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Scotland: Society and Culture

Murray Stewart Leith and Duncan Sim

Introduction

‘Except for viewers in Scotland’. This announcement, heard frequently on television, has always highlighted for viewers that Scotland was about to receive its own news, current affairs, sport or other programmes, separately from England and Wales. In other words, it signalled ‘difference’ – that Scotland, while part of the UK, was nevertheless somehow different and distinctive – and, in this chapter, we explore some of those distinctions. We begin by examining the strengthening of national identity, before moving on to look at education, employment, gender, ethnicity and culture. Taken together, these various aspects of society will hopefully help us to understand better that distinctiveness. We will conclude the chapter with a look at current research into Scottish society and consider the state of the discipline.

National Identity

The 1950s were a high point of Britishness in the UK, following the Second World War but before the disintegration of the Empire (Devine, 1999). Yet the UK appeared unsure of its future direction and in December 1962, Dean Acheson, who had served as Secretary of State under President Eisenhower, made his famous remark that Great Britain had lost an empire but not yet found a role. This lack of direction led many in Scotland to question whether the union with England was still meaningful and, after the discovery of North Sea oil with its potential to transform Scottish economic fortunes and to make an independent Scotland economically viable, the union came under particular strain. Tom Nairn (1977) could write of the impending ‘breakup’ of Britain.

The 1960s therefore saw the growth of political nationalism in Scotland and some electoral successes for the Scottish National Party (see Chapter 17, below). The establishment of the devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999 and further growing support for the SNP appear to reflect a stronger sense of national identity within Scotland. In 1988, research explored the dual identity of Scots - being Scottish and British at the same time - and found that 39 per cent stated that they were Scottish-only, while a further 30 per cent prioritised their Scottishness over their Britishness (Moreno, 1988).

In subsequent studies of Scottish identity, and also of social and constitutional change, it appears that an overall sense of a British identity has declined in all of the nations of the UK. Of course, there may be many different reasons for this, as an individual's sense of identity is a very personal thing. As the writer William McIlvanney has suggested, 'Having a national identity is like having an old insurance policy. You know you've got one somewhere but you're not sure where it is. And if you're honest, you'd have to admit you're pretty vague about what the small print means' (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009).

Questions on national identity within the 2011 Census (Simpson and Smith, 2014) confirm that a sense of Britishness has declined across the UK, albeit more so in Scotland (Table 1). The table shows that country-only identity is strongest in Scotland, where British-only identity is weakest. For those individuals who were actually born in Scotland, 72 per cent claimed a Scottish-only identity.

	Scotland	Wales	England	Northern Ireland
Country identity only	62 per cent	58 per cent	60 per cent	47 per cent
British identity only	8 per cent	17 per cent	19 per cent	40 per cent
Country and British only	18 per cent	7 per cent	9 per cent	8 per cent
Other identities	11 per cent	18 per cent	11 per cent	5 per cent

Source: Simpson and Smith (2014)

It is clear therefore that there is a growing sense of a distinct national identity within Scotland, sometimes quite separate from 'being British'.

Education

One of the key pillars underlying Scottish distinctiveness has been the Scottish education system which, along with the Kirk and the legal system, remained untouched by the 1707 Treaty of Union with England and Wales. Devine (1999) notes how the Scottish system of schooling from the Reformation to the Industrial Revolution played a central part in the nation's sense of itself, attracting praise from contemporary commentators and later observers and education played a central part in the nation's sense of itself.

Various myths have grown up around Scottish education regarding its egalitarian tradition – or the 'democratic intellect' (Davie, 1961) – and these myths and traditions have usefully been invoked against threats of 'anglicisation'. As McCrone (2001) has pointed out:

The myth of egalitarianism ... is not dependent on 'facts', because it represents a set of social, self-evident values, a social ethos, a celebration of sacred beliefs about what it is to be Scottish. It helped to underpin a social and cultural order which placed a premium on collective, cooperative and egalitarian commitments. It is an ideological device for marking off the Scots from the English, which seems to grow in importance the more the two societies grow similar (McCrone, 2001: 102-3).

This idea of egalitarianism springs from the system of parish schools developed after the Reformation, and the wide availability of education gave rise to the notion of the 'lad o' pairts' or 'lad of parts' (Anderson, 1985). This was a shorthand term for the idea that, through the acquisition of knowledge and the encouragement of ambition, a lad (never a 'lass' in those days) from the humblest background could become socially mobile and secure a career. The parish schools represented a meritocratic system offering 'a ladder of opportunity leading to the universities and on to the professions' (Devine, 1999: 91). In terms of post-school education, Scots have traditionally been proud of their universities and the country had four institutions (St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh) by the late sixteenth century, when only Oxford and Cambridge had been established in England.

