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INDIFFERENCE OR HOSTILITY? ANTI-SCOTTISHNESS IN A POST-BREXIT ENGLAND

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Abstract

The decision by the UK to leave the European Union was partly influenced by a desire to reduce immigration. This followed a period of increased Euroscepticism, accompanied by a process of 'othering' those of a different background, nationality or religion, and ultimately the EU itself. Post-Brexit, this has been linked to a rise in hate crime in England, and the referendum decision has been characterised as an expression of a strengthened English identity. Hostility towards those perceived as 'foreigners' or 'others' seems also to have affected people from the other nations within the British Isles, with speculation that Brexit might lead to the break-up of the UK. In this paper, we focus particularly on Scots living or who have lived in England and, while their experiences are mixed, it does appear that some hostility towards Scots (and indifference to Scotland) has grown. We speculate that this and additional political tensions may, in time, bring about the end of the union.

Keywords

Brexit, immigration, racism, nationalism, identity, Scots

Introduction

On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom formally left the European Union, a decision commonly referred to as 'Brexit' – and the transition period ended on 31 December 2020. Although the decision to leave was made on a UK-wide basis, this disguised the fact that both Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to Remain but were 'outvoted' by the larger Leave vote in England.

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These differential voting patterns matter because there is evidence of subsequent tensions within the UK, not least between the UK government and the devolved administrations over the Brexit process. As well as the obvious impact of Brexit, regarding the economy, trade and freedom of movement to and from the EU, there were a number of other consequences. These included firstly, a strengthening of English national identity (O'Toole 2020); secondly an increased hostility towards and othering of immigrants, leading to an increase in 'hate crime' (Burnett 2017); and thirdly, changing attitudes towards the devolved nations of the UK (Mullen 2019). The combination of these three forces has raised the prospect of some increase in hostility to – or at best an indifference towards – citizens of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, especially those living in England (Leith and Sim 2020b). Previous research on such hostility has explored how this relates to both the Brexit and Scottish Independence votes (McCollum 2020).

In our research, therefore, we seek to address the linked issues of hostility to migrants and tensions within the UK, and we are focused in particular on the English response to Scots living in England in a post-Brexit environment. It is clear from opinion polls that many people see no great value in the continuation of the Union between England and Scotland and it may be a short step from that indifference to suggesting to those Scots (and Welsh and Irish) living in England to 'go home' and to leave England to the English. This would echo the views of those (for example Henderson *et al* 2016), who see strong links between a strengthened English identity and anti-EU sentiment.

We begin by discussing English (or perhaps Anglo-British) identity and the ways in which this has apparently strengthened in recent decades, the possible distinctions between 'Englishness' and 'Britishness', the impact of devolution within the UK on England's sense of itself, and the connections between Englishness and Euroscepticism. We then report on two research studies which have provided us with data on the experiences of Scots living in England, post-Brexit.

Anglo-British identity

While a majority of people in England retain a dual sense of English and British identity, Wyn Jones *et al* (2012) have identified the emergence of what they call an Anglo-British identity in which the English component is increasingly dominant. It was not always like this. The high point of Britishness is generally accepted to have been in the late 1940s and early 1950s, following the Second World War, before the disintegration of Empire, and coinciding with the establishment of UK-wide institutions like the National Health Service (Devine 1999). The term 'British' was used to apply to the wider Empire or Commonwealth, and it was only with the British Nationality Act of 1981 that it came to mean the UK alone (Bhambra 2017).

Because the UK is a multinational state, Britishness may be contested between its constituent parts, but it allowed the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish to feel, for example, Scottish as well as British. In England, however, there is strong evidence that Englishness and Britishness were viewed as more or less synonymous. According to Kumar (2003), this reflects England's hegemony over the rest of the UK and he notes how politicians frequently use English identifiers to refer

to Britain or the UK. While this enhanced sense of Englishness may sometimes be termed English nationalism, both Kumar (2003) and Aughey (2007) believe that this is a cultural form of nationalism and not a political phenomenon. At no point have the English sought to establish an independent English state.

