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Parties, Movements, Brokers: The Scottish Independence Movement

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Abstract This paper is a study of the consequences of brokerage for movements, particularly for the role of political parties within social movements. I find that brokerage creates opportunities for minor groups to play a crucial role in mobilisation, which comes at a cost to a movement's structure. I make my case with a study of brokerage in action based on activist interviews, events data and network data collected from the Scottish independence movement. Results demonstrate the likelihood of the governing Scottish National Party participating in movement events only increases with the number of participating movement organisations. As the movement organisations transitioned from a referendum campaign to an autonomous movement under-resourced, peripheral groups took the lead in brokering the Nationalist movement.

Nationalist sentiment in Scotland can be traced back as far as Wallace, Bruce and the Wars of Independence in the 12th century (Harvie 2004). Contemporary Yes voters would, however, recoil at such a suggestion, concerned as they are with being perceived as pragmatic, civic nationalists. From the 19th Century and into the first decades of the 20th it was writers, poets and intellectuals who kept the idea of the Scottish nation alive although Brand was probably broadly correct, if exaggerating, that these writers have never been read by more than "the merest handful of the population" (Brand 1978, 91). With some exceptions, the Scottish National Party (SNP) monopolised nationalism in activism and ideology for most of the 20th century and for the most part directed nationalist energies towards party and parliament

* Ella Baker said that strong people don't need leaders. This paper is dedicated to the activists who are continuing the work of the movement. At times they look to politicians for leaders, but whether they agree or not they are the true leaders of the independence movement. Some of those who shared their testimony with me are named in the paper, those who are not made equally important and valid contributions, their exclusion is due only to space limitations. I'd like to thank every activist who took the time to speak with me. The following colleagues commented on drafts of this manuscript: Anna McKeever, Cillian McGrattan, Fidelma Ashe, Fiona Bloomer, Yusuf Magiya. I am grateful to the editors of *Contention* for support and insightful suggestions as I am to the reviewers. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my friend Silvia Fierascu for advice on networks and to Lesley Riddoch for help with recruitment to the study.

though rarely with much success (Sommerville 2013; Lynch 2013). Jimmy Halliday, SNP leader from 1956-60 captured the mood in the party at this time regarding the politics of protest in his memoirs, "you don't get peace by milling around shouting 'Peace', and you don't get 'Justice' with banners" (Halliday 2011, 12).

A series of events, propitious for Scottish nationalism transformed the cause's fortunes suddenly and dramatically. The SNP took control of the devolved Scottish parliament as a minority government, then as majority, in an election outcome most observers agree was motivated by anything but nationalist concerns (Johns and Mitchell 2016). Impressed by SNP competence in government the Scottish electorate had, almost by accident, granted the SNP a mandate to hold a referendum on the national cause (Carman, Mitchell, and Johns 2014, 23). The Yes (to independence) side lost that referendum, but with the benefit of hindsight the referendum appears to have been a critical-juncture in Scottish politics. Support for independence, depicted in figure 1 rose from the mid-20s at the beginning of the referendum campaign to 45% on the 18th of September 2014. In 2020 support for independence has remained above 50% for more than nine successive polls, a first in Scottish history.

The focus of this paper is on a related consequence of that critical-juncture. Specifically, the mobilisation of a movement for independence, different in almost every sense to what came before. In the course of the referendum campaign grassroots activists organised new campaign outfits, some locally, some nationally many of which remain mobilised now more than half a decade on. This paper begins the work of developing an explanation for the emergence and growth of this movement, with a specific focus on the role of activists themselves.

Part of the broader explanation is structural. The history of the movement is tied to the decline of empire, discovery of oil, decline of industry and most recently Britain's exit from the European Union (Devine 2006). Part of the explanation is political. The establishment of the devolved Scots parliament in Edinburgh in the late 1990s created opportunities for SNP electoral advancement which were aided and widened by the long-term decline of support for the Labour party in Scotland which dramatically collapsed in 2015 but had been evident since at least the Iraq war (MacWhirter 2015). Other aspects are more subtle. Relative, multiple deprivation is persistent in Scotland and produces a unique outcome of excess mortality, compared to equally deprived cities (Liverpool, Manchester, Belfast). For instance, Glaswegians on low incomes are 30% more likely to die before their 65th birthday, Glaswegians on high incomes are 15% more likely (Walsh et al. 2006). Scottish urban density and architecture (Scots are more than twice as likely to live in flats, specifically tenements, as their English counterparts) means that in their daily lives Scots, living close together, rich and poor, are confronted intimately with the consequences of deprivation (Riddoch 2013). Grievance based explanations cannot be ruled out for Scottish activism, although there is little evidence these grievances are expressed in national identity

which has never been a particularly salient issue (Smout 1994; Leith 2008).

These factors matter but are beyond the scope of this paper. Grievances are historical constants, sometimes they are translated into activism but not always. I focus on the ways activists choose to act upon those structural opportunities, and the consequences therein. When parties and movements cooperate, their joint action is brokered: a temporary agreement in pursuit of agreed goals (Heaney and Rojas 2015; Pirro et al. 2019). Brokering in activism is done by intermediaries, people Tilly calls 'political entrepreneurs' in keeping with the business metaphor (Tilly 2004, 30). There are mixed views in the literature on when and why parties and movements work together (Amenta et al. 2010). I find that parties engage selectively with movements and that peripheral movement organisations broker most joint-action. Brokerage is a mechanism connecting social groups, whereby an identifiable third party (the broker) negotiates cooperation. With notable exceptions, researchers have tended to view brokerage as an unmitigated good in terms of mobilisation strategy. Breaking this trend Vasi raised the 'diffusion and scale shift paradox': *"contention spreads more quickly when brokers connect few groups and when they connect groups that are highly miscible; yet, contention cannot spread widely if brokers do not connect diverse groups and groups with low miscibility"* (Vasi 2011).

