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Leith, Murray; Sim, Duncan

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# Les Ecosais en France: A Modern Diaspora?

## Introduction

Scotland has long historic links with France, as with the rest of the European continent. These encompass economic links derived from trade, and academic links with European Universities, as well as the still mentioned 'Auld Alliance' (Ichijo, 2004). This is possibly one of the longest formal relationships between two states in recorded history. While it has been claimed that this relationship, initially founded in 1295 by King John Balliol of Scotland and Philip IV of France, came to an end in the 1560 Treaty of Edinburgh (Bonner, 1999), others have argued that France refused to accept Westminster's abrogation of the Auld Alliance (Talbot, 2011a) and that it only came to an end at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The treaty relationship was firmly enshrined in the French socio-political system. For example, a Scotsman born before 1907 still possesses the full rights and privileges of Franco-Scottish nationality (Talbot, 2011b).

The connections engendered by this relationship over the past 800 years were economic, political and military. As Devine (2011) illustrates, Scottish professional soldiers were extremely numerous during the Thirty Years War, with possibly as many as 60,000 active across the period. He also highlights the Scottish involvement in trade and the subsequent Scottish diaspora present in Holland, Denmark, Germany and Poland-Lithuania. Interestingly, he omits France from his discussion. There were numerous regiments and individuals in French service during this period (Murdoch and Grosjean, 2014). The 'Garde Écossaise' remained an element of any French King's military bodyguards until the abdication of Charles X in 1830. Likewise, there were long established Scottish communities in Bordeaux, Paris and La Rochelle during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Talbot, 2011b). In many respects the relationship between France and Scotland must have been strained by the significant religious differences that emerged following the Reformation. However, the Church of Scotland established the Scots Kirk in Paris in 1858 (Scots Kirk, 2015), and it remains active today; the sole Scottish church in France.

Despite such a long, varied and shared history between the two countries, and despite some cultural echoes amid traditional gatherings in Brittany, there is limited evidence of strong ongoing social and cultural connections between Scotland and France. Some organisations do exist but, appear to have only an internet presence and failed to respond in anything but a limited fashion to requests for information or advice.

Outside of the Scottish Kirk, the only other historical/cultural evidence of a strong Scottish-French connection is in Paris, where the existence of four Scottish named pubs sets the city apart from most others. While Irish pubs are both numerous (and often part of corporate chains), foreign based Scottish pubs tend to be rare and very individual, perhaps highlighting the recent presence of one or more Scot in the area. As Fry notes, Scots have always been inventive, energetic, adaptable and mobile (2001, p489) and many an establishment has been founded by Scots in foreign climes. The 'Auld Alliance' Pub names itself the first Scottish Pub in Paris, but 'The Pure Malt' is described on its website as the only 'Scottish owned, Scottish run, Scottish Pub' in Paris. Clearly, being Scottish owned as well as Scottish themed is seen as a unique selling point.

There must be enough of an interest in Scottish culture for four pubs to survive in the present economic climate and this may represent the more modern nature of the Scottish diaspora in France. Despite the historical connections, most of our respondents moved to France from the 1970s onwards coinciding with the UK becoming a member of the then European Economic Community, now the European Union (EU). For example, both France and Scotland have long been involved with the aerospace industry, and the existence of 'aerospace valley' near Toulouse, led to an increase in Scots in that area due to the move during the 1980s relocation of a major Aerospace company HQ (personal communication, August, 2012). Also, France has undergone significant immigration over the past forty years, much of it from the UK.

France conducts a census count every year, using a sampling method, rather than a full population analysis. This is conducted by *the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*, or INSEE, in collaboration with local authorities and municipalities. Between 1970 and 2015, the French population increased from almost 51 million people to an estimated 64 million. In 2010, 27.3% of newborns in metropolitan France had at least one foreign-born parent and 23.9% had at least one parent born outside of Europe (INEES, 2011). While full figures for Scottish individuals are not available (the census notes national origin but does not differentiate between the UK home nations) 5% of the migrants to France during 2012 alone came from the UK. From the homeland perspective, the UK Home Office data highlights that a significant number of people leave the UK each year to work abroad, especially in managerial or other professional positions (Murray, Harding, Angus, Gillespie and Aorra, 2012), with France one of the top five destinations for the past few years. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century France exceeded the USA as a top destination for UK migrants (Murray et al, 2012), becoming the third favourite destination for a number of years.

