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National identity or national interest?: Scottish, English and Welsh Attitudes to the Constitutional Debate

Ailsa Henderson, Charlie Jeffery and Robert Liñeira

Abstract

This article analyses political attitudes to the union in England, Scotland and Wales after the Scottish independence referendum. Using public opinion data we explore constitutional preferences and perceptions of national grievance before examining the role that national identity plays in structuring preferences. Our evidence shows that considerable demand exists for nationally demarcated forms of government within the UK, although these constitutional preferences do not translate in support for policy diversity across the UK. We also find evidence that these constitutional preferences relate closely to national identity, but relate also to appeals to national interest.

Keywords

Constitutional Preferences; Independence Referendums; Devolution Paradox; England; Scotland; Wales

The outcome of the Scottish independence referendum on 18 September 2014 – a clear No vote – may have resolved one constitutional question, but it also opened up a number of others. Following the pledges made in the ‘Vow’ of the three main UK-level party leaders on 16 September to shore up the No vote, the Smith Commission (after its chair, Lord Smith of Kelvin) was rapidly convened after the referendum to generate cross-party proposals for additional Scottish devolution. These were delivered by the end of November, with a draft Bill following in January 2015. Although a signatory to the cross-party proposals, the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP), buoyed by an extraordinary surge in its membership and popular support in opinion polls, immediately began to argue for more.

At the same time a different debate began to unfold in England. The day after the Scottish referendum the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, made the surprise announcement that he favoured the introduction of English Votes on English Laws, or EVEL. EVEL would give MPs from England a privileged or, in some versions, exclusive role in deciding laws that had to do with England alone by removing Scottish (and, possibly, Northern Irish and Welsh) MPs from the legislative process. EVEL is seen as an English counterpart and response to national devolution outside of England. A UK Government Command Paper followed in December 2014, setting out a range of different options for EVEL as proposed separately by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition partners.

These issues – the extent of additional devolution for Scotland, and whether or not to introduce EVEL in England – promised to be prominent issues in the May 2015 general election debate. A less well-noticed debate also continued in Wales. A new Wales Act was passed at the end of 2014, giving the National Assembly for Wales tax-raising powers for the first time. It passed against the backdrop of a debate about ‘fair funding’ which focused on the view that Wales was under-funded, in particular relative to Scotland.¹ Then there was the discussion on the devolution of the power to levy corporation tax to the Northern Ireland Assembly, which led to the introduction of the Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Bill to the House of Commons in January 2015. Focused on challenges of cross-border competition with the Republic of Ireland, where corporation tax rates are much lower, the debate also spilled over into Scotland, feeding SNP demands for additional tax devolution.

What has been notable in Scotland’s constitutional debate is the way in which appeals were made before the referendum (and afterwards) both to national identity, but also to more instrumental calculations of material interest, whether for Scotland as a whole or individual Scots. The existence of Scottish values, and the potential for decisions in an independent Scotland to be made by Scots rather than ‘the London Parliament’, combined with the benefits of Scottish control over oil and economic

levers were dominant themes in the Yes campaign. On the No side, voters were warned of the risks of economic independence, uncertainty over currency and the positive economies of scale – and considerable pride – brought by membership of the UK union. The Vow made by the three main UK party leaders just before the referendum appealed likewise to both national identity and national interest, promising to recognise as permanent the Scottish Parliament as well as maintaining the funding formula that ensures, for the time being, higher per capita public spending in Scotland (but which, of course, jars so much in Wales).

After the referendum, such claims surfaced again in the debate about more devolution in Scotland, but also in different parts of the UK. Calls for EVEL are in part about ‘our’ MPs making decisions on ‘our’ laws, but also chime with a sense that Scotland gets a better deal than England from current arrangements. The Welsh debate, initially driven by the demand for national recognition, has increasingly been defined by material issues and again a sense that current arrangements are unjust.

