.

The Scottish titles included are *The Scotsman*, *The Herald*, the *Daily Record*, *The Press and Journal* (Aberdeen), *The Courier* (Dundee), *The Scottish Sun* and the *Scottish Daily Mail*. The English/UK sample includes the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. The first two of these latter are marketed as 'national' UK titles (even though the applicability of this term to any newspaper has been contested by authors such as MacInnes et al. [2007]), while the last three are the London editions of newspapers which have different editions for different parts of Britain. For this reason, the second group of papers cited above is referred to as English/UK papers in this article. The sample was chosen among the top-selling newspapers in England and in Scotland at the time of the two elections and is balanced with respect to the type of newspapers included (elite, middle market, popular), their political orientation (left or right of the centre) and, in the case of Scotland, also their geographical location (central belt of Scotland and more northern regions).

In both Scottish and English/UK papers, the most mentioned reserved issue was found to be taxation in 2001 and the Iraq war in 2005, while the most mentioned reserved issue was health care in both campaigns. The content analysis which identified these themes used key words to count the number of times different issues were mentioned as relevant to the campaign.³

Following this, one day was chosen for each of these four election themes, and the coverage of the issue on that day across all the newspapers was submitted to detailed critical analysis. In order to select the one-day samples, the specific topics discussed under each of the four issues throughout the campaign were mapped out and dates were selected when Scottish and English/UK newspapers discussed both similar and different topics, in order to reflect the diversity of the coverage. Another criterion for the selection was the amount of editorial coverage dedicated to the issue, as a signal of the significance newspapers themselves gave to the events of that day. Hence, the material analysed is all the coverage of taxation in the 12 newspapers on 22 May 2001, that of the Iraq war on 29 April 2005, and that of health on 1 June 2001 and on 15 April 2005.

The analysis of the four issues draws on the critical approaches to the analysis of national identity in the press outlined in the previous section, and specifically explores the way national markers and deixis are used in the coverage of different titles. I focus particularly on the use of markers such as 'Britain', 'England' and 'Scotland', as well as their derivative adjectives 'British', 'Scottish' and 'English' (Higgins, 2004a). In addition, instances are examined where markers are missing but nationhood is implied banally. I also look at the use of personal pronouns such as 'you' and 'we' to address the reader as a member of a community (Fowler, 1991: 49; Billig, 1995; Wodak et al., 1999: 45), deictic markers of place (e.g. 'here'), demonstratives (e.g. 'this') and deictic uses of the definite article 'the' (Billig, 1995: 115–17). The excerpts presented in the discussion illustrate trends that emerged from careful reading and analysis of all the articles in the four one-day samples.

Reporting on a British electoral debate

Although I started out looking for distinguishing features between the coverage of devolved and reserved issues, the analysis of the data revealed that what makes the primary difference in the way the electoral debate is located in a national context is whether the topic discussed is constructed as having to do with Scotland or with the UK overall, irrespective of whether it is devolved or reserved. In the days sampled, 'UK' topics included, for example, the debate on taxation between Westminster parties on whether taxes should be raised or reduced; the publication by Labour of Lord Goldsmith's initial advice on the legality of the Iraq war; and the debate on health between Westminster parties in 2001.

1. Mr Hague's effective attack on Labour continued to be undermined by the Tories' inability to distance themselves from the £20bn of tax cuts allegedly forecast by Oliver Letwin, the shadow Treasury spokesman.

(Macleod, *The Herald*, 22 May 2001, news, p. 1)

2. Imagine that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had just hinted that he might raise the higher rate of income tax by 10 per cent to 50 per cent.

(*Daily Telegraph*, 22 May 2001, editorial, p. 27)

In excerpts 1 and 2 above, the definite article is used in a very similar way to identify individuals within what is taken to be the readers' immediate national context. In neither case is it explicitly marked that 'the shadow Treasury spokesman' and 'the Chancellor of the Exchequer' are the British ones. The readers of the two newspapers, although located in different regions of the UK, are expected to understand that these referential expressions refer to British politicians because they are members of the same national community. In both cases, the definite article functions deictically (Billig, 1995: 115) and points to the UK as the relevant nation.