We wished to examine the nature of the contemporary Scottish diaspora in France. Given the huge influx of British people in general throughout the past 40 years, and the apparently moribund nature of some Franco-Scottish organisations, the nature of the Scottish diaspora in France may be somewhat different from other Scottish diaspora elsewhere. Recent work into other Scottish diaspora groups has highlighted their varied nature (Leith and Sim, 2014), and such differences may well exist in France too. Unlike other diaspora groups, Fry (2001) notes that much of the Scots diaspora were 'voluntary' members who had left Scotland willingly – a pattern that seems to have continued through to modern times. Similarly, Vance (2005) has suggested that Scots might not be considered as a diaspora *per se*. Most were not forced migrants and thus lack the element of victimhood found in other, more traditional diaspora groups. This remains an arguable position. What is clear from previous study is that there are several differing types of Scottish diaspora groups (Leith and Sim, 2012, Sim and Leith, 2014, Leith and Sim 2015). These can be classified by the driving motivation by which members became part of the diaspora. Some left Scotland because they were forced to, whatever Vance suggests, and thus are 'victim' diaspora, some left because they moved overseas to work and are thus 'trade' diaspora, and others were members of the 'imperial' diaspora, moving to help administer elements of the British Empire (Leith and Sim, 2014).

We are able to draw such initial conclusions because there are now significant works that focus on the Scottish diaspora, some historical (such as Hunter, 1994; Fry, 2015; Harper, 2003; McCarthy, 2006; Devine, 2011; Bueltmann, Hinson and Morton, 2013) while others are more sociological and anthropological in focus ( Ray, 2001; Basu, 2007; Prentis, 2008; Sim, 2011). But we argue that many of these previous studies have been somewhat limited by their foci, and have not provided a picture

of the living diaspora, nor providing insight into their nature, and their understanding of who they are, and their relationship with Scotland. We do know that often the Scottish diaspora relationship with the homeland can be strong, but based on romantic or outmoded visions and ideas (Basu, 2007; Sim, 2011).

There have been other works that have looked at specific contemporary Scottish diaspora such as those in England (Leith and Sim, 2012), or in the Netherlands (Sim and Leith, 2014) or North America (Ray, 2001; Leith and Sim, 2016) and these have illustrated a more nuanced set of existing groups with differing perceptions. These perceptions may well demonstrate the importance of location and distance to the homeland as an aspect of diaspora understanding and relationship. The contemporary Scottish diaspora in France, the closest outside the UK (and the closest non-English speaking polity with a significant Scottish diaspora presence) provides an excellent case study.

### Considering and Theorising Diasporas

The term diaspora, as it has come to be 'generally understood', remains a 'slippery concept' (Sim and Leith, 2014). A decade ago Brubaker pointed out that entering the word diaspora in Google provided over a million hits (Brubaker, 2005). Today Google will provide 127 million in 0.3 seconds. However, such broader awareness and usage is belied by the concern that there is still no universally accepted definition of the term itself and, therefore, overt discussion around the concept, how we consider, employ, and apply it, is necessary (Baser, 2015).

The term diaspora derives originally from the Greek and literally means to scatter or disperse (Baumann, 2010). Initially applied to such dispersed communities as the Jews (considered by many as the original diaspora) it has now come to have a wider meaning; refugees, guest workers and so on (Knott and McLoughlin, 2010). What is important is what the concept has come to mean and how one envisions the existence of a diaspora, and how that diaspora considers itself. Shuval argues that the term has become a social construct within which the diaspora, through a sense of national identity, belonging, history and memory, can create a sense of their own reality (2000).

Safran (1991) suggested six necessary or defining characteristics of a diaspora, which included dispersal across a number of locations outside the homeland, the retention of a memory of that homeland, and a continuing relationship to the homeland. Butler (2001) agreed that there should be two or more destinations, and also that a relationship (real or imagined) with the homeland must continue, and further that the group must also have a sense of their own identity as a diaspora, with links among themselves as well as with/to the homeland. However, she also added a fourth feature – the need to exist over more than one generation, a 'true' diaspora must be multi-generational in nature. This point is also emphasised by Van Hear (1998) who also stresses the importance of inter-group activity within the diaspora. Bearing all the above in mind, the definition of the diaspora we employ in this work is one loosely drawn from MacGregor (1980); millions of people around the world of (Scottish) birth or ancestral descent who feel a connection with and back to the homeland (to Scotland).

This temporal dimension is an important aspect of diaspora studies, as the nature of the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland may change over time (Butler, 2001). Many members of the diaspora when given the opportunity may actually choose not to return to the homeland, due to the disruption or strain that may occur (Shuval, 2000). So there is a temptation among many

diaspora to look back at the homeland, in an affectionate sense, at a place that is in the past and has already changed (Handlin, 1973).

