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Devolution Briefings

Towards a multicultural nationalism? Anglophobia and Islamophobia in Scotland

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Key Points

- Contemporary Scottish nationalism claims to be civic rather than ethnic and the Scottish Parliament has stressed an equal rights agenda – but evidence from elsewhere suggests that minorities may still feel outsiders despite equal rights and civic welcome. Do Pakistani and English people in Scotland feel like outsiders, or is Scottish nationalism genuinely multicultural?
- Islamophobia is greater in England than Scotland, and more closely tied to English nationalism in England than to Scottish nationalism in Scotland.
- There is less Anglophobia than Islamophobia in Scotland, though not by much, and anti-minority phobias tend to run together
- Level of education has the clearest impact on minority phobias: the more highly educated are less phobic, and those with lower education levels are more phobic
- Having a strong Scottish identity has hardly any impact on Islamophobia, but a significant impact on Anglophobia.
- Over a quarter of the English and over half of the Pakistanis have experienced ethnic harassment in Scotland.
- Pakistanis find it easier to identify with Scotland than the English, partly because their identities are primarily cultural (Muslim) rather than territorial
- Scottish Pakistanis feel conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims is worse in England than Scotland, and have become more strongly bound to Scotland since 9/11 and the Iraq war.
- Progress towards a multicultural nationalism has been one of the most important achievements in Scotland in the post-devolution era

Introduction

Much of the debate about multiculturalism in Britain has focused on England and on its 'visible' minorities. Conversely, much of the debate about Scottish nationalism has focused on the tension between Scottish and British identities within the Scottish majority. We connect the two debates, and pay attention to 'invisible' as well as 'visible' minorities. That puts the English in the unaccustomed role of being a minority, indeed an '*immigrant*' minority, in Scotland.

We focus on the largest ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ minorities in Scotland: ethnic Pakistanis (highly visible, almost entirely Muslim, but less than one percent of the population) and the English-born (invisible, though not inaudible, and very much more numerous at over 8 percent – indeed 12 percent in Scotland are either English-born or have English-born partners).

Leading Scottish nationalists proclaim their commitment to a non-ethnic, inclusive and ‘civic’ rather than an exclusive, ‘ethnic’ concept of nationalism. And the Scottish Parliament has vigorously pursued an ‘equal-rights’ agenda but as Parekh points out: ‘one might enjoy all the rights of citizenship and be a formally equal member of the community, *and yet feel an outsider* who does not belong’ – something that depends upon the public as much as on the Parliament, and on ‘political symbols, images, ceremonies, collective self-understanding and views of national identity’ as much as on equal-rights legislation.

Have the politicians succeeded in their expressed aim to create a devolved Scotland that can combine nationalism with multiculturalism? There are two ways to find out: by investigating the experiences of minorities and the anti-minority phobias of the majority. We held 12 focus-group discussions followed by over 1500 interviews with minorities in Scotland, half with self-described ethnic Pakistanis, half with English immigrants. We also used the 2003 Scottish Social Attitudes survey to interview 1158 ‘majority Scots’ – defined as those who were not only born in Scotland, but are also non-Muslim and do not have English-born partners. (There is no point in asking minorities about their attitudes towards themselves.) And for comparative purposes, we used the 2003 British Social Attitudes survey to interview 830 similarly-defined ‘majority English’ in England.

Comparing Islamophobia in Scotland and England

We measured the Islamophobia of majority-Scots and of majority-English (in England) by taking the average percentage who give Islamophobic answers across five questions: about economic resentment, nationalist distrust (two questions), fears for national identity, and social exclusion. By that measure, Islamophobia is not only significantly greater in England than in Scotland (averaging 63 percent compared to 49 percent), it is also far more closely tied to English nationalism within England, than to Scottish nationalism within Scotland.

Comparing two anti-minority phobias in Scotland: Islamophobia and Anglophobia

The weakness of Islamophobia in Scotland is offset by Anglophobia however. Using strictly comparable measures, a comparison of the two suggests:

- ***Lesser Anglophobia:*** Amongst majority Scots, Anglophobia runs at a lower level than Islamophobia – averaging 38 percent compared to 49 percent.
- ***But not much less:*** The difference between Islamophobia in Scotland and England (14%) is greater than the difference between the levels of Anglophobia and Islamophobia within Scotland (11%).