So what is Scottish education like today? Firstly, state school education is administered within a national system by the 32 local authorities, with Roman Catholic schools part of the state system since 1918. The range of ‘faith’ schools, ‘foundation’ schools and ‘academies’ which exist in England have no equivalent north of the border. There is an independent sector but this is responsible for educating only around 4 per cent of school pupils, compared with 7-8 per cent in England.

In terms of academic performance, 61.2 per cent of school leavers in 2017 gained one or more qualifications at Higher level (somewhat akin to the English A level) or above; before 2010, the figure was below 50 per cent (Scottish Government, 2018). There remains, however, an attainment gap between leavers from the most and least deprived areas of the country (Sosu and Ellis, 2014), which the Scottish Government is keen to address. In 2016, a study of Scotland’s international education scores suggested that all was not well and a decline in performance in both science and reading had seen a number of other countries overtaking Scotland. After extensive consultation, the Government issued a National Improvement Framework in December 2018 with the aim of closing the attainment gap.

In terms of further and higher education, Scottish FE colleges are well established, although sector-wide mergers have taken place in recent years and rationalisation has seen a drop in student numbers. The university sector is quite distinct in Scotland. The four-year Honours degree (contrasting to the English three-years) was always a clear difference but now the absence of tuition fees for Scottish residents who attend university is the most visible difference of all. The UK Government introduced fees in 1998; Scotland, after limiting costs to a ‘graduate tax’ of only £2000, then moved, in 2007, to remove all tuition costs for Scottish domiciled undergraduate students (Wilkins, Shams and Huisman, 2013). The argument was that such fees were a barrier to widening participation and this seems to link clearly to the historic idea of the democratic intellect and the firmly Scottish idea of educational access which is as open as possible.

Employment

Scottish employment was traditionally associated with heavy industry, and Clydeside was a major centre of iron and steel working, manufacturing, locomotive building and, of course, shipbuilding. Shortly before the First World War, almost one quarter of the world's shipping tonnage was built on the Clyde and, even in 1947, 18 per cent (Devine, 1999). But cracks began to appear in the Scottish economy in the interwar period and, although there was some recovery as a result of demand created by the Second World War, the situation did not last. High profile events such as the launch of the *Queen Elizabeth 2* in 1967 only disguised the underlying decline.

In the post-war period, central government pursued a regional policy (McCrone, 1969) in an attempt to diversify the Scottish economy. The country gained a share of the British motor industry, and in 1958, a new strip mill was built at Ravenscraig in Motherwell to boost the steel industry (Devine, 1999). Scotland was also successful in attracting electronics companies, with 'Silicon Glen' becoming a shorthand for a Scottish version of California's 'Silicon Valley' (Macdonald, 2009). But much of this investment was in 'branch plants', headquartered elsewhere, and the 1980s saw significant numbers of plant closures and a sharp rise in unemployment.

Elsewhere there was growth, most significantly from the 1970s onwards, in the energy sector. The first commercial Scottish oilfield – the Forties – came onstream in 1977, closely followed by the Brent and Ninian fields – and oil companies established offices and research and development bases in Aberdeen, the city rapidly becoming the oil capital of Europe. By 1981, UK oil production exceeded 87 million tonnes and, by the mid-1980s, 50,000 jobs in the country were oil-related (Macdonald 2009) but the industry was prone to booms and slumps as the oil price varied over time. While Norway established a Sovereign Oil Fund for future generations, the UK did not; thus periods of slump have seen the Scottish economy fail to benefit widely from the oil industry. Such failure to capitalise on the benefits of oil provided a major boost to political nationalism from the 1970s.

In terms of current economic activity in Scotland, the Labour Force Survey unemployment rate for February 2019 was 3.5 per cent, lower than the UK figure of 4.0 per cent (Aiton 2019). Although the rate of 7.6 per cent for 16-24 year olds remained a concern, this was

better than the UK rate of 11.5 per cent. Unemployment remains slightly high but employment activity (people in work) has risen, and the number of people aged 16 and over in employment in Scotland was 75.5 per cent at the end of 2018, just below the UK figure of 75.8 per cent (Aiton, 2019). These increases may be due to changes in the population as a whole, however, and many people work on a part-time basis.

