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Collaborator

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It is always an error to infer attitudes from background, but I cannot help pointing out to my students how many scholars of nationalism come from ethnic frontiers. My interest in the problems of diversity date to my school days in northern England, when the 'Whig' history promulgated in the textbooks jarred so harshly with the interpretation of my Irish Catholic teachers. My father (an Irish Catholic) and mother (brought up in Scottish Calvinism and converted to Rome) kept up a lively debate on religion, nation and the politics of glorious defeat. My introduction to formal political studies as an undergraduate in Oxford in the late 1960s was entirely Westminster-centred, while the books importing the new 'political science' a few years later seemed perverse in their insistence that the United Kingdom was a homogeneous nation-state.

So I took the opportunity as a graduate student in Glasgow early-1970s to open this whole question with a PhD thesis on the role of the Scottish MP. In one of those serendipities that explain so much about our career developments, this intellectual backwater became a matter of live interest by the time I finished in 1975, because of the 'unexpected' irruption of nationalism across the UK periphery. In the late 1970s, I developed this into an interpretation of UK politics as part of a new wave of studies of the United Kingdom as a multinational state. This broke with the received idea that peripheral nationalism was evidence of retarded modernization, but also with those insisting that it was radically new. On the contrary, I argued that this was part of the normal condition of politics and that Scotland, far from being an exception to the 'norm' (that is southern England) was a nation to be examined in its own right. Another project traced the modernist origins of Scottish nationalism and its links with the labour movement and the political left, showing that neither class nor nationalist politics was predestined to win (*Labour and Scottish Nationalism*, 1979). They remain entwined in Scotland to this day.

During the 1980s I extended this perspective in a comparative direction, with work on France and Spain. This produced *State and Regional Nationalism* (1988) on territorial management in the UK, Spain, France and Italy. This was a historical examination of the problematic of territorial integration, disintegration and re-integration within the European state, showing how neither integration nor disintegration was predestined, but both were historically contingent. At the same time, I worked on the implications of European integration for territorial politics with two edited volumes, *Regions in the European Community* (1985) and its updating ten years later (*The EU and the Regions*). Unfortunately, this became something of an industry and, having drawn attention to the importance of European integration for regionalism and peripheral nationalism, I have spent much of the last twenty years telling people not to exaggerate it and, in particular, not to give too much importance to the Structural Funds.

During the late 1980s and the early 1990s I worked on urban politics and policy, in Scotland (*Remaking Urban Scotland*, 1985; and *Glasgow. The Politics of Urban Regeneration*, 1988) and then in a comparative perspective (*Comparative Urban Politics*, 1991).

From the mid-1990s I returned to the study of minority, stateless and 'regional' nationalism. The focus now was on the reconfiguration of nationalist movements in the context of globalization and European integration, in which the old territorial management mechanisms were no longer effective. I argued that nationalism, far from disappearing, was reshaping and re-inventing itself. There was a process of deterritorialization consequent on economic change and globalization, but also a re-territorialization. The 'new nationalism' in Quebec, Scotland and Catalonia, emerged from old nations in a



new context (*Nations against the State*, 1996, 2001). I argued again that, rather than be dismissed as a rejection of modernity, these 'new' nationalisms should be treated on the same moral plane as nationalisms of the state. I also emphasized the *possible* value of nationality in sustaining collective action and social solidarity in the face of global pressures. My book on *The New Regionalism in Western Europe* (1998) also examined the emergence of new territorial spaces in the context of state transformation, but from a political economy and institutional perspective, and covering a wider area. Since then, I have sought to bring together insights from the new regionalist literature and those on nationalism.

The culmination of this phase was *Plurinational Democracy* (2001). This explored the transformation of the state and the rise of new nationalisms which are not state-seeking but recognise the limitations of statehood in the modern era and adapt themselves accordingly. It explores the concept of 'post-sovereignty', an idea inspired by recent legal thinking, and seeks to rethink the concept of self-determination. It pursues a series of normative issues through the study of practices in the UK, Canada, Spain and Belgium. Inspired by the Spanish debate on historic rights, it also explores the 'usable past' of nations and the existence of political and legal traditions that lend themselves to a world of divided and shared sovereignty. A number of articles subsequently have sought to expand and deepen these ideas.

Another concern over the years has been with public policy, especially at the local and regional level. I have published several books on public policy in Scotland, the most recent based on a major research project since devolution (*The Government of Scotland*, 2005). This is linked to comparative work on devolution and public policy in a comparative context, and a work group of which I convene with colleagues in Spain. An edited book is forthcoming shortly. Presently I am working on devolution and public service delivery in the UK and have started a policy forum with academics and public servants.

If there is a consistent theme in my work it is about the changing relationship among identity, territory, nation, institutions and collective action. I have sought to integrate into my empirical work normative considerations of democracy, collective action and social solidarity. These provide the archimedean points on which I base my analysis, so avoiding relativism, shapeless pluralism or empty formulations like 'governance' as an account of how the world is changing.