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Identity, Class and Civil Society in Scotland's Neo-Nationalism

Dr Jonathan Hearn
School of Social and Political Studies
University of Edinburgh

j.hearn@ed.ac.uk

Introduction

In recent decades the concept of civil society has played a central role in the popular political discourse of, and scholarly commentary on, Scottish nationalism (e.g., Brown *et al.* 1998; Maxwell 1999; Morton 1999). Lindsay Paterson (1994) has argued that Scotland's robust civil society helped it preserve a high degree of institutional autonomy after the Union of 1707, and that the current process of devolution is a way of preserving that autonomy. Tom Nairn (1997: 73-89) objects to Paterson's argument, viewing civil society as a concept specifically descriptive of Scotland's elite political management without its own state in the eighteenth century. He views civil society as a misleadingly apolitical concept, preferring instead to talk of 'civic nationalism', and to link civicness to explicitly politicised national identities. Be that as it may, civil society is so much a part of the common parlance of Scottish politics today, that it perhaps makes more sense to re-politicise it, than to rule it out of court. Moreover, the usefulness of the concept lies not in whether it is a satisfactory substitute for the high politics of statehood, but rather in the ways it can help map the lineaments of power that join the state to a broader society, through various means of association, organisation, mobilisation, and opinion formation (Hearn 2000: 19-22).

This article attempts to develop such a repoliticised notion of civil society in three ways. First, by examining shifts in class structure, party system, and political leadership in Scotland in this century, then by defining civil society in Scotland, and finally, at a more theoretical level, by using Weber's interdependent concepts of class, status groups, and parties as a device for rethinking civil society in general. Doing this I believe helps illuminate another issue. It has become common to argue that there has been a 'dealignment' of class and voting behaviour since the 1960s (Särlvik and Crewe 1983), sometimes seen as heralding 'the end of class' (Clark and Lipset 1991) and the rise of 'identity' as a basis for politics. In keeping with this, analysis of survey research by Brown *et al.* (1999) indicates that class structure fails to account for substantial divergence in voting behaviour between Scotland and England, namely stronger support for Labour and weaker support for the Conservatives in Scotland, and that class location is a relatively weak predictor of party choice in Scotland. Instead, strong identification as working class and as Scottish are better predictors of voting behaviour

(particularly support for the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Labour). I think that a critical conception of civil society, informed by Weber, can help make sense of this apparent ascendancy of identity over class in political behaviour.

Changing Patterns of Class and Party Support

  A distinctive pattern of party support emerges from the analysis in *The Scottish Electorate* (Brown *et al.* 1999). While broadly dealigned, there are significant differences. As we move up the class scale that is employed--working class, manual foremen and technicians, petty bourgeoisie, routine non-manual, salariat[1]--we see highly uneven distributions of class support for parties gradually even out as we approach the salariat. The overall pattern is one in which support for the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats is relatively restricted to the upper three classes, especially the salariat, while Labour and the SNP draw support more evenly across the class spectrum, with much greater support than the other two parties from the bottom two classes (see table 3.5, p.54). It is specifically within the top three classes, and especially the salariat, that the notion of partisan dealignment is most compelling, a situation accentuated by dealignment across four political parties. This data might suggest a very low relevance of membership in the salariat to any understanding of party preferences, but we might equally see it as an indication of important divisions within the salariat around issues of economic and social policy, and Scotland's constitutional future. A key point here is that in the latter twentieth century the professionals of the salariat tend to provide the leadership of both civil society and the political parties.

