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Patterns of Democracy - Coalition Governance and Majoritarian Modification

in the United Kingdom, 2010-15

Abstract

The UK is often regarded as the archetype of Westminster democracy and as the empirical antithesis of the power-sharing coalitions of Western Europe. Yet, in recent years a different account has emerged that focuses on the subtler institutional dynamics which limit the executive. It is to this body of scholarship that this article responds, locating the recent chapter of coalition government within the wider context of the UK's democratic evolution. To do so, the article draws Lijphart's two-dimensional typology of democracies, developing a refined framework that enables systematic comparison over time. The article demonstrates that between over the course of the 2010-15 Parliament, the UK underwent another period of majoritarian modification, driven by factors including the long-term influence of the constitutional forces unleashed under Labour and the short-term impact of coalition management. The article makes several important contributions, salient in the UK and beyond. Theoretically, it offers a critical rejoinder to debates regarding the relationship between institutional design and democratic performance. Methodologically, it demonstrates that the tools of large-scale comparison can be effectively scaled-down to facilitate within-case analysis. Empirically, it provides a series of conclusions regarding the tenability of the UK's extant democratic architecture under the weight of pressures to which it continues to be subject.

Government, Constitution, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Lijphart, Majoritarianism

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The United Kingdom (UK) has been regarded as the archetype of majoritarianism, characterised by a power-hoarding executive that dominates the legislature and wider polity; and within the comparative literature, British government is often portrayed as the empirical antithesis of the power-sharing coalitions of Western Europe (e.g. Powell, 2000; Lijphart, 2012). Yet, in recent years a different account of the UK's democratic credentials has emerged which focuses on the subtler institutional dynamics that serve to limit the executive, and which are often neglected by macro-level comparative accounts. Such studies include the accretion of functions by select committees (e.g. Benton and Russell, 2013; Matthews and Flinders, 2015); the increasingly combative character of the House of Lords (e.g. Russell, 2013); and the rise in judicial independence (e.g. Norton, 2013; Hazell, 2015). Other scholars have analysed the effects of the dispersal of executive power to devolved assemblies throughout the UK (e.g. Dunleavey and Margetts, 2001; Cairney, 2008); and to depoliticised bodies such as the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) (e.g. Flinders and Buller, 2006; Diamond, 2015). Indeed, focusing on the net effect of such changes, it has been argued that under the previous Labour governments of 1997-2010, the UK has embarked on a process of 'modified majoritarianism', as 'power-sharing reforms' were introduced within 'the contours of what remains

a power-hoarding democracy' (Flinders, 2010. p. 287).

It is to this body of scholarship that this makes an important and timely contribution, locating the recent chapter of coalition government within the wider story of the UK's democratic evolution. The constitutional journey on which Labour embarked in 1997 lacked both a roadmap and a final destination, resulting in a myriad of constitutional obstacles that its successor would be required to navigate. Yet, whilst the 2010 election offered a window of opportunity for a new government to instill a much-needed degree of constitutional coherency, the process of coalition formation brought together two parties with radically divergent constitutional philosophies (Matthews, 2015). Moreover, that the electoral system failed to produce to produce a clear winner underscored the extent to which the normative assumptions of Westminster majoritarianism had been compromised; and throughout the 2010-15 parliament, the realpolitik of coalition management served to exacerbate many of these pre-existing tensions. Set in a comparative perspective, this episode also provides further evidence of a wider shift from the extremes of majoritarianism and consensus taking place in countries worldwide (Vatter et al, 2014).

To substantiate this argument, the article draws on the two-dimensional typology of democracies developed by Lijphart (2012). Initially developed to facilitate cross-national comparison, Lijphart's framework has been successfully applied to a number of individual country settings, including the UK (Flinders, 2010); and by adopting a similar lens, this article extends this analysis to the previously uncharted terrain of coalition at Westminster. In doing so, it makes several specific contributions to existing scholarship. Theoretically, it offers an important rejoinder to Lijphart's own analysis, and challenges his argument that the UK has become *more* majoritarian (2012, pp. 10-20). Methodologically, it demonstrates that the tools of large-scale comparison can be effectively scaled-down to facilitate within-case analysis. Empirically, it provides a series of conclusions regarding the tenability of the UK's extant democratic architecture under the weight of pressures to which it continues to be subject. In order to develop these arguments, the article is divided into three sections. The first section provides an account of Lijphart's analytical framework and the insights it affords regarding the state of British democracy, whilst positing a number of alternative proxies to facilitate a finer-grained analysis. The second section applies this revised framework to the 2010-15 parliament, and in doing so captures the underpinning dynamics of change. The final section locates this research within the broader contours of democratic and constitutional change in the UK. It demonstrates the changes wrought under the Coalition exceeded the 'bi-constitutionality' (Flinders, 2010) that had hitherto developed, revealing an apparent trajectory from 'Westminster unchanged' to 'Westminster transformed' (Hazell, 2008). Moreover, it underlines how many of these changes were unanticipated and unintended, which has precipitated a series of critical tensions that contemporary governments will be required to manage.

1. Patterns of democracy and their underlying visions

The performance of democratic institutions is a core concern of comparative political science. Within this scholarship, the corpus of work by Arend Lijphart has attracted such widespread attention that 'it is difficult to discuss contemporary European democracies without reference to Lijphart' (Bulsara and Kissane, 2009, p. 172). The essence of Lijphart's argument, developed through successive volumes (most recently 2012), is that democracies can be placed on a continuum that has majoritarianism at one extreme and consensualism at the other. In broad terms, in the majoritarian model political power is concentrated, exclusive and has little emphasis on public participation. The consensus model, by contrast, emphasises the inclusive, deliberative sharing of power and public engagement with the political process. To determine a polity's 'pattern' of democracy, Lijphart develops an analytical framework involving two dimensions – 'executives-parties' and

'federal-unitary' – which each contain five variables, as set out in table 1. Using the proxies detailed, a country is scored against each variable, and these scores are then aggregated to locate cases on a two-dimensional 'conceptual map of democracy', as shown in figure 1.

