



SCOTTISH EXCEPTIONALISM? NORMATIVE CODES OF SCOTTISH NATIONALISM IN THE BRITISH AND EU CRISES

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Abstract : Scotland has thus far proved immune to the appeal of right-wing populism present in many European neoliberal democracies. This paper argues that changing tension balances in the crises facing the UK as a union state cannot be reduced to an understanding of the supposedly internal challenge of Scottish sub-state nationalism. Instead sub-state nationalism needs to be situated in the shifting long-term, inter-state power balances of Britain as a union state and a rising and falling world power. Such an approach builds on the promise offered by the historical sociology of Norbert Elias to account for the over-functioning of the normative humanist we-ideals of Scottish civic nationalism in the British and EU crises.

Keywords: Scotland; Civic Nationalism; Normative Duality; Double-declining; Post-imperial Decline

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Introduction

One of the side-effects of the UK referendum of 2016 on EU membership is that it accentuated the internal crisis of the British state. Brexit presented rejuvenated sub-state nationalism in Scotland with another opportunity to threaten the territorial integrity of the UK state. While England voted narrowly to leave the EU (53:47) Scotland voted even more emphatically to remain (62:38). This led to renewed claims about a progressive “civic”, largely social democratic nation being wrenched out of the EU against its will by nativist, right-wing English populism. Similar claims were voiced two years earlier during the 2014 referendum on an “independent” Scottish state that resulted in a narrow margin (55:45) to remain part of the UK. The Scottish Independence referendum witnessed mass participation in sometimes acrimonious, emotionally-charged public debate and activity, culminating in the highest ever recorded vote (85 percent) in the UK since the advent of universal suffrage.

With the break-up of the union state narrowly avoided, Prime Minister David Cameron placed a reckless wager on the EU referendum, a gamble condemned as inept from the point of view of ruling elites attempting to negotiate deep-rooted power tensions of a crisis-ridden UK state. Jessop (2017: 134) summarised the main contours of the «organic crisis» afflicting the UK state as «a long-running split in the establishment, a worsening representational crisis in the party system, a growing crisis of authority for political elites, a legitimacy crisis of the state, and a crisis of national-popular hegemony over the population».

In the context of resurgent ethno-nationalism, protectionism and Brexit, Scotland might appear to be something of an anomaly. Thus far it has proved immune to the appeal of right-wing populism that has harnessed popular resentments and discontent elsewhere in the West. Instead, popular grievance against neoliberal austerity has been channelled by the well-worn parliamentary routines of the governing Scottish National Party (SNP) and what is seen, problematically, as the unchallenged hegemony of “civic nationalism” over ethnic nationalism. This paper argues that the “we-they” images of the civic nation more or less successfully bracket out Scotland’s historical complicity in British power politics, imperialist violence and the humiliating trauma of national decline. Politics in Scotland trade on deepening processes of functional democratisation and more equal power chances for past outsider groups, principally women, Catholics and LGBT, and evince a relatively high level of collective awareness and public stigma of overt displays of social superiority and offensive denigration of socially weaker groups.

Perhaps surprisingly from a post-national perspective, sub-state nationalism in Scotland is also enthusiastically European. Although it opposes an encroaching European super-state, the SNP advocates deeper integration at the level of the European Union – under the oxymoronic slogan “Independence in Europe” – at the same time as seeking to dissolve the union state. It is necessary to examine critically the thesis of apparent Scottish exceptionalism by situating normative appeals to civic humanism within a historical sociology of the long-term, inter-state power balances of as a rising and falling world power. Such an approach builds on the promise offered by the historical sociology of Norbert Elias on state formation processes and national habitus. Putting the British state formation process in long-term perspective has the advantage of clarifying the general trajectory of increasingly large-scale social integration processes through what Elias described as «all the fissions and fusions, all the disintegration and integration spurts» (2008a: 111).

