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## **Political Attitudes and National Identities in Scotland and England**

**Ross Bond**

‘Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle’ (Gellner, 1983: 1)

These are the opening sentences of Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism*, one of the most famous books on the subject, by one of its leading scholars. Gellner’s words highlight the fact that any study of nationalism and national identities must consider their political significance, and it is the purpose of this chapter so to do. But in this chapter, and indeed this book, we are concerned with nationalist sentiment of a different kind, that which can more usefully be termed national identity. This relates to a more subjective sense of belonging or attachment to a particular nation, one which the individual assumes is shared with other co-nationals. The chapter will assess the degree to which such sentiments are indeed related to political attitudes.

The chapter will highlight and develop three particular features of ‘political’ attitudes. Firstly, political attitudes may be represented by people’s beliefs about the most appropriate *constitutional* arrangements for the government of the nation within which they are resident: in stark terms, national independence, some form of devolved government at a national level, or centralized government at a state level. This has, self-evidently, been the essence of debates about UK devolution and its possible futures, and, as stated in the introduction, national identities have been an important element of these debates. One might assume that constitutional change in the UK was inspired to a considerable degree by national identities in the ‘non-English’ territories of the UK and that, in turn, the establishment and further development of the devolved political institutions might change conceptions of national identity in the UK, including in England. Are people’s national identities closely aligned with those political attitudes which have constitutional significance? That is the first question which this chapter seeks to answer.

The second kind of political attitudes concern the degree to which people living in one of the national territories of the UK post-devolution feel solidarity with, or dissociation from, those living in the other national territories. States – even devolved states – need a certain amount of ‘glue’ to hold them together. The extent to which national identities are shared between the people of Scotland and England is examined elsewhere in this volume, and certainly shared identities are one important element of solidarity, but so too are certain political opinions. To an extent, these cannot be divorced from the constitutional attitudes outlined above. For example, the attitudes of people in England towards Scottish independence may provide an indication of weakening identification and/or increasing antagonism between these different parts of the UK. However, so too might opinions about the economic and fiscal benefits which each of these ‘partners’ in the Union derives from the continuation of this partnership. Such attitudes may not have a specifically constitutional character, but may nevertheless have important constitutional consequences if evident grievance weakens the glue which holds the state together. Also important in this sense, although less obviously political in character, is the

degree to which people identify on a personal level with those who live in a different nation within the UK. So the second central question to be addressed is the extent to which there is evidence of solidarity or dissociation.

In turn, the third dimension also relates to some extent to the issue of identification and may also have constitutional import. These are what we might call 'ideological-legislative' political attitudes. They are less concerned with constitutional issues and more with normative beliefs about social justice and morality and the ways in which governments might exercise power in accordance with these norms. Rather than examine a series of distinct social issues or policy preferences, it is more useful (and economical) to address ideological-legislative preferences in a broader sense. This will be done through utilising two well-established scales, one of which places individuals on a left-right political spectrum, and the second on a libertarian-authoritarian dimension. If the political character and normative beliefs of people from different national units within the same state show profound differences, then once more this might raise questions about the future stability of that state. Thus the third and final question to be answered concerns whether there are any evident ideological divides between different parts of the UK.

The broader question to be addressed, then, concerns what national identities and political attitudes, and the relationships between them, can tell us about the likelihood of further constitutional change in the post-devolution UK. While recognising that Wales and Northern Ireland are an important part of this post-devolution context, in common with the rest of the book the focus will be on England and Scotland. The evidence which will be drawn upon and evaluated is taken from questions in large-scale social and political surveys. This represents a contrast and complement to much of the other evidence considered in this book. As Bechhofer and McCrone (2007: 253) point out, surveys are a necessary tool when attempting to assess patterns of national identity across broad populations, but it is also important that we are alive to the limitations of this approach, and these will be discussed briefly below.

Many of the survey questions we draw upon were inspired by constitutional change itself and by associated research programmes, not least the Leverhulme Trust programme upon which the book is founded. However, the sheer diversity of questions which constitutional change has generated (and the resource limitations within which even the most generously-funded programmes must work) means that some relevant questions have been asked more frequently, and more recently, than others. The chapter uses the most up-to-date data available with respect to each question. All data are taken from the Scottish and British Social Attitudes Surveys.

### **National identities and the Constitution**

This section investigates whether national identities in Scotland and England are related to three issues of constitutional significance: opinions about the best means of governing the respective countries (what might be called constitutional preferences); political party support; and trust in the institutions of government. As has been discussed elsewhere in the book there are a number of different ways of measuring national identity in survey questions. The method used in this chapter is the 'multiple choice' question which allows people to select as many national identities as they believe apply to them. This question has been consistently asked on an annual basis in the British and Scottish Social Attitudes surveys during the entire period since

devolution. Here we use it to identify three categories of respondent in both Scotland and England: those who identify as Scottish or English but *not* British; those who identify as Scottish or English *and* British; and those who identify as British but *not* Scottish or English<sup>1</sup>. So the question allows us to identify whether people adopt an exclusive ‘sub-state’ national identity (Scottish or English), an exclusive ‘state’ national identity (British), or whether they adopt both of these and thus have a dual national identity. Others have described this distinction as ‘state’/‘national’ (Bechhofer et al, 1999; McCrone et al, 1998) or ‘state’/‘ethnonational’ (Heath & Kellas, 1998; Kellas, 1998) or ‘supranational’/‘national’ (McCrone, 1997). However, describing both ‘sub-state’ and ‘state’ identities as *national* identities is helpful because it makes the important distinction between two different territorial levels while still recognising that, for many people in the UK, Britishness will be conceived of as a national identity in a similar fashion to the ‘sub-state’ identities of English, Scottish and Welsh (Bryant, 2006; Gallagher, 1995: 721; Langlands, 1999).

