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A Four Territories Comparison

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National Identities and Attitudes to Constitutional Change in the Post-Devolution UK: A four territories comparison

This paper analyses survey data drawn from two distinct time points (2003 and 2006/7) to examine whether national identities in the UK are associated with support for further constitutional change. It compares all four 'national' territories of the UK: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We use logistic regression to model the relationships between identities and constitutional attitudes, taking into consideration other relevant social and political variables. While in England there is little evidence that national identities are constitutionally significant, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland national identities remain significant in explaining support for constitutional change, even after we have controlled for the effects of other variables. However, this significance needs to be qualified by considering trends in national identification in these territories and the likelihood that these will contribute to demands for further constitutional change.

This paper analyses social and political surveys to examine whether national identities in the UK are associated with support for further constitutional change. We build on a substantial body of previous research, but update and extend previous inquiry in at least two important respects. First, we compare all four territories of the UK, a significant endeavour since little contemporary comparative research of this nature has been done. Second, we undertake analysis at two distinct time points (2003 and 2006/7) in order to identify consistent patterns in the data. We exploit the wealth of survey data which has been inspired by constitutional change and some of the innovative research programmes by which it has been accompanied¹, creating a unique opportunity for comparative analysis.

We begin by reviewing the ways in which (national) identities have been understood conceptually and the implications which these understandings have for empirical research in this area. Important here is the recognition that social identities in general are characterised by multiplicity. Individuals conceive themselves as belonging to a number of social collectivities, each of which contributes to their overall sense of self. We are primarily concerned with a specific sub-category of social identity, that of territorial identities, which are often in themselves of a multiple nature. Moreover, these different sources of identification are not entirely independent of one another but will, under given circumstances, interact. Our work recognises this in two respects. First, we consider how different territorial identities which might equally be classed as 'national' relate to each other. Second, we take into consideration relationships between these and other types of social identity (political, demographic, economic, religious, linguistic). We also recognise that social identities are fluid: their salience and the ways in which they are understood are subject to change, over time, across different contexts and between different individuals. While this point is to some extent offered as a methodological caveat with respect to our primarily quantitative research approach, we offer a defence of the quantitative employment of categorical identities and also incorporate change as an important element through examining data from two distinct time periods.

Having laid this conceptual groundwork we then outline the principal means by which national identities have been measured in survey research in the UK and, using one particular measure which can be applied across all four UK territories, we examine the contemporary distribution of these identities. In the final and most important part of the paper, following a review of previous relevant survey-based research, we model the relationships between identities and constitutional attitudes, taking into consideration other relevant social and political variables.

Conceptualising and researching national identities

Robin Cohen (1994: 204) argues that for some academics, ‘... the construction, reproduction and reshaping of identity is the crucial preoccupation of our era’. Significantly, this reflection comes towards the end of a book specifically concerned with British identity, and others have argued that *national* identities are especially central to modern social life. Thompson (2001: 21), for example, states that ‘Even in those parts of the globe where globalisation is at its most advanced, national identities remain crucially important for the great majority of the populations’.

However, contemporary understandings of identities highlight the potential difficulties of research in this area. ‘Constructivist’ conceptualisations of identities highlight their fluid and multiple nature (Cohen, 1994; Kohli, 2000; McCrone, 1997: 582)ⁱⁱ, and this means that individuals may mobilize different identities in different social contexts (Bechhofer et al, 1999; Cohen, 1994; Todd et al, 2006). This point can be extended to territorial identities. Some have argued that individuals may identify with a hierarchical (or concentric) range of territories extending from their immediate neighbourhood, through wider locale, region, nation, state, and supra-state (Cohen, 1982; Colley, 1992; Smout, 1994). There are features of the UK which mark it out as both typical and atypical in this respect. Its incorporation of so-called ‘stateless nations’ such as Scotland and Wales and the existence of an obvious supra-state referent in the shape of Europe/the EU increase the likely salience of these territorial levels and facilitate dual ‘national’ identities. But while these features are shared by other European multinational states such as Spain and Belgium, in other parts of Europe there will be no evident territorial level lying between region and (nation-) state. In some parts of world suprastate identities might be less obviously available (and lacking the collective rights and symbols of European identity). Moreover, those other social identities which might have significant associations with national identities will vary both within and between national state contexts. For example, as we shall see, we expect that language might be an important correlate of national identity in Wales, as it is in Catalonia and Quebec (to take two other ‘stateless nations’), but this is much less obviously true of Scotland. Similarly, we would expect religious and national identities in Northern Ireland to be associated to a much greater extent than in other parts of the UK. A related point is that it is also true that similar national identities may be understood and interpreted quite differently between individuals (Hopkins & Reicher, 1996; Miller, 1995; Thompson, 2001). Thus identity ‘labels’ may be identical but their perceived ‘content’ may be different (Thompson, 2001: 24; Todd et al, 2006: 328; Todd, 2007: 567).

Such observations suggest that it would be problematic to base research on national identities solely upon survey-based approaches which entail respondents self-categorising into various national identity groups. Hence qualitative research strategies which can draw out the complexity and contingency of the construction and employment of national identities provide an essential parallel to more quantitative

studies. Two series of UK studies based on in-depth interviews with theoretically-grounded samples of respondents merit particular attention. Condor and colleagues have explored English and British national identities among a broad spectrum of people in England (Condor, 1996 and 2000; Condor & Abell, 2006; Condor et al, 2006). McCrone, Bechhofer, Kiely and colleagues in their studies of Scotland's landed and arts elites (Bechhofer et al, 1999; Kiely et al, 2001; McCrone et al, 1998) and of 'Scottish nationals' and 'English migrants' (Kiely et al, 2005a and 2005b) have explored the bases and nature of Scottish and British identities. Similar interview-based research in Wales highlights the importance of language in the understanding of Welsh identity, a dimension largely absent in England and Scotland (see Thompson & Day, 1999).