We know from survey evidence across the UKⁱⁱ that national identity has long related to constitutional preferences. National interest, used here in the sense of a calculation about fiscal advantage, now also appears to play a role in constitutional debate and may with that also structure constitutional preferences.

This contribution explores political attitudes to union in England, Scotland and Wales, after the Scottish referendum, drawing on a survey of attitudes conducted in November 2014 while the Smith Commission was at work. Funding for the survey – hereafter summarised as the Smith survey - was provided by the Economic and Social Research Council. The sample included 1500 Scottish residents, 1000 English residents and 1000 Welsh residents, all aged 18+. Fieldwork for all three surveys occurred in early November 2014 through online interviews conducted by ICM.ⁱⁱⁱ What follows is a discussion of the survey findings, focused in turn on:

- Preferences on how each of the three nations should be governed
- The distinctiveness of policy preferences in and across the three nations
- Attitudes to distributional questions across the three nations

A further section explores the relationship of these attitudes to differences of identity and interest in the three nations. The final section suggests how these differences may help shape the continuing debate on constitutional reform in the different parts of the UK that looks set to unfold in the coming months.

National Government within the UK

There were two institutional certainties for the respondents of the 2014 Smith survey. The first was that the union should persist. When we asked respondents to indicate their most preferred constitutional option, independence was preferred by more respondents in Scotland (42%) than was more powers (37%)^{iv} but when we asked respondents to rate different constitutional options on a 0-10 scale, ‘more powers’ received higher average scores than did independence. This reflects the fact that those who want independence give ‘more powers’ higher ratings than those who prefer ‘more powers’ give to independence. The preferences for continuing union (with stronger powers for Scotland within the union) is a pattern seen across the UK, although people in England and Wales are more firmly against Scottish independence than those in Scotland. We provide two sets of scores for Wales, so that we can see whether voters prefer one set of constitutional options for Wales and another for Scotland but the general pattern of support is similar: greater support for more powers than independence. Where they differ is that more Welsh voters would prefer powers to remain unchanged – both for Scotland and Wales – than they would independence, while the same is not true in Scotland. Given what we know of constitutional preferences in the UK, these results are unsurprising.^v

Table 1: Constitutional Preferences in Britain

	Scotland	England	Wales
Scottish independence	5.9	3.3	4.3
More powers for Scottish Parliament	6.4	5.8	7.0
Same powers for Scottish Parliament	3.8	5.4	5.9
Wales independence	-	-	4.6
More powers for Wales Assembly	-	-	7.6
Same powers for Wales Assembly	-	-	7.4

Source: Smith Survey 2014. Results are mean scores on a 0 to 10 scale.

The second certainty is about the role the UK Government should play. Table 2 presents responses to the paired questions of ‘which of the following do you think currently HAS the most influence over how’ Scotland, England or Wales ‘is run’ and which ‘SHOULD have the most influence’. On the question which *does* have most influence, opinion is split in Scotland and Wales with the UK Government coming out ahead (in Scotland only just) of the respective devolved government. But fewer than one in ten Scots and fewer than fifteen percent in Wales think the UK Government *should* have most influence. People in Scotland and Wales evidently want still less of UK-level government in their lives and more devolved government.

Table 2: The Influence of Different Levels of Government

	Which does have most influence?			Which should have most influence?		
	Scotland %	England %	Wales %	Scotland %	England %	Wales %
UK Government	43	45.4	35.6	8	38.8	14.9
Devolved Government	33	--	32.2	68	--	49.2
Local Councils	3	2	3.4	7	14.2	10.2
The EU	5	29.4	6.2	1	1.2	1.1
Own MPs	4	5.1	3.4	7	30.1	10.4