There was a significant strengthening of English identity during the 1990s. In 1996, the European Football Championships were held in England and English fans began widely to fly the St George's flag instead of the Union Jack. This is seen as the time when the English flag was successfully recalled from extreme right wing political groups (Gibbons 2014). Secondly, the election of the Blair government the following year led to the establishment of devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales and this is seen by many as leading to a greater sense of English identity, not least because England was seen as somehow being 'left behind' by devolution elsewhere in the UK (Aughey 2007). Aughey wonders if the English are therefore being treated as the residue of constitutional change and have a feeling of a 'lack'. Indeed, if devolution ultimately led to Scottish independence, Kumar (2003) believes that the English will have to look in the mirror at themselves and consider more deeply than ever before who they might be.

Englishness and Europe

A stronger English identity appears to be strongly associated with Euroscepticism, something which is not the case for those with predominantly Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish identities (Ashcroft and Bevir 2016). Indeed, Wellings (2010) argues that Euroscepticism is, in all but name, a form of English nationalism, although the language used is often that of Britishness. Henderson *et al* (2016) find that individuals with a strongly or exclusively English sense of their own national identity were the most overwhelmingly hostile to the European Union. This hostility may not be converted into a politicised English national identity, although Henderson *et al* think it may be possible.

If we look specifically at the Brexit referendum results as indicating attitudes towards Europe, then analysis (Curtice 2017, Denham 2018) has shown that, among those who described themselves as 'British', only 45% voted to leave the EU. In contrast, among those who included 'English' among their selection of identities, 54% voted to leave. This is not simply a reflection of the fact that a majority of voters in England voted to leave, whereas in Scotland the opposite was the case. Those who said their sense of being English was more important than their sense of being British were more likely to vote to leave than were those whose British identity was more important. Indeed, among those who said they were English and denied that they were British, 74% voted to leave, whereas only 38% of those who rejected feeling English did so.

O'Toole (2020) believes that Brexit itself is an English nationalist movement, although he distinguishes between London (which voted strongly to Remain) and the rest of the country which he calls 'England-without-London', where a clear majority of almost 11% voted Leave. But English 'nationalism' is, as we have seen, rather hard to pin down. Merriman (2018) believes it has been fuelled by politicians like Margaret Thatcher, aided by a right-wing media hostile to Europe, both leading towards a rise

in xenophobic prejudice. Cockburn (2017) believes it is 'deeply felt but incoherent', while Kenny (2016, 8) suggests that:

> English nationalism is best understood as a bundle of sentiments and convictions which are closely aligned to Euroscepticism, though not in any straightforward way a cause of anti-EU feeling. A stronger sense of Englishness represents both a manifestation and vehicle for, a gathering seam of political disenchantment.

There is also a strong sense of nostalgia within English nationalism, which harks back to an imperial past, with the result that the more retrospective and wistful voters were, the more likely they were to vote to leave the EU (Merriman 2018). Esler (2021), for example, references the MP Jacob Rees-Mogg whose speeches frequently link Brexit with past victories such as Waterloo, Crécy and Agincourt. Such nostalgia was widespread and suggests (Henderson *et al,* 2016) that the Leave vote, associated with a strengthened English national identity, may in time further a politicised English nationalism which cuts across party lines.

Englishness and the constitution

Research suggests that an additional reason for the strengthening of English identity is the impact of devolution to the other three nations of the UK (Curtice 2010). Marquand (2009) believes this has led to a growth of national feeling in England – yet something from which the Blair government averted its eyes. He suggests that this form of 'post-devolution nationalism in England is faintly reminiscent of post-Soviet nationalism in Russia. It is a nationalism of relative decline, a nationalism of resentment' (Marquand 2009: 19-20).