Scotland in the maelstrom

The presumed absence of “pathological” or essentialist forms of Scottish nationalism is typically explained in terms of the survival since the founding of the Union state in 1707 of an autonomous, extra-state civil society, principally the institutions of religion, education and law, that somehow continuously characterise Scotland as an eminently charismatic “stateless nation” (McCrone 1992). National elites in Scotland commend civil society as largely immune to assertions of in-group superiority and

outsider inferiority. This not only obscures processes described by Stephen Menell (2007) as “functional de-democratisation” of widening power differentials and more ambivalent We-I images *within* Scotland, it also evades the strategic contribution of Scots as soldiers, administrators and colonists to the British empire (Devine 2003).

Historically, right wing populism in Scotland tended to be marginalised by the sectarian power chances of Protestants as an established group resisting the weaker power bases of outsider Irish Catholicism (Bowd 2013). Since the 1950s, however, secularisation, economic restructuring and democratisation processes have eroded the cohesion and controls of the sectarian figuration and generated more equal power chances for Catholic outsiders (Law 2016). As the established Protestant group gradually lost its charismatic self-worth they, by and large, adjusted to reality without lapsing into collective fantasy images that often issue from the experience of group trauma (Elias, Scotston 2008). While not without its tensions and conflicts, this process produced a relatively high level of awareness of the dissolution of the special superiority of the established Protestant group. Expressions of sectarian superiority began to be felt by many as a badge of shame rather than one of privilege. Some attempted to emotionally escape the changed relations symbolically through the “controlled de-controlling” of sectarian fantasy images ritualistically enacted at public parades and football-related displays. In 2012 the nationalist government made the display of sectarian symbols at football games a criminal offence as part of a top-down “civilising offensive” (Flint, Powell 2013).

At stake here is what Elias (2013: 169) identified as the «duality of normative codes within the nation-state»: on the one hand, a humanist code that elevates the inherent equality of individuals as the highest human value and, on the other hand, a great power code that asserts the exclusive rights of the nation-state as the highest human ideal. The duality of normative codes is mediated by an argumentative repertoire that Michael Billig (1998: 87-8) terms «double-declaming». Double-declaming refers to an ambivalent repertoire of in-group rhetoric where justifications and we-ideals, premises and conclusions, *explanans* and *explanandum*, constantly change places to simultaneously support and deny unequal relations of group superiority and self-praise while, at the same time, appearing to affirm the more equal relations of functional democratisation (Billig 1998).

Within nations rhetorical strategies of double-declaming allow people to lend a specific but shifting gravity to one side or the other of the dual normative code in the ordinary course of arguing and thinking with others. In Scotland, the praise code denies that it is a praise code by decentering the emotional we-ideals of group superiority the better to articulate them on a more rational, civic and humanist basis. Even the word “nationalism” has been rejected by the leader of the nationalist government in Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon. In a debate with Turkish author Elif Şafak, whose 2006 novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* was condemned by nationalists for «insulting Turkishness» (BBC 2017), Sturgeon rejected the ethnocentric connotations of the term that it has «in other parts of the world» (not here) and would remove the word from the name of her party if that were possible (which it isn't). Anyone who feels Scottish regardless of their origin, the First Minister claimed, has «as much say over the future of the country as I do». Here, somewhat improbably, the egalitarian humanist code is advanced and

the ethnocentric code denied. While the word is overtly disclaimed, Sturgeon hesitated before articulating her defence of civic nationalism: «So the word is hugely, hugely problematic sometimes for those of us who [...] but Scottish independence is about self-government, it's about running your own affairs and making your own mark in the world».

Now, the thing to be justified (the *explanandum*), an independent state, itself becomes the justification (the *explanans*). An independent state is necessary because civic nationalism demands an independent state in a world of other such states. Double-declaming rescues the circular belief in civic nationalism by decentering emotional nationalist pride while rationally re-centring the state to restore national pride – “running our own affairs”, “making our own mark” - that a moment before had been disclaimed. Such a decentred denial of the emotional appeal of collective superiority limits the scope for overtly ethnocentric discourse, even as the praise code is reintroduced by rational appeals to human universals. The decentred people of the civic nation incline strongly towards humanist evaluations and only weakly towards the open glorification of the state as an exclusive ideal.

