

The Narcissism of National Solipsism: Civic Nationalism and Sub-State Formation Processes in Scotland [1] [#N1]

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Abstract: *This paper accounts for the lengthy emergence of sub-state nationalism in Scotland by locating it within British state formation processes. A spiral process of compromise and challenge characterises Scotland’s constantly evolving position within the United Kingdom. Despite the legalistic dilemmas that each challenge poses, the fissiparous process of sub-state remaking is rarely about ‘the constitution’ so much as shifts in the We–I balance expressed by deeply contested political and moral differences between formally equal but distinct partners of the ‘union state’. Relieved of direct responsibility for the organised violence of great power politics, and notwithstanding the formative role of Scots in managing the British empire, a charismatic Scottish we-ideal claims for itself the peaceful, humanist and egalitarian virtues of civic nationalism in contrast to the perfidious Machiavellianism at the heart of UK state power.*

Keywords: national habitus; sub-state formation processes; power tension balances; survival units; Scotland

Introduction

The 2014 referendum to decide on the creation of a Scottish state ‘independent’ of the UK state was a vibrant, disputatious, but overwhelmingly peaceful affair. Mass participation in the referendum process in Scotland flowed through long-established channels of non-violent contention, protest and mobilisation. Nonetheless, much commentary about the referendum emphasised that it traumatically ‘divided’ the nation. It was described by the leader of the Scottish Conservatives Ruth Davidson as a ‘wound’ that would need time to heal, but which sub-state nationalism constantly re-opens. Following the UK-wide EU referendum of June 2016, Davidson further warned that a second Scottish Independence referendum would result in ‘another fratricidal conflict’ (Anon. 2017a). In early 2017, a senior Cabinet official, Philip Rycroft, Head of the UK Governance Group formed to bolster the UK constitution, claimed that ‘abuse and intimidation’ and ‘direct or veiled threats of violence, is a feature of the contemporary political climate in Scotland’ (O’Hare 2017).

A related fear persists that sub-state nationalism in Scotland is part of the same species of dangerous established–outsider divisions as violent racism and ethnic bigotry. As the London mayor Sadiq Khan told the Scottish Labour Party: ‘There’s no difference between those who try to divide us on the basis of whether we’re English or Scottish and those who try to divide us on the basis of our background, race or religion’ (Anon. 2017b). Here the unifying integral nationalism of Britain as an established state-society forms the banal, taken-for-granted point zero for negatively comparing the ‘us’ and ‘them’ of Scottish sub-state nationalism to

the 'us' and 'them' of xenophobia, racism and religious intolerance (Billig 1995). Sub-state nationalism, it is claimed, incubates the same violent processes of inter-group division as racism while the established state nationalism of the United Kingdom represents a largely benign source of human integration and differentiation.

Indeed, civilising processes leading to greater collective and individual constraints are more or less indivisible across England and Scotland. As measured by social attitude surveys, social and political 'values' in Scotland differ little from those in England. Scots appear to be slightly more liberal in some respects and slightly more authoritarian in others, and slightly more social democratic politically (Curtice and Ormston 2012; Henderson 2014). For instance, while homosexuality was partially decriminalised in England in 1967 it remained illegal in Scotland until 1980 on the pretext that it was not so viciously criminalised as in England (Meek 2015). Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, supported by powerful religious and business interests in Scotland, prohibited schools from openly discussing homosexual relationships until the Act was repealed in 2000 by the first Scottish parliament, slightly earlier than the repeal across the rest of the UK in 2003.

Against alarmist rhetoric about intemperate divisiveness, the dominant self-image of nationalism in Scotland is one of 'civic' values rather than an 'ethnic' mythos (Bechhofer and McCrone 2015). Sub-state nationalism in contemporary Scotland generally takes a moderate civic form rather than a militant essentialist one. Humanist morality weighs heavily in the charismatic 'we-ideal' of a Scottish national habitus unspoiled by problems of inter-state power politics of warfare, borders, immigration and international relations. In this narrative of civic as opposed to ethnic nationalism, Scotland retained its autonomous institutions of 'civil society' – law, education, religion – long after the Acts of Union of 1707 between England and Scotland dissolved the separate national parliaments (Paterson 1994; McCrone 1992). These intermediate institutions incubated an 'extra-political' national identity for Scotland as an equal partner in the British state formation process.

In contrast to contemporary British state nationalism, the we-ideal of sub-state nationalism in Scotland appears especially charismatic, 'benign' and 'progressive', promoting, as one commentator put it, 'civic values of internationalism and social justice' and 'enlightened political leadership' (Macwhirter 2016: 37). For example, to counter 'baseless' media speculations of impending political disorder, the Scottish Police Federation (2014) felt compelled to issue a statement close to the vote that appealed to the democratic charisma of the Scottish nation:

Any neutral observer could be led to believe Scotland is on the verge of societal disintegration yet nothing could be further from the truth. Scotland's citizens are overwhelmingly law abiding and tolerant and it is preposterous to imply that by placing a cross in a box, our citizens will suddenly abandon the personal virtues and values held dear to them all.

Far from political malevolence the referendum struck Staffan de Mistura, UN Special Envoy to Syria, as a 'unique non-violent constitutional and democratic journey' in comparison to the brutal violence of the civil war in Syria (Freeman 2016).

The most recent phase of group charisma emerged in the 1960s when a national-popular egalitarian We-ideal of Scotland began to be opposed to a They-image of elitist, self-interested Tory England. Until the 1990s, the pragmatism of the UK state absorbed or ignored recurring challenges of sub-state nationalism until New Labour conceded to demands for a referendum in 1997 to establish a Scottish parliament. Yet, once formed, the Scottish parliament itself came under challenge almost immediately, amidst claims that it was captured by

a self-reinforcing elite figuration of state managers, media commentators and self-interested parties (Schlesinger, Miller and Dinan 2001; Hassan 2014).

Contested state boundaries in the UK did not emerge as a *deus ex machina* with the 2014 referendum. They form part of a long run process of radical challenge and state compromise, a process that defies both British and Scottish pretensions to an absolute concept of state sovereignty (Paterson 2015). That the Acts and Treaty of Union enabled certain pre-union institutions in Scotland to survive as relatively autonomous units represents a problem for state nomenclature. ‘Great Britain’ refers only to England, Scotland and Wales, although Northern Irish Unionists see themselves as British. ‘United Kingdom’ strictly defined refers to Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In what follows I refer to Britain as a state-society, the UK more narrowly as a territorial state, and Scotland as a sub-state nation.

This paper accounts for the lengthy emergence of sub-state nationalism in Scotland by locating it within British state-formation processes. Relieved of direct responsibility for the organised violence of great power politics, and notwithstanding the formative role of Scots in managing the British empire, a charismatic Scottish We-ideal claims for itself the peaceful, humanist and egalitarian virtues of civic nationalism in contrast to the They-images of the perfidious Machiavellianism at the heart of UK state power.