It should, however, also be recognised that for a number of different reasons (historical, geographical, political, cultural, demographic) the state/sub-state distinction is likely to be more keenly appreciated in Scotland (and indeed in Wales and Northern Ireland) than in England, where many people tend to conflate English and British identities (Kumar, 2003; Langlands, 1999; Rose, 1982). Moreover, the potential limitations of assessing national identities in the UK through survey questions do not end there. As Wynn Jones (2001: 46) points out, even subtler survey measures of national identity do not allow for change in identification based on different social or political contexts. Nor do they uncover the various *meanings* national categories might hold (Brand et al, 1993; Heath and Kellas, 1998; Henderson, 1999), although some survey-based and experimental studies have sought to address this question (see Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007; Haesly, 2005). Nevertheless, surveys have established consistent patterns of difference in national identities between different parts of the UK as well as correlation with other key social and political variables (see, e.g., McCrone et al, 1998; McCrone, 2001) and with alternative measures of national identity and sentiment (see e.g. Heath et al, 1999; Heath & Smith, 2005). The consistencies are such that one can be confident that, notwithstanding their limitations, these means of measurement are methodologically robust: they are assessing something ‘real’ about national identities in the UK. Moreover, there is evidence of convergence in findings between studies utilising primarily quantitative and qualitative methods (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007).

The ways in which respondents to the latest available surveys (2006) in England and Scotland divide between the three categories of national identity previously outlined are shown in Table 1. These data reflect differences in patterns of national identities in the two countries discussed elsewhere in the book. Broadly, English and British identities have a much more equal salience in England than do Scottish and British identities in Scotland, where Scottish identity is clearly much more prominent, although dual identities also account for one-third of respondents<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the analysis concerns only those who identify as Scottish in Scotland or English in England, not those who identify as English in Scotland or Scottish in England.

<sup>2</sup> In fact this is an unusually low figure for dual identities in Scotland compared with other recent surveys. In the three Scottish Social Attitudes surveys from 2003-2005 the figure ranged from 39-47%.

**Table 1: Dual and Exclusive National Identities in England and Scotland, 2006**

	<b>England</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
	%	%
English/Scottish <b>not</b> British	22	51
English/Scottish <b>and</b> British	45	33
British <b>not</b> English/Scottish	23	10
Neither English/Scottish nor British <sup>3</sup>	10	6
<i>base</i>	<i>3666</i>	<i>1594</i>

Sources: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006 and Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006.

How then are these identities associated with key constitutional attitudes in both countries? In England, respondents are asked the question below about direct constitutional preferences. Table 2 shows how responses to this question vary by national identities.

With all the changes going on in the way the different parts of Great Britain are run, which of the following do you think would be best for England...

- ...for England to be governed as it is now, with laws made by the UK parliament,
- for each region of England to have its own elected assembly that makes decisions about the region's economy, planning and housing,
- or, for England as a whole to have its own new parliament with law-making powers?

**Table 2: National Identities and Constitutional Preferences in England, 2006<sup>4</sup>**

	<b>English not British</b>	<b>English and British</b>	<b>British not English</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%	%
Westminster status quo	50	57	58	55
Regional Assemblies	15	18	18	18
English Parliament	27	22	16	21
<i>base<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>182</i>	<i>448</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>923</i>

Source: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006.

The table shows that, regardless of national identity, the Westminster status quo is clearly the most popular constitutional preference in England. Substantial minorities in each category do favour constitutional change but, especially in the dual identity and exclusively British groups, supporters of change are divided fairly evenly between the two options. This is somewhat less true of the exclusively English category, with support for an English Parliament highest in this category (but still

<sup>3</sup> People in this category are not examined separately in subsequent tables but are included where data are given for all respondents and also in reported measures of association.

<sup>4</sup> All the associations between national identities and political attitudes shown in tables 2-7 are statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.01$ . The *strength* of any such associations is of course another matter, as will become clear.

<sup>5</sup> In some tables the overall sample size is smaller than the survey as a whole because only a sub-sample of respondents was asked the question. Similarly, column percentages in some tables do not sum to 100 because those answering 'none of these', 'don't know' etc. have been excluded.

little more than one-quarter). There is evidence, then, that English identity is associated with stronger support for an English parliament while British identity is more closely associated with the status quo, but the variation is fairly weak. Nevertheless, these data do suggest a possible shift because, if anything, previous surveys tended to show an even weaker association between national identities and constitutional preferences in England.

In Scotland, the preferred constitutional options are of course different. Respondents are offered the options of Scottish independence, either within or outside the EU; the status quo of devolution, either with or without the current taxation powers; or a return to the pre-devolution position of no elected Scottish parliament and government from Westminster. Table 3 shows how responses vary by national identity. Responses favouring independence or devolution in either of the preferred forms have been amalgamated in the table.