This interpretation is made easier by the fact that Scotland does not have a Treasury or a Chancellor. However, this information is not stated or implied anywhere in the article. The reader is expected to already know this because s/he is a member of the British community and knows these terms as part of the British political lexicon. If this sentence was written in a newspaper outside the UK, the marker 'British' would become necessary to identify the referent, because 'the' is deictic and therefore context-bound.

This banal identification of Britain as the national context for the debate is a dominant characteristic of the coverage of taxation at Westminster level in both Scottish and English/UK titles. Scotland becomes relevant very rarely in the Scottish coverage and, in these cases, it is explicitly marked rather than implied:

3. Jim Wallace, the Scottish Lib Dem leader, outlined where extra cash – raised by his party's policy of raising income tax by 1p in the pound – would be spent on public services in Scotland if the party wins the General Election.

(Hardie, *The Scotsman*, 22 May 2001, news, p. 9)

In excerpt 3, Scotland is flagged twice as the relevant context ('Scottish', 'Scotland'). However, there appears to be an ambiguity in the interpretation of the referent of 'his party's policy': Jim Wallace, who is the referent of 'his', was the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, therefore, if taken literally, this sentence claims that the Scottish Liberal Democrats had a policy to raise tax by 1p in the pound. This is not true, given that this was the policy of the British Liberal Democratic party on an issue reserved to Westminster.

However, this literal interpretation of the sentence is not the one intended here. The reader is expected to understand that 'his party' refers to the British Liberal Democrats. Such an interpretation is also supported in the conditional clause 'if the party wins the General Election'. In this clause, 'the party' does not refer to the Scottish Lib Dems but to their UK colleagues who compete in the general election. The correct interpretation of this sentence requires knowledge on the part of the reader that taxation is a reserved issue – this information is not offered in the article but presupposed in relation to the Scottish reader. Yet, as discussed, instances where Scotland is mentioned or implied are very rare in the articles on Westminster taxation.

So far, the coverage of this topic in Scottish and English/UK titles appears generally similar, with the UK being the banal national context within which the coverage is written and read. The indigenous Scottish coverage on the day of my taxation sample makes no reference at all to its readership; however, the English/UK titles and their Scottish editions occasionally do:

4. MIDDLE ENGLAND WOULD PAY PRICE

Removing the cap on employees' National Insurance contributions would have exactly the same effect on Middle England as raising higher rate income tax by 10 per cent, accountants said yesterday. Under Labour, the total amount of NICs we pay has increased sharply.

(Cowie, *Daily Telegraph*, 22 May 2001, news, p. 7)

Excerpt 4 was chosen to illustrate this direct address to the readership because it additionally illustrates an instance of what Law (2001: 305) calls a 'forgetful slip' between a British and an English location. Taxation affects all UK regions and is not just an English matter. By using the fixed expression 'Middle England', the *Telegraph* positions the debate in an exclusively English, middle-class context. This term is commonly used to denote the upper-working class and lower-middle class of England, who might be living in the Midlands or the south-east of England, and is stereotypically linked to mainstream, and often conservative, political positions (Reeves, 2007).

It may be argued that this is not a forgetful lapse and that the reason England is used instead of Britain in the lead sentence of the article is that this is the way the accountants quoted phrased their statement. However, the *Telegraph* does more than just paraphrase the source of this statement. It adopts the discourse used by the accountants outside the quotation and uses their 'voice' in the title of the article (Fairclough, 1995) where 'Middle England' is repeated, this time without being attributed to the accountants.

Moreover, an addressee-inclusive 'we' (Wodak et al., 1999: 45) interpellates the readers (Althusser, 1971; Tolson, 1996: 57), inviting them to identify themselves with this 'Middle England'. The sentence 'Under Labour, the total amount of NICs we pay has

increased sharply' directly follows the reference to 'Middle England', and 'we' addresses the newspaper's readers as members of this social and national group. An imaginary homogeneity (Fowler, 1991: 49) is constructed among the readership, which excludes readers from other UK regions or social classes.