The difference between Anglophobia and Islamophobia in Scotland varies sharply across our five indicators. There is a large difference on *social exclusion*: few (only 5 percent) ‘would

feel unhappy if a close relative married or formed a long-term relationship with an English person now living in Scotland’ but far more (32 percent) if the relationship was ‘with a Muslim’. But there is less difference on *economic resentment* and on *fears for national identity* (‘if more Muslims or English came to Scotland’). And ‘majority Scots’ do *not* draw any great distinction between the loyalty of English immigrants and Muslims to Scotland – they doubt both.

- ***To some extent anti-minority phobias go together:*** personal contacts with the minority, youth, and most of all, high education, reduces both Anglophobia and Islamophobia.
- ***But other factors differentiate between the phobias:*** religiosity (usually Christian amongst majority Scots of course) has more impact on Islamophobia. Conversely, Scottish nationalism – with either a small ‘n’ or a capital ‘N’ has more impact on Anglophobia – indeed it has hardly any impact on Islamophobia in Scotland. (In very sharp contrast to England, where English nationalism has a large impact on Islamophobia.)

We can usefully summarise our findings on comparative phobias in Scotland by means of a multivariate analysis. To do this we used our indicators to construct composite scales of Anglophobia and Islamophobia, then used multiple regression to see which factors – like age, education, national identity and so on – explain phobias best (see the Annex at the end of this briefing for more information). The findings are in Table One.

Table One: A multivariate analysis of Islamophobia and Anglophobia in Scotland

	Islamophobia	Anglophobia
RSQ (x 100) =	15	17
	Beta (x 100)	Beta (x 100)
Higher education	-26	-25
Not religious	-13	*
Knows little or nothing about Muslims	11	10
Has a Muslim friend	-10	*
Strong/exclusive Scottish identity	*	17
Has an English friend	*	-13

* blank entries, and all variables missing from the table indicate that the beta coefficient was less than 0.10; so the independent and additional impact of such variables is small (if any at all) and relatively unimportant; all beta coefficients displayed in the table are not only large enough to be politically significant, they are also statistically significant at better than the tough one percent error level.

The multiple regressions confirm that the most important influence on both phobias is education: those with higher levels of education are less likely to be Islamophobic or Anglophobic (as indicated by the large negative figures against higher education in Table One). And some factors that correlate with these phobias do not exert a truly independent influence. But even taking the major impact of education into account, some of the other factors have their own independent and additional impact.

Islamophobia is greater (with positive numbers in Table One) amongst those who know little or nothing about Islam. It is lower amongst those who have a Muslim friend, and amongst those who are irreligious. But most significant is the factor that does *not* exert any substantial impact: Scottish nationalism. This is, in Sherlock Holmes famous phrase, the very significant ‘dog that did not bark’.

By contrast Scottish identity comes close to rivalling low levels of education as an influence towards Anglophobia. Beyond that, having an English friend reduces Anglophobia by about as much as having a Muslim friend reduces Islamophobia. And lack of knowledge about Islam probably indicates a broader rejection of the 'other', for it has as much impact on Anglophobia as on Islamophobia.

Regression is better at demolishing plausible hypotheses than generating them. In addition to showing that Scottish identity has no important impact on Islamophobia, it also shows (by their absence from the table) that age and generation do *not* have an independent impact once education, personal contacts, and Scottish identity have been taken into account. And nor does political nationalism, once Scottish identity has been taken into account.

So: is Scottish nationalism, unlike English nationalism, 'benign' rather than 'nasty' as so many writers suggest? Towards Muslims our answer must be an unequivocal 'yes'. But towards English immigrants perhaps not. Scottish nationalism, unlike English nationalism, does not make people significantly more Islamophobic. But at street level (though not at SNP leadership level) it does make them more Anglophobic.

Minority attitudes

Civic nationalism has been described as 'inclusive in the sense that anyone can adopt the culture and join the nation'. But one minority – Pakistanis - is unwilling to 'adopt the culture' and the other – the English - is (psychologically) unable to 'join the nation'. Despite that, both feel 'at ease' in post-devolution Scotland.