  We can look at transformations of class in Scotland over the last century to see if that sheds light on how the patterns outlined above came into being. John Foster (1992) has focused on a paradox in the history of classes and mass party politics in Scotland. Simply put, it is that the long slow decline of heavy industry in Scotland, and its piecemeal replacement by lighter industries and an expanding service sector, has corresponded with a secular rise, rather than a decline, in support for the Labour Party. Considering that the SNP has achieved 'number two' status partly by imitating traditional Labour policies only underscores this paradox. Foster's answer to this riddle is that, compared to England, the working class in Scotland was

relatively unorganised and divided before World War Two by the coercive power of strong local capital bolstered by Protestant-Catholic factionalism, whereas since then the Scottish working/middle class has become more unified behind the project of the welfare state and by a collective, national relationship of uncertainty to more remote loci of capital. Others have been less inclined to see this process as one of consolidation of class interests, in view of the ramifying complexity of occupational structures under deindustrialisation, which produces a varied series of manual and non-manual occupational segments (Brown *et al.* 1999; McCrone 1992a). However, there is general agreement that Scottish politics is shaped by a widespread, moderate social democratic ethos which sees a significant place for state-led action in regard to economic and social policies and wealth redistribution. The question is, does this reflect a relative dominance of the political culture by a modern, complex working class, or an unusual national solidarity across class divisions? More cynically, this left-of-centre ethos might be viewed as an ideological process obscuring the very dealignment of class interest and party politics we have been discussing.

  One of the problems of dealignment theory is that it tends to uncritically assume a marxist model of two great classes, reflected in two great parties, as the normal state of affairs in modern mass politics, whereas this might simply be a historical form peculiar to bi-partisan systems in the process of industrialisation. If we assume, in line with Weber (1978: 302-7), a more complex class system involving varied dimensions of competing interests, then we are likely to expect shifting historical alliances between classes and class fractions, generating imprecise correspondences between what we might take to be the objective interests of various class groups, and the distributions of support for parties and policies. With this perspective in mind, let us turn to a more detailed look at class transformations in twentieth-century Scotland, as provided by the work of David McCrone (1992b; 1996).

  McCrone focuses on another paradox, related to Foster's (McCrone 1996: 105-6). He argues that given the basic underlying similarities in industrial and occupational structures in Scotland and England, social class does not easily explain their divergent patterns of voting behaviour, especially in regard to support for Labour and the Conservatives. McCrone suggests that we must look for intervening variables affecting the 'class culture', in

particular, he credits the distinctive institutional nexus of Scottish civil society--law, education, churches, local government--and the way these have shaped a social ethos and political values (see also Paterson 1994). As McCrone puts it:

> Ideas about class and social opportunity are firmly embedded in Scottish civil society. That is the clue to understanding the culture of class. How people act will not be the result of automatic responses to structural dictates, but will result from the meanings, values and ideas which structural aspects have in the society (McCrone 1996: 115)

This account of institutional distinctiveness needs to be understood in tandem with McCrone's earlier assessment of changing elites in twentieth-century Scotland (1992b). By 1900 Scotland had developed a strong indigenous industrial bourgeoisie which had inter-married with the landed gentry, developing complex patterns of corporate ownership clustering around capital interests in Glasgow and Edinburgh. This mixture of capital and large rentier interests achieved political leadership through the Conservative and Liberal-Unionist Parties and an ideology which fused imperialism, unionism and Protestantism, attracting the allegiances of middle and working classes. The relatively small educated professional class was drawn from this elite mixed with the upwardly mobile from the rural middle classes. In the cities a petit bourgeoisie functioned as a small rentier class, and dominated local government. Elected as 'Independents', and later through loose coalitions styled 'Progressive' and 'Moderate', they espoused a supposedly 'non-political' approach to the prudent management of urban affairs. In the countryside a couple of centuries of agricultural 'improvement' had substantially diminished the rural bourgeoisie and proletariat, further mechanisation leading to extreme contraction and marginalisation of these classes in the inter-war years.