Source: Smith Survey 2014

On this measure England stands out, with more respondents there thinking the UK Government does, and even more that it should, have most influence. There is an obvious qualification in that the choices open to people in England in Table 2, in the absence of any English devolved government, are different. Table 2 offers choices between the UK Government, local government and the EU. The sense among almost one third of people in England that the EU has most influence is an outlier finding compared not just to Scotland and Wales, but also in comparative survey work across a range of sub-state jurisdictions in western Europe.^{vi} This provides an indication of the strength of hostile feeling about European integration in England, which we explore more fully elsewhere in our reports on the separate Future of England Survey.^{vii} But it also skews the findings about the status quo option of ‘UK Government’, which scores so highly in England. In the three rounds of the Future of England Survey (FoES), for example, we have never found the level of support for the status quo in England to reach 30 per cent of respondents. And when the status quo (‘governed as now with laws made by all MPs in the UK Parliament’ or more simply ‘keep things as they are at present’) is offered against other institutional options it has *never* been the top preference.

We can see this in an adapted version of the ‘should’ question, as shown in Table 3, where we asked ‘And what if in the future there were different types of institutions in England. Which of the following do you think should have the most influence over the way England is run?’ The Smith survey was fielded in November 2014. To put these findings into context we compare them with the most recent results for the FoES survey in April 2014. In the earlier survey, the status quo – here described as ‘the UK Government’ – is the preference of just 29 per cent, a little behind the top choice of an English Parliament, but ahead of stronger local government or elected regional assemblies. By November 2014 the English institutional debate had increasingly become shaped by two other options: the reform of how English legislation is dealt with in the House of Commons (often known as English Votes on English Laws, or EVEL); and city-regions, following the example of regional-scale local

authority collaboration in and around Manchester. When we included these options EVEL becomes the top choice, with an English Parliament second. The status quo – here defined as England governed by ‘the UK Parliament with laws decided by all UK MPs’ – is less popular than stronger local government. The two regional options – elected assemblies and city-regions – together account for 16 per cent. Support for EU influence remains vanishingly small.

Table 3: ‘Institutional Alternatives for England: Who should have most influence?’

	April 2014	%	November 2014	%
England-wide institutions			UK Parliament with English laws voted on solely by English MPs	23.1
	English Parliament	30.5	English Parliament	17.3
UK-wide institutions			UK Parliament with laws decided by all UK MPs	11.3
	UK Government	29.4		
Local institutions			Stronger local councils	13.3
	Stronger Local Councils	16.3		
Regional institutions			Elected Regional Assemblies	8.5
	Elected Regional Assemblies	10.2		
			New Regional Authorities Based Around the Major Cities in England	7.0
European institutions			The EU	0.5
	The EU	0.7		
Other/Don’t Know		12.4		18.8

Source: Future of England Survey April 2014 (n=3695); Smith Survey 2014 (n=1000)

There are obvious methodological qualifications to be noted in drawing precise inferences across different question wordings to describe the status quo in England and in comparing England with Scotland and Wales given the different options available. But it seems clear enough that the current institutional arrangements for the government of England are popular only in a direct trade-off with the EU (Table 2) and are less popular than both England-wide and English sub-national institutional alternatives (Table 3). And when the status quo is ranged alongside the alternatives in Table 3, support for UK-wide institutions falls to a level comparable to the ‘should’ figures for the UK Government in Scotland and Wales in Table 2.

Perhaps the most significant finding in Table 3 is the level of support in England for the political institutionalisation of England *as a whole*, either in the form of EVEL or an English Parliament. When both options were offered, they together attracted the support of 40 per cent of respondents. This preference for a *national* form of government in England within the UK is illuminated further in Table 4, which identifies preferences on the English constitutional question, including EVEL, and English Parliament and different regional options. These preferences were explored in separate questions, and therefore did not require respondents to make a relative judgement. This allows us to establish a rank order of preferences. EVEL is top and secures majority support.