Table 1 here

Figure 1 here

As a starting point for systematic analysis, Lijphart's typology provides a replicable framework and a commonly-understood vocabulary that can be used to facilitate both comparative analysis. It has also been successfully applied to a number individual country settings including Ireland (Bulsara and Kissane, 2009), Canada (Studlar and Christensen, 2006) and Switzerland (Vatter, 2007). When applied to the UK, however, a somewhat confusing picture emerges. Extending to 2010, Lijphart's own analysis reinforces the caricature of the UK as the prototypical power-hoarding democracy, suggesting that between 1945-1981 and 1981-2010 there was a decisive shift towards the right of the map (figure 1 above). Yet this conclusion remains in sharp contrast with a number of academic analyses that sought to emphasise the increased diffusion of political power and disaggregation of constitutional norms. Between 1997-2010 the UK's constitution was subject to raft of institutional developments, including the dispersal of power to the devolved assemblies established by the the the *Government of Wales Act 1998, Northern Ireland Act 1998, Scotland Act 1998*, and *Greater London Authority Act 1999*; the enshrinement of the European Convention on Human Rights via the *Human Rights Act 1998;* the introduction of the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*; and the creation of the Supreme Court in 2009 via the *Constitutional Reform Act 2005*. The forces unleashed by these rapidly instigated reforms were regarded by some as amounting to a constitutional upheaval. Glover and Hazell, for example, described this period as one of 'quite extraordinary constitutional change' (2008, p. 1); and Bogdanor argued that '[t]he most striking quality of the new constitution is its startling and radical discontinuity with the old… cutting power into pieces' (2009, pp. 273, 291). Others were more circumspect. Describing the 'new' constitution as 'a mess' of 'disconnected bits and pieces', King criticised Labour's failure to 'expound and justify the new constitutional order as an integrated whole' (2007, pp. 350-1). In a similar vein, Gamble stated that '[i]n Lijphart's terms the United Kingdom today is less centralist and less unitary than it was, but it is still a long way from a political system that is truly federal and decentralized' (2006, p. 33). This was echoed by Flinders (2010), who highlighted the one-sided nature of Labour's reforms, as the transfer of governing competencies to devolved assemblies resulted a process of 'bi-constitutionalism', whereby a more consensual power-sharing model was imposed on the sub-national level, whilst an attachment to the norms and institutions of power-hoarding was maintained at the national level.

Nonetheless, whilst the overall impact remains contested, it is clear that Labour's period in office heralded a critical period of constitutional and democratic change. It is also clear that Lijphart's analysis failed to account for these changes, as the process of generalising over a relatively long timeframe (1981-2010) served to distort or conceal the profound shifts that occurred *during* this period. As this suggests, whilst Lijphart's analytical framework may constitute 'a major breakthrough in categorizing established democracies' (Bormann, 2010, p. 9), it is not a panacea for the challenges of democratic analysis. A number of specific criticisms have been made regarding the selection of variables, the relevance of proxies and the impressionistic use of evidence (e.g. Mainwaring, 2001; Tsebelis, 2002; Siaroff, 2003; Taagepera, 2003; Bormann, 2010; Ganghof, 2010; Jordan and Cairney, 2013). More broadly, it has been argued that the framework's focus the formal powers granted to institutions may 'miss the significance of culture and behaviour' (Hazell, 2013, p. 13); and that a 'fixation' on interactions between government and non-

government parliamentarians neglects the practices of 'normal policymaking' that occurs within extra-parliamentary arenas (Jordan and Cairney, 2013, p. 236, 245). Yet, one of the strengths of Lijphart's framework is its adaptability, and a number of studies have demonstrated the way in which the framework can be refined to increase its analytical purchase (e.g. Nagel, 2000; Kaiser et al, 2002; Vatter, 2007; Bulsara and Kissane, 2009; Vatter and Bernauer, 2009). It is this vein that this article proceeds, employing a *Lijphartian* framework to compare the degree and direction of democratic change under the Coalition with that which occurred under the Labour governments of 1997-2010. It is apparent that 'much change goes unnoticed if the measures of democracy are not sensitive to the details' (Jordan and Cairney, 2013, p. 245); and this focused comparison is intended to ameliorate the distortions in which the aggregation of observations can result. Moreover, a systematic assessment of the 2010-15 parliament is significant and timely. As indicated above, Labour's incoherent and piecemeal reform 'agenda' created a range of constitutional pressures that any incoming government would be required to manage. Yet, not only did the 2010 hung parliament witness the first coalition since 1945, but one comprised of partners with a high level of divergence over constitutional issues (Matthews, 2015). A detailed analysis of this period is therefore demanded; and the 2010-15 parliament provides critical insights regarding the extent to which an 'unchanged' model of Westminster majoritarianism has been 'transformed' by a new constitutional settlement (Hazell, 2008, p. 297).

However, the process of scaling-down Lijphart's framework to a single parliament serves to magnify the flaws in several of the proxies used; and refinement is required to facilitate analysis that effectively travels between temporal scales. The relevance of cabinet type and duration as measures of cabinet inclusivity (V2) and executive-legislative relations (V3) have been queried (Mainwaring, 2001; Tsebelis, 2002; Ganghof, 2010); and these two proxies in particular offer limited purchase when applied to a single observation. That the Coalition was minimal winning (V2) and lasted for its full five-year term (V3) is self-evident; and the comparison with the single party majority Labour governments (V2) of 1997-2010 (V3) fails to reveal any meaningful underlining trend. Moreover, in neither instance do the proxies illuminate intra-government dynamics or the balance of power between government and parliament. To overcome these weaknesses, this article adopts alternative proxies for V2 and V3. To assess the inclusivity of the cabinet (V2), Nagel's (2000) alternative measure of 'popular cabinet support' is applied; and this articles focuses on votes *and* seats in order distinguishing between the extent to which executive power is shared within the legislature and the extent to which it is proportionally distributed in accordance with electoral support. To assess the dynamics of executive-legislative relationships (V3), this article focuses on the degree of influence exercised by non-cabinet parties; and adopts the index of 'opportunity for opposition influence' proposed by Powell (2000, pp. 103-9), which ranges from a low of 0.1 (opposition parties facing majority government and the absence of legislative committees) to a high of 0.75 (opposition parties facing minority government and the presence of strong legislative committees). This approach is further supported by the introduction of a complementary measure of the party system (V1). Whilst Lijphart focuses solely on each party's share of seats owing to the effect upon cabinet formation, the inevitable distortions in which an electoral system results (as measured in V4) masks the dynamics of party competition on the ground. To account for this, this article applies the Laakso-Taagepera measure of the 'effective number of parties' (1979) to both the share of seats *and* votes won by each party.

As this article seeks to locate the recent episode of coalition government within its broader context, these new measures will be applied to the 2010-15 parliament and to all previous observations (following Lijphart (2012, p. xvi) a single observation runs from the date of a national election to the eve of the next election, i.e. the duration of an entire parliament). The overall results are presented in table 2. The final two columns depict the *degree* of change which occurred under the Coalition; and then the overall degree of change that has occurred since 1997. They also depicts the *direction* of change, indicating whether against the variable in question the UK has become more majoritarian ('+'), or less ('-'). The presentation of individual variables in a

tabular format, rather than an aggregated conceptual map, is intended to overcome criticism regarding the equal weighting given to each variable in Lijphart's typology (e.g. Jordan and Cairney, 2013, pp. 245-6); and in doing so creates the space for a degree of expert judgment that can be absent when relying on operational measures (Taagepera, 2003, p. 10). More broadly, the handling of the data in this way, along with the accompanying qualitative analysis of each variable, is intended to respond to the request that 'political scientists in Lijphart's footsteps... try to disentangle the intricate relationship between culture and political institutions to gain a deeper understanding of how the two influence each other' (Bormann, 2010, p. 10). It is to this analysis that the next section turns.

