

This is an Open Access document downloaded from ORCA, Cardiff University's institutional repository: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/58348/>

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted to / accepted for publication.

Citation for final published version:

Chaney, Paul 2014. Multi-level systems and the electoral politics of welfare pluralism: Exploring third-sector policy in UK Westminster and regional elections 1945-2011. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 25 (3) , pp. 585-611. 10.1007/s11266-013-9354-9

Publishers page: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11266-013-9354-9>

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite this paper.

This version is being made available in accordance with publisher policies. See <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/policies.html> for usage policies. Copyright and moral rights for publications made available in ORCA are retained by the copyright holders.



# Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit

## Multi-level Systems and the Electoral Politics of Welfare Pluralism: Exploring Third Sector Policy in UK Westminster and Regional Elections 1945-2011

--Manuscript Draft--

<b>Manuscript Number:</b>	
<b>Full Title:</b>	Multi-level Systems and the Electoral Politics of Welfare Pluralism: Exploring Third Sector Policy in UK Westminster and Regional Elections 1945-2011
<b>Article Type:</b>	Research Papers
<b>Keywords:</b>	welfare pluralism; electoral politics; third sector; agenda-setting; policy
<b>Corresponding Author:</b>	Paul Chaney Cardiff University CARDIFF, WALES UNITED KINGDOM
<b>Corresponding Author Secondary Information:</b>	
<b>Corresponding Author's Institution:</b>	Cardiff University
<b>Corresponding Author's Secondary Institution:</b>	
<b>First Author:</b>	Paul Chaney
<b>First Author Secondary Information:</b>	
<b>Order of Authors:</b>	Paul Chaney
<b>Order of Authors Secondary Information:</b>	
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>Electoral politics constitute a formative, agenda-setting phase in the development of mixed economy approaches to social welfare. This study examines issue-salience and policy framing related to the welfare role of the third sector in party manifestos in UK Westminster and regional elections 1945-2011. The findings reveal a pronounced increase in salience over recent decades. Welfare pluralism, whereby voluntary organisations complement state and market-based services, is shown to be the dominant approach at both state-wide and regional levels. Yet election data also reveal inter-party and inter-polity contrasts in policy framing. This is significant to contemporary understanding of mixed-economy approaches to welfare because it shows electoral discourse to be a driver of policy divergence in multi-level systems. The result is differing policy prescriptions for the third sector that (re-)define governance practices and underpin the rise and territorialisation of welfare pluralism. In turn this poses questions about policy coordination and differential welfare rights in the unitary state.</p>

## **Multi-level Systems and the Electoral Politics of Welfare Pluralism: Exploring Third Sector Policy in UK Westminster and Regional Elections 1945-2011**

### **ABSTRACT**

*Electoral politics constitute a formative, agenda-setting phase in the development of mixed economy approaches to social welfare. This study examines issue-salience and policy framing related to the welfare role of the third sector in party manifestos in UK Westminster and regional elections 1945-2011. The findings reveal a pronounced increase in salience over recent decades. Welfare pluralism, whereby voluntary organisations complement state and market-based services, is shown to be the dominant approach at both state-wide and regional levels. Yet election data also reveal inter-party and inter-polity contrasts in policy framing. This is significant to contemporary understanding of mixed-economy approaches to welfare because it shows electoral discourse to be a driver of policy divergence in multi-level systems. The result is differing policy prescriptions for the third sector that (re-)define governance practices and underpin the rise and territorialisation of welfare pluralism. In turn this poses questions about policy coordination and differential welfare rights in the unitary state.*

**KEY WORDS:** welfare pluralism, electoral politics, third sector, agenda-setting, policy

### **INTRODUCTION**

Recent decades have seen an international trend towards welfare pluralism; in other words, the situation whereby state welfare delivery is complemented by input from the voluntary and private sectors (Beresford and Croft, 1983; Johnson, 1987; Taylor and Lansley, 1992; Kendall, 2000). It is a shift founded on political attempts to recast public service provision, encourage voluntarism and harness the contribution of the third sector (Evers, 1995; Kidd, 2002; Zimmer, 2003; Dahlberg, 2005; Hanlon et al, 2007; Fyfe

et al, 2007). In the UK it was an agenda evident under the Left-of-centre New Labour governments (1997- 2010) (Cf. Lewis, 2005; Haugh and Kitson, 2007) and it continues to feature in the current Centre-Right coalition government's 'Big Society' discourse (Corbett and Walker, 2012; Daly, 2011). In part it is driven by successive governments' attempts to reduce state welfare spending (Impero Wilson, 2000); as well as initiatives to promote active citizenship and service to the community (Walzer, 1992; Ruiter and De Graf, 2006; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2003). At a more fundamental level it is deeply embedded in ideological debates between Right and Left about whether statist or neo-liberal approaches to welfare delivery should prevail (Chen, 2002). In turn, these considerations feed into enduring questions related to social justice, equity and inequality in social policy (Korpi and Palme, 1998; Osterle, 2002).

The present study makes an original contribution to understanding the contemporary development of welfare pluralism by analysing the hitherto under-examined nexus between electoral discourse, issue-salience and party programmes. Its specific focus is the framing of policy on the third sector in UK Westminster and regional elections 1945-2011.<sup>1</sup> It is argued that earlier third sector studies have given insufficient attention to parties' election programmes and the formative phase of policy-making. This lacuna matters in a number of key regards. Not least because manifestos set out parties' political vision, reflect their ideological position and outline substantive details of future government and opposition policy on the sector. In this way electoral discourse is an important indicator of political agenda-setting (Cobb and Ross, 1997). As Marks et al (2007, p. 27) conclude: 'far exceeding expert surveys or any other systematic form of data [they...] convey strategic intentions of political parties, as distinct from their actions'. Thus, analysis of the party programmes reveals the political use of language and discourse-based processes that underpin the development of contemporary third sector policy. It therefore provides a 'discursive benchmark' to complement traditional instrumental analyses of welfare delivery (Meyers et al, 1998).

Such an approach also provides insight into parties' attempts to appeal to particular audiences at the time of elections. In turn this shapes wider voting patterns and determines which policies are endorsed by the electorate. In this way the present focus contributes to understanding of the connection between political representation and the third sector's role in welfare delivery (Stimson, 2003). It is a relationship explained by both mandate and accountability theory (Budge and Hofferbert, 1990; Royed, 1994; Fearon, 2003). The former asserts that when in government parties should implement the policies that they promised when running for office. In contrast, accountability theory asserts that party election programmes are effectively 'opinion polls' on the performance of the party or parties forming the previous administration (Przeworski et al, 1999; Ferejohn, 2003). Two non-discrete, contemporary factors heighten the importance of these theoretical underpinnings: devolution and, the rise of coalition government. In the former case, study of welfare delivery needs to be cognizant of the discursive underpinnings of distinctive territorial approaches to third sector involvement in the implementation of social policy. This stems from the pluralising of electoral systems that accompanies state decentralisation such that single state-wide ballots are supplemented by regional elections. In regard to the second factor, whereas the current coalition government is something of a rarity at Westminster, multi-party executives have become a routine aspect of devolved government in the UK (no less than ten parties have held government office over the past decade at the meso-level). Electoral discourse thus plays a key role in constructing coalition agendas for government as the respective partners seek to merge party-specific election pledges into a single executive policy programme.

In definitional terms, this paper follows existing research practice (Casey, 2004; Levi, 2005) by using the umbrella term 'third sector' to refer to the principal collective signifiers associated with non-government advocacy and service organisations; namely: 'voluntarism', 'voluntary sector', 'third sector', 'civil society' and 'non-profit sector'.<sup>2</sup> In summary, the following discussion explores the contemporary development of welfare pluralism by: 1. exploring changes in the issue-salience of the third sector in post-war elections; 2. examining policy framing in manifesto discourse; and 3. analysing the

impact of state decentralisation. Accordingly, the remainder of the paper is structured thus: a discussion of the literature on the third sector and electoral competition is followed by an outline of the research context and methodology. The findings in relation to the study aims are then presented. The main findings and their implications are discussed in the conclusion.

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS AND THE FORMATIVE PHASE OF THIRD SECTOR POLICY-MAKING**

As Halfpenny and Reid (2002) explain, existing third sector research has largely focused on: the organisational composition of the sector; the resources it commands; explanations for its existence; accounts of differences between the voluntary, private and public sectors; and the nature and impact of intersectoral relationships. Limited attention has been afforded to the nexus between electoral politics and voluntarism. When it has been examined the focus has centred on: the role of third sector organisations as power-bases and platforms for election to parliament (Casey, 1998); the sector's relationship with the party forming the executive (Salamon, 1995; Burt, 2007); and third sector associations' activities during election campaigns (Sobieraj, 2006). In contrast, in the ensuing discussion focus is placed on the formative phase of 'third sector policy'. This term refers to public policy covering the funding, service-delivery, regulation and advocacy of non-profit organisations.

Accordingly, the following draws upon the electoral theory of 'issue-salience' (RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976). This is a conceptualisation whereby key importance lies not on party issue-positions but on the prominence and attention afforded to different issues in their campaigns; ergo the more an issue is emphasised by a party (making it 'salient'), the greater the probability it will attract voters who share similar concerns. Traditionally, quantitative analysis has been used to explore this (Libbrecht et al, 2009; Volkens, 2001). The present examination makes an original contribution by combining this with an exploration of policy framing. Frames here are 'a necessary property of a text—where text is broadly conceived to include discourses, patterned

behaviour, and systems of meaning, policy logics, constitutional principles, and deep cultural narratives' (Creed et al, 2002, p. 37; see also Fairclough, 2000).

By focusing on state-wide and regional elections this study provides further insight into the impact of multi-level governance on the third sector (Laforest, 2007). This locus of enquiry is appropriate because 'devolution'- or move to quasi-federalism in the UK (Gamble, 2006) is part of the wider international trend of state restructuring (Doornbos, 2006). Under the revised governance structures the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments have responsibility for the respective third sectors in their territories. Moreover, in each case, structural mechanisms and political discourse have emphasised co-working between government and the sector. In timescale we follow existing practice (Kendall and Knapp, 1996; Taylor and Kendall, 1996) by considering post-war decades. This provides insight into a period associated with major social changes in the UK, including patterns and processes of voluntarism.