Table 4: The Preference for National Government in England

	Total agree %
Changing the rules in Parliament, so that only English MPs can vote on laws that would apply only in England (EVEL)	55.1
UK government ministers for each of the regions of England	46.9
English Parliament	43.4
Secretary of State for England in the UK cabinet	42.6
New regional authorities based around the major cities in England	36.9

Source: Smith Survey 2014, n=1000

While people in all parts of Great Britain may endorse the continuation of the union, all, given the option, would reduce the influence UK-level government has over how their part of the UK is run. UK-level government is an unpopular institution everywhere. And there is support everywhere for its reduced influence to be reflected in increased influence for some form of national - that is, Scottish, Welsh or English - government. People in Great Britain appear to want more fully demarcated forms of national government within the UK.

Devolution without Difference?

A strong preference for national political institutions does not automatically mean that citizens want those institutions to deliver distinctive national policy preferences. We have noted elsewhere the existence of a devolution paradox across regions in Europe,^{viii} namely that voters are keen for their regional legislatures to wield additional power, but the automatic consequences of such power, namely greater policy control and greater policy variation across regions of the state are not necessarily desired. On policy control we typically see fewer contradictory views in Scotland and Wales. Voters here, when calling for greater regional control, typically also want greater policy control for the region. The paradox usually remains, however, with policy variation.

Table 5 seeks evidence for this paradox in the Smith survey. It shows responses in Scotland, England and Wales to the question – asked of six different policy issues - ‘whether you think each policy should be the same across the whole of the UK or whether it could vary across the UK’. The responses in Table 5 are the percentage in each nation supporting uniform policies. The policy issues are a mix of matters currently dealt with uniformly across the UK (unemployment benefits), or that vary in Scotland, England and Wales (tuition fees, care for the elderly, prescription charges), or that are common in England and Wales but devolved in Scotland (young offenders).

Table 5: Policy Uniformity

	Scotland %	England %	Wales %
Unemployment benefit	51.3	64.7	59.3
University tuition fees	34.3	63.0	45.2
Paying for elderly care	46.1	67.2	55.6
Punishment of young offenders	56.4	76.3	67.6
Prescription Charges	36.6	71.7	40.7
Income tax	47.7	68.4	60.9

Source: Smith Survey 2014.

In Scotland, where we know there is clear support for more powers, there is also – in line with the devolution paradox – majority support for uniform unemployment benefit and uniform punishment of young offenders across the UK, that is in one policy field that is currently uniform across the UK (unemployment) and one in which powers are devolved (young offenders). For income tax and payment of vulnerable old people, there is plurality but not majority support for uniformity. On income tax, 48% wanted a uniform policy across the UK, 40% wanted it to vary and 12% said they had no preference or didn’t know. There are similar figures for the care of vulnerable old people (46% policy uniformity, 41% policy variation). Only in two fields is there majority support for policy variation in Scotland: prescription charges and university tuition fees.

Support for policy uniformity is considerably higher in England, at 63 per cent or above in all cases. Support for uniformity is greatest for prescription charges and the punishment of young offenders, both areas where there is currently policy variation. Uniformity on those pillars of what are conceived of as a UK-wide welfare state, namely unemployment and income tax, are supported by 65 and 68 per cent respectively.

Support for policy uniformity in Wales lies midway between support in Scotland and England, with majority support for uniformity on all but tuition and prescription charges. The argument made by the

Commission on Devolution in Wales^{ix}, that further devolution to Wales must not undermine the existence of a UK-wide welfare state and a UK-wide sense of solidarity, appears to resonate with Welsh voters.

For Scottish voters, those areas where there is variation are areas where provision is more generous in Scotland than in England. Prescriptions and university tuition are free, and there is also a more generous entitlement in Scotland for the care of vulnerable old people. We cannot at present examine what attitudes to policy variation would be for a policy field where provision is *less* generous in Scotland because none currently exists. We can test this in Wales, though, and there is greater support for uniformity on tuition fees (which are higher in Wales than in Scotland) than prescription charges (which are also free).

So the devolution paradox persists: even though people in Scotland, England and Wales want less UK government influence and more devolved government (or, in the case of England, more than the other alternatives the establishment of national, England-wide institutions), there is limited demand for policy difference by nation, especially in England and Wales. And, it seems, voters are less supportive of policy variation when they believe they are losing out, and more supportive of policy variation where at present they are enjoying more generous provisions.