Table 2 here

2. Coalition governance and majoritarian modification

The executives-parties dimension

V1– Party system

Whilst the electoral stranglehold of the two main parties has waned since 1974, the distortions of the election system resulted in a series of outright victories for the Conservatives (1979, 1983, 1987, 1992) and Labour (1997, 2001, 2005), prompting some scholars to regard the party system of 1979-2005 as one of 'alternating predominance' (e.g. Quinn, 2012). Yet, recent elections have witnessed the burgeoning impact of 'other' parties upon the dispersal of parliamentary seats; and this pattern was unequivocally confirmed in 2010 as the effective number of parties returned to the House of Commons stood at 2.58, reflecting the finer balance of seats *between* the two main parties and the 'king-maker' role accorded to the Liberal Democrats. Moreover, this record high only partially reflected longer-term shifts within the party system. The 2010 general election witnessed the share of vote accorded to the two main parties plunge to a then-low 67.6 percent; and it is evident that the logic of the simple plurality electoral system has masked a burgeoning multi-party system in terms of *votes cast*. Indeed, the dispersal of votes cast in 2010 revealed that 3.72 parties were effectively present on the ground, which therefore confirmed the longer-term trend towards increasingly multi-party competition that has gathered pace since the election of 1992. This trend has been driven by the weakening of traditional electoral cleavages and the rise in issue-based voting, which has increased the vote of the 'third' party (i.e. the Liberal Democrats) whilst allowing relative newcomers such as the Green Party and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) to gain prominence. The rapid ascent of the latter became a critical theme throughout 2010-15. In the 2010 general election UKIP were the fourth most popular party, although with only 3.1 percent of the UK-wide vote, failed to gain a single MP. Undeterred, this 'revolt on the right' gathered momentum as the party connected with the 'more insecure and precarious working class, which feels its concerns have been written out of the political debate' (Goodwin and Ford, 2014). By August 2014, the party had come second in seven of the sixteen by-elections held, in several instances with a share of the vote exceeding 20 percent. Later that year, UKIP secured its first MPs with the resignation of two Conservative MPs (Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless) who then successfully stood for UKIP in the subsequent by-elections. Moreover, in the 2014 European Parliament elections, UKIP received the largest share of votes (26.6 percent) *and* seats (24 of 73).

V2 – Cabinets

Whilst the result of 2010 election was inconclusive, the ensuing negotiations resulted in a minimal winning coalition of two parties whose combined vote basis constituted a majority. Shifting the UK away from 'extreme pluralitarianism' (Nagel, 2000), the Coalition occupied a majority of seats in the House (55.9

percent), and represented a majority of voters on the ground (59.1 percent). Whether this afforded the Coalition a popular mandate is moot, reflecting normative debates regarding the desirability of the pre-election identifiability and the defensibility of post-election coalition chicanery (for an overview, see Powell, 2000, pp. 69-88). In the run-up to the 2010 election, the topic of coalition focused exclusively on Labour and the Liberal Democrats, and few foresaw the coming together of two parties with seemingly little shared ground or experience (although see Bale, 2011 for a retrospective mea culpa). Few also anticipated the Coalition's longevity: in a poll taken days after the Coalition was formed, only 28 percent of those surveyed thought it would last 12 months and 90 percent believed it would not last the full term.[1]

Whilst this longevity can be contributed to a wide range of factors, it was undoubtedly supported by the adaptation of the 'hidden wiring' (Hennessy, 1996) of the constitution to the demands coalition governance. As anticipated by theories of coalition formation (e.g. Budge and Keman 1990), ministerial positions at all levels of government were allocated on a near-proportional basis with the Deputy Prime Minister holding the right to veto re-shuffles. Alongside this, a series of 'safety valves' were written into the *Programme for Government,* with provisos for the relaxation of collective responsibility around contentious issues including university tuition fees and electoral reform; and the Ministerial Code was revised to allow collective responsibility to be relaxed 'where it is explicitly set aside' (Cabinet Office, 2010, p. 3). The Coalition's stability also rested on a rational acceptance of the transitory nature of the deal. Throughout 2010-15, both parties frequently reaffirmed the pragmatic nature of their relationship; and during the long campaign of 2015 general election, each sought to distinguish itself in terms of ideology and policy in a manner that strained the bonds of collective responsibility, reflecting the 'unity-distinctiveness dilemma' that often confronts coalitions at the end of their life-cycle (Boston and Bullock, 2009). The extent to which the experience of coalition promoted a more consensual sharing of executive power is therefore unclear. There is little evidence to suggest that the experience of governing in partnership fostered a sustained culture of co-operation and inclusivity. Indeed, as the term progressed, relationships between the two parties became increasingly fractious, with inter-party divisions laid bare via the national press. Nonetheless, the adaptation of processes of government to the exigencies of coalition demonstrated an important degree of institutional responsiveness.

V3 – Executive-legislative relationships

To assess the dynamics of the relationship between the executive and the legislature, it is important to consider both the powers enjoyed by its legislative committees and the wider influence of the plenary session (Powell, 2000, pp. 103-9). In terms of the latter, Powell suggests that 'if a government has a clear majority, *however achieved,* the probability of influence is low', and assigns a score of 0.1 (2000, p. 105 – emphasis added). Certainly, the the plenary session provides opposition parties with few *formal* mechanisms to directly affect policy; and in one recent analysis was described as 'either peripheral or totally irrelevant' (King and Crewe, 2013, p. 361). Nonetheless, there is a burgeoning body of scholarship that provides a more nuanced account of Parliament's power, focusing on its capacity to affect policy on both the public stage *and* behind-the-scenes. In particular, these studies underline the ways in which the House of Commons exercises 'preventative influence' by encouraging governments to focus on 'anticipated reactions' (Russell and Cowley, 2016); and in doing so argues that this 'parliamentary decline thesis' fundamentally misunderstands the essence of parliament's power (e.g. Flinders and Kelso, 2011). In addition, evidence suggests that the challenges of parliamentary management experienced by the Coalition were qualitatively different to those experienced by their single-party predecessors. The dispersal of ministerial posts across the two parties, for

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[1] https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/today_uk_import/YG-Archives-Pol-Suntopical-100513.pdf, last accessed 7 March 2016.

example, fuelled disappointment amongst the significant number of Conservative MPs who had anticipated ministerial appointment (Evans, 2012); whilst backbenchers across both parties resented their leaders for entering into a coalition with their political opponents and for conceding the policy grounds necessary to foster a workable coalition agreement. Unsurprisingly, the 2010-15 parliament was the most rebellious since 1945 with the analysis of Cowley and Stuart (2014) revealing that 52 percent of Conservative MPs and 72 percent of Liberal Democrat MPs had rebelled.