Nevertheless, quantitative approaches in themselves have considerable value. Let us consider the contention, implicit in 'constructivist' conceptions of identity, that observing that two or more individuals claim the same national identity may in fact tell us little. As Stuart Hall reminds us, '... when we come to consider whether national identities are being dislocated, we must bear in mind the way national cultures help to 'stitch up' differences into one identity' (1992: 299). In recognising that national identities accommodate diversity and contested meanings it does not necessarily follow that such identities, even understood in broad categorical terms, are not endowed with social and political significance for those who share them. As Cohen argues:

If, instead of announcing myself as, say, Sri Lankan, I say "I am Tamil", I do not mean to suggest that I am just like any other Tamil. I do not have to sublimate myself in an anonymizing "Tamil-ness" in order to suggest that Tamils have something in common which distinguishes them from Sinhalese. (1993: 198).

Claims to a similar national identity can have significance in and of themselves, notwithstanding the various qualifications and caveats we have discussed. Quantitative research based on self-categorisation into various (national) identities remains important because, as Bechhofer and McCrone point out (2007: 253), there are certain dimensions of national identity which necessitate investigation through large-scale sample surveys, notwithstanding the undoubted limitations of this method. This is true not least because, as Coakley (2007: 575) observes, '... qualitative data typically lack the reach and representative capacity that is possible with large surveys'. It is data from such surveys which we employ in this paper. In doing so we are building on a well-established body of research in the UK, stretching back over a considerable period.

The introduction of survey questions on national identity has varied across the constituent territories of the UK, undoubtedly related to their different political contexts. An early example of a political scientist employing a survey to measure (*inter alia*) national identity was Rose's 1968 'Loyalty survey' in Northern Ireland (Rose, 1971), which was followed by a similar survey ten years later (Moxon-Browne, 1983; see also Gallagher, 1995; Todd et al, 2006). These employed a 'forced' choice measure of national identity, offering respondents a list of identities and asking them to choose *only* that which 'best' described them, an approach still broadly employed in Northern Irish surveys (Coakley, 2007: 583).

However, phrasing survey questions in such a way does not allow an individual to express *multiple* national identities, a limitation particularly germane to the UK for the reasons outlined above. Although for some individuals certain national identities may be mutually exclusive and competing, for others these may overlap and be adhered to simultaneously. In each of the four territories plurality is represented by the existence of what we describe, for the sake of conceptual clarity, as ‘state’ and ‘sub-state’ national identities (others have described these as ‘state’ / ‘national’ (McCrone et al, 1998; Bechhofer et al, 1999) or ‘state’ / ‘ethnonational’ (Heath & Kellas, 1998; Kellas, 1998)). This conceptual division may not, however, do full justice to the nuances of popular understanding. As many have pointed out, the UK lacks a collective label for its citizens (Crick, 1989; Kumar, 2003; Nairn, 1988). While the ‘state’ identity might be understood as ‘British’, for many this will be considered as much a *national* identity as the ‘sub-state’ identities of English, Scottish and Welsh (Bryant, 2006; Gallagher, 1995: 721; Langlands, 1999). Further, while in Scotland and Wales distinctions between state and sub-state national identities are relatively clearly understood, in England many people may conflate English and British identities (Kumar, 2003; Langlands, 1999; Rose, 1982). In Northern Ireland the situation is yet more complex. There is less historical and popular support for the notion that Northern Ireland can be understood as a nation in its own right (Gallagher, 1995). Further, the issue of the *state* (and state identity) in Northern Ireland is at the very heart of its conflict, and for most people national identity boils down to a mutually exclusive choice between British *or* Irish.

To reflect the existence of dual/multiple national identities, survey questions have been developed which go beyond a singular (‘best’ or ‘forced’) conception of national identity. A now common question offers respondents multiple choices from a suite of national/territorial identities; another, originally developed in another manifestly multinational state – Spain – allows people to assign relative weight to their ‘state’ and ‘national’ identity (see Gunther et al, 1986), and is often referred to as the ‘Moreno question’ after the researcher pioneering its use in the UK (Moreno, 1988).

Numerous studies report analysis of these various survey questions on national identities in the UK. Data from Northern Ireland dates from the late 1960s (Gallagher, 1995; Moxon-Browne, 1983; Rose, 1971), and Scottish and Welsh data from the 1970s (Brand et al, 1993 and 1994; Brown et al, 1998; Curtice, 2005 and 2006; McCrone, 2001; Paterson et al, 2001; Paterson, 2002). From the 1990s, various studies compared England, Scotland and Wales (Brown et al, 1996 and 1998; Curtice & Heath, 2000; Heath & Kellas, 1998; Henderson, 1999; Kellas, 1998; McCrone, 2001; Paterson, 2002). There is only one notable, and now rather dated, comparison of national identities in all four UK territories (Rose, 1982). This is also based on a Gallup poll rather than a more established social or political survey, and the basis of comparison thus weakened.

This research does not address all the limitations associated with investigating national identities through survey methods. As Wyn Jones (2001: 46) points out, even relatively subtle measures such as ‘Moreno’ cannot account for shifts in national identification based on different social or political contexts (see also Coakley, 2007: 584-5; Muldoon et al, 2007: 92). Nor do they uncover the various *meanings* national categories might hold (Brand et al, 1993; Heath & Kellas, 1998; Henderson, 1999), although some quantitative studies have sought to address this question (see Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007; Haesly, 2005). Nevertheless, surveys show consistent

patterns of difference between the four territories and correlation with other key social and political variables within them (see e.g. McCrone et al, 1998; McCrone, 2001) and with alternative measures of national identity and sentiment (see e.g. Heath et al, 1999; Heath & Smith, 2005). The consistencies are such that we can be confident that, notwithstanding their limitations, these means of measurement are methodologically robust: they are telling us something ‘real’ about national identities in the UKⁱⁱⁱ. Moreover, there is evidence of convergence in findings between studies utilising primarily quantitative and qualitative methods (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007).

