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What does England want?

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Summary

It is often argued that there are important differences of political outlook between England and Scotland. In particular, public opinion in England is often portrayed as both further to the right and more Eurosceptic than that in Scotland, and that therefore becoming an independent country would enable Scotland to pursue a more social democratic and Europhile policy agenda.

Meanwhile, concern has often been expressed that introducing devolution in rest of the UK but not in England would eventually result in an 'English backlash' whereby, thanks to an aroused sense of national identity, people in England would begin to question the 'advantages' that devolution delivered to Scotland and might even question its continued role within the Union. Any such development might be thought to undermine the prospect of Scotland being granted yet more devolution within the framework of the Union, should the country decide to remain part of the UK.

In this paper we use data from the British and Scottish Social Attitudes series, together with some opinion poll data, to assess the validity of these two arguments. Is England really much less social democratic than Scotland? And has she become more resentful of what Scotland now enjoys?

Introduction

At first glance England is a bystander in Scotland's referendum debate. In the protracted negotiations last year about the rules under which the independence referendum should be held, neither the UK nor the Scottish Government suggested that anyone resident south of the border should have the right to vote. For good or ill, it is those living in Scotland alone who will decide whether the country remains part of the United Kingdom or will become an independent state.

Yet England is far from irrelevant to the debate about Scotland's constitutional future. Part of the Yes side's case in favour of independence is that England brings a right of centre outlook to many policy issues, whereas in Scotland there is a distinctive social democratic consensus. Thus if Scotland were to become independent it is argued that it would be able to pursue a more left of centre agenda without being constrained by an English public opinion that, inter alia, occasionally elects Conservative governments that have little representation and support north of the border.[1] Equally it is argued that the Euroscepticism that, thanks to the electoral success of UKIP, has now become a significant feature of politics in England knows no place in a Scotland whose nationalist party has long campaigned for 'independence in Europe'. In short, England and the supposedly very different public opinion of its residents, is an important reference point in Scotland's independence debate.

Meanwhile critics of the current asymmetric devolution settlement have long expressed concern about how England is and will react to the experience of being denied the autonomy enjoyed by the rest of the UK.[2] It has been suggested that some kind of 'English backlash' will occur. People living south of the border might become more aware of their English rather than their British identity. That in turn might, for example, start to stimulate a demand that England should have devolution too – or at least to question why MPs from the rest of the UK can vote on purely 'English' laws. Alternatively, people in England might oppose allowing Scotland, Wales and the Northern Ireland to have their own devolved institutions, or else argue that if those territories wish to run their own affairs then perhaps it would be better for them to become independent. If any such reaction has or is occurring, it could well affect the terms of any further changes to the devolution settlement that the UK might be willing to make should Scotland opt to remain within the Union. In particular it might perhaps affect adversely the chances of fulfilling the aspirations that some, including the former Scottish Secretary, Michael Moore, have expressed that Scotland should enjoy yet more devolution.[3]

In this briefing we examine how accurate these portrayals of England might be. Is public opinion south of the border well to the right of that in Scotland? If so, is there any evidence that this divide has grown since the advent of devolution? Similarly, is Euroscepticism alien to most

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[1] See, for example, G. Fraser and S. Arnott (2012), 'The Case for Scottish Independence'. Available at http://socialistunity.com/the-case-for-scottish-independence/; S. Maxwell (2011), 'Socialism in Democracy', *Scottish New Left Review*, 67. Available at http://www.scottishleftreview.org/article/socialism-in-democracy/

[2] T. Wright (2000), 'England, Whose England?', in S. Chen and T. Wright (eds), *The English Question*, London: The Fabian Society.

[3] M. Moore (2013), 'Devo More: Extending Devolution and Strengthening the Union', Speech given to Institute for Public Policy Research at the University of Glasgow. Available at: http://www.ippr.org/research-project/44/10218/devo-more-extending-devolution-and-strengthening-the-union?showupdates=1&layout_type=updates

people living north of the border? Meanwhile we examine whether there is any evidence of an English backlash, and whether the character of public opinion south of the border could have implications for the kind of constitutional settlement that Scotland could secure should voters decide to continue the Union.

Our principal source of evidence on attitudes in England is the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey. Now in its thirtieth year, this high quality annual survey, conducted by NatCen Social Research, has established itself as the principal source of evidence on long-term trends in social and political attitudes across Britain as a whole.[4] By extracting from each year's survey those people living in England (who, of course, comprise the majority of the 3,000 or so people interviewed face to face each year) it can provide us with a reliable picture of public opinion in England alone too. However, as Scotland contains less than 10% of the population in Great Britain, each year's BSA contains too few respondents from north of the border to provide reliable estimates of public opinion there. When we wish to compare public opinion in England with that in Scotland we therefore use the Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey, conducted by ScotCen Social Research (the name by which NatCen is known in Scotland).[5] This survey is conducted using much the same methodological approach as BSA, and thus where the two surveys have carried the same questions they can provide a robust basis for comparing attitudes in the two countries.