In terms of the second aspect of opposition influence, a distinction is made between strong committees with chairs equally shared amongst all large parties (score = 0.25); and, *either* strong committees chaired by government parties *or* weak committees with shared chairs (score = 0.125). There is unfortunate tendency within comparative scholarship to neglect the impact of select committees (e.g. Mattson and Strøm, 1995, p. 260); and numerous studies have demonstrated the increasing impact of select committees on government policy (e.g. Hindmoor et al, 2009; Benton and Russell, 2013). In recent years, committees have enjoyed an ongoing accrual of powers in response to demands to 'shift the balance' (HC 300, 1999); and under the Coalition a further shift occurred as a series of important changes were instigated, including the introduction of elections for committee chairs, the creation of the Backbench Business Committee and the establishment of a public e-petitions system. These reforms were part of a package proposed by the Wright Committee, convened by Labour in 2009 to 'rebuild the House' (HC 1117, 2009). Although constituting only a partial fulfillment of the Coalition's pledge to implement Wright's recommendations in full (the commitment to a House Business Committee was sidelined), such reforms have bolstered the capacity of select committees; and whilst structures alone cannot determine behavior, it is clear they have contributed to a 'new confidence and authority' (Institute for Government, 2015, p. 2). The introduction of chair elections in particular has been seen as critical for 'giv[ing] those chosen a greater degree of authority in their role in the House, their relationship with ministers and their standing in the wider community' (HC 954, 2015, para. 8); wresting from the party whips an important resource of intra-party control. Overall, therefore, the cumulative impact of 2010-15 was to further shift the balance of power towards the legislature, increasing aggregate score on the 'index of opportunities for opposition influence' from 2.25 to 3.5, driven by the significant reforms to appointment of select committee chairs, and the concomitant effect upon the behavior of members.

V4 – Electoral systems

The aggregate effect of the UK's electoral system has been to over-reward the plurality winner with parliamentary seats. For proponents of majoritarianism, this is normatively defensible in terms of strong and responsible government. Yet, as discussed above (V2), there have been few examples of 'majority' government in the UK (the Coalition being the first government to represent a majority of voters since 1935). Unsurprisingly, the UK ranks highly in terms of disproportionality on a comparative basis. The UK received a score of 14.66 on the Gallagher index for the period 1971-96; and the return of three successive Labour governments with majorities that far exceeded their vote share pushed the average score up to 16.98 for the period 1997-2010. Following the 2010 general election, the score stood at 15.08; and whilst this remains whilst high in comparative terms, in relative terms it signalled an apparent reversal of previous trends. Nonetheless, the gulf between votes cast and seats won has been grist to the mill of electoral reform proponents. With a long-standing commitment to proportional representation, electoral reform was a critical 'red line' for the Liberal Democrats during coalition negotiations. Yet, despite advocating the single transferrable vote, the Liberal Democrats ultimately accepted the Conservative's offer of the legislation required to hold a referendum on the alternative vote (a decidedly *non*-proportional electoral system). This concession was further limited as collective responsibility was suspended to allow each party to campaign freely during the subsequent referendum campaign. Indeed, during the campaign, the two largest parties remained committed to the status quo; as the Labour Party adopted no official party position and the Conservatives were vociferously opposed to change. This reflects what Judge (1993) described as the 'negative executive mentality', and underlines the limited incentives for established political parties to

support reforms that could reduce their power by encouraging a more competitive party system (V1), in turn increasing the likelihood of multi-party coalitions (V2), and therefore making it more difficult to control the legislature (V3). Moreover, the lack of popular support for electoral reform (67.9 percent of voters rejected AV in the referendum of 2011) assured the short-term future of this fundamental aspect of Britain's 'mega constitution', despite its failure in 2010 to deliver against its underpinning majoritarian objectives.

V5 – Interest groups

Notwithstanding the corporatist experiments during the 1970s, interest group engagement in the UK has remained at the pluralist end of Siaroff's (1999) eight-point index. Indeed, despite Labour's historic association with the trade unions, between 1997-2010 it remained committed to maintaining the patterns of engagement inherited from previous Conservative governments. Under the Coalition, a similar pattern persisted. There is little evidence to suggest that the Government brought organised interest groups into policy-making through structured and coordinated channels. Moreover, the declining presence of organised labour in British public life persisted throughout 2010-15. Trade union membership has been in sharp decline since its peak in 1979, when over 13m members of the workforce belonged to a union; and despite the economic pressures faced by employees since the recession, it fell to a low of 6.4m by 2014 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2015, p. 5). Indeed, by 2014 only 25.0% of the workforce were union members, the lowest rate recorded since 1995. The overarching context of austerity ensured that unions remained relatively active throughout 2010-15, an average of 647,200 working days per year being being lost (peaking in 2011 at 1.4 million working days), with the overwhelming majority of stoppages relating to wage disputes[2]. Yet, reflecting the dwindling membership base, this translated into a mere 23.2 lost working days per 1,000 workers; and it was also evident during this period that public support for union activity waned, despite widely experienced pressures resulting from public sector cuts and the rising cost of living. Only 37 percent of people supported the large-scale public sector strikes of September 2012; and only 27 percent of people supported Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey's call in April 2013 for a general strike 2013 (YouGov/*The Sun*, 26 April 2013). Reflecting these trends, the index yields a score of 3.625 for the period, which represents a slight shift towards the pluralist end of the index.

The federal-unitary dimension

V6 – Division of power

Prior to 1997, the UK was regarded as being one of the most centralised democracies in the world. In this context, the devolutionary reforms enacted by the Labour governments were significant in terms of loosening the centre's grasp on power; pushing the UK towards what Flinders described as a system of 'quasi-federalism' (2010, p. 182; see also Gamble, 2006), occupying an interim position between Lijphart's categories of 'semi-federalism' (score = 3) and a 'unitary and decentralised' state (score = 2). Under the Coalition, this agenda was incrementally extended. The *Scotland Act 2012* equipped the Scottish Parliament with additional financial and legislative powers; and the *Wales Act 2014* gave the National Assembly limited tax raising powers whilst clarifying some of its procedures. The Coalition revisited the issue of local devolution. In May 2012, referenda were held in eleven English cities on issue of directly elected mayors; and in November 2012 voters throughout England and Wales were given an opportunity to elect local Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). In both instances, public enthusiasm was muted: only one city (Bristol) supported a directly elected mayor; and only 15.1 percent of the electorate turned out to vote in the PCC elections. Finally, Coalition pledged to 'promote decentralisation and democratic engagement' and 'end the era of top-down government' (HM Government, 2010, p. 11); and statutory provisions were made under the

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[2]http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/workplacedisputesandworkingconditions/articles/labourdisputes/2015-07-16, accessed 29 June 2016.

Local Government Act 2011. Nonetheless, the significant cuts in local authorities' budgets reduced their practical capacity to utilise their new powers (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012).

