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PATTERNS OF PARTY INTEGRATION, INFLUENCE AND AUTONOMY IN SEVEN FEDERATIONS

Lori Thorlakson

ABSTRACT

In this article, I develop three measures of party organization in multi-level systems: vertical integration, influence and autonomy. I assess these in 27 parties in Canada, Australia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the United States and Spain and investigate how parties respond to the incentives and opportunities created by their institutional environment. Clear patterns emerge between the form of federal state design and the predominant form of party organization: in decentralized federations with low coordination requirements between federal and state-level governments, a tendency can be found towards highly autonomous state parties. Where resources are centralized and intergovernmental coordination requirements are high, integrated parties with low autonomy can be found. However, neither aspect of institutional design has a significant relationship with ‘upward’ influence of state-level parties in the governance structure of federal parties.

KEY WORDS ■ decentralization ■ federalism ■ party organization ■ political parties

Introduction

Federalism presents political parties with both opportunities and threats. By creating multiple important sites for political organization and competition, each with constitutionally guaranteed autonomy in at least some policy areas (Riker, 1964), federalism gives parties the opportunity to compete and capture significant rewards of office in both arenas, and use their organizational and electoral strength within each state to build a strong federal party.¹ In turn, the state organizations can benefit from the overall strength of the federal party. However, the dual prizes of state and federal office can create tensions within the party. Variations in the economic and social conditions and priorities across the units of the federation or an unpopular

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federal party leader may make it difficult for a state-level party to respond to their local electoral base without bringing it into conflict with the federal level of the party organization (Filippov et al., 2004; Kramer, 1994).

There are, however, wide variations in forms of federalism, and this affects the incentives and risks facing parties. The range of policy competences and taxing and spending power of states differs. In some federations, such as Switzerland or Canada, state governments exercise a high degree of fiscal power and jurisdiction over a wide range of policy areas, while in others, such as Austria, taxing and spending power is limited. In so-called 'dual federations' such as Canada and the United States, state governments face a low requirement for cooperation with the federal government in policy-making, while in federations with a functional allocation of powers, such as Germany and Austria, state governments are constrained by the need to cooperate with the federal government.

There is a broad literature arguing that party organization has important consequences for the operation of federal political systems. It affects the strategy and operation of political contestation, and the extent to which political competition at the state and federal levels occurs in separate or merged spheres. Variations in party organization can influence whether state parties have the autonomy and capacity to shape their appeals in response to local conditions, leading to parties that are distinctive from one jurisdiction to the next, or whether parties serve an integrative role, maintaining a 'national' brand and mediating conflict within the party.

For Riker (1964: 91), a decentralized party organization was a vital tool preventing the encroachment of the national government on states. In a similar line, party organizational linkages can serve as a tool for influencing intergovernmental relations and fiscal transfers in federations (Gordin, 2004). Integrated parties, where the state and federal party organizations are linked in an interdependent relationship, can promote the stability of federal systems (Filippov et al., 2004; Wheare, 1953). Linkages between the state-level and federal parties may provide the means of national survival for the party, both allowing unknown local candidates to prosper on the 'coat-tails' of national leaders, unified by a party label, and providing national leaders with a broad base of support in their bid for executive office. At the same time, the degree of autonomy granted to the party at the local or regional level allows the party to localize policy conflicts (Filippov et al., 2004). Indeed, research has related organizational linkages between state and federal parties in the United States to party capacity and electoral success (Cotter et al., 1984; Gibson et al., 1983; Huckshorn et al., 1986).

Party organization can also have implications for representation and accountability within the political system. When party organization preserves the autonomy of regional branches, this can maximize the ability of the sub-national organizations to represent local, territorially-defined interests, whether they arise from territorial cleavages or not (Brancati, 2008). By comparison, more centralized parties can internally mediate territorial conflict.

Second, the organizational integration or separation between the state and federal parties may affect political accountability. When sub-national party organizations have looser organizational ties to the party at the federal level, and when they possess a high degree of policy autonomy, this may decrease the tendency of voters to hold the state-level party accountable in state-level elections for the actions of the federal party.

What affects this important organizational relationship between federal and state-level parties? Much of the literature points to the potential of the state structure to affect various aspects of party organization in federations. In recent work on devolution and federalization in the UK, Spain and Belgium, it has been argued that party organizations evolve in response to a changing state structure (Hopkin, 2003; Shaw, 2002). Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argue that centralization of resources in federations creates an incentive for national party aggregation – the linkage of candidates across constituencies to build national parties united under a single party label. The cohesion and centralization of parties is argued to be affected by the decentralization of the state (e.g. Duverger, 1963; Lawson, 1976: 79). In this article, I take a similar line, arguing that when the taxing and spending power of state-level governments increases, it increases both the prize of office and potential for divergence between state and federal party priorities and the reward for state party autonomy.