Certainly, there appears to be a view in England that they have been ignored in the constitutional debate and that England somehow gets a raw deal from the devolved settlement, with 45% of English voters believing that Scotland gets more than its fair share of public spending and 35% believing that devolution meant that the UK as a whole was governed worse than before (Wyn-Jones *et al* 2012). Gillespie (2020) believes that this may ultimately destabilise the constitutional settlement.

There are, of course, other destabilising factors. In Northern Ireland, with its land border with the Irish Republic, the Brexit vote led to Sinn Féin politicians arguing for a border poll on a united Ireland (Murray 2017), a position which was strengthened by Sinn Féin's electoral successes in the Irish Republic's February 2020 General Election. In Scotland, the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has demanded another referendum on Scottish independence, as Brexit negates the assurances about Scotland's place in the EU given at the time of the first Independence referendum in 2014. A number of commentators and politicians have therefore recognised that a break-up of the UK is now possible (BBC 2016; Deerin 2018), and others believe that the mood shift in Scotland is now tangible (McEwen 2016).

It is not at all clear, however, if such a break-up is a cause for concern in some parts of England and the strengthened English identity appears to be

accompanied by an indifference to the rest of the UK. An opinion poll conducted for the *Daily Telegraph* in 2017 suggested that a majority of those surveyed believed that Brexit was more important than maintaining the integrity of the UK (Riley-Smith *et al* 2017), and a number of politicians appear to share this view. Indeed, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has often tended to ignore the devolved administrations, for example during the Brexit negotiations (Gillespie 2020), and in a House of Commons exchange, described devolution as a 'disaster' and 'Tony Blair's greatest mistake' (Brooks *et al* 2020). It seems clear therefore that Brexit linked to the rise of Englishness is serving to exacerbate the constitutional tensions within the UK. Yet this 'English question', although now being asked by the electorate, is being largely ignored by the British political classes (Wyn-Jones *et al* 2012).

Englishness, migrants and minorities

A number of writers have expressed concern that the strengthening of Englishness has been accompanied by an 'othering' of those who are thought somehow not to belong. Both Leddy-Owen (2014) and Valluvan and Kalra (2019) see Englishness as backward-looking and nostalgic and while the imperial past cannot be resurrected, the associated hubris can lead to the othering of racial minorities, and EU migrants.

For all that an English identity may be strengthening, Hirsch (2018) suggests that it is actually less secure than, say, a Scottish or Irish identity. She notes that Scots have the 'advantage' of being able to view England as their 'other', which is a unifying factor across divides. It reflects the views of Miall (1993, 6) in relation to English perceptions of other nationalities – 'English views on foreigners are very simple. The further one travels from the capital in any direction, the more outlandish the people become'.

It is important, at this point, to return to the distinction between Englishness and Britishness. We have already seen that those identifying themselves primarily as English rather than British were more Eurosceptic. Research suggests that they were also more likely to be hostile to migrants. Parekh (2009) argues that 'Britain' has been a great and largely successful multicultural experiment and Britishness can include the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish, as well as diverse groups of immigrants from the Commonwealth. Britishness therefore is an inclusive identity and 'immigrant minority groups have found space within the broad set of values, laws and attachments which the British identity encompasses' (Hayton *et al* 2009: 130). Englishness is, in contrast, a more insular and exclusive identity.

Hostility towards EU migrants was, of course, seen throughout the 2016 referendum campaign. There was a clear denial of their voice or scope for active citizenship through voting rights (Tyrrell *et al* 2018), while the nadir of the whole campaign came with the unveiling by UKIP leader Nigel Farage of a poster entitled 'Breaking Point: the EU has failed us all'. The poster depicted a line of (mostly Syrian) refugees crossing the border between Croatia and Slovenia but was used as part of an ongoing campaign against migration from existing EU countries. It was a clear exploitation of a refugee crisis in a dishonest way and was reported to the police for inciting racial hatred, but it could not be unseen (Looney 2017). After the vote itself, there was evidence of growing racism:

What was different after the Brexit vote was that acts of open hostility towards immigrants were no longer confined to vulnerable old black ladies living in areas with a history of racist aggression. Now white Europeans realised they were 'immigrants' too – French bankers, Italian architects and Portuguese beauticians suddenly felt vulnerable (Hirsch, 2018, 275).

