

# **POLITICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN SCOTLAND AND QUEBEC**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The opening of the Scottish Parliament provides a useful opportunity to reflect on the success and struggles of other regional or sub-national Parliaments, particularly those where nationalist parties seek to form a government. Comparisons between Scotland and Quebec have been plentiful since the May 1997 UK General Election, when it appeared that for the first time in 300 years Scotland would acquire its own Parliament. Given the frequency with which politicians on either side point to the other as proof of success or failure, the extent to which Quebec provides lessons for the establishment of the Scottish political system warrants attention. For nationalists, the electoral strength of the Parti Québécois provides evidence that nationalist parties can govern prudently while at the same time calling for greater autonomy in key areas of jurisdiction. For those less enamoured of separatism, the presence of a nationalist party bent on increasing political autonomy presents a serious danger to the ability of the government to function and thus poses a threat to the economic and social well-being of all within its borders. As Scottish politicians, on either side of the nationalist

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divide, each use Quebec to prove their case, a deeper examination of the differences and similarities between the two cases seems prudent.<sup>1</sup>

This paper forms part of a wider thesis on the effect of national identity on political culture in Scotland and Quebec. The thesis argues that the content of national myths in Scotland and Quebec, and their treatment and projection by organised groups within society, affects the political attitudes, values, and participation within both societies. In the development of a national political programme, nationalist leaders project and encourage a sense of national identity in order to sustain the proclaimed necessity of the project. The political use of pre-existing markers of cultural identity clarifies the components of that identity, allowing it to be harnessed as a potent political force. In order to examine a nationalist-encouraged politicised identity this paper first defines its terms, placing particular emphasis on the difference between cultural and political identity. Nationalist parties and the governments they form compose but one category in a list of organised groups that might exert influence over civic values. The media and other organised bodies, such as the Church, unions, protest or civic groups, may each rely on conceptions of national identity in their interactions with the nationalist project. This paper, however, limits its analysis to the influence of nationalist parties on the characteristics and values promoted by a politicised national identity.

## **SCOTLAND AND QUEBEC: THE TWO CASE STUDIES**

Comparative coverage of the 1995 and 1997 referenda in Quebec and Scotland and of the activities of national actors in both locations, confirms that the two political situations lend themselves to comparison.<sup>2</sup> While probably motivated by the timing of political events as much as the similarities between the two programmes, a closer examination will expose the differences between the efforts of the two nationalist projects. An analysis of how these different tactics have affected their respective political situations provides for a greater understanding of the relationship between civic values and national identity. The nationalist programmes in Scotland

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of brevity this paper refers to home rule parties in Scotland as referred to as nationalist. The extent to which this is an accurate reflection of policy lies outwith the scope of this work.

<sup>2</sup> Of the larger recent studies, Michael Keating's book *Nations Against the State* compares Scotland, Catalonia and Quebec (1996, Basingstoke: Macmillan).

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and Quebec operate within models of the British parliamentary system, the latter an adapted federal system to suit the particular cultural needs of the 'two founding nations'.<sup>1</sup> The case study thus chronicles the events and circumstances in two varying approaches to internal challenges to the British parliamentary model: one which has sought accommodation from the beginning, and at several subsequent opportunities; and the other, which has sought to resist change, adapting only when public outcry has prompted action.<sup>2</sup>

### **NATIONAL IDENTITY**

For the purposes of this paper, four basic assumptions form the point of departure for the use of national identity. While the first three factors aim to provide a workable definition of national identity (identity as a sense of belonging, multiple and different from image), the fourth factor provides the main underlying assumption of this paper, that cultural identity and political identity are different in their construction and in their relative levels of inclusiveness.

According to the first assumption, national identity represents the self-defined sense of belonging to an 'imagined' community that occurs through the incorporation of national values.<sup>3</sup> In the acquisition of values promoted by organised groups within society, citizens acquire a sense of national consciousness. Just as the process of socialisation introduces individuals at an early age to norms of acceptable behaviour, the competing messages of national socialisation promote the civic values that allow individuals to

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<sup>1</sup> *The debate surrounding the existence of two, three or ten founding nations in Canada, while integral to an understanding of the federal system, is beyond the scope of this paper. For an analysis of Quebec's understanding of its place in Canada at the time of Confederation in 1867 see A.I. Silver (1982) **The French Canadian Idea of Confederation 1864-1900** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press)*