As we have already noted, the well-studied North American diaspora in particular has been accused of having a very sentimental view of what Scotland actually is (MacGregor, 1980). It has been argued that many a diaspora consider the homeland in an idealized, often mythical way (Tsuda, 2009). In this sense though, members of the diaspora see themselves as part of the imagined community that is a nation (Anderson, 1991).

On this issue of reality versus awareness, previous research has shown that while many diaspora do indeed lack a strong awareness of the modern homeland, many are 'very perceptive' about contemporary issues (Sim and Leith, 2013). In this regard distance becomes a defining issue. It may well be that the 'near' diaspora in France are more informed than those of the 'far' diasporas of North America or Australasia. As our discussion above noted, location and distance to the homeland can be an important aspect of the diaspora relationship. These are in addition to the time factor we have also identified. Therefore, our study of this 'near' diaspora is to consider the nature of Scottish identity and the connection that the diaspora group has with the homeland.

### Methodology

Our research employed a face to face interview technique, utilising a number of questions, mostly open-ended, through a pre-printed questionnaire, which was made available to the individual subjects prior to the interview, although follow up and additional questions were employed during the interview to elucidate on individual points raised. The average length of an interview was 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed after the fieldwork was complete. The fieldwork was undertaken during 2012, with additional interviews held during 2013. In addition to the initial interviews, follow on telephone conversations took place during 2014. We employed the particular approach of face to face interviews as it was considered to be one that would (and did) produce a significant amount of detailed, qualitative data (Silverman, 2014). This is the most widely employed method for creating qualitative research output (Silverman, 2005). In addition, it allows for a consideration of the nuance of interaction, whereby an interviewer can pick up on non-verbal clues and other non-verbal issues that can provide input to a study of identity, such as ours.

To gain respondents for our research we initiated contact with a number of the Scottish diaspora organisations already existing in France. These included long standing Caledonian and St Andrew's societies and other organisations such as the Scots Kirk in Paris, some of which have existed for over a century or more. Some organisations located via the web proved to be of limited assistance and somewhat moribund. We therefore utilized more recently established organisations and groups, such as web based diaspora forums and clan organisations. Recognising that this particular method of recruitment would provide us with individuals with an already clearly existing sense of Scottishness, we also sought to identify individuals out with such organisations. Using a variety of online business, community and individual websites, and other resources, we initiated contact with individuals and employed 'snowballing' to reach further into the French based Scottish diaspora, beyond established organisations. We achieved 39 initial interviews, involving 42 people.

Of the 42 respondents, 32 had been born in Scotland, five in England 'to a Scottish family', four born in France, again 'to a Scottish family' and one in Japan and raised in London, albeit 'to a Scottish

family'. The majority of those interviewed had moved to France during the 1980s and 1990s, with a few moving as early as the 1970s and one third having moved since the turn of the millennium. Six individuals had retired, although only four were aged above 65, and others were working as lawyers, teachers, engineers, or civil servants, while some ran small businesses. Only one of our respondents was unemployed. Many had initially located to France for business or employment purposes and thus the current Scottish diaspora in France falls into the middle class or managerial/professional group. Most respondents lived in family units, with 26 of the interviewees having children living at home or away at University. Only six lived alone, and all of these were in the 21-30 age range. We interviewed 16 men and 26 women, and 21 of them lived in a family setting. Of those in a relationship, 24 had non-French partners, and 8 French. The vast majority were married to their partners. The average respondent would be female, aged 36-50, working in a professional middle class form of employment, living in a family unit with 2 children, with a non-French spouse. Her male counterpart would be slightly older but still average just below 50, more likely to be a professional, less likely to live in a family setting, but still would, and more likely to have a non-French partner.

As noted above, all initial interviews were fully transcribed, while follow up telephone interviews were recorded in notation form. The transcriptions and notes are analysed in this paper to consider the nature of the contemporary Scottish diaspora in France. We are very much aware of the hazards involved in drawing wide conclusions from a limited qualitative sample, but analysis of the responses illustrated many clear and consistent points in a variety of themes that became evident during the research process. Therefore, we now report on those commonalities and themes.

#### Discussion of Themes drawn from diaspora

Our discussion above, highlights the importance of identity among diasporas, as well as relations with, and understanding of, the homeland, the importance of generational connections; and the issue of time/space from the homeland. In considering these areas, a number of common themes, emerged from interviews. These covered such diverse issues as pride in a sense of identity, a sense of staying connected to the homeland, either by visiting or by keeping up family connections, and the annoyance caused by people mistaking Scots for being English or Irish.