Continued technological change and the growth of the welfare state had a profound effect on this distribution of class powers. Not only did the industrial proletariat develop a distinctive political influence through the growing Labour Party after World War One, but the indigenous industrial bourgeoisie was gradually partially displaced from its socially dominant

position, by competition from external capital, by increased government control of industry through centralised planning, and by their own propensity to reinvest abroad. Meanwhile housing reforms meant that the urban petit bourgeoisie's position as a small rentier class was weakened, leading them to become more detached from the large bourgeoisie, more a class unto themselves, and the growth in government bureaucracy and ancillary services led to an expansion and broadening of the professional classes, in a way that blended with the developing, more highly educated, white collar proletariat. Moreover, the personnel of this diverse professional/service sector class milieu, thanks to the mid-century opportunities for advancement offered by the welfare state, has been increasingly drawn from the shrinking ranks of the of the older industrial proletariat. My language here is vague because this is an analytically difficult category, a class continuum made up of many fractions which, under the right conditions, could undergo considerable internal political differentiation. There are likely to be profound differences in socialisation and life chances between lawyers, school teachers, call centre workers, and fast food servers. While the old professions (doctors, lawyers, professors, etc.) and a service sector proletariat should be distinguished, it is of some consequence that they are now linked through a gradated and overlapping hierarchy, generated under the aegis of the managerial welfare state, and that the occupants of these positions may have similar class origins in the previous generation.

Thus the c.1900 dynamic of class-based political leadership through the party system has been eroded and replaced. The current big business class is substantially diminished compared to its predecessor, and the remaining aristocracy and landed gentry politically marginalised and hampered by an 'alien' (i.e. anglified) status. Over the century they have learned to share the field of political/class leadership with the broad managerial/professional class, spanning public and private sectors, that forms the upper tier of the complex class-milieu hierarchy just described. Today the experienced leadership of the four main political parties tends to come from these ranks. Transformations of state, class, and party system in the twentieth century have had a profound effect. Scots, and Britons as a whole, no longer accept the kind of naturalised notions of class hierarchy that were prevalent in the Victorian and Edwardian eras (the embattled reputation of the monarchy, and the looming fate of the

House of Lords are further indications of this). British and Scottish conceptions of appropriate class relations have moved several degrees toward the US model. There is still class hierarchy, of course, but it is now the 'salariat' that stands at the head, and that must lead precisely by obscuring its class distinctiveness, and highlighting its interdigitation with the gradated welfare state class structure. In general, Labour and the SNP are succeeding in this task, while the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats are not. While the class leadership of all four parties is relatively similar, these latter two are more grounded in the older landed, commercial and professional classes, and thus carry baggage of an older, more culturally recognisable elitism, along with the distinctive interests of those class fractions.

  With these transformations of class and state the political leadership potential of the salariat in Scotland has become inextricably linked to the issue of devolution and self-government (Paterson 1991). In the world wrought by the welfare state and the penetration of non-Scottish capital, to advocate laissez faire and minimal government is to appear not to lead. This has been the problem of the Conservatives in Scotland--not simply that they espouse a social ethos out of step with the Scottish norm--but that by current Scottish standards, they have refused to lead.   The Liberal Democrats have an historic commitment to devolution and federalism in Britain, and have played an important role the political mobilisation that led to the new parliament. But in a sense, with their rurally rooted, respectable professional middle class credentials, they arrived at the ideal combination of entrenchment in the salariat along with pro-devolution politics too early. In the popular imagination, despite social democratic policies, they are not plausible as a mass party, unable to elide the difference between the salariat which is their home-base and the broader middle/working class. Here both Labour and the SNP have the advantage of having come of age through the very creation of the contemporary welfare state class system--they are creatures of it. They have naturally appended themselves to the modern Scottish salariat as it has grown. Despite early commitments to home rule, Labour has had a commitment to political leadership through centralised policy formation at Westminster since the middle of the century, and for a long time this made the party reluctant or ambivalent about a devolved form of leadership. But the long years of the north-south divide and Conservative government, along with Scottish

resistance to a UK level retreat in the Party from traditional social democratic policies (i.e., resistance to 'New Labour'), has created a situation in which home rule became an essential ingredient in political leadership in Scotland (or at the very least, the appearance of leadership). Meanwhile, the creeping professionalisation and embourgeoisment of the party leadership across the century has given it a firm place within the salariat. The SNP has eclectic roots in terms of class, and long vacillated between 'party' and 'movement' strategies in its campaign for independence. But in the 1960s the SNP began to develop into a viable party, and by the 1980s was shedding its earlier petit bourgeois image. Whereas Labour has had to get behind home rule over the past twenty years in order to appear to lead in Scotland and thus justify its broad support, the SNP has struggled to expand its middle and working class support and its presence in local government in order to appear serious and experienced enough to handle the new form of political leadership it's members have so passionately advocated.