In England, the we-ideal is personified at the apex of the state by the monarchy as “the minority of the best” par excellence. Yet even the monarchy as a state-led “we-ideal” is beset by ambivalences and rationalisations that respond to Britain’s declining power chances in the world. In his study of the rhetorical psychology of the monarchy, Billig (1998) found that ordinary speakers in England routinely double-declaim to justify their own sense of group superiority as the envy of the outside world, especially America, the most powerful state-society, while at the same time denying any feelings of collective superiority and pride. Ideal national we-images are projected onto outsider nations observing the majesty and mystery of the monarchy, thereby enhancing the self-awareness of the nation’s unique collective and personal charisma. Paradoxically, without a secure image of unearned privilege (monarchy) the nation of equals (England) would cease to be the same nation in the eyes of both its subjects and the world of other nations.

Every crisis and conflict affecting Britain as a state-society, such as Scottish independence or Brexit, is therefore also a division about how to respond by mediating the normative codes from a definite position within the historically-formed national habitus. As groups are integrated into increasingly complex and dense figurations, national forms of integration continue to exert a more intensely affective commitment than post-national forms of integration, such as the European Union or global humanity. A personalised tension-balance is formed through emotional involvement in the we-group of the nation. National we-identity serves as a graphic example of the degree to which the social habitus of the individual provides a soil in which personal, individual differences can flourish. «The individuality of the particular Englishman, Dutchman, Swede or German represents, in a sense, the personal elaboration of a common social, and in this case national, habitus» (Elias 2008b: 210). And, we might add, from within the union state a distinctively Scottish national habitus developed with its own personal and collective gratifications and emotional consolations.

What Billig (1995) also termed “banal nationalism” is founded on the “we-ideal” of group charisma, the unquestioned, tacit and relatively stable conventions of how to talk, behave and feel formed by the national habitus. Group charisma and group disgrace are not fixed for eternity at the extreme poles of the normative duality. Feelings of group disgrace over a violent imperialist past may be soothed by the double-declaming argumentation of present day charisma granted by the moral superiority of rational-national genius (Scottish intellectuals, inventors and scientists) and the humanist discourse of civic, media and political elites. The fact that support for the monarchy is considerably lower and opposition higher in Scotland than England reinforces official we-images of the moral and cognitive superiority of Scotland as an especially egalitarian country.

As the state’s population became increasingly integrated and interdependent it was no longer possible for elite rule to take the absolute form of dynastic states. Dynastic states founded on more or less exclusive elite authority were transformed into national state–societies characterised by political parties as mass institutions.

The reciprocity of the dependence of government on those they govern and of the governed on governments, though still uneven enough, has become less uneven than it used to be. The balance of parties in different countries is a fairly exact indicator of this balance of power and its fluctuations. (Elias 2008a: 116)

The changing power balance is evident in the contrasting fortunes of political parties. In the twenty-first century, the fortunes of the SNP, the party of sub-state nationalism whose central claim is that state territorial boundaries ought to correspond to the imagined boundaries of nation, have waxed in Scotland in an unprecedented fashion. Over the past decade, a sustained upsurge in popular support for sub-state nationalism in Scotland led to the electoral eclipse of the Labour Party, the dominant political institution in Scotland since the 1960s.

Much of the case for civic nationalism in Scotland rests on claims about the cohesive role and civilising function of the post-war welfare state (Paterson 1994). Increasingly it appeared that only sub-state nationalism could defend distinctively “Scottish values” of welfare, equality and humanity. Such claims both inflate the integrative role of the welfare state and obscures the role of the retreat from empire in the emergence of sub-state nationalism. Only with the twilight of decolonisation processes did sub-state nationalism in Scotland begin to appear as a credible response to the inner tensions of British decline. Until the mid-1960s Scottish business, labour, media, colonists and churches remained tenaciously committed to the lure of empire (Glass 2014). Decolonisation enabled nationalism in Scotland to adopt a humanistic, civic post-imperial we-image and progressively abandon Anglophobic ethnocentrism. From being a marginal political group for most of the twentieth-century, the dominance of the SNP in post-imperial Scotland stands, as Glass (2014: 164) argues, as «a legacy of the failed empire».