The method of power division in the state, however, is also important. Functional divisions of power, which create overlapping spheres of policy competence, are said to promote the development of integrative linkages in parties, as this can reduce the coordination costs of policy-making for the party. On the other hand, dual federalism – the style of federal constitutional design that creates largely separate spheres of activity for federal and state governments – allows parties to govern effectively even if they lack strong coordination structures with their federal counterparts. Furthermore, institutional structure is not the only force likely to affect the design of party organizations. ‘Genetic’ approaches argue that party organization is predominantly shaped by its historical form, which exerts a path-dependency effect, leaving its imprint on the modern party. We would, therefore, expect this to yield similarities by party family rather than by federation. Moreover, government participation – or the lack thereof – is also likely to influence party organizations.

In this article, I evaluate these competing accounts of the relationship between state structure and party organization. We currently lack comparative evidence on when we find patterns of integration (structural linkages between state and federal party organizations), and when this integration coincides with a high degree of state party influence over the federal party and a high degree of autonomy or ‘room to move’ for the state party. Using data from party statutes, I measure vertical integration and autonomy in 27 parties from seven federations: Canada, the United States, Austria, Germany, Australia, Switzerland and Spain.² I identify empirical types of multi-level

party design, and investigate whether these organizational patterns are associated with federal institutional design (the centralization or method of power division in the state), or alternatively whether patterns of integration, influence and autonomy vary by party family and patterns of government participation. I find that the institutional configuration of the federation has a clear correspondence to the choices parties make concerning the degree of autonomy to afford to state-level parties. Explaining the influence of state parties within the federal structure is more complex, and requires us to look beyond institutional design.

This empirical investigation first requires the identification and development of indicators for aspects of party organization that are crucial to a party's ability to respond to the risks and rewards of multi-level competition: vertical integration, influence and autonomy. In the literature, the concept of integration is sometimes unhelpfully conflated with the manner in which power is exercised through integrative linkages – the autonomy of the party (e.g. Filippov et al., 2004: 192). This is problematic because this leaves us unable to identify when and why the structures that parties build for coordination and sharing of resources serve as a means for the federal party to exercise control over the state-level party, or result in a high degree of state party influence in federal party affairs. In this article, therefore, I refine the concept of vertical integration to distinguish it from the influence that state parties exercise in the governance of federal party organizations and the autonomy of state party organizations in integrated parties.

Concepts: Vertical Integration, Influence and Autonomy

Vertical integration refers to the extent and strength of formal and informal linkages between state and federal parties. However, while vertical integration describes the organizational and strategic linkages that connect state and federal parties, it does not describe how power is exercised in an integrated party. Influence refers to the extent to which the state party organizations exercise control in the governance of the federal party, while autonomy tells us whether these integrative linkages result in control over another party level.

In this article, I assess these party organizational features using evidence from party statutes.³ One of the problems with this is that party practice can sometimes deviate from the rules; for example, statutes that allow the federal party to intervene in the affairs of the state party may rarely be used in practice if strong norms of non-interference have evolved over time. However, party statutes and official party publications are reliable sources of information for the indicators of vertical integration that I use in this article: organizational structure of governance, membership and internal representation. For autonomy, I measure the legal power of the federal party to intervene in various aspects of state party affairs. While norms may

prevent the employment of these powers, the legal potential to intervene – or, conversely, the legal guarantee of non-interference – defines the degree of autonomy a party level enjoys, analogous to the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy of the governments in a federation.

The varied forms that organizational interdependence within a party can take present a challenge when selecting consistently meaningful indicators to use in cross-party comparison. Cross-national comparison compounds this difficulty. This research does not measure forms of integration exhaustively, but it does measure the starkest forms of integration. This yields a classification of the organizational structure as integrated, split or truncated. I then focus on assessing the degree of influence that state-level parties exert within the governance structure of the federal party organization and the autonomy of state-level parties.

