Second Talk – Nasar Meer

~~Ok well thank you very much for the invitation to participate. I thank~~ ▮ ~~colleagues for organising the day and especially requiring me to wake at 4.30am to catch my flight down from Scotland, at times like this you appreciate the virtue of the Skype I think.~~

So from the billing I took it as my role to say something about how England and Scotland compare on some key attitude~~s~~ and identity issues and especially explain something of the tendencies evident in Scotland. ~~Perhaps~~ There ~~this~~ is a prevailing view ~~in Scotland~~ that migrants are much more welcome in Scotland, as illustrated by ~~and these~~ images ~~are~~ taken from the National Newspaper ~~which~~ that were printed on the day before and after the arrival of Syrian refugees last year. How true is this assumption?

Now I suppose my first point to make is that there are very few data sources that offer a like for like comparison between England and Scotland on these questions so I am going to try to use the best that I can find in order to answer these questions.

~~Well what are the differences in~~ Here we might point to mass attitude to~~wards~~ immigration in Scotland and England as well as ~~and what are the differences in~~ mass attitudes on the matter of ~~on~~ race~~.~~ and compare the two countries. I am also going to talk a little bit about political conduct in Scotland, especially in terms of the extent to which there is something like a civic political nationalism underway, and then move back to this issue of ~~mass~~ minority ethnic self-definition and ~~on minority~~ claims on nationhood. Perhaps we will even get to discuss some of the *why* questions but we will see how time goes.

So beginning with migration I suppose, one immediate view is that we shouldn't perhaps assume that there are significant differences between England and Scotland because what we know is that the majority in Scotland ~~in~~ favour ~~of~~ reducing migration ~~there~~ too~~,~~ ~~so in the~~ The ~~migration~~ Migration ~~obs~~ Observatory (2014) survey ~~from a couple of years ago, what this~~ reported ~~was~~ that ~~just~~ 60% of respondents in Scotland supported reductions to immigration in Scotland whilst only 10% favoured increases in migration to Scotland and another 20% preferred the status quo, and 9% said they didn't know. What's interesting about this survey is that large reductions were much more popular than small reductions so 37% of people surveyed in Scotland ~~chose~~ opted to reduce a lot compared to a small number who ~~chose~~ opted to reduce~~d~~ a little.

So in the first instance people in Scotland too want a reduction in migration, however, important differences then become ~~immediately~~ apparent when you look closely at this survey ~~in detail~~, because when people are asked whether immigration is a good or a bad thing for the receiving country, attitudes are relatively positive towards immigration in Scotland and certainly more so than in the rest of the UK. So when people are asked to respond on a scale for 0 to 10 as to ~~would you say that~~ whether migration from outside the UK ~~it~~ is generally good or bad for Scotland ~~that people come to live here from outside the UK, in Scotland~~ more people place themselves on the good for the country side than on the bad for the country side, about 50% to 32% with 17% placing themselves in the midpoint. So the findings here I think show a significant difference between Scotland the rest of Britain~~,~~: in England and Wales the bad for the country side of the scale out polled the good for the country side by roughly the same number, just under 50% and 35%. Notably the most common single response in England and Wales was on the extreme end of the scale, the bad side, chosen by 16% of respondents whilst only 4% chose the other extreme side the good side. In Scotland it was roughly about 9% on each side.

So I think this reading suggests more of a difference than might appear from the question simply about whether you would like to reduce migration to Scotland. ~~and p~~Perhaps it just indicates the beliefs in Scotland that there are benefits in immigration but that belief coexists with a desire to perhaps reduce ~~it's~~its scale insofar as Scotland shows a majority support for less immigration but only about a 3rd of people polled in Scotland rate immigration as bad for Scotland.

So what about race? Well I suppose here we can look at a couple of surveys, probably the best one is the British Social Attitudes survey which asked people the question, 'Would you describe yourself prejudiced against people of other races?' Now they have used this question since 1983 and between 1983 and 2013 they report that in 8 of the 10 years of following 2000 levels of ~~self reported~~self-reported prejudice were at 30% or higher compared with the low point of 25% in 2001. ~~Now o~~One way to interpret this is to say that there was a falling trend during the 1990s but this then tipped up in the first decade of this century.