In terms of numbers employed, the largest sectors are retail and the public sector, including health and education (Scottish Enterprise, 2016). Manufacturing remains significant but the numbers employed have declined over the years. Areas of expansion are renewable energy, the creative industries, food and drink, and tourism. Renewable energy employs around 16,000 and this is forecast to grow, following the Scottish Government's climate change legislation. Creative industries are estimated to employ almost 70,000 people; for example, Scotland enjoys a strong international profile in the gaming industry, with two of the most internationally successful games, *Minecraft* and *Grand Theft Auto* being developed in Dundee. Such centres of research excellence can develop next-generation technologies to support growth in the sector.

Food and drink expansion is based on high quality products such as salmon, game, whisky and gin distilling. Tourism, long a significant aspect of the Scottish economy has expanded, linked to international trends of higher incomes, greater leisure time and a growing interest in heritage and genealogy (Timothy, 2011).

The Scottish economy is in many respects 'holding its own' in comparison with the wider UK, with comparable employment rates. But there are challenges. For young people entering the labour market, we have already noted the problems of the attainment gap, with many young people, particularly from deprived backgrounds, leaving school with few, if any, qualifications. Finlay *et al* (2010) suggest that many young people in Scotland possess skills and have normal *aspirations*, but end up with low *expectations* in regard to their employability and life chances.

However, Scotland faces a growing problem because of its ageing population. Although the Scottish birth rate has risen in recent years, with additional population gains from inward migration, low levels of births over time have left an age structure with over one million

people aged over 65. Such ageing population challenges are not unique to Scotland, of course, but appear to be particularly acute there.

A third challenge relates to inward migration. The ageing population has led to a recognition that Scotland benefits from inward migration with ‘new Scots’ (particularly from the EU) helping to grow the economy. ‘Brexit’, however, has profound implications for the movement of labour into Scotland in the future and this has led to considerable economic uncertainty at the time of writing, particularly in the tourism and agriculture sectors.

Gender

Scotland is often viewed as a rather masculine country, exemplified by militaristic or Glasgow ‘hard man’ figures in popular media or novels like *No Mean City* (McArthur and Long, 1935). Celebrated figures in Scottish history – ranging from military leaders like Robert Bruce and William Wallace, to literary giants such as Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott) are male, and have influenced the nation’s sense of identity. However, women have played a significant role, but many of those with whom we are familiar – Mary Queen of Scots, Flora MacDonald, for example – appear as ‘romantic and doomed as participants in history’s lost causes’ (Breitenbach *et al*, 1998: 45).

More recently, contributions by women such as Elsie Inglis, the Scottish doctor and suffragist, who helped to develop medical services for women in Edinburgh in the 1890s, or the missionary Mary Slessor in Africa around the same time, have been recognised. Within Glasgow, Mary Barbour who led the 1915 rent strike against private landlords (Melling, 1983) had a commemorative statue dedicated in 2018. Gender inequalities and discrimination are still with us but society has changed immeasurably over the years and we can identify many ways in which these changes have occurred.

Perhaps the most significant – and liberating – development has been in the control of fertility. Victorian families were large, partly because of lack of contraception and partly because so many Victorian children did not survive infancy. But by 1900, the average family size fell to around 6 and the trend towards smaller families has continued. At the 2011 Census, the average household in Scotland was 2.19 (the UK average was 2.3). While

improvements in child health contributed to better infant survival rates, the 1960s saw massive changes in access to contraception and the legalisation of abortion in 1967 (Botting and Dunnell, 2000).

Thus, demographic changes have affected gender roles within society (National Records of Scotland, 2018). Women are having fewer children and the General Fertility rate (births per 1000 females aged 15-44) fell from 99.5 in 1962 to 51.3 in 2017. Women are also having children later in life, the average age of mothers rising from 27.4 in 1991 to 30.5 in 2017. More women are childbearing in their thirties, which means they are working and developing their careers before (and after) starting a family; this is particularly marked within the professional classes.

As general health has improved, life expectancy has increased to 77.1 for males and 81.2 for females born in 2015. One result of Scotland's ageing society is an increase in pensioner households, many consisting of women living alone. This increased female life expectancy has led to an equalisation of retirement and pensionable ages between genders, but this does mean that women are now able to work longer if they choose, or to enjoy a longer retirement.

The overall demographic picture results in women playing a greater role in the workforce. While the availability of childcare remains a significant issue for working parents, women are no longer confined to the domestic sphere. By 2017, there were over 170,000 more women in the Scottish labour market than in 2000 but, as was the case in earlier decades, much female employment is part-time. The overall unemployment rate masks slightly higher long-term female unemployment.