**Table 3: National Identities and Constitutional Preference in Scotland, 2006**

	<b>Scottish not British</b>	<b>Scottish and British</b>	<b>British not Scottish</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%	%
Scottish Independence	42	20	15	30
Devolution status quo	45	65	60	54
No Scottish Parliament	5	12	23	9
<i>base</i>	798	523	178	1588

*Source: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006*

The table shows an immediate contrast to the findings from England in that national identities and constitutional preferences are much more closely associated. This is reflected in the statistical measure of association for each table: 0.133 for England, 0.197 for Scotland<sup>6</sup>. Those in the exclusively Scottish category are much more likely to support Scottish independence than are those with a dual or exclusively British identity and, in turn, those in the latter group are unlikely to support independence but more likely to favour a return to centralised Westminster government. It is the exclusively Scottish group which stands out as being most distinctive in their opinions, particularly with regard to support for independence. Indeed if we focus specifically on exclusive Scots and compare them with all other respondents treated as one category, then the contrast in measures of association between the Scottish and English data becomes much more obvious, with Cramer's V rising to 0.293 for Scotland. However, this only tells half the story. In Scotland as in England the status quo is the most popular option in all three identity groups, albeit only marginally so in

<sup>6</sup> The correlation coefficient used is Cramer's V, which is commonly applied to cross-tabulations of this kind. The coefficient may run between 0 (no association whatsoever between the two variables in the cross-tabulation) and 1 (a perfect association). It should be noted, however, that for categorical data of this kind it is rare to achieve strong correlation coefficients. For example, for this to be achieved for Table 3 would require the vast majority of respondents in the Scottish not British category to support independence, and for similar majorities in the Scottish and British and British not Scottish groups to support devolution and no parliament respectively. It should also be noted that a somewhat stronger correlation coefficient (0.316) may be achieved with respect to the Scottish data if one applies a measure which is appropriate to ordinal data ('gamma'). This may be done for the Scottish data because both variables have an evident rank order, from more to less Scottish and from high to low Scottish political autonomy. The constitutional options in England cannot be so ordered.

the exclusively Scottish category. It is particularly striking that half of those who profess no British identity believe that Scotland should continue to be governed within the United Kingdom, while three-quarters of those who profess no Scottish identity favour some form of Scottish government (in most cases devolution). So, in Scotland, what might be termed the 'alignment' of national identities and constitutional preferences is certainly stronger than it is in England, but as the correlation coefficients indicate, it is hardly strong, especially if we consider all categories of identity separately rather than comparing the exclusively Scottish with all others.

This is even more evident in the views concerning which political institution people believe *should* have the most influence over the way their country is run. In Scotland in 2006, 67% of those with an exclusively Scottish identity believed that the Scottish Executive (prior to the 2007 name change to 'Scottish Government') should be most influential compared to only 8% who thought the UK government at Westminster should have most influence over the way Scotland is run. The differential narrows when we consider those in the dual identity and exclusively British categories – from around 8:1 to 4:1 and 3:1 respectively – but it is clear that there is a broad consensus on this question in Scotland which encompasses those of all national identities<sup>7</sup>. This question was not asked in England in 2006, and one has to go back to 2003 for comparative data. A very similar finding emerges: even though people with an exclusively English identity are more likely to believe that a new English parliament should be the most influential institution, even among this group this option is only favoured by around one in six respondents, and indeed comes below local councils which are chosen by around one in five. In contrast to Scotland, the UK government at Westminster is the most popular choice regardless of national identity, and its prevalence only varies marginally between those with an exclusively English national identity (47%) and those with an exclusively British identity (51%).

A second way to assess the constitutional significance of national identities is to examine their association with support for particular political parties. Of course in England – in contrast to the other UK territories – there is no political competition between 'nationalist' parties which are the most obvious advocates of radical constitutional change and 'unionist' parties which seek to limit the extent of such change. The Conservatives have to some degree assumed the mantle of an 'English' party, both in terms of their core electoral support and their advocacy of 'all-England' solutions to the constitutional anomalies created by devolution. Under William Hague in the late 1990s the possibility that the Conservatives in government would establish an English Parliament was briefly on the agenda, but this lacked the support ever to become official party policy (Ward, 2004: 159). They currently favour more modest constitutional changes with respect to 'English-only' legislation which would not fundamentally alter the Westminster model in England. Labour and the Liberal Democrats have shown more appetite for further constitutional change along regional lines but it is doubtful whether their positions on the constitution would be reflected in disproportionate support among any particular national identity group. However, while overall one might not expect party support to vary greatly by national identity

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<sup>7</sup> In each case, most of the remaining respondents said that local councils should have most influence. Indeed in each identity category more people gave this response than chose the Westminster government.

in England, examining any such associations provides a useful benchmark for a similar exercise in Scotland, where the SNP in particular are much more obviously associated with radical constitutional change.

Table 4 shows how supporters of the principal political parties in England break down across the categories of exclusive and dual national identities. The measure of party support used combines questions which ask respondents whether they support any particular party and then, for those who do not, asks whether they feel closer to any party. Of course, many people decline to nominate a party in response to either question, and they are represented by the ‘None’ category. Those who supported a party other than Labour, Conservative or Liberal Democrat (e.g. the Greens) are not represented as a separate category in the table, but they are included in the final column which shows data for all respondents. As expected, although Conservative supporters have a somewhat more English than British profile (as indeed do those who support no political party) and the opposite is true of Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters, any differences are small: there is only a very weak association (0.093) between party support and national identities in England.

**Table 4: Party Support and National Identities in England, 2006**

	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	None	All
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>English not British</b>	20	25	16	27	22
<b>English and British</b>	48	48	47	38	45
<b>British not English</b>	23	22	26	22	23
<i>Base</i>	<i>1192</i>	<i>1030</i>	<i>447</i>	<i>536</i>	<i>3650</i>

*Source: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006.*

Table 5 shows the kind of associations between ‘nationalist’ and ‘unionist’ parties and identities which might be expected in Scotland. SNP supporters are the most likely to identify as exclusively Scottish, and Conservative supporters as exclusively British. Liberal Democrat supporters also have a relatively British profile. However, although the correlation coefficient for the table is 0.207 – notably stronger than for the English data in table 4 – once more this does not support the conclusion that national identities and party support in Scotland are strongly associated. This is most evident with respect to Labour supporters, more than half of whom are exclusively Scottish (indeed, given the relative size of the two parties’ support in the 2006 survey, Labour supporters contribute a larger proportion to the Scottish not British category than do SNP supporters). It is also true that although Conservative supporters are more likely to hold an exclusively British identity than those from other parties, a larger proportion have an exclusively *Scottish* identity than are exclusively British. Thus while both Conservative and Labour *parties* strongly emphasise their British credentials and would contemplate further constitutional change only within a broadly British framework, their perspectives on constitutional policy do not necessarily map on to the identities of their *supporters*. Moreover, it is also true that around one-third of SNP supporters professed some form of Britishness, and therefore the SNP’s status as an explicitly *non*-British party is again not always reflected in their supporters’ identities.