Vertical Integration

Vertical integration refers to the extent of organizational linkages, interdependence and cooperation between federal and state party organizations in both the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary arenas (Dyck, 1991: 130; Filippov et al., 2004: 192; Huckshorn et al., 1986: 978; Smiley, 1987: 103 ff.). In its basic form, vertical integration can result from formal organizational linkages such as a common party membership, shared finances and a common governance structure.⁴ When these linkages exist, the party is integrated and the federal and state levels are interdependent, as ‘neither level of party is necessarily subordinate to the other’ (Huckshorn et al., 1986: 978). By contrast, the non-integrated party maintains state and federal parties that are organizationally split. Parties that organize and compete at only one level of government, which I term ‘truncated’ parties, are non-integrated. Vertical integration is an important measure in a multi-level party. Integrated parties can build strong and coherent party organizations, and offer mechanisms for brokering disagreements among constituent units.⁵

This analysis operationalizes vertical integration by using indicators of interdependence created by formal governance and membership structures in the party. These ‘core’ forms of integration can be meaningfully applied to all parties in the analysis, and evidence for these indicators can be reliably drawn from party statutes. I assess the extent to which governance structures incorporate state parties into the federal party structure. Parties are classified as integrated if the state and federal levels of the party share a common governance structure and a unitary membership structure. If the party organizes and competes at both the state and federal levels but shares neither a common governance nor membership structure, it is classified as non-integrated. Truncated parties are those that organize at one level of government only (Dyck, 1991: 129; Smiley, 1987), and so by definition cannot be integrated.

A special situation arises when a party is based in a single unit of the federation, and competes at both the state and federal levels, but within the

state boundaries only. In these state-based parties, such as the CSU in Bavaria, the party's operations at the state and federal level are integrated, yet unlike federal-level parties operating state-wide, the CSU does not have to broker the interests of multiple state-level parties. While party strategies or goals in federal and state competition may occasionally diverge because of differences in the competitive context, they share a geographically congruent support base.

Influence

Influence refers to the degree to which the state party organization is an important force in the federal party structure. State party influence is strongest when its institutional interests are represented on federal party governing bodies – when the state-level party executives, rather than representatives from district- or constituency-level constituencies, hold the balance of power in governing bodies. The reason for this is the same as why senates are said to more powerfully represent state interests when they consist of representatives from state governments, rather than directly elected deputies – while directly elected deputies may bring local interests to the senate, only the state government representatives will represent the interests of, and therefore enhance the power of, state governments (Kramer, 2000: 223; Riker, 1955: 455). A high degree of state party influence produces what is sometimes described as a 'confederal' party structure, where the balance of party power lies in the state organizations.

I classify state party influence as low (1), moderate (2) or high (3) according to the way in which the party structure provides for representation of state party organizations in the overall party governance structure. State representation within integrated governance structures is strong if the executive bodies of the federal parties are composed chiefly of state party representatives, moderate if state representation is accompanied by representation of functional groups or regional aggregations of state parties, and weak if state party representatives form a minority.

Autonomy

Vertical integration does not connote the direction of control in the party organization. Autonomy measures the freedom of the state level of the party to conduct its affairs without interference from the federal party. Truncated and non-integrated state parties are autonomous by definition, but autonomy can vary in integrated parties, depending on the degree of federal party control over state party organizations in matters such as discipline, policy, campaigning, internal organization and candidate and leader selection. Autonomy allows for policy diversity among state parties. Complete autonomy is found in split parties, where the state party organizations exist separately and in parallel with the organizational units of the federal party. The

federal party has little or no influence over the state parties, and the state parties have little or no influence over the federal party. The strength and form of available sanctions against state parties also affects autonomy. Provisions for the dissolution of dissident state (or district) party organizations by the federal party afford the least autonomy to state parties. State-level party organizations retain greater autonomy when the greatest sanction available is expulsion of the state party: the state party remains intact, but its ties to the federal party are dissolved. Finally, dispute settlement bodies that operate independently of the federal party governing councils preserve the autonomy of party organizations in multi-level systems.

I use two indicators of autonomy in the empirical analysis. The first is the autonomy of the state-level party organizations in programme development, and candidate and leader selection. Autonomy is constrained if the federal party organs play a role in or wield veto power in these processes. If party statutes provide for a federal party role in the selection of state party managers, party leaders or candidates, a score of 0 (low autonomy) is assigned. If party statutes provide for no such role or if they guarantee state party freedom to develop the party programme, select candidates and/or leaders, a score of 1 (high autonomy) is assigned. The second indicator is the means of party discipline and intervention. The right to exist, free from the threat of unilateral action to dissolve or internally intervene in the structure of the state party, is a fundamental element of autonomy, analogous to the constitutional guarantee to the autonomy of the federal unit that underpins the federal contract. If party statutes provide for intervention by the federal party in the affairs of the state party, dissolution of the state party or intervention in the structure of the state party, a score of 0 (low autonomy) is assigned. State party autonomy is assigned a score of 1 (high autonomy) if the federal party's only disciplinary recourse against state parties is to exclude or expel state parties from the federal organizational structure or disassociate the federal party from the state party. The scores can be combined to create a summary categorical variable that classifies autonomy as high, moderate or low. This results in the loss of data, but it is an appropriate strategy for cross-national measurement because it reduces our reliance on any single indicator of autonomy. To supplement these classifications, I discuss patterns in coordination mechanisms and dispute settlement procedures in the parties.