This raises the possibility that brokerage may not always be the optimal basis for movement-party cooperation. By Vasi's reasoning, miscibility, by which he means ideological congruence, can limit the breadth of brokerage. On this basis, this paper is a study of relations between social movement organisations (SMOs) and political parties, aiming to understand the process of mobilisation from the activists' perspective and to account for the consequences of activist's choices, intended or otherwise. My proposition is that Vasi's paradox may be attributable to the process of brokerage as much if not more than ideology alone. Even among groups united by common cause, a movement's breadth can be determined by peripheral brokers, who may not be the best candidates for broker. Groups may be at the periphery of a movement for ideological, organisational or resource related reasons, all of which may detract from their ability to secure long term relations. The defining characteristic of brokerage can therefore be at once a cost and a benefit; brokerage creates opportunities for otherwise under-resourced groups or individuals to contribute to a movement, by acting as broker, in so doing brokerage increases the structural dependence of a movement on under-resourced groups or individuals. I make my point through analysis of activist interviews, events-history data and network data from the Scottish independence movement. Researchers have only begun to address this case in its current phase (Lynch 2017; McAngus and Rummery 2018). Most writing on the case to date is journalistic and neglects the grassroots element of the movement telling a (partial) story of institutional conflict between the leaders of the Scottish and UK governments. As I will show in this paper the reality of the Scottish movement is one of widespread

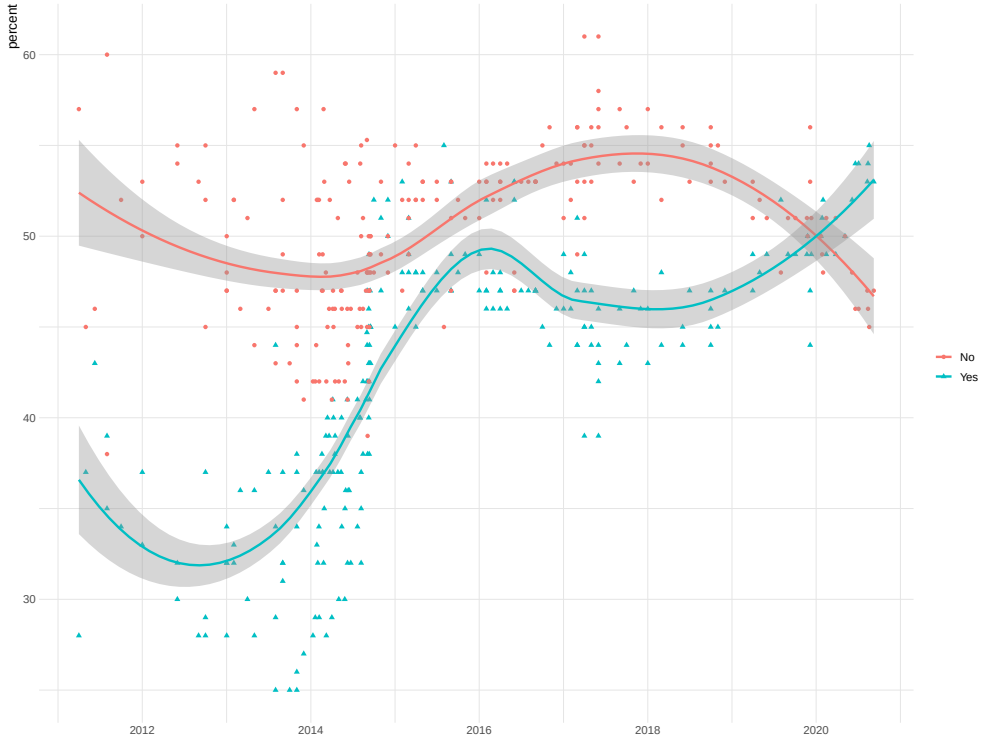

Figure 1: "If there was a referendum tomorrow with the question 'Should Scotland be an Independent country?', how would you vote?" 2014-20. In September 2014 Scotland answered answered this question with a 'no' by 55% in a referendum. This figure depicts national polling since. Data: *ScotCen (http://whatscotlandthinks.org/)*

mobilisation.

As the movement has mobilised around the SNP, the case is therefore rich in potential observations on the consequences of deliberately involving political parties in movement events. Through this explanation I hope to contribute to social movement theory specificity in our understanding of brokerage and its dangers as well as contributing to the growing literature on coalitions of movements and parties. I begin in the next section with a review of relevant research, a growing field, on party-movement dynamics with a particular focus on brokered relations. I raise the possibility that researchers have not fully appreciated the costs of brokerage to mobilisation. I then set out the methods underpinning my research in this paper. The focus of the paper is a case study detailing brokerage between pro-independence political parties and the Scottish independence movement. I begin from a model of party participation in movement events, then compare relative rates of brokerage within the movement arguing that peripheral, under-resourced SMOs have been responsible for brokering

new activism more than party activists. Lastly I offer a discussion of the implications of the Scottish case for the theory of brokerage highlighting the disproportionate influence brokers can attain within a movement.

BROKERAGE IN CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

Until recently the prevailing orthodoxy on party-movement relations has been the insider/outsider dichotomy. This view of movements as 'outsiders' predicts little cooperation between movements and parties leading researchers in this tradition to focus largely on the strategies movements employ to influence party agenda (Gamson 1990; Kitschelt 1993).

Increasingly researchers are looking beyond this distinction as movements have achieved viable policy outcomes and the boundary between movement and party has blurred in the context of polarisation (Amenta et al. 2010; Fernández et al. 2017). Schwartz (2010) has argued that parties do have incentives to work with movements given the value of endorsements, particularly during electoral campaigns. Movement style activism can appeal to parties with strong issue identities as movements can, with greater perceived authenticity than party elites, maintain civic interest in party values (Mische 2008; Yishai 2001). Movement activism is increasingly normalised and decreasingly disruptive in terms of tactics (McAdam et al. 2005). One recent study has found members of political parties are more likely than non-members to participate in protest (Guigni and Grasso 2019a). Parties enter into the protest arena for both strategic and ideological reasons as part of specific campaigns aimed at achieving jointly agreed goals (Abdou and Rosenberger 2019).

Yet cooperation between parties and movements entails risks for both. The participation of a party within movement actions may deter potential support along partisan lines. This cuts two ways as image-conscious parties may be reluctant to work with radical activists (Prezworski and Sprague 1986). If a party becomes a central participant in a movement, its withdrawal can be sufficient to initiate demobilisation (Heaney and Rojas 2015). Given this Amenta et al. (2010) conclude their review with the argument that cooperation between parties and movements is likely a last resort when no alternative route to policy change is available.

These risks, often apparent to activists, make the 'business-like' connotations of brokerage an apt metaphor for thinking about this. Brokerage is a "mechanism of mediation" by which joint actions by parties and movements are agreed (Mische 2008, 41). In brokerage intermediaries negotiate joint actions between groups separated either by material or ideological factors, with a pay-off accruing to the broker (Marsden 1982, 202). Movement activists can be surprisingly competitive (Born, Akkerman, and Torenvlied 2013).

Brokerage is a process common to many networks, but its specificities vary with context; the pay-off and incentive structure in a business context varies from that of a mobilisation context (Williams 1998; Bulow 2011). Various typologies of movement broker have been proposed (Vasi 2011; Bulow 2011). Han (2009) formulation is relevant to brokerage as it occurs in the context of mobilisation. (1) In movements, organisations sometimes act as brokers, not only individuals. (2) SMOs operate informal membership structures and may in any case be sharing members and resources independently of brokerage. (3) Importantly, Han speculates brokers, whether individuals or groups, are liable to be marginally placed within the organisational structure.

This last point is perhaps the most in need of clarification. It builds on work on weak ties and work on structural holes, both in graph theory. Weak ties are in a sense the strength of a network as they bridge the gap between dense clusters of people and/or groups of people (Granovetter 1973). The structural holes between dense clusters tend to be bridged by actors at the periphery, not fully integrated into clusters either side (Burt 1992). This act of bridging is brokerage in network terms.