The Coalition's modest concessions failed to quell nationalist tensions; and in 2011, the SNP were returned to Holyrood with an outright majority and the determination to hold a referendum on Scottish independence. The signing of Edinburgh Agreement in October 2012 paved the way for a referendum on 18 September 2014. The three main Westminster parties were clear in their opposition to independence. However, in the last few days of the campaign a poll that placed support for independence at 51 percent sent shockwaves through the 'Better Together' camp; and within 48 hours a joint pledge was made to transfer additional powers to Scotland, in a package described by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown as being 'as close to federalism as you can have in a nation where one part forms 85 percent of the population'. Whilst the extent to which 'The Vow' affected the subsequent result is unknown, the referendum witnessed a record turnout (84.6 percent), and a narrow rejection of independence by 55 to 45 percent. The Smith Commission was duly established on 19 September 2014, and reporting twelve months later, it recommended the transfer of significant competencies including the freedom to set income tax rates and bands; increased borrowing powers; and control over a number of social benefits. In January 2015, the Coalition announced its acceptance of these recommendations in full, pledging to implement them during the 2015-20 parliament (Cm. 8990, 2015).   This breakneck pace prompted serious concerns regarding the coherency and sustainability of 'devo-max'. The Political and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee, for example, criticised the Government for accepting the recommendations without any explicit 'examination of the overall consequences for the UK constitution…and no process – apart from the consideration of legislation – for the UK Parliament to assess the overall effect of the proposals on the Union' (HC 1022, 2015, p. 8; See also HL 145, 2015). Nonetheless, with fundamental decisions regarding the future of the Union postponed until after the general election, the record of the 2010-15 parliament is one of constitutional 'offset' rather than reform; and the score of 2.5 continues to reflect the division of power under the Coalition.

V7 – Parliaments and congresses

The extent to which the UK enjoys a meaningful degree of bicameralism has been contested. Describing the the Lords as 'a relic of a pre-democratic era', Lijphart ascribed the UK a score 2.5 on the 'index of bicameralism', hovering between 'medium' and 'weak' (2010, p. 201). Similarly, the abolition of hereditary peers in 1999 – without the coterminous introduction of an elected element – was seen by Flinders to weaken the Lords further, downgrading its score to 1.75 (2005, p. 81). Yet such arguments have been challenged, notably by Russell, whose in-depth analysis leads her to assert that the *House of Lords Act 1999* delivered 'a revival of bicameralism at Westminster [that] brings Britain closer to the consensus model' (2013, p. 293). The wealth of evidence accumulated by Russell demonstrates the significant increase in government defeats since 1999, as the removal of the hereditary peers has left a chamber where no single party dominates, and where votes are increasingly issue-based and closely fought. Far from leaving the Lords in limbo, the reforms that commenced under Labour actually served to legitimise and embolden, and a score of 3.0 (reflecting Lijphart's catergory of 'medium strength bicameralism with asymmetrical and incongruent chambers') is instead ascribed for 1997-2010.

This pattern of bicameralism persisted during 2010-15. The *Programme for Government* contained a commitment to 'bring forward proposals for a wholly or mainly elected upper chamber on the basis of proportional representation' (HM Government, 2010, p. 27). Although the ensuing *House of Lords Reform Bill 2012* was quickly withdrawn following widespread Conservative opposition the backbenches (again underlining the anticipatory influence of the Commons, discussed in relation to V3), members of the Lords remained willing to assert their autonomy. Whilst the Coalition's annual rate of defeats in the Lords was

lower than that experienced by the last Labour Government (19.8 percent per annum versus 35.0 percent per annum), it suffered significant defeats on many of its key (and most controversial) policies, including *the Welfare Reform Bill* in January 2012*, the Health and Social Care Bill* in February 2012, and *the Banking Reform Bill* in November 2013. Moreover, and despite the numerical advantage of the Coalition in the upper chamber, party blocs became less cohesive and the votes of cross-benchers more decisive. Whereas for 1999-2010 only 30 percent of divisions in the Lords saw a rebellion by a government backbench peer; in the first two years of the Coalition this increased to over 55 percent (Russell, 2013, pp. 115-120). More generally, this period witnessed greater involvement by peers in the life of the House and between 2007-8 and 2012-13, daily attendance increased by 17 percent; voting activity increased by 55 percent; Questions for Short Debates increased by 63 percent; and Questions for Written Answers by 15 percent.[3] The contrast between the ostensibly weak bicameral structures and the increasingly robust bicameral culture is a clear example of the 'strong mismatch' that may exist between 'constitutional form' and 'constitutional practice' (Bulsara and Kissane, 2009, p. 191); and reiterates the necessity of expert discretion in the application of evaluative indices. Taken together, the evidence here suggests that ongoing activism of the Lords during 2010-15 complemented the resurgence of parliamentarianism in the lower house; and the chamber can again be given a score of 3.0

V8 – Constitutions: Amendment Procedures

Famously uncodified and with a constitutional culture predicated on parliamentary sovereignty, it is unsurprising that the UK scored 1.0 on the index of 'constitutional flexibility' throughout 1945-2010. Parliament enjoyed few formal limits on its capacity to instigate change, underlined by way in which Labour implemented critical constitutional reforms in quick succession on the basis of a simple majority. During 2010-15 this flexibility was subject to a degree of circumscription. The passage of the *Fixed-Term Parliaments Act 2011* brought with it the requirement of a two-thirds majority approval for the early dissolution of Parliament, and thus introduced a formal constraint on this previously unfettered prerogative power of the Prime Minister. Whilst a super-majority is a constitutional first, it is in relation to only one specific aspect of the UK's constitutional architecture; and therefore a score of 1.5 reflects the flexibility of the constitution between 2010-15. This period also witnessed a degree of 'codification creep'. In February 2010, then Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced a project 'to consolidate the existing unwritten, piecemeal conventions that govern much of the way central governments operates… into a single written document' (cited in IPPR, 2011, p. 12). This document became the Cabinet Manual, published in October 2010. Although Sir Gus O'Donnell, then Cabinet Secretary, stressed that the Manual was 'not intended to be legally binding or to set issues in stone' (Cabinet Office, 2011, p. iv); the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee suggested that its very existence risks its elevation to constitutional status (HC 734, 2011, p. 41). Thus, as Bogdanor argued, 'in an unplanned and unforeseen way… the Manual, drawn up to meet a particular exigency, might well prove… a further stage in the long process of transforming a constitution based on "tacit understandings" into one based on a written document' (2011, p. 24).

