



Understanding National Identity

We live in a world in which being a ‘citizen’ of a state and being a ‘national’ are by no means the same. Amidst much scholarly debate about ‘nations’ and ‘nationalism’, comparatively little has been written explicitly on ‘national identity’ and a great deal less is solidly evidence based. This book focuses on national identity in England and Scotland. Using data collected over twenty years it asks:

- Does national identity really matter to people?
- How does ‘national identity’ differ from ‘nationality’ and having a passport?
- Are there particular people and places which have ambiguous or contested national identities?
- What happens if someone makes a claim to a national identity? On what basis do others accept or reject the claim?
- Does national identity have much internal substance, or is it simply about defending group boundaries?
- How does national identity relate to politics and constitutional change?

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with Lindsay Paterson); and also *The Petite Bourgeoisie: Comparative Studies of the Uneasy Stratum* (1981, edited with Brian Elliott).

Together they have published many papers and books, including *Living in Scotland: Social and Economic Change since 1980* (2004, with Lindsay Paterson) and *National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change* (2009). They have a national and international reputation for their work on national identity.

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Preface

This book is the product of a thoroughly collegiate form of working in which the data, the analysis and successive drafts, as well as the many papers on which it is broadly based, have been discussed and amended by both authors throughout, and they are equally responsible for it. David McCrone took responsibility for writing the first draft. We are both deeply committed to collegiate research but it is inevitable that one can only do this for twenty years or so by also being firm friends. Given our differing personalities and intellectual interests and strengths, our colleagues may well regard our enduring intellectual partnership as something of a miracle but we have greatly enjoyed the experience and that is what has enabled us to produce this body of work. The usual stricture applies. We and we alone are responsible for the research we have done together and what we have written; the faults are ours alone.

We have a lot of people and organisations to thank. By far the major funder was The Leverhulme Trust without which most of the research would simply not have happened. Successive directors Barry Supple, Richard Brook and Gordon Marshall were always supportive and understanding, and above all, wonderfully non-bureaucratic. We commend the Trust as an ideal funding body with which to work. We are also indebted to the Economic and Social Research Council which funded the arts and landed elites study and helped with funding Scottish and British Social Attitudes Surveys at crucial moments. The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) which carries out the British Social Attitudes Surveys, and the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) which is responsible for the Scottish Social Attitudes Surveys, have been especially helpful and encouraging. We particularly wish to thank Simon Anderson, Rachel Ormston, John Curtice and Susan Reid at ScotCen for their robust and incisive help with the social surveys, and their willingness to let us try out innovative ideas even if they were initially sceptical.

There are many colleagues to thank. Pride of place goes to our main research officer, Richard Kiely, who worked with us on the arts and landed elites project, the Berwick study, and the Leverhulme programme in the course of which he carried out virtually all of the intensive interviews on ‘nationals and migrants’ across Scotland, and, being unable to drive at the time, learned and suffered without complaint the intricacies of public transport in so doing. We are grateful too to Gary West and Robert Stewart who worked with us as research officers in the early days of the research on the elites, and Sue Renton and Margaret McPherson, our secretaries on the elites and Leverhulme projects respectively.

We are indebted to our colleagues and friends at Edinburgh University who not only played a vital part in the Leverhulme projects, but have been generous with their time and advice; notably, Lindsay Paterson, Jonathan Hearn, Michael Rosie and Ross Bond. Lindsay Paterson deserves our especial thanks not only for that general intellectual support but for his uncomplaining and lucid advice when our joint statistical expertise was not up to some task. Outside of Edinburgh, we have benefited from working with social psychologists Steve Reicher at St Andrews, Nick Hopkins at Dundee, Susan Condor and Jackie Abell, then at Lancaster. The great pleasure of academic life is that it is a collaborative exercise in which sharing ideas, findings, and having disagreements, is of the essence. We are grateful, too, to the anonymous referees and reviewers who have provided helpful suggestions and comments, and to John Haslam at Cambridge University Press for his patience and advice. Even when we disagreed with them, it made us think harder about how to present our ideas more clearly.

Finally, the biggest debt we owe is to our partners, Jean Bechhofer and Jan Webb. This book would never have been written without their support. They have not only had to put up with our long-standing interest, an interest bordering on obsession with national identity, but in the course of the last year they have tolerated the excessive amount of time which writing the book has absorbed in our joint lives especially as we have been supposedly largely retired.