The role of women in public life is perhaps the most visible of changes in Scotland. The first woman MP was the Duchess of Atholl, elected for Kinross and West Perthshire in 1923. She was described as an 'accidental trailblazer', as she had actually opposed women's suffrage, although she did have a record in public service (Innes and Rendall, 2006), as her more privileged lifestyle allowed. But women MPs remained few in number for many years, although the rise in SNP support from the late 1960s onwards led to the election of some high profile women, such as Winnie Ewing and Margo MacDonald. The establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 fostered an increase in women parliamentarians, to a high of 35.3

per cent in 2003. In the Holyrood elections of 2016, the number of female MSPs elected was 45 (34.9 per cent), only slightly higher than the Westminster figure of 32 per cent. Clearly, a more acceptable gender-balanced legislature remains elusive.

In 2014, Scotland gained its first female First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP leader, and she immediately announced a Cabinet with equal numbers of men and women; her gender commitment remains today. Scottish Labour has had three female leaders since devolution – Wendy Alexander, Johann Lamont and Kezia Dugdale – and between 2011 and 2019 the Scottish Conservatives consolidated their position under the high-profile leadership of Ruth Davidson. In the wider context of the debate on equality, it is also of interest that Davidson, Dugdale, and the co-convenor of the Scottish Green Party, Patrick Harvie, are all gay.

Because Scotland has been portrayed as a somewhat ‘macho’ society, it has been assumed that Scottish attitudes towards gender are more conservative. Research suggests, however, that this position has been changing, with MacInnes (1998) concluding that Scots were actually slightly more egalitarian than other countries, at least in the sense that support for the idea of different roles for men and women was low. But attitudes to gender were broadly in line with other European countries and MacInnes added the caveat that these gender attitudes did not necessarily translate into changes in behaviour.

In a more recent study, Tinklin *et al* (2005) undertook a survey of almost 200 young people in Scotland, exploring their attitudes to gender roles within work, the family and wider society. Finding that young people held different views of gender roles, the authors concluded that young people ‘had really “got” the equal opportunities message’, although their views were often tempered by the inequalities which they saw around them (Tinklin *et al*, 2005:.140). Such evidence suggests that Scotland, like other western countries, is adopting a more modern approach to gender roles, although inequalities in society undoubtedly remain.

Ethnicity

Scotland is often (correctly) thought of as a country characterised by emigration and there is a significant Scottish diaspora. But there is also a long history of immigration to Scotland, notably from Ireland in the nineteenth century, and large numbers of migrants from elsewhere in Europe and the Commonwealth. After the Second World War, inward migration increased with significant movement from South Asia and, more recently, Glasgow has been a host city for large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. The ethnic geography of the country has changed and Scotland has become a more diverse society.

Table 2 illustrates the population of Scotland, disaggregated by ethnic group. Inward migration is the largest contributor to population growth and there are three groups whose numbers have increased significantly between 2001 and 2011. The first is ‘Other White British’ reflecting movement of people from within the UK (particularly England). Much of this is labour migration, while some older people move, viewing Scotland as an attractive location in which to retire (Short and Stockdale, 1999).

The second significant group is ‘Other White’, primarily from within the EU (Pollard, Latorre and Sriskandarajah, 2008); in Scotland in 2011, for example, there were 61,000 Poles. For some people, this EU in-migration was viewed as problematic and concerns about migration played a major part in the UK’s decision to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum (although Scotland voted 62 per cent to remain).

The third grouping which has expanded is the ‘black’ group. In 2001, this was enumerated as a single group, but in 2011, distinctions were made between African and Caribbean groups, as well as those claiming to be ‘Black British’ or ‘Black Scottish’. In fact, the largest sub-group within the ‘black’ category was the African grouping, with 29,000 people. Growth here is almost entirely due to the large numbers of asylum seekers who have settled – mainly in greater Glasgow.

Table 2 Ethnic Groups in Scotland 2001 and 2011					
Group	2001		2011		
	Number (000s)	per cent	Number (000s)	per cent	Change 2001-2011 (000s)88.1
White Scottish	4459	86.1	4446	84.0	-13
Other White British	374	7.4	417	7.9	+43
Irish	49	1.0	54	1.0	+5
Other White	78	1.5	167	3.2	+89
Mixed	13	0.3	20	0.4	+7
Pakistani	32	0.6	49	0.9	+18
Indian	15	0.3	33	0.6	+18
Chinese	16	0.3	34	0.6	+17
Other Asian	8	0.2	25	0.5	+17
Black (inc African, Caribbean)	8	0.2	36	0.7	+28
Other	10	0.2	14	0.3	+4
Total	5062	100	5295	100	+233

Note: There are occasional rounding errors in the totals.