Therefore brokerage in movements can happen on the initiative of either political parties or SMOs. Regardless of who the broker is, two necessary effects of successful brokerage are implied by this definition. Brokerage is (1) a process by which change occurs, and (2) a process of value creation (Burt 1992). Change, as brokers bring at least two groups together, and value creation as the outcome of brokerage is, in the activism context, joint-action. Brokerage is a notion that implies pay-offs to all parties including the brokers. In the context of mobilisation, I theorise, adding a fourth point to Hans' account of brokerage in the activism context, the likely pay-off to a broker whether in the movement or party would be activism. This runs counter to Heaney and Rojas suggestion that SMOs broker activism with parties as a means of accessing party resources. Often the lines between party and movement activist are a matter of intersectional identities and it seems more likely that wherever loyalties lie, movement or party activists motivated sufficiently to engage in brokerage are compelled by commitment to the cause (Hirsch 1990).

The literature on party-movement relations has advanced to the stage that certain propositions can be identified for closer study. First, consensus is emerging around the notion that ideologically congruent groups will work together. Among the earliest findings of social movement research is that participation in activism promotes more positive views of social movement activities (Lange, Irvin, and Tarrow 1990; McAdam 1988). Guigni and Grasso (2019b) have shown that left-wing MPs are more likely than right-wing MPs to respond to requests from SMOs and other civic interest groups. Related, Vasi, Strang, and Rijt (2014) find that political parties cooperate with movements along ideological lines. This suggests we can anticipate frequent or relatively indiscriminate cooperation in movement activities among congruent groups, or in events with issue congruence.

Second, previous findings suggest incentives exist for either parties and/or minor SMOs to broker connections. The literature contains competing propositions on this point. Traditional resource mobilisation theory predicts that, as access to resources is necessary for mobilisation according to this view, brokers will be central, resourced groups (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Heaney and Rojas's (2015) work on the party in the street provides confirmation of this theory in finding party activists as brokers, hence rapid demobilization following their withdrawal. Han (2009), however, in his development of graph theory finds brokers to be placed at the periphery of the movement. The centrality and viability of brokers therefore remains an open question, one I aim to address in the present study.

METHODS

My description is based on events-history data, 30 qualitative interviews with activists and network data. I recorded an itinerary of movement resources from observation in the events and network data and from SMO produced documentation. This body of evidence has its limitations, discussed in detail below, but I am confident it is the best available evidence of this case.

Scottish Independence Events Dataset

The data set (n = 603) covers the period 19 September 2014, the day after the independence referendum, until activism ceased as a consequence of the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown. This therefore covers activism in the post-referendum period, a theoretical decision to focus on movement activities rather than a campaign narrowly defined. The data (henceforth SIED) records event location, date, organisational composition and a number of intensity measures, with the protest event as the unit of analysis. I follow conventions in defining a protest event as a public gathering of more than one person making political claims (McAdam et al. 2005). I added a further stipulation that events must be attended by one identifiable SMO. This excludes meetings at the Edinburgh SNP club addressed by non-movement speakers keeping the focus on party participation in movement events.

The events dataset is based on newspaper sources and a movement produced record, the *Independence Live* archive. I used keyword searches of the Nexis database to identify events by type ('protest', 'march', 'rally') as well as named political parties and SMOs. I coded all reports in all national and local press. All national newspapers (*the Herald*, *the Scotsman*, *the Daily Record*, *the Sunday Express* and *the National*) reported all rallies. However, the only national newspaper to report local meetings was *the National*, the only Scottish national daily to support independence. Local press covered meetings sporadically. In addition to coding from newspapers, I coded

from a record of events produced by the movement itself, again coding the entire catalogue. An activist collective, 'Independence Live', have since 2012 been live-streaming and archiving footage of movement events (Wray 2015). I studied each Independence Live record manually. I interviewed their founding organiser Kevin Gibney as well as a number of their local activists. Gibney described to me their process, giving an indication of reliability and selection bias in the *Independence Live* archive.

Gibney works full time from the Independence Live offices in Glasgow, with one (effectively full time) volunteer and another de facto full-timer in Edinburgh. In addition they have a network of local volunteers in every Scottish region. They are invited to film some events by organisers and in other cases they approach organisers for permission to film. The organisation survives on a combination of merchandise and subscription sales as well as donations through regular fund-raisers and advertising revenues. There were no events reported in the press that were not covered by Independence Live. The main source of selection bias is therefore in terms of geographic proximity with events in rural areas less likely to be covered than in the urban central belt running from Glasgow to Edinburgh. As this is the most populous region in Scotland it is reasonable to assume most events in the population occur in the central belt. In an interview one of their cadre of local organisers described to me the importance of Independence Live:

> Looking back at some of those live streams, you've recorded history because you're not reporting, you're right in the middle of it. So you're actually recording history, you can look back on it and you can sense the history of it, because it is an unedited record. All that stuff that *Independence Live* did is a great body of historical documentation. (Mulvenna 2020, Interview with author.)

Coding the observations is a largely a-theoretical classificatory process (number of SMOs and parties per event, location of event, event type).[1] For cases where no organiser can be identified from the documentation all SMOs are coded as participants. For evidence of participation I restrict coding to those groups who send speakers to

[1]The only variable to pose issues in terms of validity is attendance at events. For small events (< 50) attendance was counted manually based on photographic or video evidence. For larger marches and rallies I relied exclusively on press estimates with a preference for the BBC. There is an extensive literature on counting protest attendance (Fisher et al. 2019). Biggs is correct the validity of the figures is less important than the variation in orders of magnitude from one event to the next (Biggs 2016). For the most part this is a non-issue as attendance is not a theoretically relevant variable in this paper, its purpose is descriptive, with one exception. A lagged measure of turnout at past events is used in the resource data, discussed below, because anticipated turnout is a resource SMOs can deploy. For this purpose, as with the purpose of description to a lesser extent, categorical bins of small, medium and large would achieve the same goal. I favour the probably conservative estimates of the BBC for the sole reason of bringing detail to description. Readers may choose to view counts as generous or conservative as they please.

meetings or marches, rather than those just in attendance. This ensures that my measures of brokerage reflect planned, agreed actions, a point particularly important regarding the involvement of political parties as there is tension within the SNP over involvement at these events, some party members attend in a personal capacity.

Brokerage Measures

To measure brokerage I disaggregated variables recording participants at events into a weighted, directional organisation by organisation matrix. This approach infers evidence of the effects of brokerage from network structure and event-level parameters. Direction refers to the organiser and participant in events and weight refers to the sum of co-participation. The variables I disaggregated record the names of organisations participating in events.