There are of course different reasons for opposing policy variation. One might be motivated by the complications for individuals or companies brought by the existence of different benefit and tax systems, or fears of a ‘race to the bottom’ in terms of service provision that many assume is associated with extensive devolution. On the other hand, one might have individual self interest in mind, opposing any system that might led to oneself paying higher taxes or others receiving higher benefits. Table 6 summarises the different motivations that respondents in England, Scotland and Wales have of policy variation. The general pattern is remarkably similar across the different motivations, although in all three nations there is a greater sense of injustice about paying higher taxes than there is for objection about different levels of benefit. The primary differences are in the levels of support across the constituent parts of Britain. People in Scotland are less persuaded by all three rationales for opposing policy variation, people in England most persuaded, with people in Wales in between.

Table 6: Opposition to policy variation, % agree

	Scotland %	England %	Wales %
We should keep tax levels the same across the UK because it would not be fair if people in different parts of the UK received higher levels of benefits	40.8	61.6	52.4
Keep same because it would not be fair if people in different parts of the UK who earned similar wages pay higher tax rates	44.9	65.0	56.6
We should keep tax levels the same to avoid tax competition across different parts of UK	43.5	63.4	55.6

Source: Smith Survey 2014

What Best Accounts for Constitutional Preferences?

Those interested in understanding voter preferences in elections can draw on different schools of thought. In one view, voters back parties that are likely to act in their personal economic interest or in the national economic performance. Parties appealing to national identity, by contrast tap psychological orientations. These are not either or explanations, with voters influenced by a range of appeals made to their various identities and interests. Certainly we saw evidence of both types of

appeals both before and after the Scottish referendum. In this section we explore further whether national identity or assessments of the national interest structure constitutional preferences.

National interest

Evidence that national interest might relate to constitutional preferences can be seen in the extent to which people in England, Scotland and Wales feel that their own and the other parts of the UK are receiving more or less than their fair share of public spending. Table 7 shows that such perceptions are one-eyed: each thinks it loses out and the others win. Table 7 shows this in responses in Scotland, England and Wales to the question whether ‘compared with other parts of the UK, each of these [the four nations of the UK, including Northern Ireland] gets pretty much their fair share of public spending, more than their fair share, or less than their fair share’. Table 7 presents a complex mosaic in detail but boils down in overview to simple dividing lines: people in Scotland and (especially) Wales think they are disadvantaged relative to England; and people in England think they are disadvantaged relative to everyone else.

Table 7: Unfair Shares?

		Scotland	England	Wales
		%	%	%
Scotland gets ...	More than its fair share	30.0	21.0	19.6
	Its fair share	12.1	37.7	26.7
	Less than its fair share	44.2	10.3	23.5
England gets ...	More than its fair share	30.2	26.2	20.9
	Its fair share	47.6	10.3	47.0
	Less than its fair share	6.8	34.6	8.6
Wales gets ...	More than its fair share	25.7	25.2	10.8
	Its fair share	6.9	15.3	5.1
	Less than its fair share	39.5	24.9	61.0
Northern Ireland gets ...	More than its fair share	23.6	25.1	13.4
	Its fair share	11.4	14.4	10.0
	Less than its fair share	33.0	15.4	32.2

Source: Smith Survey 2014.

The potential for these distributional grievances to take on constitutional significance is shown in Table 8. This reports responses to a question which explored attitudes to additional tax and welfare devolution for Scotland, that is the main themes discussed (and then recommended) by the Smith Commission.^x As shown above in Table 1, people in England and Wales were on balance supportive of additional devolution, but Table 8 suggests a caveat: they also agree that ‘levels of public spending in Scotland should be reduced to levels in the rest of the UK’. Here, perhaps in the light of the debate about ‘fair funding’ in Wales which often focuses on the relative advantage in public spending per head that Scotland enjoys, Welsh-Scottish solidarity dissolves. Around half of the respondents in Wales agree and only 12 per cent disagree that Scottish public spending should be reduced. The pattern of opinion in England was even more strongly for the reduction of Scottish spending. The implied message is clear. Scots can have more powers if they want, but will need to pay for them from their own resources. Predictably enough Scots were not of the same view.