The two features of the coverage of Westminster taxation discussed so far, namely a tendency in both Scottish and English/UK titles to locate themselves and their readers in the UK, and the presence of occasional addresses to the reader as a member of a national community in the English/UK titles, which is absent from the indigenous Scottish sample, are also found in the coverage of the Iraq war in 2005.

5. Yesterday's revelations merely add to the charge that Mr Blair took this country to war on a false prospectus.

(*The Herald*, 29 April 2005, editorial, p. 21)

6. He has proved that he did not lie to the Cabinet, to Parliament or to the country over the decision to go to war on Saddam Hussein.

(*The Sun* and *The Scottish Sun*, 29 April 2005, editorial, p. 8)

In excerpts 5 and 6, 'this' and 'the' function as deictic markers banally pointing to the UK as 'this/the country' the Cabinet and the Parliament talked about. The editorials of *The Herald* and *The Sun/Scottish Sun* point to Britain not only as the location of the debate they report on, but also as the country where the newspaper is written and read.

In contrast to the coverage of taxation though, in the Iraq coverage Scottish titles make occasional direct addresses to their readers. Yet these are significantly different from the addresses found in the English/UK papers and their Scottish editions:

7. And if you punish Blair for Iraq, you'll end up with Michael Howard as Prime Minister.

(*Daily Record*, 29 April 2005, editorial, p. 8)

8. This was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, talking about the way we went to war.

(Letts, *Daily Mail* and *Scottish Daily Mail*, 29 April 2005, opinion, p. 7)

9. Behind the leaded glass of number 13, one of the oldest homes in the road, even solid Labour supporter Dennis Owen was outraged by the war and felt the latest revelations only confirmed his view that we should never have invaded Iraq.

(Laville, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2005, feature, p. 3)

10. I don't see how anyone can trust Tony Blair after he sent us to war.

(Smith, *Daily Mirror*, 29 April 2005, letter, p. 46)

In excerpt 7, the reader is directly addressed with a deictic 'you'. In the same sentence, there is a banal reference to Britain in the unmarked use of 'Prime Minister'. In this context, the reader is addressed as a Briton, but the verbs which this 'you' accompanies represent the reader as an actor who 'punishes' or 'ends up with' a candidate in the electoral process, therefore as a voter.

By contrast, in excerpts 8–10 from different English/UK titles and their Scottish editions, the reader is not interpellated as a voter but as a participant in the war. The deictic ‘we’ is used metonymically for Britain’s armed forces (Wodak et al., 1999: 47) and readers are addressed as participants in the war, either voluntarily, as subjects who ‘went’ to war⁴ (excerpts 8, 9) or involuntarily, as affected patients ‘sent’ to war (excerpt 10). In both cases, they are addressed as being personally implicated in it. Once again, Scottish editions of English newspapers follow the trends of their London editions, differentiating themselves from the indigenous Scottish coverage.

Although both newspaper samples place the Iraq debate in a UK context, indigenous Scottish titles keep a distance between their readers and the war: the Scottish reader is addressed as a voter, an outside observer who will judge Labour based on their decisions about the war. This distance is surprising, in the light of the participation of Scottish regiments in Iraq, which is not commented on in the indigenous Scottish coverage of that day. The Scottish editions of English titles and the English/UK sample on the other hand identify their readers with the British troops and stress their personal implication in the war, as members of a British community.

It is worth noting here that although direct addresses to the reader are sometimes found in news articles (for example, in excerpt 4 earlier), they are more common in editorial and opinion articles. This is true in both the Scottish and English/UK titles and across the different issues analysed, and therefore it is not a differentiating factor in the coverage compared in this article.