Civil society and state-society

It is often claimed that Scotland is best described as a ‘stateless nation’ (McCrone 1992). In contrast Britain is classified as a nation-less ‘state identity’ founded on the formal paraphernalia of citizenship (Bechhofer and McCrone 2015). In this conception, Britain can only ever be a ‘state’ never a ‘nation’. While they mutually impinge on each other, the concepts of state and nation form a binary opposition. ‘State identity’ and citizenship are fixed, objective and formalised while national identity is a fluid, variable and subtle discursive process of subjective meaning and claim-making. Inspired by the perspectives of symbolic interactionism, especially Erving Goffman, social identity sociologists concentrate on the performative and presentational aspects of national claim-making.

As a special case of collective claim-making, national identity cannot be defined analytically *a priori*, ‘as if it had an “objective” character outwith and superior to the meanings implied by social actors’ (Bechhofer and McCrone 2015: 26). National identity is dependent on interpersonal situational context, state identity on impersonal bureaucratic structures. British state identity and Scottish national identity therefore take the form of radically different categories of identity. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, sociologists are required to adopt a nativist definition of the situation. Since the state–nation dualism is ‘common currency north of the border [i.e. in Scotland]’ traditional binary thinking must also be taken for granted by sociologists (Bechhofer and McCrone 2015: 23). On one side, the objective macro-structures of statehood; on the other side, subjectively situated micro-meanings of national identity. Non-state publics form nations.

At an earlier stage in the development of sociology during the Scottish Enlightenment, the state was often conceived of as an extra-social institution while civil society was regarded as an extra-political spontaneous order. As famously stated by Adam Ferguson (1995 [1767]: 187), ‘nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design’. Like Elias, Ferguson (1792: 18) was thinking in terms of unplanned relational processes and tension balances, rather than static juridical structures: ‘This order of things consists of movements, which, in a state of counteraction and apparent disturbance, mutually regulate and balance one another’ (cf. Bogner 1986). In eighteenth-century Scotland, civil society was valorised by an ascending middle class held at arm’s length from the upper class monopoly of state power.

For Elias (2010: 213–14), this rigid separation of state and civil society had an important, if confused, legacy for sociology. Positively, the concept of civil society opened up for understanding extra-state domains as apparently autonomous social processes. Negatively, it also obscured the state-formation process as forming a distinctive part of that social process. On the other hand, Ferguson (1995 [1767]: 24), in particular, understood the established–outsider nature of the relationship between inter-state tensions and civil society cohesion: ‘Without the rivalry of nations, and the practice of war, civil society itself would scarcely have found an object, or a form’. Civil society cannot be conceived in terms of a self-enclosed world of consensual civic nationalism. After all, as Ferguson (1995 [1767]: 24) noted ‘he who has never struggled with his fellow-creatures is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind’.

Persistent tensions between identification and dis-identification processes enable emotional boundaries to be experienced as threats to group survival that call for the organisation of mutual defence (Kaspersen and Gabriel 2008). In agrarian societies, mutual defence was organised on the basis of physical proximity by village kinship communities, gradually expanding in scale through dynastic rule, religious orders, and military solidarity (Linklater 2016). Today, states play the role of survival units mediating these tensions at different scales of integration, from large imperial states to micro-states. Propelled by crisis conditions, the broadest scale of state integration can rapidly give way to much smaller units on a more fragmented scale, as when multinational states like Austro-Hungary fell prey to ‘the struggle of the nationalities’ in 1918 or the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1989 (Judson 2016). Such tensions of scale and uneven temporalities currently beset the European Union. In the case of the United Kingdom this process has stretched over an even longer period. Relatively short-run political events such as referendums, elections and extra-parliamentary movements expose the longer-term stresses and strains of Britain as a state-society.

National habitus and group charisma

Social processes do not depend on invariant categories – state or nation – that only become salient when demanded by situational dynamics. All supposedly micro-situations at all times depend on, and are made possible by, supposedly macro-structures. It makes little sense to rigidly separate them as analytical categories and to privilege either macro-structures (state) or micro-situations (nation) when they always form part of the selfsame historical process. Properties of meaning do not emerge as a salient effect of the situation itself. They belong to a symbolic universe that precedes face-to-face interaction, itself made possible by long-run historical processes. While personal habitus is confined to the life course of a biological individual, nations transcend generations. Individuals die while the nation lives on.

The explanatory advantage of ‘national habitus’ is evident here. The concept of ‘national habitus’ helps situate the process of nation formation within changing power-balances and social interdependencies over time (Kuipers 2013; Le Hir 2014). As Elias (2010: 164) argued, nations are ‘a habitus problem *par excellence*’. Each national habitus imposes contradictory emotional demands on individuals and groups caught between what Anderson (1983: 7) called the non-violent egalitarianism of ‘horizontal solidarity’ and violent power rivalries with outsider groups. This grants the national habitus a large degree of flexibility between the extreme ends of the peaceful insider–violent outsider axis. Much of the time, daily routines impose high levels of self-restraint on the national habitus of familiar habits of mundane symbols and practices (Billig 1995). At other times, when collective fears and anxieties are aroused by tensions, crisis and inter-group conflict, the unremarkable drift of the banal national habitus shifts gear and arbitrary differences are intensified to an emotionally gratifying pitch.

In one sense, habitus, like identity, has become a ubiquitous term in sociology, acting as a kind of shorthand for the operation of largely unplanned structural constraints and long-run historical processes on the cognitive and affective sense-making practices of persons and groups. For Bourdieu and Elias, the dispositions and schemas of habitus depend on a largely unreflexive second nature of accumulated history buried deep within individual and group structures. The buried historical residues of habitus are not so self-evident or well understood by actors themselves in the way that 'identity' is often assumed to be. Individuals bear within their personal habitus a collective habitus formed by identification processes of multiple, interlocking units, ranging from the most intimate dyad to all-embracing humanity (Mennell 1994). Multi-layered, biographical variations of this collective habitus, the We-identity, come to be individualised as an I-identity in the process of personality formation. Long established and more recent group identification processes – family, neighbours, friends, workmates, leisure circles, through to wider associations of class, nation, religion, ethnicity, and humanity itself – are held in tensions of varying intensity with each other and with the widening or narrowing scales of group integration.

As interdependencies among strangers became more complex, opaque and elusive, the impersonal symbolic ideal of the nation took on a numinous existence beyond the individuals included and excluded from its sacred canopy. 'Societies may differ with regard to the beliefs and ideals which guide their ruling elites in their intra-state politics; but they all have in common the nationalisation of ethos and sentiment, of we-attachment and we-image of most of the individuals who form them' (Elias 2013: 168). Survival of the national unit assumed a higher human value than the survival of single individuals. Prohibited for individuals, organised violence is permitted in defence of the essential value of the national We-ideal.