<sup>2</sup> *For a recent examination of the British State's attempts to deal with nationalist demands from Scotland see Tom Nairn (1998) 'Virtual Liberation or : British sovereignty since the election' **Scottish Affairs Special Issue: 13-37**. For a more complimentary view of the British State's ability to adapt, see Lindsay Paterson (1994) **The Autonomy of Modern Scotland** Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press*

<sup>3</sup> *Benedict Anderson (1991) **Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism** (London: Verso)*

integrate within the nation.<sup>1</sup> National identity, ultimately, is self-defined in the face of nationalist messages from a variety of sources. Nationalist actors and their opponents vie for the attention of individuals by each providing interpretations of the past development and future prospects of the nation. Differing interpretations of the 1760 British Conquest of New France, and of the 1707 Treaty of Union, in addition to varying interpretations of the economic impact of independence, divide neatly along partisan and nationalist lines. The historical accuracy of the message matters less than public perception of fact. As Richard Finlay states, 'the factual invalidation of myths in weighty academic tomes does not and never has invalidated them as complex icons of cultural, social and political belief.'<sup>2</sup>

The resulting second tenet asserts that national identity is not a single overarching construction of self but part of a series of multiple and often conflicting identities. Self-conceptions related to gender, employment status, family environment and class compete with national identity in affecting attitudes, values and behaviour. The strength with which national identity is felt, in addition to its relationship with alternate identities, varies in reaction to different stimuli throughout a lifetime. No direct relationship exists between the strength of national allegiance and age, nor does national identity assume a constant and primal role in determining decisions.<sup>3</sup>

The distinction between identity and image marks the third point of departure. Image is the marketable vision of identity, an objectified depiction of any 'national experience'. The tourism industry, for example, relies on this

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<sup>1</sup> *The topic of early political socialisation was first associated with the growth of political culture literature, and later with the debate surrounding political sociology and social psychology. For a comparison of the treatment it receives see Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) **The Civic Culture: political attitudes and democracy in five nations** (Princeton: Princeton University Press) and Olive Stevens (1982) **Children Talking Politics: political learning in childhood** (Oxford: Martin Robertson)*

<sup>2</sup> *Richard Finlay (1997) 'Heroes, Myths and Anniversaries in Modern Scotland' **Scottish Affairs** 18: 123.*

<sup>3</sup> *For two recent examinations of the competing factors influencing political decisions see Pierre Martin (1998) 'Identity, Reference Groups and Values: Dispositions and choice on the question of sovereignty in Quebec' Paper presented to the 1998 American Political Science Association and Alice Brown, David McCrone, Lindsay Paterson and Paula SurrIDGE (1999) **The Scottish Electorate: the 1997 General Election and beyond** (Basingstoke: Macmillan)*

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easy identification of a reified national collectivity. By their very nature tourist advertisements are designed for those outwith the national culture, and as such present an image of the nation to the outside world. Such treatment of nationalist images receives less attention in Quebec than in Scotland where Highland markers of identity have proven both a lucrative marketing tool and a source of frustration for critics. The familiar objectification and marketing of an appealing national image to the outside world affects how others view the nation. Outside perceptions of the nation cannot but affect the self-perceptions of its members.<sup>1</sup> While image cannot be equated with identity, its prevalence dictates a level of potentially distortive influence on national self-awareness.

The fourth assertion points to the inherently vague and malleable nature of cultural national identity. National leaders appeal to the presence of national culture and history but rarely enunciate the specifics of these pillars. An emphasis on distinctness accompanies the promotion of generally positive national traits such as tolerance or democracy, values to which few members could object.<sup>2</sup> Citizens left to define their own conception of culture and interpretation of history thus may all feel included in the nation. When invoked in the name of a political project, however, national identity distinguishes itself from cultural identity. In the politicisation of cultural national identity, in particular by political parties, the vision of national identity emerges, if not as a checklist of national characteristics, then certainly as a partisan consensus of values. The potency of national identity thus relies less on content than on the treatment it receives from organised groups within civil society. If cultural identity represents the vague, inclusive aspect of national allegiance, politicised national identity is the more exclusive, enunciated force. The potency of cultural identity lies in its ability to appeal to a wide variety of people, whereas the power of political identity hinges on the potential for mobilisation in the name of a political project. In their efforts to advance the national cause, political parties in Scotland and

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<sup>1</sup> For three treatments of image and identity David McCrone, Angela Morris and Richard Kiely (1995) *Scotland - the Brand: the making of Scottish Heritage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press); Tom Nairn (1977) *The Breakup of Britain* (London: Verso); Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whately (1992) *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Polygon)