Data sources

Given that, while recognising some limitations, we can invest a degree of confidence in survey data concerning national identities, the analysis in the remainder of the paper is based on such data. These are drawn from a number of different sources appropriate to each of the four UK territories. Relevant surveys must (minimally) include measures of national identities and of attitudes toward the constitutional future of the territory in question. To enable us to make use of the most contemporary data available at the time of writing and to assess consistency over time they must also (ideally) be conducted annually. In addition, they must be based on substantial samples of respondents for each territory. The annual British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA) meets most of these conditions, but because it excludes Northern Ireland and includes only relatively small sub-samples of respondents in Scotland and Wales, we use it solely for analysis of data from England. Fortunately, since devolution there has also been an annual Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSA) which contains questions appropriate to our needs, and the same is true of the annual Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT). At the time of writing, the most recent year from which data were available from all three of these sources was 2006. However, there is no corresponding 2006 survey specific to Wales and we therefore use data from the slightly more recent 2007 Wales Life and Times Study (WLT)^{iv}.

Comparing dual and exclusive national identities in the four territories

We now offer a brief outline of the distribution of national identities within and between the four territories. In a context of multiple identities, of particular interest is the degree to which identities are exclusive or overlapping, not least state and sub-state national identities. Although they are by no means rooted solely in national identities (see, e.g. Brown et al, 1999), sub-state identity is an important source of legitimacy for the new political institutions in the UK. But at the same time such identities may also stimulate demands for more far-reaching autonomy, and thus disrupt the constitutional status quo. Whether or not they have devolved or federated political power to sub-state national or regional territories, states require a certain degree of shared identity to maintain their coherence. Where different, exclusively held identities dominate in different territories, or where the state national identity is very much of secondary importance to the majority of citizens, then this may have implications for the constitutional future of that state, although, as we shall see below, it is important not to make simplistic assumptions about associations between national identities and attitudes to constitutional change.

Although some argue that it is preferable to measure ethnonational identities in a ‘graded’ as opposed to ‘nominal’ fashion (see e.g. Brady and Kaplan, 2000) we do not have the kind of shared data across all four UK territories which would enable us to construct such a measure. We lack data on how people relate with and to members of

other national groups, which are, e.g., employed by Brady and Kaplan (ibid.) to construct quite a complex scale measure of national identity. Nor, as will be noted below, do we even have more rudimentary scale measures of national identity which are used consistently across all parts of the UK. We can, however, assess the balance between exclusive and dual identities in the UK using the ‘multiple choice’ measure noted above^v. Table 1 presents the most contemporary data from this question. In Wales this is drawn from 2007 and in England and Scotland 2006. Due to the preponderance of the ‘forced choice’ measure in Northern Ireland (see above), the most recent ‘multiple choice’ data are from 2003.

Table 1: Multiple choice national identities

%	British	English	Scottish	Welsh	Irish	N.Irish	<i>Sample size</i>
England	68	67	3	2	3	*	3666
Scotland	43	4	84	*	1	1	1594
Wales	58	11	2	67	1	*	884
N.Ireland	49	1	1	*	30	33	1800

* = 0.5% or less

Sources: BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006; SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006; WELSH LIFE AND TIMES, 2007; NORTHERN IRELAND LIFE AND TIMES, 2003.

In Scotland, the sub-state identity is particularly prominent in relation to the state identity. In Wales, rather more people choose the sub-state option but the proportion who do so is not markedly greater than the proportion who identify as British. In England, sub-state and state identities are chosen by virtually identical numbers. Given that the total percentages in each of these three countries clearly exceed 100%, it is evident that substantial proportions have a dual state/sub-state identity. This is less clear in Northern Ireland, and indeed here no single identity is chosen by a majority.^{vi}

Table 2 offers a more explicit demonstration of the preponderance of dual identities shown by the multiple choice measure. It shows the proportion of respondents choosing *both* a state and sub-state national identity, and the proportion opting for either one exclusively of the others (or opting for neither). The initial (2003) data shown for Northern Ireland indicate only the degree to which the two potential state identities (i.e. British and/or Irish) are complementary or exclusive. The table also shows (in brackets) more contemporary 2006 data from Northern Ireland, derived from the following direct question concerning dual and exclusive identities: ‘What nationality are you?’, with the specified options British, Irish, British **and** Irish or Other. It is these data which are used in our subsequent analysis of Northern Ireland (see table 8).

Table 2: Dual and exclusive national identities^{vii}

(X = English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish in relevant territory)

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
	%	%	%	%
British and X	45	33	33	3 (8)
British but not X	23	10	25	46 (56)
X but not British	22	51	35	26 (33)
Neither of these	9	6	7	24 (4)
<i>Sample size</i>	3666	1594	884	1800 (1230)

Sources: BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006; SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006; WELSH LIFE AND TIMES, 2007; NORTHERN IRELAND LIFE AND TIMES, 2003 (2006).

These data clarify and substantiate the figures shown in table 1. If we focus first on those who choose one identity but *not* the other, in Scotland and Wales (but especially so in Scotland) the sub-state national identity has greater relative prominence, whereas in England the proportions who choose each identity exclusive of the other are very similar. Large minorities in all three of these territories also adopt a dual identity. This is an evident contrast to Northern Ireland where dual identities are rare, highlighting the *competing* nature of British and Irish identities. The rather different means of eliciting these data in 2006 does increase the proportion of dual identifiers somewhat, but this still accounts for less than one in ten. Indeed the most notable effect of the change in question is that when the sub-state option of Northern Irish is explicitly removed fewer people ‘opt out’ of both British and Irish categories^{viii}. While we cannot use the 2006 data to assess how many people in Northern Ireland have a dual state/sub-state identity, if we use the 2003 data to expand our measure of dual identities to encompass *any* dual or multiple combinations of British, Irish, Northern Irish or Ulster, such designations still account for less than 15% of all respondents (not shown in table 2). Although the argument that national identification often tends to be dual (or indeed multiple) holds for the three territories in Britain, it cannot be extended to Northern Ireland.

While table 2 shows the preponderance of dual and exclusive identities in each territory it gives little information about the relative *weight* which respondents place on national identities, particularly where dual identities are in evidence. This can be explored by asking people which identity ‘best’ describes them. In England, Scotland and Wales the question is asked as a follow-up to the multiple choice question for those who chose more than one national identity: ‘And if you had to choose, which one **best** describes the way you think of yourself?’. In Northern Ireland, respondents are asked the familiar ‘best choice’ question described earlier: ‘Which of these best describes the way you think of yourself?’, with the options being British, Irish, Ulster, Northern Irish or Other. The results, shown in table 3, substantiate previous research and the findings shown in tables 1 and 2. The most notable feature is that, in Scotland especially but also in Wales, it is clear that the state identity has a secondary salience for most respondents, although in England the sub-state identity is also chosen to a somewhat greater degree than the state identity.