A Social Democratic Divide?

Each year BSA and SSA carry a number of questions on perceptions of the extent of economic and labour market inequality, and attitudes towards what the government should do about it - the subject matter that might be regarded as lying at the heart of the debate between left and right in the UK. Those on the left would be expected to be more concerned than those on the right about the degree of inequality that exists and keener to see the government do something about it. Respondents to the two surveys are invited to state whether they agree or disagree that:

> *The 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 get the better of employees if it gets the chance*

Two of these items, about big business and about management, refer primarily to perceptions of the labour market. And as Table 1 shows, for the most part people in England and in Scotland have very similar views on this topic. Although people in England are slightly less likely than those in Scotland to say they agree strongly that big business benefits owners or that

[4] A. Park, C. Bryson, E. Clery, J. Curtice and M. Phillips (eds) (2013), *British Social Attitudes: the 30th report*, London: NatCen Social Research. Available at http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/

[5] For further details see: http://www.scotcen.org.uk/series/scottish-social-attitudes

management always gets the better of employees, there is nothing here to justify the claim that Scotland is markedly more left-wing or social democratic than England. Rather, given that in both countries a majority agree with our propositions, we might conclude that on this topic at least the balance of public opinion in both countries leans in a social democratic direction.

Table 1 Attitudes in England and Scotland towards the Operation of the Labour Market

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Business benefits owners						
England	%	13	41	29	13	2
Scotland	%	16	39	29	14	2
Management get the better						
England	%	16	40	24	15	2
Scotland	%	20	38	24	15	3

Sample size: England = 2448; Scotland = 1180
Sources: British Social Attitudes 2012 respondents living in England; Scottish Social Attitudes 2012

The picture does, however, begin to look a little different when we look at people's perceptions of the extent of economic inequality more broadly (see Table 2). True, there is again little difference between the two countries when it comes to the proposition that 'there is one law for the rich and one for the poor'. However, people in England are a little less likely than those in Scotland to agree that 'ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth'. While as many as 59% of people in England agree, the proportion in Scotland stands at 63%. Even so, the difference is no more than marginal, and far from sufficient to argue that there is a very different outlook on the two sides of the border.

Table 2 Attitudes in England and Scotland towards Economic Inequality

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Ordinary people don't get fair share						
England	%	14	45	26	11	1
Scotland	%	20	43	24	11	2
One law for the rich and one for the poor						
England	%	24	39	19	12	3
Scotland	%	25	36	20	15	4

Sample size: England = 2448; Scotland = 1180
Sources: British Social Attitudes 2012 respondents living in England; Scottish Social Attitudes 2012

Perceptions of inequality are however one thing, a wish to see government do something about it potentially quite another. This indeed proves be the case when we look at the last of our five questions, which focuses specifically on whether the government should engage in income

redistribution (Table 3). Two points emerge. First whereas in both countries over half are inclined to agree that there is too much inequality, in both cases less than half agree that the answer to this problem is redistribution by government. That said, however, the proportion backing redistribution is, at 49%, clearly rather higher in Scotland than the 41% figure in England. While Scotland may not be dramatically more concerned than England about the degree of inequality that exists, it seems it is somewhat more inclined to want the government to do something about it.

Table 3 Attitudes in England and Scotland towards Government Redistribution

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Government should redistribute income						
England	%	14	45	26	11	1
Scotland	%	20	43	24	11	2

Sample size: England = 2448; Scotland = 1180
Sources: British Social Attitudes 2012 respondents living in England; Scottish Social Attitudes 2012

So it appears that contrary to common assertion England is, on these measures at least, only a little less left-wing than Scotland. But how consistent is this picture? Have we in just looking at the data for the most recent year, 2012, alone, focused on a year whose results prove to be atypical? Conversely, might it be the case that while England is currently only somewhat less left-wing than Scotland, the gap between the two countries has been widening over time, thanks not least perhaps to the fact that under devolution political debate in Scotland has been dominated by two parties of the centre left in contrast to the position in England?