<sup>2</sup> One Quebec Liberal Party policy paper on identity, for example, makes reference to the shared Quebec values of individual freedom, pluralism and a willingness to decrease social inequalities. Quebec Liberal Party (1997) *Recognition and interdependence* (Montreal: Quebec Liberal Party) 6

Quebec have manipulated cultural identity into a political tool, articulating a framework of civic values and national characteristics that justify greater political autonomy. In so doing, they have created an exclusive, and admittedly powerful identity at the expense of non-nationalists in Quebec and Scotland. In a departure from the oft-employed categories of civic and ethnic nationalism, this examination of national identity claims that inclusion and exclusion operate within all national discourses. The extent of this exclusion, whether it is based on inherited characteristics or selected values, or felt by individuals who exclude themselves in the face of publicly inclusive notions of belonging, varies according to the treatment of national identity by nationalist actors.

### **IDENTITY MEASUREMENT IN SCOTLAND AND QUEBEC**

National identity, as a result of these four characteristics, proves difficult to measure. Most works using national identity as an independent variable exerting influence over partisan preference or voter turnout rely on a variation of Luis Moreno's five-point identity scale.<sup>1</sup> Developed while comparing national identity in Scotland and Catalonia, Moreno's scale asks that respondents describe their sense of allegiance given the following options: Scottish not British, More Scottish than British, Equally Scottish and British, More British than Scottish, British not Scottish.<sup>2</sup> Such a categorisation lends itself to straightforward quantification and cross-national comparison.

Despite the importance of creating data to test relationships between variables, what Moreno's scale gains in applicability it lacks in description. The scale fails to identify the strength with which national feelings are held, what such self-identification actually means to the individual, and leaves hidden the components of identity itself. What, for instance, are the distinguishing characteristics of the Scottish or Québécois identity? How is the identity of an individual who self-identifies as solely Scottish different from the identity of an individual whose self-definition allows for a minimal

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<sup>1</sup> Luis Moreno (1988) 'Scotland and Catalonia: the Path to Home Rule' *The Scottish Government Yearbook*: 166.

<sup>2</sup> Used in the 1997 British Election Survey and Scottish Election booster survey, the results from similar questions have been used in several papers presented at a Fall 1997 conference for the Centre for Research on Elections and Social Trends (CREST). See *Scottish Affairs Special Issue* 1998.

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sense of Britishness? If used in isolation, Moreno's categories, while valuable in their ability to demonstrate the effect of national identity on political behaviour, fail to provide a sense of context to national identity; what is it about national identity that affects subsequent behaviour? As previously argued, identity is not a thing, and should not be treated as such. That said, in attempts to mobilise identity behind a political project, nationalist parties encourage the creation and acquisition of a definable identity package that provides citizens with the tools to interpret their past, present and future. For those who exclude themselves from national identity, a reluctance to align oneself with the associated values and characteristics of the nation matter as much as the notion of belonging itself. The reification of identity, whether a top-down or bottom-up activity, alters the processes through which people acquire an identity. The legitimacy of this activity matters less than its existence. Through an examination of opinion polls, this article supplements available quantitative data by examining the civic values engendered in the content and treatment of politicised national identity in Scotland and Quebec.

A recent Ekos poll in the English-language daily in Montreal, long a forum for identity debates, produced the figures in table 1.

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**Table 1**  
**Sense of belonging in Quebec and Canada<sup>1</sup>**

Date	Quebecers		Canadians	
	To Canada	To Quebec	To Canada	To Province
1998	54	68	88	70
1997	57	75	90	71
1996	54	74	93	74
1995	58	87	95	81
1994	57	73	88	75

*Percentage claiming a moderate-to-intense sense of belonging*

*Ekos, sample size 3000 (1004 from Quebec)*

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The results demonstrate that while Quebecers record similar levels of allegiance to other Canadians in their respective provinces, their sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Wells, 'Sovereignty Star Fading: Poll' *The Gazette* 2 April 1998

belonging in Canada is less than that of other Canadians by an average of 35 percent. The 87 percent attachment to Quebec during the referendum year points to the influence of concentrated political and media attention to questions of identity. It is worth noting that Quebecers do not appear to be supporting sovereignty because of a profound belief in the infallibility of their own government. Rather than holding unreasonable expectations, Quebecers view their province in the same light as other Canadians view their provinces. Support for autonomy in Quebec appears to stem more from a lack of attachment to the federal entity than a stronger sense of belonging in Quebec.