#### Identity

Ideas differ regarding a national identity, such as 'Scottishness' (cf. McCrone and Bechhofer, 2015). For many scholars, Scottishness is an open and inclusive sense of belonging while others argue that there are greater boundaries to belonging than simply wishing to (Leith and Soule, 2012). Sim and Leith (2013, 2014) have illustrated that many members of the diaspora see a sense of ancestry as important. However, as the majority of our interviewees were born in Scotland, they held to their individual sense of national identity in an uncomplicated manner. This is not surprising, because 'most contemporary individuals subscribe to the view that national identities are factual, self-evident and pervasive' (Malesevic, 2013, p155).

What is interesting is that while most considered themselves Scottish, they tended to downplay British as sense of belonging;

I always say I am Scottish and not British... I wouldn't consider myself not British because that is just silly though (F21a, Female)

I relate to that because I am happy to be British but proud to be Scottish and that really helps to get on side with people everywhere... There is nothing wrong with being British but I am proud to be Scottish (F21, male)

For me, being Scottish is simple, and identity hasn't bothered me very much... I don't say British next, I think I am Parisian, with Scottish origins obviously (F9, Female)

I tend to use the word Scottish much more than British... often because English people just don't get it. But, I am happy to think of myself as British (F32, Male)

While one or two people firmly rejected being British '...absolutely not... never consider myself British' (F3, Female), there was no wholesale rejection, which has been witnessed among other Scottish diasporas in Europe (Sim and Leith, 2014). Interviewees were asked to rank the relative strengths of their Scottish or British identity as per the now traditional 'Moreno question' (Moreno, 1988). The results from our sample closely reflected other such surveys undertaken in Scotland in recent years (see, for example, Leith and Soule, 2012 or Curtice, 2014). Most appeared happy to acknowledge a combined identity, although feeling 'more Scottish than British'. Only one respondent declined to discuss identity. Such findings illustrate the strength and importance of a particularly Scottish sense of identity. We did discuss the issue of being European, given the location and subject material, and it did crop up in a number of discussions. Nonetheless, the idea of a supranational identity was not a core aspect of our research. Initial discussions indicate that this is an area ripe for future research.

Exactly half of our respondents were living in a family unit. Therefore, in a similar vein, we specifically sought interviewee attitudes about how they thought their children viewed their national identity. We were not able to interview the children directly themselves, for practical and ethical reasons, but we were able to gain insight through the parents. Most children had been born and very often schooled in France although, interestingly, a handful had returned to the UK for schooling. This area was included as previous research into children of migrants have identified integration issues, especially when significant cultural or linguistic barriers are present (Alba, 2002).

Many stated that their children were primarily French, but also consider themselves Scottish.

My children probably consider themselves French first, but all say they are Scottish (F33, Female)

They were both born in France and I think they... yes if you asked them they would say they feel more French than Scottish. They are bi-lingual, the younger one not as good, but he has become more involved in his Scottish roots as he got older. (F20, Female)

They think themselves more French than Scottish... the eldest...has been to stay and absolutely adored it. (F8, Male)

[my children] are different...the eldest is 18 and I would say she is the most British of the 3...the middle one, her English has suddenly improved and the youngest he has started bi-lingual classes at School and is fascinated by the fact we can speak English at home and others can't . All were born here but know they are in a Scottish family (F12, Female)

Some interviewees, however, were very clear that their children saw themselves as Scottish or British rather than French, although there were no clear reasons why this should be the case. There seemed to be no significant markers between the families that provided this differing information, as they all included children born in France. Even when children had been born in Scotland (or elsewhere), but raised in France, they could see themselves as either Franco-Scottish or Scottish-French.

It was also clear that all parents wanted their children to be both bi-lingual, and also very aware of their own family heritage. Most families travelled extensively back and forth (or had in the past) and most children had, at the very least, experience of holidays in Scotland. In most cases many children actively engaged in the process of embracing or displaying their Scottishness.

My son bought a 'Wallace lives in me' t-shirt when he was in Scotland this year and he also...came back with a Kilt...a Celtic cross and he was just really proud. (F3, Female)

I don't want to shove it [being Scottish] on them, I said if they wanted to pick up a Saltire, they could and, (laughing) they did! (F16, Female)

One interesting fact was that in 14 cases, where respondents had children aged 18 or over, many of them were attending, or had attended Scottish Universities. Among those specifically mentioned were Dundee, St Andrews, Glasgow, Stirling and Edinburgh. Overall, a sense of Scottish identity among the diaspora was clear and strong, where even those long residents of France, or children born and raised in France strongly connected to elements of Scottishness. The transmission to the second generation, within our sample, was not 100% by any means, but no children were perceived as rejecting a sense of Scottish identity, and many actively employed or displayed it when given the opportunity. However, whether we can extrapolate this finding remains in question.

