

NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN POST-DEVOLUTION SCOTLAND

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A number of recent studies have described the changing responses of survey respondents in Scotland when questioned on their national identities (see, for example, Paterson et al (2001), Brown et al (1998), Bennie et al (1997)). Broadly speaking such studies have discerned a rise in feelings of (or identification with) Scottishness, and a seemingly related decline in Britishness, since the early 1990s. This process, on the surface, seems to map closely on to the rising desire for constitutional change and for the enthusiasm with which change, when it came, was received. The new devolved settlement has, in turn, given rise to a more widespread reflection among leading academics and commentators on the contemporary status of Britain and Britishness (Nairn, 2000; Marr, 2000), not to mention the renewed vigour with which scholarly and journalistic communities have concentrated their gaze upon Scottishness. Our purpose in this article is to bring identity and constitutional change together under an empirical lens. We do this, firstly, by examining national identities in post-devolution Scotland within the context of broader historical trends. We then go on to assess evidence relating to the relative importance of such identities, before gauging their political significance. The latter is achieved by investigating how national identities relate to individuals' political attributes and attitudes to devolution now that the Scottish parliament is an established fact, and now that we are approaching the second Scottish Parliamentary election. Our findings are based on analysis of the Third Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, conducted in 2001, and comparison with findings from other recent surveys.

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NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN PRE- AND POST-DEVOLUTION SCOTLAND

Before we turn to the contemporary situation it is worthwhile to examine the broad pattern of change in national identities in Scotland over the last 25 years or so. This can be clearly seen in the Table 1, which notes the responses in Scotland to questions of which term respondents felt 'best' described their 'nationality'¹:

Table 1
Which nationality best describes you?²

% by column	1974	1979	1992	1997	1999	2000	2001
Scottish	65	56	72	72	77	80	77
British	31	38	25	20	17	13	16
Other/none	4	6	3	8	6	7	7
Base	588	658	957	882	1482	1663	1605

It can be quickly grasped that over the last quarter of a century Scottishness has been the most popular form of national identity in Scotland, and has increased significantly since the late 1970s apparently at the expense of Britishness. But whilst it seems that Britishness is declining as a popular 'best' or prioritised national identity it should not be concluded that Britishness is necessarily 'declining' in absolute terms, since a very large proportion of people in Scotland profess to hold at least a dual sense of national identity. For example, in some surveys respondents have been presented with a list of

¹ *In the later surveys quoted, a number of questions were asked which allowed respondents to choose any number of national identities before being asked to prioritise one single identity.*

² *The surveys cited in this article are the Scottish Election Surveys (1974; 1979; 1992; and 1997); the Scottish Referendum Survey 1997; the Scottish Parliamentary Election Survey (1999), and the Scottish Social Attitudes Surveys (2000 and 2001).*

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national categories and asked simply 'Do you regard yourself as X'. Answering 'Yes' to one category did not preclude respondents from answering 'Yes' to one or more of the others. Table 2 shows the responses from the Scottish Election Survey 1997, and the Scottish Social Attitudes Surveys of 2000 and 2001:

Table 2
Percentages regarding themselves as ...

	1997	2000	2001
Scottish	82	87	86
British	52	52	50
English	4	5	3
Northern Irish	1	1	1
Irish	1	2	2
European	9	10	12
Other	4	3	3
Base	882	1663	1605

Half these samples regarded themselves as British: in 2001 around half (48%) of those who regarded themselves as Scottish also regarded themselves as British, whilst the overwhelming majority (82%) of those regarding themselves as British also regarded themselves as Scottish. Of the large proportion of the sample (48%) who did *not* regard themselves as British the overwhelming majority (91%) regarded themselves as Scottish. Of the relatively small proportion who did *not* regard themselves as Scottish, two-thirds (67%) regarded themselves as British and a small proportion (16%) as English. To a large degree the question of Scottishness may well relate to country of birth (and length of residence in Scotland for those born elsewhere). Although, unfortunately, there is no question in the 2001 survey relating to where the respondent was born, almost three-quarters (71%) of the sample claimed to have never lived anywhere except Scotland, and amongst this group a very high proportion (94%) regarded themselves as Scottish, and

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a large minority (47%) as British. In the survey sample as a whole 41% regarded themselves as both Scottish and British, demonstrating the necessity of exploring national *identities* in Scotland.