Civil Society and the 'New Class'

As suggested at the outset, civil society has served both as an analytic tool for academics studying Scottish politics (Paterson 1998; USGS 1998), and as a popular rallying cry for pro-home rule activists. The term is often used almost as a shorthand for the familiar triumvirate of church, law and education preserved and entrenched in the Act of Union. But more generally it indicates the much broader range of non-governmental and quasi-governmental institutional bodies, such as the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), Action Together by Churches in Scotland (ACTS), the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the umbrella organisation The Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), and significantly, the numerous cross-party campaigning groups such as the Campaign for a Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Constitutional Convention that helped prepare the way for the new parliament. This is only an indicative list. It is interesting to note that through bodies such as the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), institutions of local government are often assimilated to this civil society nexus, despite ultimately being organs of the state. Correspondingly, the institutions of the Scottish media (newspapers, radio, television) are

often treated as more marginal to this nexus, and representative bodies of the business community (e.g. the Scottish Federation of Small Businesses) are often conspicuously absent.

  To be fair, civic activists in Scotland are often aware and concerned about this lopsided conception of civil society, and efforts have been made to think about the business community's relationship to the new parliament, about which many sectors of the business community have been less than enthusiastic (Brown and McCrone 1999). But the main point still stands: in keeping with Scotland's left-of-centre political values and support for the welfare state, civil society in Scotland tends to be popularly conceived as a matter of service and welfare oriented public bodies, and not in terms of corporate or individual agents in the marketplace. Thus the popular notion of civil society at play in this context owes very little to Marx's well known indictment of it as a realm of alienated capitalist competition in the marketplace, a '*bellum omnium contra omnes*' (Marx 1994: 37), and much more to a kind of fusion of a Gramscian notion of para-state institutions of great strategic political importance (Gramsci 1971: 210-276), and a Tocquevillian idea of intermediate organisation between the populace and the state, sustained by a spirit of voluntarism (Ehrenberg 1999: 144-69). The popular use of the term has been influenced by left intellectuals in Scotland and Britain who have revived the ideas of Gramsci over the last two decades (e.g. Hall 1988), and taken inspiration from the anti-statist civil society discourses generated in Poland and Eastern Europe during the decline of the Soviet Empire (Pelczynski 1988; Havel 1988). But intellectual fashions can only have influence on popular discourse if they seem to fit the reality people are confronted with, and in Scotland the long confrontation between an ethos of social democratic corporatism and an ideologically hostile Conservative government seems to have been decisive in insuring a congruence of rhetoric and reality. Apart from this ideological confrontation however, there is a distinctive institutional density to Scottish social structure, built up historically, ad hoc, through the course of this century, to which 'civil society' mundanely refers.

  What is significant for the present argument is the close correspondence between this particular national conception of civil society, its institutional reality, and the life paths and careers of the salariat and the broader white collar working-middle class to which I have