Table 8: Reducing Public Spending in Scotland

	Scotland	England	Wales
	%	%	%
Total Agree	22.0	51.8	40.0
Neither	28.5	25.6	28.6
Total Disagree	38.7	10.2	14.0
Don't Know	10.7	12.4	17.4

Source: Smith Survey 2014

National Identity

The results discussed above help us to see how citizens in England, Scotland and Wales have differing interpretations of their national economic interest, and that these impact on views of constitutional arrangements. Within each nation these views also intersect with individuals' sense of national identity. So it is not just the case that Scots are more likely to think that they get less than their fair share of public spending, but that those who do so, and those who prioritise their Scottish identity, are more supportive both of Scottish independence and of policy variation. The same is true in England as well. Those prioritising their English identity are more supportive of an English Parliament (30%) than those prioritising their British identity (19%). The gap is smaller across the identity categories for EVEL, which appears a popular solution across all respondents. Almost 90% of those describing themselves as 'Scottish only' believe the Scottish Parliament should have the most influence over how Scotland is run, while just under half of those describing themselves as 'British only' feel the same.

Table 9 summarises the relationship between national identity and support for policy variation. It uses a common measure of identity which allows respondents to place themselves on a five point scale with at one end only having a Scottish (or English, or Welsh) identity and at the other only a British identity and a mid point of holding the two identities equally. The relationship between identity and support for policy variation is most marked in Scotland. With respect to policy variation on unemployment benefit we see an almost thirty percentage point gap between Scottish and British identifiers on policy variation, while only five percentage points separate English and British identifiers and around seven percentage points separate Welsh and British identifiers. The sole policy field in which the pattern of responses for Wales most closely approximates the pattern of support in Scotland is that field – prescription charges - where Wales was the first to establish policy variation within the UK. This is tentative evidence that the existence of policy variation leads to a stronger relationship between national identity and support for continued differentiation.

This general pattern across Scotland, Wales and England suggests that support for variation more effectively taps national identity in Scotland than in Wales and England. This contrasts with national interests, which appears equally effective across the nations of Britain.

Table 9: National identity and support for policy variation

	Scotland	England	Wales		Scotland	England	Wales
	%	%	%		%	%	%
<i>Unemployment benefit</i>				<i>Young offenders</i>			
Nation only	48.7	25.3	29.8	Nation only	43.2	13.4	22.8
Nation>state	37.2	29.8	29.3	Nation>state	29.3	13.4	20.4
Nation=state	29.0	20.6	26.4	Nation=state	23.9	11.0	18.7
State>nation	29.8	26.0	27.9	State>nation	23.8	12.5	15.6
State only	20.0	20.0	23.2	State only	20.6	10.4	17.4
<i>University tuition fees</i>				<i>Prescription charges</i>			
Nation only	63.8	27.2	42.2	Nation only	54.8	12.7	35.3
Nation>state	59.2	29.0	46.0	Nation>state	41.5	25.0	22.2
Nation=state	45.9	22.8	39.5	Nation=state	29.9	16.4	12.2
State>nation	43.7	28.1	40.2	State>nation	28.9	28.5	8.2
State only	36.2	25.7	37.5	State only	20.3	14.7	12.5
<i>Paying for elderly care</i>				<i>Income tax</i>			
Nation only	52.8	21.1	37.1	Nation only	63.9	13.6	48.4
Nation>state	44.3	23.1	34.3	Nation>state	57.7	15.6	47.5
Nation=state	34.2	21.5	29.0	Nation=state	41.5	14.6	44.3
State>nation	37.2	24.3	26.8	State>nation	41.1	24.1	50.0
State only	25.6	17.1	30.8	State only	36.5	20.0	37.1