A question regularly used by Scottish surveys was specifically designed to examine how respondents deal with situations where they may 'balance' dual national identities. They are asked to choose an exclusively Scottish or British identity, a dual identity in which one of these elements is prioritised over the other, or an equally balanced dual identity. Data accumulated from the use of this question over a number of years sheds light both on the dual Scottish-British identity in Scotland, and the way the specific balance between the two elements has shifted over time (Table 3).

Table 3
National Identity in Scotland 1992-2001

% by column	1992	1997 Elcn	1997R ef	1999	2000	2001
Scottish not British	19	23	32	32	37	36
More Scottish than British	40	38	32	35	31	30
Equally Scottish and British	33	27	28	22	21	24
More British than Scottish	3	4	3	3	3	3
British not Scottish	3	4	3	4	4	3
Other or None	1	2	2	4	4	4
Base	957	882	676	1482	1663	1605

What do these data tell us about the changing balance between Scottish and British national identity during the last decade? At first sight, and in line with the evidence from other questions on national identity, they suggest that there has been a substantial strengthening of Scottishness. The proportion of those claiming an *exclusively* Scottish identity almost doubled between 1992 and

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2001, rising from 19% to 36%. Over the same period, the proportion of those claiming an identity in which Scottishness and Britishness are accorded equal importance has declined from a third to a quarter.

The conclusion that these changes represent an unequivocal strengthening of Scottishness as Britishness wanes must, however, be qualified in a number of respects. First, on closer inspection we can see that a large part of the rise in levels of 'exclusive' Scottishness in fact took place within the same year, 1997. Such a large change in such a short period of time appears anomalous, but one explanation could be the very different contexts of the surveys, the first taking place in the aftermath of a UK General Election, the second relating to a Scottish referendum³. Whatever the explanation, this fact certainly raises questions about whether the rise in exclusive Scottishness is a post-devolution phenomenon. The second qualification is that although 1992 appears to represent some sort of base year for increasing Scottishness, in fact the survey conducted in this year is something of an exception given that there are at least two opinion polls prior to 1992 which show a *higher* level of exclusive Scottishness than even the 2000 and 2001 surveys⁴. Finally, we should acknowledge that, if we leave aside the somewhat unusual 1992 survey, the data are characterised by a high degree of stability. The combined proportion of those prioritising their Scottishness has increased by only 2% since 1997, and there has only been a relatively small decline in those claiming an equally balanced dual identity (in fact the proportion making such a claim had marginally increased in the latest survey).

These qualifications notwithstanding, we should note that the data described earlier concerning people's choice of 'best' nationality certainly indicate a trend of strengthening Scottishness and weakening Britishness. Further, and returning to the figures relating to the *balance* of these identities, a potentially significant shift is suggested by the fact that the modal, or most popular, category in the past two surveys has been exclusive Scottishness. Again, such

³ *It is also quite possible that changing patterns in national identity are linked to the specific political context. For example, it may be that levels of Scottishness declined in the late 1970s as a response to the failure of the first devolution initiative, but rose again in the 1980s because of the dominance of British politics by Thatcherism and the widespread belief that this ideology was antithetical to Scottish values.*

⁴ *These were the surveys conducted in July 1986 by System Three Scotland (39% exclusive Scottishness) and in September 1991 by ICM Research Ltd. (40% exclusive Scottishness).*

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a finding is not unprecedented, but it does represent a contrast with the modality of the 'More Scottish' category between 1992 and 1999. It also means that the combined proportion of those asserting *any* form of dual Scottish-British identity has declined. It could be that we have entered a post-devolution period in which a consistently high, and perhaps growing, number of Scots will allow no room for Britishness in their own national identity. What we can be certain of is that there is no evidence to suggest that devolution has weakened Scottish sentiment or led to a strengthening of the British element of Scots' national identities.

Our findings therefore represent consistency rather than change because they highlight the continuing relative strength of Scottishness as opposed to Britishness. But a potential problem for those of us who study national identity is that we have little sense of the weight such identity is given relative to other sources of identification. Perhaps people's Scottishness is of comparatively little importance when compared to other factors such as their gender, social class or age group?

ARE NATIONAL IDENTITIES IMPORTANT?

Over a number of studies, respondents have been asked if they feel themselves to have more in common with a fellow Scot from a different class, or an English person from the same class. Responses to this question since 1992 have consistently shown that more people feel they have more in common with Scots of a different class than with English people from the same class, a pattern not found in the 1979 data, although a significant proportion in each survey declined to choose (Table 4).

Table 4
More in common with person who is ...