To investigate these possibilities we look first of all at the trends in attitudes towards redistribution in England and in Scotland since the early days of devolution (see Table 4). The results for 2012 prove not to be atypical (see also Curtice and Ormston).[6] Although there has been some fluctuation from year to year, on average between 2000 and 2011 people in England were seven points less likely than those in Scotland to agree that government should redistribute income, just one point less than the eight point gap in 2012. Moreover, there is no evidence that the difference of outlook between the two countries has gradually been widening. Rather, at 12 points the difference in 2000, the first year in which we have a reading for both countries, proves to have been one of the bigger ones to have been observed.

[6] See also J. Curtice and R. Ormston (2011), 'On the road to divergence? Trends in Public Opinion in Scotland and England', in A. Park, E. Clery, J. Curtice, M. Phillips and D. Utting (eds), *British Social Attitudes: the 28th report*, London: Sage.

Table 4	Trends in Attitudes towards Government Redistribution, England and Scotland, 2000-12									
Government should redistribute wealth	**2000**	**2002**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
England	**%**	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	38	37	31	32	34	32	36	34	36	41
Neither agree nor disagree	24	25	28	27	26	29	27	27	28	26
Disagree	36	35	39	40	38	37	35	37	34	31
Base	*2515*	*2419*	*2185*	*3005*	*3195*	*3057*	*2495*	*2360*	*2436*	*2448*
Scotland										
Agree	50	45	40	31	39	37	37	43	51	49
Neither agree nor disagree	24	25	30	29	26	25	30	28	32	29
Disagree	24	27	28	37	33	36	31	26	24	22
Base	*1506*	*1507*	*1514*	*1409*	*1437*	*1312*	*1317*	*1366*	*1156*	*1180*

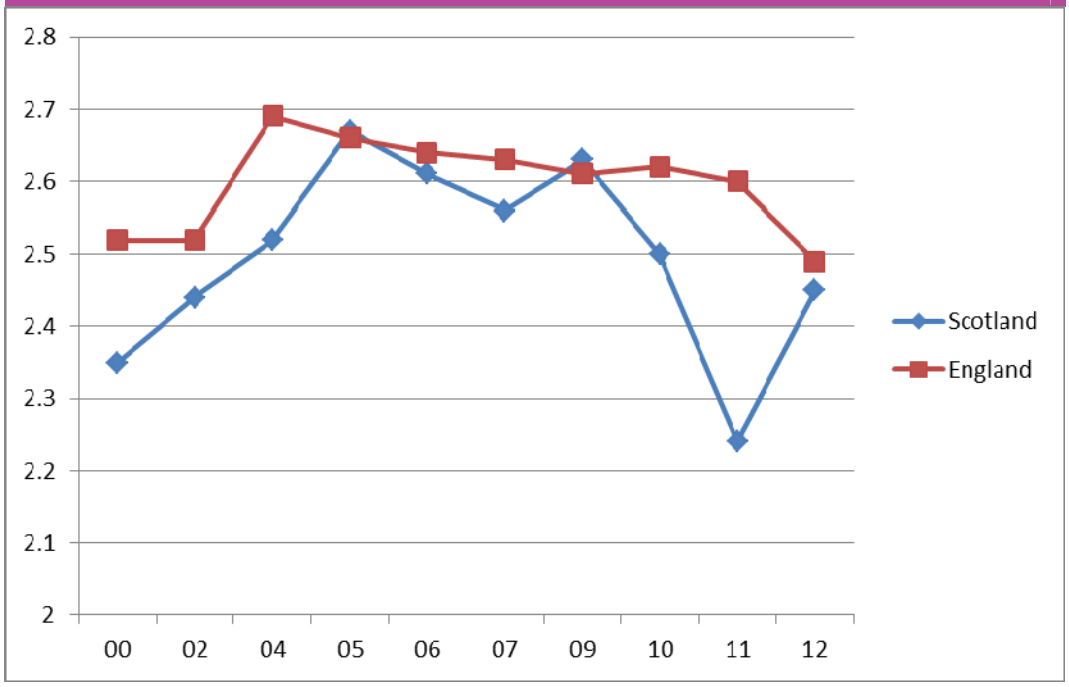
Sources: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England; Scottish Social Attitudes

A not dissimilar picture emerges from Figure 1 where we show the average score in England and Scotland on a summary measure of where people stand in respect of all five of the items we have been considering.[7] Anyone with a score of less than three on this measure can be regarded as broadly left of centre. As we might by now have anticipated this is where on average public opinion in both England and Scotland lies; the highest (least left-wing) score registered in either country in any year is the one of just under 2.7 obtained in England in 2004. At the same time, in most years, the average score in England has been somewhat higher, and thus public opinion a little further to the right, than that in Scotland. Meanwhile, although the gap between the two countries has fluctuated from year to year, there is no sign that it has consistently widened (or narrowed). Rather, there is intriguingly some suggestion that public opinion in both countries moved somewhat to the right in the early years of the twenty-first century, while more recently it has moved back again in the opposite direction, suggesting that the trend in public opinion in both countries may be subject to similar influences.[8]