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY**

In 2010 the third sector in the UK comprised 163,763 organisations, had an income of £36.7 billion, and employed 765,000 staff. In recent years peak annual funding for the sector totalled £38 billion (NCVO, 2012, p. 6).<sup>3</sup> As noted, it is made up of four territorial policy frameworks covering the three constituent nations and province in the UK. These geographical distinctions existed during the pre-existing era of administrative devolution,<sup>4</sup> yet they have taken on heightened significance with the (re-)establishment of legislatures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1998/9. This has accentuated divergence of the prevailing legal and policy frameworks applying to the third sector(s) in the UK and resulted in contrasting funding regimes, legal frameworks – as well as levels and structures of engagement with government. Contrasts also exist in the size and operation of the sector in each regional polity. Thus, the third sector in Scotland comprises 45,000 organisations, has a turnover of £4.4 billion (circa 2010) and employs 137,000 people (SCVO 2012, p. 2). In Wales it contains 32,798 organisations, employs 34,370 people and has an income of £1.6 billion (circa 2008-09) (WCVA, 2012, p. 3) – whilst in Northern Ireland it is made up of 4,700 organisations, has an income of £570 million and a workforce of 26,737 (circa 2009) (NICVA, 2009, p. 4).

By applying mixed research methods the current study heeds earlier calls for policy work to combine content and critical discourse analysis (Wilson, 1993). Accordingly, issue-salience is determined by content analysis of manifestos. This is applied by recording the number of incidences of key words, ideas or meanings in party programmes (Topf, 1994; Krippendorff and Bock, 2008) and is complemented by frame analysis (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Schön and Rein, 1994). The latter is concerned with how, as key political texts, manifestos enable parties to construct (or ‘frame’) policy proposals on the third sector and other matters. In electoral terms, as Nelson and Oxley (1997, p. 75) observe: ‘frames influence opinions by stressing specific values, facts and other considerations, endowing them with greater apparent relevance to the issue than they might appear to have under an alternative frame’. In this way framing leads to political agenda-setting (Cohen, 1963; Cobb and Ross, 1997) and whether parties’ third sector policies are mandated or fail to attract electoral support.

Comparative analysis of framing practices in different polities and tiers of government is an established methodological practice (De Vreese et al, 2001; Papacharissi, 2008).<sup>5</sup> Yet it is acknowledged that manifestos have limitations as a data-source; not least because party policy proposals are also expressed in speeches, debates and other documents, yet they constitute the principal political texts that reflect a party’s priorities and issue positions thereby allowing systematic analysis over time. Accordingly, as noted, electronic versions of the manifestos of the leading<sup>6</sup> parties in UK general and regional elections 1945-2011 were analysed using appropriate software.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, in the preliminary stage of the research, the manifesto texts were divided into ‘quasi-sentences’ (or, ‘an argument which is the verbal expression of one political idea or issue,’ Volkens 2001, p. 96). Splitting sentences in this way controlled for long sentences that contain multiple policy proposals. Individual quasi-sentences were subsequently coded using an inductive coding frame (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe and Yardley,



2003) based on key topics/ themes derived from the policy literature on the third sector (Cf. Best and Dunn, 2000; Evers and Laville, 2004; Kendall 2003; Elson, 2010) (See Figure 3). Thus, this schema incorporates a range of frames including: funding, community development, social services, caring and, participation. Divergent views on the coding emerged in <2 per cent of quasi-sentences (N=1,023)<sup>8</sup> (resolved by discussion between coders). Issue-salience was then determined by logging the frequency of quasi-sentences in a database of party manifestos 1945-2011.

As existing electoral studies reveal, over recent years party programmes have tended to become more detailed and have a greater word-length. This has potential methodological implications for any claims of shifting salience over time; not least because any change might be regarded as a possible function of increased manifesto length rather than being reflective of greater attention to third sector policy by the respective parties. To control for this the present analysis uses both 'absolute' and 'relative totals' methodologies. The former details the total number of quasi-sentences on the third sector; whilst the latter recalculates them as a percentage of all quasi-sentences in each manifesto<sup>9</sup> (i.e. quasi-sentences on all topics and issues; see Figure 1 – below). Because the impact of increased manifesto word length on saliency is complex and variable<sup>10</sup> both approaches have advantages and shortcomings. Moreover, notwithstanding the overall trend towards greater manifesto length, there are major fluctuations in both manifesto word totals and the number of quasi-sentences (for example, in seven of the 13 election cycles studied here the total number of quasi-sentences in the manifestos studies actually *decreased* compared to the preceding ballot). Nevertheless, in order to check for any discrepancies between the two methods, as noted, both were used in the following analysis. This dual approach affirmed that the 'absolute totals' method (i.e. exploring the changing totals of third-sector quasi-sentences) produced findings consistent with those derived from the 'relative proportion' method (thus, for example, they both reveal a significant increase in the issue salience of the third sector over time, see Figures 1 and 2) – thereby confirming it as robust and appropriate measure for the frame analysis in the following discussion.

## **ISSUE- SALIENCE, THIRD SECTOR POLICY AND WESTMINSTER ELECTIONS 1945-2010**

Earlier analysis alludes to a “social policy revolution” that placed the third sector at the heart of a ‘mixed economy of welfare’... [one that] saw a major rethink about the nature and extent of the state’s contribution to social welfare and witnessed a renewed concern for voluntary and community action’ (Crowson, 2011, p. 491). The present data show that this transition did not take place in the immediate aftermath of the war for the third sector had low issue-saliency in the first five post-war elections. During this period the emphasis was on building the new institutions of the welfare state. Just 1.9 per cent of post-war references were made in these ballots. Subsequently, from 1964 onwards, the overall pattern is one of a significant increase in salience. It is a trend that is confirmed by contrasting methodological techniques employed here. Specifically, it is revealed when all-party third sector references are plotted as a percentage of total quasi sentences (i.e. on all topics and issues) in each election (Figure 1) – and, it is apparent when absolute totals are examined (Figure 2). In the former case a threefold increase in salience is revealed (from a mean of 1.89 per cent in the 1960s to 5.8 per cent in the 2000s, N= 359). Expressed in absolute terms (Figure 2) 4.5 per cent of references were made in the 1960s, 15.2 per cent in the 1970s, 16.8 per cent in 1980s, 21.3 per cent in the 1990s and 42.3 in the 2000s.

The growth in third sector policy salience has been underpinned by the shifting position of two principal parties. In the case of the Left-of-centre Labour Party the dearth of attention in the initial post-war ballots reflects the party’s concentration on statist solutions to welfare delivery (Walker, 1983; Lister, 1998). Subsequently, increased attention to the third sector (most noticeable in the post-1983 period) reflects a repositioning of the party as an advocate of welfare pluralism, latterly with an accent on market-based reforms supplemented by voluntarism (e.g. we ‘will support voluntary efforts that supplement services which are essential to the community... Labour’s approach will be to develop the partnership between central and local

government, with the direct participation of the voluntary and private sectors', Labour Party, 1987, p. 29). For the Conservative Party the New Right's ascendancy in the 1980s resulted in a particular emphasis on private sector provision of welfare services and the privileging of individualism over collectivism (Wilding, 1992). This has subsequently been modified, not least by the current administration's 'Big Society' agenda that consists of 'a variety of new techniques of neo-liberal governmentality... the core component is the offloading of the responsibility for the provision of a variety of public services on to various voluntary groups and charities... [as part of] an extension of a longer-term attempt to reduce the costs and risks of governing' (Kerr et al, 2011, p. 204).

[Temporary Note – Figure 2 – about here]

Over the post-war period there are statistically-significant inter-party differences in issue-salience ( $p < 0.001$ ).<sup>11</sup> Thus, reflecting the Right's traditional conception of citizenship founded on civic duty (Viroli, 2000) – as well as what Kendall (2000, p. 558) memorably refers to its use of 'communitarian imagery of charities as carriers of tradition and vehicles for the expression of elite responsibility' – the Conservatives made most manifesto references to third sector policy (42.6 per cent of the 1945-2010 total). They were followed by Labour (35.7 per cent) and the Liberal Democrats (21.7 per cent). There are also significant party shifts in salience over time. The foremost example is Labour's move away from its traditional emphasis on state collectivism. Thus, almost two-thirds (64.6 per cent) of references to the sector were made in the three elections after 1997 (compared to 3.8 per cent, 10.7 per cent and 18.5 per cent in the 1970s, '80s and '90s). In contrast, issue-salience has been more evenly distributed across the post-war decades for the other two parties. In the case of the Conservatives 29.3 per cent of the party's post-war total references was made in the 1970s. During the ascendancy of the New Right in the 1980s references almost halved to 15.3 per cent. Yet they rebounded to 25.3 per cent in the 1990s, and 24.7 per cent in the 2000s. For the Liberals/ Liberal Democrats the corresponding totals are 10.3 per

cent (1970s), followed by 42.3, 23 and 23 per cent. Accordingly, these data affirm that over recent decades heightened electoral salience of welfare pluralism has in large measure been driven by the Left-of-centre Labour Party's 'late conversion' to using the sector in the delivery of welfare services.

## **POLICY FRAMING IN UK STATE-WIDE ELECTIONS**

Analysis of variance between the three major parties reveals statistically significant differences across all frames in their manifesto discourse on the third sector ( $P > 0.05$ ).<sup>12</sup> Crucially, underlining the shift towards welfare pluralism, references framed in terms of third sector organisations' delivery of public services collectively account for the largest share of the discourse (23.1 per cent).<sup>13</sup> Strikingly, Labour account for two-thirds of these references (66.5 per cent), followed by the Conservatives (30.3 per cent) and Liberals/ Liberal Democrats (3 per cent). The Conservatives' long-held, ideological position of reducing state involvement in welfare provision is reflected in the fact that almost two-thirds (64.7 per cent) of the party's references were made before the 1992 elections. In contrast, Labour's more recent embracing of a mixed economy of welfare (Driver and Martell, 1998) is evidenced by the fact that over three-quarters of the party's references to third sector welfare delivery were made during, or after, the 1997 election (87.5 per cent). Notably, this discourse is principally expressed under the rubric of 'partnership'; a trope that was particularly to the fore during the Blair administrations (Fairclough, 2000). For example, 'we [will] develop more far-reaching partnerships for the delivery of services... partnership with the voluntary and private sectors is key' (Labour Party 2001, p. 34). It is also a discourse advanced in terms introducing new practices into state welfare delivery - as well as flexibility and value for money. For example, 'in a range of services the voluntary and community sector has shown itself to be innovative, efficient and effective. Its potential for service delivery should be considered on equal terms. We will continue to improve the context in which the gifting of time and resources to the voluntary sector takes place' (Labour Party 2005, p. 48).