% by column:	1979	1992	1997	1999	2001
Same class, English	35	27	23	23	25
Opposite class, Scottish	30	45	46	41	40
Base	608	957	882	1482	1605

This question is of course open to the same criticisms noted above – people in Scotland may well show higher levels of 'national' rather than class solidarity, but might *both* be regarded as relatively unimportant? To attempt to answer these questions the 2001 survey contained a question specifically designed to measure the importance of national identities as opposed to a range of other identities. Respondents were shown a list of possible identities⁵, and asked to name the three they felt were central to their own sense of who they were. The question ran:

Some people say that whether they feel British or Scottish is not as important as other things about them. Other people say their national identity is the key to who they are. If you had to pick just one thing from this list to describe yourself - something that is very important to you when you think of yourself, what would it be? And what would the second most important thing be? And what would the third most important thing be?

Two identities stand out as most popular on the first question (as 'something that is very important to you when you think of yourself'): being a parent was chosen by 24% of respondents whilst being Scottish was chosen by 18%. This pattern holds true when we examine responses across all three questions – around half of the sample choose being a parent as one of the three most important ways in which they think of themselves, and almost as many choose being Scottish. Being Scottish is more frequently chosen than other identities long seen as central to a person's sense of self, most notably class, age and gender. The eight most popular chosen identities were as in Table 5.

'Being Scottish' is rated highly across a number of social groups although its importance is clearly mediated through life-cycle factors. For example, amongst those respondents who are married or cohabiting, the most important identity is being a parent (60%), followed by being a spouse (44%), and being Scottish (40%). Amongst those who have never been married on the

⁵ *These were, in order presented to the respondent: Working class; British; Elderly; A woman/man; Not religious; A wife/husband; A Catholic; A country person; A city person; A Protestant; A mother/father; Middle class; Black; Retired; Religious; Scottish; A working person; Young; White; Asian; Unemployed; Other (WRITE IN); None of these.*

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other hand (and for whom choosing 'being a wife or husband' is not an appropriate response), the most important identity by some considerable distance is being Scottish (59%). Amongst those living with their own children a very high proportion (79%) choose 'being a mother/father' as a key identity, compared with 30% of the rest of the sample (many of whom will have no children and for whom 'being a parent' is not a relevant choice). Amongst these groups, however, being Scottish accounts for, respectively, 43% and 46% of respondents. Whilst responses are to some degree affected by the range of options appropriate to the individual respondent, it is revealing that 'being Scottish' seems to be the only identity popular across a whole range of social groups.

Table 5
Identities most important to respondents

% by column	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	TOTAL
A mother/father	24	16	9	49
Scottish	18	13	15	45
A working person	10	10	10	29
A wife/husband	6	13	9	28
A woman/man	10	8	8	25
Working class	9	8	8	24
Retired	3	4	4	11
British	4	4	3	11
Base	1605	1605	1605	1605

Table 6 notes the proportions of the sample choosing Scottish, British, both, or neither across the three questions. Two points stand out here – that a majority of the sample (53%) chose a national identity as central to their own sense of themselves, and that by and large the national identity chosen was Scottishness. Rather unsurprisingly, there is considerable overlap between responses on which identities are important to respondents, and the way in

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which they balanced their British and Scottish identities. Amongst those who said they were 'Scottish not British' 63% chose being Scottish as one of their three key identities, as did 44% of the 'Scottish more than British' group. Of those 'Equally Scottish and British' just under half (49%) chose at least one national identity as of key importance to them, with 26% choosing Scottish, 18% choosing British, and the remaining 5% choosing both identities. Amongst those claiming to be 'More British than Scottish' some 38% chose being British as an important identity compared to just 4% choosing being Scottish, whilst in the exclusively British group almost half (48%) chose being British as a central part of their own self-identity⁶.

Table 6
Proportions choosing a national identity

	%
Chose Scottish	42
Chose Scottish and British	3
Chose British	8
Chose neither	47
Base	1605

The results of the 2001 survey do seem to indicate that national identity (and in particular 'being Scottish') is regarded as important to the sense of self of a large proportion of people in Scotland. However, a further crucial question remains. To what degree do national identities matter in terms of how people think and act in the political realm?

⁶ It should be noted, however, that the numbers prioritising their Britishness are relatively small, representing just 7.5% of the 2001 survey (106 respondents).