Additional poll results highlight the relationship between attachment to province and attachment to Canada. In a post-referendum examination of attitudes in Canada, pollster Angus Reid also asked whether individuals felt less attached to Canada than they did a few years ago.

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**Table 2**  
**Attachment in Canada<sup>1</sup>**

	profoundly attached to Canada	profoundly attached to province	more attached to province than to Canada	less committed to Canada than a few years ago
Canada	86	89	46	31
Quebec	62	91	66	53
Rest of Canada	95	88	40	23

*Percentage agreeing with the statement 'I feel...'*

*Angus Reid, sample size 3603 (650 from Quebec)*

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<sup>1</sup> *Angus Reid (1996) **Renewing Canada** (Toronto: Angus Reid) 23*

**Table 3**  
**Identity in Britain<sup>1</sup>**

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Identity	Country of Residence		
	Scotland	Wales	England
Scottish/Welsh/English not British	23	13	8
More S/W/E than British	39	29	16
Equally S/W/E and British	26	26	46
More British than S/W/E	4	10	15
British not Scottish/W/E	4	15	9
Other	4	6	6

*British Election Survey, Sample Size Scotland 882, Wales 182, England 2551*

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As these results indicate, the declining attachment to Canada among one in two Quebecers accompanies a similar decline among one in five Canadians outside Quebec. Similarly, two in five Canadians outside Quebec feel more attached to their province than to Canada. Quebecers, it would appear, have no more attachment to their nation than other Canadians feel to their province. The poll results demonstrate a clear trend of allegiance away from the larger entity towards the local.

Scottish poll results, gathered in the recent British Election Study, provide for an equivalent regional comparison (table 3). The results highlight a lack of allegiance to the British identity in Scotland. Eight percent of Scottish residents prioritise their British identity while 62 prioritise their Scottishness. This imbalance compares to 42 percent in Wales and 24 percent in England who feel greater allegiance to their region rather than the State.

The often assumed role of language in entrenching a distinct sense of identity, while beyond the scope of this paper, warrants further attention given identity distribution in Wales. In their analysis of the 1997 Welsh referendum Richard Wyn Jones and Dafydd Trystan indicate that although all linguistic groups (from non-Welsh to fluent) shy away from prioritising their Welsh identity exclusively, the resulting distribution of identity preferences

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Heath and James Kellas (1998) 'Nationalisms and Constitutional Questions' *Scottish Affairs Special Issue*: 113

highlights the influence of language in the Welsh debate.<sup>1</sup> While 73 percent of fluent Welsh speakers felt more Welsh than British only three percent prioritised their Britishness. These proportions stand in contrast to the relatively even distribution of non-Welsh speakers among the three identity options. Similarly, language in Canada, both by virtue of its role as a pillar of identity in Quebec, and the protection it has received from successive Québécois governments since the 1960s, has exerted a strong influence on identity. In their examination of Scottish political values, Brown, McCrone and Paterson point to variations in identity within Britain and its composite regions and nations. In Scotland, religion plays a less determinant role in identity selection than it once did, and differences among social classes are small. Although all regions prioritise their Scottishness, British national identity is strongest in the North East and weakest in the Centre West of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Variations in identity within Quebec, for reasons discussed later in this paper, divide according to demographic characteristics and present a greater obstacle to nationalist actors hoping to harness national identity as a political force. The first part of this paper ends, then, having produced a clear definition of national identity, a summary of the problems of identity measurement, and a brief examination of the patterns of identity in Scotland and Quebec. Next, we analyse the content and treatment of national identity by political parties in both locations.

## CIVIC VALUES IN SCOTLAND AND QUEBEC

Any complete examination of national identity and its political treatment in Scotland and Quebec relies upon an exposition of the traditional pillars of society and their significance to the current nationalist debate. In both case studies, the survival of institutions following the loss of political independence allowed for the maintenance of a civil society that served as the guardian of identity. Much as the 1707 Treaty of Union allowed for the survival of the distinct Scottish education system, legal system and Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the 1774 Quebec Act preserved the role of the Catholic Church, civil code and French language in Britain's colony.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Wyn Jones and Dafydd Trystan (1999) 'The 1997 Welsh referendum vote' in Bridget Taylor and Katarina Thomson, *Scotland and Wales: Nations Again?* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press) 78

<sup>2</sup> Alice Brown, David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson (1996) *Politics and Society in Scotland* (Basingstoke: Macmillan) 200-201.