Historical sociology and imperial decline

While an earlier figurational flow is a necessary precondition for a later one to emerge, the later figuration is not the inevitable or necessary outcome of the earlier one, which may develop or not develop in a range of different possible ways (Elias 2006). History has two main directions for Elias, tending over many generations either towards greater or lesser social integration and differentiation, thus rejecting the false choice between the Scylla of static structures or the Charybdis of unpatterned contingencies (Elias 2012). So, while a state-society figuration like Britain may exhibit a long-term tendency to form a larger, more centralised unit, it is also possible that power tensions and power chances not fully under the control of people enmeshed in the figurational flow may also result in a series of smaller, more fragmented units. Such has been the tendency of the figurational flow in Scotland, itself premised on the long-term flow of UK state-society as marked by relative decline in its global power chances.

Liberal humanism, the British civilising mission of “the white man’s burden”, formed part of the ideological justification of group charisma for illiberal violence and colonial conquest. Imperial neoliberalism continues to be justified, as in the past, by a civilising mission that relegates the violence of the imperial state behind the benevolent imposition of trade, good governance and the rule of law. In order to bolster elite confidence in the imperial project selective forgetfulness about the trauma of past injustices are necessary. The foremost celebrant of imperial neoliberalism today is the historian Niall Ferguson (2003) who, in a series of best-selling books and media appearances, urges state elites to simply hold their nerve against whining critics, to refuse to succumb to a “crisis of confidence” that empire is anything but a good thing in general that bestowed the beneficence of liberal imperialism across the past five hundred years of British and now American world empires.

For Ferguson, unlike Elias, history evinces no long-term pattern or trajectory. Like the financial markets that he takes as his model, the historical process is infinitely complicated, spontaneous and chaotic, although it is also somehow constant and continuous (Morefield 2014). His concept of time is locked into the contingencies of an imperfectly understood dynamic present, where at any moment an unanticipated crisis may erupt to abruptly plunge empires to their doom, an extreme version of short-term horizons, unusual for historians, that Elias (2009) called “presentism”.

History as a permanent contingency is far removed from the process theory of Elias as a historically-derived symbolic means of orientation. Elias refused to entertain the idea that this was the best of all possible worlds, that existing society expresses the highest human ideals. For much sociology of the past century long-term processes have become less relevant, at least in part because the ideals of a new social order of nineteenth century forerunners Comte, Spencer and Marx conflict with the immediate, short-term demands of the present. Earlier sociologists forefronted an «immanent *order of change*» in variable and unplanned processes by which less complex and less differentiated relations become more complex and differentiated (Elias 2006: 145).

Neither is the sophistication of Elias’s figurational model captured by unilinear models of state decline. Post-war state elites were routinely charged with a crisis of

confidence and nostalgic longings for imperial grandeur and a refusal to face a changed reality soberly. Realist discourses of decline have a long pedigree in Britain. In 1776, at the end of the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith (1776) appealed for greater realism in the economic benefits and costs of defending the colonies in America and against the fantasy images of empire entertained by the ruling elites.

The rulers of Great Britain have, for more than a century past, amused the people with the imagination that they possessed a great empire on the west side of the Atlantic. This empire, however, has hitherto existed in imagination only. It has hitherto been, not an empire, but the project of an empire; not a gold mine, but the project of a gold mine ... If any of the provinces of the British empire cannot be made to contribute towards the support of the whole empire, it is surely time that Great Britain should free herself from the expense of defending those provinces in time of war, and of supporting any part of their civil or military establishments in time of peace, and endeavour to accommodate her future views and designs to the real mediocrity of her circumstances (Smith 1776: 944-7)

Neoliberal imperialists like Ferguson would view Smith's call for a process of adaptation to "the real mediocrity" of British state power as closer to a failure of ambition than a realistic policy of imperial expansion.