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN SCOTLAND

The most obvious means of attempting to measure the political significance of national identity has been to compare this with individuals' party identification and their stance on what was the key contemporary issue of Scottish politics – the constitutional question. Previous work by ourselves and others (e.g. Brown et al, 1998; Bond, 2000; Paterson et al, 2001; McCrone, 2001) has shown that the relationship between these three variables has been surprisingly and consistently complex, in that strong levels of 'Scottishness' as measured by asking people about their national identity do not correspond to other apparent indicators of strong Scottishness – support for the SNP and for an independent Scotland – as neatly as a common sense understanding might lead us to suspect. The principal indicators of the complexity of this three-way relationship have been as follows. First, only quite a small minority even of 'exclusive' Scots support *both* independence and the SNP, and a much larger proportion of these people in fact support *neither*. This general pattern is present in an even more radical form among other 'prioritized' Scots, that is, those who describe themselves as 'More Scottish than British'. Second, a large minority of SNP supporters do *not* support independence. Third, of those who do support independence it is common to find that a majority do not support the SNP. These findings do not mean that one's Scottishness has no bearing upon key political opinions – the balance of Scottish and British identities remains closely associated with both party support and attitudes to the constitution – but that the political significance of national identity is much more complex than might be supposed.

Table 7
Support for Independence and/or the SNP amongst those claiming a 'Scottish not British' national identity, 1999-2001

% by column	1999	2000	2001
Support both independence and SNP	22	21	17
Support independence but not SNP	21	26	24
Support SNP but not independence	8	8	7
Support neither	48	46	51

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Base 479 611 575

Our purpose here is to consider the nature of this significance within a post-devolution context. We do this firstly by establishing whether or not there remains a considerable 'non-alignment' between national identity, party identification, and constitutional preference.

Tables 7, 8 and 9 in aggregate indicate that 'non-alignment' remains equally robust within a post-devolution environment. In fact, if anything, most of the evidence points to a small increase in this non-alignment over the past three surveys, most notably in the percentage of those supporting independence but not identifying with the SNP, and in the declining proportion of those 'exclusive' Scots who also support both SNP and independence. However, as with our earlier observations relating to recent trends in national identity, the levels of non-alignment recorded in the most recent survey are not unprecedented (see Bond, 2000). Therefore, rather than concluding that devolution has initiated a further disassociation between national identity, party identification and favoured constitutional option, a more robust conclusion would be that the relationship between these factors remains as complex in the wake of Scottish devolution as it was before the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

Table 8
Support for Independence and/or the SNP amongst those claiming a 'More Scottish than British' national identity, 1999-2001

% by column	1999	2000	2001
Support both independence and SNP	11	9	10
Support independence but not SNP	16	18	19
Support SNP but not independence	9	10	6
Support neither	65	63	65
Base	521	513	483

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However, this is not to say that devolution does not 'change the rules of the game'. Importantly, it changes the very questions that we are able to ask people. Firstly, perennial favourites like the constitutional question are changed subtly in that now the Parliament is a reality, devolved government becomes the status quo, and Westminster government of Scottish affairs the status quo ante. One noticeable effect is in the further decline in support for the latter: between the election surveys of 1992 and 1997 it declined from 24% to 18%, but by 2001 it had fallen sharply to 10%. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we are now able to ask a series of new questions relating to the Scottish Parliament's powers, its impact and its likely future effects. Are people's views on such matters influenced in any way by their sense of national identity, and, if so, are any observable relationships relatively straightforward and predictable or do they exhibit a similar complexity to those explored above?

Table 9
Total support for Independence, 1999-2001⁷

	1999	2000	2001
Percentage supporting independence but not identifying with SNP	57 (404)	61 (503)	66 (441)
Percentage of Labour identifiers among these respondents	54 (229)	49 (307)	65 (289)
Percentage of all Labour identifiers who support independence	21 (589)	25 (602)	25 (743)
Percentage of all SNP identifiers who do not support independence	38 (284)	40 (326)	38 (247)

We begin by considering the influence and power of the Scottish Parliament, in terms of both perceptions and desires. In other words, how influential do

⁷ *Figures in brackets indicate base number from which each percentage is derived.*

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people *believe* the Parliament to be and how influential would they *like* it to be (Tables 10 and 11)?

We can see here that a remarkable change occurred between 1999 and 2000 in perceptions of the Scottish Parliament's influence. In 1999, before the Parliament had become established, 42% thought that Holyrood would be the most influential institution – more than believed this of Westminster. A year later, with the Parliament up and running, a mere 13% thought it the most influential body, whereas a clear majority (66%) accorded this status to Westminster. These findings were virtually duplicated in 2001. It seems that we are observing a sharp difference between expectation and evaluation. Crucially, respondents in 2000 and 2001 were asked what *was* the most influential institution, rather than what *would be* (as they were in 1999). Clearly, expectations of the new Parliament's likely influence far outweighed the perceived reality of this influence. In contrast, opinions about which institution should have most influence have remained remarkably consistent across all three surveys, with around 3 in 4 respondents citing the Scottish Parliament while only about 1 in 6 feel that Westminster should be pre-eminent.