[7] This measure is constructed as follows. First we assign a score of between 1 and 5 to each of the five possible answers to our items. Thus, those who say they strongly agree with a proposition are given a score of 1, those who agree 2, etc, with those saying they strongly disagree being given a score of 5. This means the *lower* the score that someone receives, the more left-wing their responses to a question. We then simply add up for each respondent their score across all five items and divide by five. Someone with an overall score of 1 will have said strongly agree to all five items, while at the other end of the spectrum those with a score of 5 will have said that they strongly disagreed with all five.

[8] See Curtice and Ormston, 'Road to Divergence'

Figure 1 Average Position on Left-Right Summary Scale, England and Scotland, 2000-12



Sources: British Social Attitudes (respondents living in England); Scottish Social Attitudes

So on these measures at least public opinion in England is not as different from that in Scotland as is sometimes portrayed. But such findings clearly raise an important question - how can it possibly be the case that public opinion in the two countries is so similar when their party politics are so different? In particular how can it be the case that in Scotland the principal battle for power is between two parties of the centre left rather than, as in England, between one of the centre left and one of the centre right? The answer is in fact relatively straightforward. Those in Scotland who on our measures appear ideologically to be on the right are much less likely to vote Conservative than are those in England who share the same outlook. Thus on the occasion of the 2010 UK general election, just 46% of those in Scotland with a score of three or more on our summary scale voted Conservative, compared with 67% of those in England.[9] Far from simply reflecting a lack of people on the right and centre right in Scotland, the weakness of the Conservative party north of the border is also a consequence of its relative failure to win over the support of those who do lie at that end of the ideological spectrum.

A Different Outlook on Europe?

But if the views of people in England are not so different from those living north of the border on the issue of inequality, perhaps they are further apart when it comes to the question of Europe? After all, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which believes that Britain should leave the European Union, appears to be much more popular south of the border than it is in Scotland. Meanwhile the SNP's vision for an independent Scotland is very much one that involves the country being a member of the European Union.

[9] J. Curtice (2012), 'Why no revival in Scotland?', in D. Torrance (ed.), *Whatever Happened to Tory Scotland?'*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Previous research conducted in the early years of devolution suggested that people in England were indeed somewhat less likely than those in Scotland to adopt a favourable view towards Europe - but only marginally so.[10] However, a poll conducted by Ipsos MORI in February this year suggested that the difference of outlook between the two countries was now much wider.[11] It reported that as many as 53% of people in Scotland would vote to stay in the European Union while only 34% wanted to leave. This contrasted sharply with the findings obtained when Ipsos MORI asked the same question in a Britain wide poll conducted the previous November, in which only 44% said they would vote to stay in the European Union (nine points lower than the equivalent figure in the Scottish poll), while rather more, 48% indicated they would vote to leave (no less than 14 points higher).

However, a key event took place between November 2012 and February 2013 – David Cameron's speech in January 2013 in which he stated that any majority Conservative government elected in 2015 would hold a referendum on Europe following a renegotiation of Britain's terms of membership. It is evident from regular polling conducted by YouGov during this period that one of the paradoxical consequences of Mr Cameron's promise, in the short run at least, was to reduce the level of support for leaving the EU.[12] Thus we cannot be sure how far the difference between the findings of the two Ipsos MORI polls reflects a difference of outlook between Scotland and England, and how far it may be the result of a change in attitudes that took place (on both sides of the border) during the intervening period.

Unfortunately no other recent poll or survey, including SSA, has ascertained the views of a full sized sample people in Scotland towards the European Union using a question and methodology identical to that of a contemporaneous exercise in England. However, a more robust comparison than that provided by Ipsos MORI can be obtained by examining the regular Britain wide polls that have been conducted on this subject by YouGov during the course of 2013. All in all, between January and the beginning of August YouGov conducted 19 Britain wide polls in which people were asked whether they would vote to leave or stay in the EU. On their own none of these polls contain sufficient people living in Scotland (typically there are 150 or so such respondents) to provide a robust estimate of opinion north of the border. But what we can do is to bring together all of these polls and calculate the average level of support recorded in Scotland across all of them (bar four where a breakdown of the responses of those living in Scotland alone is not available) and compare it with the equivalent statistic for Britain as a whole.