In addition to generic references to welfare delivery, specific proposals under the frames 'social services' and 'health' accounted for 5.3 and 4.6 per cent of the total discourse. In both cases the Conservatives made most references (64 per cent,<sup>14</sup> and 50 per cent,<sup>15</sup> respectively). This discourse from the Right is largely concerned with the espousal of a non-collectivist, pluralist approach to welfare to be accompanied by state deregulation (Hudson 1992). Early examples include: 'the voluntary hospitals which have led the way in the development of hospital technique will remain free. They will play their part in the new service in friendly partnership with local authority hospitals' (Conservative Party 1945, p. 9) and; 'we have cut away restrictions on voluntary effort in the hospital service. We shall continue to give every encouragement to voluntary work' (Conservative Party 1955, p. 17).<sup>16</sup> However, subsequent Conservative references (as well as instances in Labour's post-1997 discourse), often present third sector welfare delivery as an alternative, rather than a complement to state provision.

[Temporary Note – Figure 3 – about here]

Allied to specific discourse on third sector involvement in public service delivery, the most employed individual frame was the issue of funding; it accounted for 13.4 per cent of references overall (Figure 3).<sup>17</sup> Analysis shows key differences in the parties' use of language related to this frame. For the Conservatives and neo-liberal-oriented New Labour the emphasis is on funding as a form of social investment; in the former case to challenge, and in the latter to complement, state welfare. Manifesto discourse on housing services illustrates partisan differences. Thus, reflecting the Conservative Party's traditional opposition to state housing provision (Whelan 2008), they predominate in the manifesto discourse on third sector housing services (85 per cent).<sup>18</sup> For example, 'we will provide new powers and more funds for the voluntary housing movement' (Conservative Party 1974a, p. 18). In contrast, Labour discourse on third sector funding – as well as that of the Liberals/ Liberal Democrats – places greater accent on empowerment, support and enablement. For example, 'we will give greater support to voluntary agencies' (Labour Party 1987, p. 33); and 'we want a more stable

framework for the voluntary organisations making them less dependent on short-term funding which can be misused by local councils and government departments as a means of exerting political control in the voluntary sector' (Liberal-SDP Alliance 1987, p. 22).

Community development was the third most employed individual frame (6.7 per cent).<sup>19</sup> Labour predominate in its usage (70.8 per cent of references), followed by the Liberals/ Liberal Democrats (16.7 per cent) and Conservatives (12.5 per cent). Labour's lead on this issue is a function of its longstanding focus on tackling poverty. Yet, as Popple and Redmond (2000, p. 395) note, the party's post-1997 policy record is open to the criticism that it 'has been used as a tool to placate disaffected communities. This runs counter to community development's core values of acting as a liberator among the poorest in society'. Examples of the discourse include: we will 'give incentives to voluntary bodies to involve themselves more widely in the provision of community facilities' (Labour Party 1983, p. 53) and, 'we are committed to developing plans for a national citizens' service programme, to tap the enthusiasm and commitment of the many young people who want to make voluntary contributions in service of their communities... We do not believe programmes should be imposed from the top down, but on the contrary wish to encourage a broad range of voluntary initiatives devised and developed by people within their own communities' (Labour Party 1997, p. 34).

Further insight into party differences in the manifesto discourse can be gained by reference to the tropes used by the parties. These form part of political discourse and cross-cut policy frames. As Fischer and Forrester (1993, p. 117) explain, tropes are 'figures of speech and argument that give persuasive power to larger narratives [including policy frames] of which they are part'. Three principal tropes feature in the discourse: 'partnership', 'citizenship' and 'choice'. Reflecting the Party's shift away from its collectivist roots (Lewis 2005; Perkins et al 2010) Labour predominated in the use of 'partnership' (63.2 per cent). For example, 'countries only prosper on the basis of partnership – between government, employers and their employees, and the voluntary

sector' (Labour Party 2001, p. 39) ( $p < 0.001$ ).<sup>20</sup> As Davies (2012) observes, voluntarism has been an integral component of New Labour's notion of 'citizenship'; and this is reflected in the Party's majority-use of this trope (57.2 per cent).

Analysis also reveals that during the Blair administrations there was an element of discursive convergence between Labour and Conservatives; notably around the notion of 'stakeholding'. For example, 'an independent and creative voluntary sector, committed to voluntary activity as an expression of citizenship, is central to our vision of a stakeholder society' (Labour Party 2001, p. 38).<sup>21</sup> As Klitgaard (2007) has observed, in a range of advanced welfare systems neo-liberal proponents of reform have used political rhetoric around user 'choice' to make the case for developing the use of third sector organisations and quasi-markets in alternative models of provision (see also Ungerson and Yeandle, 2007). The present data confirm that the Conservative Party leads in this regard. Over post-war decades it made most references under the 'choice' trope (50 per cent). Examples include, we will use 'independent, voluntary and community sector [health care] providers. We will make patients' choices meaningful' (Conservative Party 2010, p. 54).<sup>22</sup>

## **MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND THE ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE THIRD SECTOR: UK REGIONAL ELECTIONS 1998-2011**

Following devolution in the UK third sector policy has been subject to increasing issue-salience in the newly established 'regional' electoral politics (+16.9 percentage points). However, key contrasts are apparent when the polities are compared. In Scotland salience has increased over the past four election cycles (+47.3 percentage points). In Wales it has declined (-38.6 percentage points); and in Northern Ireland it has fluctuated. In the first case, the near doubling of references reflects Scotland's post-devolution emphasis on 'policies engaging with the third sector... [with] twin emphases on neoliberalism and neo-communitarianism'. As Fyfe et al (2006, p. 630) proceed to explain, these have particular significance in relation to welfare pluralism owing to their

focus 'on the relation between the state and third sector organizations, on the social economy, and on volunteering'.

However, like-for-like comparison of salience in regional and state-wide elections is not possible. Contrasting policy-competencies and differences in the periods to which data relate are amongst a number of factors that preclude exact comparison. Nevertheless, a broad indicator that meso-elections have presented significant opportunities for third sector policy development is evidenced by the fact that, in little more than a decade, almost twice as many references were made in the regional ballots (1998-2011) compared to all 18 post-war state-wide votes (N=664 compared to N=359). The territorialisation of policy is further underlined by statistically-significant inter-polity differences in the total number of third sector quasi-sentences in the post 1998/9 electoral discourse ( $p=<0.001$ ).<sup>23</sup> Most references were made in Scotland (46.5 per cent), followed by Wales (38 per cent) and Northern Ireland (15.5 per cent) (Figure 5). 'Participation' and 'funding' were the most-used frames across the 'devolved' polities (Scotland 21 and 16 per cent, respectively; Wales 19.6 and 14.9 per cent; and 24.7 and Northern Ireland 13.4 per cent). Frames concerned with public service delivery account for just over a third of references (33.7 per cent). The significance of these findings is in affirming broad compatibility between state-wide and regional elections. In both tiers of election the manifesto discourse reveals welfare pluralism to be a key political priority.

[Temporary note – Figures 5 and 6 – about here]

The fact that welfare pluralism is the dominant approach in state-wide and regional elections is hardly surprising; major divergence would be unlikely after little more than a decade of devolved governance. However, what is of greater significance is the fact that the data also show that there are key territorial contrasts in the way that welfare pluralism is to be pursued in each polity. These differences underline the need for research to explore the formative, discursive phase of policy-making as the starting point in territorial policy divergence that (re-)defines the third sector's role and relationship with the state. It is illustrated by policy framing data associated with third



sector welfare delivery (Figure 6) (ANOVA,  $P = > 0.001$ ).<sup>24</sup> For example, in Scotland the third-ranked frame is 'education' (14.5 per cent),<sup>25</sup> followed by 'public Services (non-specific)' (11 per cent)<sup>26</sup> and 'health' (9 per cent);<sup>27</sup> whereas, in Wales the most-cited is 'public Services (non-specific)' (13.7 per cent), followed by 'equalities' (8.9 per cent)<sup>28</sup> and 'education' (7.7 per cent). In Northern Ireland third-ranked is 'education' (12.4 per cent), followed by 'equalities' (10.3 per cent) and 'health' (6.2 per cent). This pattern of territorialisation is further evident when inter-polity differences in the use of overarching tropes are examined.<sup>29</sup> Greatest use of 'community' and 'choice' is made in Scotland (48.3 and 66.6 per cent of regional references to each frame, respectively);<sup>30</sup> whilst in Wales most use is made of 'partnership' and 'citizenship' (46 and 53.8 per cent, respectively).<sup>31</sup>

In the case of state-wide parties in Scotland and Wales the territorialisation of welfare pluralism is also driven by intra-party differences in both issue-salience and framing ( $p < 0.05$ ); in other words divergent practice between UK and 'regional' divisions of a given party (e.g. between UK Labour and Scottish Labour).<sup>32</sup> Thus, for example, the Scottish Conservatives accounted for just over a quarter (27.4 per cent) of all state-wide parties' third sector policy discourse in Scotland, compared to over a third (34 per cent) by the Welsh Conservatives in Wales. In the case of Labour the differences were more pronounced 32.5 and 21 per cent, respectively.<sup>33</sup> A further notable aspect of the intra-party variation in policy framing is the 'discursive-distancing' of the Scottish and Welsh Labour Parties from the neo-liberal agenda followed by the UK tier of the Party in Westminster elections. This has been done by the former's espousal of terms such as 'clear red water' and self-description as 'classic'- or 'traditional'- Labour (Birrell, 2009). It is supported by statistically-significant differences in the salience of third sector involvement in public service delivery between the Scottish, Welsh and UK divisions of the Labour Party ( $p < 0.01$ ).<sup>34</sup> Thus, when all state-wide and regional manifesto references to third sector policy 1997-2011 are aggregated, the majority are made by the UK Labour party (52.7 per cent), compared to just over a third (35.5 per cent) by Scottish Labour and just 12.7 per cent from Welsh Labour. As noted, the significance of these findings is that intra-party variation in the political priority

afforded to third sector policy – as well as differences policy framing are revealed as formative drivers of policy divergence in the unitary state following devolution.