The phlegmatic British national habitus underwent a further crisis of adaptation associated with precipitous national decline. Much of the critique of national decline, ranging from Marxists, neoliberals to conservatives, explained Britain's apparently intractable crisis from the early 1960s until the 1990s as a consequence of an amateurish, arcadian, moral-humanist elite culture that eschewed modern business, management, scientific and technological cultures (Anderson 1992; Gamble 1994). Where state elites promoted technological infrastructure, critics claimed that this was disproportionately tied to military expenditure in a vainglorious pursuit of global power politics and squeezed out the developmental and entrepreneurial roles of the state (Barnett 1986).

Malaise, crisis and decline discourses framed neoliberalism as the solution to restore the British state-society to its rightful hegemonic place in the world (Overbeek 1990). In her critique of the consensus of the corporatist establishment, Margaret Thatcher acknowledged the influential, and highly debatable, account of UK decline proposed by historian Corelli Barnett (1986). Thatcher claimed that a spurt of competitive individualism and a global geo-political role for the UK state would revive British national charisma. In the afterglow of (a rather fortunate) British victory in the Falklands/Malvinas war Thatcher extolled the superiority strain of Churchillian nationalism:

There were those who thought we could no longer do the great things which we once did. Those who believed that our decline was irreversible – that we could never again be what we were ... that Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world. Well, they were wrong. The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed and that this nation still has those sterling qualities which shine through our history. (Thatcher, in Barnett, 2012: 149-50)

In the face of global functional de-democratisation processes, Thatcher's compensating fantasy we-images combined the humanist code of market individualism and the nationalist power code of "the strong state" (Gamble 1988).

That the decades-old discourse of decline disappeared rather abruptly in the mid-1990s indicates that it no longer needed to fulfil the function of "modernising" the neoliberal state (Gamble 1994). This was not simply due to the explanatory inadequacies of decline discourses. Rather it had more to do with a feeling at large among elites that Britain had been or was in the process of being transformed, "modernised" and "renewed", as New Labour relentlessly put it (Fairclough 2000). National charisma promoted by New Labour's youthful, multicultural and vibrant "cool Britannia" no longer needed to be tempered by the archaic, post-imperial collective shame of national decline, when Britain was described as "the sick man of Europe".

Normative codes and UK state-society

Like most of his (and some of our) contemporaries, Elias underestimated the painful and violent transition process as state elites experienced declining British geo-political and economic power, decolonisation, nationalist movements, and anti-imperial sentiment. In the context of Nazi barbarism, British crises like Suez appeared to Elias as "small lapses" in crises of adaptation. As is well known, Elias (2013: 273) compared the different reactions to national decline in Germany and Britain. In Germany the failure to surrender fantasy images of the nation as a great power in the world resulted in fascist barbarism. In Britain the shock of decline was absorbed gradually without the same paroxysms of rage and shame, "making a last stand by using violence". In one case an attempt was made to make reality fit the we-ideal; in the other the we-ideal adapted to reality, however painful a process. Yet even if he did not elaborate a satisfactory account of the union state Elias (2008b) was well aware of some of the anomalies and peculiarities of Britain as a state-society. In the 1950s it was understandable if the distinction between England and Great Britain was not readily apparent to outsiders given the numerical preponderance of England over other UK nations, and the concentration of population in Greater London over the rest of England. Nonetheless, Elias is far too sanguine about the we-ideals of British statecraft. A century ago the "break-up" of the British state was announced with the opening salvos of the 1916 rising in Dublin (Allen 2016). In 1926 the Balfour Declaration recognised the constitutional autonomy of the predominantly "white" "British Dominions" within the British empire, initially Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland and the Irish Free State, as a loosely-affiliated "commonwealth of nations". This process of shrinking UK statehood continued after the 1939-1945 war with the forced retreat of the British state from its worldwide empire. In 1981 the UK state attempted to salvage the remnants of empire by fighting a war with the Argentine state for possession of a remote island outpost, Falklands/Malvinas, in the South Atlantic (Barnett 2012).