This calculation reveals that across Britain as a whole, on average during this period some 42% of people said that they would vote to leave the European Union while only 37% reckoned they would vote to stay. The equivalent figures for Scotland were almost the exact obverse, with 36% saying they wanted to leave the EU and 43% wanting to stay. These are differences of no more than six points. In short Euroscepticism is rather more common in England than it is in Scotland,

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[10] K. Machendran and I. MacIver (2007), *Attitudes towards the European Union & The Challenges Communicating Europe: Building a Bridge between Europe and its Citizens - Evidence Paper Two,* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research. Available at *www.**scotland**.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/163772/0044574.pdf*

[11] See http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3131/Scots-want-EU-referendum-but-would-vote-to-stay-in.aspx

[12] See the Europe (referendum) entry at: http://yougov.co.uk/publicopinion/archive/?year=&month=&category=political-trackers

but the difference, although potentially enough to make a difference to which is the more popular option, is much narrower than that implied by the comparison provided by Ipsos-MORI. Once again, public attitudes in England do not look so different from those in Scotland after all.

An English Backlash?

We turn now to the final question that we raised about public opinion in England – whether there are signs of a 'backlash' against the 'unfair advantages' being enjoyed by the rest of the UK as a result of the asymmetric devolution settlement, a change of mood that might perhaps have implications for the prospects of the Scottish Parliament being granted more powers and responsibilities in the event of a 'No' vote in the referendum. Such a backlash might have seen people in England become more aware of their distinctive English identity as opposed to the British identity they potentially share with the rest of the UK, made them more critical of the deal that Scotland currently enjoys within the Union and perhaps even become more doubtful of the value of maintaining the Union.

Certainly one widely quoted study, the Future of England (FoE) survey, has argued that such a backlash is taking place.[13] In an initial survey conducted in 2011, this study found fewer people saying they were British than at any time since the advent of devolution, while more were claiming to be English than ever before. Meanwhile by the time of a second survey undertaken in 2012, it appeared that the proportion thinking that Scotland secured more than its fair share spending and the proportion that agreed 'strongly' that Scottish MPs should no longer vote on English laws had both reached record highs of over 50%. However, these findings were obtained by comparing the results of polls conducted with non-probability samples over the internet (the method adopted by the FoE surveys) with the findings of earlier British Social Attitudes surveys undertaken face to face with probability samples of the general population. This clearly creates a risk that any differences between the FoE polls and the findings of the earlier BSA surveys are the product of differences in the ways in which they were conducted rather than evidence of changes in the mood of the public in England.[14] In this paper we are able to offer a more robust analysis by comparing the results of the BSA surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012 with those of earlier surveys in the same series.

First of all, is there any evidence that people in England have become increasingly more likely to feel English and less likely to say they are British in recent years? Table 5 casts doubt on this

[13] R. Wyn Jones, G. Lodge, D. Wincott, and A. Henderson, A. (2012), *The Dog that Finally Barked: England as an Emerging Political Community*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research, available at: http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/8542/the-dog-that-finally-barked-england-as-an-emerging-political-community; R. Wyn Jones, G. Lodge, C. Jeffrey, G. Gottfried, R. Scully, A. Henderson, and D. Wincott, D. (2013), *England and its Two Unions: The Anatomy of a Nation and its Discontents*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research, available at http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/11003/england-and-its-two-unions-the-anatomy-of-a-nation-and-its-discontents.

[14] Internet surveys about politics are, for example, inclined to higher proportions of people with an interest in politics - no less than 67% of those who responded to the 2012 FoE survey said that they were 'very' or 'fairly' interested in politics whereas just 36% of respondents to the 2012 BSA said that they had a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot of interest' in politics. Meanwhile, apart from the possibility that even the pattern of responses to two identically worded questions might differ as a result of then being administered in different ways, in fact the response options on the FoE survey did always exactly mimic those on BSA. See also fns. 17 and 18 below.

proposition. It shows the proportion who say 'English' and the proportion who claim to be 'British' when identity is measured in a simple and straightforward fashion, that is by asking people to choose just one identity from a list that contains all the national identities associated with one or more parts of Britain and Ireland. Back in 1999, shortly after the Scottish Parliament was first established, as many people chose English as said they were British, 44% apiece. In the most recent survey once again as many people said they were English as indicated they are British; the only difference is that this time around the two proportions were 43% apiece. All that might possibly be argued about the most recent findings is that in being just as common as a British identity, the incidence of English identity in the last two years has been towards the higher end of the range within which it has oscillated since 1999. (Equally we should note too that English identity does appear to have been rather higher since 1999 than it was earlier in the 1990s, but that seems to have been a one off step change rather than the beginnings of a continuous secular trend.[15])