**Table 5: Party Support and National Identities in Scotland, 2006**

	Lab	Con	Lib Dem	SNP	None	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Scottish not British</b>	51	32	33	65	58	51
<b>Scottish and British</b>	38	38	44	29	25	33
<b>British not Scottish</b>	8	25	18	3	6	10
<i>base</i>	<i>529</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>1588</i>

Source: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006.

The final issue to be considered in this section is the relative trust which people have in institutions of government and how, if at all, this might vary by national identity. In Scotland in 2006 people were asked how much they trusted the Scottish Executive and the UK government to work in Scotland's best interests. The different degrees of trust invested in both institutions, and across different categories of national identity, are shown in table 6.

**Table 6: Do people trust the Scottish Executive and UK government to work in Scotland's interests? Scotland, 2006**

Trust Scottish Executive (UK government in brackets) ...				
	<b>Scottish not British</b>	<b>Scottish and British</b>	<b>British not Scottish</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%	%
... Just about always / Most of the time	46 (15)	55 (25)	62 (37)	51 (21)
... Only some of the time / Almost never	51 (82)	43 (73)	38 (62)	46 (76)
<i>base</i>	<i>798</i>	<i>523</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>1588</i>

Source: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006.

The first thing to note from the table is that people overall, and in each identity category, have much more trust in the Scottish Executive than they do the UK government. Secondly, the degree of trust in each institution varies by national identity. With respect to the UK government, this association has a predictable character: the exclusively Scottish respondents are the least trusting, followed by those with a dual identity and then the exclusively British who are the most trusting. But even among the 'British' a clear majority of respondents (62%) would trust the UK government only some of the time or almost never. In terms of trust in the Scottish Executive the relationship with national identity is rather different to what might be expected. Those in the British not Scottish category show the highest degree of trust in the distinctively Scottish institution, and indeed are far more trusting of this body than they are of the UK government (62% to 37%). Of course there are many other factors which may influence trust in political institutions and it is not my purpose here to explore these. However, one obvious conclusion might be that the reason that the exclusively Scottish are less trusting of the Scottish Executive than those in other categories of identity relates to the party political character of the Executive at the time of the survey in 2006: a Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition. But

this does not provide an entirely satisfactory explanation, firstly because we have already observed that those with an exclusively Scottish identity are most strongly represented among *Labour* supporters, and secondly because a similar question in previous surveys which asked about trust in the Scottish *Parliament* as opposed to Executive produced broadly similar results. For example, in the 2003 Scottish Social Attitudes survey, the exclusively British showed a greater degree of trust in the Scottish Parliament than did the exclusively Scottish, albeit that the difference between them was less than in 2006. In 2003, levels of trust among the exclusively Scottish were rather higher than in 2006, with 59% saying they would trust the Parliament at least most of the time compared to 67% among the 'British' group. Despite some decline in trust among the exclusively Scottish in recent years, overall these data indicate that national identities in Scotland are not strongly associated with trust in the key political institutions of the post-devolution UK. This is reflected in the correlation coefficients of 0.158 (trust in Scottish Executive) and 0.265 (UK government)<sup>8</sup>.

What of England? An obvious difference is that, aside from the London Assembly, there are no devolved institutions about which to gauge trust, so analysis is limited to trust in the UK government and how this relates to national identities. The most recently available data (Table 7) are also rather more dated than in Scotland, coming from 2003. Overall, trust in the UK government in England is much higher than in Scotland (this is also true if we compare with 2003 Scottish data, which are very similar to 2006) and only a little lower than trust in the Scottish Executive in Scotland (although lower still if we compare with 2003 Scottish data, which nonetheless relates to *Parliament* rather than *Executive*). The degree of association between trust and national identity is also less than in Scotland (correlation coefficient = 0.147), although as in Scotland it is those with an exclusively 'sub-state' (English) identity who are the least trusting of the UK government. Even if we were to accept, then, that lack of trust might suggest an appetite for some kind of constitutional change (and, as was noted above, political trust is likely to relate to many other factors) there is only weak evidence that it may be those with the strongest English identities who support constitutional change the most.

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<sup>8</sup> An ordinal measure of association has again been used since the response options for trust follow a rank order from more to less trusting. The coefficients are based on the full tables in which each option – just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, and almost never – is represented separately.