One particularly concerning side effect of Brexit appears to be an increase in hate crimes being reported to the police, particularly in parts of England that voted Leave (Burnett 2017). Indeed, despite an international rise in populism within Europe, the increase in hate crime appears to be distinctive to the UK (Albornoz *et al* 2020), although in Scotland the number of recorded racially and religiously motivated hate crimes actually fell after the Brexit referendum. It is important to note that this absence of a rise in hate crime does not negate the presence of anti-immigrant prejudice in Scotland (McCollum 2020) but what is clear is the perception that Scotland differs from England in attitudes towards migrants in general (Pietka-Nykaza *et al* 2020).

We should also note, of course, that although incidents of hostility towards European citizens have increased significantly since the EU referendum (Burnett, 2017), hate crime is not a recent phenomenon and hostility has previously been directed against people of colour (Panayi 2014), and religious minorities such as Muslims (Jackson 2018).

Being Irish, Welsh and Scottish in England

As well as othering of migrants to the UK, there is also evidence of some hostility between the different nations within the British Isles. Irish people were the largest group of immigrants to the UK for several decades after the Second World War (Hickman & Walter 1997) and were treated as distinct from other migrants in official UK policy – for example in terms of their voting rights. But this has not prevented a regular airing of negative stereotypes, anti-Irish jokes and, in some cases, workplace bullying (Ryan 2007).

Brexit appears to have unleashed a greater level of anti-Irish racism, possibly because the debate over the Irish 'backstop' was seen as delaying or disrupting the whole process. As a result, a number of Irish people seem to have decided to return 'home'. Carswell (2019), suggests that net migration to Ireland from the UK rose from 3,800 in 2016 to 8,600 two years later, and he describes personal accounts of racism experienced by Irish people living in London.

Similar antagonism has also been directed against Welsh people in England. English attitudes to the Welsh have often been somewhat dismissive (Parker 2007), but, here too, there is evidence of post-Brexit hostility. Cosslett (2018), for example, suggests that Brexit has reinforced an English sense of cultural superiority towards the Welsh, while Cornock (2018) refers to the words of Anne McMorrin, MP for Cardiff North, in a St David's Day debate in the House of Commons. McMorrin referred to the dismissal of Welsh culture by the London elite, claiming that the sense of false English superiority was leading the Government to pursue a 'hard Tory Brexit', which would be damaging to Wales (Cornock 2018).

In our research, we are specifically concerned with incidents of anti-Scottishness and there is clear evidence of this (Leith and Sim, 2020a). Ichijo (2004), for example, refers to Scots being portrayed as 'subsidy junkies', while Tony Blair apparently referred to 'whingeing Jocks' (Campbell, 2010) and interviewer Jeremy Paxman was critical of what he called a 'Scottish Raj' in England (Aughey 2007). The former editor of the *Sun* newspaper, Kelvin Mackenzie, referred to Scotland pejoratively as 'Jockistan' (McLeod 2015). McMillan (2015) has analysed anti-Scottishness within England's right-wing press and has unearthed numerous examples, ranging from disparaging remarks by Nigel Farage to openly insulting comments about 'little sweaty jocks' by the columnist Katie Hopkins.

Such anti-Scottish racism was in evidence following the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum – most shockingly perhaps during a visit to a school in Somerset by Conservative MP James Heappey. When a Scottish schoolgirl told him she would have liked to have voted for Scottish independence, had she been able to, he told her to 'fuck off back to Scotland' (Wilford 2017). Post-Brexit, there has been some media coverage of anti-Scottish feelings (Frith, 2016), while the findings of the *Daily Telegraph* poll which we refer to above suggest that many in England are actually indifferent to Scotland and the Union.