#### Belonging among the Diaspora – Organised Activity

Sullivan has noted that 'Scottish Associations remain a highly significant beacon of ethnic consciousness within the wider Scottish diaspora community' (2015, p63). She records a long history of organisations providing a sense of community among Scots outside of Scotland, while well-established diaspora communities in North America, seem to be undergoing a renaissance of sorts, with Highland Games and other events having increased during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Hague, 2001). As Sim and Leith have pointed out 'Scottish societies appear to be significant for many people' (2014, p145) even in Europe, where the closer proximity to the homeland might mean people were less interested in joining such specifically Scottish organisations.

This was indeed the situation for many of our interviewees, who saw little need to embrace Scottish organisations.

I don't belong to any, I know where some are, but I don't do anything with them. We have a Burns Supper here at work, but you would not recognise it – it's a bit French (F26, Male)

I don't belong to any (F23a Female)/the only membership I have is the golf club...every Friday the local expats play, about 20-30, but I don't play with that group...there are some expats who are so clichéd and that's the last thing we want to be (F23b, Male)

For at least thirty years I have had nothing to do with official organisations (F18, Male)

Other people are actively engaged in Scottish focused or Scottish cultural organisations – although for a variety of reasons. One respondent was an organiser of the local Scottish country dance association; however, a number of dance groups had responded stating that there were no ‘real’ Scottish members of their group, and those members who were Scots born tended to highlight other reasons to be involved rather than it being a specifically ‘Scottish’ activity. Indeed, across Europe one can find a long standing interest in Scottish focused culture (Dietler, 1994). Hesse (2011a, 2011b) has noted a significant number of non-Scots involved in Highland Games, or (bag) Pipe Bands. Hesse argues that media outputs such as *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* and more recent material such as *Outlander*, a series of Scottish cultural themed novels written by Diana Gabaldon and now also a TV series, have created significant interest in all things Scottish. He has hypothesised that some Europeans may be turning against their own cultural heritage (for reasons such as Fascism) and connecting with a less tainted, more appealing culture. It is certainly the case that a significant number of non-Scots within France are heavily involved in cultural events that are firmly Scottish. As our Scottish born organiser of the dance group, who dances regularly, but does not ‘do the expat thing’ also noted

It’s not all Scots – there is a big mixture actually, a lot of French, one or two English and quite a few Germans’ (F11, Female)

Echoing those who did not get involved in organisations, some individuals introduced Scottish cultural elements into their local communities. A number organised Burns suppers at work or home and one family had a significant part of the local commune attending a Burns night held in the village hall, something they had been doing for the last few years and which had ‘grown and grown’. It seems that many individuals within the diaspora organise their own networked groups with those other members of the diaspora that they come across. One such individual had organised a ‘lassies who lunch’ group through their work (which was a significant British organisation). However, there had been a complaint about it being unfair:

It really winds me up...I wasn’t sure they were serious or not so I decided to just drop it. I don’t really like the confrontation, although I am an assertive person (F7, Female)

Well, you know it is funny as it had crossed my mind. We did get the comment that it was discriminatory but if an English girl wanted to come we would not say ‘no’ just because they were English. (F4, Female).

Thus, while several individuals were engaged in some way with official organisations, many were not formally active, but had wider links with other diaspora Scots. Few lacked knowledge of other Scots within the wider community – even if they lived in very rural circumstances. As more than one commented, a Scottish accent serves as a very clear signal of sorts and somewhat stands out.

### A Future Return?

The relationship with the homeland is a central element of any understanding of the diaspora (Butler, 2001, Brubaker, 2005). Yet, as we have already discussed many members of the diaspora, despite longing for the homeland, never actually return (Shuval, 2000) because of the various costs, economic, physical, or even spiritual, associated with it. There are numerous factors that can

impinge upon a return to the homeland. The existence of children in the host country, lack of financial resources to return, lack of any direct family back in the homeland, and considerable time from leaving the homeland for the host country are all key factors. For a third generation migrant, return might be impossible due to legal restrictions. Nonetheless, as the majority of our respondents were first generation migrants, returning was a potential outcome and therefore one we specifically focused upon.

There were a number of individuals who had actively considered return, only five rejected it outright. Many of the others raised some of the concerns that could limit their choice to return, and several noted differences between married partners.

My husband is not so sure, but I would be happy to return if we could...certainly we are going to be buried there, even if we cannot afford to move back first (F20, Female)

We have disagreed on our retirement... I don't want to stay here but he might. It's a very common thing. I know a lot of people, the female half wants to return to Scotland and the males don't. I think when we are retired we should move back to Scotland (F21, Female)

I would, my wife would be over the moon, she has lived over here for x amount of years for me so why not. I am not against moving back, I don't think, work wise, it is advantageous though (F8, Male)

Others were more open about recognising not only the practical problems of a formal return but the fact that, over time, the Scotland they had left perhaps no longer existed.