Table 5 Trends in Forced Choice National Identity, England, 1992-2012

	1992	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
English	31	34	33	37	44	41	43	37	38	38	40	47	39	41	41	34	42	43
British	63	58	55	51	44	47	44	51	48	51	48	39	47	45	46	52	43	43
Base	*2428*	*1019*	*3150*	*2695*	*2718*	*2887*	*2761*	*2897*	*3709*	*2684*	*3643*	*3666*	*3517*	*3880*	*2917*	*2795*	*2859*	*2800*

Source: 1992 and 1997: British Election Studies (respondents living in England only); 1996, 1998-2009: British Social Attitudes (respondents living in England only)

Nevertheless, even if there is little sign of a substantial increase in English national feeling south of the border, it may still be the case that English public opinion has become more critical of the current devolution settlement. One possibility is that people in England have become more concerned about the level of public spending per head in Scotland, which currently stands at 111% of that in England (although in fact the relatively high level of public spending north of the border long predates the advent of devolution).[16] This possibility is investigated in Table 6 below.

[15] J. Curtice and A. Heath (2009), 'England Awakes? Trends in National Identity in England', in F. Bechhofer and D. McCrone (eds), *National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[16] Scottish Government (2013), *Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland 2011-12*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/03/1859

Table 6	Attitudes in England towards Scotland's share of public spending, 2000-12									
Compared with other parts of the UK, Scotland's share of government spending is…	**2000**	**2002**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
… much/a little more than its fair share	21	24	24	22	32	41	40	38	44	44
… pretty much its fair share	42	44	44	45	38	33	30	29	30	30
… much/a little less than its fair share	11	9	9	8	7	3	4	4	4	5
Don't know	25	23	22	25	22	23	25	28	23	22
Base	*1928*	*2761*	*2897*	*1917*	*859*	*982*	*980*	*913*	*967*	*937*

Sources: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

There has evidently been some change in opinion on this question since the advent of devolution. In the early years of the last decade, only just over one in five people in England felt that Scotland secured more than its fair share of public spending. However, when the question was revisited in 2007 that proportion had increased to almost a third, while since 2008 it has been running at around two in five, that is at twice the level at the beginning of the decade. England certainly has become grumpier about the level of public spending enjoyed by Scotland – though perhaps not to the extent claimed by the FoE survey.[17] However, the salience of the issue for many people in England is to some extent questioned by the fact that consistently around a quarter say that they do not know whether Scotland receives more than its fair share or not.

A not dissimilar picture emerges if we look at attitudes towards whether Scottish MPs should be voting on English laws – given that since the creation of the Scottish Parliament English MPs no longer have a say in most domestic Scottish legislation (see Table 7). In truth, allowing Scottish MPs to vote in this way has never been particularly popular. Even when the issue was first addressed on BSA in 2000, nearly two-thirds said that they agreed that Scottish MPs should be barred from voting on such laws. That proportion has changed little over time. However, there has been some tendency for people's views to have become more insistent, in that the proportion who say that they strongly agree that Scottish MPs should not vote on English laws is now just over ten points higher than in 2000. Even so, the proportion adopting this view still falls fair short of the 55% recorded in the most recent FoE survey. On this issue at least there seems

[17] Indeed we should note that there were some notable differences between the way in which this question was administered on FoE and the way in which it is asked on BSA. First, the FoE survey only offered respondents three options, eliding the distinction between 'much' and 'a little more'. Second, the options were presented in a different order, with Scotland getting its fair share appearing first, and more than its fair share second. Third, and most importantly, the FoE survey described the middle option as 'Scotland gets its fair share' rather than 'pretty much its fair share'. The former is a more precise formulation that consequently could well have been less likely to have been chosen.

to be a real risk that the consequences of differences of methodology could be mistaken for evidence of an English backlash.[18]

Table 7 Attitudes in England towards Scottish MPs voting on English Laws, 2000-12

Now that Scotland has its own parliament, Scottish MPs should no longer be allowed to vote in the House of Commons on laws that only affect England	2000	2001	2003	2007	2010	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	18	19	22	25	31	29
Agree	45	38	38	36	35	36
Neither agree nor disagree	19	18	18	17	17	15
Disagree	8	12	10	9	6	7
Disagree strongly	1	2	1	1	1	1
Base	*1695*	*2341*	*1530*	*739*	*773*	*802*

Source: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

But if England has become somewhat grumpier about the current asymmetric devolution settlement, does this mean it is now less sympathetic to Scotland's demands for autonomy – at least for so long as it remains part of the Union? In Table 8 we show how people in England have responded when presented with five options as to how Scotland should be governed, options that in fact are identical to those that the Scottish Social Attitudes survey has regularly presented to its respondents north of the border since 1999. These options read as follows:

> *Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union*
>
> *Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union*
>
> *Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has some taxation powers*
>
> *Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has no taxation powers*
>
> *Scotland should remain part of the UK without an elected parliament*

To simplify matters somewhat, those who chose either of the first two options are grouped together under the heading 'independence', while those who selected either the third or fourth possibility are combined under the heading 'devolution'.