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Current nationalist parties rely on these institutions, and use them to foster a sense of collectivism and civic duty. The final section of this paper examines how these parties have aligned certain values and institutions with a politicised national identity. In so doing, it concentrates on two key issues, the role of identity versus interest in the nationalist programme, and the extent to which individuals feel included or excluded by notions of national identity.

### ***Quebec***

The Preamble to the 1995 Bill respecting the sovereignty of Quebec lists several historical events considered significant by Québécois nationalists:

*We were hoodwinked in 1982 when the governments of Canada and the English-speaking provinces made changes to the Constitution, in depth and to our detriment, in defiance of the categorical opposition of our National Assembly.*

Twice since then attempts were made to right that wrong. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 confirmed a refusal to recognise even our distinct character. And in 1992 the rejection of the Charlottetown Accord by both Canadians and Quebecers confirmed the conclusion that no redress was possible...

Because starting with the Quiet Revolution<sup>1</sup> *we* reached a decision never again to restrict ourselves to mere *survival* but from this time on to build upon *our* difference;

Because *we* have the deep-seated conviction that continuing within Canada would be tantamount to condemning ourselves to languish and to debasing *our* very identity;

Because the respect *we* owe ourselves must guide our deeds;

*We* the people of Quebec declare it is our will to be in full possession of all the powers of a State ...<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Period of liberalisation and secularisation within Quebec society whose origins are associated with - though not confined to - the 1960 election of Jean Lesage and the Quebec Liberal Party.*

<sup>2</sup> *Emphasis added. Government of Quebec (1995) **An Act Respecting the Sovereignty of Quebec: 1.***

The preceding statement has sparked a controversy among the cultural communities in Quebec, largely due to the recurrent use of 'We' in the preamble. This statement, which not only outlines the defeats of a people but defines several characteristics of the population, excludes those without a 'deep-seated conviction' in separation, those whose primary identity is to Canada, and those who feel there is little difference between Quebecers and other Canadians. The reference to survival and difference provides a link to the state of affairs in post-Conquest Quebec. The current population of Quebec is thus defined as the descendants of the inhabitants of New France. This definition provides a disconcerting stumbling block to more recent arrivals or those whose ancestors are linked with the conquering side. Lastly, the preamble clearly juxtaposes the use of 'Quebecer' with 'Canadian', suggesting that an individual should possess one primary identity or the other, but not both.

Of the three main political parties in Quebec, the federalist Liberal party<sup>1</sup>, the separatist Bloc Québécois, both operating at the federal level, and the separatist Parti Québécois which contests provincial elections only, all make two important connections regarding the traditional pillars of Québécois national identity: firstly, that language is the cornerstone of culture; and secondly, that culture is the cornerstone of identity. Or, according to the 1994 Parti Québécois platform, 'culture is the essence of a people, the very expression of a feeling and belonging to a collectivity ... French is the primary vehicle of Quebec cultural identity.'<sup>2</sup> Similar statements emanate from the PQ Government and the Quebec Liberal Party. According to the Ministry of Culture and Communications, French is not just a language and instrument, it is 'un milieu de vie, une façon d'être, de penser, d'écrire et de créer pour tous les Québécois.'<sup>3</sup> The Liberal Party similarly commits itself to the 'protection et le développement du fait français et des institutions qui

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<sup>1</sup> *The Liberal party contests elections at the provincial and federal level. The provincial and federal branches have different structures and, in the case of Quebec, different views of sovereignty.*

<sup>2</sup> *Parti Québécois (1994) Des Idées pour mon pays: programme du Parti Québécois (Quebec: Parti Québécois) 155.*

<sup>3</sup> *Note the use of the word all. Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (1998) Langue (www.gouv.qc.ca)*

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marquent l'identité québécoise.<sup>1</sup> In each of these examples membership in the nation is defined according to language and the less articulated notion of culture.

References to social cohesion also feature in political constructions of identity in Quebec. Seen as a means of integration for new arrivals to Quebec and an opportunity to enable traditional Quebecers to understand their own culture, the education system receives particular attention from nationalist parties. In a document entitled 'Reaffirming the mission of our schools' the task force on Quebec's curriculum declares the education system 'must teach common values ... must help young people growing up in a culture to assimilate their identity, assimilate the cultural tradition of society ... [and] that French and national community are the cornerstones of identity.'<sup>2</sup> Or, as the Parti Québécois states, 'The education system is the cradle of society, a unique place for the transmission and development of culture. Values, beliefs, attitudes and cultural references, as well as a sense of belonging to Quebec society, are shaped within it.'<sup>3</sup> Attention to the collective surfaces also in such diverse areas as law and sport. Considered a document based on individual rights that are not recognised exclusively in Quebec, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is portrayed as alien to the collectivist spirit of Quebec society.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, information provided by the previous PQ Government on Quebec society maintains recreational activities not only combat social isolation, but present opportunities for expressing cultural identity.<sup>5</sup>