Democratisation processes make a national habitus possible. Lubricated by print and broadcast media, democratisation processes reduced the social barriers between groups and made possible the routinised horizontal relations of solidarity between anonymous strangers symbolised by the nation (Anderson 1983). This is not primarily a relationship based on 'identity' as an inner psychological condition, where the individual and the nation appear as two entities separated in space that are only later brought together by integrative 'norms'. In modernity, the individual habitus is always at the same time a national habitus. Individuals subordinate their needs and even their lives to an emotional reflex of unquestioning collective solidarity to the state-society.

Established groups claim for themselves superior qualities and a special grace in contrast to the inferior qualities and disgrace attributed to outsider groups (Elias and Scotston 2008). This can become a mutually reinforcing, escalating process of indisputable self-praise of and by the nation as a charismatic group. Group charisma and group disgrace are not static or absolute attributes given for all time. As individuals become more and more like each other through processes of large-scale social integration, group distinctions and differences from other groups are magnified and valorised. What Freud (1985[1930]: 305) famously called the 'narcissism of minor differences' refers to the process of strengthening group cohesion by gratuitous separation through ridicule and aversion from a closely related but outsider group to produce ambivalent feelings of 'relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression'. One of Freud's 'relatively harmless' examples from the 1920s was the mutual disparagement between the English and the Scots.

We-identity manifests itself as 'public opinion' on the assumption that a national consensus exists beyond the state's reach on how problems and issues are defined symbolically. Variations and deviations are uncovered by aggregating individuals offering isolated opinions on questions abstracted from power relations between groups. Dispositions of national habitus are thereby reduced to what Bourdieu (1993: 151) called the 'consensus effect' of public opinion as a discourse that demands prior coherence and competence. Such a 'consensus effect' was evident in the now vanished world of national newspapers, typically published in

London but read widely throughout post-war Britain, that produced what Elias (2008b: 218) claimed was an 'extraordinary uniformity of interest in the whole island'.

The 'diminishing contrasts' of social integration and 'increasing varieties' of differentiation are two sides of an unplanned process where 'relatively harmless' national ambivalences can mutate into more dangerous national essences (Elias 2012: 422–7). Clearly, civic virtue and ethnic essentialism are extreme poles between which the national habitus can travel. Yet, in the absence of popular anxieties aroused by crisis conditions or perceived threats represented by 'outsiders', in Scotland the national habitus has, thus far, followed a path-dependent tendency towards deeper integration. Contrary to elite perceptions, the referendum process did not lead to dangerous levels of inter-group aggression (Geoghegan 2015). Despite the heightened rhetoric between politicians and journalists in Edinburgh and London, inter-group ambivalences generally restrained, rather than intensified, anti-English and anti-Scottish feeling in both countries.

Sub-state nationalism in Scotland has undergone a lengthy process of 'de-racialisation'. A more restrained political process drained racial discourse from the public sphere, alleviated by the relative muting of the toxic discourse of immigration in Scotland in contrast to England (Virdee *et al.* 2006; Hussain and Miller 2006). Traditional Anglophobic prejudices of sub-state nationalism are also in decline. For instance, an analysis of the Scottish National Party's election manifestoes shows that traditional anti-English polemics began to give way in the 1980s to more specific critique of Conservative Party policies (Leith 2008). More recently, the official response of the Scottish government to Brexit emphasised the special charisma of Scotland as a humanist European nation, defined by 'its desire for peace and justice, firm in its cultural, environmental, social and economic ambition, and inspired by a generous vision of our obligations to fellow human beings and to the world' (Scottish Government 2016: 18). As further evidence of the charismatic we-ideal, the Scottish government appealed to the national genius of Scots for education, science and technology, boasting examples of 'Scottish' inventions and discoveries, including the steam engine, refrigerator, telephone, television, pneumatic tyre, penicillin, bicycle, mammal cloning, and the Higgs Boson particle.

Changing power balances

Unlike in dynastic societies, in societies increasingly shaped by functional democratisation and dense webs of interdependency party elites are unable to ignore the governed. And unlike absolutist monarchs, party elites issue regular appeals to the ruled that the central duty of every party is to secure the survival of the nation. Across Europe, as local middle-class elites became national ruling classes, humanist values metamorphosed increasingly into nationalist ones. Elias (2013: 169) identified what he called the self-contradictory 'duality of normative codes within the nation-state':

[On the one hand,] a moral code descended from that of rising sections of the *tiers état*, egalitarian in character, and whose highest value is 'man' – the human individual as such; and [on the other hand,] a nationalist code descended from the Machiavellian code of princes and ruling aristocracies, inegalitarian in character, and whose highest value is a collectivity – the state, the country, the nation to which an individual belongs.

Inter-state rivalries, therefore, appeared to be more decisive for the formation of the national habitus than intra-state tensions. Nationalism emerged from the need of rival state-societies to secure their own survival and power in an inter-state system pregnant with mutual suspicions and fears of rival means of organised

violence. Power politics no longer depended on the person of the prince but on the symbolic unity of the nation.

On becoming the ruling elites of the state, the middle class subordinated the humanist we-image in their dealings with rival states. As ruling elites, they came under the pressure of mutual fears and suspicions and adopted the expediencies, deceptions, hypocrisy, diplomacy and violence of the Machiavellian tradition of unrestrained self-interest that characterised dynastic regimes. Yet the Machiavellian tradition depended on an aristocratic code of conduct that transcended state boundaries, stronger than any 'we-feeling' of social solidarity with the lower classes of their own country. For dynastic elites, as Elias put it, 'attachment to their own state did not yet have the character of an attachment to their own nation' (2013: 157). In contrast, bourgeois state elites operate within a contradictory humanist–nationalist code of conduct. On one side, the fundamental equality of individuals represents the highest human ideal while, on the other side, the collective self-interest of the nation as a sovereign state-society subject to no external superordinate power is solidified as an absolute value.

Contradictions between the Machiavellian power politics of armed *inter-state* relations and the humanist morality of non-violent *intra-state* relations produced a charismatic we-ideal of the moral British nation. This also meant for Elias that the nationalisation of morality in Britain lagged behind states dominated by the Machiavellian code where criticism of the state was denounced as unpatriotic or worse. In contrast to narcissistic nationalism, as Kidd (1996: 374) argues, the Scottish Enlightenment induced

a revolt against the vulgar errors of national solipsism: at this level it is particularly inappropriate to classify North Britishness as a manifestation of a national identity. The sociologists of the Scottish Enlightenment deconstructed at an abstract level the whole phenomenon of patriotism.