Table 3: Best choice national identities

	England	Scotland	Wales	N.Ireland
	%	%	%	%
British	38	14	32	39
English	47	2	7	-
Scottish	2	78	1	-
Welsh	1	*	56	-
Irish	1	*	1	28
Northern Irish	*	1	*	26
Ulster	*	*	*	4
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>3666</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>884</i>	<i>1230</i>

* = 0.5% or less; - = not specifically recorded in Northern Ireland

Sources: BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006; SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006; WELSH LIFE AND TIMES, 2007; NORTHERN IRELAND LIFE AND TIMES, 2006.

National identities and constitutionally-significant political attitudes

The varying patterns of national identities we have outlined thus far may in themselves have political implications in that where many people do not identify with the state identity, or regard it as secondary to their sub-state identity, then there is potential to fuel demands for further autonomy at the sub-state level, or to wholly renegotiate the state/sub-state relationship. However, this assumes that national identities map on to political perspectives of territorial-constitutional significance, and that powerful sub-state or alternative state identities are clearly associated with ‘separatist’ aspirations rather than, for example, broad contentment with the degree of autonomy (for some territories) introduced in the late 20th century.

A substantial body of previous survey-related work has explored how constitutionally-significant political factors such as party support (actual or intended vote, or broader party identification) and preferred means of governing the territory in question (broadly, independence, devolution, or centralized government) may be associated with national identities in the UK. Such work can be divided around 1999 into pre- and post-devolution periods. Heath and Kellas (1998) offer a rare example of comparative work in the pre-devolution period. Their analysis of England, Scotland and Wales suggested that national identities might be linked to future political developments, with those who adopted exclusive identities in each country displaying a stronger appetite for constitutional change than those with dual identities. Aside from this there is little notable pre-devolution research concerned with national identities and political attitudes in England, reflecting the comparative lack of concern with national identities in that country during this time.

Relevant pre-devolution studies concerned specifically with Scotland (Brand et al 1993, 1994; Brown et al, 1998) indicated a clear association between national identities and constitutionally-significant political views with, for example, those with an exclusive Scottish (rather than British) identity more likely to support the SNP and to favour Scottish independence. However, they also established that most supporters of the SNP and of independence were not ‘exclusive Scots’, and even those with the most unionist political attitudes (i.e. supporters of the Conservatives and opponents of devolution) were more likely to prioritize a Scottish rather than British identity. Such findings revealed a ‘non-alignment’ between identities and political attitudes in Scotland (Bond, 2000). Research in Wales (Balsom, 1985; Cooke, 1989) showed that national identities were associated with vote and constitutional preference, but that the articulation of Welsh national identity and capacity to speak Welsh was most significant, particularly with respect to voting for Plaid Cymru and supporting devolution. Nevertheless, ‘non-alignment’ was evident here too.

Rose (1982: 17) provided an early example of relevant survey-based research which was both comparative and included Northern Ireland. This indicated that identities and political behaviour were more ‘aligned’ in Northern Ireland: at the 1979 General Election only 21% of Scottish identifiers and 10% of Welsh identifiers voted for the Nationalist party in these respective territories, whereas in Northern Ireland 60% of Catholic Irish identifiers voted for the nationalist SDLP. Other relevant research conducted in Northern Ireland has tended to be specific to that territory. Moxon-Browne (1983) showed that while more than three-quarters of SDLP supporters in a 1978 survey identified primarily as Irish, more than 90% of those identifying themselves as supporters of either of the two main unionist parties (OUP and DUP) chose either a British or Ulster national identity^{ix}. Later work based on the 1994

Northern Ireland Social Attitudes survey suggested that the alignment between identities and political attitudes remained strong (Breen, 1996; Trew, 1996).

Relevant post-devolution research in Scotland continued to highlight the non-alignment of national identities and political attitudes (Paterson et al, 2001). Wyn Jones's analysis of the immediate post-devolution period in Wales suggested that one of the eponymous 'unintended consequences' of constitutional change had been '... the new prominence and role that national identity has acquired in Welsh politics' (2001: 35). Work on identities and constitutional attitudes in England in the early post-devolution period indicated that any such associations were rather weak. Clear majorities in England, regardless of national identity, appeared to be content with the asymmetry of Scottish and Welsh devolution paralleled by centralized Westminster government for England (Curtice & Heath, 2000). Perhaps the most comprehensive *comparative* post-devolution study is provided by Curtice's (2006) analysis of England, Scotland and Wales, which related constitutional preference (i.e. best means of governing each territory) to national identities. This analysis, using 2003 data, generally substantiates previous research: identity in England makes little difference but in Scotland and Wales there is an association with constitutional preferences, albeit that devolution clearly enjoys the strongest support regardless of national identity in both countries. Relevant post-devolution research in Northern Ireland has tended to examine how religion may be associated with national identities and/or political preferences (see, e.g., Coakley, 2007; Todd et al, 2006) rather than employing identity as an independent variable and relating this to opinions on the territory's constitutional future. This doubtless reflects an earlier observation by Trew (1998: 61) that in Northern Ireland '... although the Protestant and Catholic labels are denominational they are also assumed to reflect contrasting national identities and political allegiance between nationalist Irish Catholics and unionist British Protestants'.

Our task now is to build on and develop this previous research in three key respects. Firstly, we are still (relatively speaking) in the early days of the post-devolution UK and constitutional arrangements remain subject to change. It is therefore imperative that we update analysis of the association between national identities and constitutional attitudes to include the most recently available data. This takes us to near the end of the second electoral period of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and we also examine how our findings compare with data from the end of the first period of devolution (2003). Secondly, we once more expand this analysis to compare all four UK territories at a similar time point. Thirdly, although our principal concern is a comparison of the degree to which national identities are associated with constitutionally-significant political attitudes in the four territories, we will assess the importance of these identities relative to other political and social factors. This is important both because patterns of national identity often vary in relation to other characteristics such as political perspective, social class, age, religion and language, and because these factors sometimes have a more direct association with attitudes to constitutional change.