It is, of course, important to stress that such inter-country antagonisms are not confined to England. Within Scotland, Anglophobia has also been a matter of concern (McIntosh *et al* 2004). The west of Scotland, with its large population of Irish heritage, has had a long history of anti-Catholic prejudice and sectarianism (Devine 2000) and McCollum *et al* (2014) noted the continued presence of both sectarianism and Anglophobia in Scotland. But it appears to us that, at present, the *political* rhetoric is different. Scottish politicians across all parties have emphasised the importance of immigration to Scotland and Scottish population growth, and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has stated clearly that Anglophobia has no place within the country (Davidson 2019). Furthermore, there is significant evidence of migrants and minorities feeling welcome in Scotland both before and after Brexit (Pietka-Nykaza *et al* 2020). In England, however, as we have shown above, recent hostility towards the devolved nations and their administrations has come from the topmost levels of government.

Study focus and methodology

It seems clear from our considerations, that, firstly, immigration was a key factor in the vote to leave the EU. Secondly, the vote appears to have led to a spike in recorded hate crime in England. And thirdly, this hostility has also affected other UK nationals from across the British Isles living in England – the Irish, Welsh and Scots. As we state above, some of this antagonism is historically mutual. But because the recorded rise in hate crime has occurred in England rather than in Scotland and, because Brexit has become very much associated with a strengthened *English* identity (Curtice 2016), we felt it was appropriate to undertake our research in that country.

However, our research actually began in quite a different way, in a study of members of the Scottish diaspora who had chosen to return to Scotland (Leith and

Sim 2021). When we analysed our responses, we discovered – rather unexpectedly – that a large number of returners from England referred, as a reason for their decision to return, to an increasingly hostile atmosphere in England following the Brexit referendum. This led to a second study, aimed at Scots still living in England to establish their views and their experiences.

Ideally, it would have been appropriate to conduct a larger study across all the nations of the UK and perhaps the Republic of Ireland as well. But, firstly, there is already a literature covering aspects of hostility towards these other nations (which we refer to above). Second, this research stemmed from an earlier study into returned members of the *Scottish* diaspora and so it seemed sensible to use this to launch the present study. Third, we lacked the resources to carry out such a large-scale piece of research. Rather we offer our initial – and admittedly limited – findings in the hope that they will stimulate further research and focus in these areas

For both of our studies, we undertook an online questionnaire, advertised widely via social media, and cascaded through local and regional organisations, including Scottish diaspora organisations within England. Our approach was influenced by the ongoing pandemic, which made interviewee selection and face-to-face interviewing impossible. For our first study, of returners, we received 31 responses from individuals who had returned from England. For our second study, of Scots still living in England, we received 42 completed responses, and so we had data from 73 people able to tell us about their experiences of living in England, prior to and immediately after Brexit. A larger data set would, of course, have been welcome and would have given us greater generalisability, but we believe the information we have gathered is sufficient to identify issues of concern. In analysing our data, we employed NVivo to analyse and identity key themes emerging from the experiences of Scots in post-Brexit England, and their feelings of difference and othering. We identified four major areas involving Scotland and Scots: stereotyping (often involving jokes and banter), positive views, hostility, and the impact of Brexit, / anti-Scottishness. Brexit and anti-Scottishness turned out to be quite closely correlated. We analyse and investigate our key themes with quotations from our interviews, including the gender and locations of those quoted, below.

Characteristics of Respondents

There were some differences between the two sets of respondents. Returners to Scotland had an average age (at the time of interview) of 59 and so most were still economically active. They had generally left Scotland before the age of 30 (76%) and such moves were to study (during teenage years) or work (during their twenties). Reasons for return included changes of employment, family or personal issues, and a belief that Scotland offered a better quality of life. Only three of our returners were moving back to Scotland to retire.