For Elias (2013: 455) state nationalism only emerged in Britain as an incontrovertible human value a century later with the Boer War. Although earlier wars with France helped establish a liberal-protestant form of Great British nationalism (Colley 1992), the inter-state threats and tensions of imperialist crisis founded a new type of racialised military patriotism, 'jingoism'.

Fuelled by imperialism, racism and social Darwinism, that orientation [patriotic militarism] celebrated the "pleasures of war" while reinventing notions of chivalry in defence of the thesis that force was indefensible unless it promoted a just and honourable national cause (Linklater 2016: 327).

At the same time, however, a sustained internal humanist challenge was mounted by positivists, liberals and socialists to the morality of imperialist conquest and racism as a source of collective shame (Claeys 2010).

Formerly, the humanist ideal of 'progress' orientated non-ruling middle-class elites on the future as an unfolding process. By contrast, the nationalist idealisation of the state fixated ruling elites on a we-image of the nation's glorious and immutable past. In contrast to German idealisations of an exalted past far removed from sordid present-day realities, in Britain the past appeared to form part of a long chain of tradition that merged seamlessly with the imperfect present (Elias 2013: 248). A more even power balance and feelings of increased security between hostile ruling factions helped galvanise the 'civilising spurt' in Britain.

What had resulted in England from the more violent period of social conflicts [in the seventeenth century] was a moderately unstable tension-equilibrium between several competing ruling groups, none of which was any longer willing, or appeared strong enough, to challenge the combined forces of the others by a direct test of physical strength (Elias, in Elias and Dunning 2008: 170).

Attempts to establish an absolutist regime in Britain ended with the final defeat and brutal repression of the final Jacobite rebellion in 1746. Civilising spurts are not necessarily free of state violence.

Developments in eighteenth-century Scotland were part of the wider process of the rise of the bourgeoisie across Europe. Alongside what Colin Kidd (1996: 366) called their ‘remorseless deconstruction of national myths, including those of both England and Scotland’, the principal protagonists of the Scottish Enlightenment – David Hume, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, William Robertson, Lord Kames, John Millar, Thomas Reid – adopted a flattering we-ideal of themselves as moderate North Britons. Elias (2013: 136) notes that, besides the Voltaire circle in France, Scottish historians, most notably William Robertson exercised ‘a formative influence on the ideas of the rising German intelligentsia’. Elias, like Marx before him, put this down to the fact that German thinkers proved even more idealistic as a function of their relative isolation from the centres of power in a relatively underdeveloped country. Instead of the value placed on political history in France and Britain, German middle-class elites either retreated behind non-political ‘humanist’ values or glorified the authoritarian state, perpetuating the duality of the normative codes.

Realist and pragmatic thought that resonated in the context of Scotland and elsewhere had little currency in the absence of a vibrant bourgeois civil society. While Robertson and philosopher-historians like David Hume exerted some kind of intellectual attraction, the work of other luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as Thomas Reid’s common-sense philosophy, influential in post-revolutionary France and America, fell on stony ground in the German lands. In the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783) Kant notoriously misunderstood the critique of Hume mounted by Scottish common-sense philosophy (a misnomer in Kant’s view) as ‘an appeal to the opinion of the multitude, of whose applause the philosopher is ashamed, while the popular charlatan glories and confides in it’ (Kant 1783: 4). Common-sense philosophy offered little for an abstract German rationalism attuned to ‘polities with weak middling classes and entrenched hierarchies and lacking republican institutions and a common public sphere of social and political interaction’ (Redekop 2004: 335).

Eighteenth-century Scottish intellectuals faced a radically different social situation. Crucially, the union state, a bourgeois civil society and accelerating socio-economic development eroded the appeal of philosophical idealism and fostered a greater sense of historical realism and political pragmatism among the Scottish literati. Worried about ‘the ruinous progress of empire’, Adam Ferguson (1995 [1767]: 61) identified an underlying compulsion for smaller nations to unite with larger neighbours to create more powerful survival units like Great Britain:

Where a number of states are contiguous, they shall be near an equality, in order that they may be mutually objects of respect and consideration, and in order that they may possess that independence in which the political life of a nation consists.

Indeed, the term ‘Great Britain’ was minted to refer less to the inherent value of a unified nation than to the new sense of the enlarged state formed by the Union of Crowns in 1603 under James VI of Scotland on becoming James I of Great Britain (Levack 1987).

Ferguson (1995 [1767]: 63) allowed that any survival unit had to strike a balance between conflict and peace, between ‘the agitations of free people’ and ‘calming the worst of their passions’, with different forms of government ‘to suit the extent, the way of subsistence, the character, and the manners of different nations’. For Ferguson, a specifically British collective habitus was forged by the daily habits of national intimacy, described by Elias (2008c: 238–9) as ‘a deep and secure feeling of mutual trust, of belonging together and of simply belonging’ founded on an ‘unshaken certainty about the value of themselves and their own nation.’ For Elias (2008c: 234) the bourgeois habitus was shaped increasingly by the easing of external threats to a specifically ‘British way of life’, characterised as a tacit, practical and moral ‘ritual of social friendliness’ and polite manners, in contrast to the more formalised, impersonal objects of serious collective self-worship in more insecure national we-ideals such as Germany. Indirect, coded and evasive turns of phrase and an ironic, self-deprecating sense of humour, learned across generations, appear to British people as well-mannered and decent, but may be viewed by other nations as superficial, duplicitous or dishonest.

Tensions of group fusion and group survival

National we-images rely on an emotionally compensating ideal of nationhood that somehow remains continually present both across the generations and in the dense social integration of state-societies. However, the intrinsic value of a collective habitus can also change. It can rise, as in the case of a formerly understated Scottish habitus, and it can decline, as in the case of the once hegemonic Anglo-Scottish habitus. The process of state-society formation – with its reciprocal interdependencies, nation-building, mass parties and development of more equal power chances – is fraught with centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. Increased functional interdependencies between human groups engender structural tensions and conflicts that may or may not remain unmanageable.

For if two groups become more, or more reciprocally, interdependent than they were before, each of them has reason to fear that it may be dominated, or even annihilated, by the other. The struggle may result after many tests of strength in a fusion. It may result in the complete disappearance of one of them in the new unit emerging from their struggles (Elias 2008a: 111–2).

Such a dynamic tension balance between national ‘fusion’ and national ‘annihilation’ expresses something of the pattern of sub-state nationalism in Scotland. In the case of the formation of the union state, it was, in part, a response to elite fears of external domination following the fiscal catastrophe of the failed attempt by Scottish nobility to establish itself as an imperial power with the doomed project to establish a colony at Darien on the Panamanian Isthmus in the 1690s (Watt 2007). A weak and relatively poor Scottish state was unable to resist the pressures of wider European power politics, leaving the Darien colony exposed to the forces of the Spanish Empire, as well as to disease and organisational disintegration. Financial losses from the Darien scheme suffered by political elites were compensated by the ‘Equivalent’ – £398,085 10s – negotiated as part of the Acts of Union to finance state debts (Whatley 2006: 254).