Several measures of brokerage have been proposed (Ingold 2011). I follow Everett and Valente (2016) in ranking brokers as

$$C_B(i) = \sum_{j=k} (\frac{t_{jik}}{t_{jk}})$$

where t_{jk} is the total number of shortest number of paths and t_{jik} is the total number of ties connecting nodes j and k. Each node is assigned a score reflecting their brokering, including a zero for non-brokers. This takes account of both the network-wide influence implied by betweenness and the actual weight and direction of ties, crucial considerations in distinguishing brokers from active participants, or those who are frequently invited to participate in events. In doing so this method therefore produces a normalised (for network-size) measure of how many ties a group has brokered. This quality of distinguishing both the behaviour of brokers, and the character or brokered ties relative to non-brokered ties distinguishes the Everett and Valente measure.

Resource and Qualitative Data

As Andrews and Biggs point out, event-history analysis "can be buttressed by scrutinizing qualitative evidence on the process of diffusion" (Andrews and Biggs 2006, 755). Therefore I draw on a series of 30 detailed, semi-structured interviews with grassroots organisers. I took the list of organisations accrued in the network data as a 'sampling frame' or recruitment list and contacted each of the groups. Interviews lasted between one and four hours. Participants were treated as representatives of their organisation but given time to expand on their own history of activism and motivations if they chose to. Interviews covered the reasons for group formation, relations with other groups, and activism activities. Each participant answered a tailored set of questions designed to elicit the story of their organisation.

Lastly, given expectations about brokers' access to resources I sought to record information on resource concentrations. I adapted the framework for recording movement resources from (Cress and Snow 1996) as a theoretically sound model which has been adopted widely by other researchers (Andrews 2004; Lin 2001). Movements have varying access to material, human and moral resources, a good deal of which is recorded in the SIED. Moral resources include solidaristic and sympathetic support. Displays of solidarity per organisation were coded from the SIED as the number of organisations participating at events, statements of sympathetic support coded through searches of SMO statements in the sources outlined above used for qualitative analysis. Human resources include leaders, cadre of organisers (dummy variables) and turnout at events (which was coded from the SIED). Previous research has found cadres of activists to be of greater importance than mass membership (Andrews and Biggs 2006). Material resources other than income are employees, office space and meeting space, all coded as dummies.[2] Data on income was recorded from Companies House for those SMOs which declare, and supplemented with totals raised by crowdfunder on the website Indiegogo used widely within the movement. I recorded this data at annual intervals for each SMO then calculated the average resources each group has had access to over the past five years.

CASE STUDY: BROKERAGE IN THE SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

From Referendum Campaign to Autonomous Movement

Since 2014 mobilisation has continued and, in fact, increased; a history made visual in figure 2. More or less events have increased year on year while attendance has been consistent and impressive. When I interviewed Paul Kavanagh who authors the blog *Wee Ginger Dug* he described to me his experience of the movement:

> I go to places I would never have visited before. You'd no reason to go to, for example, Campbeltown, and I've been all over Scotland now and loved it. And what struck me constantly is how the independence movement, it might have started off with the SNP directing it from above, but its now sprung up from below. And I think that's what needs to be stressed about it, about how much of a grassroots movement it is. Its really amazing the breadth of the people, and the talent and skills and abilities people have got that they're throwing into this. For no other reason than they

[2] (Cress and Snow 1996) also categorise the flow of information within the movement as a resource. I did not record informational resources as information is not a restricted, scarce resource in the Scottish context as it can be in different contexts.

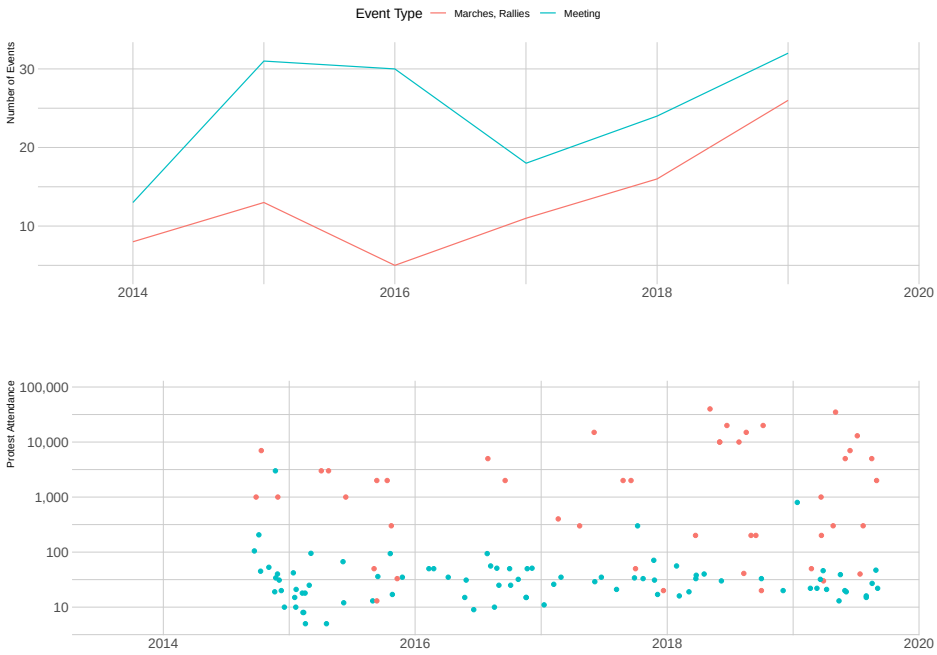

Figure 2: *Marches and meetings for Scottish independence. 2014-20.*

> want to make Scotland a better place for their kids and their grandchildren. That's quite a humbling experience, and that's what needs to be highlighted, that this is not a party political phenomenon, its a people phenomenon, a people and movement phenomenon. (Kavanagh 2020, Interview with author.)

Yet Kavanagh would admit that, even for a people and movement phenomenon, the SNP still matter to the movement. In all SNP parliamentarians attend on average 25% of movement events in a given year, which may not seem much but is more than any other group. The relationship between the SNP and the movement invites researchers to reconsider theories of party-movement relations. Sometimes the press or opposition try to portray the movement as the governing SNP's 'radical fringe', the phrase 'cyber-nat' has entered common parlance in Scottish political discourse for this purpose. Yet to suggest that the SNP leadership feel anything other than pride at seeing the streets of Glasgow or any Scottish city awash with the regalia and symbolism of Scottish nationalism, must be a stretch.

For their part, grassroots activists are determined to establish their own autonomy.

Mary McCabe, co-convenor of Pensioners for Independence, who had herself been an SNP member since 1968, explained to me:

> I realised that political parties were quite divisive and regardless of independence as soon as elections come up we're all at each other's throats. So that's why I try to be more into Yes groups and not even have policies beyond independence, other than very broad principles. We're all for inclusiveness. (McCabe 2020, Interview with author.)

Others take a different view, Gerry Mulvenna of Yes Edinburgh West described with sadness the loss of party-movement unity after elections.