Our study of post-Brexit residents in England showed that their average age was 70 and many were retired, with 14 living alone. Of the 25 who were still living with a spouse or partner, 14 of those partners were born in England. Of our 42 respondents, 35 had moved to England before 1980. This appeared therefore to be

a slightly older and more settled group, with stronger English family connections. Nevertheless, both groups clearly had experience of being Scottish in England.

In terms of our respondents' sense of identity, we asked the interviewees from our two studies to complete the 'Moreno question' (Moreno 1988). The results are shown in Table 1.

Both groups emphasised their Scottish identity. Those who had returned to Scotland tended to prioritise their Scottishness ahead of (or instead of) their Britishness, while those still living in England generally felt both Scottish and British – understandably so as they had tended to live in England for longer and many now had English-born families.

Insert Table 1 about here.

How are Scots viewed in England?

Both groups referred to tiresome stereotyping, and having to endure 'jokes' or 'banter' about Scottish drunkenness, meanness and so on. This was perhaps the clearest theme to emerge during our analysis and perhaps echoes the stereotypical attitudes which Irish people in England have long encountered (Ryan, 2007).

Rough and ready. Heavy drinkers. Mean (Female, Shropshire).

They often come up with some kind of joke around a Scottish stereotype or put on a Scottish accent (Female, Manchester).

Taunting about men wearing the kilt, about our so-called lack of sophistication. In many cases a complete refusal to believe the many inventions achieved by Scots. I was once shouted down when I tried to explain the Clearances (Female, Shropshire).

But on the whole, we should also stress that our analysis indicated that Scots were generally viewed positively within England in many instances.

I have always felt at an advantage to local people. I feel special perhaps because of having had a better state education than the average English person. I am also perceived with a certain amount of curiosity – new acquaintances always remark and ask about places they know. I have never felt any antagonism from others. During the Independence Referendum, English people would assume (wrongly) that I would be in favour of independence, but would be interested in my views (Female, Surrey).

Everyone loves the Scots. They think we are unusually well educated (our generation are). Humorous, great raconteurs and they love our accent (Female, London).

We have always been favourably accepted without any animosity or derogatory comments. In fact, many of our past and present contacts have always been keen to know more about Scotland, to inform us about their experience on visiting Scotland or where to visit and what to see (Male, Birmingham).

Perhaps because of generally positive attitudes, 30 of the 42 responders to our English residents' questionnaire stated that they felt settled in England and 38 felt England was welcoming. Six people stated that Scotland was, however, still 'home' and three were contemplating moving back.

Interestingly though, a clear theme of hostility emerged during our analysis. This was a clear pattern in the data and 13 of our 42 respondents referred to an increase in hostility to Scots following the 2014 Independence Referendum. Responses on hostility ranged around a variety of issues, with clear economic and political aspects being key within this theme. Several people had been told how much England 'subsidises' Scotland, and this appears in large part to stem from a misunderstanding of the role of Scottish MPs at Westminster and the workings of the Barnett Formula (Wyn-Jones *et al,* 2012). Some Scots had been accused of disloyalty to the UK, because of an apparent desire to break up the Union.

I have not experienced any hostility but during the independence referendum people would say 'let them get on with it'. A friend from north east England was particularly negative about the independence issue as in the north east, they have similar disadvantages to Scotland without the advantage of a national voice and a devolved parliament (Female, Middlesex).

Around the independence referendum, some acquaintances expressed anger that Scots wanted to leave the UK, saying they felt that Scotland was treated more favourably than England, especially financially. One person even said we were disloyal to the 'Queen of England' (Female, London).

Over the last few years, there is definitely more hostility towards the Scottish Government. People can't understand why they want to break up the United Kingdom and there is resentment about the Barnett Formula and also free university tuition, prescriptions and personal care for older people. Many feel it very unfair that English taxpayers are subsiding these. Also people ask why are there Scottish MPs sitting at Westminster when they have their own Parliament? (Female, Leeds).