I would love to but can't afford it. I like the fact that there is so much on my doorstep here...I think the conclusion I am drawing is that Scotland is my head and heart. I don't *need* physically to be there often. I carry it with me. Thinking about the answers to your questions, it occurred to me that when I think of Scotland, when I think about being Scottish, I'm possibly harking back to a Scotland and concepts that no longer exist. (F19, Female)

It's difficult to imagine never going back. Why? It is just a horrible thing. I know lots of people who say yes, I am here and I have got settled, but my ashes are going back to Scotland. I would like to go back. I mean, I think I know maybe it has changed and it is obviously changing...but the quality of life in France is, you know, not so bad at all, and the weather is generally nice. Yes, it is a really difficult question. (F24, Female)

Five respondents had no intent to return now, or in the future. Weather was one of the oft quoted reasons for this, even if brought up in conjunction with other reasons, it was usually mentioned sometimes with great conviction.

I don't see myself returning to Scotland. It's too small, for my particular domain, there is nothing there for me and the weather is rubbish...I still like to go back, although this might die out over time. (F11, Male)

I am content here. I see less contact in the future, although there is virtually none at present. (F25, Female)

No way, I only go back when it is summer now, and sometimes you can't tell. (F37, Female)

In all, the majority of respondents did not foresee a return in the immediate future. A smaller number recognised the possibility, although some seemed more wistful than firm about it. While a minority ruled out return completely, a significant number noted that they planned to have their burial take place in Scotland, or have their ashes scattered there. There would be, in that sense, a final homecoming for many.

### Awareness of the Homeland

Baser notes that a diaspora, 'by definition, takes its *raison d'être* from a sense of belonging to the homeland' (2015, p25); whether that relationship is with 'a real or imagined homeland'. We have already highlighted that the Scottish diaspora, in other countries and at other times, has been challenged for having an overly romantic or unreal vision of the homeland. Given the limited distance between France and Scotland, and the seemingly modern nature of the Scottish diaspora in France, perhaps a greater level of awareness of the real homeland is likely? Furthermore, with the advent of legislative devolution in 1999, there has been a specifically Scottish Government in place which has sought a much firmer and obvious relationship with the diaspora (Leith, 2015). By holding a Year of Homecoming in 2009 and by publishing a *Diaspora Engagement Plan* that specifically sought to 'harness the power of Scotland's Diaspora' (Scottish Government, 2010, p1) the Scottish government has made it clear it is seeking to fully engage with the diaspora. We therefore sought to gain an insight into just how knowledgeable the diaspora was about the contemporary homeland and ongoing political changes underway there.

The vast majority of our interviewees stated that they accessed information on Scotland via the web – namely through a limited number of media web pages. The majority of respondents named *the BBC*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Herald* web sites as their primary source of information. A few others mentioned smaller, regional media outlets in Scotland, and some used ITV and Sky news websites. A handful had satellite television in their homes, which gave them full access to British television programming, although, interestingly enough, only one family had such a facility, all others who had Satellite TV were childless. Only a limited number of respondents admitted to not following regular news on Scotland, but even these individuals stated that they kept informed via family and friends. This reflects the modern practicalities of life and informs the concept of the diaspora; as any contemporary individual or group outside of the homeland with access to the internet can at the very least connect with information on and from that homeland.

Although the 2009 Year of Homecoming had a high profile within Scotland, and was specifically aimed at bringing worldwide members of the Scottish diaspora 'home to Scotland', almost half of our interviewees admitted to not being aware of the Homecoming itself, or of the numerous events linked to it.

I was vaguely aware, but we did not hear much about it over here to be honest (F37, Female)

No, I heard nothing about it (This respondent actually worked for the British Embassy at the time, we have thus chosen to not directly attribute this response)

No...I was back in June [2009] for my school reunion with pals. (F18, Female)

Those individuals that were aware of the Year of Homecoming tended to be involved with official British organisations, or had links through employment. Nonetheless, very few admitted that they would have made extra efforts to return to Scotland in that year. Many had plans to return anyway, but these had not been impacted upon, or informed by, the homecoming itself. At the end of the day, the Scottish diaspora in France did not seem to be fully aware of, let alone engage with Homecoming 2009.

In terms of a more political awareness, we asked all respondents, in 2011/12, if they could name the First Minister of Scotland at that time. Only 12 respondents were unable to name Alex Salmond, although of that twelve one admitted to having met him and shaken his hand. This presented a significant level of general political knowledge awareness with 30 of our group being fully aware of the First Minister's name and these respondents also seemed much more aware of the changes which had taken place in Scotland during the previous decade or more. As we were focused on Scotland as the political and social unit in question, we did not ask about Westminster or the UK Prime Minister.