Elias tends to gloss over the tension balances between competing sub-state groups within the UK and tends to reproduce the we-ideals of elite English hegemony (Fletcher 1997: 105–6). Building on the central role that Elias (2012) gave to the state-formation process for habitus formation, Kuzmics and Axtmann (2007: 7) argue that ‘since the English influence on the British state-formation process was preponderant since at least the time of the union with Scotland (1707), it is legitimate to argue that English state character constitutes the “national character”’. Sovereignty in the UK is similarly argued to rest with the ‘unitary’ character of the state,

that is, as a centralised apparatus that rules through uniform controls. In this approach, the Union is understood not as a union state but as an ‘incorporating state’ where the Scottish parliament was discontinued and incorporated into an extended but essentially English parliament.

Yet the civilising process in Scotland cannot be subsumed *tout court* under an ‘English’ state-formation process or an English national habitus. Characterising Britain in terms of an ‘English state character’ evades the historical character of the union state: the English Act of Union of 1706–1707 did not simply merge the Parliament of Scotland into the Parliament of England. Both Parliaments were abolished and replaced with a new Parliament of Great Britain housed in the Palace of Westminster, traditional home of the English Parliament. Union did not lead to the complete disappearance of distinctively Scottish institutions in a new survival unit, but neither did it leave untouched the traditional distribution of power chances in England. As a ‘fused’ survival unit, British state-society produced opportunities for greater functional interdependencies in an expanding common market and empire as well as allowing for semi-autonomous Scottish institutions (Paterson 1994).

Sub-state nationalists claim that political legitimacy derives from ‘the people’ of Scotland, in some cases stretching as far back as the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320, a pre-democratic piece of royal propaganda signed by powerful nobles centuries before the modern state system existed. In contrast, the legitimacy of the UK state derives from the sovereignty of parliament. At the time of the Union, Daniel Defoe, arch-Union propagandist, spy and author of *Robinson Crusoe*, argued that, while the pre-Union parliaments were founded on popular sovereignty, the union state was founded by a legal document, the Treaty of Union, which, being prior to the Parliament, cannot be revoked ‘since all constituted power is subordinate and inferior to the power constituting’ (cited by the jurist Neil MacCormick 1999: 295). But the problem here, MacCormick (1999: 296) argues, is that the constituting power of the separate parliaments was abolished by the very act of constituting the new parliament, now conceived as ‘sovereign’, which is to say, an independent source of legitimate rule.

Moreover, the terms UK and Britain are often used interchangeably and conflated with a single part of the whole, England. Tom Nairn (1988: 97) termed the incoherent, nostalgic and absurdist spirit of palpable British state nationalism ‘Ukania’, a pun on Robert Musil’s renaming of imperial Austria as Kakania,

diffused from above downwards in a process of (occasionally antagonistic) familial articulation signposted by notions like “fairness”, “decency”, “compromise”, “consensus”, plural concessionary “liberties”, “having one’s say”, “tradition” and “community” – rather than the humourless abstractions of 1776, 1789 and after: Popular Sovereignty, democracy, *égalité*, and so on.

Problems of state nomenclature and the dualist categorisation of state and nation in Scotland express something of the shifting power balances of Britain as a state-society. The union state was a compromise struck between interdependent, pre-national survival units to create new relations of ruling more fundamental than the ones that they superseded. While the English Act of Union was concerned to establish the rule of a single monarch in both realms, the Scottish Act of Union preserved Scotland’s separate Presbyterian establishment within the union state. In practice, the new parliament inherited the prevailing balance of majority English governance from the 1688 Revolution while preserving Scots law and religion and opening up the offices of the imperial British state to Scots, not least for service in the merged British army, with Scots over-represented in the officer corps as well as the ordinary ranks of ‘privates’. As well as a merged military force, among the common relations of state were also a cohesive customs union, a single system of taxation, a common currency, shared symbols of statehood, the monarchy, and the bicameral Parliament.

Inter-state rivalries continued to generate mutual fears and suspicions between interdependent state-societies, giving lasting force to the Machiavellian code. In Britain, middle class elites fused with the ruling aristocratic groups earlier than other European states. However, inter-state relations continued to be governed by the power politics code of the armed nobility. Over time, a workable compromise emerged and a flexible balance was found between the contradictory codes of humanism and nationalism. In other states, notably Germany, the ruling elites refused to compromise nationalist self-assertion as the essence of power politics. As an island state-society, British military power derived from its naval establishment, a relatively porous figuration that allowed middle-class and aristocratic codes to come into contact with each other in ways that proved impossible for the rigid social segregation of the officer corps of Germany's standing army or the officer castes of absolutist Spain and France (Elias 2007). British monarchs found themselves more dependent on social inferiors than European dynasties and felt pressure from below to comply with bourgeois morality: 'From being rulers of the state [monarchs] became symbols of the nation' (Elias 2008a: 181).

The proximity and fusion of the middle classes and aristocracy produced a democratisation process in Britain, though not Ireland, as a fused state-society that simultaneously moralised the state (middle-class codes) and nationalised morals (aristocratic codes). This cross-class fusion emerged with deepening social force after the Union as parliamentary state power became increasingly embourgeoisified as different factions, titled and untitled, learned to temper their internal struggles by non-violent means (Elias and Dunning 2008: 20). Manners and morals were gradually reconciled by the greater social interdependencies and political stability among ruling elites. Elias places particular stress on the intermediary role of the untitled gentry between the aristocracy and the middle classes as 'a unique social formation' not found in absolutist regimes (Elias and Dunning 2008: 13–5). United by a 'gentlemanly' code, different factions of the landed classes felt sufficiently confident that their own survival was not in danger to adopt non-violent political methods in their political dealings with each other.

Britain is a figuration *sui generis*, not an additive combination of separate nations that only subsequently affected each other. If Scottishness is a core part of Britishness then Britishness must also be an intrinsic element of Scottishness. In contrast to Linda Colley's (1994: 373–4) claim that Great Britain as a newly invented nation was superimposed on three much older nations, a powerful case has been made by Neil Davidson (2000) that the modern sense of both British and Scottish nationhood emerged together in the late eighteenth century. Paradoxically, only after the abolition of the Scottish state was a Scottish national habitus made possible. As part of the British state-formation process, an Anglo-Scottish national habitus was diffused socially by an emergent bourgeois class, the shared experience of soldiers, colonists and administrators of an expanding British empire, the destruction and assimilation of Highland culture, and political claim-making by the working class on the British parliament.