In order to take account of these various effects we present logistic regression models for each territory using the most contemporary (2006/2007) data, and in each case assessing those elements of the model which are consistent with similar models constructed using 2003 data. In each territory we examine associations with a dichotomous dependent variable which indicates support for further constitutional

change. Each of these variables is shaped to a degree by the precise survey questions on constitutional preferences from which they have been derived. These are given in full in the appendix. However, we have also made active decisions about the specification of the dichotomous dependent variable in each territory. In doing so we focus on constitutional positions which would represent a substantial and novel change to the status quo. Thus we do not, for example, focus specifically on support for the status quo ante of sole Westminster government in any of the devolved territories. It is also important that dichotomization does not divide respondents into a very small minority and a large majority, and for this reason we do not specify support for independence alone in Wales or for an independent Northern Ireland. Therefore, in Scotland, we analyse support for an independent Scottish state; in Wales, support for further autonomy either in the form of independence or a parliament with legislative and tax-raising powers; and in Northern Ireland support for re-unification with the Republic of Ireland. In the case of England we employ two separate models with different dependent variables representing support for the most likely alternatives to the status quo: an English parliament or elected regional assemblies.

The measure of national identity we employ as an explanatory variable is that outlined in table 2 above since, in contrast to possible alternatives such as the ‘Moreno’ scale which it is difficult to use in Northern Ireland (see Coakley, 2007), this can be applied in all four territories. In England, Scotland and Wales, this indicates exclusive or dual state/sub-state national identities derived from the ‘multiple choice’ measure shown in table 1. In Northern Ireland we employ the more direct measure of exclusive or dual British/Irish identities used in 2006. We assess the explanatory significance of several other political and social variables: party identification, position on a left-right scale,^x age, social class (based on the NS-SEC occupational categorisation^{xi}), capacity to speak the Welsh language (in Wales only), and, for Northern Ireland only, religion^{xii}. For each of these explanatory variables we first carried out a bivariate cross-tabulation with the relevant dependent variable and then, only if this showed a statistically significant association ($p < 0.05$) was the explanatory variable included in the final logistic regression model. The final models for each territory using 2006/07 data are presented below, and in each case we discuss the model and relate the findings to those derived from an identical exercise using 2003 data. This allows us to identify and highlight only those variables and categories which are consistently significant across *both* time periods.

England

Table 4 shows the 2006 logistic regression model for support for an English parliament. This is a rather restricted model in that only two explanatory variables – party identification and national identity – had a statistically significant bivariate association with the dependent variable. Where categorical variables such as these are used in logistic regression models a reference or base category is specified against which other categories are compared. The first column of the table shows, for each categorical variable included in the model, the reference category and the other categories which are compared against it. So, in table 4 the reference category for party identification is Labour and the other categories are Conservative, Liberal Democrat and None (i.e. no party identification). The final column of the table shows the odds ratio for each of these categories relative to the reference category. In this instance it shows the likelihood, once the effects of the other variables in the model have been controlled for, that someone who, for example, supports the Conservative

party will support an English parliament compared to someone who supports Labour. An odds ratio of 1 indicates no difference in likelihood; the magnitude of an odds ratio greater than 1 gives an indication of how much *more* likely someone in the given party category is to support an English parliament than is someone in the reference (Labour party) category, and the magnitude of an odds ratio lower than 1 gives an indication of how much *less* likely they are to support this constitutional position^{xiii}. The same principle of interpretation can be applied to the national identity variable, for which the reference category is English and British (i.e. a dual identity), and indeed for all categorical variables in the tables below. Also important is the penultimate column of the table which indicates statistical significance (conventionally, values of **less** than 0.05 are accepted as statistically significant).

Table 4: Logistic regression model of support for English parliament, England

	B	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Party				
(Labour)				
Conservative	.889	.232	.000	2.433
Lib Dem	.600	.295	.042	1.822
None	.649	.278	.019	1.914
National Identity				
(English and British)				
English only	.366	.226	.106	1.441
British only	-.359	.255	.159	.698
Neither	-.033	.362	.926	.967

Source: *BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006*

The table shows that when both variables are entered into the model the effect of national identity is no longer significant. Compared to Labour, supporters of the other two parties (and of none) are significantly more likely to favour an English parliament, but this finding is not consistent with the 2003 analysis, where differences in party identification were not found to be significant. Hence in terms of support for an English Parliament there are no variables which are significant across both time periods.

Table 5 shows a similar model from 2006, this time with support for elected regional assemblies as the dependent variable. Once more only two of the original explanatory variables had a significant bivariate relationship with the dependent variable and are therefore included in the model. As well as our now familiar categorical variable of party identification, this model includes a continuous variable: age in years. For variables of this nature interpretation of the model is somewhat different. The odds ratio represents the relative likelihood of taking a positive value in the dependent variable (i.e. in this case supporting regional assemblies) **for each unit increase** in the explanatory variable (in this case an increase of one year). Hence for continuous variables such as age (which have many potential values) even an odds ratio which is quite modestly different from 1 may be statistically significant (because a much greater difference in age would have a much larger effect). The table suggests that age has a significantly *negative* effect on support for regional assemblies: i.e., other things being equal, older respondents are *less* likely to support this constitutional option. Party identification is once more significant, but on this occasion it is only Liberal Democrat supporters who are significantly more likely to support regional assemblies compared with Labour. However, a similar effect related to party identification was

not evident in the analysis of 2003 data. The only finding which is consistent across both 2003 and 2006 is that younger people are more likely to support elected regional assemblies. Note that for neither constitutional alternative in England is national identity a significant factor.