A sense of civic duty stems naturally from a collectivist vision of society. According to the Ministry of Citizen Relations and Immigration, 'le ministère veut encourager une plus grande participation des citoyens à la vie collective

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<sup>1</sup> Quebec Liberal Party (1997) *Reconnaissance et interdépendance: faits saillants de la position constitutionnelle du Parti Liberal du Quebec* (Montreal: QLP) 6

<sup>2</sup> Task Force on Curriculum Reform (1997) *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools* (Quebec: Government of Quebec) 3.7

<sup>3</sup> Parti Québécois (1994)

<sup>4</sup> See Josée Legault (1992) *L'invention d'une minorité: Les Anglo-Québécois* (Quebec: Boréal). Legault claims part of the misunderstanding between Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec lies in the inability of Anglophones to understand that Francophones do not prioritise individual rights to the exclusion of collective rights.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Quebec (1998) *Quebec Society* ([www.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.gouv.qc.ca))

et favoriser le développement de l'appartenance à la société québécoise.<sup>1</sup> In support of this principle, the ministry issues awards for participation in collective life.

On most constructions of national identity both provincial parties agree. The Parti Québécois and Quebec Liberal Party support the need to defend the distinct character of Quebec and the necessity of national identity in the struggle for greater political autonomy. For its part, the federal Bloc Québécois has attempted to portray Quebecers and the sovereignty movement as a modern political force: 'the sovereignty movement is inclusive, forward-looking, respectful of others, tolerant and peaceful'.<sup>2</sup> And later in the same document:

Quebecers do not claim to be better than Canadians. They simply believe that they are different, as they do not share the same language, the same culture, nor the same social and economic visions. ... The Quebec people show a deeply rooted commitment to and respect for liberty and equality. They are tolerant, peace-loving and concerned for the well-being of their fellow man. A resolutely outward-looking people ... an open-minded people.<sup>3</sup>

As in the preamble to the 1995 sovereignty bill, the preceding statement provides two telling definitions of who is a Quebecer and who is a Canadian and why the two are mutually exclusive. Because the languages spoken by Quebecers and Canadians are set in opposition, so too are the identities set out for English- and French-speakers. The suspicion that they have been considered outsiders within their own province has long troubled non-French speakers in Quebec.<sup>4</sup> The BQ document thus excludes these individuals from *automatic* membership in the nation while professing to possess an inclusive vision. The attempt reinforces the efforts of all three parties in Quebec to define membership in the national collective along linguistic lines while

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<sup>1</sup> *Ministère des Relations des Citoyens et Immigration (1998) Les Relations Civiques (www.mrci.gouv.qc.ca)*

<sup>2</sup> *Bloc Québécois (1998) Québec...on the road to nationhood (Quebec: Bloc québécois) 3.*

<sup>3</sup> *Bloc Québécois (1998)*

<sup>4</sup> *William Johnson's book Anglophobia: made in Quebec is a revealing example. Johnson is president of the Anglophone rights organisation Alliance Quebec (1991, Montreal: Stanké).*

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reinforcing the inclusive, democratic and socially responsible aspects of that community.

The result of these policy positions is a content marked by a strong sense of history fuelled by recent political events and a sense of difference marked by a distinct language, culture and resulting civic values. The values promoted throughout the nationalist discourse provide models of social behaviour for those within Quebec's borders. If the construction of national identity in Quebec is exclusive, it is in the emphasis on the characteristics of the majority population rather than the national values promoted throughout society. This exclusion is emphasised through the nationalist agenda which seeks to right the democratic wrongs suffered by this majority population. That all these traits form part of a broad consensus for the three main political parties strengthens the accepted wisdom of the political debate, and construction of national identity within the province.

