**25 Years Of Devolution: The Federalisation Of A Unitary Polity?**

*Summary*

The devolution of political, legislative and fiscal authority to the legislatures in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1998 was a concession to the growing demands for self-government guided by pragmatism rather than by a federal idea or long-term thinking over the consequences for the UK’s constitution. By adopting federal elements without fundamentally altering its unitary set-up, the UK can nowadays be understood as a federal-like hybrid that has evolved in response to functional and political demands from different levels of government. The tensions around Scottish independence and leaving the European Union has increasingly strained the political relations between the governments in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff during the second decade of the 21th century. Simultaneously, devolving more and more powers as well as Brexit have fostered new intergovernmental modes of cooperation and coordination to deal with policy areas that were previously operating under the EU’s regulatory regime. 25 years after introducing the devolution settlement, this chapter discusses the nature of self-rule and shared rule in the UK and places the UK’s multilevel system in a federal perspective.

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