Table 5: Logistic regression model of support for Regional Assemblies, England

	B	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Party				
(Labour)				
Conservative	-.144	.244	.553	.865
Lib Dem	.676	.266	.011	1.966
None	.434	.262	.097	1.544
Age				
(in years)	-.011	.005	.040	.989

Source: BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006

Scotland

Table 6 shows the 2006 logistic regression model for support for an independent Scotland. On this occasion all five initial explanatory variables had a significant bivariate relationship with the dependent variable, and four of these remained significant in the logistic regression model (the exception being social class). However, in the 2003 analysis age was not significantly associated with attitudes to the constitution. Three variables are therefore significant across both survey years: position on the left-right scale, party identification and national identity. Like age, position on the left-right scale is a continuous variable and the data must be interpreted accordingly. But unlike age the scale has a restricted range, from a minimum of 1 (most left-wing) to a maximum of 5 (most right-wing). The odds ratio in this instance relates to each unit increase on the scale. Being more right-wing has a consistently negative relationship with support for independence: for each unit increase on the scale toward the most right-wing position, the odds ratio is 0.705 in 2006, and a similarly significant pattern was evident in 2003 (odds ratio = 0.583). In terms of party identification, the party reference category is Labour. Not surprisingly, identifying with the SNP has a strongly positive relationship with support for independence in both years (in 2006, as shown in the table, odds ratio = 3.609; in 2003 = 5.729). No other significant differences related to party identification were found in both years. Finally, national identity also shows a consistent significant pattern across both surveys, and to some extent this takes the form we might have predicted. The reference category is those with a dual (Scottish and British) identity, and compared to them respondents with an exclusive Scottish identity are more likely to support independence in both surveys (in 2006, odds ratio = 2.479, in 2003, = 2.214). However, it is interesting that while those with an exclusively British identity were significantly less likely to support independence in 2003, as table 6 shows there is no significant difference with the dual identity category in 2006. Overall then, unlike in England, national identity has a significant association with constitutional attitudes even after other key variables have been controlled. However, this is true only in the sense that having an exclusive sub-state identity is associated with support for independence. Those with an exclusive state identity are not significantly less likely to support this option compared with the dual identity category – at least not consistently so in both surveys. We must also emphasize that in both 2006 and 2003 the status quo (devolution), was the most popular option across *all* categories of

national identity, including those with an exclusive Scottish identity. Hence national identities are significant but a degree of ‘non-alignment’ with political attitudes remains evident.

Table 6: Logistic regression model of support for Scottish independence, Scotland

	B	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Party				
(Labour)				
Conservative	-.444	.275	.106	.641
Lib Dem	-.170	.284	.551	.844
SNP	1.285	.185	.000	3.615
None	-.041	.223	.853	.960
Social Class				
(Employers, Managers and Professionals)				
Intermediate	.162	.270	.549	1.176
Small employers and self-employed	.210	.299	.482	1.234
Lower supervisory/technical	.088	.222	.691	1.092
Semi-routine/routine	.290	.191	.129	1.337
National Identity				
(Scottish and British)				
Scottish only	.908	.162	.000	2.480
British only	-.398	.353	.260	.672
Neither	-.471	.470	.316	.624
Age				
(in years)	-.016	.005	.001	.984
Left-Right Scale				
(1-5)	-.350	.104	.001	.704

Source: SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES, 2006

Wales

Table 7 shows the 2006 logistic regression model for support for greater Welsh autonomy, either in the form of an independent state or a Welsh parliament similar to the current Scottish model. Unlike in Scotland, age is a significant explanatory variable in both years: older people are less likely to support further autonomy (in 2007, odds ratio = 0.985, in 2003, 0.979). Similarly to Scotland, both party identification and national identity are significant across both surveys. The party reference category is Labour, and in both surveys (as we might expect) supporters of Plaid Cymru are more likely to support further autonomy (in 2007, odds ratio = 1.899, in 2003, 2.391). No other significant differences related to party identification were found in both years. The reference category for national identity is Welsh and British, and those with an exclusively Welsh identity were more likely to support further autonomy in both surveys (in 2007, odds ratio = 1.527, in 2003, 1.592). Once more although we can observe a similar *negative* effect among those with an exclusively British identity in both surveys, in neither one is this statistically significant (in 2006 $p = 0.069$; in 2003, $p = 0.082$). Capacity to speak the Welsh language has a significant bivariate association with constitutional preference in both surveys, but in the 2007 logistic regression model, using fluent Welsh speakers as the reference category, there are no significant differences, albeit that this is only marginally so with respect to non-fluent Welsh speakers where there is a near significant (negative) association with support for greater autonomy ($p = 0.068$, odds ratio = 0.571). In 2003 those who

spoke Welsh but not fluently *were* significantly less likely to favour enhanced autonomy ($p = 0.027$, odds ratio = 0.536) compared to the reference category of fluent Welsh speakers. It should be noted that, as in Scotland, there is consensus to the degree that a majority of respondents in all identity categories supported devolution, although beliefs about the specific form this should take do vary somewhat in relation to national identities. For those with an exclusively Welsh identity or a dual Welsh/British identity, a parliament similar to that in Scotland is the most popular option, accounting for nearly half of respondents in each category in the 2007 survey, and clearly more popular than the status quo which is supported only by around a quarter of respondents in each category. For those with an exclusively British identity, in 2007 the status quo was the most popular option (31%) albeit only marginally more so than a devolved parliament (29%).

Table 7: Logistic regression model of support for greater Welsh autonomy, Wales

	B	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Party				
(Labour)				
Conservative	-.283	.206	.169	.754
Lib Dem	-.124	.267	.641	.883
Plaid Cymru	.641	.279	.022	1.899
None	-.481	.248	.052	.618
Welsh language fluency				
(Fluent speakers)				
Non-fluent speakers	-.560	.307	.068	.571
Non-speakers	-.306	.264	.246	.736
National Identity				
(Welsh and British)				
Welsh only	.424	.193	.028	1.527
British only	-.369	.203	.069	.691
Neither	.282	.314	.369	1.326
Age				
(in years)	-.015	.005	.001	.985