The formation of a Scottish national habitus was therefore not predicated exclusively on processes internal to a pre-Union civil society, as is often assumed. Instead, it was intimately conditioned by the British state-formation process. Hence, the UK is described as a 'union state' to allow for the fact that while the state absorbed rival territorial units of state authority, in the case of Scotland – unlike Ireland – it did not do so through a zero-sum elimination contest. National tension balances were managed by the union state through a complex process of negotiated autonomy. By the twentieth century, a small interlocking corporate group of politicians and state managers negotiated a tension balance that, until the advent of neoliberal governance during the 1980s, could be represented as mutually beneficial for both Britain and Scotland (Moore and Booth 1989). Faced with diminishing levels of autonomy in Scotland in the 1980s, corporatist elites mobilised themselves as representatives of 'civil society' to extend the democratic rights of the Scottish people as self-protection against the neoliberal onslaught of the British state (Hassan 2014).

Sub-state nationalism and British state-society

Challenges to the union state did not always have the formation of a separate Scottish nation-state as their primary goal. Between the 1850s and 1970s, the main aim of ostensibly 'national' movements, typically marginal outsider groups concerned with a miscellany of arcane issues, was political recognition of Scotland's distinctive needs as an equal partner within a reformed union state. It is important to stress that sub-state nationalism commanded minority support in Scotland until the twenty-first century and that, even then, Unionism continued to command wide, if declining, assent. Indeed, many British state nationalists supported Scottish devolution in the 1997 referendum, with the expectation that it would act as a permanent barrier to the formation of an independent Scottish state.

A spiral process of compromise and challenge characterises Scotland's constantly evolving position within the union state (Mitchell 1996). In the 1850s, an initial spurt of sub-state nationalism, the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, was led by romantic Tories, but harboured disparate party affiliations concerned with a more equitable redistribution of state revenue, decentralisation of certain state functions and, more derisively, respect for Scotland's heraldic traditions (Morton 1996). A second wave in the 1880s coincided with British militarist jingoism to demand a federal British empire, 'the union of the mother country with the colonies in one real United Empire, the United States of Greater Britain' (cited in Mitchell 1996: 70). Imperial sub-state nationalism was intertwined with the Irish Home Rule crisis, the fate of the Liberal party and self-aggrandising English nationalism, fuelling demands for some form of distinctively Scottish home rule. The Scottish Home Rule Association was formed by radical Liberals to demand 'the right of the Scottish people to manage their own affairs' through 'a Federal not an Incorporating Union' (SHRA 1888: 3, 14). Modern Scottish nationalism emerged out of this tension. A state compromise established the Scottish Office, an administrative concession to sub-state sentiment that profoundly shaped the apparatus of both the Edwardian liberal-welfare state and the Keynesian welfare state (Cameron 2012).

A third spurt of sub-state nationalism emerged in the years before 1914. It shed its more eccentric Victorian character and reframed Home Rule as a practical instrument for radical social reforms (Finlay 1997: 57). Stimulated by the social reformist zeal of the Young Scots Society, new Liberalism aimed to overcome the conservative inertia of the Westminster Parliament, pushing Churchill to support devolution in a 1911 speech at Dundee. While the outbreak of war put paid to Scottish home rule, the next spurt of sub-state nationalism after 1918 saw a reformed SHRA energised by the Scottish labour movement, with which it had a symbiotic relationship until it became frustrated by the mid-1920s by an indifferent parliamentary Labour Party.

Between the wars, sub-state nationalism was simultaneously a response to, and was hindered by, industrial decline and cultural dejection. Discourses on 'the end of Scotland' bewailed a perceived loss of distinctive national qualities and a fear of becoming an administrative province of England (Finlay 1994). Even middle-class Unionists felt a debilitating loss of 'national spirit'. This was fostered by a growing sense of economic dependency on the Union and despondency about the national capability for self-government. Unionists responded with further administrative devolution, in the late 1930s relocating the main functions of the Scottish Office from London to Edinburgh, token reforms that left the centralised nature of the British state largely unaffected.

In such a context, the fifth spurt of sub-state nationalism began to shed its social movement character and acquire its modern form as a political party, albeit one shrouded in ethnic essentialism (Mitchell 1996: 180–6). Galvanised by the Scots National League and its splinter group, the Scottish National Movement, the founding of the National Party of Scotland in 1928 was a peculiar brew of moderate devolutionism, 'spiritual values' and hardline Celtic racial mysticism, including calls from the poet Hugh MacDiarmid for a form of 'Scottish fascism' (Finlay 1994: 83). The NPS's brand of radical Celtic nationalism was itself challenged by the

founding in 1932 of a right-wing, home rule party of Empire, the Scottish Party. This led ultimately to a new merged party in 1934, the Scottish National Party. The new party was immediately plunged into internal disarray, unable to unify incompatible left–right ideologies, strategies and personalities.

If anything, administrative devolution consolidated the authority of the centralised UK state in Scotland. Sub-state management in wartime Scotland produced and sustained patronage networks outside direct democratic controls. During the war, SNP radicals managed to stabilise the chaotic and fractious party, giving it organisational coherence before finally establishing the goal of an independent Scottish state, not home rule, as its guiding principle. However, post-war reconstruction and the corporatist state made the ‘spiritual values’ of sub-state nationalism largely irrelevant. Full employment, the nationalisation of primary industries, and the welfare state appeared to demonstrate in practice the material benefits of the Union. In 1950s Scotland, the Unionist Party, as the Scottish Conservatives were officially called until 1965, successfully challenged Labour in the industrial centres by emphasising their distinctive Scottishness as an equal partner in the Union state, not an assimilated, undifferentiated part of the corporate state that characterised the Labour Party in Scotland (Mitchell 1990).

With Scottish Unionism rejuvenated, sub-state nationalism found itself marginalised. It resorted to desperate pressure group tactics, such as the mass petition of 1949 organised by the Scottish Convention (Mitchell 1996: 145). The irrelevance of sub-state nationalism in 1950s Scotland was further illustrated by derisory middle-class symbolic stunts like seizing the Stone of Destiny (used in coronations of Scottish monarchs until taken to London in 1296 by Edward I) from Westminster Abbey and blowing up a mail box in Edinburgh embossed with the insignia of the new Queen Elizabeth II (on the basis that there had been no Queen Elizabeth I of Scotland).

However, as the post-war Scottish economy began to flag the electoral fortunes of sub-state nationalism revived, heralded most spectacularly by the SNP’s Hamilton by-election victory in 1967. Yet again, however, the expected nationalist breakthrough did not materialise. Electoral prospects faltered until the twin crises of economy and state in the mid-1970s created new stresses and strains for the UK that nationalist grievance eagerly seized upon. Moreover, the discovery of oil within the territorial waters of Scotland appeared to reverse the relations of fiscal dependency on the British state. The high watermark for the SNP came in the General Election of October 1974 when it achieved an unprecedented eleven MPs.