**Table 7: How many trust the UK government to work in England’s interests? England, 2003**

	<b>English not British</b>	<b>English and British</b>	<b>British not English</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%	%
Just about always / Most of the time	42	54	55	55
Only some of the time / Almost never	54	42	41	44
<i>base</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>364</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>975</i>

*Source: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2003.*

Many of the findings discussed in this first section substantiate previous survey research. Work carried out in Scotland in the pre-devolution period (Brand et al 1993, 1994; Brown et al, 1998; McCrone, 2001) showed a clear association between national identities and constitutionally significant political views with, for example, those with an exclusively Scottish (rather than British) identity more likely to support the SNP and to favour Scottish independence<sup>9</sup>. However, such relationships were not straightforward. For example, many supporters of the SNP and of independence were not ‘exclusive Scots’, and even those with the most unionist political attitudes (i.e. supporters of the Conservatives and opponents of devolution) were more likely to prioritise a Scottish rather than British identity. Such findings revealed a non-alignment between identities and political attitudes in Scotland (Bond, 2000). Similar post-devolution research continued to highlight this non-alignment (see e.g. Paterson et al, 2001; Bond and Rosie, 2002). With respect to England, Heath and Kellas’s (1998) analysis showed that those who adopted exclusive identities displayed a stronger appetite for constitutional change than those with dual identities, but research on national identities and constitutional attitudes in England in the post-devolution period has indicated that associations between them are rather weak (see e.g. Curtice and Heath, 2000; Curtice, 2006).

### **Solidarity or Dissociation?**

The degree to which national identities and national differences might be politically significant relates not only to self-conceptions of identity and constitutionally-significant political attitudes *within* given UK territories but also to how people view the political status of other parts of the UK. If there is an evident desire for the dissolution of the union, or substantial grievances about the relative benefits of continued union in a post-devolution context, then the continuance of the UK state might be called into question. This section considers the views of people in Scotland and England about the best means of governing the other country. Do people in Scotland believe that England should now be governed by its own parliament? Do people in England feel that it would be better if Scotland were fully independent? Are

<sup>9</sup> Some of the previous studies discussed here use a five-category scale to measure national identity, in which respondents choose one option ranging from ‘Scottish not British’ to ‘British not Scottish’. This contrasts somewhat with the simpler three-category measure used in this chapter, which is constructed from responses to the multiple choice national identity question outlined above. However, patterns of association between identities and political attitudes are broadly similar regardless of which measure is used.

people in both countries broadly supportive of the current constitutional arrangements? Or are people in Scotland and/or England in fact largely indifferent to the constitutional fate of their neighbours? After considering these questions, the views of people in both countries concerning the economic and fiscal benefits (or disbenefits) which they believe their own nation derives from the union are examined. Finally, a rather more direct measure of solidarity which explores whether a shared sense of social class is more or less important than a shared nationality in each country is considered. Much of the data we examine in this section is taken from surveys carried out in 2003, around the end of the first Scottish parliament. While this certainly allows one to consider the potential impact of devolution upon feelings of solidarity between people in Scotland and England, it is also possible that further change in opinion may have taken place over the course of the second Scottish parliamentary period up until 2007, and beyond.

Table 8 shows the constitutional preferences of people in Scotland for the government of England in 2003. The pattern of response to the same question among respondents in England in the same year is also shown in the table. This shows that in both countries, desire for constitutional change of any sort was outweighed by support for the status quo. The only notable differences are a somewhat higher level of support for regional assemblies in England and a higher proportion of 'don't knows' in Scotland, but overall the pattern of response is very similar<sup>10</sup>. Examining these data according to respondents' national identities does not reveal any striking differences. In Scotland, the status quo is the most popular option for each of the three categories of national identity, although comparatively speaking those with an exclusive Scottish identity are rather more likely to believe that England should have its own parliament while for the exclusively British the opposite is the case. In England there is a pattern that is very familiar from table 2: the status quo is supported by a majority in each identity category and those with an exclusively English identity are somewhat more likely to support an English parliament than those in the other identity categories.

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<sup>10</sup> This question was asked of some respondents in Scotland in 2006, but they were participating in the *British Social Attitudes Survey*, and because less than 100 people in Scotland were asked this particular question one must be cautious about the validity of the data. Nevertheless, even allowing for a large margin of error in such a small sample, they do suggest a substantial increase in support for an English Parliament – 39%, compared to 44% in favour of the Westminster status quo and 12% Regional Assemblies. It should however be noted that the data from England also show an increase (albeit more modest) in this support between 2003 and 2006 (compare tables 8 and 2).

**Table 8: Constitutional Preferences for government of England. Responses in Scotland and England, 2003**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>England</b>
	%	%
Westminster status quo	53	55
Regional Assemblies <sup>11</sup>	17	24
English Parliament	18	16
Don't know	10	4
<i>base</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>975</i>

*Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 and British Social Attitudes Survey, 2003*

If the views of people in Scotland with respect to England's constitutional status were broadly similar to those of people in England – at least in 2003 – is the same true of corresponding opinions regarding Scotland's constitutional status? Table 9 indicates that this is indeed the case, with devolution supported by a majority in each country.

**Table 9: Constitutional Preferences for government of Scotland. Respondents in England and Scotland, 2003**

	<b>England</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
	%	%
Scottish Independence	17	26
Devolution status quo	59	56
No Scottish Parliament	13	13
Don't know	12	6
<i>base</i>	<i>1917</i>	<i>1508</i>

*Sources: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 and Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2003*

The most notable difference is that support for independence is somewhat higher in Scotland, but this merely establishes that support for the union is, if anything, even stronger in England and so there is not much evidence of dissociation in the post-devolution period. Similarly to the Scottish respondents in table 8, the proportion of 'don't knows' is also higher for people in England who are asked to state their constitutional preference for Scotland. Do national identities make a difference? With respect to Scotland, the answer is similar to our conclusions regarding table 3 above: yes, but only to a degree. Only 10% of those in the exclusively British category support Scottish independence, while 23% do not support any form of Scottish parliament. Equally, 39% of the exclusively Scottish support independence and only 4% believe there should be no Scottish Parliament. But the status quo of devolution is the most popular option in each category including the exclusively Scottish, where it is favoured by 50% of respondents. As one might expect, differences related to national identities in England are even smaller. The exclusively English are somewhat more likely to believe that Scotland should be independent (22%) but there is majority support for devolution in each category of identity. Overall, then, at least with respect