Explaining Forms of Party Organization

Institutional Influences on Party Organization

The literature identifies two main institutional factors that influence party organization in federations. The first is the degree to which federal policy-making requires interaction between the state and federal governments.

Federations that employ a jurisdictional principle of power division ('dual' federations) usually allocate exclusive legislative and executive powers to a level of government, minimizing the interaction between the two levels of government in the formulation and administration of policy (Thorlakson, 2003; Watts, 1970). This has been said to create a tendency for decentralization in national parties (Scharpf, 1995) and an environment in which non-integrated parties can thrive because they are not in direct competition with each other (Chandler, 1987). For the federal level of the party, there are low political costs to a non-integrated organization with autonomous state wings. For state-level parties, policy autonomy can be beneficial, as it allows for local vote maximizing strategies.

By contrast, European federations often employ a functional division of powers, allocating legislative powers to the federal government and leaving the state level responsible for administering and implementing policy. The high degree of intergovernmental coordination required by functional federalism can create an incentive for integrated parties because such linkage offers channels for intra-party coordination. A special variant, joint federalism, requires the highest degree of cooperation between the state and federal governments because it requires the participation of the state governments, represented in the federal upper chamber, in federal policy-making. It is a distinctive feature of German federalism. We would expect this to encourage close links between the parties at the federal and state levels, with a powerful federal party (Chandler, 1987; Scharpf, 1995). Parties at the federal level face strong incentives to maintain integrative linkages and exercise control over the state-level parties, enhancing overall policy coherence within the party. In federal policy-making, such coherence is necessary for effective party influence in the federal upper chamber.

The allocation of resources in a federation is a second variable said to affect party organization (Desposato, 2004; Duverger, 1963; Lawson, 1976). Decentralization increases the demand for policy freedom for state levels of the party, as the state governments have a greater capacity to act and create policy in a wide range of issues, increasing the potential for the state branches of a party to come into conflict with the federal party. This should result in demands for greater state party autonomy, perhaps to the extent of severing integrative linkages.

Table 1 provides scores for the seven federations on the two institutional dimensions: allocation of resources and method of power division. The centralization scores are produced by taking the mean of the degree of revenue centralization and expenditure centralization (the share of revenues or expenditures controlled by the federal level of government compared to all revenues or expenditures). A higher centralization ratio indicates a more centralized federation in public finance terms.⁶ The cases yield the following four combinations: decentralized federations with a dual allocation of power (Canada, the US), decentralized federations with a functional allocation of power (Switzerland, Spain), centralized federations with a dual allocation

Table 1. Dimensions of federal institutional design: resource centralization and method of power allocation in six federations, 1974–1999

<i>Federation</i>	<i>Combined centralization</i>	<i>Method of power division</i>
Austria	0.71	Functional
Australia	0.67	Dual
Germany	0.61	Functional
United States	0.58	Dual
Spain (1995–2000)	0.56	Functional
Switzerland	0.53	Functional
Canada	0.45	Dual

Source: Calculated by author using data from IMF, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook* (1978, 1985, 2001). Centralization ratios are calculated as averages, using data from 1974–1999 for Australia, Austria and Canada, 1973–1998 for Germany, 1974–1984 and 1991–1999 for Switzerland, 1995–2000 for Spain and 1975–1999 for the US.

of power (Australia), and centralized federations with a functional allocation of power (Austria, Germany). We would expect to find the greatest degree of autonomy in the decentralized, dual federations. When decentralized, both dual and functional federalism should be conducive to state parties with a high degree of influence, as decentralization is likely to produce strong state-level power bases within the party that make state parties capable of asserting influence within the federal party.

Alternative Explanations

One alternative explanation of party organization starts from the assumption that institutional forces do not operate on a blank canvas. Instead, the historical form of party organization has a path-dependency effect, leaving its imprint on the modern party (Epstein, 1967; LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966; Panebianco, 1988). From this perspective, we would expect liberal parties, with their origins as parties of loosely associated notables, to have high autonomy and a low degree of integration. In socialist parties, by contrast, which emerged as mass membership parties with a branch structure and strong central leadership, we would expect integration and a low degree of state party influence and autonomy. The centrality of the values of subsidiarity and democracy in Christian Democratic ideology generally facilitate internal party democracy and decentralization. In a multi-level structure, we would expect this to translate into an integrated structure that provides autonomy for the state parties. Finally, Green parties tend to have a highly decentralized grassroots structure, which is likely to produce autonomy.

Another alternative account focuses on the party's governing or opposition status. Electoral success at the state level coupled with long periods in opposition federally can create an enduring incentive for state parties to attempt to increase their autonomy so they are best equipped to pursue rewards of state office.