suggested it is closely historically tied. Indeed, it is the pervasiveness of this civil society nexus in Scottish social life that has helped generate a sense of unity and consensus behind social democracy and the devolution project in Scotland, in spite of the considerable gradations of class it contains. The salaried academic and the waged lower level bureaucrat that probably would have felt greater social distance a couple of generations ago now find their distinctive fortunes none the less contained within this common institutional nexus, an array of class fractions sharing a corporatised fate. About twenty years ago Alvin Gouldner (1979) adapted Djilas's (1957) concept of 'The New Class' to describe the social tier of technocrats, experts, and managers generated by the interacting demands of capitalism and the modern state over the last century. Narrowly defined this referred to a new species of intellectuals commanding specialised knowledge and cultural capital; applied more broadly it included the new educated middle classes associated with the expanding service and public sectors. At the turn of the century members of this New Class often provided leadership and key sectors of support to both nationalist (cf. Mann 1993: 546-596) and socialist (cf. Levy 1987) movements. During the middle years of this century, these New Classes became strongly associated with the technocratic projects of Keynesian and socialist states in the west and east respectively. But with the retrenchments of the welfare state since the 1970s, the latest generation of the New Class has had to reconfigure, and rethink, its social role. The Scottish demand for devolution and/or independence reflects in part this process of New Class intellectuals redefining and reconstructing their positions, including conceptions of social obligation and responsibility, in a changing political economic environment. In a sense they are reclaiming the institutions of state and civil society, and reaffirming their interdependent relationship, because that is where this sector of society is bound to find its way in life. The fact that 'civil society' has become a label of self-ascription for middle class intellectuals and activists in recent years in Scotland indicates, I would argue, a need to re-establish and revalorise the legitimacy of the New Class in a world where its estrangement from the state, and in some cases redefinition as a threat to society, has created a crisis of identity and social standing. The formation of the New Class is a general phenomenon in the industrialised countries, but in the Scottish context a significant portion of the New Class has

found its particular fortunes in the rather corporatist structures of a national civil society. Thus a highly general process of class and state transformation takes on a specific, localised political form.

Rogers Brubaker has drawn on the 'new institutionalism' in sociology in order to highlight the '...constitutive rather than merely constraining role of institutions...' (1996: 24). His aim is to demonstrate how current nationalisms and national identities in the former Soviet Union are not simply ancient ethnic sentiments long held in check, and now unleashed, but rather that they were very much re-created and sustained through the policies of the USSR, in which they served as legal categories both of territorial authority and personal identity. As he observes:

> A whole series of features of the Soviet nationality regime...were radically incompatible with the organizational model of the nation-state. These included the Soviet system of ethno-territorial federalism; the elaborate codification of, and pervasive significance attached to, personal nationality; the cultivation of a large number of distinct national intelligentsias; the cultivation of distinct national cadres, allowed, for the most part, to live and work in "their own" national territories; the deliberate policy of nation building, aimed at the consolidation of non-Russian nations, pursued in the 1920s and early 1930s; the cultivation and codification of a large number of national languages; and the development of an elaborate system of schooling, including higher education, in non-Russian languages (1996: 29).

While I am sceptical about the lessons to be learned for Scotland from the conceptions of civil society generated in Eastern Europe around the unravelling of the USSR, Brubaker's more general 'institutionalist' point seems acutely relevant to the present discussion. Scottish nationalism, understood broadly to include both those who support only devolution and those who prefer independence, has been similarly sustained and reinforced by a series of institutional conditions that have developed over the years, only to be increasingly exposed as the national fault lines of a changing system of British politics. To be sure, the Soviet project was one of catch-up industrialisation and state-building, while Scotland's institutional

distinctiveness within the British union is more a result of ad hoc adjustments in its much longer relationship to a first rising and later declining empire. But the more general point is that Scotland's civil society is a prime example of this institutionalisation process, including the institutionalisation of class and national identities, which have been formed by material interests in, and allegiances to, the institutions of civil society.

Revisiting Weber:

A series of historical changes, some of them touched on above, have conditioned the general shift of social analytic attention away from 'class' and toward 'identity' over the last two decades. The growth and diversification of middle classes under state managerialism has rendered class structures more complex. Greater globalisation of relations of production have rendered class relations in the industrial west more obscure, partially restructuring them in terms of transnational neo-colonial relationships. The decline and fall of the Soviet Union has eliminated the Cold War ideological and geopolitical axis of communism versus capitalism, and delegitimated socialism more generally. This process has been accompanied by the spread, out from their heartlands in the US and Britain, of neoliberal economic regimes that resist class as a central framework of social, economic, and political analysis. Meanwhile the expanding middle classes mentioned above have provided the main personnel of an array of new social movements that appear to be oriented around issues other than class, often styled 'post-materialist values'. And a part of this process has been the sharper articulation of politicised identities around forms of exploitation, domination, and exclusion not reducible to economic structures, and new claims to rights and the recognition of citizenship. It is worth reminding ourselves of this broad historical context, lest we too easily attribute changing intellectual frameworks to a simple refinement of ideas and understanding.