Similar patterns are visible in the Scottish coverage of the health debate at Westminster in 2001 (the health debate at Westminster was only covered in indigenous Scottish titles in 2001 and not in 2005). Despite the devolved nature of health care in Scotland, this coverage shares the banal UK perspective of the coverage of Westminster taxation and the Iraq war examined earlier, although in this instance there is no address to the Scottish reader.

11. The NHS, of which Britons were so proud, is still a national scandal.
(Heathcoat-Amory, *Daily Mail/Scottish Daily Mail*, 1 June 2001, opinion, p. 6)

12. Who is intent on subverting the popular will and stopping a rich country investing more of its wealth more effectively in the education of its children and the well-being of the population at large? All the main parties in this election have slapped protection orders on more money for schools and hospitals.
(Young, *The Herald*, 1 June 2001, opinion, p. 22)

Excerpt 11 openly marks the Anglo-British character of the health debate. The NHS is described as ‘a national scandal’ and ‘national’ is openly flagged in the previous clause as British. It is described as an institution ‘Britons were proud of’, which implies that the NHS is something that belongs to Britons or that Britons have created. The NHS is treated as one entity, even though it is managed differently and by different people in England and in Scotland. This evidence agrees with Rosie et al.’s (2006) finding that the ‘territorial limitations’ of Westminster Ministers on matters such as education (or health in this case) are not mentioned by ‘England-bought’ newspapers. In this context though,

it is particularly significant that the excerpt is reproduced in the same form in the Scottish edition of the *Daily Mail*.

A similar Anglo-British point of reference is found in excerpt 12. Although the referent of 'a rich country' is not openly specified, the deictic reference to 'this election' in the second sentence points to Britain, because the most imminent election at the time was the general election. Besides, the entire article, where excerpt 12 appears, discusses the general election. Here, an article in a newspaper produced and read in Scotland makes banal references to Britain as the location of the health debate, even though in Scotland health is devolved to the Scottish parliament.

I have argued so far that issues which are constructed as relevant to the UK, namely taxation and health debates at Westminster and the Iraq war, present similarities in the construction of national identity in the coverage of Scottish and English/UK titles. Britain is generally the banally implied location of the coverage in both newspaper groups, but English/UK titles additionally address their readership as implicated in the issue discussed (as a taxpayer or a participant in the war). Although Scottish titles expect their readers to identify Britain as the relevant national context in all these debates, they avoid similarly engaging interpellations and only occasionally, in the coverage of Iraq, address their readers as voters in the election. English/UK titles, on the other hand, treat all three issues as of common concern to all of Britain, occasionally 'slipping' into an English-oriented discourse, and do not take into consideration the devolved nature of areas like health care.

The Scottish aspect of the elections

Additional supportive evidence for the conclusion that English/UK titles cover general election issues from an Anglo-British perspective is offered by the fact that they do not report at all on topics which are constructed as relevant to Scotland in the Scottish titles. On the four days selected for this analysis, such 'Scottish' topics included the debate on whether the Scottish parliament should acquire fiscal autonomy, namely the power to raise taxation in Scotland, and a debate on Scottish hospital waiting lists, which came up both in 2001 and in 2005. The omission of these topics in the English/UK newspapers agrees with Rosie and Petersoo's (2009: 137) finding that London-based editors do not consider Scottish stories as relevant to their readers.

In contrast to the 'UK' topics discussed earlier, in the 'Scottish' debates deictic terms banally point at Scotland as the relevant national context.

13. Crikey, it almost makes me wish I could vote for that Tony Blair bloke to come and run the country.

(Nicoll, *The Scottish Sun*, 15 April 2005, opinion, p. 6)

In excerpt 13, from the coverage of Scottish waiting lists in 2005, banal deixis expressed through the definite article ('the' country) implicitly points to Scotland as the homeland. The author can of course vote for Tony Blair in the election, but he cannot vote for him 'to come and run the country' on the issue of health, because health is devolved to the Scottish parliament. Although Scotland is not mentioned, it is the unambiguous

national context of the article, otherwise the sentence would appear paradoxical within the coverage of a general election.