Retreat from empire gave rise to the charismatic group myth of an orderly, peaceful British withdrawal process that avoided the catastrophic escalation of violence of

the French in Algeria or the US in Vietnam. It was often claimed that unlike other global powers Britain adopted a pragmatic humanist doctrine to isolate communist and nationalist non-state insurgents from civilian communities by winning “hearts and minds” to universal British values of decency, restraint and forbearance combined, only when necessary, with the more conventional “kinetic” power of military force (Briant 2015; Mumford 2012). Recent scholarship has amply demonstrated that British decolonisation was paved with torture, repression and atrocities committed against anti-colonial movements and civilians, from the Malayan Emergency (1948-60), the Kenyan Emergency (1952-60), the Aden Emergency (1962-67), to the Northern Ireland “Troubles” (1969-98) (Bennett 2013; Newsinger 2015). More recently, the southern Iraq debacle (2003-09) and Helmand, Afghanistan (2006-14) exposed the national myth of British moral superiority in “minimum force” counter-insurgency acquired over six decades of asymmetrical warfare (Briant 2015).

In responding to individual emergencies, the retreat from empire was predicated by politicians and civil servants on the basis of how best to serve the interests of the UK state. State elites were in competition with each other to establish adequate policy responses. A new power balance began to emerge through such intra-governmental conflict between the defence and “overseas” ministries and the Treasury (Christie 2004). By the 1960s closer cooperation with Europe, long thought anathema to British state power politics, began to supplant the falling economic value of empire and the Commonwealth.

Elias (2008b: 221-3) claims that three structural determinants shaped the British national habitus. First, Britain experienced a continuous development of state and society, uninterrupted for centuries by foreign invasion, conquest and occupation. Second, a high level of urbanisation in Britain concentrated large populations in a limited space, making social interdependency a more keenly felt daily experience. Third, the early absence of a peasantry in Britain, with its isolated, separate forms of life, removed a further barrier to the standardisation of the social habitus. A distinctively British national habitus was not easily disturbed, indeed it was deepened, by war and de-colonialisation processes of the twentieth century. One expression of a secure national habitus was that British public opinion in the 1960s was largely indifferent to closer economic and political union with continental Europe (Elias 2008a).

Parliamentary rule founded on the sportisation of political conflict gave rise to a relatively stable anglo-British national habitus (Elias, Dunning 2008). Elias (2008b: 226) developed a dynamic model of the British state-society as «a field of forces holding each other in equilibrium». Public opinion in post-war Britain was formed, according to Elias (2008b: 227), by spectators impassively watching the public stage of political events but ever ready to actively make themselves heard: «public opinion is not simply a consensus of opinion of many people on a particular question of the day, but something constantly in the process of formation, a living process which advances by swings of the pendulum and, in the course of these swings, influences decisions made in the name of the nation». A largely incoherent body of spectators may on occasion be aroused by a contentious issue that contravenes deeply embedded moral rules and «drive those acting on the political stage from the scene».

Elias gave the example of the Suez crisis of 1956 when British public opinion was deeply divided about the world standing of a once powerful state-society in decline. In the moral outrage expressed by British public opinion over the government's aggression during the Suez crisis, Elias (2008c: 247) detected an affront to the humanist self-images that people entertain of their own nation's standing in the world. Changes in the power balance *between* the UK state and the new bi-polar state system reciprocally affected that between the rulers and ruled *within* the state-society. Suez represented a serious crisis of adaptation for the UK state to the twin pressures of functional democratisation and the geo-political decline of a world power. By and large, Elias claims, the British ruling class gradually came to terms with the trauma of treating nations and classes formerly perceived as subordinate and inferior as more equal in human value. Pragmatic adaptation to new realities and the tempering of unfettered competition in power politics, as in sport and daily life was, Elias thought, a reflex deeply ingrained in the British national habitus.