Anti-Scottishness after Brexit

We suggested above, based on the literature, that since the Brexit vote, there has been an increase in a strengthened English identity, coupled with a growing hostility towards immigrants or 'others', particularly Europeans who may be felt no longer to have a right to be in the UK; the rise in hate crime in England is evidence of this. We specifically wished to investigate if this 'othering' of and hostility towards non-UK citizens had, after the vote on Brexit, extended towards the non-English nations within the British Isles. Our analysis of the data indicated a potential link between the

idea of Brexit and anti-Scottishness, and while our respondents were prompted by direct questions around this issue, clear elements merged in their answers.

As we note above, for many of our respondents, England had been generally welcoming, with anti-Scottishness being relatively minimal and, at worst, feeding into tiresome stereotypes. Any increased anti-Scottishness around the time of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum may have subsided after the vote to remain in the UK. When asked if Brexit had made a difference in terms of how Scots were viewed in England, 17 of our 42 English resident respondents indicated it had, while a further 10 thought this might be the case. While only nine believed there had been no noticeable difference, the majority of respondents clearly felt there was.

> Yes, the difference in how the two nations voted, and in how the two governments have reacted has had a clear impact – the fault line is now about Brexit and people view the Scots as 'anti' (Male returner from West Midlands).

> There is some confusion as to why Scotland should be going along such a different path from England … In some ways, it has made the English realise that Scotland isn't just a little county at the top of the map but does have its own identity and wishes (Female, Hertfordshire).

> The fact that Scotland has objected to the UK-wide Brexit result and stated that they wish to remain within the EU has certainly made the English more critical of Scots and Scotland (Male, London).

> I think there is an element that want England for the English and everyone else to go home (Female, Lancashire).

> Social media makes anti Scots sentiment part of English loyalty. Just as Europeans are foreign, the Scots are also thought of as more foreign (Male, south of England).

These responses echo similar responses from our earlier survey of diaspora returners. A number of them also referred to a growth in anti-Scottish hostility.

> In some cases, it is not an 'issue'; in others there is an Anglophile undercurrent which discriminates against all forms of difference, including being Scottish (Male returner from London).

> There is a belief that all nationalities that are not English should 'go home' (Female, Lancashire).

> There were notable incidents of racism such as me being told to 'go back home' by a woman in Liverpool … and a couple of racist incidents with taxi drivers with abuse about Jocks if I only had Scottish notes. These incidents increased post-Brexit (Male returner from Liverpool).

There was always an underlying racism / contempt in London and I ended up with a circle of friends who were themselves from diasporas. Irish, Kiwi, Welsh etc (Male returner from London).

I think [things] have changed over the years as English nationalism has become more prevalent. When I visit England now, I'm aware sometimes of occasional hostility (Male returner from Lancashire).

Discussion and Conclusions

It is, of course, far too soon for the full effects of Brexit to become apparent. But already the increase in reported hate crime in England must be a matter of concern and appears to reflect a growing hostile environment for Europeans – and some other minorities – living in the UK. We have noted how Brexit has apparently been accompanied by a strengthening of English identity, coupled with an othering of those who may be felt not to belong. As de Cillia *et al* (1999) argue, the construction of a national identity goes hand in hand with the construction of difference – from others who do not belong and this lack of belonging means that there are those who may be seen as 'them' – or perhaps as an 'out-group', as opposed to 'us' who are the 'in-group' (Mamadouh and Bialasiewicz 2016). In the case of a post-Brexit England, this increasingly involves a distinction between '"us, the nation", having a unique, common historical destiny, and "them, the foreigners", from which we identify ourselves as different' (Simonsen 2004: 357).

This is echoed by Henderson and Wyn-Jones (2021: 167) who believe that this strengthened English identity or 'English nationalism' 'manifests itself through a valorization of an idealised past; a sense of grievance about England's allegedly unfair treatment within a post-devolution UK; and resentment at the perceived undermining of Britain's sovereignty and status as a result of EU membership'.