General Patterns of Integration, Influence and Autonomy

Table 2 presents data on indicators of vertical integration and autonomy in all 27 parties and Table 3 summarizes mean party influence and autonomy scores by country. Nearly all political parties competing in the multi-level environments in this research have adopted integrated structures that vary with respect to the degree of influence state-level parties exert within the federal party structure and the degree of autonomy which state-level parties enjoy from federal party interference. The exception is Canada, where we find non-integrated and truncated party structures, and forms of vertical integration are weak or absent. The federal NDP and Liberal parties have adopted split organizations in some provinces, while newer parties, such as the Conservative Party of Canada and the Bloc Québécois, have adopted a truncated form, assuring complete autonomy.

In Switzerland and the United States, we find parties that are integrated, yet preserve a high degree of autonomy for state-level parties. Vertical integration in American parties produces channels of service provision rather than control – for example, the Democratic Governors Association aids gubernatorial candidacies while the Democratic Legislative Committee aids state legislative campaigns. Swiss parties, while integrated, stand out for the emphasis their party statutes place upon preserving the autonomy of the cantonal organization. This party design offers maximum flexibility for state-level parties to adopt divergent policy positions. At the same time, Swiss parties are equipped to handle the potential conflicts that diversity may bring. Both the FDP/PRD and the CVP/PDC have arbitration tribunals to adjudicate disputes. Moreover, these dispute settlement mechanisms operate more neutrally than those found in parties in Austria, where the federal party has the final say.

In Austria and Germany, the integrated parties generally have a low degree of autonomy coupled with moderate or high degrees of state party influence. While Land parties pre-dated the establishment of federal parties in Germany, there has been a gradual shift in power towards central party organizations, reflected by the low state party autonomy. Parties in these federations established strong central organizations relatively early. In the German Christian Democrats, party reforms in 1967 created a post of party general secretary with a role in the appointment of Land party managers and oversight of Land organizations in federal election campaigns (Poguntke, 1993: 150). In Austria in the early 1990s, the ÖVP responded to the need to strengthen the decision-making powers of the federal party and create a unified voice in the face of the fractious branches through top-down centralizing reforms (Luther, 1992: 71).

From a cross-tabulation of influence and autonomy scores among integrated parties (Table 4), there is no evidence to suggest a relationship between these two aspects of party organization – the degree of autonomy of state-level parties does not correlate with their degree of influence in the federal

Table 2. Organizational form and degree of integration and autonomy in 27 political parties

Country	Party	Integration	State party influence		State party autonomy			Autonomy classification
			1. Platform, candidate and leader selection	2. Internal structure and discipline	Summary score	1. Platform, candidate and leader selection	2. Internal structure and discipline	
Canada	Liberal	Split/integrated*	0/2*	1	1	2	High	
	Conservative	Split	n/a	1	1	2	High	
	NDP	Integrated	Moderate	1	1	2	High	
	BQ	Truncated	n/a	1	1	2	High	
United States	Republican	Integrated	High	1	1	2	High	
	Democrat	Integrated	Moderate	1	1	2	High	
Germany	CDU	Integrated	High	0	0	0	Low	
	CSU	State-based	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	
	SPD	Integrated	Low	0	0	0	Low	
	FDP	Integrated	High	1	0	1	Moderate	
	Green	Integrated	Moderate	1	0	1	Moderate	
	Linke	Integrated	Low	1	0	1	Moderate	
Switzerland	FDP/PRD	Integrated	High	1	1	2	High	
	CVP/PDC	Integrated	High	1	1	2	High	
	SP/PSS	Integrated	Moderate	1	0	1	Moderate	
	SVP/UUDC	Integrated	High	1	1	2	High	
Austria	SPÖ	Integrated	Low	0	0	0	Low	
	ÖVP	Integrated	Moderate	0	0	0	Low	
	Green	Integrated	High	0	0	0	Low	
	FPÖ	Integrated	High	1	0	1	Moderate	

Continued over

Table 2. Continued

Country	Party	Integration	State party influence			Autonomy classification
			State party influence	1. Platform, candidate and leader selection	2. Internal structure and discipline	
Australia	ALP	Integrated	Low	0	0	Low
	LP	Integrated	High	0	0	Low
	NP	Integrated	High	1	1	High
	AD	Integrated	High	0	0	Low
Spain	PSOE	Integrated	Moderate	1	0	Moderate
	PP	Integrated	Low	0	0	Low
	IU	Integrated	High	0	1	Moderate

Sources: Party statutes or official party publications for all parties except the Austrian FPÖ and ÖVP; German FDP, American Democratic Party and Spanish Partido Popular, where official party documents and website information are used. Additional sources are Pogutke (1992, 1993); Braunthal (1996) for Germany and Müller (1992a) for Austria, Cotter et al. (1984: 63–69) for the United States.