Alongside the Suez crisis, Elias (2008b: 223-7) gave the long forgotten case of John Waters as a mundane example of the late 1950s British "we-ideal" in operation. Waters, a "cheeky" 15 year-old Scottish schoolboy, was assaulted by a police officer after using "foul language". His father complained to the police about the police assault which the Crown Office decided not to pursue. The case was taken up by the national press and was raised in Parliament by the local MP who demanded a criminal prosecution. Instead a Tribunal of Inquiry was appointed to establish that the legal procedure was properly observed and, crucially, to soothe an aroused British "public opinion". In post-war Britain, public opinion double-declined pragmatically without lapsing dogmatically to extremes, in this case first supporting a public inquiry, while later questioning its value as an excessive response to a relatively minor matter.

The moral weight of the humanist code

The universe described by Elias of a seamless and shared British "we-ideal" no longer corresponds to the national habitus in Scotland. Social attitude surveys show that Scots identify less and less as British and more and more as Scottish (see Table 1). In forced choice surveys around 60 percent of Scots identify as exclusively or more Scottish than British, up to one third identify as equally Scottish and British, while only a very small number identify as mainly British.

A diverging politics in Scotland cannot be explained by a different socio-economic structure or different moral values. Like other post-industrial wastelands Scotland experienced an acute process of functional de-democratisation with the collapse of manufacturing employment in the 1980s. It experiences some of the worst and rising levels of poverty, income and health inequalities in Europe (Scottish Government, 2017). Males in Scotland have one of the lowest life expectancies in Western Europe, with the highest levels of morbidity concentrated in the post-industrial urban centres (Walsh *et alii* 2010). Such indices of functional de-democratisation are typically thought to provide fertile breeding ground for the retaliation of angry populism associated with groups "left behind" by neoliberal cosmopolitanism.

Table 1: *Scottish and British national identity, 1997 - 2014 (percent)*

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2003	2007	2009	2011	2014
<i>Scottish not British</i>	23	32	37	36	31	27	27	31	27
<i>More Scottish than British</i>	38	35	31	30	34	30	31	34	32
<i>Equally Scottish and British</i>	27	22	21	24	22	28	26	24	35
<i>More British than Scottish</i>	4	3	3	3	4	5	4	4	3
<i>British not Scottish</i>	4	4	4	3	4	6	4	3	2

Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, in McCrone and Bechoffer, 2015: 132; McCrone, 2017: 454

Given broad structural and attitudinal similarities, the absence of a populist backlash movement in Scotland is typically explained by an appeal to the political realism of a small nation. Sub-state nationalism in Scotland, it is claimed, is inoculated against overblown rhetoric about outsiders or nostalgic hankerings for the re-industrialisation and re-masculinisation of labour power. As one authoritative commentator has argued, Scotland is a highly integrated, small nation led by a social liberal elite that provides civic nationalism with a “relatively benign” and outward looking character:

Scotland is fortunate in having a form of relatively benign identity politics in the shape of Scottish nationalism. Patriotism isn't necessarily a bad thing provided it is attached to higher ideals than narrow self-interest. Small countries have to have modest ambitions and no-one talks of making “Scotland Great Again”... The lesson from Scotland is surely that, with enlightened political leadership, it is not inevitable that economic grievance should express itself as working-class revolt against social liberalism. (Macwhirter 2016: 37)

From such perspectives, deepening processes of functional democratisation defuse the resentments of functional de-democratisation processes. Appeals are made routinely to a long tradition of egalitarian humanism in Scotland, encapsulated by Robert Burns’ poem *A Man’s a Man for a’ That* of 1795, sung at the official opening ceremony of the Scottish parliament in 1999 but also sung by socialist politicians to protest at the Scottish parliament’s oath of allegiance to the Queen:

Gie fools their silks,
and knaves their wine;
A Man's a Man for a' that ...

The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that,
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that...

It's comin yet for a' that,
That Man to Man the warld o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

By the twenty-first century more equal power chances in Scotland were not limited to men, illustrated by the fact that all the leaders of the main political parties and the First Minister in Scotland are women while two party leaders publicly identify as LGBT.