Source: National Records of Scotland (2013): *2011 Census: Key Results on Population, Ethnicity, Identity, Language, Religion, Health, Housing and Accommodation in Scotland: Release 2A*, Edinburgh: NRS

Research has shown the various ways in which the black and minority ethnic (BME) population of Scotland has been disadvantaged and this reflects similar circumstances elsewhere in the UK. First, BME communities have often been characterised by high levels of unemployment. The Census for example, showed that, while the overall unemployment rate was 6 per cent, this rose to 36 per cent amongst those of Pakistani heritage.

Second, in housing terms, there was considerable overcrowding, a reflection of a larger household size within the BME groups. Around 12 per cent of White Scots were living in overcrowded conditions, as defined by the Scottish Registrar-General's occupancy ratings. The figure rose to 31 per cent for both Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Many houses were privately rented and, while they were often well located for places of worship and minority ethnic support networks, many were in a poor condition (Bowes, Dar and Sim, 1997). It should be noted, however, that for BME home owners there is now some movement away from inner cities and towards the suburbs (Houston, 2010, for example).

A major problem facing these 'visible' minorities has been racial harassment. Studies have highlighted a reluctance on the part of Scots to acknowledge that racism is a significant problem north of the border (Armstrong, 1989, de Lima, 2005, Meer, 2016). This has, however, been challenged by Cant and Kelly (1995) and there is clear evidence of racist incidents within Scotland, ranging from the experiences of Asian council tenants in Glasgow (Bowes, McCluskey and Sim, 1990) to 'everyday' racism in schools and places of employment (Hopkins, 2004). More recently, since the events of 9/11 and following a rise in reported incidents of Muslim extremism, there appears to be increased evidence of Islamophobia (Bonino, 2015), and wider racism (Davidson *et al*, 2018).

In the last 20 years, Scotland's BME population has grown through the settling of refugees and asylum seekers. By March 2003, a total of 92,685 asylum seekers were being supported by the Home Office (Gill and Crawley, 2003), mainly dispersed away from London and south east England. The largest single concentration (6,070) was in Glasgow and the city has demonstrated the potential for new multicultural communities to become established in dispersal locations (Sim and Bowes, 2007).

The approach taken by the Scottish Government towards asylum seekers and refugees has been somewhat different from that in other parts of the UK, where they are often portrayed in a negative light. For example, in an explicit attempt to 'counter the negative perceptions that many people hold' (Charlaff *et al*, 2004: 10), the Government commissioned an audit of the skills, qualifications and aspirations of asylum seekers and refugees. This audit responded to the then First Minister Jack McConnell's comments in 2003 on Scotland's need for new immigrants and the approach is indicative of some tensions between control of borders

through asylum and immigration policy (the preserve of the UK Home Office) and Scotland's need for a supplementary labour force (Wright, 2004). The Scottish Government has generally adopted a more positive attitude towards inward migration, partly for demographic reasons and partly because of a distaste for the 'dawn raids' used to deport asylum seekers believed to have overstayed. This has helped to create a climate, both social and political, in which immigrants may be valued (IPPR, 2007). Possibly due to this more positive approach, Netto (2011) found that just over two-thirds of her interviewees reported that they were 'very likely' to stay in Glasgow and she points to the 'connectedness to place' which many refugees felt after living in the city. Mulvey (2013) similarly found the majority of his research participants planning to stay in Glasgow.

As the BME population has grown, Scotland seems to have become more multicultural. Essentially, multiculturalism refers to a policy which has usually come about 'not so much by the emergence of a political movement but by a more fundamental movement of peoples. By immigration – specifically the immigration from outside Europe, of non-white peoples into predominantly white countries' (Modood, 2007: 2) [is this a complete quotation? Yes!]. Given the limited BME population until the 2000s, multiculturalism rarely featured in policy debates: but, recognising the growing diversity of the population, the Scottish Government introduced an anti-racist campaign entitled 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' (Penrose and Howard, 2008). There was also official recognition of the value to Scotland of increased immigration (Wright, 2004), in contrast to the anti-immigrant political rhetoric elsewhere (McLaren and Johnson, 2007), a Scottish trend which continues today.

Despite the increased presence of BME people in Scottish society, racial hostility remains a problem. We noted earlier that racism is not always acknowledged and this rather schizophrenic view of minorities may be illustrated by attitudes towards asylum seekers. Initially, the arrival of large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow caused some concern. But as they began to put down roots and as children became settled in school, it became easier for local people to see them as having a contribution to make to the community. When asylum seekers were threatened with deportation, local people campaigned on their behalf and a number of voluntary groups fought against Home Office 'dawn raids'. A group of schoolgirls in the Drumchapel housing estate in Glasgow attracted considerable attention in 2005 with a high-profile campaign to prevent some of their fellow

classmates being deported. The ‘Glasgow Girls’ as they became known won the ‘Scottish Campaign of the Year’ award at the annual Scottish political awards ceremony and the National Theatre of Scotland presented a musical based on their work.