> If you remember back the immediate aftermath of the 2014 referendum, there was a great unity within the Yes side. There was a determination to make the Labour party pay. That anger has in many ways dissipated now that the Labour Party's influence has evaporated. The united response at that 2015 election is something else that has evaporated I suppose but it was an amazing thing to be part of. We got beaten in September but in this election we're going to return as many SNP MPs as possible and then to get nearly the whole set was amazing. But as I say since then there's been so many changes politically in Scotland it's hard to keep up. Right now the situation I'd say is far from united within the independence movement. (Mulvenna 2020, Interview with author.)

He is not a member of the SNP, yet later commented on the overlap of membership between movement organisations and the party speculating that grassroots activists can sometimes find it 'confusing'.

As a first attempt to disentangle this relationship, table 1 presents a model of party participation in movement events. The first is a logistic model for which the dependent variable is SNP participation in events (coded zero = no participation, one = participation). The second, a linear model with the sum of parties present per event as outcome (to a possible total of three; the SNP, the Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party). Predictors are event level parameters which are known in advance of events and could therefore influence decisions over whether to participate. Event type is categorised into a factor with three levels, marches, meetings and 'other', in that order. Issue is coded one for independence, zero for 'other'. The organising SMO is categorised as either elite (one) or grassroots (zero), a theoretical distinction discussed in the next section. Both matter in their own right, but combined, these two factors offer an indication of the effect of ideology given the grassroots are further to the left.

Holding all other factors constant, the odds of the SNP participating in events increases with the number of SMOs present. This is also true of party participation

	SNP		All parties	
(Intercept)	-4.9	(0.833)	0.207**	(0.149)
Event Type	0.616***	(0.115)	0.0306	(0.0179)
Region	-0.0162	(0.0863)	-0.0265	(0.0173)
Issue	0.118	(0.314)	-0.0172	(0.0659)
Elite/Grassroots	-0.396	(0.391)	-0.128	(0.0851)
SMO count	0.648***	(0.0984)	0.216***	(0.0184)
N	599		598	

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Standard errors in parenthesis.

Table 1: Determinants of party participation in movement events

in general. While this is not a direct measure of brokerage, in confirming the role of SMOs in the mobilisation process it demonstrates the potential for deliberate action to influence party participation. The significance of event type suggests the SNP may be more interested in lending symbolic support to the movement than engaging in a meaningful sense as they are more likely to participate in marches than any other event, all though this effect is restricted to the SNP rather than the other parties.

Contextual factors are seemingly less important. The party's representatives do not discriminate based on whether the event is focused on the issue of independence or any other issue, nor do they discriminate between central or peripheral SMOs, so ideological congruence has no effect. This is also true of all parties which may be due to competing demands on resources or it may be a strategic decision on the part of the parties. Satisfying explanations for campaigns of contentious politics must progress beyond analysis of the strength of effects to account for divergent causal processes (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). Therefore to understand why activists are sometimes able to persuade parties to participate we must look in more detail at the process of brokerage.

Uneven engagement with the movement

The movement exhibits a tripartite structure. At the fore is the SNP, the largest political party campaigning for independence. Among the SMOs allied in the movement a distinction can be drawn between central and peripheral organisations. Those at the centre are an emergent movement elite known to Scots as *'well-kent' folks* who rub shoulders with Scotland's nationalist A-listers. This elite includes well known individuals, opinion leaders, such as Lesley Riddoch and Derek Bateman who both left careers with the BBC to campaign for independence. It also includes a 'big three' cen-

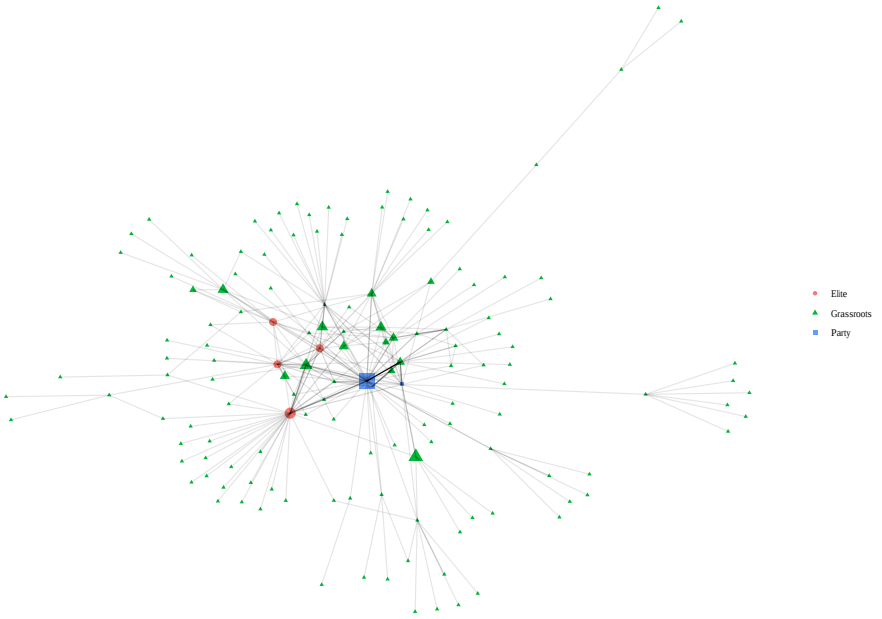

Figure 3: Patterns of cooperation and brokerage within the movement for independence. Dots represent groups or individuals, lines depict co-participation in events. Larger dots mark brokers.

tral SMOs; Women for Independence, Common Weal and the Radical Independence Campaign (Thiec 2015). Women for Indy and Common Weal both share something of a federal structure, a central core of activists with public profiles and peripheral local branches which formed spontaneously adopting the branding and values of the central organisation (Haggerty 2015). Women for Independence is a name intended to be read in both directions, the organisation campaigns for Women's independence and for Scotland's. The central organisation includes prominent women from all parties (and none) and has claimed political victories through protest and persuasion over issues such as women's prisons (Mellon 2016). Common Weal is an old Scots phrase meaning common good and captures the group's egalitarian ethos. The group are particularly active and creative running an independent news service *Source* (formerly *CommonSpace*), and regularly publish policy proposals from a radical perspective. Radical Independence is a looser association of anti-poverty activists who have remained mobilised in the period since the referendum (Gillen 2014).

The grassroots are largely responsible for the growth of the movement-as-network.