Interestingly for our purposes they find that Scotland has the lowest level of reported prejudice in the UK outside London. ~~Now o~~On first inspection ~~of~~surveys like this are good for our narrative about Scotland being much better on race, however, there are a couple of problems with these kind of surveys. First of all they tend to use a relatively small number of respondents from Scotland in their sample generally and even smaller numbers of black and ethnic ~~minorities~~minority ~~of~~Scots. ~~and i~~It is not only the ~~British/Nationalist~~BSA survey which is guilty of this. ~~it is also true of other surveys like t~~The British ~~election~~Election ~~survey~~Survey, which despite having a large sample size of about 2,600 included only 6 people of Indian background in Scotland and only 2 people of Pakistani background in Scotland. So kind of extrapolating from these base numbers will be misleading~~, but~~. ~~t~~The second issue with these kind~~s~~ of surveys is that they don't specifically ask black minority ethnic people about their experiences~~. And~~and so this potential data is lost and that's important because research has ~~now~~shown ~~I think~~quite convincingly that discrimination is a concept that black and ethnic minority people respond with something we are very familiar with and we can talk about. It is not like asking people that gentrification or social mobility.

So some of the survey work I have been doing over the last few years has been the first of its kind in trying to focus exclusively on the experiences of black and ethnic minority people in Scotland. And this does show us some quite interesting findings. The first is that when asked, about a ~~3rd~~third of people in Scotland will say that they have experienced racial discrimination in the last 5 years (Meer, 2016)~~. but also they will say that, a~~About ~~50~~60% of the same sample however say that ~~that~~they didn't report it (so if it ~~, you know if it~~happened in work ~~was in work~~they didn't report it to an employer, if it was in education they didn't report it to the tutor, if it was on the street and it was physical they didn't report it to the police). This discrimination isn't something which is located in one particular area it is actually quite dispersed across the social field, across the labour market participation, across access to public services, in education and in health. ~~And t~~These kind of findings occur at a time in Scotland when there is a salience of race, and ~~I mean the case of ?Sheikh Obiyu? Who was reported in this Guardian feature is illustrative because it has all the characteristics of what we would call institutional racism. This young man about my size and build was suffocated at a bus stop in Kirkcaldy and his family are now you know searching for justice in many of the same ways as the Lawrence family did. S~~so race does matter in Scotland ~~so~~it is misleading to suggest that everything is ok on that issue.

Ok, so what about the Scottish Government and political ~~active~~actors more broadly. ~~and~~I guess this is what I mean by political conduct. Well I think we can say that the picture is pretty clear in terms of that there is a non-politicisation of immigration in Scotland and that's led to a consensus~~,~~: so except UKIP there is no political party in Scotland that has any electoral representation ~~at least electorally,~~

which kind of mobilises on the question of migration, and eEven in the 2015 last General Election the Tory party selection manifesto was quite different on this issue in Scotland. And tTo some extent perhaps that's just a reflection of the cold hard reality of population and skill shortages to Scotland, when you look at the general demographic trend in Scotland you can see that it's had a kind of athe population decline and that low point in 2002 with was an issue of great public policy activity, when oh no I've missed the slide, it's on a different presentation, different version of this presentation. So in 2002 the population of Scotland declined underneath 5 million and the level of productivity fertility dropped below 1.5. and there is a real agitation and concern within public policy circles and Jack McConnell the then First Minister, calls it a demographic time bomb. And wWhat we have seen subsequent to that is that the inward migration of people from overseas and especially from the European Union has kind of assisted with that migration decline insofar as it has helped reverse it. so that's the figure that we are interested in here. I think that's really quite important because you know, we talk about places like London being super diverse and that's happened through migration, well actually a large section of the migration to London comes from the rest of the UK, whereas here in Scotland for a short period of time there was more inward migration to Scotland from outside the UK than anywhere else, that's quite an important observation.

So the data at the beginning in terms of attitudes towards immigration really needs to be set against this background because in that context it is quite remarkable that the consensus politically holds, and also broadly in terms of mass attitudes probably holds. But how accurate is the view that political leads leaders have actively steered this national kind of mood or, this national conversation in a more inclusive direction. ?