Source: *Welsh Life and Times Study, 2007*

Northern Ireland

Table 8 shows the 2006 logistic regression model for support for a unified Ireland. The necessary data to construct left-right political scales are not available and so this is not included as an explanatory variable, but we do include religion, which is politically relevant in Northern Ireland but not in the other territories. Among those explanatory variables which are shared with the other territories, similarly to Scotland and Wales both party identification and national identity are significantly associated with support for a reunified Ireland in both surveys. These associations have a predictable character. Using Sinn Fein as the reference category for party, supporters of all other parties (and indeed supporters of no party) were significantly less likely to support reunification in both surveys. The odds ratio is especially low for supporters of the Democratic Unionist party. With respect to national identity, Irish only is the reference category and in both surveys the (relatively small) group with a dual Irish/British identity and those who see themselves as exclusively British were significantly less likely to support Irish reunification. This effect is most marked among the exclusively British (odds ratio of 0.286 in 2006 and 0.075 in 2003). While

these findings might be thought predictable, they do show that both party identification and national identity have a statistically significant effect on constitutional preference even when controlling for the effect of the other explanatory variables. Also interesting is that this is *not* consistently the case with respect to the other explanatory variable where we might have expected to see a similar effect: religion. Table 8 does indicate that being Protestant as opposed to Catholic has a statistically significant negative effect upon support for Irish unification (odds ratio = 0.219), but in 2003 this association was not statistically significant ($p = 0.105$; odds ratio = 0.542). The influence of religion on constitutional attitudes is reduced once we control for the other explanatory variables. A caveat with respect to our analysis of Northern Ireland is that many of the explanatory variables employed are themselves quite strongly correlated with one another, which can potentially distort regression models. However, the fact that national identities remain significant even under these conditions is itself remarkable.

Similarly to Scotland and Wales then, but unlike England, national identities in Northern Ireland are significant predictors of constitutional attitudes. It is also important to add that unlike in Scotland and Wales there is polarisation as opposed to a strong degree of consensus with respect to these attitudes across different categories of national identity. In 2006, using the same question addressed in table 8, while 95% of exclusively British respondents believed that Northern Ireland should remain part of the UK and only 5% supported Irish reunification, the respective figures for those in the exclusively Irish category were 38% and 63%. Northern Ireland is thus an example of strong alignment between national identities and political attitudes which puts the other territories into context.

Table 8: Logistic regression model of support for Irish unification, Northern Ireland

	B	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Party				
(Sinn Fein)				
SDLP	-.422	.299	.159	.656
UUP	-1.839	.607	.002	.159
DUP	-4.415	1.444	.002	.012
Alliance	-1.874	.586	.001	.153
None	-1.180	.312	.000	.307
Social Class				
(Employers, Managers and Professionals)				
Intermediate	-.313	.384	.414	.731
Small employers and self-employed	.309	.390	.428	1.362
Lower supervisory/technical	.317	.517	.540	1.373
Semi-routine/routine	.488	.261	.061	1.630
National Identity				
(Irish only)				
Irish and British	-.750	.355	.034	.473
British only	-1.253	.313	.000	.286
Neither	-.719	.526	.171	.487
Religion				
(Catholic)				
Protestant	-1.519	.456	.001	.219
None	-.083	.319	.795	.920
Age				
(in years)	-.005	.006	.427	.995

Conclusions

The degree to which national identities are consistently associated with attitudes toward constitutional change, across two distinct time periods, varies between UK territories. While in England there is little evidence that national identities are constitutionally significant, this is not so in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In both Scotland and Wales, even after we have controlled for the effects of other political and social variables which we might expect to be associated with attitudes to constitutional change, we find that national identities remain significant in explaining support for greater sub-state autonomy. This finding would seem to undermine the claim that in Scotland there is a ‘... lack of relationship between national identity and constitutional preference’ (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2008: 99). However, this is only true to the extent that those with exclusive sub-state identities are more likely to favour more autonomy: those with exclusive state identities are not consistently and significantly more likely to *oppose* such change than are those with dual identities. In both Scotland and Wales being a supporter of the Nationalist political party also has a positive effect on support for greater autonomy, independent of the influence of national identity. These findings also hold true in Northern Ireland: both national identities and party affiliations are associated with constitutional attitudes, independent of the effects of other variables (many of which are themselves quite strongly associated with national identities). These effects are also somewhat more marked than in Scotland and Wales, reflecting comparative lack of consensus regarding Northern Ireland’s future within the UK. Interestingly, in relation to Trew’s (1998) point about religious affiliations in Northern Ireland being ‘labels’ which incorporate national and political allegiance, our evidence suggests that, independent of these national and political identities, it is not clear that religious affiliations in themselves shape attitudes to constitutional change.

In closing, however, it is important that we contextualize these findings within an even broader time period than that considered heretofore. More specifically, we need briefly to consider evidence concerning change in the patterns of national identities in the UK in recent years. Given that, in some territories at least, we have shown that national identities are indeed significantly associated with given constitutional attitudes even when other important variables are taken into consideration, then any trends which indicate changing patterns of national identification are more likely to have constitutional consequences. We do not have the space here to present detailed time series for each territory using different measures of national identity but we can offer some broad details of trends. In England, there is little consistent evidence of growing identification with the sub-state (English) as opposed to state (British) identity but, as we have seen, any such shift would be unlikely to have any constitutional significance anyway. Such a trend is also absent in Scotland where, at least in the post-devolution period, there has been little change in patterns of national identities, the principal shift towards greater Scottish as opposed to British identification having taken place somewhat earlier (broadly, in the 1980s). So there is no evidence that in Scotland the cause of independence is being furthered by an increase in exclusive Scottish as opposed to British identities. In Wales, once more consistent evidence of substantial change in the post-devolution period is difficult to find, although there are some indications of a strengthening of Welsh identification relative to Britishness, and we have shown that this phenomenon is likely to contribute to demand for further autonomy. Although in some respects patterns of

national identities in Northern Ireland are the most stable of all four territories, showing little in the way of fluctuation from year to year, there is some evidence that the differential between British and Irish identifiers is narrowing somewhat. However, since Irish identifiers remain in the minority and are in any case somewhat divided over support for a united Ireland, even if this trend is sustained shifts in national identity in Northern Ireland seem unlikely to lead to that most radical of constitutional changes.