A thorough review of the debates around the declining significance of class (e.g., Pakulski and Waters 1996) and the increasing significance of identity (e.g., Cohen 1985) is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, as a way of opening up some of the issues I have been addressing above, I will propose a particular reading of Weber's discussion of classes, status groups, and parties that I think might be helpful.[2] This approach immediately presents a

puzzle, because of the dominant role of Marx and marxian thinking in class theory. For the more orthodox marxist, to turn to Weber is to abandon class as an explanatory framework. None the less, many attempts to sustain marxist analyses of class have involved importing Weberian elements (cf., Wright, et al. 1989), much work consciously attempts to synthesise Marx and Weber (e.g., Mann 1986), and many avowed Weberians will claim to be employing a conception of class, regardless of what marxists think. On the other hand, although Weber is not often made central to new theories of identity and social movements (e.g., Touraine 1988; Melucci 1989), he is often present indirectly through the influence of such figures as Habermas (1981), and the entire project of trying to understand collective social action and its attendant identities can be construed as fundamentally Weberian.

One of the ironies of marxist-Weberian debates about conceptions of class is that the (very real) differences have tended to be highlighted, and Weber's deeper engagement with the analytical problems of the marxian approach have tended to be obscured.[3] Commonly, Weber is represented as making two main contributions. First, in defining class in terms of life chances determined by situations in regard to property and markets, rather than in terms of relations of production, it is often said that '...his is a consumption theory of class rather than a production theory' (Pakulski and Waters 1996: 15). But in fact, in discussing classes Weber placed as much emphasis on what one sells at the market (e.g., labour) as on what one buys (1978: 302). And he uses the consumption-production dichotomy not to distinguish his conception of class from a marxian one, but to distinguish between his conceptions of classes and status groups :

> With some over-simplification, one might thus say that classes are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas status groups are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special styles of life (1978: 937; emphasis in original).

Secondly, by proposing this multi-dimensional notion of class situations (property and markets), and adding the notions of status groups, Weber is generally credited with

recognising that stratification and power have multiple dimensions. The Weberian rejoinder to marxian theory is thus often summed up as: not one system of stratification, but many. This is fine, but it misses a lot of what Weber was up to.

  To put it back in context we have to remind ourselves of two things. First, that the key concern underlying Weber's sociology was to understand human behaviour in terms of the rationalities shaping social action (1978: 3-26). This is why questions of meaning and problems of understanding loom large in his work, because they are inevitably involved in any account of conscious social action. Secondly, the key problem bedevilling Marx's theory of class (or at least one of the major ones), was the problem of class consciousness, of the transformation of 'class-in-itself' into 'class-for-itself'. Despite the brave promises and predictions, this has proven to be a process that only happens partially and fitfully.   My core contention is that Weber's concepts of class, status group, and party need to be understood as an interdependent conceptual system designed specifically to clarify the transformation of relatively objective structural situations that may or may not direct social action, and may or may not do this in a collective way, into more consciously made structures that do guide collective social action (cf. Roth 1978: LXXXVII). Weber's main concern was not to demonstrate the multifaceted nature of stratification (something he probably considered fairly obvious), but rather to address what has come to be known as the structure/agency problem.

  In Weber's terminology, classes, status groups and parties outline a continuum from relatively unconscious to relatively conscious forms of collective social action:

> In our terminology, "classes" are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for social action. We may speak of a "class" when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, insofar as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. This is "class situation" (1978: 927).

In contrast to classes, *Stände (status groups)* are normally groups. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined "class situation", we wish to designate as *status situation* every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, estimation of social honor. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions (1978: 932).

Whereas the genuine place of classes is within the economic order, the place of status groups is within the social order, that is, within the sphere of the distribution of honor. From within these spheres, classes and status groups influence one another and the legal order and are in turn influenced by it. *"Parties"* reside in the sphere of power. Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social power, that is to say, toward influencing social action no matter what its content may be (1978: 938).