* The Liberal Party is split in five provinces and integrated in nine. Separate integration ratings are given to the split and integrated provincial parties. Influence of state party in federal structure: 0 = absent/none, 1 = weak, 2 = moderate, 3 = strong.

Table 3. Measures of central tendency: influence and autonomy, by country

<i>Country (n)</i>	<i>Integration (all forms)</i>	<i>Party influence (mean score, integrated parties)</i>	<i>Party autonomy (mean score)</i>
Canada (4)	Split, truncated, integrated	2	2.0
United States (2)	Integrated	2.5	2.0
Germany (6)	Integrated	2.17	0.8
Switzerland (4)	Integrated	2.75	1.8
Austria (4)	Integrated	2.25	0.3
Australia (4)	Integrated	2.5	0.5
Spain (3)	Integrated	2.0	0.7

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of levels of influence and autonomy in integrated parties

<i>Autonomy</i>	<i>Influence</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low influence</i>	<i>Medium influence</i>	<i>High influence</i>	
Low autonomy	4	1	4	9
Medium autonomy	1	3	3	7
High autonomy	0	3	5	8
Total	5	7	12	24

Fisher's Exact Test statistic = 5.692, sig (2 sided) = 0.247 (Fisher's Exact Test is used instead of Chi square because of the small sample size.)

party governing structure. An examination of the table is still useful, however. First, we find that low influence of state parties is rare; when it occurs, it is coupled with a low degree of state party autonomy. Most parties in federations incorporate a strong role for the state party organization in the governance structure of the federal party. Second, high influence is most often coupled with a high degree of autonomy (five out of 12 cases). All such cases of high influence/high autonomy state parties are right-of-centre parties. Third, we find an equal distribution of high, medium and low degrees of state party autonomy among integrated parties. Table 4 underestimates the degree of state party autonomy that we find across all cases – excluded from this analysis because they are non-integrated or truncated are the BQ, the Liberals and Conservatives in Canada, which have obviously all achieved a high degree of autonomy by severing links with their federal counterparts.⁷

Relationships between Party Organization and Federal Institutional Design

Non-integrated and truncated parties are only found in Canada, the most fiscally decentralized federation in this analysis. However, decentralization

by itself does not allow us to predict that parties will adopt non-integration as a general strategy – in other highly decentralized federations, such as Switzerland, parties maintain integrated structures and have not pursued the radical option of an organizational divorce between the cantonal- and federal-level parties. Among integrated parties, the degree of centralization of the state can help us predict the degree of autonomy exercised by state-level parties, but tells us little about the degree of influence state-level parties exert within the party. The evidence suggests that there is a strong negative relationship, as expected, between the centralization of the federation and the degree of autonomy exercised by state-level parties. Parties tend to enjoy a greater degree of autonomy from federal party intervention in their candidate and leader selection and internal organizational affairs in decentralized federations. This relationship is highly significant (Table 5). Overlying this pattern we can see the imprint of traditional forms of organization associated with party families: in the centralized countries, liberal and populist parties with strong state electoral power bases preserve state party autonomy (the National Party in Australia and the Austrian FPÖ). Meanwhile, in decentralized federations, social democratic parties typically maintain centralized structures. By contrast, centralization of resources is *not* associated with the degree to which party organizational structures provide state-level parties with influence in the governance of the federal party (Table 5).

Whether a country employs a dual or joint allocation of power can also help predict the degree of autonomy exercised by state-level parties. As mentioned above, we find non-integrated parties, which by definition preserve the highest autonomy for state parties, in only one federation, Canada, which employs a dual method of power allocation. In countries with a functional division of power, creating a need for state and federal governments to engage in a high degree of cooperation in policy-making, we find lower average party autonomy scores (Table 6). Cross-tabulations confirm that this relationship is not the result of chance alone (Table 7). By contrast, we

Table 5. Pearson correlations: degree of centralization, party autonomy and influence

		<i>Degree of autonomy</i>	<i>Degree of state party influence</i>
Centralization of resources	R	-0.713**	0.008
	Sig	0.000	0.486
	N	27	24
Degree of state party influence	R	0.332	1
	Sig	0.056	
	N	24	24

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Note: non-integrated parties are included for measurement of autonomy but not influence. The Liberal Party in Canada is scored as two cases (footnote 8).