V9 – Judicial Review

Between 1945-96, Britain scored 1.0 on the index of judicial review; and despite signing the European Convention of Human Rights (EHCR) in 1950, and ceding sovereignty to the institutions of European Community in 1973, the UK was still widely regarded as enjoying a 'political constitution' (Griffith, 1979). Under Labour, a series of changes were introduced with the potential to shift the balance, as the *Human Rights Act 1998* (HRA) incorporated the ECHR into domestic law; and the creation of the Supreme Court in 2009 via the *Constitutional Reform Act 2005* led to a formal separation of powers. Nonetheless, these developments were predicated on the principle of parliamentary sovereignty; and Flinders suggested that

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[3] http://www.libdemvoice.org/house-of-lords-only-slightly-larger-but-much-more-active-35729.html, last accessed 26 June 2014.

any shift had been 'offset to a large extent by a judicial culture of continuing deference and a reluctance to engage in explicit and detailed constitutional discourse', suggesting an index score of 1.5 to reflect this seemingly 'limited' change (2010, p. 250).

Of the 29 declarations of incompatibility issued to date under the HRA, only three were made during 2010-15, perceived by Joint Committee on Human Rights as a 'strikingly small number… which confirms [a] significant downward trend' (HC 130, 2015, p. 17).   Nonetheless, several declarations have led to significant policy changes, and there is evidence that the HRA has entailed an anticipatory effect, as governments have refrained from bringing forward legislation that may be deemed incompatible (Bellamy, 2011; Hiebert, 2012; Norton, 2013; Hazell, 2015). There is also evidence that the HRA has enhanced parliamentary scrutiny, in particular that the Joint Committee on Human Rights has 'ke[pt] the Government on its toes… by getting the Government to be more transparent in its thinking about important human rights issues' (Kavanagh, 2015, p. 124; see also Campbell et al, 2011; Norton, 2013; c.f. Hiebert, 2012). Yet the way in which the HRA attempts to reconcile the competing dynamics of parliamentary sovereignty and right-based constitutional review has engendered tensions regarding the appropriate balance. In opposition, David Cameron announced that a Conservative government would replace the HRA with a 'British Bill of Rights', to enable 'a common-sense balance between civil liberties and the protection of public security'. Governing with the Liberal Democrats (who supported a written judicable constitution) necessitated compromise, and a commission was established 'to investigate the creation of a British Bill of Rights that incorporates and builds on all our obligations under the [ECHR]' (HM Government, 2010, p. 11). Reporting in December 2012, the Commission on a Bill of Rights failed to reach a consensus, its report detailing the fundamental divisions that existed. Many Conservatives remained vociferously opposed to the HRA; and in 2014 the Prime Minister promised that 'with a Conservative Government after the next election, this country will have a new British Bill of Rights, to be passed in our Parliament, rooted in our values'. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that the formal powers of the courts changed little between 2010-15, the anticipatory effect of the HRA served encouraged a more juridified legislative culture, and the capacity of the courts to set aside legislation had a greater impact on government behaviour than initially anticipated. A score of 2.0 is therefore ascribed to reflect the weak, yet burgeoning, system of judicial review and cultural shift in which it has resulted.

V10 – Central banks

In 1997, Labour granted the Bank of England operational independence, freeing it to set interest rates with reference to the Government's inflation target of 2 percent. Under the Coalition, the Bank of England continued to enjoy its independence; and in 2013 was granted additional discretion to 'us[e] intermediate thresholds in order to influence expectations on the future path of interest rates'[4]. The Coalition further extended the Bank's purview, and the *Financial Services Act 2012* established an independent Financial Policy Committee to act as a macro-prudential regulator, overseeing the financial system as a whole. This period also witnessed effective limits on the executive's capacity to appoint the governor. The *Financial Services Act* 2012 resulted in a change of tenure, with the Governor being appointed for a single term of eight years rather than a maximum of two five-year terms. Moreover, Parliament sought to increase its oversight of this key appointment. In 2011 the Treasury Committee recommended that to safeguard the independence of the governor, it should be given 'a statutory power of veto over the appointment and dismissal of the Governor of the Bank of England' similar to that recently granted in relation to the Chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility (HC 874, para. 148). Despite the Government's rejection of this recommendation (Cm. 8268, 2012), Mark Carney elected to appear before the Committee before assuming the governorship; and in February 2013 gave evidence in an unprecedented event that effectively constituted a pre-appointment

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[4] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/budget2013_statement.htm, last accessed 27 June 2014.

hearing. In publishing its recommendations, the Committee announced that '[w]e will follow a similar pre-appointment process for the appointment of subsequent governors' (HC 944, 2013); and although such vettings were (and remain) resisted by the Government on grounds of 'market sensitivity' (Cm. 8628, 2012), evidence underlines the ongoing accrual of 'watchdog' powers by select committees in relation to ministerial appointments (Matthews and Flinders, 2015). The scope of a central bank's operational remit and the degree of insulation of its CEO from political interference are key factors in the indices of Grilli et al (1991) and Cukierman et al (1992); and evidence demonstrates a further increase in the Bank of England's independence during 2010-15, raising the index score to 0.67.

3. Concluding discussion: democratic drift and the danger of disengagement

Through a refined application of Lijphart's typology of democratic forms, this article has evaluated the degree and direction of democratic change in the UK between 2010-15. Overall, it has demonstrated that during the 2010-15 parliament, the UK moved further away from the caricature of a power-hoarding polity, as power became more diffuse and the executive more constrained. Yet whereas Flinders (2010) identified a pattern of bi-constitutionality, this article has instead underlined the bi-directionality of the UK's democratic evolution, as changes have occurred in relation to both the executives-parties dimension *and* the federal-unitary dimension. Nonetheless, Flinders' (2010) description of a 'drift' remains apt. Like their Labour predecessors, the Coalition failed to offer a coherent vision of the democracy it sought to achieve. Governing in partnerships entails compromise and with the two parties holding fundamentally opposed constitutional philosophies, it was unsurprising that the *Programme for Government* was heavy on rhetoric but moderate in scope (Matthews, 2015). Of those reforms pursued, several failed to capture the public imagination, such as electoral reform (V4) and the introduction of directly elected mayors (V6); fell victim to inter-party politicking, such as the *House of Lords Reform Bill 2012* (V7); or were diluted in execution, such as the implementation of the Wright Commission's recommendations in full (V3). At the same time, the Coalition was constrained by external forces. This was most vividly illustrated by the way in which SNP's outright majority in Holyrood rendered an independence referendum as politically unavoidable, which in turn acted as a catalyst for a commitment to 'devo-max' and its attendant implications (V6). Moreover, it became clear that reforms enacted by Labour had created alternative sites of legitimacy, as reflected in an emboldened House of Lords (V7) and an increasingly juridified legislative culture (V9).