Well you know we might talk about political rhetoric, we might think about and point to political speeches, when Recall when her was First Minister Alec Salmond was First Minister he would often sayid that 'Scotland is not Quebec, the linguistic and ethnic basis of Quebec Nationalism is a double edged sword, we here in Scotland follow the path of civic nationalism'. end quote. We might think about policy phraseology and this is very evident in terms of the literature that comes out offrom the Scottish Government. They often talk about all the people of Scotland rather than Scottish people. But I would also point to political activitye outside Government too and from across the political divide, and here there are some examples from recent research qualitative research, interview research I've done with members of the Scottish Parliament (Meer, 2015). Y

es here we go, so you know hHere's 3 three quotes from MSPs. and you know the first one is often the one that I share the most this is a The first statement is from a member of the Scottish National Party: 'We've captured Nationalism, we've made it something positive, made it civic, that's being 8 decades of work it doesn't happen overnight'; . The second a Labour MSP: put it as follows 'Without patting ourselves on the back too much this is to the credit of the Scottish Parliament'; I will let you finish reading those but you now t. The implication is clear that Scottish political actors feel they have taken a determining role in this.

What I find most interesting is the self-conscious goal amongst these political leads actors because it distinguishes Scotland immediately then from other comparable sub-state autonomy seeking nations in such as Catalonia, Quebec, the Basques and so on. So in this respect Scottish political actors are clearly expressing their nationalism in political and not social terms and certainly not in terms of blood and soil. And you know as wWe all know the distinction between civic and an ethnic nationhood however is problematic, because they are porous and they bleed into each other and the solution.,

~~as I suspect Tariq would argue is~~ The challenge in my view comes not ~~not~~ to try~~ing~~ ~~to~~and separate these out ~~them out~~ but ~~in to~~ try~~ing~~ ~~and~~ to pluralise the nation. I ~~rather than to take out the ethnic features. But i~~t makes sense why the late MSP Bashir Ahmed~~s~~, the first ~~non white~~non-white member~~s~~ of Scottish Parliament who ~~have~~ stood for the SNP, ~~Bashir Ahmed~~ would often state that it isn't important where you come from, what matters is where we are going together as a nation. ~~And t~~The SNP have really picked that up as a mantra ~~and they often say it~~ and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said it on more than one occasion. The question is whether that kind of popular consensus can then be translated into a consensus of national identity and this is where again we encounter the lack of up to date comparative data.

Now this was the last time we were able to measure this kind of thing and ~~it's~~is from work that David ~~McCurran~~McCrone and colleagues (2010) did by having a question in the 2006 BSA and SSA ~~the Scottish Social Attitude survey~~ at the same time. Very briefly what this shows are the attitudes of white majorities in England and white majorities in Scotland to the claim that a ~~non white~~non-white person can be English or Scottish~~or English,~~. ~~so~~In other words what does it take to be Scottish or English in these two contexts? ~~So in~~In England 45% of people will say that a ~~non white~~non-white person can be English and the figures in brackets are for white people too, so that goes up to 56% acceptance that ~~and~~ a ~~non white~~non-white person in England can be English if they have an English accent~~t.t~~ When ~~, 56%, and a~~a ~~non white~~non-white person in England ~~can be English if they have~~has an English accent and ~~have~~has English parents, we are up to 72%. In Scotland white majority people will say that only 38% of people can be Scottish if they are not white~~,~~. ~~white~~White people in Scotland will say that ~~non white~~non-white people in Scotland can be Scottish if they are not white if they have a national accent (50%) and then that goes up significantly further if ~~non white~~non-white people in Scotland ~~have~~have a Scottish accent and Scottish parentage with some kind of ancestry (68%). But the point to make is that there is a gap, there's an ethnic penalty you might say between England and Scotland on these issues.