It would appear that our expectation is fulfilled. In the early years of devolution England was remarkably supportive of the idea that Scotland should have its own parliament within the framework of the UK, with easily over half in favour. Meanwhile fewer than one in five doubted

[18] Not least of the reasons why this could well be the case is that on the FoE survey, the 'agree' and 'disagree' options were worded 'tend to agree' and 'tend to disagree'. These FoE options would appear to be more softly worded, and as a result respondents might well have been more likely to chose the 'agree strongly' option.

that Scotland should have its own parliament at all. However, since 2007 the proportion backing Scottish devolution has been well under a half. Moreover, most recently there appears to have been some increase in support for the idea that Scotland should leave the UK, from just under a fifth in most years to around a quarter. Indeed, ironically the level of support registered in England for Scottish independence in 2012 was in fact marginally higher than that recorded by SSA in Scotland itself (23%).

Table 8 Attitudes in England towards how Scotland should be governed?

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2007	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Independence	14	21	19	19	19	17	19	26	25
Devolution	55	57	52	59	52	58	47	44	43
No Parliament	23	14	17	11	15	13	18	19	23
Unweighted Base	*3150*	*902*	*1928*	*2761*	*1924*	*1917*	*859*	*967*	*939*

Sources: 1997: British Election Study (respondents living in England only); 1999-2012: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

Of course this increase in support for Scottish independence need not necessarily have been fuelled by discontent with the 'unfairness' of the asymmetric devolution settlement. Perhaps some people feel that such a development might be in Scotland's own best interests. However, in truth, some of the increase at least does seem to have been occasioned by the greater grumpiness that we have identified. In 2003 26% of those who felt that Scotland gets more than its fair share of public spending believed that Scotland should leave the UK, compared with just 16% of those who felt that Scotland simply got pretty much its fair share. So if this gap has persisted, an increase in the feeling that Scotland secures more than its fair share would in itself have helped stimulate increased support for independence. In practice this is not all that happened - the equivalent figures in 2012 are both a little higher at 31% and 18% respectively – but England's greater grumpiness is evidently part of the explanation.

What, however, we should be more wary about is the proposition that the increased concern about Scotland's share of public spending and the increased level of support for Scottish independence is the consequence of an arousal of an English nationalism that is rooted in feelings of English national identity. In Table 9 we show for various selected years between 2000 and 2012 the proportion of people whose 'forced choice' identity is English who agreed that Scotland gets more than its fair share of public spending, and compare this with the proportion of people who say they are British that express the same view. Exactly the same analysis is also undertaken in respect of support for Scottish independence. If the increased concern about Scotland's share of public spending and the rise in support for Scottish independence is the result of the arousal of English nationalism, we should find that concern should have grown most, and support for independence increased most, amongst those with an English rather than a British identity.

Table 8	Trends in Attitudes by Forced Choice National Identity, 2000-12					
	Scotland gets more than fair share of public spending		**Support Scottish independence**		***Bases***	
	English	British	English	British	*English*	*British*
	%	%	%	%		
2000	23	22	21	14	*822*	*877*
2003	26	19	20	15	*760*	*898*
2007	37	29	25	13	*347*	*408*
2012	51	40	29	21	*436*	*397*

Source: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

However, no such clear pattern emerges. True, in general, in any one year those who say they are English are more likely than those who consider themselves British to say that Scotland secures more than its fair share of public spending. However, at 25 points, the increase since 2003 in support for that view amongst those who say they are English is almost matched by a similar 21 point increase amongst those who state that they are British. Equally, in any one year support for Scottish independence is somewhat higher amongst those who claim to be English than it is amongst those who say they feel British. But at the same time, since 2000 support for Scottish independence amongst those who say they are British has increased almost as much (seven points) as it has amongst those who state that they are English (eight points). Rather than representing a 'backlash' rooted in more intense feelings of English identity, the change of mood south of the border would seem to be characterised more accurately as a 'grumpiness' that has more to do with people's perceptions of what is in England's territorial interest than their sense of identity.