Likewise, the vast majority had supported devolution, although a small minority had not. There was a clear link between attitudes towards devolution and individual responses to the Moreno question. The few individuals who felt more, or solely British also tended to be anti-devolutionist. This places our non-representative sample very much in line with other more scientific polls taken during the 1990s and 2000s (Leith and Soule, 2011).

Discussion around political awareness of the homeland indicated a mix of views about the recent changes in Scotland, potential independence and the SNP.

I think devolution was a great step forwards for democracy. I don't know the exact timing of the UK...we didn't send any Conservatives back and that was a clear democratic deficit... But I would go back and support the campaign against Scottish independence. I am not going to give you all the reasons why...I think it would diminish Scotland's voice. I don't really know much about Scottish MPS. There are a few individuals that stick out that I have a lot of time for, like Nicola Sturgeon. (F7, Female)

I grew up watching the BBC so I have a British identity as well. But then again I am not there so I don't pay taxes. It is people that are there that should have the say, although I have heard a lot of people that I wouldn't expect to vote SNP saying yes is the way forward. (F1, Female)

My heart says go for it but my head is less certain that it would be a good thing. Having not lived in Scotland for X years I also feel I have absolutely no right to an opinion. I would not want the right to vote. (F31, Female)

When asked about ongoing political issues, and an awareness of the Scottish Parliament, most respondents admitting to knowing 'only what hits the headlines' (F32, Female) and that they are 'concerned', 'excited' and 'unsure' of what the Scottish Government is doing.

Of course, given the location of the diaspora, some comments were not surprising. One that summed up a significant segment of our respondents' attitude was:

It is very easy to get information on the web. I think they [the SNP] do a lot of good things for the Scots but sometimes they are way too extreme. But Alex Salmond has the benefit of being a strong personality and at least he speaks up for Scotland. However, I am against independence; for me it defeats the purpose of the EU and I am in love with the EU. (F36, Male)

In many ways, the diaspora saw the SNP, devolution and the changes in Scotland's constitutional relationship with the wider UK as a good thing, although they tended to be much less supportive of independence, seeing this as a step too far.

### Discussion/Conclusion

Ultimately, we are left with the question of what limitations are placed upon our findings by the nature of our enquiry and the methodology of the sample itself. This is not a scientific sample we present, nor would it be easy to obtain one from the Scottish born or descended residents of the French Republic. It is even difficult to assess the actual size of the Scottish diaspora in France. Yet, there is little to challenge the idea that we have not investigated representative members of the diaspora. The group characteristics we have highlighted are not atypical of other studies, be they in Europe or North America (Sim and Leith, 2014, Leith and Sim, 2015, Leith and Sim, 2016). Our sample group are a mobile, professional, middle class, modern westernised diaspora and we have little reason to think our results are unusual. Yet, further study is clearly required, for a number of interesting findings, as we highlight below.

Our consideration of the Scottish diaspora in France indicates that it is quite a modern diaspora, rather than an ancestral one. Most of the individuals we contacted had moved to France during the period following the UK's entry into the EU. Most had moved for work purposes and many continued to stay for firm economic reasons, even while elucidating a wish to return at some future point. However, they had begun to put down firm intergenerational roots, with many children, some still living at home, but both those, and others, all firmly ensconced into French society. As noted above, the majority of our respondents considered themselves more Scottish than British, even those who had been born outside of Scotland. Some considered their Scottishness as equal to their Britishness, with less than a handful prioritising their Britishness. All strongly emphasised the fact that they identified themselves to the French as *écossais*. At the end of the day, all firmly considered themselves a diaspora, as Scottish as the 'folks back home'.

One of the reasons behind the modernity of the Scottish diaspora may well be that many within the second generation tend to identify primarily with the host nation and host identity, rather than the original homeland. It could be that each generation of the diaspora becomes less distinguishable from the majority, host population and eventually dissipates into that wider group. However, this is not conclusive, and the diaspora agreed that their children held a firm sense of Scottishness, even when, as discussed earlier, that was a second order, or perhaps a hyphenated identity. Diaspora groups within the US have long held such a sense of identity (Gans, 1994, 2014) and it is argued that it retains significant efficacy for many generations, up to and including the contemporary diaspora (Leith and Sim, 2016). Furthermore, some children of the diaspora were seen to hold Scottishness as their primary identity, and even though the majority felt their children to be primarily French, many continued their higher education in the homeland, rather than the host country. The transfer of

identity to the second generation may be one of a hyphenated or secondary identity, but the transfer is clearly evident. This modern diaspora is more than a migrant community.