Centrifugal tensions in the balance

As uneven development across the UK became more, not less, intense the union state struggled to contain centrifugal processes. By the 1970s, the contrasting sub-state-formation processes of the constituent parts of the union state began to pose different challenges, expressed in tension balances between parliamentary non-violence and non-parliamentary violence. As Mclean and McMillan (2005: 169) summarise an increasingly fractious Union:

Northern Ireland could threaten secession and bloodshed. Scotland could threaten secession, although it could not plausibly threaten bloodshed. Wales threatened a little civil disorder, when language campaigners took direct action, extending to burning down the holiday cottages of English-speaking incomers. But even this, violent though it was, affected only a small part of Wales and a few cottages. Wales posed much the least credible threat to the Union.

An embattled Labour government hoped to forestall sub-state nationalism by conceding a referendum on a limited form of Scottish Assembly (Mclean and McMillan 2005: 165). Just as the SNP were ambivalent at best about the proposed Assembly as a diversion from an independent Scottish state, neither were the Scottish electorate particularly enthused about it, with over one third failing to vote in the 1979 referendum, denying the now-abandoned Assembly a popular mandate.

Two months later, Labour lost the General Election to the Conservatives led by Margaret Thatcher, with the SNP share of the vote falling from 30 percent to 17 percent. Yet, despite collapsing electoral support in Scotland for the ruling Conservative party and deepening economic decline, during the 1980s Tory Unionists lavished relatively generous state spending on Scotland to forestall the twin threats of devolution and independence and preserve a highly centralised UK state. It was only with the disastrous miscalculation by the Tory government to introduce the Poll Tax, a deeply unpopular household levy, in Scotland in 1988, a year earlier than in England, ironically to appease affluent property owners in Scotland (and so more likely to support the Conservative Party), that the wheels started to come off the Unionist cart.

A fresh appeal was made for a devolved institution by the Scottish Constitutional Convention, a corporatist body accurately described as ‘an unelected and somewhat secretive mechanism by which some segments of the public-sector middle class used its corporate power in sundry civil-society organisations to induce the Labour party to support reform’ (Paterson 2015: 28). Incorporated into the 1997 New Labour programme and the Scotland Act 1998, the Constitutional Convention's recommendations determined the shape and functions of the Scottish Parliament. New Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, born and educated in Scotland, reluctantly supported Scottish devolution as ‘inevitable’. As a rigid Unionist, any devolution of state power was, as Blair (2010: 251) put it, ‘a dangerous game to play. You can never be sure where nationalist sentiment ends and separatist sentiment begins’. Blair lacked emotional commitment to the process. As he put it, nationalist sentiment ‘contrived to make me feel alien’ while Scots, on the other hand, were ‘incredibly sensitive’ and ‘notoriously prickly about the whole business’.

With the establishment of the Scottish parliament in 1999 the dependency of the governed in Scotland on UK institutions was loosened, while the powers ‘reserved’ to the UK state came to feel to wider layers of Scottish society as an external constraint on the possibilities for self-government. Whatever is not specifically reserved to Westminster was assumed by the Scotland Act 1998 to devolve to the Scottish parliament, an arrangement that will be severely tested by the repatriation of state powers from Brussels after Brexit (Kidd and Petrie 2017). In the first two Scottish Parliaments of 1999 and 2003, tensions between Edinburgh and London were moderated by informal networks and party loyalties so long as the Labour Party (leading a coalition government in Scotland) was dominant in both realms. As constitutional nationalists, the SNP consolidated their position as competent sub-state managers rather than ideological nationalists obsessed with the *idée fixe* of an independent state (Carman, Johns and Mitchell 2014). By managing the tension balance in ‘Scotland’s interest’, the SNP had no need to navigate the seemingly insuperable dilemmas of divided British–Scottish national loyalties that confronted the Labour Party in Scotland. On the other hand, mono-nationalism limited the relevance of the SNP at UK elections. They could never become the governing party of the UK state while any prospect of a ‘progressive coalition’ with Labour was widely resented in England.

As Elias (2008a: 116) notes, the increasingly democratised figuration of governed and governments imposes varying constraints on and possibilities for political parties.

The reciprocity of the dependence of government on those they govern and of the governed on governments, though still uneven enough, has become less uneven than it used to be. The

balance of parties in different countries is a fairly exact indicator of this balance of power and its fluctuations.

This is borne out by the pattern of electoral support for the SNP. As Table 1 demonstrates, until the 1970s, the SNP was a marginal force in Scottish politics. From 2011, the party began to attract large-scale electoral support in Scotland. This peaked at 50 per cent of the electorate in 2015 in the aftermath of the Independence referendum, before falling back to what appears to be its bedrock support of 36 percent in the snap UK election of 2017. Such fluctuations corroborate an established pattern, where the SNP typically performs much better at Scottish parliamentary elections than at UK General Elections, with the supercharged exception of 2015.

Table 1: Scottish National Party performance, UK and Scottish elections, 1935–2017

Election	Votes (thousands)	Share (Scotland)	Seats
1935	29.5	1.1	0
1945	26.7	1.2	0
1950	9.7	0.4	>0
1951	7.3	0.3	0
1955	12.1	0.5	0
1959	21.7	0.5	0
1964	64	2.4	0
1966	128.4	5	0
1970	306.8	11.4	1
1974 Feb	633.2	22	7
1974 Oct	839.6	30.4	11
1979	504.2	17.3	2
1983	332	11.7	2
1987	416.4	14	3
1992	629.5	21.5	3
1997	621.5	22.1	6
1999 Scotland	672.7	28.7	35
2001	464.3	20.1	5
2003 Scotland	449.4	23.7	27
2005	412.2	17.7	6
2007 Scotland	664.2	32.9	47
2010	491.3	19.9	6
2011 Scotland	902.9	45.4	69
2015	1454.4	50	59
2016 Scotland	1059.9	46.5	63
2017	959	36.9	35

Scottish Parliamentary elections constituency votes and share only

Political collisions between London and Edinburgh also revealed the way that issues ‘reserved’ as core functions of the UK state – such as fiscal austerity, foreign affairs and defence (diplomacy, warfare, nuclear weapons, ‘Scottish’ regiments), and Brexit (border controls, immigration, refugees) – were increasingly seen as matters about which the Scottish parliament should adopt a posture in the spirit of humanist ‘Scottish values’. This was spelled out at length in the Scottish government’s official statement on an independent Scottish state. There the SNP government claimed that a future Scottish state would, for example, adopt a ‘more humane’ approach to immigration and asylum than the UK:

An independent Scotland, as a modern democracy, will meet our international obligations and play a responsible role on the world stage. We will demonstrate our respect for international law, human rights and social justice in offering asylum to those seeking a place of refuge from persecution, war, natural disaster or other major crises ... The asylum process in an independent Scotland must be underpinned by an emphasis on robust, fair, socially-responsible and thorough decision-making, with clear adherence to human rights and equality principles and to the rule of law ... If there is a need for forcible removals, these will be undertaken with respect for human rights (Scottish Government 2013: 269, 271).