[Temporary note – Figure 7 – about here]

Statistically-significant differences in policy framing on third sector are also evident when the regionalist/ minority nationalist parties (MNPs) are considered (e.g. the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru etc.) (Figure 7) ( $P < 0.01$ ).<sup>35</sup> Thus, in Scotland the SNP places greatest emphasis on ‘funding’, ‘participation’, ‘delivery of public services (non- specific)’, and ‘education’. In contrast, in Wales Plaid Cymru gives most attention to ‘education’, followed by ‘participation’, ‘funding’ and ‘equalities’. In Northern Ireland Sinn Féin gives greatest attention to ‘participation’, ‘funding’ and ‘health’ – whilst the SDLP focus on ‘participation’, ‘education’ and ‘equalities’. Such contrasts are important because they are part of a new dynamic in the formative phase of third sector policy making. Devolution has afforded these parties unprecedented policy influence (either in government office or opposition) that did not exist prior to 1998/9. In the case of MNPs their ideological goal of independence (variously defined) raises fundamental questions about the nature of the welfare state in the respective territories, and is likely to have an increasing impact on divergent approaches to welfare pluralism.

[Temporary Note – Figure 8 – about here]

The meso-level data also provide insight into the rise of welfare pluralism by revealing the motives underpinning parties’ policies on third sector involvement in public service delivery (Figure 8). Overall, ‘better coordination of services’ was the most common reason alluded to. It accounted for just over a third of all references (36.5 per cent). This was followed by claims over the beneficial effects on local communities (30.2

per cent), delivering user-choice (11.1 per cent), securing greater effectiveness in service delivery (11.1 per cent) and achieving greater efficiency (7.9 per cent). Statistically-significant differences are evident between polities. Notably, twice as much emphasis is placed on 'better coordination of services' in Wales compared to Scotland. This reflects continuing political conflict in Wales over the restructuring of public services (Hartley, 2005). In contrast, user-choice and efficiency arguments are used more in Scotland compared to the other polities ( $P=<0.01$ ).<sup>36</sup> When parties are compared, Plaid Cymru makes most references to 'better coordination of services' (21.7 per cent); for example, 'strong co-operation with voluntary organisations. Each local authority should therefore have an Early Years Unit which will work with the Partnership to co-ordinate services across a wide range of providers, and ensure needs are met' (Plaid Cymru 1999, p. 18). In contrast, the Scottish Liberal Democrats advance the most arguments in relation to extending choice (57.1 per cent of the regional total). Examples include: 'we will increase the choice people have in choosing services by enhancing the role of the voluntary sector' (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 2003, p. 32). The Scottish Conservatives make the majority of references to third sector involvement leading to greater effectiveness of service delivery (42.9 per cent). For example, 'many of them [third sector organisations] have strong local roots and specialist knowledge and may be better placed to deliver services than the public sector ever could be. We will therefore consult on introducing a "right to bid" for the voluntary sector' (Scottish Conservatives, 2011, p. 43). Lastly, the SDLP and Welsh Conservatives are equal in making most references to the community benefits of third sector involvement in service delivery (both 21 per cent). Examples include: 'we will support the good work of existing rural community and voluntary organisations who promote rural and community development' (SDLP 2007, p. 19).

[Temporary note – Table 1 – about here]

Analysis of the substantive details of the policies set out in the party manifestos for the regional elections further underlines the electoral underpinnings of third sector policy divergence in multi-level systems. This is a function not only of framing but also parties proposing policy measures in one polity that are unmatched in the others (Table 1). It is a process that applies to all the policy frames analysed and is evident in the discourse of both state-wide and regionalist parties.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present findings highlight the discursive underpinnings of the late-twentieth century rise in welfare pluralism in the UK. This stems from a significant growth in the issue-salience of the third sector in the electoral discourse of the main state-wide parties in Westminster elections. Initially ignored in the immediate post-war period, it rises up the political agenda from the mid-1960s onwards. This shift is accompanied by changing party positions on welfare. In the case of the Conservatives it reflects the move away from the exclusive market-based prescriptions of the New Right; whilst for Labour, it is a function of the transition from collectivism to neo-liberalism.

Frame analysis identified the motives underpinning parties' advocacy of welfare pluralism. 'Better coordination of services' was found to be the leading objective, followed by 'beneficial effects on local communities', 'delivering user-choice', and 'securing greater effectiveness and efficiency'. The present analysis also confirms that in the wake of devolution welfare pluralism is the dominant approach at both UK and regional levels. However, instead of uniform state-wide practices, a process of territorialisation was identified. This stems from inter-polity differences in the formative, electoral discourse phase of policy-making that include significant inter- and intra- party contrasts in policy framing. The latter is also apparent in the tropes crosscutting the discourse. With increasing legislative powers and policy responsibilities being transferred from Westminster to regional legislatures, as well as the separatist ambitions of four parties that have held government office over the past decade, such divergence is likely to gather pace over future years. In turn this poses key

questions about policy coordination and differential welfare rights in the unitary state. The latter are embedded in wider debates and issues related to issues of accountability and taxation arrangements in the quasi-federal state and, reconciling disputes between EC and UK/GB enactments and laws passed by the regional legislatures.

The wider significance of the current findings to international third sector scholarship is that focus on electoral discourse can reveal how ideological and pragmatic party shifts to the political centre-ground, concerns to lessen political risk-taking, measures to reduce public expenditure and the rise of 'new' governance practices may foster the development of mixed economy approaches to social welfare. In this way the current study provides an empirical and methodological basis for future analysis of the sector's role in social welfare delivery. Emerging issues deserving of future comparative work include: the extent to which the patterns and processes observed in the UK are replicated in other states; the effect that third sector organisations' lobbying of political parties has on electoral agenda-setting; and the extent to which parties' third sector policy proposals influence voting behaviour. Overall the present study underlines that contemporary analysis of mixed-economy approaches to social welfare needs to be cognizant of the way that electoral discourse, issue-salience and territorial politics combine to shape the development of welfare pluralism.

## REFERENCES

- Beresford, P. and Croft, S. (1983). Welfare pluralism: the new face of Fabianism. *Critical Social Policy*, 3, 9, 19-39.
- Best, R. and Dunn, A. (2007). *The Voluntary Sector, the State and the Law*. Hart Publishing, Oxford.
- Burt, E. (2007). Voluntary Organizations in the Democratic Polity: Managing Legitimacy, Accountability and Trust. *Public Money & Management*, 27, 2, 157-160
- Birrell, D. (2009). *The Impact of Devolution on Social Policy*. Policy Press, Bristol.
- Boyatzis, R. (1998). *Transforming Qualitative Information*. Sage, London.
- Budge, I. and Hofferbert, R. (1990). Mandates and Policy Outputs: U.S. Party Platforms and Federal Expenditures. *The American Political Science Review*, 84, 1, 111-131.
- Casey, J. (2004). Third sector participation in the policy process: a framework for comparative analysis. *Policy & Politics*, 32, 2, 241-57.
- Chen, S. (2002) State socialism and the welfare state: a critique of two conventional paradigms, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 11, 3, 228- 42.
- Cobb, R. and Ross, M. (1997). Agenda setting and the denial of agenda access: Key concepts, in R.W. Cobb and M.H. Ross (eds), *Cultural Strategies of Agenda Denial*. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence. KS.
- Conservative Party. (1945). *Mr. Churchill's Declaration of Policy to the Electors*. Conservative Party, London.
- Conservative Party (1955). *United for Peace and Progress: The Conservative and Unionist Party's Policy*. Conservative Party, London.
- Conservative Party (1974a). *Firm action for a fair Britain*. Conservative Party, London.
- Conservative Party (1974b). *Putting Britain First*. Conservative Party, London.
- Conservative Party (2011). *An invitation to join the Government of Britain*. Conservative Party, London.
- Cohen, B. (1963). *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Corbett, S. and Walker, A. (2012). The Big Society: Back to the Future. *The Political Quarterly*, 83, 3, 1 487-493.
- Creed, W., Langstraat, J. and Scully, M. (2002). Picture of the Frame: Frame Analysis as Technique and as Politics. *Organizational Research Methods*, 5, 1, 34-55.
- Crowson, N. (2011). Introduction: The Voluntary Sector in 1980s Britain. *Contemporary British History*, 25, 4, 491-498.

Dahlberg, L. (2005). Interaction between Voluntary and Statutory Social Service Provision in Sweden: A Matter of Welfare Pluralism, Substitution or Complementarity?. *Social Policy & Administration*, 39, 740–763

Daly, S. (2011). Philanthropy, the Big Society and Emerging Philanthropic Relationships in the UK. *Public Management Review*, 13, 8, 1077-89.

Danson, M. and de Souza. (2012). *Regional Development in Northern Europe: Peripherality, Marginality and Border Issues*. Routledge, Princeton, NJ.

Davies, J. (2012). Active citizenship: navigating the Conservative heartlands of the New Labour project. *Policy and Politics*, 40, 1, 3-19.

De Vreese, C., Peter, J. and Semetko, H. (2001) Framing Politics at the Launch of the Euro: A Cross-National Comparative Study of Frames in the News. *Political Communication*, 18, 2, 107-122.

Doornbos, M. (2006). *Global Forces and State Restructuring: Dynamics of State Formation and Collapse*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Driver, S., and Martell, L. (1998). *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Elson, P. (2010). *High Ideals and Noble Intentions: Voluntary Sector-Government Relations in Canada*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Evers A. (1995). Part of the welfare mix: The third sector as an intermediate area, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 6, 2, 159-182.

Evers, A. and J-L. Laville. (eds.) (2004). *The Third Sector in Europe*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Fairclough, N. (2000). *New Labour, New Language*. Routledge, London.