Another interesting point in example 13 is that *The Scottish Sun* which, like the *Scottish Daily Mail*, was found to reproduce the discourse of its London edition in the previous section, here appears to clearly point to Scotland as its location. A similar observation can be made for the Scottish edition of the *Daily Mail* referring to fiscal autonomy:

14. But yesterday the other parties united against any move to change the arrangement which determines how Scotland's money is controlled. They claimed severing financial ties with Westminster could have a devastating impact on Scotland's wealth and warned that Scots could be forced to pay crippling new taxes to maintain public services.

(Oakeshott, *Scottish Daily Mail*, 22 May 2001, news, p. 6)

Excerpt 14 comes from the only taxation article in the *Scottish Daily Mail* that did not appear in its London edition. Scotland is flagged as the relevant nation three times (and several more times later in the same article). In fact, the last two of these explicit references could have been replaced with banal ones to avoid repetition: 'Scotland's wealth' could have been 'the country's' or 'the nation's' and 'Scots' could have been replaced with 'taxpayers'. It seems though that the *Mail* explicitly stresses the Scottish character of this debate, even when this is not required for the article to make sense. Such emphatic use of Scottish location markers was also found by Higgins (2004a: 640) in the coverage of the first Scottish election, but it was not found in the coverage of 'UK' topics earlier in this article. A reason why the two Scottish editions of English newspapers locate their coverage of fiscal autonomy and waiting lists more clearly in a Scottish context, compared to their coverage of 'UK' issues, may be that this coverage is written especially for the Scottish edition, by journalists based in Scotland, while the other material is simply reproduced with little editing.

However, Scotland, whether explicitly or implicitly pointed at, is not the only relevant national context in the coverage of 'Scottish' topics. In all the 'Scottish' topics, there are instances across the Scottish titles which confirm that the country deixis refers to occasionally shifts between Scotland and the UK.

15. The unpalatable truth is that beneath the Chancellor's statistical achievements, Scotland is being pushed further out on the margin of economic irrelevance [...] The biggest single problem at present is that the conditions that would make such performance possible are not within the parliament's gift to deliver.

(Jamieson, *The Scotsman*, 22 May 2001, opinion, p. 12)

Excerpt 15 makes two implicit references to a national context, but each refers to a different nation: 'the Chancellor' is the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, while 'the parliament' is the Scottish parliament. In both cases, the interpretation of the deictic 'the' depends on readers' familiarity with the roles of the UK and the Scottish parliaments and their officials. The reader should know that the UK Chancellor is responsible for the growth of the British economy, while there is no official in the Scottish parliament with

such a role, because the economy is a reserved matter. Hence, ‘the parliament’ which does not have the power to ‘deliver’ economic ‘performance’ is the Scottish one. This knowledge is required of Scottish readers, if they are to correctly identify the referent of deixis each time, while the national context here shifts within the same article.

This evidence therefore agrees with Rosie et al.’s (2006) argument that a ‘multiplicity’ of deictic centres is used in Scottish papers, often within the same article or sentence. The identification of which nation is meant each time presupposes familiarity with the devolution settlement. If the same article was written for English readers, it is likely that the implicit references to the two nations would need to be more clearly spelt out. Further instances of shifting deictic centres can be found in the coverage of Scottish waiting lists, especially in 2001:

16. With less than a week before Scotland goes to the polls, Labour’s promise to reduce waiting lists is in tatters.

(*The Courier*, 1 June 2001, news, p. 1)

17. The government was given a mandate in 1997 partly on the back of promises to boost the NHS. Health is still at the heart of its campaign. It has to start delivering now. That will be the only way honestly to bring down waiting lists.