Source: Smith Survey 2014

We can see, therefore, that support for policy variation tends to vary with national identity, and we know from above that national interest also matters. What remains, then, is to pit them against each other to determine which has a greater impact and whether these relative impacts vary across England, Scotland and Wales. The results in table 10 provide a summary of these relationships. We have created an aggregate score for support for policy variation across the six policy fields that varies from 0 (no policy variation preferred) to 1 (policy variation across all six fields preferred). The independent variables include national identity (1 if prioritise Scottishness/Englishness/Welshness and 0 otherwise), self interest, which is measured as the respondent's income from the minimum (0) to the maximum (1) in the dataset, and national interest, which is measured here as the sense that your own part of the UK is not getting its fair share of public spending. The results are interesting because of how they vary across the three nations. In Scotland, national identity and national interest both matter and the same is true in Wales, where income also structures preferences. In both places, the less British you feel the more likely you are to back policy variation, and the more you believe your nation doesn't get its fair share, the more likely you are to support policy variation. In Wales, support for policy variation is also higher among those with lower incomes. In England, national interest trumps identity: you are more likely to support policy variation if you believe England does not get its fair share than if you feel English rather than British. This is, of course, but a summary view but it serves to highlight that interest and identity operate independently, and that it is collective national interest rather than individual self interest that drives constitutional preferences.^{xi}

Table 10: Explaining support for policy variation: national identity vs national interest

	Scotland	England	Wales
Nation identity (otherwise)	0.18*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.06** (0.03)
Income (0-1)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.08* (0.04)	-0.09** (0.04)
National interest (nation is getting its fair share)	0.08*** (0.03)	-0.04* (0.03)	0.09** (0.03)
Male (female)	0.04* (0.02)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
Age (0-1)	0.03 (0.05)	-0.22*** (0.05)	-0.17*** (0.06)
Education (0-1)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)
Constant	0.27*** (0.04)	0.32*** (0.04)	0.35*** (0.05)
R ²	0.09	0.05	0.05
N	1,020	625	631

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Results are OLS unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Conclusion

The preceding sections have shown that there is considerable demand for demarcated forms of national government within the UK but that there remains majority and plurality support for policy uniformity on almost all policy fields. We might well expect that a year in which Scotland held a referendum on independence would be a time of heightened attention to and the influence of national identity. Certainly we know from research published elsewhere that national identity is one possible predictor of support for independence, with Scottish identifiers tending to back independence more than those who describe themselves as primarily British. We know from previous Future of England reports that national identity correlates with constitutional preferences in England and Wales as well. And yet this only provides us with a partial sense of where such preferences come from. Attitudes can be explained in part by the result of appeals to national interest, with each nation perceiving that it is less well off than its neighbours, a relationship that explains not only variations across the nations of the UK but variations within nations as well.

Certainly we have seen recent evidence of politicians' appeal to such notions, with English politicians emphasizing the unjustness of any solution that does not include English Votes for English Laws – most notably made by the Prime Minister the day after the referendum - and long running Welsh discontent on the Barnett funding formula (Independence Commission on Funding and Finance for Wales 2010). Incoming Scottish Labour leader Jim Murphy has pursued a rhetoric of national interest, most recently by noting how higher taxes on English houses would pay for additional nurses in Scotland. The promises were not without controversy, prompting negative reaction from English politicians across the partisan divide.^{xii}

It is against this backdrop of appeals to national interest that the Smith Commission (2014) made its recommendations about the devolution of further power to the Scottish Parliament. The speed with which the commission was established and the deadline provided for its report could reasonably be seen as quick, particularly when viewed in light of the time between the Edinburgh Agreement and Scottish Referendum, but there is no denying that its disintegrative logic chimes with public and political opinion in Scotland, England and Wales.

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