<sup>11</sup> The version of the question asked in Scotland in 2003 was somewhat different to the 2006 version outlined above. In this version, the regional assemblies would '... run services like health'. Around one-third of the sample in England in 2003 was also asked this version, and to ensure direct comparison only these respondents are represented in table 6 (although in fact response to the version related to 'economy, planning and housing' was very similar).

to 2003 data, it is not the case that people in England think that it would be better if Scotland went its own way, and nor is it true that they believe that constitutional change has already gone too far and that there should be a return to centralised Westminster government. It is also interesting to note that in 2003 people in England were also asked how they would feel if Scotland and Wales were to become independent: would they be pleased, sorry, or neither? Only a small minority (less than 10%) said they would be pleased while nearly half said they would be sorry, once more certainly not offering positive evidence of a lack of solidarity. However, a large minority (42%) said they would be neither pleased nor sorry, perhaps suggesting a large measure of indifference in England with respect to the constitutional future of other parts of Britain.

If political disaffection cannot be found in people's direct opinions on the constitution, perhaps they might be more obvious in their beliefs about economic and fiscal justice? Once more in 2003, respondents were asked which economy, England's or Scotland's, benefited more from having Scotland as part of the UK, or if the benefits were about equal. The patterns of response in Scotland and England are compared in table 10.

**Table 10: Does England's or Scotland's economy benefit more from having Scotland in the UK? Respondents in Scotland and England, 2003**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>England</b>
	%	%
England benefits more	30	7
Scotland benefits more	24	39
Equal	40	40
Don't know	6	12
<i>base</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1917</i>

*Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 and British Social Attitudes Survey, 2003*

An identical proportion (4 out of 10) in both countries believe that the benefits are equally shared and this is also the most common response on both sides of the border. However, in England a similarly large minority believe that Scotland benefits more from its place in the UK, far outnumbering the small minority who believe England benefits disproportionately. In Scotland nearly one-quarter think that their own country benefits more from the union, not far short of the 30% who feel this about England. Overall then, there is some evidence here of grievance and this is more marked among respondents in England. Here national identities (not shown in the table) make an evident difference, once again more marked in Scotland. 42% of those with an exclusively Scottish identity believe that England benefits more as against 10% of those with an exclusively British identity. Correspondingly, 41% of the exclusively British believe that Scotland benefits more compared to only 16% of the exclusively Scottish. It should be noted, however, that in each identity category a large minority believe that the benefits are equal. In England, it is those with an exclusively English identity who are the most likely to believe that Scotland benefits most from the union: 45% compared to 35% of the exclusively British, but once more the differences are much smaller than in Scotland. Overall, then, perceptions of economic injustice are clearly related both to national location and national identity, particularly in Scotland.

How about the analogous issue of differences in attitudes to government spending under the union? In 2003 respondents were asked whether, compared to other parts of the UK, Scotland received a fair share of government spending or whether it received more or less than this fair share. Again the different patterns of response in England and Scotland are shown in table 11. Once more, response varies by country, although this time the sense of grievance at fiscal injustice is much stronger in Scotland. Less than a quarter of people in England felt that Scotland received more than its fair share of public spending but nearly half of people in Scotland believed that the country received less than its fair share. However, large minorities in both countries do think that Scotland gets pretty much its fair share and no fewer than one in four people in England did not feel equipped to give a definite response to the question, which once more may reflect indifference or ignorance. In England, those with an exclusively English identity are somewhat more likely to believe that Scotland gets more than its fair share of government spending but differences are not great and the most popular response in each identity category is that Scotland receives its fair share. In Scotland, however, differences across identities are much more evident. While 63% of exclusive Scots believe that Scotland gets less than its public spending entitlement, only 28% of the exclusively British think likewise. In this group, and indeed in the dual identity category, the most common response is that Scotland receives its fair share.

**Table 11: Does Scotland receive a fair share of UK government spending, or more or less than this fair share? Respondents in Scotland and England, 2003**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>England</b>
	%	%
More than fair share	11	22
Fair share	35	45
Less than fair share	47	8
Don't know	8	25
<i>base</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1917</i>

*Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 and British Social Attitudes Survey, 2003*

There is, then, some evidence of grievance on both sides of the border but, especially from the English perspective, this is not represented by profound dissatisfaction with the economic and fiscal arrangements in the post-devolution UK. In Scotland too there is a fairly widespread recognition that Scotland is not fundamentally disadvantaged by maintaining its place in the UK. However, the questions thus far relate solidarity or dissociation to political arrangements at a 'macro' level, and it is interesting to draw on data showing how people on both sides of the border might relate to each other at a personal level. On this occasion, the same question was asked in 2006 in both Scotland and England. The question asks respondents to say whether they feel they have more in common with people with the same (Scottish or English) nationality to them who come from a different social class, or with people from the same social class but different nationality<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, as well as comparing patterns

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<sup>12</sup> The measure of class used for this question is subjective rather than objective. That is, the question is phrased in accordance with which social class respondents chose to identify with in a previous question, rather than their occupational status. Thus, for example, someone in England who had previously identified as working class would be asked whether they felt they had more in common with

of response between the two nations, because this question has some historical pedigree in Scotland we can also assess whether solidarity based on shared social class seems to be declining with respect to national differences or not. The data for 2006 are shown in table 12.