Locating this analysis within the wider context of the UK's constitutional evolution, a number of broad conclusions can be drawn. As discussed above, scholars (e.g. King, 2007; Hazell, 2008; Bogdanor, 2009; Flinders, 2010) had been divided regarding the impact of Labour's reform agenda; and in the immediate aftermath of these reforms, such uncertainty was somewhat inevitable. As Glover and Hazell explained, 'the initial reforms set in train a series of consequential changes, and there is a lot of dynamism still working its way through the system' (2008, p. 4). The 2010-15 parliament made clear that the changes wrought by Labour have been embedded in the UK's constitutional settlement. Notwithstanding the Conservative's ongoing hostility to the HRA, the Coalition did not seek a repatriation of powers to Westminster, and many of its constitutional reforms sought to further extend the logic of decentralisation. The 2010-15 parliament also witnessed the manifestation of the unintended consequences of Labour's 'disparate collection of unrelated measures' (Bogdanor, 2009, p. 271), in particular the SNP's dominance of the Scottish Parliament and the concomitant growth of nationalist sentiment. In hindsight, it may seem inevitable that devolution would provide the institutional and political conditions for nationalism to flourish. Indeed, comparative research clearly demonstrates that 'the opportunities [decentralisation] provides regional parties to win elections in regional elections' enables such parties to 'increase… secessionism by reinforcing regionally based ethic identities' (Brancati, 2006, pp. 652-3). Yet the cautious optimism of scholars who believed that 'devolution will loosen but not break the bonds of the United Kingdom' (Hazell, 2008, p. 289; see also King, 2007) pre-

dated the return of an SNP majority in 2011 whose constitutional and policy platform was entirely at odds with that of the government at Westminster; and the inter-governmental dynamics that developed during 2010-15 provided fertile conditions for the 'consequential changes' (Glover and Hazell, 2008, p. 4) of devolution to be dramatically played out. Moreover, the Coalition's attempts to manage its knock-on at Westminster, such as 'English votes for English laws', served to reiterate the lack of 'internal coherence' of Labour's reform agenda (Bogdanor, 2009, p. 271; see also King, 2008, p. 351).

At the same time, the way in which the Coalition sought to manage the 'meta-constitutional' issues such as electoral reform and Scottish independence further entrenched the pattern of 'constitution-by-consent' (Matthews, 2015, p. 329) that developed at the sub-national level under Labour. Scholars have divided regarding the constitutional status of referenda. Whereas McLean argues 'you cannot at the same time believe wholeheartedly in parliamentary sovereignty and believe wholeheartedly in the referendum' (2009, p. 191); Bodganor suggests that their 'tactical' deployment may actually serve to make parliamentary government work 'more smoothly' by 'defus[ing] political or parliamentary conflict' (2009, p. 195). In both referenda, the 'settled will' of the electorate was intended as binding. Clause 8 of the *Parliamentary Voting and Constituencies Act 2011* compelled the introduction of AV if supported by a majority; and by signing the Edinburgh Agreement in 2012, the Coalition acceded to a referendum that would 'deliver a fair test and decisive expression of the views of people in Scotland and a result that everyone will respect'. On both occasions the Coalition was on the 'winning' side, which avoided the two sources of sovereignty being brought into conflict. Nonetheless, the frequency of referenda held by the Coalition (who also held a referendum in Wales on further devolution in 2011; and in 12 English cities on directly elected mayors in 2012) has fuelled popular expectations that matters of territory and other constitutional 'fundamentals' should be subject to public approval; and that governments will exercise a self-denying ordinance if the 'settled will' of the electorate were at odds with the government's preferred outcome.

The evidence presented in this article therefore demonstrates that over the course of 2010-15 parliament an increasing gap emerged between constitutional 'form' and constitutional 'practice' (Bulsara and Kissane, 2009). In particular, it has highlighted the enduring influence of key 'framing' principles such as parliamentary sovereignty upon governing elites, whilst also drawing attention to the unforeseen consequences of reforms intended to preserve such principles, and the constitutional tensions that result. In terms of the UK's constitutional and democratic journey, the ongoing dispersal of power and the emergence of elements of a legal constitution have rendered the vision of 'Westminster unchanged' (Hazell, 2008, p. 295) as bearing little relevance to constitutional practice. Indeed, the experience of 2010-15 suggests an apparent trajectory towards a radically different vision of 'Westminster transformed' (Hazell, 2008, p. 295). Yet, forecasts are fraught with difficulty (see Glover and Hazell, 2008); and in the context of Brexit, the UK's constitutional future is set to be subject to profound deliberation. The uncertainty that surrounds Britain's future in Europe has prompted fierce debate regarding the sovereignty of parliament versus that of the people, as reflected by demands for a parliamentary vote to formally trigger of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. Moreover, the state of the union is also under threat as Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the SNP, has raised the possibility of a second independence referendum due to the 'democratically unacceptable outcome' (Scotland voted in favour of the UK remaining in the EU by 62 percent to 38 percent) and the 'significant and material change in circumstances' in which it could result.

The unfolding implications of Brexit will undoubtedly have a profound effect upon the UK's constitutional settlement. Yet, even without this additional dimension, the current parliament presents a series of constitutional challenges to be carefully navigated. Perhaps the greatest source of pressure emanates from

the most fundamental aspect of the UK's 'meta-constitution': the electoral system itself. The 2015 general election saw the SNP being returned as third largest party in the House with 56 seats. With a UK-wide share of the vote of just 4.7 percent, first-past-the-post significantly over-rewarded the party for its geographic strength. Indeed (and despite the fact that the SNP was supported by 50.0 percent of voters in Scotland), if Gallagher index of disproportionality is applied to Scotland alone, the score for 2015 stands at 61.37! The parliamentary success of the SNP stands in sharp contrast with that of UKIP, who received just one MP for its 12.7 percent share of the vote; and the Greens, whose 3.8 percent share also returned just one MP. The increasing gulf between votes and seats means that Westminster democracy is failing against its own majoritarian terms, as the wider pattern is of governments that represent a declining minority of voters. Electoral reform is the most powerful tool at the disposal of executives to affect the democratic character of a polity (see, for example, Powell, 2000; Carey and Hix, 2011), and yet successive governments have shied away from instigating changes that would be likely to increase party competition and policy compromise (Matthews, 2015, p. 331). Although this is politically rational in the short-term, as the disparity between votes and seats grows, so to will the long-term implications for the legitimacy of the system. The burgeoning body of research on the crisis of democracy (e.g. della Porta 2014) underlines a clear relationship between democratic change and public trust in political institutions. Yet within the UK, the ongoing drift away from majoritarianism has not closed the gap between the governors and the governed; and swathes of society such as the young and the poor have become increasingly disengaged from traditional mechanisms of representative politics. Set against this wider context, the challenge for the current Government is to not only address constitutional incoherency that has previously burgeoned, but to do so in a way that reconnects the disenfranchised within a more deliberative political process.