There are several things to notice from this set of definitions. While no underlying principle of the determination of status groups and parties by class is invoked, it is observed that there often is a close relationship (especially in regard to property classes). In turn, classes and status groups can provide the bases for the formation of parties, though this is not inevitable. The key point is to grasp the implied hierarchy of social action: classes are defined in terms of an objective situation, regardless of consciousness; status groups are, by definition, conscious to some degree of their group-ness, and mark this fact symbolically; and parties are formed expressly for the purpose of pursuing a political agenda. It is important to bear in mind that Weber's conception of parties was a broad one, designed to include parliamentary parties, but also something more like what we might call 'institutional factions'. They are organised groups that pursue an agenda within a specific legal-institutional context. Thus the formation of rival cliques within bureaucracies, and the organisation and mobilisation of campaigning groups within civil society, would also serve as examples of 'parties' in Weber's terms. More generally, this highlights the point that Weber was trying to devise

highly general concepts that could be applied over a vast field of sociohistorical cases, he was not trying to create concepts specific to nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrial society.

We should be aware of how these three concepts map onto another important distinction in Weber's work: non-legitimate versus legitimate domination. He defined domination as '...the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons...' (1978: 212). But he emphasised the difference between the situational and systemic 'commands' that people encounter (and often obey) as actors in the marketplace, from commands based on some form of authority that requires legitimation, either on rational, traditional, or charismatic grounds (1978: 215). Although authority, or 'legitimate domination', may be underwritten by economic power, particularly in the form of monopoly, this economic domination is not 'legitimate' insofar as it is encountered by social actors as a given, 'natural' condition that guides action, rather than as a willed command that may require justification (1978: 941-48).[4] To put it bluntly and somewhat crudely, classes act primarily within the sphere of non-legitimate domination (the economy), and status groups and parties act in the sphere of legitimate domination, and thus often involve dynamics of power that must be legitimised by claims to authority. Moreover, being based on different principles, the system of legitimated status group power (honour) may often come into fundamental conflict with the system on non-legitimate market power: 'As to the general effect of the status order, only one consequence can be stated, but it is a very important one: the hindrance of the free development of the market' (1978: 937).

Let me steer us back to Scotland now. The preceding discussion leaves us with two questions: (1) we have talked about classes and parties in Scotland, but where do 'status groups' fit in; and (2) how does Weber's system, as I have presented it here, help us analyse the Scottish case? First, in Scotland, the social space that Weber allocates to status groups is prominently occupied by what has been called 'civil society', suggesting the conceptual mapping:

CLASS	STATUS GROUPS	PARTIES
CLASS	CIVIL SOCIETY	PARTIES

   I am not trying to suggest a conceptual identity between status groups and civil society, but simply a high degree of conceptual overlap. Weber himself said status groups are an amorphous category, that range from loosely bounded social strata that mark themselves off from others and make claims to prestige through patterns of consumption, club memberships, and probabilities of intermarriage, to the closed, endogamous ranks of elaborated caste systems. Interestingly, his notion of status groups seems to rely on a combination of milieu-- i.e., social circles and frequencies of interaction--and specific institutionalised forms of interaction, both in terms of practices (in his own case, duelling!), and organisations (social clubs, charities, debating societies, etc.). I think the parallels here to the concept of civil society are striking, in that it is used both to refer to a rather amorphous social sphere in which people interact according to principles of civility, and to a more concrete nexus of institutions and organisations. Moreover, just as the Hindu caste system consists of *varnas* subdivided into numerous *jati* (the normal, more localised and craft/trade-based sense of caste), we can think of Scottish civil society as a macro status group made up of smaller status groups, albeit without the same kind of clear and ritualised internal ranking.