**Table 12: More in common with same class, different nationality or same nationality, different class? Scotland and England 2006**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>England</b>
	%	%
Same class, different nationality	25	26
Same nationality, different class	47	34
No preference	19	25
Depends on the individual	5	6
Don't know / not answered	5	10
<i>base</i>	<i>1494</i>	<i>2775</i>

*Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006 and British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006*

The table shows that levels of class solidarity are very similar in both nations, with around a quarter of respondents saying they would have more in common with people from the same social class but the opposite nationality. National solidarity is stronger in each country, but particularly so in Scotland, where nearly half of respondents feel they would have more in common with people of the same nationality but a different social class. This is true of about one-third of respondents in England. A quarter in England and a fifth in Scotland do not give a decisive answer either way. One might expect that individuals' national identities would make a difference to the response they give to this question, and this is certainly true in Scotland. Among those with an exclusively Scottish identity, the differential between the two main categories of response is wider, with only 20% saying they would have more in common with English people of the same class compared to 53% who would have more in common with Scottish people of the opposite class. For those with an exclusively British identity, on the other hand, the differential is reversed, with a higher proportion (38%) saying they would have more in common with English people of the same class than Scottish people of the opposite class (27%). The figures for those with a dual identity are broadly similar to those for respondents as a whole. Differences by national identity in England are much less obvious. There is little variation in the proportions saying they would have more in common with Scottish people of the same class, but those with an exclusive English identity or a dual identity are significantly more likely to say they would have more in common with English people of the opposite class compared to those with an exclusively British identity, who are rather more likely not to choose either way. Overall though, once more we find that national identities in Scotland make more of a difference in terms of key social and political attitudes than is true in England.

This leaves the question of whether the period of devolution has coincided with an increase in national solidarity at the expense of class solidarity in Scotland. In fact there is very little evidence for this. An identical question asked in 1997 produced very similar results, with 23% of respondents saying they would have more in

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middle-class English people or working-class Scottish people. Those who did not identify with any social class are excluded.



common with English people of the same class compared to 46% with Scottish people of the opposite class.

### **Ideological-Legislative attitudes**

Finally, are there any evident ideological divides between the people of Scotland and England which might imply that further constitutional separation is desirable or necessary? Are any such divisions based on people’s subjective sense of national identity? Two well-established political scales, each derived from a series of survey questions, can be used to address this question. The first measures the degree to which respondents are left- or right-wing in their political outlook. It is based on the following five statements:

*Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off*

*Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers*

*Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth*

*There is one law for the rich and one for the poor*

*Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance*

For each statement, respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement (agree strongly; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; disagree strongly) with each response given a value from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly). These responses are then summed and divided by 5 to give an average point on the scale. The left-right scale can therefore run from a minimum of 1 (for someone who agrees strongly with all statements) to a maximum of 5 (for someone who disagrees strongly with them all). Table 13 shows the mean value on the left-right scale for all respondents in Scotland and England in 2006, and also how this value varies for each of the three categories of national identity<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 13: Mean values on left-right scale, Scotland and England 2006**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>England</b>
All respondents	2.61	2.64
Scottish/English not British	2.50	2.56
Scottish/English and British	2.70	2.70
British not Scottish/English	2.75	2.65
<i>base</i>	<i>1408</i>	<i>3152</i>

*Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006 and British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006*

The table shows that, overall, there is very little difference in the degree to which people living in Scotland and England might be considered left- or right-wing on this measure. There is a prominent perspective in Scotland which emphasises the nation’s ‘social democratic’ credentials. Data such as those in Table 13 do not necessarily contradict such beliefs – there remain good reasons to think that Scotland is a social democratic country (see McCrone and Keating, 2007) – but they do indicate that there is no strong evidence that people in Scotland are much more social democratic in their perspectives than are their southern neighbours in England. In fact there is more

<sup>13</sup> People who did not respond to one or more of the questions are excluded. This also applies to table 14 below.

variation between categories of national identity within each nation than there is between the nations. Once more, however, such variation is very limited in England and indeed there is no clear pattern of association, with the *dual* identity group, rather than those in either of the exclusive categories, showing the most right-wing profile<sup>14</sup>. In Scotland the key group would appear to be those who have an exclusively Scottish identity, who are noticeably more left-wing than their counterparts with a dual or exclusively British identity. Indeed the difference in mean values between these two latter groups is not statistically significant, and even the degree of difference between the exclusive Scots and the others hardly amounts to a fundamental division on the basis of national identity. Both aspects of these findings largely reflect previous survey research concerning such political values. Where differences between Scotland and England do emerge, either with respect to specific attitudes or the type of multi-question scale utilised above, these frequently disappear when attitudes in England are disaggregated on a regional basis (Brown et al, 1998; Hearn, 2000; Rosie and Bond, 2007). Social democracy is related more to the leftward slant of the party political structure in Scotland (Paterson, 2002; Rosie and Bond, *ibid.*) than it is to the attitudes of the people. It is also argued that social democratic values are related to national identity in Scotland (Hearn, 2000: 3) and the analysis bears this out to some degree at least, and in doing so once more mirrors earlier analysis (Rosie and Bond, *ibid.*).

The second summary scale with which to assess ideological divides between and within Scotland and England measures the extent to which people hold a predominantly libertarian or authoritarian position on social issues. It is based on the following six statements:

*Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values*

*People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences*

*For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence*

*Schools should teach children to obey authority*

*The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong*

*Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards*

The same response options and method for calculating the final scale value for each respondent are used as with the left-right scale outlined above. In this scale the value 1 represents the most libertarian position and 5 the most authoritarian. Table 14 shows the mean value on the libertarian-authoritarian scale for all respondents in Scotland and England in 2006, and also how this value varies for each of the three categories of national identity. The table shows that people in both countries are more socially conservative (as measured by the libertarian-authoritarian scale) than they are politically conservative (as measured by the left-right scale): the values in all categories are markedly higher than in table 13. But the difference between the two nations is once more very small<sup>15</sup>. This finding is virtually identical to previous

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<sup>14</sup> In fact the difference in mean values on the scale between the two exclusive identity categories is not statistically significant.