Table 10
Which institution(s) will have (1999) or has (2000 & 2001) the most influence over the way Scotland is run

% by column	1999	2000	2001
Scottish Parliament	42	13	15
Westminster	39	66	66
Local Councils	8	10	9
European Union	5	4	7
Base	1482	1663	1605

We might expect that those with a stronger sense of Scottishness would feel differently about these issues than those who express higher degrees of Britishness within their national identity. In order to explore this, Tables 12 and 13 show how attitudes vary by how respondents balance their British and

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Scottish identities. To aid analysis, we have combined the less popular categories of 'More British' and 'British not Scottish', creating a single category for all those who prioritise their Britishness. We have also excluded the small numbers who gave another nationality or did not answer. Thus percentages are based only on those who responded by giving some combination of Scottish and British⁸.

Table 11
Which institution(s) should have the most influence over the way Scotland is run, 1999-2001

% by column	1999	2000	2001
Scottish Parliament	74	72	74
Westminster	13	13	14
Local Councils	8	10	8
European Union	1	1	1
Base	1482	1663	1605

Table 12
Which institution(s) has the most influence over the way Scotland is run, by national identity, 2001

% by column	Scottish not British	More Scottish than British	Equally Scottish and British	More British/British not Scottish
Scottish Parliament	13	15	15	18
Westminster	66	65	66	66
Local Councils	9	10	9	8
European Union	7	7	7	7

⁸ This accounts for 96% of respondents, so does not in fact greatly alter the results, merely makes them easier to interpret.

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Base 572 490 373 103

There is a striking contrast between these two tables. In terms of perceptions of the actual influence of the Scottish Parliament, there is very little difference across the different categories of national identity. There is some weak evidence to suggest that those at the more Scottish end of the scale are more sceptical about this influence than are the more British respondents, but the uniformity in the proportions in each national category citing Westminster as the most influential institution suggests that national identity has little impact upon responses to this question. In contrast, when respondents are asked which institution *should* be most influential, there are clear differences relating to national identity. Those who prioritize their Scottishness overwhelmingly cite the Scottish Parliament, and very few back Westminster. For those with an equally balanced dual identity, though, the findings are more equivocal: although nearly two-thirds support the Scottish Parliament, nearly one quarter believe Westminster should be more powerful. However, perhaps the most interesting group are those who prioritise their Britishness. Clearly they are even more supportive of the notion that Westminster should be the most influential body, yet a majority of these people in fact support the *Scottish* Parliament in this respect. Precisely the same conclusions are reached when we use our other methods of gauging national identity by looking at respondents' choice of 'best nationality' or the question that allows them to choose both Scottish *and* British should they so wish (see Tables 1 and 2). This consistency across different measures demonstrates that while national identity clearly matters here, it would be quite wrong to suggest that strong feelings of Britishness equate with a desire to see Westminster continue to be the political institution that does most to influence the way Scotland is run. Even among strong British identifiers, fewer people support this option than favour the Scottish Parliament.

Another way to explore this issue is to look at how many people support the proposition that the Scottish Parliament should be given more powers than it currently has. In fact we know that a majority of people agree that the Parliament should be given more powers, and that the extent of this

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agreement appears to be growing⁹. What we must now explore is the effect that national identity has upon levels of agreement (Table 14).

Table 13
Which institution(s) should have the most influence over the way Scotland is run, by national identity, 2001

% by column	Scottish not British	More Scottish than British	Equally Scottish and British	More British/British not Scottish
Scottish Parliament	82	81	63	51
Westminster	7	9	24	39
Local Councils	7	8	10	7
European Union	5	4	3	3
Base	572	490	373	103

Table 14
Percentage of those agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Scottish Parliament should be given more powers, by national identity, 2001

Scottish not British	81
More Scottish than British	74
Equally Scottish and British	54
More British/ British not Scottish	35

⁹ The combined proportion of those 'agreeing strongly' or 'agreeing' with the statement 'The Scottish parliament should be given more powers' rose from 56% in 1999 to 66% in 2000 and 68% in 2001.