Similarly, the Scottish government appeals to the Eurocentric we-ideals of civic nationalism in contrast to the Eurosceptic antagonism of British state nationalism. Following the Brexit vote the official position of the Scottish government was outlined in a statement intended for an international readership: *Scotland: A European Nation*. This emphasised that Scotland's national history has been closely intertwined with European power politics, cultural flows and migration patterns: «Scotland has always had strong ties with Europe both as an independent nation until 1707 and as part of the United Kingdom thereafter» (Scottish Government 2016: 7). The nationalist claim is repeated here that Scotland existed as an ancient European nation long before the eighteenth century (Ichijo 2004). In the official government text this is charted from the introduction of Christianity to Scotland in the 6th century, the “Auld Alliance” with France of the 13th century, intellectual, military and trading exchanges across feudal Europe, the Scottish enlightenment as part of a wider European movement, the birth of literary romanticism in the nineteenth century, through to the more prosaic present day realities of Erasmus student exchange programme, cultural festivals, and transnational flows in capital and labour.

All nations balance between the collective hubris of nationalism and the universal moral codes of humanism. An underlying humanism of official civic nationalism affirms the moral virtue of greater human integration while preserving national distinctiveness. Nations not only face inwards but also outwards where their standing in the eyes of other nations matters a great deal to the collective sense of self-worth. As the Scottish government argues: «Scotland is a European nation grounded in the desire

for peace and justice, firm in its cultural, environmental, social and economic ambition, and inspired by a generous vision of our obligations to fellow human beings and to the world» (Scottish Government 2016: 18). Moreover, the document concludes with a list of Scotland's unique achievements in education, science and technology (including inventions and discoveries of the steam engine, fridge, telephone, television, pneumatic tyre, penicillin, bicycle, mammal cloning, the Higgs Boson particle), an official reminder to the Scottish nation of its own special group charisma (Elias, Scotston 2008).

Scotland in the balance

In Scotland, official forms of double-declaming continue to subordinate codes of declining UK state power as magical thinking under routine appeals to the democratic and humanist codes of collective self-praise. In the duality of the normative codes of civic nationalism humanist codes greatly outweigh coercive state power codes, limiting the opportunities for overt displays of ethnocentric superiority in Scotland beyond the sectarian margins. Yet it is important to stress that until the twenty-first century the established nationalism of the union state commanded wide if declining hegemony in Scotland. Indeed, British state nationalists supported devolution in the 1998 referendum with the expectation that it would act as a permanent barrier to the formation an independent Scottish state.

With the loss of empire, opportunities for personal advancement were reduced for ambitious Scots. What was once an avowed source of Anglo-Scottish we-group pride became increasingly perceived by Scots as one of British out-group shame. Once the British crisis of confidence was symbolically abolished by Blair the demands of sub-state nationalism in Scotland began to be addressed. Until then, the union state had more or less successfully managed the internal tensions of Scottish nationalism, which oscillated between appealing to formal rights as an equal partner in the Union and the substantive injustices of a dominated nation in an unequal Union that was not freely chosen. In each case, an ideal we-image of the Scottish nation and its institutions has been repeatedly mobilised to demand either a reformed Union or its abolition. For sub-state nationalists the union state always appears Janus-faced: it needs either strengthened or eliminated. It can never take a final, settled form.

Only when the power balance represented by sub-state devolution inevitably failed to satisfy renewed demands for social reform was the question of an “independent” Scottish state posed in a zero-sum way. Like the EU Leave slogan that urged voters to “take back control”, the Scottish National Party (Scottish Government 2013: 1) made the case for an “independent” state with the claim that «Scotland's future will be in Scotland's hands». Sub-state formation processes in Scotland were subject to a further developmental spurt in 2016 with the UK referendum on membership of the European Union. A further referendum to establish an independent Scottish state has been postponed as the Brexit disorder presents ever new grounds for nationalist grievance, a process that will add further fuel to an already blazing firestorm engulfing the UK state.

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