Fearon, J. (2003). Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance, in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ferejohn, J. (2003). Accountability and Authority: Toward a Theory of Political Accountability. In B. Manin, B. Przeworski, and S. Stokes (eds.) *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Fischer, F. and Forester, J. (1993). *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Fyfe, N., Timbrell, H. and Smith, F. (2006). The third sector in a devolved Scotland: From policy to evidence. *Critical Social Policy*, 26, 3, 630-641

Gamble, A. (2006). The Constitutional Revolution in the United Kingdom. *Publius*, 36, 1, 19-35.

- Gamson, W. A. and Modigliani, A.. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1, 1-37.
- Halfpenny, P. and Reid, M. (2002). Research on the voluntary sector: an overview. *Policy and Politics*, 30, 4, 533-48.
- Hartley, J. (2005). Innovation in Governance and Public Services: Past and Present. *Public Money & Management*, 25, 1, 34-47.
- Hanlon, N., Rosenberg, M. and Clasby, R. (2007). Offloading social care responsibilities: recent experiences of local voluntary organisations in a remote urban centre in British Columbia, Canada, *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 15, 4, 343-67.
- Haugh, H. and Kitson, M. (2007). The Third Way and the third sector: New Labour's economic policy and the social economy. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 31, 6, 973-994.
- Hudson, B. (1992). Quasi-Markets in Health and Social Care in Britain: can the public sector respond?. *Policy and Politics*, 20, 2, 131-43.
- Impero Wilson, P. (2000). Deficit Reduction as Causal Story: Strategic Politics and Welfare State Retrenchment. *Social Science Journal*, 37, 1, 97-121.
- Joffe, D. and H. Yardley. (2003). Content and Thematic Analysis, in D. Marks and H. Yardley, (eds) *Research methods for clinical and health psychology*. Sage, London.
- Johnson, N. (1987). *The Welfare State in Transition: The Theory and Practice of Welfare Pluralism*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst.
- Kendall, J. and Knapp, M. (1996). *The Voluntary Sector in the UK*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Kendall, J. (2000). The mainstreaming of the third sector into public policy in England in the late 1990s: whys and wherefores. *Policy & Politics*, 28, 4, 541-62.
- Kerr, P., C. Byrne and Foster, E. (2011). Theorising Cameronism. *Political Studies Review*, 9, 193-207.
- Kidd, A. (2002). Civil Society or the State?: Recent Approaches to the History of Voluntary Welfare. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 15, 3, 328-46.
- Klitgaard, M. (2007). Do Welfare State Regimes Determine Public Sector Reforms? Choice Reforms in American, Swedish and German Schools. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30, 4, 444-62.



- Korpi, W. and Palme, J. (1998). The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries. *American Sociological Review*, 63 (5), 661–87.
- Krippendorff, K. and M. Bock, M. (2008). *The Content Analysis Reader*. Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Labour Party (1964). *The New Britain*. Labour Party, London.
- Labour Party (1970). *Now Britain's Strong - Let's Make It Great To Live In*. Labour Party, London.
- Labour Party (1983). *The New Hope for Britain*. Labour Party, London.
- Labour Party (1987). *Britain will win with Labour*. Labour Party, London.
- Labour Party (1997). *Because Britain Deserves Better*. Labour Party, London.
- Labour Party (2001). *Ambitions for Britain*, Labour Party, London.
- Labour Party (2005). *Britain Forward Not Back*. Labour Party, London.
- Laforest, R. (2007). *The New Federal Policy Agenda and the Voluntary Sector: On the Cutting Edge*. School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, ON.
- Levi, Y. (2005). 'Nonprofits' and 'Third Sector': from Definitive Vagueness to Potentials for Innovation. *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, 38, 2, 37-43.
- Lewis, J. (2005). New Labour's Approach to the Voluntary Sector: Independence and the Meaning of Partnership. *Social Policy and Society*, 4, 2, 121-41.
- Libbrecht, L., Maddens, B., Swenden, W. and Fabre, E. (2009). 'Issue-salience in regional party manifestos in Spain'. *European Journal of Political Research*, 48, 1, 58–79.
- Liberal-SDP Alliance (1987). *Britain United: The Time Has Come*. Liberal-SDP Alliance, London.
- Lister, R. (1998). From equality to social inclusion: New Labour and the welfare state. *Critical Social Policy*, 18, 55, 215-225.
- Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Steenbergen, M. and Bakker, R. (2007). Crossvalidating data on party positioning on European integration. *Electoral Studies*, 26, 1, 23-39.
- Meyers, M. K., Glaser, B. and Donald, K. M. (1998). On the front lines of welfare delivery: Are workers implementing policy reforms?. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17: 1–22
- National Council of Voluntary Organisations. (2012). *The UK Civil Society Almanac 2012*. NCVO, London.
- Nelson, T. and Oxley, Z. (1999). Issue Framing Effects on Belief Importance and Opinion. *The Journal of Politics*, 61, 4, 1040-67.

- Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. (2009). *State of the Sector V - Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Almanac 2009*. NICVA, Belfast.
- Osterle, A. (2002). Evaluating Equity in Social Policy: A Framework for Comparative Analysis. *Evaluation*, 8, 1, 46-57.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2008). News Frames Terrorism: A Comparative Analysis of Frames Employed in Terrorism Coverage in U.S. and U.K. Newspapers. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13, 1, 52-74.
- Perkins, N., Smith, K. Hunter, D. Bambra, C. and Joyce, K. (2010). What counts is what works'? New Labour and partnerships in public health'. *Policy and Politics*, 38, 1, 101-23.
- Plaid Cymru. (1999). *The Manifesto of Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales*. Cardiff, Plaid Cymru.
- Popple, K. and M. Redmond. (2000). Community development and the voluntary sector in the new millennium: the implications of the Third Way in the UK. *Community Development Journal*, 35, 4, 1 391-400.
- Przeworski, A., Stokes, S. and Manin, B. (eds) (1999). Elections and Representation, chapter one in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- RePass, D. (1971). Issue-salience and Party Choice. *American Political Science Review*, 65, 389-400.
- Robertson, D. (1976). *A Theory of Party Competition*. Wiley, New York.
- Royed, T. (1996). Testing the Mandate Model in Britain and in the United States: Evidence from the Reagan and Thatcher Eras. *British Journal of Political Science*, 26, 1, 56-69.
- Ruiter, S. and De Graf, N. D. (2006). National Context, Religiosity, and Volunteering: Results from 53 Countries. *American Sociological Review*, 71 (2), 191-210.
- Salamon, L. M. and Sokolowski, W. S. (2003). Institutional Roots of Volunteering, in D. Paul and L. Halman (eds), *The Values of Volunteering: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. NewYork: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, pp. 71-90.
- Salamon, L. M. (1995). *Partners in Public Service: Government-Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.
- Schön, D. and M. Rein. (1994). *Frame Reflection: Toward the resolution of intractable policy controversies*. Basic Books, NY.
- Scottish Conservatives (1999). *Scotland First*, Scottish Conservatives, Edinburgh.
- Scottish Conservatives (2003). *Time to Do Something About It*, Scottish Conservatives, Edinburgh.

- Scottish Conservatives (2011). *Common Sense for Scotland*, Scottish Conservatives, Edinburgh.
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2012). *Scottish Third Sector Key Statistics*. SCVO, Edinburgh.
- Scottish Labour (2007). *Building Scotland*. Scottish Labour, Edinburgh.
- Scottish Liberal Democrats (1999). *Raising the Standard*. Scottish Liberal Democrats, Edinburgh.
- Scottish National Party (2011). *Re-elect A Scottish Government Working For Scotland*. Scottish National Party, Edinburgh.
- Sinn Féin (2007) *Delivering for Ireland's Future*. Sinn Féin, Dublin.
- Sinn Féin (2011) *Leadership Across Ireland*, Sinn Féin, Dublin.
- Sobieraj, S. (2006) Association Mobilization around the 2000 Presidential Campaign. *Sociological Inquiry*, 76, 1, 52-80.
- Social Democratic Labour Party (2003). *Reshaping Government, Rebuilding Public Services*. SDLP, Dublin.
- Social Democratic Labour Party (2007). *Let's Deliver Real Progress*. SDLP, Dublin.
- Stimson, J. (2003). 'Party Government and Responsiveness', in B. Manin, A. Przeworski, and S. Stokes (eds.), *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Taylor, M. and J. Lansley. (1992). Ideology and welfare in the UK voluntary sector, *Voluntas*, 3, 2, 153–74.
- Taylor, M. and J. Kendall. (1996). 'History of the voluntary sector', in J. Kendall and M. Knapp, *The Voluntary Sector in the UK*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Topf, R. (1994). 'Party Manifestos', in A. Heath, R. Jovell and J. Curtice (eds.), *Labour's Last Chance: 1992 Election and Beyond*. Aldershot, Dartmouth.
- Ungerson, C. and Yeandle, S. (2007). *Cash for Care in Developed Welfare States*, Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Viroli, M. (2000). Republican patriotism. In C. McKinnon & I. Hampsher-Monk (eds.), *The demands of citizenship* (pp. 267–275). Continuum, NY.
- Volgens, A. (2001). Manifesto Research since 1979: From Reliability to Validity, in Michael Laver (ed.), *Estimating the Policy Positions of Political Actors*. Routledge, London.
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action. (2012). *Basic Statistics of the Voluntary Sector January 2012*. WCVA, Cardiff.

- Walker, A. (1983). Labour's social plans: the limits of welfare statism. *Critical Social Policy*, 3, 8, 45-65.
- Walzer, M. (1992). The Civil Society Argument, in C. Mouffe (ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. Verso, London, pp. 89–107.
- Welsh Conservatives (2007). *Vote Welsh Conservative for a change*. Welsh Conservatives, Cardiff.
- Welsh Labour Party (1999). *Working hard for Wales*, Welsh Labour Party, Cardiff.
- Welsh Liberal Democrats (2003). *Deliver the Difference for Wales*, Welsh Labour Party, Cardiff.
- Whelan, R. (2008). British Social Housing and the Voluntary Sector. *Economic Affairs*, 28, 2, 5-21.
- Wilding, P. (1992). The British Welfare State: Thatcherism's enduring legacy'. *Policy and Politics*, 20, 3, 201-212.
- Wilson, A. (1993). *Towards an Integration of Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis*, Lancaster University Unit for Computer Research on the English Language Technical Papers No.3.
- Zimmer, A. (2003). Welfare Pluralism and Health Care: The Case of Germany, in Kovács, J. (ed.) *The Politics of Welfare Reform - East and West. Between Governmental Policy and Civic Initiative*, Routledge, London/New York.