The grassroots have produced their own intelligentsia in the bloggers and major grassroots SMOs such as Hope over Fear and All Under One Banner organise mass marches and rallies. The core of this periphery though are local Yes groups, survivors of the Yes campaign who never stopped campaigning, whose contribution, creativity and persistence cannot be understated. These groups represent the true character of the movement though they have received none of the attention they deserve. A brief list of their actions include 'bridges for indy' (flying flags over motorway bridges), street stalls, leafleting, regular public meetings and some dedicated campaigners have even established High street 'Yes Hubs' which open their doors daily serving the local population. Lesley Riddoch went some way to describing the importance of these groups when I spoke to her:

> There's something pleasingly anarchic about them [Yes groups]. They also, they bring so much in, *in place*. The whole of Scottish society is cursed by not having any emphasis on place, so Yes groups pin you to the ground in a physical place. They tend to be working class led, which is very unusual, and they, the way they organise, there's no clipboards. There's something pleasingly organic about the whole thing. (Riddoch 2020)

It is, however, worth placing the activities of the Yes groups in the context of the complete absence of pro-independence activism, let alone grassroots political participation which was the norm in Scotland prior to 2014. For example, discussing the earlier, largely elite, campaign for a Scottish Parliament, in a sense the predecessor to the independence movement of today, Taylor argued,

> Protest self evidently, has played its part in the devolution story. The issue of reform would not arise at all if objections to the status quo had not surfaced... However ... Scotland was not remotely in a fervour of popular discontent at this time despite the impressive turnout produced by, for example, the March for Scottish Democracy. (Taylor 1999, 62)

Organisational co-participation in contemporary movement events is illustrated in a stylised visualisation in figure 3. Dots represent groups or individuals, coloured according to the aforementioned tripartite structure, while lines represent co-participation in an event by two organisations. The movement is dominated by the disordered array of local organisations who for the most part organised *for* the 2014 referendum then continued their mobilisation in its wake. Participation at the periphery of the movement is piecemeal, yet wider encompassing a broad range of groups who cooperate indiscriminately.

Why is the network of the grassroots wider than that of the SNP? Part of the answer is the predominance of grassroots brokers, illustrated by the larger dots. More detail is available in table 2, the parameters of network interaction. These measures suggest firstly the extent to which the movement is susceptible to the external pressure of the electoral cycle. The obvious narrative of these trends is that the network began to demobilise following the independence referendum but resumed activity in 2015, election year, peaking in 2016, the year of the Brexit referendum. That these trends are not evident in the overall frequency of events in figure 2 alludes to the behind-the-scenes networking that staging these events entails. This of course can also be taken as suggestive of the influence of the SNP within the movement, at least in terms of agenda-setting.

The main areas of growth are in the number of SMOs, and in brokerage which went into decline immediately after the referendum but quickly recovered. Measures of centrality: betweenness and eigenvector, are in decline or static. So while the movement has been growing steadily in the period reviewed it has simultaneously decentralised. The movement's density reveals that on average only 4% of possible intra-movement connections are made. This is suggestive of atomisation, like a classic divided left. To an extent this is the case, the greatest intra-movement hostilities are the unfathomable (to the uninitiated) debates of social democrats and socialists and revolve as much around issues of social justice and wealth distribution, and strategy and electoral systems, as around constitutional matters, causing MacWhirter (2015, 93) to describe the movement as the "Yes Disalliance".

Yet for the network's transitivity, which averages at 0.09, the network does cohere, indicating the latent potential for connections and the low network-cost of mobilising activists and resources; for a movement that brings together the Scottish government and an eclectic mix of anti-capitalists, including competing political parties there are no more than two steps between any two points in the network. For example, when I asked Ellen Höffer, the Creative Director for EU Citizens for an independent Scotland about relations with other groups she told me "different topics always require different people, I couldn't break it down to that level but I know whats going on and who to call from each group" (Höffer 2020).

This point is further corroborated by the low rates of betweenness and eigenvector centrality which both indicate the presence, or in this case absence, of concentrations around well connected individuals. The Scots movement is not one characterised by cliques but by mixed patterns of participation. Often high rates of these measures are taken to indicate the presence of brokers who on occasion can be well-connected gate-keepers or representatives (Freeman 1979). That the Everret-Valente brokerage parameter varies in the context of declining centralisation suggests a decentralisation of brokerage, rather than its concentration in the hands of gatekeepers.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
SMOs	35	46	39	41	39	
Edges	44	76	53	51	51	
Density	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	
Betweenness	0.01	0.02	0.02	0	0.01	
Eigenvector	0.79	0.81	0.79	0.79	0.78	
Brokerage*	0.31	0.85	0.55	0.22	0.21	
Transitivity	0.1	0.18	0.15	0.02	0.03	

Table 2: Network parameters of the Scottish Independence Movement for each full year of data.
* Mean values

Brokerage and access to Resources

The relative breadth of grassroots cooperation can be explained by greater levels of brokering at this periphery of the movement, shown in figure 4. Groups categorised as broker have managed, at least temporarily, to occupy a position of betweenness centrality and have from that position staged events bringing together two or more otherwise unconnected groups. As the measure accounts for both the position of brokers, as a third-party, and the degree of connections, the x-axis can be read as a normalised measure of how many connections a group has brokered. The low movement-wide average suggests brokerage is a specialist role, most groups do not broker. All three theorised factions broker at a rate higher than the average. What is notable is that the grassroots are responsible for, on average, almost as much brokerage as the combined political parties and in absolute terms far more, similarly for the better resourced elite. Greater variation within the distribution of elite brokers relative to the grassroots further demonstrates the consistency with which the grassroots work at mobilisation. The outlier amongst the elite is Lesley Riddoch, the former BBC broadcaster who walked away from her career by abandoning the required commitment to neutrality to endorse independence, who has worked tirelessly in the service of the movement ever since. In passing she commented that she was not much of a 'joiner of things' when I spoke with her, perhaps alluding to an attitude conducive to brokerage:

> My philosophy is, I'm very alert to the gaps. I think, good, you've got that covered, where are the gaps? I tend not to be much of a joiner, of things, and some of that's because, I think I can be helpful a little bit everywhere more than being bolted into one particular group. (Riddoch 2020, Interview with author.)