#### ***Scotland***

Values, rather than social characteristics, form the litmus test of identity in Scotland. The prevalence of egalitarianism and the perception of a democratic intellect, in combination with recent political events, have compounded to foster a sense of identity marked by a coexistent low self-belief and political indignation.<sup>1</sup> Treatment of national identity by political parties, organised groups and the media has sought to counteract this claim while promoting the belief that the previous lack of democratic control for Scotland is an affront to national identity. As much as the political debate in Quebec has concentrated on the role of culture and language, and a resulting identity, nationalist actors in Scotland have reinforced the desire for Scotland's needs and interests to be protected. The difference is one of identity versus interest. While the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, nor mutually antagonistic, the difference in emphasis of the two programmes explains why nationalists in Scotland are not labelled as exclusive to the same extent as nationalists in Quebec. The difference between the two programmes is not one of civic nationalism versus ethnic nationalism, but rather points to differences in emphasis and tactics within the general rubric of civic nationalism.

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<sup>1</sup> *Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull (1989) The Eclipse of Scottish Culture (Edinburgh: Polygon)*

Another significant distinction from Quebec is the lack of consensus among political parties in Scotland. Despite the spirit of cooperation among the three parties that supported devolution during the 1997 referendum campaign, partisan differences parallel contrasting interpretations of the need for change. All four major parties point to different aspects of the current situation that require attention, and all four offer different methods to address these problems. Unlike in Quebec, where both the provincial Liberal Party and Parti Québécois agree that greater autonomy and respect for difference would represent positive change, the Scottish political spectrum offers an assortment of constitutional options including unionism, federalism, devolution and independence. Each constitutional option is associated with a point on the left-right continuum, forcing Scots to make two commitments at once, one political, the other constitutional.

In his 1996 speech to his national conference SNP leader Alex Salmond set out his party's place in Scottish politics and decried the arrogance of Labour, noting its 'contempt for the traditional values and lack of respect for the common weal.'<sup>1</sup> One year earlier he attacked Prime Minister John Major's Conservatives claiming 'the cohesive nature of the Scottish state system presents a political obstacle in the way of the Conservative Party and its anti-Scottish, elitist dogma.'<sup>2</sup> In each case, the effort was to align the SNP closer to the traditional values and interests of Scots than its two opponents. These statements, in addition to various references to the London levy, higher business rates and council tax in Scotland, Trident, the Stone of Destiny and the poll tax demonstrate the efforts of the SNP to align the strong tradition of democracy and egalitarianism with the left of the political spectrum, effectively excluding Tories from any claim to Scottish national identity. Labour, in its efforts to portray itself 'as the real national party of Scotland', announced that the 'Tories were confirmed as representing and acting for a smaller and smaller elite, having failed Britain and turned against Scotland.'<sup>3</sup> In addition to these efforts, SNP policy regarding the House of Lords and references to the 'archaic, anti-democratic and sometimes farcical Westminster parliamentary system' reinforce the perception that a unitary state does not meet the democratic needs of Scotland's interests, breeds a

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<sup>1</sup> *Alex Salmond (1996) Address to the Annual National conference (Edinburgh: SNP)*

<sup>2</sup> *Alex Salmond (1995) Address to the Annual National conference (Edinburgh: SNP)*

<sup>3</sup> *Labour Party (1997) (www.labour.org.uk)*

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sense of dependence and impotence, and weakens confidence and distorts self-image.<sup>1</sup> SNP MP George Reid's comment that 'Independence by itself is far less important than what Independence is actually for' implies that the promotion of confidence and self-worth are important components of the nationalist drive for greater political autonomy.<sup>2</sup>

The place of education in Scottish national identity, while stronger than that in Quebec, occupies a slightly different role. In Quebec, education serves as a tool of identity, reinforcing a sense of difference. Scottish education, however, provides a pillar of identity itself. Valued in its creation of a literate society and as a social leveller, the education system centres less on creating a sense of self. In its recent update to the Higher course requirements for History and English, the Scottish Qualifications Authority notes that there is no obligation to use Scottish texts in the syllabus for English, and only four of the twenty-two history modules cover Scottish history. In reference to this lack of Scottish material, Alex Salmond warned that an education system fails a nation 'if it does not instil within our young people a sense of their history, for it is from that that will often spring the determination to create a better tomorrow.'<sup>3</sup>

References to civic values, 'the passion for improvement, education, family and tradition ... equality of access and opportunity for all'<sup>4</sup>, pervade the SNP's general policy papers. The promotion of these values coexists with promises from all the major parties to look after the interests of Scotland at Westminster. According to the SNP, only the nationalists possess the additional factor of 'being the only party which, always, can put Scottish interests first' suggesting that the three others, in efforts to maintain British-wide appeal, will be less vigilant in their defence of Scottish concerns.<sup>5</sup> This claim, in addition to the traditional pillars of identity, has produced a sense of