---

<sup>1</sup> Excludes 1945-72 elections to the Northern Ireland Parliament. Also on definitional matters, notwithstanding the nation status of Scotland and Wales, this study follows existing practice by using the umbrella term 'regional' to denote sub-unitary state nations and provinces (Cf. Danson and de Souza 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Discrete references to bodies such as religious organisations, political parties, trade unions and the like are not included.

<sup>3</sup> 2007/08

<sup>4</sup> Territorial government ministries oversaw aspects of public administration in Scotland and Wales.

<sup>5</sup> However, it is only possible if, as in the present case, regional and state-wide party programmes to have broadly similar word-lengths and levels of detail. For example, in the mean word lengths of state-wide parties' manifestos in the last Westminster and Scottish elections were 26,500 and 23,500, respectively. Moreover, regional manifestos contain examples of policy proposals on issues and debates not presently devolved to the meso-level.

<sup>6</sup> Defined in terms of share of the popular vote.

<sup>7</sup> Where necessary, hardcopy only versions of early manifestos were transcribed. The software used was Nvivo 9.

---

<sup>8</sup> 15 incidences.

<sup>9</sup> Derived from the Comparative Manifesto Project, <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>

<sup>10</sup> Owing to a range of factors including changing policy competency in UK elections over time (i.e. shifting policy powers between EC/ EU as well as devolved governments/ legislatures); and the varying propensity of parties to use 'mini', dedicated manifestos to set out specific policies to targeted groups or on specific issues.

<sup>11</sup> Chi squared = 24.373, df=2, P = 0.0000051

<sup>12</sup> Df = 2, F = 4.554919908, P = 0.016680097

<sup>13</sup> Chi squared = 20.182, df=2, P = 0.00004145

<sup>14</sup> Chi squared = 10.842, df=2, P = 0.00442272

<sup>15</sup> Not significantly significant

<sup>16</sup> The remaining frames attract less than five per cent of the all-party total ('education', 4.2 per cent), 'youth services' (4.2 per cent), 'caring' (3.9 per cent), urban renewal (3.9 per cent), equalities (3.6 per cent), criminal justice (3 per cent) and participation (2.5 per cent).

<sup>17</sup> The full range of frames used in coding is: Caring; Community development; Criminal justice; Delivery of public services (non- specific); Education; Employment; Equalities; Funding; Health; Housing; Participation; Social services; Arts, Sport, Leisure; Urban renewal – and miscellaneous.

<sup>18</sup> Chi squared = 24.1, df=2, P = 0.00000584

<sup>19</sup> Chi squared = 15.25, df=2, P = 0.0004881

<sup>20</sup> Chi squared = 15.368, df=2, P = 0.00046013, N=38

<sup>21</sup> Not statistically-significant, N=14

<sup>22</sup> Not statistically-significant, N=10

<sup>23</sup> Chi squared = 96.367, df=2, P = 0.000756

<sup>24</sup> ANOVA, F = 5.721544961, P = 0.000553191

<sup>25</sup> Comparison of frame-use across regional polities; Chi squared = 49.904, df=2, P= 0.0004532

<sup>26</sup> Comparison of frame-use across regional polities; Chi squared = 33.831, df=2, P= 5e-8

<sup>27</sup> Comparison of frame-use across regional polities; Chi squared = 26.873, df=2, P= 0.00000146

<sup>28</sup> Not statistically-significant

<sup>29</sup> Not statistically significant, ANOVA F= 1.586249103, P= 0.234321138

<sup>30</sup> N=76 and 13, respectively.

<sup>31</sup> N= 180 and 12, respectively.

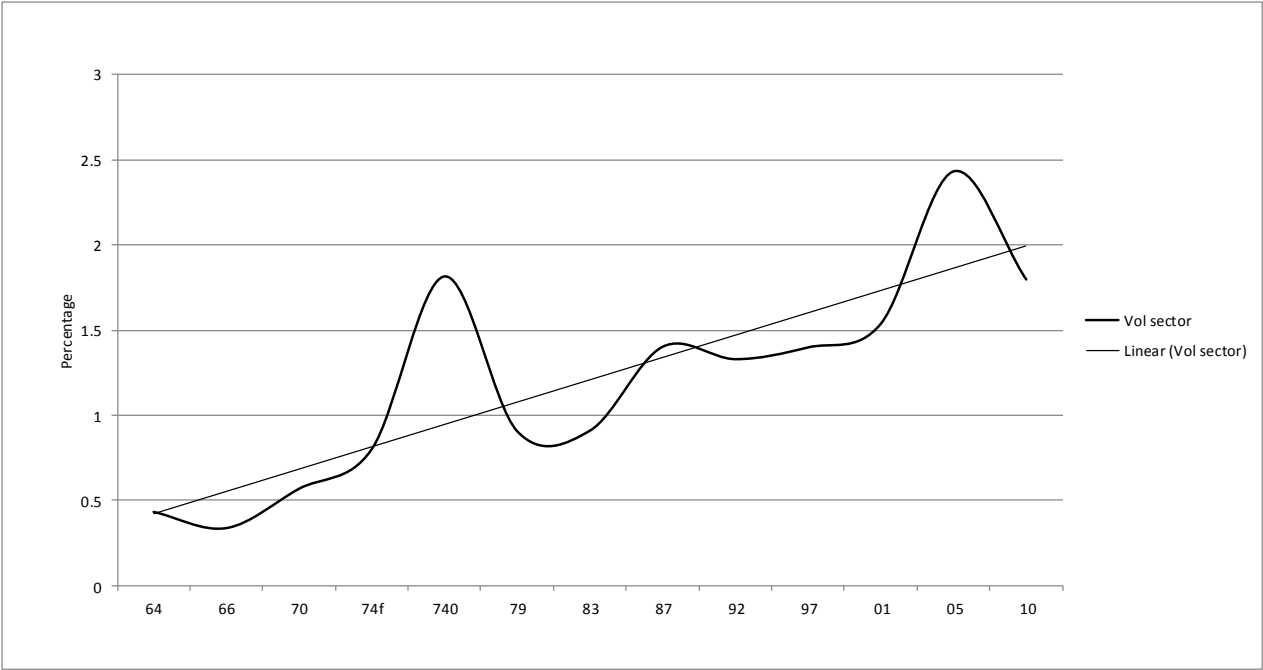
<sup>32</sup> Chi squared = 6.481, df= 2, P= 0.03914432

<sup>33</sup> (and the Liberal Democrats 40.2 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively).

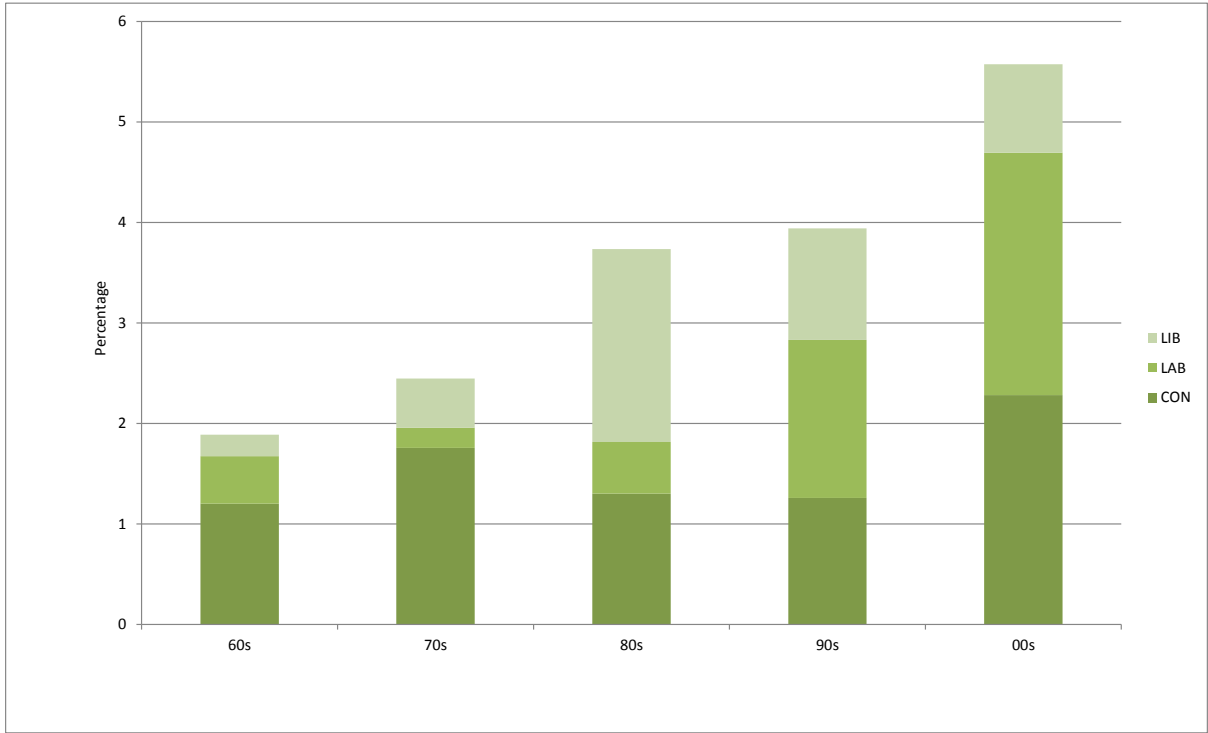
<sup>34</sup> Analysis of the frames 'delivery of public services (non- specific)', 'health', 'social services', and 'education'; N=55. Chi squared = 13.236, df= 2, P= 0.0013361