(*The Herald*, 1 June 2001, editorial, p. 23)

If excerpt 16 was taken out of context, it could be interpreted as referring to a Scottish election: ‘Scotland’ is a metonym (Wodak et al., 1999) for Scottish voters and places the discussion in a Scottish context. Based on this and on the background knowledge that health is devolved to the Scottish parliament, one would understand the unidentified ‘Labour’ to refer to the Scottish division of the party, which is not the case here. The newspaper refers to Tony Blair’s promise in the 1997 election that his party would reduce waiting lists in Scotland in four years if it was elected. The division of the Labour party that made a ‘promise to reduce waiting lists’ is therefore the Westminster one. Yet this cannot be read or deduced from the lead sentence of the article quoted above. The reader needs to continue reading the article to clarify it.

Similarly, in excerpt 17 ‘the’ government elected in 1997 points to the British government and the ‘promises’ mentioned were again made by Tony Blair. However, ‘waiting lists’ refers to Scottish hospital waiting lists which is the topic of the entire article. Again within the same excerpt, the paper shifts between a Scottish and a British location. In this case, the use of temporal deictic markers ‘still’ and ‘now’ even seems to imply that the new Westminster government needs to deliver on Scottish waiting lists.

Apart from locating ‘Scottish’ topics in Scotland, with occasional shifts to Britain, the coverage of these issues in Scottish titles differs from that of ‘UK’ issues also because it addresses the reader as directly implicated in the topic.

18. It is clear to everyone that, excluding oil, we spend more than we raise in Scotland [...] under the SNP’s proposals for full fiscal powers, every year we would have to go to the Treasury to ask for a top-up.

(Mackay, *The Scotsman*, 22 May 2001, opinion, p. 8)

19. Labour, bold as brass, are expecting us to settle for HALF the deal they promise closer to home. So for Scots, it's double the pain for half the gain. They must think we're thick as well as sick.

(*The Scottish Sun*, 15 April 2005, editorial, p. 6)

Excerpt 18 interpellates the reader as a member of a Scottish national community through the use of 'we', while this personal pronoun is also a metonym (Wodak et al., 1999) for the Scottish parliament. It is the Scottish parliament rather than the readers of the newspaper that spends tax revenue and that would request more investment from 'the Treasury'. 'We' makes a direct address to the readers as someone who is personally involved in the topic discussed: the personal pronoun functions as an actor controlling verbal processes (Fowler, 1991).

In the same excerpt, there is also a banal reference to 'the Treasury' which points to the UK Treasury. Scotland and Britain are the two deictic points of reference within the same excerpt; however, the one that readers are invited to identify with is Scotland: 'we', the Scottish readers and our Scottish parliament, would ask them, the UK Treasury, to top 'us' up with more investment. An 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric is constructed in this excerpt, which distances the Scottish reader from the UK government and identifies him/her with the Scottish one.

Similarly, excerpt 19 also adopts an 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric. 'Us' is explicitly identified in the second sentence as referring to 'Scots', the group that the reader is invited to identify with. 'They' are 'Labour', which appears to refer to the Westminster rather than the Scottish division of the party. This is indicated in the second sentence, where Labour are located through a prepositional phrase 'closer to home', which does not refer to our home, because 'we', the Scots, are expected to settle for a lesser deal. The location marker 'closer to home' here refers to England and the Labour party referred to is the Westminster one. The final sentence additionally implies a tension between 'us', the Scottish patients, and 'them', Labour at Westminster. The interpellation of the reader here partly has a national dimension, but additionally appears to 'ventriloquize' (Fairclough, 1998: 160; Lauerbach, 2006) the complaints of citizens against government policies.

It is worth noting that in the coverage of Scottish waiting lists, these interpellations of the reader as someone implicated as an agent in the issue are more common in 2005 than in 2001 (though they are found in both years), while there are less instances in 2005 of a national centre that shifts between Scotland and Britain.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to identify how English/UK and Scottish newspapers construct national identity in a post-devolution era, within the context of general elections, a political event which concerns the whole of the UK. The evidence presented suggests that in the first two general elections after devolution, newspapers produced in England did not adapt to the devolved UK context. Even though it would have been technically appropriate for them to make a shift from location in Britain to location in England when discussing

devolved matters, they still reported on these topics from a British point of view. Despite their assumption of a British rather than an English identity in their discourse, they systematically omit topics such as fiscal autonomy and Scottish waiting lists, which they perceive as of relevance only to readers in Scotland, hence strengthening the separateness of the electoral debate in the two countries.