<sup>15</sup> To put the difference of 0.04 between the countries into perspective, we might take the example of educational qualifications where, in both Scotland and England, the mean score of those with a degree is about 0.7 lower than those with no qualifications.

analyses based on 2003 and 2004 data (Rosie and Bond, 2007). Those with an exclusive Scottish or English identity in the respective nations are somewhat more authoritarian than are their counterparts with dual or exclusively British identities, but again the differences are relatively small<sup>16</sup>. Overall then, there is little evidence to suggest that people in Scotland and England diverge fundamentally in terms of ideological-legislative political attitudes, nor that national identities in either nation are strongly associated with such attitudes.

**Table 14: Mean values on libertarian-authoritarian scale, Scotland and England 2006**

	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>England</b>
All respondents	3.69	3.73
Scottish/English not British	3.76	3.84
Scottish/English and British	3.65	3.71
British not Scottish/English	3.62	3.71
<i>base</i>	1420	3195

*Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2006 and British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006*

## Conclusions

This chapter began by setting out three specific questions and one broader question. These questions have been addressed using data from Scotland and England in the post-devolution period. The first question asked whether people's national identities were closely aligned with constitutionally-significant political attitudes. In England, there was little evidence of any such alignment. It is true that there is some consistent evidence that those who identify as English rather than British are rather more likely to favour constitutional change, most specifically the establishment of an English Parliament, but in fact their constitutional views are not much different from their counterparts who have a dual English/British or exclusively British identity. Support for the continuation of Westminster government, more or less in its current form, is strong across all three groups. The findings in relation to Scotland are similar in that the status quo (of a devolved Scottish Parliament) is also strongly supported among the exclusively Scottish or British and those with a dual identity. Associations between identities and attitudes (including party support and trust in governments at state and sub-state level) are much more evident than in England, and for the most part they have a predictable character. People who feel Scottish rather than British are more likely to support independence and/or the SNP and have low levels of trust in UK government. But evidence of non-alignment is also extensive, not least with respect to the large proportions of people with an exclusively British identity who show high levels of support for Scottish institutions and those respondents who do not profess any British identity but who nevertheless do not favour constitutional changes or parties which would divide Scotland from Britain politically.

The second question concerned the extent to which there was evidence of solidarity or dissociation between people living in Scotland and England. This was examined with

<sup>16</sup> Similarly to the analysis for the left-right scale, the difference in means between the 'Scottish and British' and 'British not Scottish' categories is not statistically significant. The same is true in England, where the difference in means between the dual and exclusively British identity categories is not statistically significant either.

respect to constitutional, economic, fiscal and inter-personal attitudes. The significance of national identities was also considered in each case. To the extent that dissociation might be represented by a desire among people in England for Scotland to be independent or for people in Scotland to believe that England should have its own parliament, there is little evidence of this. A majority of respondents in both countries favour retaining the current constitutional status of their neighbour. There is some evidence of widespread perceptions that the economic benefits of the union are not shared equally between Scotland and England, but it is also true that only a minority in each nation believes that the other nation's economy benefits more. A similar pattern is observable with respect to the degree to which public spending is distributed equally, although in this instance, and in contrast to views about economic benefit, it is people in Scotland who have the greater sense of injustice. There is some evidence that solidarity with one's sub-state counterparts represents a challenge to the continued coherence of the state to the degree that sub-state nationality appears to be a more powerful focus of association than does social class. But again this applies only to a minority of people in both Scotland and England, and large minorities are unwilling to profess that sub-state nationality 'trumps' state-wide social class as a general rule or vice versa. It is also true that, in Scotland at least, there is no evidence that solidarity based on one's nation is increasing at the expense of class-based association. People's national identities do make a difference to the patterns of response to all these questions and, although often these differences are not large and do not represent fundamental cleavages in opinion, it is consistently true that those with exclusive sub-state identities in both Scotland and England are the most likely to be discontented with the current constitutional settlement and the least likely to feel solidarity with those in the neighbouring nation.

The third question asked whether there were any evident ideological divides between people in Scotland and England. This was addressed by using two scales designed to place people on a left-right and a libertarian-authoritarian dimension. There was no evidence of any substantial ideological differences between the two nations. Indeed there was greater variation between those with different national identities within each nation. Once more, although those with an exclusive sub-state identity are distinct to some degree, they are not fundamentally different from their counterparts with dual or exclusive state identities.

The broader question concerned what national identities and political attitudes in the post-devolution UK might tell us about the likelihood of further constitutional change. Overall, there are some consistent associations between identities and attitudes, although these are not uniformly evident. Particularly in Scotland, but also to some degree in England, it is those with exclusive sub-state identities whose attitudes are most consistent with a desire for change. However, and perhaps most importantly, such differences in attitudes are not so fundamental as to suggest that even profound shifts in conceptions of national identity in Scotland and England would necessarily lead to very strong demands for constitutional change. The pattern of response to some of the questions in England also suggests that there is a substantial degree of indifference with respect to Scotland's status and whether this might occasion the need for constitutional change in England. Of course if national identities changed so radically that only small minorities continued to hold a state level identity then this might in itself have profound constitutional implications, but that is both a doubtful proposition and an issue which this chapter does not address directly. Finally, it is

also true that not only national identities but political attitudes too may shift. Although much of the data discussed in this chapter is consistent with previous research from recent years, this does not preclude future change. After all, relatively speaking, post-devolution United Kingdom is still quite a young country.

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