Kay and Morrison (2013) emphasise the contrast between the attitude of the Scottish Government in relation to refugees and in-migrants and the consistent negativity displayed in Westminster and Whitehall (Flynn, 2013). While one should never downplay issues of racism and discrimination in Scotland (Davidson *et al*, 2018) or elsewhere, Scotland may possibly be seen as a more welcoming place in which to live and there appears to be a political will to confront problems.

Culture

Cultural identity is important to any nation - perhaps doubly so to a stateless nation such as Scotland - as culture can help to preserve the nation’s distinctiveness. Culture has therefore been at the heart of government policy since devolution. In 2013 the then First Minister, Jack McConnell, delivered a St Andrew’s Day speech in which he placed culture at the core of government and crucial to help shape Scotland’s future and national identity (Bonnar, 2014). The present Government Culture Minister, Fiona Hyslop, has similarly championed culture as an ‘intrinsic and public good’, in contrast to her former Westminster counterpart, Maria Miller MP, who argued that culture could only be valued in terms of its economic impact (Archer, 2014; Behr and Brennan, 2014).

‘Culture’ gained a significant profile from the late 1980s onwards, partly as a result of Glasgow being the 1990 European Capital of Culture. The city had already begun to regenerate itself as a ‘post-industrial city’, with the arts as a key component, and had adopted the slogan ‘Glasgow’s Miles Better’. It hosted the National Garden Festival in 1988 and had opened the Burrell Gallery in 1983 (Garcia, 2004). Although there were criticisms of the Glasgow event as being elitist (Mooney, 2004), the year of City of Culture had a transformative effect.

The establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 fostered the development of a Scottish-specific cultural policy. In 2000, an initial report, entitled *Creating our future; minding our*

past (Scottish Executive, 2000) suggested that Scottish culture would include a substantial nod to the country's past heritage. There appeared to be broad agreement that the then cultural agency infrastructure was ineffective and uncoordinated, that Scottish culture should be integrated within the country's education system, and that the international image of culture needed to banish the 'tartan and shortbread' image (Bonnar, 2014). Anne Bonnar has suggested that the political and public confidence built up during the years of devolution 'has resulted in an increasingly clear expression of what culture means for Scotland and where that differs from that articulated by Westminster politicians' (Bonnar, 2014: 145).

Because cultural policy is devolved, it occupies a larger percentage of the Scottish Government's remit than it does in the UK as a whole. Scotland's relatively small size also means that those involved in the cultural and creative industries are more connected with each other and with the Government. Their importance is reflected in the fact that, according to the Scottish Government, the industry contributed £4.6 billion annually and employed over 73,000 people in 2015.

There is a long history of Scottish literary culture which has impacted on the country's sense of identity, from Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, through the nationalist writings of Hugh MacDiarmid, Neil Gunn, and Compton Mackenzie in the mid-twentieth century. MacDiarmid, writing as he did in Scots, was making a specific political point. After him, many more modern authors would use colloquial Scots in their work. Contemporary examples include the poet Liz Lochhead and writers such as Irvine Welsh, Alasdair Gray and James Kelman.

It is important, however, to note that Scotland does, of course, have another indigenous language with cultural impact, and one which is also undergoing a revival: namely Gaelic. At the 2011 Census, a total of 87,100 people (some 1.7 per cent of the population) had some Gaelic language skills, either in terms of speaking, reading or understanding. There was an increase of 8.6 percentage points in the proportion of Gaelic speakers under 25, reflecting both a growing interest and the introduction of Gaelic medium education in various parts of Scotland. In 2015-6, there were 5,200 children in Gaelic medium nurseries, primary and secondary schools (Scottish Government, 2017).

Gaelic literature, music and song have long been promoted by *An Comunn Gàidhealach*, the Gaelic arts and cultural organisation, now boosted by the Gaelic Language Act of 2005 which placed on a statutory footing *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, whose role is to promote the language (Scottish Government, 2017). BBC Alba, established in 2008, became available on Freeview from 2011, allowing it to be accessed by the whole country. Oliver (2005) suggests that this indicates a shift within Gaelic from traditional to modern, from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, so that Gaelic is not solely restricted to a remote corner of the Highlands and Islands (a ‘*Gàidhealtachd*’) but now essentially belongs to all of Scottish society.