Mostly, the explanation is that the movement's grassroots expend time and re-

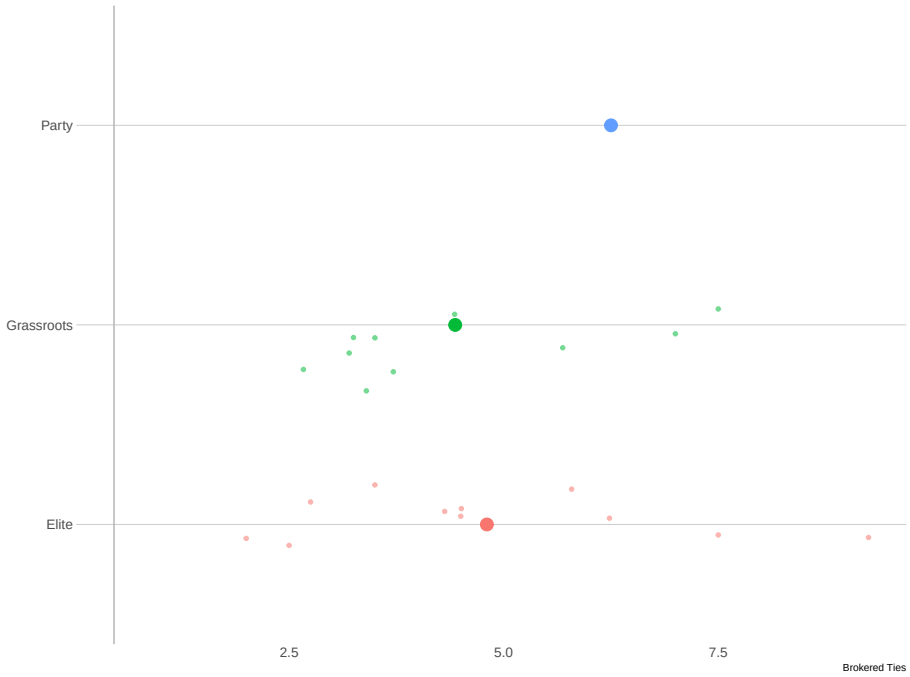

Figure 4: *Brokerage in the Scottish independence movement. The vertical line depicts the movement-wide mean while larger points depict group means.*

sources on creative means of brokering activism, more than anybody else. Marie Gray, secretary for Yes Blantyre described to me how, following their decision to form in early 2015 activists from the neighbouring town East Kilbride volunteered resources and information. The two groups Yes Blantyre and East Kilbride were in contact as both shared members with the local SNP branch. Veteran East Kilbride activists shared information on practicalities like funding, donated campaign materials and shared the text of their constitution which Blantyre adapted to reflect their own values. Some groups such as Women for Independence have formalised this process hosting a template group constitution on their internal website. Yet in interviews I found this is an experience many groups shared. Sometimes there is an element of encouragement to this. Mike Blackshaw uses his Edinburgh Yes Hub (an activism space housed in a high street shop) to encourage the formation of new groups. He describes his strategy:

> Let people come along, and if there's enough, away you go. The only assistance I have for them is, by all means, material. Use our equipment for

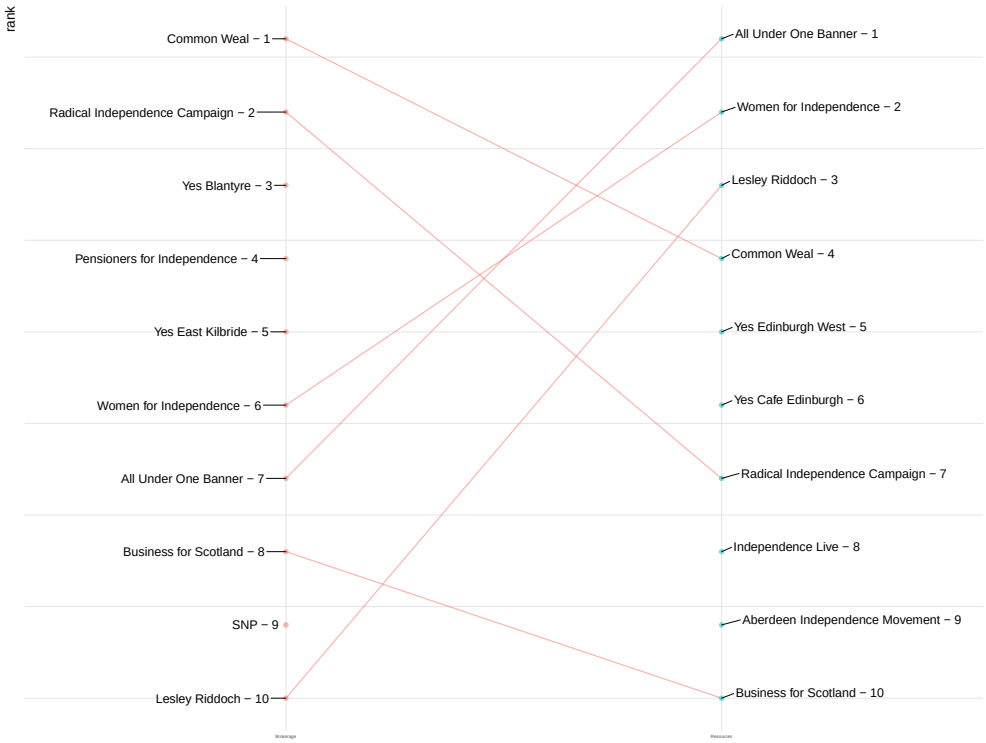

Figure 5: *Rankings of brokers and resource concentrations within the movement.*

> street stalls. But do them. Build up your own area. Don't think people are going to be bored by politics. (Blackshaw 2020, Interview with author.)

Consistently, since 2014, it has been peripheral, under-resourced organisations persuading better known groups to participate. This negative relationship is further visualised in figure 5. The first point to be made about figure 5 is that the SNP rank among the top brokers. This should be surprising for a number of reasons. The data collection process this study is based on excludes events organised by the SNP to keep the focus on party participation in movement events. Their brokering role therefore lies in the capacity for SNP participation to encourage further participation. Furthermore activists are keen to present the movement as theirs, and non-partisan. That the SNP figure prominently at this level of detail suggests of the behind-the-scenes role the party seems to prefer within the movement. Of course this does not necessarily imply a partisan interpretation that the movement is in any way controlled by the SNP, just that the party is deeply involved in the movement.

For that reason the prominence of the SNP is consistent with existing theories of brokerage. Burt (2004) describes brokerage as a leadership position, more efficacious

than a managerial approach to leadership. Opting for a decentralised, negotiated approach to 'managing' the grassroots as this data implies is the case is potentially a considered tactic for preserving a scarce resource; organised, non-partisan grassroots support for the cause. In this context the failure of the other pro-independence parties to act as broker is notable. They do engage with the movement so it is legitimate to view their participation as just that, participation rather than organisation.

The rest of the movement is a different story. Three of the top brokers hold no meaningful resources operating on a shoestring budget. Five are local groups acting independently of any national coordination. One of the top brokers, the Aberdeen Independence Movement, appeared on the scene as late as 2018 in a flurry to organise the movement in the north-east, possibly with the zeal of the convert. Furthermore, the presence of members of the movement's elite within the top brokers should be taken as suggestive of the extent of their brokerage when considered as a consequence in part of the coding scheme employed in this study. Common Weal and Women for Independence both rank, despite their activism being subcategorised within the dataset according to local branches. The same is true for Lesley Riddoch, the only individual to rank within the top brokers. Her activism was similarly attributed in coding in part to other campaigns and organisations she works with.