Implications

Our analysis has provided us with three clear messages. First England is only a little less social democratic than Scotland in outlook. Second, and in similar vein, Eurscepticism is only somewhat more popular in England than in Scotland. Finally, although talk of an 'English backlash' appears somewhat exaggerated, England has become grumpier about the current asymmetric devolution settlement and the apparent 'advantages' it confers on its northern neighbour. But what are the implications of our findings for the debate about Scotland's constitutional future?

First, it would appear that some caution should be exercised in presuming that an independent Scotland would want to pursue policies that are markedly more social democratic than those currently pursued by the United Kingdom. In so far as the balance of opinion north of the border is only tilted slightly more to the left than in England, there would seem to be considerable potential to create a much more popular party of the centre right than the Conservative party evidently manages to be. Certainly that party's weakness seems to have more to do with the perception that the party's heart lies in England rather than Scotland, a legacy of its opposition to devolution in the 1980s and 1990s, than a belief that its instincts are too far to the right.[19] That

[19] Curtice, 'Why no revival?'

legacy might, however, be overcome if a newly branded wholly Scottish party of the centre right were to be created to fight elections in an independent Scotland.

Second, although the cry of 'independence in Europe' has helped ensure that nationalism in Scotland is Europhile in orientation, we should be wary of assuming that this means that an independent Scotland would be an enthusiastic member of the European Union. If Euroscepticism is indeed only a little less common in Scotland than in the UK, it might well wish to remain alongside the UK in the slow lane of European integration rather than be a cheerleader for closer union. Indeed, if and when the constraints on Scotland's ability to decide for itself as a result of its membership of the UK are removed, we might even wonder whether those emanating from Brussels would come to be regarded as more irksome than they seem at present?

Still, all this assumes that Scotland votes Yes. What if it votes No, but in the hope or expectation that nevertheless the Scottish Parliament will be given more power and responsibility? Does the increased grumpiness in England mean that it is going to be difficult to make the current devolution settlement even more asymmetrical than it is already?

Of course, that need not be the case if England had become more willing to embrace devolution for itself. Of this, however, there is little sign. According to the 2012 BSA, 56% of people in England think that their laws should continue to be made by the House of Commons as they are now, a figure little changed from the 54% that took that view in 2000. Just 22% back the idea of an English Parliament while only 15% would like to see assemblies created in each of the regions of England. The seemingly 'logical' solution to some of the apparent tensions created by the current asymmetric devolution settlement seems to be foreclosed by the continued reluctance of England to embrace devolution for itself.

What, however England would apparently like to see is greater recognition of the fact that some of the legislation passed by MPs from across the whole of the UK in fact only refers to the position in England. It thus may well be the case that serious consideration does need to be given to the proposal of the McKay Commission that during the course of any bill that applies only to England there should at some stage in its passage be at least an indicative vote in which only English MPs would be allowed to vote. However, it is not clear that any such move would be contentious so far as public opinion in Scotland is concerned, as many people there appear to feel that there are better things for their MPs to do than become involved in England's affairs.[20] It is certainly not obviously a reason why such a step should constitute a barrier to giving more powers to Holyrood; rather, it might help pave the way.

But what of England's grumbles about public spending, and the apparent withdrawal of sympathy for Scottish devolution that they seem to have helped to induce? Are these not likely to act as a brake on England's willingness to tolerate more devolution? Here, however, we need to bear in mind that, given the character of the proposals that have been put forward so far,[21] it

[20] J. Curtice and B. Seyd (2009), 'The citizens' response: devolution and the Union', in J. Curtice and B. Seyd (eds), *Has Devolution Worked?* Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 131-2.

[21] Scottish Liberal Democrats (2012) *Federalism: the best future for Scotland – the report of the home and community commission of the Scottish Liberal Democrats*, Edinburgh: Scottish Liberal Democrats. Available at: http://scotlibdems.org.uk/files/Federalism%20-%20the%20best%20future%20for%20Scotland%20web.pdf;
Scottish Labour Party (2013) *Scottish Labour Devolution Commission: Interim Report*, Glasgow: Scottish

seems likely that any programme of further devolution will focus primarily on giving the Scottish Parliament greater power - and responsibility - over taxation. One implication of any such move is that more of the revenues spent by the devolved institutions north of the border would have to be raised by taxes collected north of the border. As a result the level of public spending per head in Scotland would come to depend much more on revenues raised in Scotland. And if Scotland is seen to be paying more of its way, then perhaps England would have less reason to grumble?

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