The increased sense of a Scottish identity in music and literature has also been evident in the theatre, from the 1970s onwards. Possibly the most influential company was 7:84, which toured Scotland in 1973 with *The Cheviot, The Stag and The Black Black Oil*, a significant and hugely popular piece of agit-prop theatre about landownership, the Highland Clearances and the exploitation of rural communities. Both 7:84 and other companies were enormously influential in bringing political debate into the theatre and raising awareness of aspects of Scottish history and identity (DiCenzo, 1996; Stevenson, 2002).

Recent developments include the establishment of a National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) in 2003, another reflection of an enhanced Scottish consciousness (Leach, 2007). In sharp contrast to the English National Theatre in London, the NTS does not have a building of its own, although it has headquarters and rehearsal space in Glasgow. It operates as a ‘theatre without walls’, commissioning plays from existing theatres, companies and playwrights, and taking productions across Scotland. The NTS quickly proved itself with the production of the stunningly successful *Black Watch*, exploring the regiment’s Iraq War involvement.

Scottish film presents a slightly different picture. Early films portrayed a romanticised, tartan version of Scotland, as in *Brigadoon* (1954). Some more recent films have been grittier and, in some respects, perhaps more realistic in their portrayal of Scottish urban life, including *Shallow Grave* (1994), *Small Faces* (1996) and *Ratcatcher* (1999), as well as film adaptations of novels such as *Trainspotting* (1996) and its sequel in 2017. The film which perhaps best epitomises Scotland’s somewhat ambiguous relationship to its history is *Braveheart*, about William Wallace. Directed by and starring Mel Gibson, it was released in 1995 (Edensor, 2002). The film has been criticised by historians for serious factual inaccuracies (Ewen,

1995), yet it was hugely successful, winning five Oscars, including Best Picture. Within Scotland itself, the film struck a chord, perhaps because of its timing. It was shown when John Major's Conservative government was approaching its end and when it was clear that devolution legislation would soon be enacted. As a result, the film was embraced by Nationalist politicians, as well as the wider public. Perhaps the secret of *Braveheart's* success was the fact that it showed Scotland in a positive light as well as depicting a famous victory (Bannockburn) and so Scots seemed willing to forgive it its faults.

Thus, Scots – and Scottish politicians in particular – have tended to emphasise the significance of culture *per se*, rather than focusing on its narrow economic potential. Scottish Government, from the beginning, pushed the notion of cultural rights for all and, although this is a very subjective notion and one for which it is difficult to legislate, cultural 'entitlement' is an important concept (Orr, 2008). The respected cultural critic Joyce McMillan has suggested that the arts have the power to 'transform Scotland's view of itself – to reframe the nation not as a problematic provincial backwater but as a powerhouse of 21st-century creativity, generating work that is recognised on a global level for its ability to articulate the human condition'. She argues that the achievements of the Scottish arts scene are due in large measure to the contributions of public policy and the financial support the arts receive from the Scottish Government (McMillan, 2010).

Current research and the state of the discipline

Perhaps inevitably, given the constitutional changes which have taken place in Scotland during the last twenty years, there has been considerable research in the field of politics (see Chapter 17, below). But it is often hard to draw a line between society, culture, identity and politics and much research spills over from one area to another. As McCrone (2017: 627) observes, the 'emergence of sociology at Scottish universities has coincided with the rising salience of "Scotland" as an object of social, political and cultural study. Manifestly, this is in large part due to "political" events'.

The constitutional and political changes have, for example, led to a substantial amount of research into aspects of national identity and the growing strength of a Scottish as opposed to a more British identity. Leith and Soule (2011) explore the links between identity and

politics, adding to a growing body of work by scholars such as McEwan (2006) and Henderson (2007), while Broun (2013) focuses on the potential impact which Scottish independence might have on Britishness and the whole idea of 'Britain'. McCrone and Bechhofer's (2015) book provides a valuable summary of the identity debate, reporting on a major research programme carried out at the University of Edinburgh and funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

The growing interest in national identity appears to have stimulated a renewed focus on Scottish history. Sir Tom Devine's bestsellers cover the nation's history (1999), its global reach within the British Empire (2003), its overseas diaspora (2011) and, most recently, the ways in which many Scots left Scotland or were 'cleared', to emigrate elsewhere (2018). This growing interest in history has in turn fostered a fascination with family history and genealogy (Moffat and Wilson, 2011) and there is a growing body of research which has explored the tourist aspects of this genealogical interest (Basu, 2007, Sim and Leith, 2013).

For most Scots, their daily lives are now mostly influenced by decisions taken in Edinburgh, rather than in London. Areas of policy affecting health, education and social services were devolved in 1999, and the Scottish Parliament has now taken responsibility for income tax and a range of social security benefits. Academic research has therefore begun to focus more specifically on the Scottish experience. Murphy *et al* (2015), for example, explore the experiences of Scottish comprehensive education, while the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (Walsh *et al*, 2016) has amassed a considerable body of research on the country's health inequalities.