A narrow focus on national self-interest would be balanced by humanitarian internationalism, a conception that included continuing small state membership of NATO and the EU: ‘Scotland will be a champion for international justice and peace ... On independence, Scotland will be clearly positioned as a country which observes international law and respects and promotes human rights, democratic values, equality and good governance’ (Scottish Government 2013: 210, 212).

In the course of the referendum contest, a high level of engagement with the political process, passionate participation and vociferous public debate was experienced across society, particularly as the day of the referendum drew closer (Geoghegan 2015; Henderson *et al.*, 2014). Voter participation in the Independence referendum was the highest ever recorded (85 per cent) for any popular vote in the UK since the beginning of universal suffrage. By comparison the turnout of 60 percent for the 1997 referendum to establish the Scottish parliament was broadly similar to the pattern for recent UK elections. Much of the grassroots energy behind mass engagement was driven by Yes campaigners, who managed to increase support for Independence from around 23 percent in 2012 to 45 percent of the actual vote cast in September 2014. Despite losing the referendum, Yes campaigners flooded into the SNP, which quadrupled in size from 25,000 to more than 100,000 members in the space of few months following the referendum. By 2015, around one in forty of the entire adult population of Scotland were members of the party of sub-state nationalism.

When the Yes campaign appeared to be within a whisker of a narrow victory in the weeks before the referendum, elite leaders of the No campaign promised ‘extensive’ new powers for the Scottish parliament without the risking the turbulent uncertainty that comes with leaving an existing multinational state (Law 2015). Immediately following the No vote, political elites seized back control of the process by appointing a Commission under Lord Smith, who promptly recommended a further extension of powers to the Scottish parliament. These included increased, but limited, control of income tax, though other important taxes, above all, National Insurance, corporation tax and VAT (sales tax), continue to be ‘reserved’ to the UK state, and increased ‘prudent’ borrowing powers subject to definite limits determined by the UK fiscal framework. It also included a complex ‘no detriment’ principle where Scottish budgets would not be affected negatively by UK policies or vice versa, introducing further potential for political conflict and grievance. Overall control of state revenues would remain reserved to Westminster. Increased fiscal ‘autonomy’ of the Scottish sub-state is

entangled in a new tension balance with a wider fiscal dependency on the UK state and falls well short of the monopoly control of revenues demanded by sub-state nationalism. By the time that legislation granting additional powers was enacted in March 2016, the political dynamic had shifted again in unforeseen ways, not least due to the impending EU referendum.

Conclusion

Clearly, the civilising process in Scotland evinces its own peculiarities even as it contributed towards the processes of formation and reproduction of the wider UK state-society. Elias (2012: 6) described state-societies as Janus-faced: *internally pacified* but *outwardly embattled*. More recent phases of the British state-formation process have seen the ‘outwardly embattled’ state-society become increasingly an ‘inwardly embattled’ one. Sub-state nationalism in Scotland has contributed, and is contributing, to an ‘inwardly embattled state-society’ at the same time as changes in the tension balance are channelled by a long established ‘internally pacified society’. In the case of Scotland, a pre-national, courtly society standing above the lower and middle classes proved unable to fully pacify internal social relations across a unified territory, a process Elias thought necessary for his more general theory of civilising processes. Only in the second half of the eighteenth century, after the Jacobite failure to establish absolutism in Britain through armed force, was the state monopoly of violence employed effectively across Scotland, brutally destroying alternative sources of state power and consolidating the social and territorial reach of Britain as a state-society.

Increasingly the state fulfils the primary human need for security, protection and belonging at a higher scale of integration. Yet states permanently threaten each other, endangering the security and survival of the we-group. States therefore function as *both* survival units and annihilation units. Welfare and warfare functions are maintained in a changeable field of force. This process is not without ambiguities, tensions and contradictions. Inter-state rivalry and survival, including foreign wars, nuclear armaments, the policing of borders and immigration controls, came to be identified with British ‘state-identity’, allowing humanist problems of social justice to frame Scottish civic nationalism.

Sub-state nationalism has less need to contend with the coercive side of the Janus-faced state. Instead it concentrates on acquiring and reproducing the symbolic power of humanism to circulate We-images of the charismatic civic nation beyond coercive state relations. Bourdieu (2014: 164) described this process: ‘The most violent relations of force – as Hume says – are at the same time symbolic relations’. Here Bourdieu is referring to Hume’s (1996[1742]: 24) conundrum of why ‘the many’ submit so easily to the rule of ‘the few’ despite their greater force of numbers. However, as Steven Loyal (2017: 123) notes, Bourdieu tends to cast the coercion–symbolic dimensions of the state as rigid categorical binaries based on the French state model, limiting its effectiveness for comparative empirical study. In this, Bourdieu’s symbolic structuralism forms the counterpart to the symbolic interactionism of nativist sociology.

Rejecting the finality of *a priori* reasoning in sociology, Elias aspired to a higher level of synthesis of historical, sociological, political and psychological processes that presupposed social development as a whole (see Korte 2017: 191–9). Like consent and coercion, state and nation cannot be reduced to inert either–or concepts to account for sub-state nationalism. A double-bind process of state reformation and sub-state challenge sometimes passes through dramatic spurts of development while at other times undergoes largely unnoticed incremental adaptations to national tension balances. The union state adopted a pragmatic approach to the logical anomalies of asymmetrical representation under devolution. The SNP minority government of 2007 prepared the way for the electoral earthquake of 2011, when they unexpectedly emerged as the dominant political force in Scotland. When the election returned a majority SNP Scottish government,

something that the electoral system designed by Labour aimed to prevent, the union state began to appear in jeopardy and an independent Scottish state suddenly became a realistic proposition.

Sub-state nationalism in Scotland does not possess an unchanging character. A fresh challenge to the Union is constantly in the process of preparation. Despite the legalistic dilemmas that each challenge poses, the fissiparous process of sub-state remaking is rarely about 'the constitution' so much as shifts in the We–I balance expressed by deeply contested political and moral differences between formally equal but distinct partners of the 'union state'. By the twenty-first century, sub-state nationalism, framed in terms of indisputable civic-humanist values against the coercive power politics of established state nationalism, became a permanent source of political tension not only in Scotland, but also for the survival of the Britain as an integrated state-society.

Notes

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