Overall then, we conclude that while national identities are not constitutionally significant in England, they are in the other three UK territories. In each of these, the association between identities and constitutional preferences cannot simply be interpreted as reflecting other political and social characteristics such as party support, linguistic status or religion. However, this significance is qualified in each case. In Scotland there is strong support for the constitutional status quo across all identity categories and there is little evidence of expansion of the group most likely to favour independence – those with an exclusive Scottish identity. In Northern Ireland maintenance of the status quo also seems the most likely immediate future. Despite some evidence of a modest increase in Irish as opposed to British identification, the radical constitutional option of Irish unification is not overwhelmingly supported even among the Irish group, who in any case remain a clear minority compared to those in other identity categories who are unlikely to support a united Ireland. In fact, although evidence of a shift towards stronger Welsh identification is somewhat ambiguous, if anything it is in Wales that national identities are most likely to have the most immediate constitutional import in that any continued trend towards more exclusively Welsh identities would contribute to demands for further political autonomy, most likely in the form of a legislative parliament.

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Appendix: survey questions on constitutional preference

England

With all the changes going on in the way the different parts of Great Britain are run, which of the following do you think would be best for England...

- ...for England to be governed as it is now, with laws made by the UK parliament,
- for each region of England to have its own elected assembly that makes decisions about the region's economy, planning and housing,
- or, for England as a whole to have its own new parliament with law-making powers?

Scotland

Which of these statements comes closest to your view?

- Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union
- Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union
- Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has **some** taxation powers
- Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has **no** taxation powers
- Scotland should remain part of the UK **without** an elected parliament

Wales

Which of these statements comes closest to your view?

- Wales should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union
- Wales should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union
- Wales should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has law-making **and** taxation powers
- Wales should remain part of the UK, with its own elected assembly which has limited law-making powers **only**
- Wales should remain part of the UK **without** an elected assembly

Northern Ireland

Which of these statements comes closest to your view?

- Northern Ireland should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union
- Northern Ireland should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union
- Northern Ireland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has law-making **and** taxation powers
- Northern Ireland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected assembly which has limited law-making powers **only**
- Northern Ireland should remain part of the UK without an elected assembly
- Northern Ireland should unify with the Republic of Ireland

Notes

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ⁱⁱ For a key critique of such perspectives see Brubaker & Cooper, 2000.

ⁱⁱⁱ Similar measures are routinely employed in other parts of the world, particularly in 'stateless nations' like Catalonia and Quebec (see e.g. McCrone, 2001: 161).

^{iv} The BSA, SSA and WLT are all conducted by the National Centre for Social Research, the largest independent social research institute in Britain (www.natcen.ac.uk). The NILT is conducted by ARK, a joint initiative between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster (www.ark.ac.uk/nilt). The data from all these surveys may be downloaded via the UK Data Archive (www.data-archive.ac.uk), with NILT data also available direct from ARK's web page.

^v Respondents are asked 'Please say which, if any, of the words on this card describes the way **you** think of **yourself**. Please choose as many or as few as apply'. The specified options are: British, English, European, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish, Ulster, Welsh. Respondents may also specify their own 'Other' identity.

^{vi} It should also be noted that 11% of respondents chose an Ulster identity, and are not represented in the table.

^{vii} Identities are exclusive only in that one but not the other of the identities shown in the table are chosen. The table does not take into consideration whether respondents chose another national identity in addition to those shown.

^{viii} In fact it is interesting that two-thirds of those who do choose a dual identity on the 2006 question describe their (best choice) national identity as 'Northern Irish', substantiating Trew's (1998) argument that a Northern Irish identity is notable in being one that is open to all sections of the community in Northern Ireland. In contrast only 1% and 4% of those whose best choice identity is British and Irish respectively choose a dual identity. Thus although the wording of the 2006 question used in Table 2 is somewhat novel, the results are highly correlated with more established measures of national identity.

^{ix} It should be noted that both these early studies pre-date the emergence of Sinn Fein as an additional electoral option for nationalists in Northern Ireland.

^x Party identification encapsulates those who explicitly support a particular party or at least feel closer to it than other parties. It is commonly used in preference to actual or intended party vote, not least because voting is subject to 'tactical' variation which might not reflect actual party identification. The left-right scale is based on respondents' level, of agreement (on a five point 'Likert' scale) with five or six of the following statements (the exact combination varies between surveys and the wording of some of the statements is also sometimes varied between positive and negative):

Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off

Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers

Ordinary working people [do not] get their fair share of the nation's wealth

There is one law for the rich and one for the poor

Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance

There is no need for strong trade unions to protect employees' working conditions and wages

Private enterprise is the best way to solve Britain's economic problems

Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership

It is the government's responsibility to provide a job for everyone who wants one

The scale can run from a minimum of 1 (for someone who agrees strongly with all the 'left wing' statements and/or disagrees strongly with all the 'right wing' statements) to a maximum of 5 (for someone who agrees strongly with all the 'right wing' statements and/or disagrees strongly with all the 'left wing' statements).

^{xi} This is one of a number of possible employment-based measures of social class used in the UK and is employed here because it is the most recently developed.

^{xii} Previous research which has explored the association between party identification, religion, language and national identities and/or constitutional preferences in the UK has been discussed above. For examples of work which examines the relationship between national identity and social class see Balsom 1985, Bennie et al 1997, Brown et al 1999, Heath & Kellas 1998 and McCrone 2001, and for

constitutional attitudes and class see SurrIDGE 2006. For national identity and position on the left-right scale see Brown et al 1999 and Rosie & Bond 2007, and for constitutional preference and left-right position see Rosie & Bond 2007. For national identity and age see Balsom 1985, Bennie et al 1997, Heath & Kellas 1998 and Wyn Jones & Trystan 1999, and for constitutional attitudes and age see Paterson et al 2001 and SurrIDGE 2006.

^{xiii} While logged odds in logistic regression are unbounded, when they are converted back into conventional odds ratios, those representing positive associations can take any value greater than 1 whereas those representing negative associations may only range between 0 and 1. However, comparing magnitudes is relatively straightforward: one may simply invert values less than 1 (so e.g., an odds ratio of 0.5 would be comparable in magnitude to an odds ratio of 2.0, because $1/0.5 = 2.0$).