At one level, we should perhaps not be surprised at the combination of Euroscepticism and xenophobia; after all, immigration was a key driver of the Brexit vote. The rise in hate crime is, however, a matter of concern, and we may be surprised that hostility to the European Union appears to be accompanied in some cases to a hostility – or at least an increasing indifference – to the older unions which go to make up the UK. The votes by Scotland and Northern Ireland to remain in the EU have been followed by, firstly, demands in Scotland for a second independence referendum and secondly, by a long-drawn out Brexit negotiation arising from the 'Irish Protocol' (and the possibility of a future border poll). For many English people therefore, Scotland and Northern Ireland may appear simply to be a nuisance that distracts from the problems of 'England/Britain'. As we have seen, although there are many who would regret the break-up of the UK, a poll in the *Daily Telegraph* indicated that Brexit was more important to voters than keeping the UK together; 60% of their sample supported this view (Riley-Smith 2017). A preference for Brexit was particularly important for Conservative voters (Tolhurst 2019). And high-profile politicians involved in the Leave campaign, such as Nigel Farage, have stated that, while the break-up of the United Kingdom would be 'deeply regrettable', it was a price worth paying to deliver Brexit (Kentish 2019).

Our survey of returning members of the Scottish diaspora rather unexpectedly revealed to us that the changed political atmosphere in England was leading some Scots to move back to Scotland. This echoed the increase in Irish people living in England moving back to Ireland (Carswell 2019). Both the data from our survey of returners and from our survey of Scots still living in England illustrate a potential shift in English attitudes since Brexit. While many Scots had not been personally affected, there was nevertheless a growing awareness of a hostile environment for Europeans and a number of our respondents believed that this was beginning to affect attitudes towards Scots living in England as well.

Yet, while we found evidence of some negative stereotyping, some hostility towards Scots and a level of anti-Scottishness, we would not wish to exaggerate our findings. Some of the experiences which we uncovered may reflect a hostility while others may simply reflect a somewhat negative indifference to Scotland and the Scots. More research is perhaps needed to dig deeper into the apparent attitudinal shifts which we identified. We should, of course, also stress that our data clearly indicated that there had been a generally positive view of Scotland and Scots in England. We also acknowledge that our sample size was not large and, because of the pandemic, we were unable to conduct in-depth face-to-face interviews. Many Scots are happily settled in England with families who have been born and raised there. And many, while irritated by the stereotyping about kilts, drunkenness, meanness and so on, recognised this as being essentially banter. While tedious, such banter was not in the main intended to be threatening – although sometimes it may cause discomfort (and more widely, banter remains a contentious issue in regard to stereotyping and othering). One of our respondents reported that she had often been asked 'why so many Scots were down in England'. While she felt that, for the most part, the questions were benign, she believed that there were undertones to the questioning that were 'not nice'.

It appears to us, however, that there are danger signs. We concede and stress that more research is needed, although elements are already being supplied by both academics (Henderson and Wyn Jones 2021) and journalists (Esler 2021). But there is evidence that Scots are viewed within England more negatively than before. Partly, this may have resulted from the 2014 independence referendum, partly by Scotland voting so differently from England in the Brexit referendum, and partly because of a growing hostility towards migrants to England, regardless of their origins. It may well be that, as demands grow for a second independence referendum in Scotland, that some people in England will actively encourage Scotland to become independent and to leave 'England to the English'. Indeed, historian Tom Devine (2021) believes that it will be England rather than Scotland which will bring the union to an end. In our collaboration, we have often informally hypothesised this outcome and, as the fall-out from Brexit continues, with English identity strengthened, and England overall less supportive of the union, it may well be that our hypothesis will be supported.

Acknowledgements

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Table 1. Respondents' sense of identity.		
	Returners from England (Study One)	Resident in England Post-Brexit (Study Two)
Scottish, not British	16	3
More Scottish than British	6	15
Equally Scottish and British	5	21
More British than Scottish	2	2
British not Scottish	2	1