The English titles that have Scottish editions adapt their coverage in relatively modest ways for these editions. They add articles on 'Scottish' topics which emphasize the Scottish character of these debates, but the rest of their coverage generally replicates the Anglo-British orientation of their English editions.

Scottish papers, on the other hand, seem to report on 'UK' issues with a certain degree of detachment, often avoiding using discourse which directly associates their readers with issues such as taxation and the Iraq war. Although indigenous Scottish newspapers banally point to Britain as their location in these debates, they do not emphasize a personal involvement of their readers in the way that the English/UK press does. These topics are presented as election news but not necessarily as 'our' problem. If collective identity is an important shared feature for a debate to exist (Peters, 2008), it appears that Scottish readers are not constructed as sharing much with the rest of the UK on these issues, other than their role as voters.

A more inclusive rhetoric is found in the Scottish coverage of 'Scottish' issues, such as fiscal autonomy and waiting lists. Similarly to their coverage of Scottish elections (Higgins, 2004a), newspapers locate these debates in a Scottish context and construct their readers as members of a community which not only shares an identity but is also directly affected by their outcome.

The difference, though, between this coverage and that of the 1999 Scottish election (Higgins, 2004a), is that the articulation of a separate identity is rather modest. Shifting deictic centres, especially in 2001, make it unclear for the unaware reader which issues are the responsibility of the Scottish parliament. As well as requiring awareness of the devolution settlement, the coverage of 'Scottish' issues also suggests that they are not completely cut off from a British context. Links between Scottish and UK parties, financial links between Westminster and Holyrood and Scotland's pre-devolution past all play a role in the discussion. Although there are instances in the coverage of 'Scottish' topics which address the reader as a Scot, there is perhaps not the degree of address to a national community that might be expected in a national press.

Given though that 'UK' topics are generally covered from a British perspective on both sides of the Scottish border, it appears that the topics constructed as 'Scottish' make the performance of Scottish newspapers distinctive. This is because they use a different discourse compared to the 'UK' topics and because these issues are not covered at all in the English/UK newspapers. These debates appear to be mediated in isolation and in parallel to the 'UK' issues. It could be said that this discursive construction of certain election topics as more relevant to their community, despite the reservations discussed above, is Scottish newspapers' curtailed contribution to a differentiation of the electoral debate in Scotland.

This analysis demonstrates that although the Scottish press is historically and contemporaneously linked with a separate Scottish identity and civic society (Meech and Kilborn, 1992; Smith, 1994; Schlesinger, 1998; Connell, 2003), in the context of

UK-wide political events this connection is complex, as Scottish newspapers balance between British and Scottish perspectives. Rosie et al. (2004) suggest that the flexibility of Scottish newspapers in discursively locating themselves in Britain and in Scotland shows that they do not see a contradiction between Scottish and British national communities. Although much of the evidence presented here could support this position, there are also instances in the coverage of 'Scottish' topics where a Scottish identity is juxtaposed to a British one in an 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric, reminding us that the relationship between these identities is not unproblematic.

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Notes

1. A list of devolved and reserved issues can be found at www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/publicInfo/faq/category6.htm (accessed 1 February 2010).
2. The quantitative segment of the research analysed a total of 11,748 articles between 9 May and 7 June 2001 and between 7 April and 5 May 2005.
3. In their content analysis of the coverage of the two elections, Deacon et al. (2001, 2006) found different themes to top the agenda; however, differences in the operationalization of the categories as well as in the sample of media analysed account for these differences.
4. In these cases, the active construction 'we went' creates the impression that the subjects are agents of their actions, as opposed to the passive construction 'we were sent'. Van Dijk (1997: 34) notes that this is contrary to background knowledge but, although the real agent is understood, causality and agency are not openly expressed.

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