One thought-provoking finding was that many respondents eschewed formal diaspora organisations, or downplayed their membership when they participated, in favour of a more informal relationship with fellow members of the diaspora. All were aware of other Scots within France, many identifying them within the local area and wider region quite easily; indicating the presence of an informal network. Yet, when formal organisations were available, they were not always accessed, with many individuals making it plain that they wished to integrate as fully as possible into the host country culture and society. This stands in direct contrast to more established and traditional 'ancestral diasporas', such as one finds in North America, where membership of a clan organisation, or Scottish association is firmly tied to the focus of identity. This particular difference points to a clear need for further study on this finding.

In fact, many respondents identified the 'expat thing' as a peculiarly British, or English, form of behaviour, and this may have influenced, or informed their attitude towards it. Several felt that English people living in France made less of an effort to integrate than they did, although how accurate such a feeling is, we are unable to assess. A study among English migrants in France or wider Europe would do well to focus on that point. It may well be that such an attitude is a means by which the Scottish diaspora differentiate themselves from the other 'British' diaspora with which the French might otherwise equate them. It is important to note that 'conventional wisdom' argues that the Scots are viewed very positively in France –much more positively than the English. This feeling was reflected throughout much of the diaspora we encountered, and may influence this differentiation of behaviour.

What was obvious was that the Scottish diaspora were, and are, very content to introduce aspects of cultural behaviour and events into the local community. Informal Burns Suppers, where the French or others greatly outnumbered the Scots present, and where the actual format may differ from the traditional Scottish form to suit local practices or palates, were numerous. Add to this the existence of a number of Scottish Country Dance societies and local Pipe Bands that have few, if any, Scottish members and one perhaps finds traces of the earlier diaspora. Certainly they do represent influences of Scottish culture that stretch beyond the modern members of the diaspora. Whether this is the influence of previous generations of a Scottish diaspora in France, or members of other cultures seeking a purer form of cultural activity (Deitler, 1994; Hesse, 2011b), is a subject of discussion.

One element that clearly marks the Scots in France out as a diaspora is the myth of, and longing for, a return. Of course, most respondents had returned to Scotland at one point or another, for a family, holiday or work related visit, and many continued to travel back on a regular basis. In addition, all had taken children back to the homeland at least once, creating a firm connection in the minds of the second generation. The pattern among respondents seemed to be that as individuals grew older, the visits back to Scotland became less frequent, and the expectation of a firm return less clear. Several respondents noted a gender divide in the wish for a return, with females being much more positive and hopeful of doing so than their male counterparts. The existence of a second generation in the host country tended to make a return problematic, but childless respondents held similar ideas about returning.

Two items of note around the issue of returning stood out. The first was that, while often presented in a comic or almost facetious manner, the weather was cited by 32 respondents as a factor (sometimes as *the* factor) weighing against a return. A number of these 32 individuals noted the much more favourable climate of France, especially the long summers and warmer winters, as a significant issue. Likewise, other social factors tended to be mentioned, often in conjunction with the weather. The second issue raised by numerous interviewees was the fact that they, as individuals, wished to be either buried in Scotland, or be cremated and have their ashes scattered in Scotland, even if they did not return beforehand. As the majority of our respondents were first generation diaspora, it would seem clear that the majority wish to 'rest' in the homeland, even if they do not wish to live there. The myth of return is certainly a key element of the Scots in France.

Given the modern nature of the diaspora, the close geographical proximity of France and Scotland, and the immediate availability of news and information in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is perhaps unsurprising that the diaspora seemed generally informed about the changing social and political situation back in Scotland. Many kept up with recent political developments, although by no means all, and many had an awareness of the key issues facing the people in Scotland. Interestingly, many also felt that they themselves, as Scottish individuals, had little right to partake in the decision on independence for Scotland given that they no longer lived there. This would be firmly in keeping with the Scottish Government's reasoning about who it allowed to vote in the 2014 Referendum, which was presented as an issue of residence and not ethnicity/nationality, with the franchise employed being the one for the Scottish Parliament, where all EU citizens resident in Scotland could vote, rather than the Westminster franchise, which would allow expatriates, within the time limit, to vote, while excluding EU citizens resident in Scotland.

Nonetheless, while remaining informed, Scottish Government activity aimed at the diaspora seemed to have bypassed the 'near' diaspora of France. Even though many travelled back to Scotland on a regular basis, and several did so during 2009 itself, any attempts to publicise Homecoming 2009, and generate an additional interest among the worldwide Scottish diaspora to return home in that year were unknown to a significant number of our interview subjects. In this regard the Scottish Government has seemed to fail to connect to at least one geographic element of the diaspora.

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