<sup>35</sup> Chi squared = 17.941, df= 5, P= 0.00302126

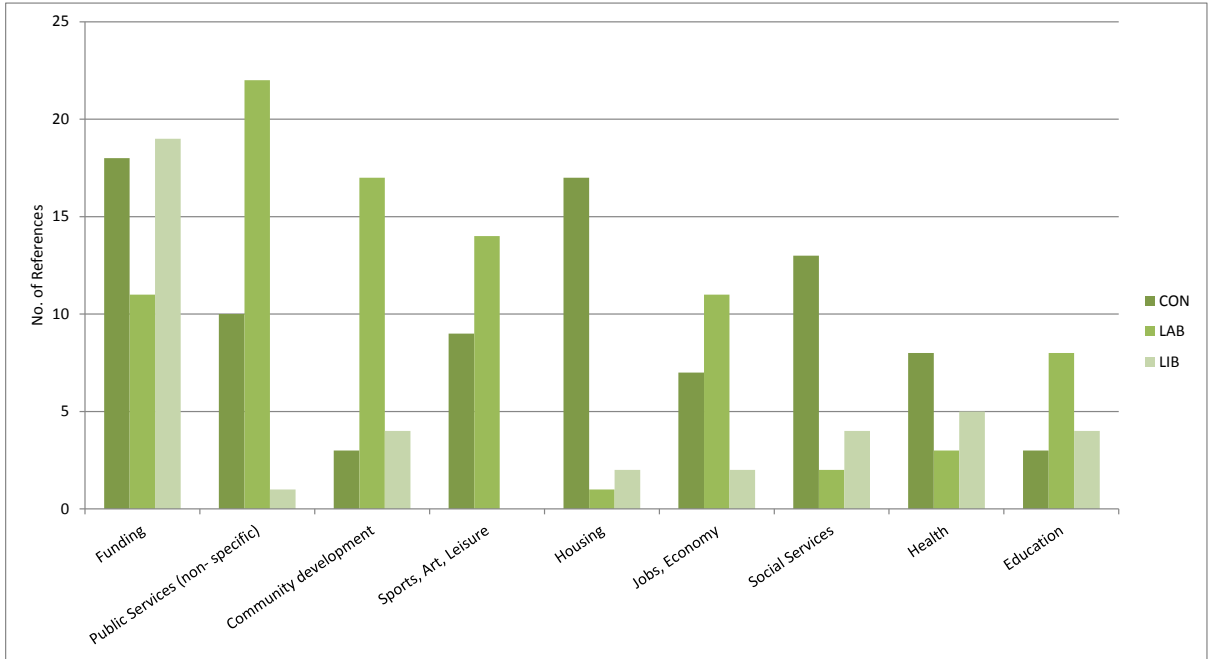
<sup>36</sup> Chi squared = 12.87, df= 2, P=0.00160441



**Figure 1. Voluntary Sector References as a Percentage of total Quasi-sentences in each Election.**



**Figure 2. Issue-Salience of the Third Sector as a Percentage of total Quasi-sentences in each of the Principal Parties’ General Election Manifestos 1945-2010.**

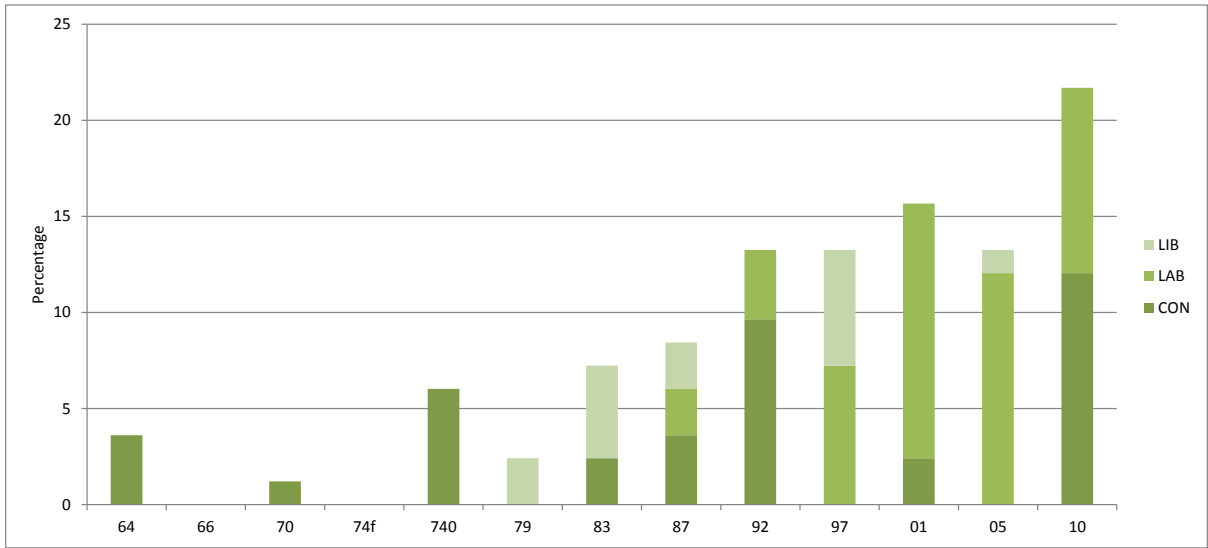


**Figure 3. Party Differences in Policy Framing of Third Sector Policy: UK General Election Manifestos 1945-2010 (No. of References per Frame, by Party).<sup>1</sup>**