Table 6. Mean influence and autonomy scores, by method of power division

<i>Method of power division</i>	<i>Party influence*</i>			<i>Party autonomy</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>All parties</i>	2.29	0.806	24	1.07	0.847	27
Functional (16)	2.25	0.856	16	0.81	0.750	16
Dual (8)	2.38	0.744	8	1.45	0.934	11

*Cases include integrated parties only.

once again find no relationship between institutional design in the federation and the degree of influence exercised by state parties in federal party governance. While mean influence scores are slightly lower in functional federations than in dual federations, this difference is not significant (Tables 6 and 8). The joint federalism cases of Germany and Austria also exhibit no consistent pattern.

These data do not provide evidence of a causal relationship between the institutional design of the federal state and party organization, but they lend plausibility to the hypothesized effects of decentralization and a dual federalism structure.

Table 7. Classification of degree of state party autonomy by method of power division

		<i>Degree of state party autonomy</i>			
		<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Total</i>
Method of power division	Dual	3	0	8	11
	Functional	6	7	3	16
Total		9	7	11	27

Fisher's Exact Test statistic = 10.410, sig (2-sided) = 0.004.

Table 8. Classification of degree of state party influence by method of power division

		<i>Degree of state party influence</i>			
		<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Total</i>
Method of power division	Dual	1	3	4	8
	Functional	4	4	8	16
Total		5	7	12	24

Fisher's Exact Test statistic = 0.748, sig (2-sided) = 0.859.

Relationships between Party Organization, Party Family and Government Position

As has already been hinted at, there are some clear patterns in party organization by party family (Table 9). Liberal parties have readily adapted to an integrated form. Their associations between the regional parties and the centre remain loose; they have generally developed as parties with local or regional power bases. In relatively centralized joint federations, such as Austria and Germany, these remain integrated parties geared towards federal competition; state parties enjoy more influence than autonomy. In the most decentralized and dual federations, these parties have highly autonomous, if not split, state parties. Likewise, populist parties tend to have state parties as the main organizational unit, with high autonomy for state, provincial, or Land organizations.⁸ In Christian Democratic parties, the combination of functional and territorial representation has counterbalanced tendencies towards strictly regional power bases. These parties in joint federations have maintained an integrated structure. Across all of the cases here, social democratic parties have the greatest propensity for 'centralized' power: a combination of low state party autonomy and low state party influence.

The relationship between party family and party organization falls short of statistical significance, however. When we test the independence of party family and both autonomy and influence, we find that party family cannot reliably predict either dimension of party organization, although the relationship between influence and party family comes close.⁹ With a sample size as small as we have here, this should provide us with enough reason to further examine the impact of party family on state party influence. So far, party family is the most promising variable for explaining this aspect of party organization.

Table 9. Mean influence and autonomy scores by party family

<i>Party family</i>	<i>Party influence*</i>			<i>Party autonomy</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>All parties</i>	2.29	0.81	24	1.07	0.87	27
Social democratic	1.43	0.54	7	0.71	0.76	7
Liberal	2.71	0.49	7	1.50	0.76	8
Christian Democratic	2.67	0.58	3	0.67	1.16	3
Conservative/National	2.33	1.16	3	1.50	1.00	4
Green	2.50	0.71	2	0.50	0.71	2
Regionalist	3.00	–	1	1.50	0.71	2

*Measures integrated parties only.

Finally, patterns of government and opposition may matter in both decentralized and centralized federations. In Canada, the need for autonomy has led to an organizational split in the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties in provinces with patterns of electoral behaviour least congruent with federal patterns. In Austria the power and importance of the Land organizations has increased over time, most markedly in the People's Party, when electoral strength at the Land level was coupled with federal opposition status from 1970 to 1987 (Luther, 1992: 69; Müller, 1992b: 122). Without any formal alterations of the institutional allocation of resources, protracted periods in government at the state level and in opposition federally can increase the *de facto* importance of the state arena of competition, particularly in the unusual case where the pattern is uniform across most or all units of the federation.

Conclusions

We find evidence of varying party responses to the demands of a multi-level competitive environment in federations. When pressures for responding to state-level policy priorities are more intense than the benefits derived from membership in a broader federal party, state-level parties may choose the road of complete autonomy, and sever their organizational ties with the federal party. We have found this pattern in Canada, a highly decentralized federation in which policy-making to a large extent can be contained within the provincial sphere. Elsewhere, we find examples of another model of response to the pressures of a decentralized state: 'confederal' parties such as those in Switzerland and the IU in Spain, combine integration, a strong degree of influence and a high degree of autonomy, with the result that the state-level parties play a leading role in the integrated party, and integrative linkages develop to facilitate consultation, cooperation and managing the 'coalition' of state parties. The United States also fits this model, although with the influence of its state parties moderated by the sheer number of states. Both a functional division of powers and centralization correlate with a third model of multi-level party organization: integrated parties with limited autonomy for the state parties. In these parties, vertical integration serves as a means of control and intervention by the central party.