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Once more we can discern a clear relationship between national identity and support for the acquisition of more powers by the Scottish Parliament, with those at the more Scottish end of the scale being more supportive of this proposition. But, as above, it is also true that strong levels of Britishness do not neatly map on to high levels of opposition to a more powerful Scottish Parliament. A majority of those with an equally balanced dual identity would like to see this happen, and, among those who prioritise their Britishness, while there is evidence of greater opposition than on the question of institutional influence, more than one third still agree that the parliament should be given more powers.

We now turn from consideration of the perceived and proposed power and influence of the parliament to an examination of popular evaluation of its performance in certain key areas. Specifically, we will look at its influence upon the economy, the health service, education, and popular participation (Table 15).

Table 15
Expectations and evaluations of the Scottish Parliament, 1999-2001. % agreeing that it will or has

	1997	1999	2000	2001
Improve(d) Scotland's economy	54	43	36	43
Improve(d) the NHS in Scotland	60	50	n.a. ¹⁰	45
Increase(d) the standard of education in Scotland	71	56	43	27
Give(n) ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed	79	64	44	38
Base	882	1482	1663	1605

¹⁰ This question was not asked in 2000.

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It is apparent from these figures that the overall picture is one of decline in positive expectations and evaluations of the Parliament's impact in these key areas. On this occasion, this cannot be largely accounted for by the shift from a pre- to a post-devolution context (i.e. the shift from expectation to evaluation), because expectations themselves declined between 1997 and 1999¹¹. This shift has undoubtedly had an effect as, no doubt, have specific events and controversies in the various policy areas – for example the SQA exams debacle of 2000. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to avoid an excessively negative interpretation of these changing levels of agreement. Those holding positive opinions on these questions continue to substantially outnumber those with negative opinions. Most change is accounted for by people moving from positive to 'no difference' categories, reflecting a realisation of the limits to Holyrood's powers and influence. What we must now do is focus upon current evaluations of performance in these four areas, and assess the extent to which these are influenced by national identity (Table 16).

Table 16
Evaluations of the Scottish Parliament by national identity, 2001. % agreeing that it will or has improve(d):

	Scottish not British	More Scottish than British	Equally Scottish and British	More British/British not Scottish
Economy	46	45	39	30
NHS	51	44	41	31
Education	27	29	28	18
People's say in government	38	43	41	41
Base	572	490	373	103

¹¹ *That said, in the case of education especially, changes in question wording have perhaps been an important influence on response. Over the four surveys, respondents have in fact been asked whether the Parliament 'would', 'will', 'is going to', and 'is' improving education. The more recent wording makes it progressively more difficult for people to answer positively.*

These data add a new layer of complexity to our findings. In certain policy areas – the economy and health – national identity appears to have a clear influence on attitudes because those who more strongly identify as Scottish are more likely to positively evaluate the Scottish Parliament's influence in these areas. However, an interesting dimension of our findings is that, despite these apparently modest levels of approval, positive responses to these questions clearly outweigh negative even among those who prioritise their *British* identity. If we look at education and popular participation, we see that differences are much smaller and levels of response do not vary in a linear fashion from one end of our identity scale to the other. Hence we cannot conclude that national identity uniformly influences evaluation of the Parliament's actual or expected impact, nor can we say that Britishness is associated with a strongly negative evaluation of the devolved parliament.

What can we conclude about the political significance of national identity within a post-devolution context? It appears that national identity has a clear influence on attitudes towards the powers and responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament. Those toward the Scottish end of the scale adopt a relatively 'ambitious' position compared to the stronger British identifiers. In terms of evaluations of the Parliament's actual level of influence, or relating to its performance in key areas, the findings are more complex. In assessing overall influence, and impact upon standards of education and extent of popular participation, levels of response do not greatly vary with national identity. In other areas, specifically the economy and the health service, the stronger Scottish identifiers are more positive in their evaluations. It may be that amongst this group there is a combination of a desire to defend the Parliament's record and a disappointment with its actual achievements, a combination that will produce different outcomes depending on the precise nature of the question. Perhaps the most interesting conclusion, however, is that once again we have discovered that national identity does not map on to political perspectives as neatly as we might suppose. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that the overall perspective of strong British identifiers is often very similar to those who prioritise Scottishness, and when their perspective is more negative, it tends to be so only in a *relative* sense: in absolute terms the response of this group to devolution is in fact surprisingly positive. Hence we have discovered that, as with our exploration of its relationship to party identification and constitutional preference, the interaction between national identity and political attitudes is characterised by a high degree of

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complexity. National identity still matters, but not to the extent and in the manner that we would perhaps expect.

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June 2002