Resources generally are concentrated in a select group of organisations all of which were either established by the SNP, such as Business for Scotland, inherited resources from pre-existing organisations such as Common Weal (formerly the Jimmy Reid Foundation) or Hope over Fear (formerly Socialist Party offshoot Solidarity), or as in the case of the Yes Bar, are 'resourced' by default as they are literally a for-profit business. The measure of resources I employed is most sensitive to turnout at events, arguably the most valuable resource an SMO can possess. This is why groups such as Outer Hebrides for Independence, based in an isolated northern island, rank at all. This group which formed as late as 2019 to organise a march meet in their founder's kitchen to coordinate. Their founder described to me how they organised the march, with no resources beyond their Facebook page, as a means of brokering connections with the movement on the mainland. Far from being an initiative of the SNP, the movement is organised by dedicated non-partisans who sometimes invite the party to participate.

This ranking does not distinguish between brokerage which overcomes some hostility between groups and brokerage which simply connects unconnected groups. It does provide a means of comparing the brokering of groups like All Under One Banner, Hope Over Fear or Forward as One which stage marches bringing groups together from across the country with local Yes groups for whom brokerage, as operationalised in this research, entails inviting speakers from the national stage thereby tying localities into a national network. While Heaney's (2020) surveys at All Under One Banner marches revealed that 3% of marchers attend for the purpose of networking (in line

with expectations about the specialist role of brokerage) local groups do out-broker the larger and better known march organisers.

DISCUSSION: NETWORK COSTS OF BROKERAGE

Brokerage at the margins of the movement seems to reasonably explain the pattern in party participation. Party involvement varies with the number of SMOs present, co-operation is widest at the movement's periphery where brokerage is also highest. This all raises questions for the Scots case and offers insight for our understanding of Nationalist movements. The findings above delineate the exact scope of the SNP's limited engagement with the wider movement for independence. These observations cannot be squared with the traditional view of movements as political outsiders seeking to pressure parties into effecting change. Nor do they suggest any particular alternate, deterministic view of party-movement relations. Rather they speak to the complexity of party interests and movement interests which are ultimately heterogeneous.

The dual character of brokerage observed deepens our understanding of the process of mobilisation, specifically in terms of party-movement coalitions. Possibly due to previous findings that brokerage produces 'good ideas' researchers have tended to treat it uncritically as a strategic aid to mobilisation (Burt 2004). In terms of protest diffusion this view is partly justified; a brokered movement is larger than a non-brokered movement (Ingold 2011). Vasi (2011) has demonstrated that movements cannot surpass the critical 'tipping-point' without brokering ties between ideologically incongruent groups.

Yet viewing brokerage as a network based mechanism allows us to consider the costs of brokerage in addition to the benefits, as well as considering alternate means of movement networking (Juhász, Tóth, and Lengyel 2020). Brokerage may well be such a frequent explanation for movement formation because it enables under-resourced, peripheral groups to contribute beyond their means. This is in a sense the thesis Granoveter put forward regarding the strength of weak ties. Success in brokerage can depend as much on tact and skill as on material factors (Mische 2008, 48). This is exactly what has happened in the case of the Scots independence movement and is undoubtedly a benefit of brokerage. Yet as such peripheral organisations assert their role within the movement the network overall may be weakened in consequence. Network analysts have noted this cost of brokerage both in abstraction (Everett and Valente 2016) and in practice, (Csermely et al. 2013). The promise of brokerage is that it enables under-resourced SMOs to contribute to mobilization beyond their means. The inescapable connotation of this is that removing a broker from the network will entail a disproportionate effect in terms of demobilisation as brokered ties become undone. The Scottish movement suffered such a withdrawal early on as the National

Collective, a prominent artists SMO, disbanded in early 2015.

To be clear, this is a counterfactual observation. The analysis of the movement's network reveals over-reliance on ties brokered by under-resourced groups suggesting rapid demobilisation is a possibility activists should take seriously. Within the Scottish movement organisations such as the Independence Convention and the Independence Foundation have been established in attempts to bring some institutional weight to the movement. These organisations are effectively funding bodies tasked with matching matching activists with donors. In interviews, activists are scathing about the work of these organisations. This should not be surprising given that neither have been active enough to figure prominently in the analysis presented above. Although they could be thought of as potentially significant brokers neither have used their resources in such a way as to register within the data collected for this study. Such organisations could, with activist and party support, come to serve an important brokerage role within the movement if the campaign for independence is forced to continue. The observations in this paper suggest that non-formal ties may pose risks to network structure in terms of durability as under-resourced groups gravitate towards brokerage positions.

CONCLUSION: PARTIES AND MOVEMENT AUTONOMY

As a strategy for bringing the resources, prestige and support of political parties to a movement, brokerage may be short of optimal. The Scots case illustrates this well. The Scottish National Party, whose goals align with those of the independence movement, engages with the movement on its own terms. There is no singular party position on the movement. Seemingly parties can, and do, dictate terms of engagement to movements. This finding supports that of Heaney and Rojas, "The fact that partisan identities tended to be stronger and more enduring than their intersecting movement identities led the party in the street to serve the interests of the party over the interests of the movement" (Heaney and Rojas 2015, 229). To add complexity to this finding however are those activists associated with Labour for Independence who made a real sacrifice for the movement in their endorsement of independence. The role of the Green Party and the Scottish Socialist Party however suggest parties can choose to engage with movements as participants rather than leaders or organisers. Both of the smaller pro-independence parties participate in movement events but do not rank as brokers, the question of why is one avenue for future research on the case.

I began this paper by raising the question of durability in party, movement relations, suggesting the answer to this question offers new insight for social movement theory. For a movement led by a sizeable, governing party a surprising extent of activism is brokered from the grassroots by groups lacking in material, human and

sometimes moral resources. (Cress and Snow 1996), who devised this measurement scheme argue that groups lacking these resources cannot be considered viable. The durability of the Scottish outfits raises the possibility, often discussed in the literature, that commitment outweighs resources in determining the viability of SMOs. In this observation lies the broadest theoretical lesson we can draw from the Scots case. Activists are in part a product of their political context and have to avail of opportunities as they arise (Tarrow 2005). Yet that is not to say their fortunes are predetermined. It was activists brokering connections, not ideological congruence, that brought the SNP into the movement. With strategy and motivation activists can exercise their free will, or 'agency' as writers have taken to calling it. Nonetheless this observation also highlights the organisational weakness of brokerage, that it provides a mechanism by which networks can become reliant on peripheral, under-resourced organisations.

There are wider lessons for social movement theory to be drawn from the Scots case. The SNP had considered itself the head of a movement throughout its history, yet it took a critical juncture in the referendum of 2014 to translate that desire into activism deserving of the title. It is no understatement to describe activism in Scotland today as a social movement, one that can be clearly traced to the machinations of a party in campaign mode. Regardless of fluctuations in covariates, support for independence, feelings of Scottish identity (which have both remained more or less constant over the past five years), or indeed regardless of political events such as Brexit which have fundamentally changed the context of the constitutional debate, movement activity continues apace. I have only scratched the surface of this causal bi-directionality in this paper. The case raises this question for future research.

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