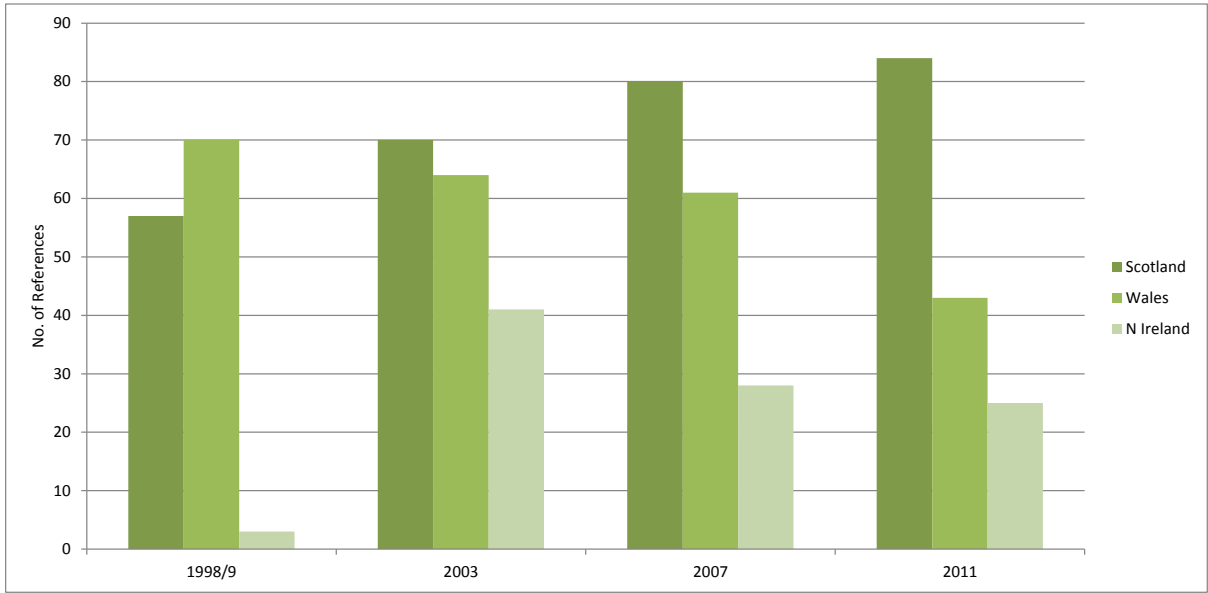


---

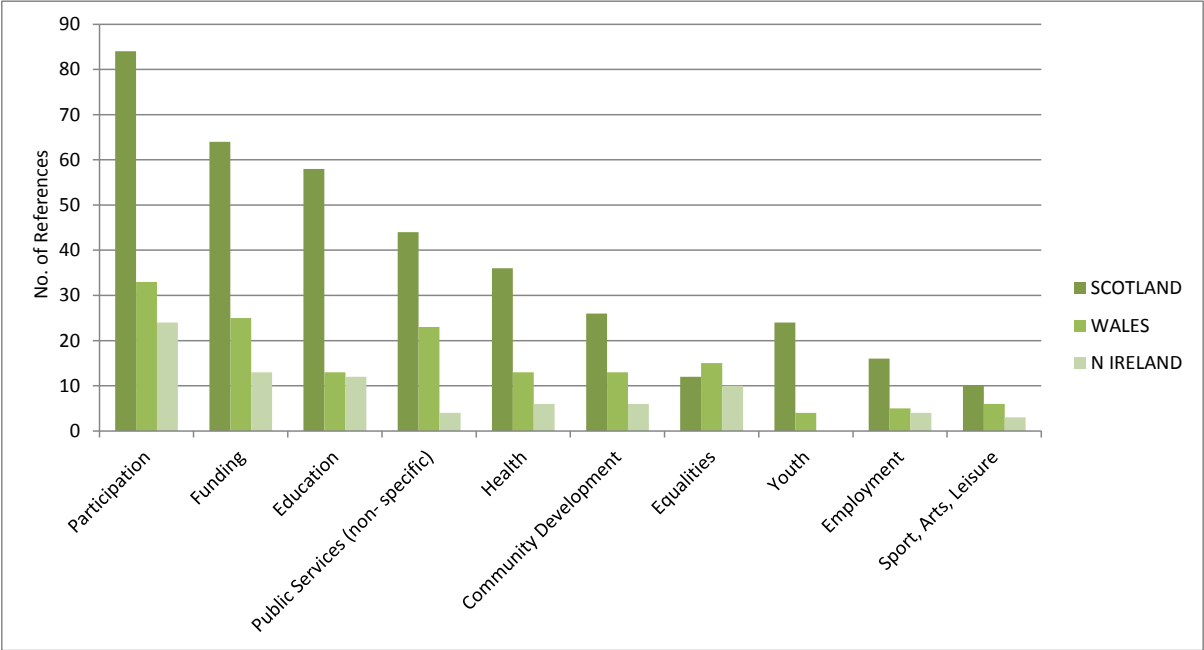
<sup>1</sup> 9 most used frames



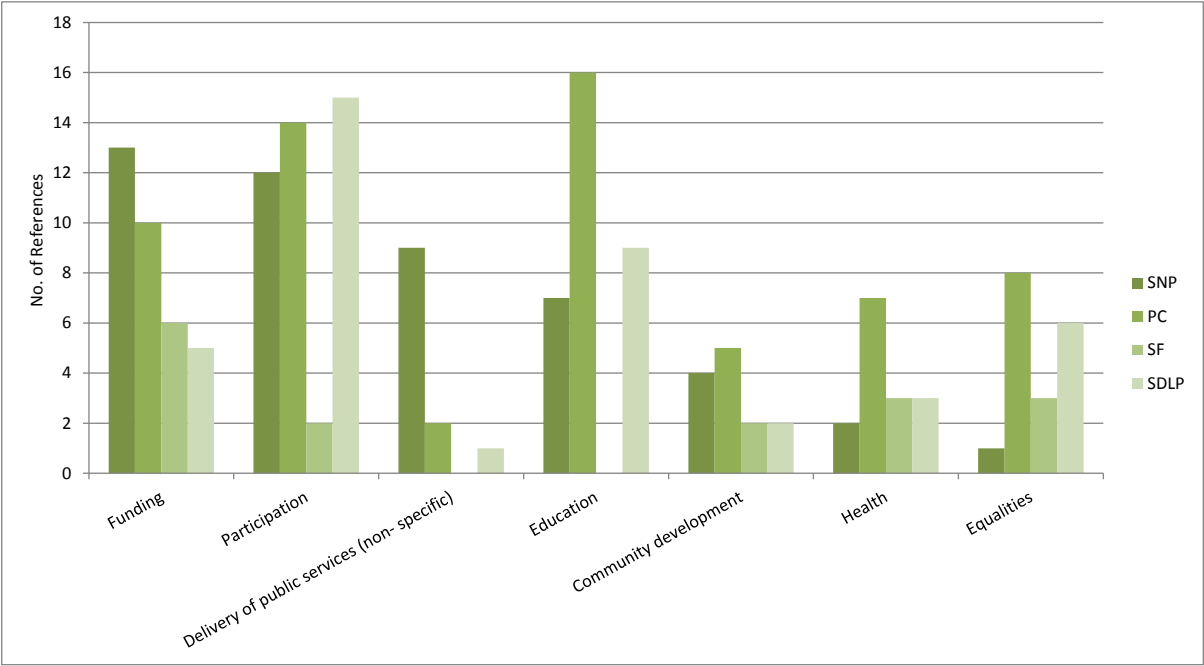
**Figure 4. Party References to Third Sector Involvement in Public Service Delivery (Percentage of all Post-war Manifesto References to PSD).**



**Figure 5. Issue-Salience of Third Sector Policy in Regional Election Manifestos 1998/9-2011, by Polity (Four Main Parties in each Polity, N= 664).**



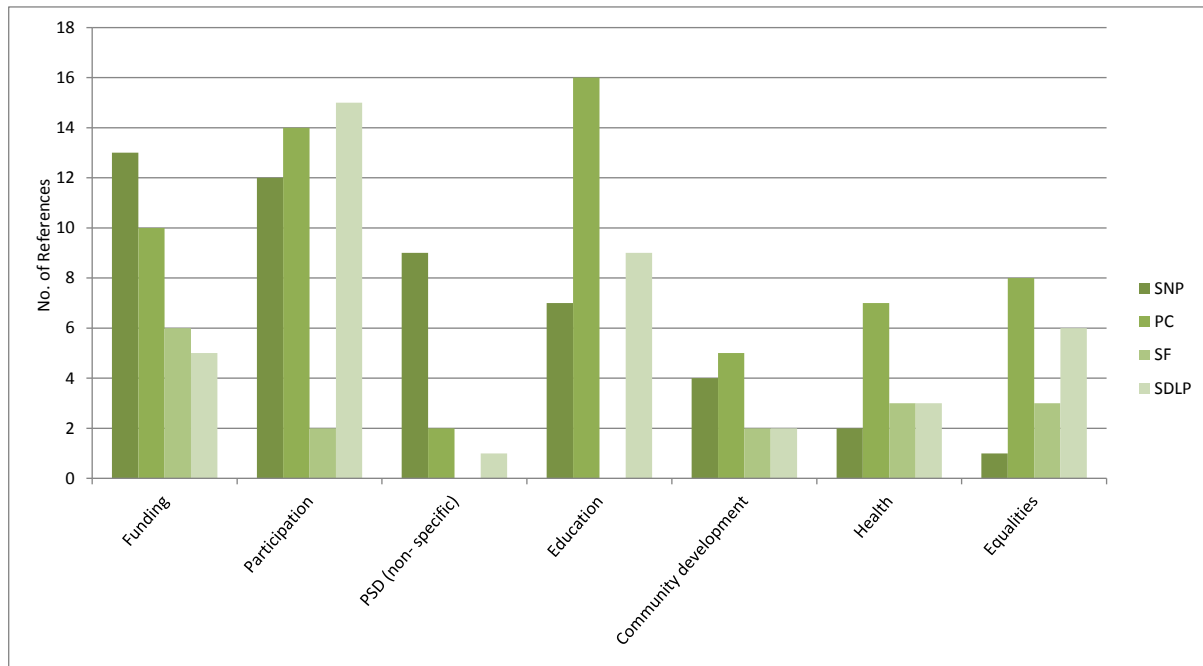
**Figure 6. Inter-Polity Differences in Framing in the Manifesto Discourse on the Third Sector: UK Regional Election Manifestos 1998-2011 (Quasi-sentences, N=664).**



**Figure 7. Regionalist Parties' Framing of Third Sector Policy: Manifestos 1998-2011.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Relates to the 4 regionalist parties making most references to third sector policy. 7 most-cited frames overall.





**Figure 8. Stated Motives for Parties' Advocacy of Third Sector Involvement in Public Service Delivery (Regional Elections 1998-2011, Percentage of All-Regions Total).<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> N=63.

Frame	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Participation	'Government departments, local councils, statutory and voluntary agencies, as well as health service bodies, must co-ordinate efforts and work together' (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 1999: 24).	'In government our partnership has embraced all of Wales, especially... voluntary groups. We want to ...create in Wales a model 'participatory democracy', one which engages all its citizens in shaping their own lives by giving them a stake in decisions which affect them' (Welsh Labour Party, 1999: 23).	'we must work to ... Promote Good Relations guidelines amongst community based organisations and encouraging voluntary participation in Good Relations practices' (SDLP, 2007: 47).
Health	'For implementing the National Drugs Strategy, we would expand the crucial role of the voluntary sector who have much to contribute towards tackling the menace of drugs. We would encourage a partnership arrangement' (Scottish Conservatives, 1999: 15).	'Government should not crowd out the voluntary and independent sectors from providing social care and health services' (Welsh Conservatives, 2003: 18).	We will 'establish a Rural Health Task Force that brings together political leadership, healthcare workers and the community and voluntary sectors to develop solutions to address the issues of unequal access to healthcare' (Sinn Féin , 2007: 22).
Education	We will 'use the colleges and the voluntary sector to spearhead the provision of quality adult and youth education and training' (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 1999: 23).	'There is little practical difference between the educational and care needs of the young child... both should be promoted through an integrated system of educare. This will require education authorities and voluntary groups... to work together in partnership' (Plaid Cymru, 1999: 19).	'We are determined that the strategy for NEET young people will be preventative and ensure... coordination with the community, voluntary and various education sectors' (SDLP, 2011: 49).
Criminal/ Youth Justice	'Innovative approaches to rehabilitation, many of them delivered by the voluntary sector, are more successful in preventing re-offending. We will therefore follow this approach' (Scottish Conservatives, 2003: 29).	We will 'develop the role of the Crime Prevention Director at the National Assembly to provide co-ordination between the public, voluntary agencies and the police services' (Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2003: 42).	We will 'promote adequate provision of assistance to victims including material, psychological, voluntary and community-based means at all stages of the criminal justice process' (Sinn Féin , 2011: 38).
Funding	We will 'secur[e] more long term support for voluntary sector services dealing directly with poverty' (SNP, 2003: 27). We will 'create a fund to enable good voluntary organisation projects to continue after... time-limited grants have expired' (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 1999: 12).	We will 'simplify and stabilise the funding process for Charitable and Voluntary Organisations working with the NHS to provide services... We will seek to provide a 3 year funding approach for such organisations' (Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2007: 29).	We will secure 'expansion of funding for statutory and voluntary children's services' (Sinn Féin , 2003: 48).
Equalities	We will 'create a National Older People's volunteering programme' (Scottish Labour, 2007: 54).	'Welsh Conservatives would expand the equalities work undertaken in local communities, often by voluntary organisations' (Welsh Conservatives, 2007: 26).	'A Plan for Equality for Older People... Older people have made a lifetime contribution to our society through their work, their taxes and voluntary work in their communities' (Sinn Féin , 2007: 19).
Public services	'Voluntary sector... should play a major part in our civic renewal. Many of them have strong local roots and specialist knowledge and may be better placed to deliver services than the public sector ever could be. We will therefore consult on introducing a "right to bid" for the voluntary sector (SNP, 2011: 39).	'Welsh Conservatives would like to see more involvement from the voluntary sector in the delivery of public services' (Welsh Conservatives, 2007: 45).	We will 'reform the delivery of public services, creating opportunities for local ownership and delivery. For example, councils, voluntary bodies or new partnerships could be invited to bid for central government funds to deliver services locally' (SDLP, 2007: 31).

**Table 1. Territorialisation of Third Sector Policy – Distinctive Manifesto Policy Proposals in UK Regional Elections 1998-2011.**



Name(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of the author(s): **Dr Paul Chaney, Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University**

E-mail address of the corresponding author (i.e., the author to whom communications concerning the paper should be directed): [Chaneyyp@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Chaneyyp@cardiff.ac.uk)

Full postal address of the corresponding author: **Dr Paul Chaney, Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3WT, Wales**

Telephone: **+44(0)29 20 874000**

**Title:** Multi-level Systems and the Electoral Politics of Welfare Pluralism: Exploring Third Sector Policy in UK Westminster and Regional Elections 1945-2011

**Key Words:** welfare pluralism; electoral politics; third sector; agenda-setting; policy