The relationships observed between both elements of federal institutional design – the decentralization of the state and the method of power division – and the degree of autonomy of state-level parties support the notion that the institutional environment is shaping the organizational strategies of parties. It suggests that decentralization creates incentives for parties to pursue high degrees of autonomy, or even split organizations as a strategy to maximize their flexibility as they respond to state-level electoral demands. However, no support was found for a relationship between the federal institutional structure and the degree of state party influence in the federal party.

Patterns by party family provide an intuitively appealing, if not statistically significant, alternative explanation. Social democratic parties, with a history of organizational centralization, generally had lower party influence scores than the institutional model would predict. We witness here the imprint of traditional models of social democratic organization: when these parties are decentralized, they build their strength from the grassroots constituency level, rather than from the state parties, yielding low levels of state party influence.

The data from party statutes provide a useful picture of vertical integration and autonomy from a constitutional perspective. While difficult to collect, comparative data on informal forms of cooperation and coordination would be a valuable addition to our understanding of the linkages between state and federal parties by adding nuanced qualitative information on the modes of informal coordination and linkage within parties. This should be high on the agenda for further research on parties in multi-level contexts.

Appendix: Party Statutes and Party Websites

Australia

Australian Democrats: National Constitution and Regulations, 6 July 2004.
National Constitution of the ALP, as amended at the 43rd ALP National Conference 2004.
Liberal Party of Australia, Federal Constitution, 1999.

Austria

Das Organisationsstatut. (SPÖ) 30 November 2004.
Satzungen der partei: Die Grünen. Beschlossen vom 24. Bundeskongress, 24 January 2004.
'Hintergrund: Die Statuten der FPÖ', press release published on party website, 9 April 2005, www.fpoe.at

Canada

Conservative Party of Canada Constitution, as amended 19 March 2005.
Liberal Party of Canada statutes for provincial parties in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

Germany

Statut der CDU Deutschlands, 1 August 2004.
Der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1 January 2004.
Die Linkspartei – Das Statut der Linkspartei, 17 July 2005.
German FDP – Mitmachen in der Freien Demokratischen Partei (on FDP website).

Spain

PSOE, Estatutos Federales.

Estatutos de Izquierda Unida, VI Asamblea Federal, 27–29 October 2000.

Estatutos Aprobados Por El XV Congreso Nacional Del Partido Popular.

Switzerland

Union Démocratique du Centre (UDC) Statuts, 1 April 2004.

Statuts du PS suisse, 14–15 October 2000.

Statuts du PDC suisse, 25 June 2005.

Statuts du Parti radical-démocratique Suisse, 16 April 2004.

United States

The Rules of the Republican Party as Adopted by the 2004 Republican National Convention, 30 August 2004.

Democratic party, www.democrats.org/a/party/ourorganization.html

Notes

- 1 Federal countries, thus, most clearly manifest the challenges for state-wide parties in multi-level political systems, identified in the Introduction to this issue. In this article, I use the term ‘state’ to refer to the units of the federation, and ‘federal’ party to describe parties operating at the national level.
- 2 I include Spain in the analysis, which comparativists have classified as a federation ‘in all but name’ (Watts, 1999: 30), but exclude the United Kingdom, a devolved unitary state, due to the absence of constitutional guarantees over devolved powers and sub-national institutions. Belgian parties organize at the regional level only; I do not measure the integration and autonomy of its parties. I assess the case of the FPÖ before its 2005 split resulting in the formation of the BZÖ.
- 3 Where party statutes were not available, I use official party documents.
- 4 With survey data, a richer conceptualization can be formulated and measured to include interdependence in the daily operation of parties through shared personnel, campaign assistance and service provision, informal cooperation through campaign trail support by party leaders and mechanisms for policy coordination.
- 5 This article focuses on vertical linkages resulting from relationships between territorial levels of the party. In many parties, however, horizontal integrative linkages between factions or affiliated organizations of the party may play a prominent role in the party organization.
- 6 For most countries, the rank order of the combined score is consistent with the rankings for revenue and expenditure. Australia is a minor exception: its revenue centralization exceeds that of Austria by 1 percent. Spain (1995–2000) is a major exception: its revenue centralization is 0.74, while its expenditures are a highly decentralized 0.38, the lowest of any country.
- 7 I include the Liberal Party in Canada as two cases, integrated and non-integrated, to capture the two models of organization chosen by the provincial parties.

- 8 This tendency for Liberal and protest parties to have strong state, provincial or Land organizations may be due to local party notables relying on the resources of state government to build a party power base.
- 9 The Fisher Exact Test statistic is 15.690 and the two-tailed significance is 0.075.

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