The UK has long been recognised as a highly unequal society (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) and Scotland equally so. Mooney and Scott's edited collection (2012) explores the impact of Scottish social policy on social justice in the country, while Comerford and Eiser (2014) speculate on whether Scotland has the powers to tackle inequality fully, without the machinery of a nation state. We should also note the influential work of some non-academics such as Darren McGarvey, whose book *Poverty Safari* (2017) was a best seller for good reason. There is also important work which looks at racism and sectarianism in Scotland, in relation to minority ethnic groups (for example Hussain and Miller, 2006; Davidson *et al*, 2018) and religion (Bruce, 2004, 2014).

Finally, the contribution of David McCrone should be acknowledged. His *New Sociology of Scotland* (2017), which charted developments since the publication of his textbook *Understanding Scotland* (2001), contains possibly everything that one could possibly wish to know about Scottish society and reflects his decades of research and activity.

Conclusions

In the immediate post-war period, Scotland was a somewhat conservative country, both socially and politically, with both the Church of Scotland and the Scottish education system particularly dominant (Brivati, 2002). Both could be seen as progressive; the Kirk, for example, had a strong sense of social responsibility. But both could also be viewed as oppressive and hierarchical, and Brivati (2002: 238) suggests that Scotland emerged later than the rest of the UK from ‘the long dark night of Victorian moralism’.

In evoking his own childhood in 1950s Scotland, Ian Jack (1987) recognised the improvements in people’s lives but felt that many families were experiencing only limited change:

In our house we lived with old times, concurrently in the 1910s and Twenties as well as the Fifties. The past sustained us in a physical as well as mental sense. It came home from work every evening in its flat cap and dirty hands and drew its weekly wages from industries which even then were sleepwalking their way towards extinction (Jack, 1987: 5-6).

Even where Scots had moved into white-collar employment and had become essentially middle class in terms of socio-economic classifications, they still tended to view themselves as working class. This continuing identification as a working-class society was far stronger in Scotland than in England (McCrone, 2001).

As was the case in other countries, many women stayed at home to look after children and the labour-saving devices which would transform domestic work were only just beginning to have an impact. Housing conditions were often poor, and although local authority house building was expanding, conditions remained problematic well into the 1960s (Gibb, 1989).

The post-war period was characterised therefore by massive house building, and clearance and renewal programmes.

Outside the home, activities could also be described as fairly traditional. A study of Glasgow males in the mid-1950s suggested that their top leisure activities were football, the cinema and dancing (Ferguson and Cunnison, 1956). We should also note the importance of religion, with Scotland having a high level of church attendance (Harvie, 1993). Indeed, the social conservatism of much of Scotland may be seen perhaps in regard to shifts in social attitudes which were generally slower north of the border. The 1960s may have been ‘swinging’ for many and it was a decade of significant social reform. But the changes were perhaps more obvious in England and not all reforms were enacted in Scotland. The decriminalisation of homosexuality, for example, which occurred in 1967 in England and Wales did not happen in Scotland until 1980.

And yet, although Scotland seems to have been slow to ‘catch up’ with other parts of the UK, the societal changes which have taken place in the last thirty years have been remarkable, reflecting rapid constitutional change. As we have seen, there has been a marked strengthening of Scottish identity and this has reflected political developments, notably the (re-)establishment of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. Research suggests that, for many individuals, Holyrood is now more meaningful in terms of their everyday lives than Westminster (Kirkaldy, 2016).

Society itself has become markedly less conservative, with the Scottish Parliament introducing a number of liberal reforms, including legislating for same-sex marriage, reform of mental health services, land reform, introducing free personal care for the elderly, abolishing both prescription charges and student tuition fees, as well as creating a more liberal climate for minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, as we have described above. Scotland was also the first part of the UK to ban smoking in public places, it implemented minimum pricing to address the country’s problematic relationship with alcohol and, in politics, has introduced proportional voting for local elections. These political moves both impact on and illustrate the inter-relationship between culture and politics in Scotland.

While we do not wish to over-emphasise these achievements, nevertheless they would have been impossible to predict a quarter of a century ago. Scottish society certainly ‘feels’ rather more open than other parts of the UK. We could perhaps do worse than echo McCrone’s (2017) view that Scotland has now outgrown its role as a junior partner in British imperialism and that feeling British is now a matter of memory rather than of the future. Scotland, as McCrone suggests, has entered the twenty first century as a relatively affluent European society, semi-detached from the UK.

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