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<sup>1</sup> For example, 'the notion of a revising chamber with a membership present by accident of birth or by political patronage is deeply repugnant to the Scottish sense of democracy.' SNP (1995) *Citizens not subjects* (Edinburgh: SNP) 2,8

<sup>2</sup> George Reid (1995) *10th Donaldson Lecture* (Edinburgh: SNP)

<sup>3</sup> The quotation continues 'We should be ashamed that it has taken Hollywood to give so many Scots back our history, and put the name and fame of Wallace on the lips of every schoolchild in our country.' Salmond (1995) *Address*

<sup>4</sup> Alex Salmond (1995) *William Memorial Lecture* (Edinburgh: SNP)

<sup>5</sup> Reid (1995) *Donaldson*

Scottish identity driven less by culture than the perception of political injustice. The Westminster Parliament, its unitary style of government, and the former Conservative government are depicted as anti-Scottish in their economic and political viewpoints.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that Conservative voters in Scotland feel less Scottish than their Labour counterparts, despite how they respond to the binary choices offered in opinion polls.<sup>2</sup> Just as Anglophones in Quebec may feel a greater allegiance to their province than to Canada, however, the exclusive message of nationalist actors affects the values accepted as markers of national identity.

## **CONCLUSION - INTERESTS AND IDENTITY, INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION**

Given the similarity of civic values promoted by nationalists in Scotland and Quebec, the differing process through which each movement has sought to politicise national identity produces the largest divergence between the two case studies. In linking culture, language and identity, political parties in Quebec have defined the boundaries of their community as well as the sphere of acceptable political activity. By linking self-perception to politics, political participation reinforces membership in the national community. In Scotland, the political spectrum has polarised according to the national issue. Conservatives arguing for the union are seen by nationalists as denying their Scottish identity.

The treatment of national identity in Scotland and Quebec differs according to two dimensions, the importance of identity versus interest in the nationalist programme, and the perceptions of inclusion and exclusion with the nation. As mentioned earlier, this paper does not seek to assign nationalism in Scotland and Quebec to categories of civic or ethnic movements. Both nationalist programmes operate in societies with a strong respect for fundamental human rights. To label either movement as exclusive is not to elicit comparisons with oppressive regimes or programmes where non-members fear for their safety or other equally undesirable implications of exclusion. Rather, this paper argues that in the presence of nationalism or

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<sup>1</sup> See SNP (1996) *Anti-Scottish Tories* (Edinburgh: SNP)

<sup>2</sup> Data from recent Election surveys suggests that Conservatives are more likely to feel equally Scottish and British and less likely to prioritise their Scottishness than supporters of other parties. Alice Brown, David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson (1996) *Politics and Society in Scotland*. London: Macmillan

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nationalist programmes, identity is constructed in such a way as to provide identifiable characteristics to mark the boundaries of the nation. The implications of this definition of identity are intended to allow individuals to make conclusions about their own sense of belonging within the nation. Overt exclusion in both cases does not exist. The basis upon which individuals may choose to evaluate their claims to belonging present varying opportunities for inclusion. In Quebec the primordial importance of the French language as an identifiable pillar of national identity presents serious problems for unilingual Anglophones who were born, raised and continue to live within the provincial boundaries. The perception that there are hierarchies of belonging, however, stems from the way the nation has been defined, rather than from exclusionary acts. In Scotland, the SNP has successfully steered debate away from ethnic notions of nationalism by establishing two key groups within its organisation, New Scots for Independence and Asian Scots for Independence. Despite claims from other political parties that the SNP is anti-English, the lack of Scottish identity is rarely linked to personal characteristics. Instead, it is in its definition of Conservative party members, unionists, and those who would place themselves on the right of the political spectrum as anti-Scottish that the SNP contributes to its definition of Scottish identity. If individuals are wont to feel themselves as outside the nation in Scotland, it is more likely because of the political values that they hold rather than on account of their language or ancestry.

If both nationalist programmes define their visions of the nation in such a way that individuals may choose to exclude themselves, why has Quebec received much greater attention on this front? The answer, alluded to earlier, stems from the role of identity versus interest in the nationalist agenda. Exclusion from a separatist-defined vision of identity matters in Quebec, because identity is the cornerstone of constitutional change. Calls for greater autonomy in Scotland, however, stem from the alleged inadequacies of the previous power-sharing arrangement between Scotland and the Westminster Parliament. Whether this emphasis on interest will give way to greater identity-centred debate now that the Holyrood Parliament has been created remains to be seen.

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