What should we make of this? ~~Well we say that t~~The disproportionality higher rejection rates of white people towards ~~non whites~~non-whites in Scotland compared with England is certainly concerning. The authors of this survey or the way in which it is presented at least, argue that although attitudes are more exclusionary in Scotland than England they are not radically so. I would add to that ~~that~~the data is ~~old, you know it is~~over 10 years old and needs to be updated. ~~And what they also say and which I think is~~It is also quite important ~~which gets me to where we are wrapping up is that~~to see these ~~these kind of~~findings ~~need to be offset with~~alongside the ways in which minorities in Scotland are much more likely than their counterparts in England to appropriate a hyphenated sub state national identity e.g. ~~,~~ Scottish Pakistani and so on.

Now this is ~~kind of~~a ~~well established~~well-established trend ~~that~~around ~~political allegiance~~self-definition~~,~~. ~~in T~~my interview would often talk about and ~~t~~he important point here I think is the subjective willingness and confidence to claim that kind of an identity. ~~So a longitudinal stuff from a~~Looking at longitudinal data from the ~~l~~Labour ~~force~~Force ~~survey~~Survey (2001-2011) further confirms this~~and what you can see here on the left hand side are a minority in Scotland claiming a Scottish identity, you can see that is quite high. I mean if you had a rolling average those sharp points and drops would be smoothed out, but you can see you know that there is a~~ strong tendency to claim a Scottish identity, and there is also a tendency to claim British identity too, that's not absent amongst BMEs or black minority ethnic groups in Scotland. Whereas in England of course you know it is dramatically less, ~~you know in England~~and the tendency is to claim a British rather than English identity~~which is consistent with the point that xxxxxx is making at the beginning~~.

So if you look further in that data in terms of who is claiming this kind of Scottish identity and you break that down according to ethnicity, you find that there is obviously a difference between people who are born in Scotland and people who aren't born in Scotland, which again suggests something about the Scottish context. So the figures for Scottish national identity to some extent mirrors the different distributions of birthplace for each minority, which appears to support the evidence that birthplace is the most important characteristic for Scottish national identity.

and figure 1 shows on the left hand side that in each ethnic minority group with the exception of the Polish group, a large majority of minority Scots identify as Scottish. The relatively low figure for Scottish identity amongst Scottish born Polish which maybe explained by the age structure of this group, when they arrive, the vast majority of them are under 16 and are more likely to have been assigned their identities by their parents, however, the data also shows that birthplace is by no means the determining feature of national identity, not everybody who was born in Scotland identify as Scottish from minority groups, there are many people who were not born in Scotland or the UK do think themselves as Scottish.

Ok sSo then we start to get to the Why questions. Wrap up, ok ok. Well hHere are some why answers. There is a study by Hussaein and ?Merlot?Miller (2006) which finds that it is common to hear ethnic minorities in Scotland talk about how Scots understand colonialism from their past, they understand how ethnic minorities feel. Now it is kind of reminiscent of the rational once presented by the late Bernie Grant MP, that, he would call himself British because it includes other oppressed people, I quote, like the Welsh and the Scots, it would stick in my throat he said to call myself English.

But I think what we can also say following Hussain and Miller (2006) is that with certainty that Scottishness is very much a bridge for minorities in Scotland rather than a barrier, rather than a wall. Perhaps that has to be something to do with the lack of a kind of toxic spill over of migration talk in not alienating minorities in Scottish nationhood. Even though racism is a feature of Scottish society and one way to interpret that is to say that there is a difference between the salience of racist racism in society and the racialisation of politics.

So where does this leave us and what does this tell us? I think there is bad news and good news. The bad news first. I do think that Scotland has more of a problem with racial inequalities than some existing surveys would have us believe – to the extent that UK wide can be misleading in telling a story about Scotland. The areas in which BME groups are experiencing discrimination is not restricted to a single area: e.g. the labour market but includes the use of public transport and health care. There is clearly a significant problem of under-reporting. This doesn't seem to be about alienation but instead more about BME groups living with and negotiating everyday racism. The good news is that Scotland does have a positive view of immigration. In addition, BME groups in Scotland have faith and confidence in the systems and, perhaps most significantly, stake out ownership of Scotland and Scottish Identities. These are positive assets that present and future Scottish administrations must build on and England should learn from.

So if I am being told to stop there I will. Ok very good thank you.

References

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