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Table 1. Lijphart's Analytical Framework

Dimension	Variable	Majoritarian	Consensus	Proxy measurement
Executives-parties	**V1. Party system**	Two party system.	Multi-party system.	Laakso-Taagpera 'effective number of parties' (1979), applied to share of seats in legislature.
	V2. Cabinets	Single party majority cabinets.	Power-sharing multi-party coalitions.	Mean of: a) percentage of time for minimal-winning cabinets; and, b) percentage of time for one-party cabinets (mean)
	V3. Executive-legislative relationships	Dominant, power-hoarding executive.	Balance of power between executive and	Average cabinet duration in years.
	V4. Electoral systems	Disproportionality via a simple plurality election system.	Proportionality via a PR electoral system.	Gallagher 'index of disproportionality' (1991).
	V5. Interest groups	Informal pluralist interest group interaction.	Co-ordinated and 'corporatist' interest group interaction.	Siaroff 'index of interest group pluralism' (1999).
Federal-Unitary	**V6. Division of power**	Unitary and centralised government.	Federal and decentralised government	Index of federalism, running from 1 (unitary and centralized) to 5 (federal and decentralised).
	V7. Parliaments and congresses	Concentration of power in a unicameral legislature.	Division of power between two equally strong but differently constituted houses.	Index of bicameralism, running from 1 (unicameralism) to 4 (two powerful chambers elected on a different basis.
	V8. Constitutions	Flexible constitution that can be amended by simple majorities.	Rigid constitutions that can be only be changed by super-majorities.	Index of constitutional flexibility, running from 1 (can be amended by simple majority) to 4 (can only be changed by super-majorities).
	V9. Judicial review	Legislature has the final word on the constitutionality of legislation.	Legislation subject to a judicial review of their constitutionality by a supreme court.	Index of strength of judicial review, running from 1 (none) to 4 (strong).
	V10. Central Banks	Dependent on the executive.	Independent of the executive.	Mean of the following indices of central bank independence: a) Cuckierman-Webb-Neyapti (1994); and, b) Grilli-Masciandaro-Tabellini (1991).

Figure 1. Shifts on the two-dimensional map of democracy from the period 1945-81 to the period 1981-2010
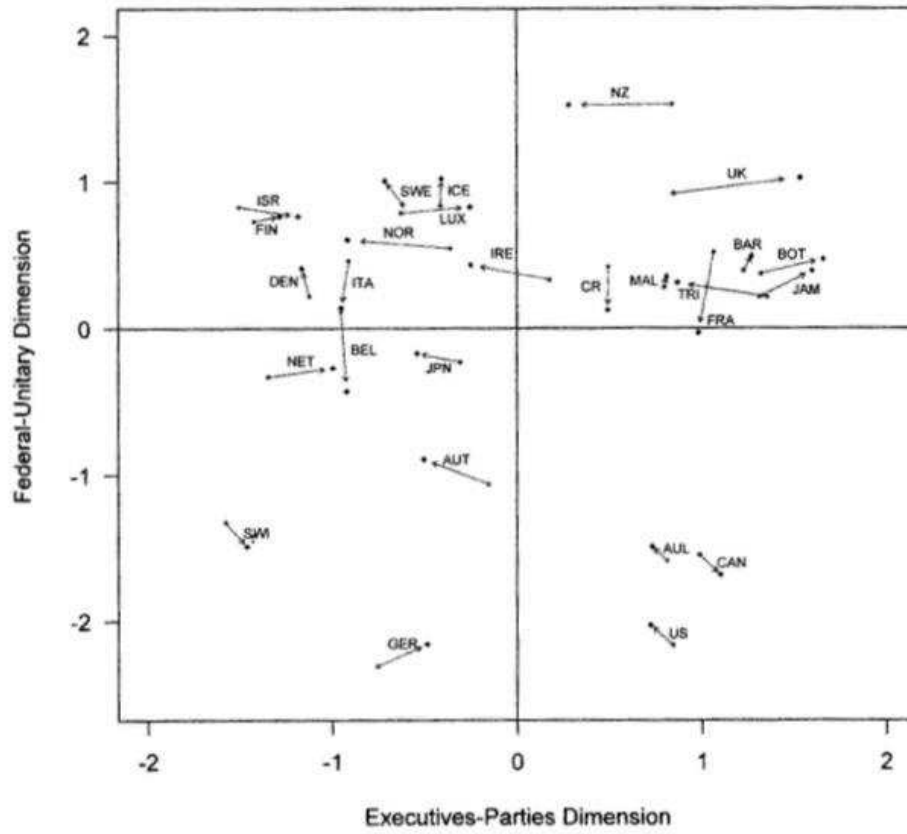
Source: Lijphart, 2012, p. 251.

Table 2. Democratic change in the UK, 1945-2015

Variable	Proxy measurement	Average, 1945-96*	Average, 1971-96*	Labour Government, 1997-2010**	Coalition Government, 2010-15	Change between 1997-2010 and 2010-15	Overall change since 1997 ***
V1. Party system	Laakso-Taagpera 'effective number of parties' (1979), applied to a) share of seats in legislature; b) share of votes cast in general elections	a) 2.11 b) 2.69	a) 2.20 b) 3.06	a) 2.25 b) 3.38	a) 2.58 b) 3.72	a) -0.33 b) -0.34	a) -0.14 b) -0.41
V2. Cabinets	Popular cabinet support (Nagel, 2000), measured by a) seat share of cabinet parties; b) vote share of cabinet parties.	a) 54.1 b) 44.7	a) 53.6 b) 41.2	a) 60.4 b) 39.7	a) 55.9 b) 59.1	a) +4.5 b) -19.4	a) -5.7 b) -3.4
V3. Executive-legislative relationships	Powell 'index of opportunity for opposition influence' (2000), running from 0.1 (weak opposition and no legislative committees) to 0.75 (strong opposition and strong legislative committees)	0.16	0.25	0.225	0.35	-0.125	-0.09
V4. Electoral systems	Gallagher 'index of disproportionality' (1991).	10.33	14.66	16.98	15.08	-1.9	+1.85
V5. Interest groups	Siaroff 'index of interest group pluralism' (1999).	3.38	3.5	3.5	3.625	+0.125	+0.125
V6. Division of power	Index of federalism, running from 1 (unitary and centralized) to 5 (federal and decentralised).	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.5	0	-1.5
V7. Parliaments and congresses	Index of bicameralism, running from 1 (unicameralism) to 4 (two powerful chambers elected on a different basis.	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	0	-0.5
V8. Constitutions	Index of constitutional flexibility, running from 1 (can be amended by simple majority) to 4 (can only be changed by super-majorities).	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	-0.5	-0.5
V9. Judicial review	Index of strength of judicial review, running from 1 (none) to 4 (strong).	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	-0.25	-0.75
V10. Central banks	Mean of the following indices of central bank independence: a) Cuckierman-Webb-Neyapti (1994); and, b) Grilli-Masciandaro-Tabellini (1991).	0.31	0.28	0.59	0.67	-0.08	-0.39

1. Partially derived from: *Lijphart, 1999; **Flinders, 2010.
2. *** Compared against average position for 1971-96. For variables 1-4, overall change between 1971-6 and 1997-2015 is based on the mean of four observations for the latter period (i.e. the outcomes of the general elections of 1997, 2001, 2005, 2010).
3. Increase in majoritarianism denoted by '+', decreased in majoritarianism (and therefore shift towards consensus) denoted by '-'