- *Suspect loyalty*: Both minorities are overwhelmingly (and rightly) convinced that 'most Scots' think they will always be more loyal to their own ethnic group than to Scotland.
- *Harassment*: Over a quarter of the English and over half the Pakistanis have experienced ethnic harassment. Five times as many Pakistanis as English have been 'hurt' by ethnic jokes and ten times as many 'frightened' by ethnic insults. But both attribute discrimination, harassment and abuse almost entirely to the faults of 'ordinary people' rather than government.
- *Culture and Identity*: Though the English immigrants are remarkably willing to accept Scotland as it is and respect its traditions they find it exceedingly difficult to identify with it because their identities are primarily territorial. They remain forever 'sympathetic outsiders'. Conversely, Pakistanis find it very easy to identify with Scotland – partly because their identities are primarily cultural (Muslim) rather than territorial.
- *Scottish Nationalism*: Insofar as there is any territorial dimension to Pakistani identities however, they are Scottish rather than British. And by 2003 (because of the Iraq War) they were over twice as likely to vote for the SNP (which opposed the War) as the average Scot. Ironically, 9/11 and the Iraq war have bound ethnic Pakistanis more closely to Scotland.
- *A (relatively) safe haven*: Despite their experiences of harassment, both minorities feel 'at ease' with living in Scotland – and, they say, rather more so since devolution. Almost all the English have 'close' friends who are not English, and three-quarters of Pakistanis have 'close' friends who are 'neither Pakistani nor Muslim'. Few of the English (only 16 percent) see conflict between Scots and English as even 'fairly

serious'. Far more Pakistanis (39 percent) see a 'fairly serious' conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in Scotland. But they rate it as rather less serious than Catholic/Protestant conflict in Scotland. Far more important: over five times as many Scottish Pakistanis see a 'very serious' conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims 'in England' as in Scotland; and over twice as many see 'very serious' conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims 'across the world' as 'in England'. Focus group discussions suggest ethnic minorities feel much safer living in Scotland after 9/11 – despite increased harassment – than they would feel anywhere else.

Conclusion

Devolution has not increased the tensions between the minorities and the majority in Scotland. Indeed it has reduced them, if only slightly. And while 9/11 increasing the harassment of Muslims, it (plus the subsequent invasion of Iraq) has bound them more strongly to Scotland than ever before. Devolution and the Scottish Parliament have many critics and some spectacular failures. But progress towards a multicultural nationalism has been one of its modest and unspectacular but extremely important achievements.

Annex: A multivariate analysis of comparative phobias

For our multivariate analysis we constructed five-point scales for each of the elements of our indices of Islamophobia and Anglophobia. Numerical values running from minus two to plus two were assigned to each scale, with plus two being the most phobic. Those with mixed opinions, or no opinion were placed at zero, the centre-point of the scale. By averaging across the five questions we get composite Islamophobic and Anglophobic scales that run from minus two to plus two.

Correlations between the components of each composite scale proved to be uniformly high. The individual items contributing to the Islamophobia scale correlate on average at over 0.70 with the composite Islamophobia scale; and items contributing to the Anglophobia scale correlate on average at over 0.64 with the composite Anglophobia scale.

More interestingly, the two composite scales correlate at 0.65 with each other: individuals who are relatively Islamophobic are likely to be relatively Anglophobic as well. Nonetheless they do not correlate perfectly: there are differences as well as similarities between the incidence of the two phobias.

We use multiple regression to see which factors explain phobias best, and which are redundant once more powerful explanations are taken into account. To do this we predict levels of Islamophobia and Anglophobia from the following, all of which correlate with phobias when assessed by themselves:

- (1) age both as a seven-point scale from young to old; and as a dichotomous 'generation marker', contrasting those above and below age 55.
- (2) education as a three point scale distinguishing university-level education; those with higher school qualifications or higher education below university degree level; and those with lower school qualifications (or none).

- (3) minority contacts measured by three variables: a four point scale of knowledge about Muslims; and two indicators of whether or not the respondent had a Muslim friend and/or an English friend.
- (4) religion measured by three separate indicators of whether the respondent was or was not Presbyterian, Catholic, or irreligious.
- (5) national identity measured by the five-point Moreno scale that runs from exclusively Scottish through 'both Scottish and British' to exclusively British.
- (6) political nationalism measured by four separate indicators of whether or not the respondent voted Conservative, Labour or SNP in 2001 or abstained.

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