   Status groups are about claims to status, and so is civil society in Scotland. In the public discourse, it is not simply a technical designation of a range of institutions, it carries immediate evaluative content, suggesting a certain civic nobility shared by those identifying themselves as such. Furthermore, Weber noted that status groups can be marked either by positive or negative prestige. I would suggest that when clusters of status groups become involved in political struggles there is likely to be an active contest over interpretations of negative and positive prestige. Thus, as I have argued, in Scotland 'civil society' is largely a gloss for the middle and professional classes of the salariat, Gouldner's 'New Class', and their privileged role in the delivery systems of the modern (welfare) state. This group, or social range, came increasingly to know itself as oppressed and maligned civil society precisely during a period in which it was being demonised in terms of neoliberal ideology, and its fate rendered less secure. Whatever the state of class struggle might be, here we have a case of institutionalised status struggles. And that status struggle has in many ways centred

around a conflict over the proper boundaries of market relations--Scottish civil society, in classic status group fashion, has defended its privileges and has posed a 'hindrance' to the unlimited expansion of the free market, generating an explicit discourse about, and justification of, its rejection of extreme neoliberal principles.

As I suggested above, the key thing that distinguishes status groups from classes is that they have a sense of their own collective identity--this is necessary in order to make status distinctions.[5] I would suggest, conversely, that where there is identity we will find status groups. Therefore, following Weber, I suspect the examination of the role of identity in politics needs to look for the linkages between status group processes of formation and deformation and espousals of identity. The connection between identity and voting behaviour highlighted by Brown et al. (1999) is not all that surprising, indeed one might question the degree to which these are independent variables. It is how both of these are shaped through a history of status struggles, conducted through nationalised politics and government and civil society institutions that needs to investigated. By this reckoning, the pronounced sense of Scottishness that seems so pervasive in Scottish society today, is a result of this heightened articulation of Scottish identity generated by an embattled civil society defending its own status, and generalising it to the population at large, in pursuit of its own legitimacy. This struggle in the mid-range is only exaggerated by a field of political parties which must pursue their own support and legitimacy in the same terms, as standing up for Scotland and its civic institutions.

Conclusion:

Nationalism in Scotland is frequently compared to similar movements in other western, industrialised liberal democracies, most notably in Catalonia and Québec. Under various rubrics, such as 'third wave ethnic demotic nationalisms' (Smith 1991: 138), 'stateless nation-building' (Keating 1997), 'nations without states' (Guibernau 1999), and perhaps most generally 'neo-nationalism' (Nairn 1975), these cases have been commonly bundled together. They are usually characterised as being ambiguous about whether autonomy or independence is being sought, as involving dual and embedded identities in relation to nations and states

that are not congruent, and as being well grounded in coherent civil societies (McCrone 1998: 128-129). The implication of the argument presented here is that it would be worth looking more closely at what is called civil society in several of these cases, and asking to what degree it defines a zone of institutions and career paths occupied by late twentieth-century New Classes seeking to reconstitute the institutional bases of their power and status within constitutional states which are themselves under new pressures from a global neoliberal economic regime. No doubt the defence of cultural identities embodied in such things as language is an important factor, perhaps more so in most other case of neo-nationalism than in Scotland, but it is in the nexus of class fractions, status groups, and civil society, that cultural and political claims upon and against the state, are forged and pursued.

Notes

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[1] Based on Goldthorpe-Heath social class groupings around occupational clusters.

[2] Fevre *et al.* (1997) also argue for the usefulness of Weber's class/status group/party model for the study of nationalism, although unlike the present study, their application of these concepts to matters of language and social closure in Wales does not address the potential relevance of civil society.

[3] While Weber rarely engaged Marx directly, his immediate intellectual milieu included historical materialist theories such as those of Sombart, Schmoller, and Lukács, and he was always concerned to challenge over-generalisation and *a priori* reasoning in social and historical analyses (cf. Roth 1978: LXIX-LXXIII).

[4] Thus Weber treats his study of the City (particularly the occidental city) as a study of non-legitimate domination, in that for him 'A city is always a market center' (1978: 1213).

[5] It should be noted however that although Weber appears to have usually thought of status groups as regularly arrayed in terms of clear hierarchical rankings, status group relations could be much more fluid, and the example of the Hindu caste system is at one extreme.

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